

The Gospel

Or

The Most Recent Attack Against the Truth of Sovereign Grace

By

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Congregation

At

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Foreword

1933, (from the Dutch)

By Herman Hoeksema

What is being offered to the reformed reading public in this booklet was first published as a series of articles in *The Standard Bearer*. Our Classical Mission committee judged that the material was important enough to also publish it in book form.

Although the contents attack the views of Prof. W. Heyns, the attentive reader shall find enough positive material in this book, to not only be warned against the heresy, but also to be trained in the truth and established in the faith.

May the Lord give that it may bear this double fruit for many!

The author

Grand Rapids, MI,
November 1933

Introduction

The Completed Translation

By Mr. Bert Mulder

I include here, as introduction, the introduction by Prof. H. Hoeksema on the publication in English of the greater part of this book, as it was included in April 1976 and subsequent issues the *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal*.

I have reviewed the translation work done by Prof. H. Hoeksema, and generally included it without change. I have myself translated the first part of the book, which was, to my knowledge, never published in English. I have attempted to follow his style and translation for the remainder of the book.

May this work serve to the glory of God, and the furtherance of His Kingdom.

Bert Mulder

Introduction by Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema

For the partial translation set forth in the *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal*, entitled:

The Simplicity of God's Will And the "Free Offer"

By Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

In this and future articles, the Lord willing, we propose to study the doctrine of the simplicity of the will of God from various points of view. There are some important aspects of this truth which are deserving of study. Thus, for example, there is the distinction between the "revealed" and the "hidden" will of God. The question is first of all: is this a valid distinction? And if it is, wherein does its validity consist? But, further, if it is valid, how is it to be conceived in relation to the truth of God's simplicity? Or again, the distinction is sometimes made between the "decretive" and the "preceptive" will of God. This is a distinction not unrelated to the former one; nevertheless, it is not identical. Here, too, we may inquire into the meaning and legitimacy of this distinction, but also into its relation to the truth of the simplicity of God's will.

Anyone who is acquainted with the development of the erroneous doctrine of the so-called "free offer," or "general, well-meant offer of grace and salvation" to all who hear the gospel will also know that frequently the distinctions mentioned above have been used in an attempted partial explanation, or at least, justification of the teaching that there is a will of God which purposes the salvation of the elect only, but also a will of God for the salvation of all men. We purpose also to touch upon the validity of the use of those distinctions in connection with that matter. There are several questions that can be raised in that context. But one of the most important is, surely, whether it is at all correct – even apart from the question of a duality of wills in God – to speak of the alleged will of God for the salvation of all men as *preceptive*, in distinction from His will for the salvation of the elect only as being *decretive*. And the same question may be raised with respect to the distinctions *revealed* and *hidden*.

However, even apart from the question of the legitimacy of the above distinctions and the question of their relation to the doctrine of divine simplicity, it is simply a fact that the matter of God's simplicity is inextricably involved in the entire issue concerning the "general, well-meant offer" or "free offer" of the gospel (the

expressions are largely synonymous in contemporary theological parlance). This has been true historically. It was, and is, true in Presbyterian circles, as is plain from the fact that the late John Murray himself recognized this – implicitly in the booklet of which he was co-author with Ned Stonehouse, *The Free Offer of the Gospel*, and explicitly in his book, *Calvin on Scripture and Divine Sovereignty*, p. 69. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia very perceptively recognizes this also as a fundamental issue in their polemic entitled *UNIVERSALISM AND THE REFORMED CHURCHES, A Defense of Calvin's Calvinism*. But it was true long before the developments just mentioned in the controversy which gave rise to the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Nor is this mere coincidence. On the contrary, it is axiomatic. It is axiomatic because all of dogmatics is principally theology; and therefore one is necessarily positing something about theology, about the doctrine of God, whether he speaks in the realm of Anthropology, of Christology, of Soteriology, of Ecclesiology, or of Eschatology. This is unavoidable. The issue of the "free offer" lies especially in the realm of Soteriology; but the soteriological pronouncements on this subject – both *pro* and *con* – were necessarily, either implicitly or explicitly, at the same time pronouncements in the realm of the first *locus* of Dogmatics, Theology. Moreover, this was very directly and concretely true in the actual controversy *circa* 1924, whether it was always recognized and admitted, or not. Theologians made pronouncements about the *will of God*. They spoke about a *will of God* to save all men and a *will of God* to save only the elect; or they insisted that God's will was solely to save the elect only. But the point is: they spoke about *the will of God*. That is undeniably *Theology*! And inevitably, too, it was Theology which concerned the important subject of the attribute of God's simplicity.

There were some who seemed rather intuitively to recognize this already in the pre-Synod controversy in 1924 in the Christian Reformed Church. The "general, well-meant offer" was not yet an explicit issue at that time; it only entered the picture when Synod incorporated it in the dual pronouncement of the First Point of Common Grace. But more than one of Herman Hoeksema's attackers at that time attacked him for his "*Gods-beschouwing* (view of God)," suggesting that he preached a hard, tyrannical God. There was more truth than fiction at the basis of that attack – not in the sense that Hoeksema's view of God was evil, but in the sense that these attackers recognized, perhaps rather intuitively, that the underlying issue was a *theological* issue, a contest between two conflicting views of God. Somewhat later, in some of the polemical writings about the issue of the "general, well-meant offer," this became abundantly clear; and there was sharp debate which focused precisely on the truth of the simplicity of the will of God. And a little analysis of contemporary writings will show that the issue is still, at bottom, a *theological* issue, not only a soteriological issue. This becomes abundantly plain, for example, in James Daane's

The Freedom of God, in which he fumes and fulminates against an alleged "decretal theology" of Hoeksema and others.

All of this serves to underscore the seriousness of this issue. To make soteriological pronouncement is serious enough; when we take into account that those soteriological pronouncements are at once *theological* pronouncements, then matters become much more serious still. To err soteriologically is bad; to err theologically is heinous, for then we speak the lie about God Himself, about His Being, Nature, Mind, Will Attributes, Works. Karl Barth wrote somewhere about those who imagine that they *say* "God" while all the time they are loudly saying "MAN!" That is idolatry. And that is the basic issue – a spiritual, ethical issue – in all theologizing. In our theology we must beware that we do not busy ourselves in making idols! We must beware that we do not say "Man" when we purport to say "God."

And this in itself is a sufficient justification for a serious examination of this subject of the simplicity of God's will and of various related questions already mentioned. One of our purposes in these articles is to consider what various theologians have had to say about both the general subject of the simplicity of God's will and the specific subject of the "free offer" and the simplicity of God's will. And in this consideration we will begin at home.

Prof. Wm. Heyns was for many years a teacher at Calvin College and Seminary, already before it became a full-fledged and accredited college and seminary. In fact, he was one of Herman Hoeksema's instructors when the latter was preparing for the ministry in the Christian Reformed denomination prior to 1915. Prof. Heyns was also, more than any other Christian Reformed theologian, the father of the view which became official church doctrine in 1924 when the doctrine of the "general, well-meant offer" was incorporated in the First Point of Common Grace.

In 1932-33, when he was already professor-emeritus, Heyns wrote a series of articles in *De Wachter*, the Dutch language weekly of the Christian Reformed Church, on the subject, "The Gospel." These articles were intended to be a defense of the doctrine of the "general offer" Surely, there was no one better qualified to write on this subject from a Christian Reformed viewpoint than Prof. Heyns: he was after all, the father of this view and had taught it for many years. Needless to say, Herman Hoeksema replied in the *Standard Bearer* also in the Dutch language. He also wrote under the title, "The Gospel," with the sub-title, "The Most Recent Attack against the Truth of Sovereign Grace." These articles were later gathered in a 255-page book. Partly because Prof. Heyns, his opponent, was a very neat and well-organized writer, who was rather capable of setting forth his views clearly, this particular polemical writing of Herman Hoeksema is also one of his clearest, uncluttered by many side-

issues and tangential discussions.

And in this book the issue of the simplicity of God and the "free offer" comes into sharp focus. For this reason, and also in order to make this material available to those not at home in the Dutch language, we present, first of all, a translation of a lengthy section of this book. The first chapter is entitled, "So Many Wills, So Many Gods." I have omitted the first of the three sections of this chapter, in order to turn directly to the pertinent discussion of the issue. Here follows a translation of Sections 2 and 3 of Chapter I and all of Chapter II.

And, from the November 1976 issue:

In the previous issue of this Journal we quoted, in translation, a rather long section from Herman Hoeksema's polemic against Prof. W. Heyns's "two-wills doctrine." In the present instalment we continue that quotation, offering a translation of Chapter 3 of *The Gospel—The Most Recent Attack Against The Truth Of Sovereign Grace*. This chapter is pertinent to our study because it continues, now from an exegetical point of view, the presentation of the views of both Heyns and Hoeksema with respect to the subject we are discussing. As the reader will see, this chapter deals with only two passages of Scripture. Both of them are pertinent in the debate concerning the "free offer." However, the special element in this pertinence lies in the fact that both passages speak of the *will of God*. Here follows the translation.

From the November 1981 issue:

In the early part of this series of articles I quoted extensively from the Rev. Herman Hoeksema's polemic against Prof. W. Heyns entitled, *THE GOSPEL, The Most Recent Attack On The Truth Of Sovereign Grace*. I did so because the controversy between Heyns, who wrote at that time in *De Wachter* in defense of the First Point of 1924 and its general, well-meant offer of salvation, and Hoeksema, who replied first in the Standard Bearer and later in this book (which is a compilation of the Standard Bearer articles), concentrated almost entirely on the subject of the will of God as it related to the issue of the 'free offer'. Since the translation of those earlier chapters appeared in this *Journal*, it has been suggested to me more than once that it would be both interesting and helpful if the remainder of that little booklet were translated, especially because there is such a sharp joining of the issue in the Heyns-Hoeksema controversy and because the focus is on the matter of the will of God. Hence, while this takes me astray from my original plan for this series, I will heed the suggestion, seeing that all this material is closely related to our general subject.

Introduction

Some time ago, from December 7, 1932 to March 1, 1933, emeritus professor Heyns wrote a series of articles under the rubric 'Dogmatic Topics' in 'The Wachter' as requested by the Publication Commission of 'De Wachter' and 'The Banner'.

He did this while filling in for Rev. D. Zwier, who had requested and received leave as co-editor of 'De Wachter'.

As his topic Heyns chose 'The Gospel', with as main goal to defend the doctrine of a universal offer, and at the same time to attack the truth of God's sovereign grace as such is propounded and defended by us.

Naturally nobody expected that we would keep silent regarding the writing and presentation of Prof. Heyns.

He himself did not expect it. He who stands in front and fires from the hip as Heyns did must be a fool if he does not expect any counter fire. And Heyns is no fool. The Publication Commission does not expect this. And Heyns writes at the request of this Commission. That which he publishes is not some 'Letters', what one can head up with 'The Editors take no responsibility'. To the contrary, Heyns is the official voice. And what he writes is the doctrine of the Christian Reformed Churches. And to be silent means agreement, which is very much true here. Even a man as Dr. Volbeda agrees with the presentation of Heyns, if he does not with a loud voice reject any responsibility for such. So much the more will the Publication Commission and the leaders of the Christian Reformed Churches expect us not to remain silent and to discuss the series of articles by Heyns.

Thus write we shall.

I promise Prof. Heyns that that I shall deal politely with him, not only because we follow this as a rule; but even more so regarding the old age of the professor, as also the fact that Heyns was my teacher, be it such that I have foresworn all his views, and that he certainly shall not recognize me as his disciple.

On the other hand will I assure him, taking into account all good manners and politeness, that I will not spare him for the sake of the truth. I shall not dare to say that Satan is the chief teacher in the presentation of Prof. Heyns, even if such my conviction; I shall also refrain from uttering my conviction that the presentation of Heyns should be 'avoided as the plague', although such is my conviction. But I shall not hesitate to make clear that the series of articles by Heyns cannot have any other

result than undermine sound reformed doctrine and will prove that as such it is an attack on the truth of God's sovereign grace.

As such the subtitle is: *'The Latest Attack On The Truth Of Sovereign Grace'*.

Let the professor not misunderstand me.

I do not mean to say, that he purposely attacks such truth; that he means to undermine the reformed truth. We will not judge motives and intentions. I will even proceed, as much as possible, with the assumption that Heyns is writing in good faith, and that he truly believes that he is propounding the reformed truth.

But I do mean to say, that the contents of his articles are such an attack on the truth of sovereign grace.

One further comment.

In this we shall not proceed from human reasoning, as Heyns, completely groundless and without proof, assures his readers that we do.

No, God's Word shall be our foundation and criterion.

And with that the reformed confessions.

All rationalism shall be far from us. And the reformed in the Netherlands may also judge if the presentation by Heyns is reformed.

First of all then the two wills doctrine.

Chapter 1

So many wills, so many Gods

(1)

A matter of exegesis of Scripture

It is a weakness of Prof. Heyns that he tries to get rid of his opponents in too easy of a manner. Namely, he claims of those that do not want to know of a general well-meant offer of grace and salvation from God, that their view proceeds from pure rationalistic methodology. They take a fundamental point of view, that although it is derived from Scripture, instead of continuing to listen to Scripture when it speaks about the right preaching of the Gospel and the offer of grace, they let go of God's Word, jump in a rationalistic way to their own conclusions and continue to build with their own understanding on the fundamental position at which they have arrived. Their representation, accordingly, is a conclusion resulting from their own reasoning. And now it happens, according to Heyns, that Scripture clearly contradicts and absolutely condemns this conclusion arrived at through reason. The point of view that these opponents take is the doctrine of predestination, with election and reprobation. According to this doctrine, God wills that some people are saved, and that others are lost. And from this principle these people conclude, according to Heyns, that God cannot will that all people are saved. Furthermore, there can thus be no well-meant offer of grace and salvation from God to all men.

That Heyns truly attributes this rationalistic methodology to his opponents is shown by the following from his hand:

In regards to the manner of exegesis, which wishes to insert a limiting element to all the general expressions in Gospel invitations and offers, or read between the lines, so that the expressions, instead of being general become particular, it is admitted that there are certainly in Scripture expressions which truly must be understood and interpreted in that way. As the apostle says in 1 Cor. 15:22: 'For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.', then we do not hesitate for a moment to accept that the 'all' in the second part of the sentence does not mean all men head for head, though it does mean that in the first part of the sentence. Not that this second 'all' would be incorrect, but because it points to something else than the first. The apostle wants to say: 'as *all that are in Adam*, shall die in him, so shall *all that are in Christ*, be made alive in Him. And now it is so, that all men are in Adam, head for head, but not all men are, head for head, in Christ. Even the resurrection of the unrighteous shall not be a making alive, but shall serve to sink away to death with body and soul. Thus we wish to add, or read between

the lines, in our exegesis of this text ‘those that are in Adam’ and ‘those that are in Christ’.

In a case such as this, however, this addition to, or reading between the lines, happens on ground of God’s own Word. Such exegesis is comparing Scripture with Scripture. The question is if one can also say that of those explanations of Gospel invitations which have the goal to reason away the universality of the invitation to all those to whom the Gospel comes, and that such is well-meant. That question has to be answered with an unequivocal no.

Because they do this not grounded on God’s Word, but grounded on their own human judgment, and that judgment they consider so true and sincere, that to support such exegesis of named texts they do not find special Scriptural proof necessary, though they would not neglect to add such proof if they could find it. They begin by placing themselves on the basis of predestination, and that basis is certainly sufficiently true and sincere. Be it that the denial of the universality and sincerity of the Gospel must follow directly from such, then we should be silent, since then such denial would be grounded in God’s Word. But such is not the case. Predestination is only the starting point, and it is from there they start their assault. From that predestination one can conclude, that there is a will in God that does not desire the salvation of the reprobate. We also do not have anything against such a conclusion. On the contrary. We agree with that totally and without reservation. But now it comes. From the fact that there is a will in God that does not desire the salvation of the reprobate, they conclude further, that there cannot be in God a will that does desire their salvation. And with this conclusion they consider the doctrine of the universal well-meant-for-all Gospel cast aside with one blow. That is the only argument they have, but they consider that so powerful and determinate, that as such the case is settled, and that they must be complete Pelagians who, contrary to this argument, want to hold fast to such a Gospel. (*De Wachter*, 11 Jan.)

It will be clear to readers of the above, that we do no injustice to Heyns, if we allege that he accuses his opponents, that their whole view rests on a rationalistic conclusion, and that with this conclusion they consider the case settled. Moreover, they do not have any Scripture proof. They themselves know very well, that such proof for their denial of the universality of God’s offer in the Gospel is not to be found in Scripture. But this one conclusion that they arrive at, is sufficient for them. And with that they put their full trust in the ability of their own understanding and reason. They simply hold their own judgment as unassailable. And with that it is finished.

Now that is indeed a terrible accusation. What these rationalistic opponents are doing comes down to this, that they, for their own judgment, knowingly and willingly push God's Word aside. And doing such is simply godless. It is a rejection of Holy Writ. We will gladly forgive Heyns such, and not accuse him of such thought. Contrariwise, we assume that he truly lives in the presumption that his opponents follow such a rational method. And also we will believe that he is sincere in his opinion, that only he holds to Scripture and interprets Scripture without adding his own conclusions to it. With this, we naturally do not say, that such presumption and opinion are in agreement with reality. We even hold to the opposite. From our side we are deeply convinced that Heyns grossly errs, that he indeed does not understand Scripture, much less that he purely interprets it. And although we do not wish to say that Heyns is completely Pelagian, still we maintain that his conception, or rather his presentation of these things, is much more dangerous than one can ever consider full-fledged Pelagianism.

Although, however, we do not wish to accuse Heyns of willingly and knowingly misrepresenting us, regarding the method that we follow and have always followed; although we wish to accept, that he actually does not know any better, still therefore his representation of us is not innocent. His ignorance regarding our method can only be explained by the fact that he has taken no cognizance of what we have written in the past. If he had done such, he could have known better. We have repeatedly given our point of view on the topic about which the professor is presently writing in *De Wachter*. And our reasoning has always been only and completely from Holy Scripture. If Heyns had only read our booklet, '*A Power Of God Unto Salvation or Grace, Not Offer*', he would certainly not have written such as he has. In that book, we discuss various passages from God's Word, which passages I am convinced Heyns would not wish to touch with a ten foot pole, being unwilling and unable to explain them. Furthermore, we argue out of our Reformed Confessions, which are time and again contradicted by Heyns.

Not only that, his allegations are not supported with any proof. Nor is it possible for him to supply such proof. He has simply come up with the groundless representation that we draw a conclusion from predestination, without being concerned with any further Scriptural proof, and that we merely trust our own judgment and understanding. And as far as Heyns could have known better, he stands guilty that he apparently does not know. Heyns also is responsible for that which he writes, and may not willy nilly, without proof or knowledge of the case, accuse us of things that are not true.

In the meantime we are glad, that, regarding the method, Heyns and I could sincerely agree. His method is to compare Scripture with Scripture. He does not wish to merely quote certain texts and consider and expound those on their own,

separate from other texts, but to consider Scripture as a whole. Scripture is not a dictionary, out of which we can quote without rhyme or reason, but she is one great unity. And exactly because of that it is so that not only is it permitted, but it is most certainly a requirement of sound exegesis, that we explain Scripture with Scripture itself. We may not add things in this or that text, which proceed from our understanding or reason. Heyns does not wish to do that. I also do not wish to do that. But we may insert in certain places of Holy Writ certain things which proceed from Scripture. That is what Heyns wants to do. And although I do not wish to go as far as Heyns, although I would rather not insert things into Scripture, still I do agree with the principle of Heyns that one place in Holy Writ has to be read in the light of the others. Thus we agree on the method. And I hope to prove that in the future also.

Heyns even gives us an example of this method.

He has sensed that his condemnation of the method, which will limit certain expressions in Holy Writ, would go too far. In case he would maintain this, he has rightly sensed that he would simply arrive at the doctrine of universal redemption. And Heyns does not wish to go that far on the slippery slope on which he is moving. Therefore he leaves open the possibility to 'insert' and 'to read between the lines'. It is good to insert in the manner in which he does.

Well, how does Heyns insert?

He says:

“As the apostle says in 1 Cor. 15:22: ‘For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive’, then we do not hesitate for a moment to accept, that the ‘all’ in the second part of the sentence does not refer to all men, head for head, even though it does do so in the first part. Not that in the second ‘all’ would not be correct, but because it is referring to something else than the first. The apostle wishes to say: ‘For as all *that are in Adam* die in him, even so all *that are in Christ* shall be made alive in Him’.”

Now is that exegesis not all that sure. It is certainly no less plausible in light of the context to read: ‘For as (the elect) all die in Adam, even so shall (the elect) in Christ all be made alive.’ This explanation has this going for it that you give to ‘all’ the same meaning in both instances.

But that does not matter in this case. What we find more important is the question, how does Heyns defend his contention that Paul meant with the first ‘all’, those that are in Adam, and with the second ‘all’, those that are in Christ?

He says: "And now are indeed all men, head for head, in Adam, but not all men, head for head, are in Christ."

How does Heyns know this last statement?

He believes in election, in predestination. Therefore he does not wish to teach universal redemption. Therefore he says, that not all men, head for head, are in Christ. And out of that Scriptural doctrine of predestination Heyns comes to a conclusion with connection to the correct interpretation of 1 Cor. 15:22.

Now I say again, that I would not wish to reason and conclude out of the doctrine of predestination as Heyns does. He does not make a single attempt to ascertain the correct meaning out of the text itself; nor does he reason at all out of the context. Also, he does not give any proof from Scripture for the assertion that not all men are in Christ. In fact, he does here, that which he accuses his opponents of doing. He reasons out of the *doctrine* of predestination and draws a conclusion as to the meaning of 1 Cor. 15:22. And that may not be. Dogmatics may never rule over exegesis.

But let that be as it may, it will be clear that there does not have to be a difference in thought over the question, which method we ought to follow in our discussion. Heyns agrees that Scripture may not be considered to be contradicting itself, and that therefore we must interpret Scripture with Scripture.

I will keep myself to this rule.

Thus we are agreed herein. And with that we have won much.

Because now our difference shall have to be over the question, as to who interprets Scripture purely, Heyns or I. It is no longer a question of method, but of pure and simple Scriptural interpretation.

It is also not the question, who can reference the most texts, but who maintains Scripture the most pure as a whole.

(2)

Heyns' two-wills doctrine

We shall first attempt as much as possible to form and to offer to the reader a correct conception of the view to which the professor himself is committed.

His basic principle is that there are in God two wills.

Two wills in relation to the same matter, the salvation of men.

Two wills which, as far as their content is concerned, stand diametrically over against each other. For according to the one will, God wills that all man be saved. According to the other will, God wills that some men be saved, and that others go lost. This the professor teaches very plainly. Note the following:

It is of this latter conclusion which is certainly not founded on God's Word (that there can be next to the will in God which does not will the salvation of the reprobate no will in God which indeed wills their salvation,, H.H.) that we would have nothing. In our estimation that is an argument which a Reformed man must not even think of using and that is totally devoid of any proof. Where is the proof that whereas there is a will in God which does not will the salvation of the reprobate there can be in Him no will, which indeed wills their salvation? Does God's Word say that? No, God's Word does not say that, but our understanding says that. That would be a flagrant contradiction, and there is in God no contradiction. Yes indeed, thus speaks our understanding, but what does that mean? Has our understanding fathomed the infinitely perfect God in order to be able to make out what is possible in the divine Being, and what cannot? Are the things of God subject to our understanding for their possibility or impossibility? And how do matters stand with our understanding? Is it not true that our understanding is darkened and confused through sin, is still in many respects the understanding of the unregenerate, because regeneration indeed removes his blindness for spiritual things, so that he sees, but his seeing is still only a seeing, not of the spiritual things themselves, but as the seeing of a vague, enigmatic image of those things in a faulty, metal mirror, with the consequence that with respect to the details they can see no harmony and can even think to see contradiction where there is no contradiction? Shall then a man who acknowledges these things come with the argument: My understanding says so, as if our poor understanding could be qualified and capable of judging concerning Divine

things? Can one actually think that such an argument would here be of any significance, that it would prove anything here?" (*De Wachter*, January 11)

I wish to remark at this juncture that I here differ radically with Heyns on two points.

In the first place I differ with Heyns in regard to the presentation that man through sin has become insane. This after all is the presentation. His reason is affected, so that he, from a rational viewpoint, sees things incorrectly. He has become so insane that he sees contradiction where there is harmony, that what he calls Yes can also be No, that if he says that God does not will something, he cannot trust his understanding to say that He therefore also cannot indeed will it. By this the subject of all revelation is annihilated. If this is so, then there is no knowledge of God possible, then every attempt to develop a theological conception is senseless. Then there can be an election, but this still does not say that some are saved; then there can be reprobation, but that still does not say that some go lost. Then there can be a God, but thereby it is still not said that the assertion that there is no God also is not true. Heyns does not express here that the sinner is *spiritually* darkened; nor does he say that our understanding is finite and can never comprehend the Infinite; but that man, the natural and the regenerate man, is insane. He puts all theology at loose ends. And over against this, I very decidedly hold that man is indeed spiritually darkened and blind, that he has also lost many of his original gifts, so that he also can no more know things as Adam knew them in the state of rectitude, but that he is normal in his understanding and not insane.

In the second place I do not go along with Heyns in his attack upon Holy Scripture. He asserts that we see in a *faulty* metal mirror. And that metal mirror is certainly Holy Scripture. But although it is true that in that mirror we do not see face to face, but a reflection of God, nevertheless I also maintain that in God's Word we have an adequate revelation of God, upon which we can depend, and no faulty mirror. Also by this assertion Heyns simply undermines the foundations for all theology. I will accept it that he does not intend it thus; in actual fact he indeed does this. I maintain therefore that we through the means of the adequate revelation of God in Holy Scripture can come to a logically construed conception of God and His works. That that which we see as Yes can also be No by virtue of a faulty revelation and an affected understanding, that I deny with all that is in me.

This does not mean that we can fathom God. It does mean that we can rationally understand His revelation.

But this in parenthesis. Our present concern is to learn the view of Heyns. And then it will be plain that there are, according to the professor, two wills in God. According

to the one will, God wills that all men be saved, or, more correctly expressed (however senseless this may be), that also the reprobate be saved. According to the other will, God wills that the reprobate not be saved.

By this Heyns has carried the issue between us back to its proper basic principle. That a general offer of grace and salvation must rest in a will of God which wills that all men be saved is indeed plain, but has never been so frankly affirmed as Heyns affirms it. He takes his stand here. Hence, we do not have to deal with the question whether there is a general, well-meant offer of grace and salvation, but with the question: does Scripture teach that God wills that all men be saved? And it is also plain that whoever simply answers affirmatively to this question is a full-blown, or let me rather say, a *simple* Pelagian. The question is, of course: what is Heyns? His answer is: Yes and No. God wills it and He does not will it!

We might ask: does Heyns attempt also to explain himself more precisely? How does he conceive of these two wills in God? Such an attempt Heyns makes in the following:

The apparent contradiction, that next to the will of the decree in God there would be another will which would will the salvation also of the reprobate, comes to stand in a somewhat different light if we remember that the two wills in God are not to be conceived as of entirely the same nature, lying entirely on the same plane, so that the willing and not willing concerning the same matter would be a directly opposite standing of the one will over against the other as light over against light, for then the one will would annihilate the other and a condition of arbitrariness (will-Iess-ness) would arise. (Notice that Heyns is here busily reasoning and depending entirely upon his reason, however crooked and perverse this may also be according to his own presentation, he simply concludes what can be and what cannot be! H.H.) That can occur with a man, but not with God. (Here Heyns simply states, without proof, banking entirely on his understanding, what *can* not occur with God, H.H.) But also in a man two wills can exist which do not abolish one another when the ground whence they arise is different. Beside the will which arises out of his personality, out of his nature and inclinations, there can exist in man another will which arises out of and is determined by someone's relation to the circumstances outside of him. A king can be a very peace loving prince, and nevertheless through circumstances be compelled to reach the point of declaring war on another nation. To the question whether that king wills war, an affirmative answer must be given, for he has declared war and wages war; and at the same time that question is to be answered negatively, for his heart trembles for war with all its bloodshed and misery, and he has done what he could to maintain peace. His will which wills no war, the will

which arises out of his person and inclination, which is, of course, proper to him, shall, unless something occurs which prevents this, determine his actions. His will which wills war, on the other hand, is the will which, instead of from his person and inclination, arose out of and was determined by circumstances outside of him, in connection with his position as king, who must protect and defend the right and freedom of his people. Of these two wills the latter can gain the upper hand over the former, so that he acts according to the latter and not according to the former; but then nevertheless the latter does not abolish the former, and still allows the former to assert itself as much as possible. While he wages war it can be said of such a king that he wills peace; and in the midst of his waging of war he will seek peace.

To a certain degree this applies also to the two wills in God; for man, also his will, is made according to God's image...

It must be accepted, therefore, that the decrees in a relative sense were determined by that which the world was, and consequently by things outside of which were indeed created by Him, but which do not belong to His Being. Were this world different, a world and another condition, then the decrees, and along with them the will of the decrees, would have been different. On the other hand by the will of command *we* conceive of the will which God has revealed in His commandments, of the will which is the will of God as He is in Himself, upon which the things which are outside of God can have no influence whatsoever, and which can never will otherwise than it does, and which on this account cannot possibly be abolished or set aside. (*De Wachter*, January 18)

In the first place, I may indeed point out that this entire philosophy is derived from the reason and the understanding of Prof. Heyns. Not in a single instance does he reason from or even refer to Scripture. Although he rubs it in to others that they trust altogether in their crooked and perverse understanding, Heyns simply boldly reasons, without as much as concerning himself about Holy Scripture. He does not even think of supporting this explanation with Scripture. And I add immediately that he would also never succeed in proving such a presentation of God from Scripture.

For this presentation is in one word terrible!

It is nothing less than an erroneous assault upon the absolute freedom of God, upon His high sovereignty, upon His very Deity!

What does Heyns teach?

The following:

1. That there is a will in God according to which He wills to save all men. This is the will which arises out of His Being, His nature, His inclination. Even as the king in the example is by nature peace loving, so God by nature wills to save all men.
2. That the execution of this will is made impossible for God by circumstances outside of Him. He has been limited in His decrees by things outside of Him.
3. That God, thus limited not simply by His own good pleasure and Being, but by things outside of Him, was compelled to come to the decree of election and reprobation.
4. That He, however, still always impelled by that first will, still also wills, conceives, seeks, offers the salvation of all men. And thus Heyns then arrives at the presentation of a general, well-meant offer of grace. He says therefore to the reprobate: Men, I would greatly wish that ye also would be saved; but I am compelled by circumstances to reprobate you!

Thus there is according to the reason and the understanding of Heyns (not according to Scripture) an eternal discord in God between that which He earnestly wills and that which He was compelled to decree! A dualism between God's Being and His decree.

We must still point to one thing.

Heyns attempts to present it as though that first will, which arises out of His Being and Nature, is the will of command. But the right to this must definitely be denied him. Otherwise we get confusion in our discussion. We must understand one another well and not talk past one another. By the will of command can never be understood a will in God, *according to which He wills to do something*; but we must understand by this His will *for us*, His ethical will, according to which He reveals what He wills *that we shall be and do in relation to Him*. God's will of command can never be that all men be saved. We can indeed say that all men are called to walk in His ways. This must be noticed a moment because otherwise we do not understand one another. Heyns must not speak of a will of command in this connection. That God maintains His will of command over against all men we understand very well. That, therefore, is not under discussion. No, what is under discussion is simply whether there are in

God two wills according to which He thinks, wills, and does exactly the opposite. According to the one will He conceives of the salvation of all men, wills the salvation of all men, seeks the salvation of all men, proclaims His will to save all men. According to the other will, He conceives the salvation of the elect only, wills only their salvation, seeks only their salvation, and proclaims that He will save them alone.

That is the issue between us. And this issue must be decided not by reason, but by Scripture.

(3)

A Duality of Gods

The line runs through.

If you posit two wills in God, you undeniably proclaim two gods.

You cannot divide God, for He is God.

God's will is characterized by all His Essential virtues. For it is a Divine will.

Therefore God's will is free, sovereign, almighty, irresistible, unchangeable, wise, good, holy, and righteous. And therefore God's will is certainly executed. For our God is in the heavens, He does whatsoever He pleases, Psalm 115:3. He has mercy on whom He will, and He hardens whom He will, Romans 9:18. This is not reason or human understanding, but divine revelation.

If there are two wills in God, then both of them are characterized by all His virtues. Then both wills are free, sovereign, almighty, irresistible, unchangeable, wise, good, holy, and righteous. And then both wills are executed. Then both lines run through completely. There is simply no escape from this.

So many wills so many godsl

Heyns has posited two wills in God.

Heyns has two gods.

He has two theological systems. For the lines run through undeniably. And that, too, according to the following scheme:

A

God wills that all men be saved, with an eternal and unchangeable, sovereignly free will.

According to His will, God has concluded all men under sin, in order that He should lead them all to the highest glory or eternal life.

According to His will God has foreordained Christ as Head and Savior of all men, in order that He should open for all a chance to be saved

According to His will God has determined to let salvation depend upon the free will of man to believe in Christ and to be saved on condition of that faith.

According to His will, God has determined to give the Spirit of grace, through Whom He will bestow salvation upon all men, to all who will receive Him and allow Him to dwell in them, as long as they will His indwelling.

God has determined that Christ, as far as His divine intention is concerned, should suffer and die for all men, in order that he should reconcile all men with God.

B

God wills that not all, but some men be saved and that others be damned, with an eternal and unchangeable, sovereign will.

According to His will God has concluded all men under sin, in order that He should lead not all, but only the elect to everlasting glory and should harden the the others.

According to His will, God has foreordained Christ as Head of the elect alone, in order that He should lead them and them only to everlasting glory with absolute certainty.

According to His will, God has determined to bestow out of pure grace upon the elect and upon them only the gift of faith, in order that they through that faith in Christ should be able to inherit salvation

According to His will, God has determined to give the Spirit of grace, through Whom He will bestow this salvation upon the elect and upon them only, to them, although they by nature do not will and cannot will that Spirit, and through that Spirit to cause them to persevere to the very end.

God has determined that Christ should die, not for all men, but for the elect alone, in order that He should put them and them only in a relation of reconciliation to Himself.

According to God's will, in the gospel grace and salvation are offered to all men on God's part well-meaningly, in order that all men should be saved.

According to God's will, the promise of the Gospel, that everyone who believes shall have eternal life, is proclaimed to all to whom God sends the gospel, with the demand of conversion and faith, in order that the elect should obtain salvation and the others should be hardened.

God's will that all men shall be saved upon condition of faith is fulfilled in those who believe, not through almighty grace, but through their own free will.

God's will, that the elect shall be saved and the others hardened, is executed by Him and by Him alone, for He has mercy on whom He will, and He hardens those whom He will. He gives to the elect faith and causes them to persevere to the very end.

Although God earnestly wills that all men be saved, this will is frustrated through the unbelief of many who reject the offer of grace.

God's eternal will to save the elect and them only is executed with absolute certainty. Those given by the Father enter into glory. The reprobate are condemned by a righteous judgment of God.

God is a God who is determined and limited by the will of man.

God is God alone, and no one else. He does all His good pleasure.

A

B

Do not misunderstand me.

I do not intend at all to say that Professor Heyns wishes to draw the lines through thus. The drawing through of the lines is of me. Heyns does not wish to draw any lines through, but only to draw dotted lines.

But basically matters stand as stated above.

So many wills so many gods.

Dualism from beginning to end.

Of course, the line drawn under A is the Remonstrant line through and through. The

line under B is the simple Reformed line.

Basically, in the Christian Reformed Churches they wished to hold us to both of the above systems. They had two gods. And this acknowledgement of two gods came to clear manifestation in many sermons.

The unavoidable result was that all too soon they let go of one side of the dilemma.

The Reformed side more and more disappeared.

The Remonstrant idol was proclaimed.

That was bound to happen. And it did happen also. One can for a time delude himself that he can hold fast to two mutually exclusive principles and maintain them. One can indeed for a little while wisely speak of a mystery and call everyone who does not accept this a rationalist; eventually this lie avenges itself. And then one lands directly in Remonstrant waters.

But we wish to put this doctrine of two gods to the test, not by reason, but by an earnest and careful investigation of Scripture.

And everyone may judge for himself whether we do violence to Scripture or whether Heyns does.

Chapter 2

One God, one will

Basically, therefore, what is at issue between Heyns and those whom he opposes, between him and us, is one's conception of God. Heyns has seen that correctly. The difference between his presentation and ours, then, is not one of minor significance, but is very profound. It is not true that Heyns and his followers and the Protestant Reformed can really live very well in one church-communion, on the basis of one and the same confession. He who thus presents the situation may have good intentions, but he nevertheless does not understand the issue. That living together in one church-connection, with the profound difference between the conception of Heyns and our conception, is impossible, 1924 proved clearly. In that respect we have no criticism of that history. Only at that time it was not decided according to truth who ought to have and ought not to have a place in the Churches which professed to stand on the basis of the Three Forms of Unity. The profound difference which we have in mind did not arise in 1924; at that time it only reached the stage of sharp manifestation and unavoidable conflict. It actually always existed in the bosom of the Christian Reformed Churches. But in 1924 Heyns, who for many years taught his conception of God, namely, his two-wills doctrine in the Theological School, triumphed. Not over us, for we still stand as we always did. But he indeed triumphed over those in the Christian Reformed Churches who still today differ radically from Heyns, but who do not dare to come into the open, who should have been leaders, but are not, who lost the day, who allowed themselves to be bound by the Three Points and who must now allow Heyns to be the spokesman concerning the doctrine of grace.

That is my criticism.

In any event it is established on both sides that our difference concerns our conception of God.

Heyns posits a dualism in God; we most decidedly deny this and maintain very definitely that God is one.

Heyns teaches, as will now be clear to everyone, that there are two wills in God, each with its own, entirely different objects; we teach that the oneness of God demands that God's will is one.

Heyns teaches that according to the one will in God He wills that all men be saved; according to the other, that some be saved and others go lost. We teach that God in

singleness of willing wills that the elect be saved, that the reprobate be damned, and that He never wills, has willed, or shall will anything else. Heyns teaches that there is conflict in God. We concede that in his article he tries to deny that he teaches this; nevertheless he indeed teaches it. The one will in God is in conflict with the other. The will of His decree stands over against the will of His nature. But the former was determined by circumstances outside of God. Because of this, the latter cannot be executed. God indeed earnestly wills to save all men, but in His decree He was limited by conditions in His creation, and therefore He has decided to save only the elect. This is what Heyns taught us with his example of the peace loving king who against his nature was compelled to wage war.

Of course, Heyns gains nothing by this as far as salvation is concerned. For even so the fact is that that king wages war and concludes no peace. And the fact is also that that king indeed very definitely wills that war under the circumstances. Or, to forsake the figure, the fact is that God, under the circumstances indeed very definitely wills the salvation of the elect and the damnation of the reprobate; and the fact is that under the existing circumstances God nevertheless does not will the salvation of all men, according to Heyns. If, therefore, you ask Heyns whether according to his presentation so much as one more man is saved than according to my presentation, then Heyns says: No. And the fact is, too, that if you ask Heyns whether the number of those who are saved and of those who are condemned is completely in harmony with God's will, then he says: 'Yes, but not according to that other will, for God would rather will it otherwise, but his will is limited by circumstances.'

But although Heyns gains nothing here, he loses God. For he teaches that there is conflict in God between the will of His decree and the will of His nature, hence, between God's Being and His decrees. If that king decides to wage war, then this militates against his nature, according to Heyns. And if God decrees to reprobate some, then this militates against the will of His nature. And with this presentation, which I indeed consider a very serious heresy, concerning which I not only assert that it *should* not arise in the head of a Reformed man, but also that it *can* not arise in a Reformed head, Heyns has lost God, Who is really God.

Moreover, except for the fact that Heyns cites a few passages of Scripture in which God's Word appears to teach, for him who reads very superficially, that God wills that all men be saved -- passages which, however, most certainly cannot have this meaning -- Heyns adduces not a single proof for his two-wills doctrine from Holy Writ. Time after time Heyns accuses his opponents of rationalism, but his own reasoning is as rationalistic as possible.

However, to make it very plain to him how completely mistaken he is with respect to

our method, we will limit ourselves strictly to Scripture.

We shall make it plain:

1. That all that Holy Scripture teaches us concerning God in His Being and nature and works totally condemns the presentation of two wills in God which stand in conflict with one another, and that God's Word teaches the absolute oneness, independence, and unchangeableness of God.
2. That Scripture not only teaches that God does not will the salvation of all, but also that He, entirely in harmony with His nature and Being, wills the damnation of the ungodly reprobate.
3. That the texts which Heyns cites in order to prove that there is also another will in God, according to which He would will the salvation of all men, in no wise teach this, and that even Heyns, from his own viewpoint, cannot possibly maintain that exegesis.

God's Word teaches us that God is one.

Deuteronomy 4:35: "Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him."

Deuteronomy 4:39: "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else."

Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD."

Psalm 18:31: "For who is God save the LORD? Or who is a rock save our God?"

Isaiah 43:10-13: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?"

Isaiah 45:5: "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me."

Isaiah 45:6: "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else."

Isaiah 45:7: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."

Isaiah 45:18: "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else."

Isaiah 45:21: "Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together; who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I the LORD? And there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me."

God is also the absolutely sovereign and independent One.

Deuteronomy 32:39: "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand."

Daniel 4:35: "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?"

Psalm 33:11: "The counsel of the LORD standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations."

Proverbs 16:4: "The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."

Isaiah 46:10: "Woe unto him that saith unto his father, what begetteth thou? Or to the woman, what hast thou brought forth?"

Romans 9:18: "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

Romans 11:34-36: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. "

Ephesians 1:11b: "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

And God is also the absolutely unchangeable one:

I Samuel 15:29: "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent."

Malachi 3:6: "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

We shall not draw any conclusions from these texts, in order to forestall every possibility of Heyns' accusing us of rationalism. We only point out that these passages of Scripture which can very easily be multiplied, teach us the following:

1. That God is one. He is one as God. Exactly upon this all these passages lay the emphasis. He is the Lord in heaven and on earth. He is God, and He is one. He is an only Lord. That implies that He is one in Being, that He is one in His nature, in understanding and will; that He is one in His virtues, for He is love, light, life, etc.; that He is one in His works; and that He is also absolutely one as far as the relation between His Being, Nature, Willing and Thinking, Virtues and Works is concerned. There is in God no duality or plural. For He is God, and He is one. Therefore there is also no discord in God, no conflict. There is in Him the most perfect harmony between His Being and Nature, His willing and His working. He is the Absolute. Therefore there can never be in Him two wills, and still less can there be conflict between two supposed wills in Him. It can never be thus, that there is in God a will of His nature against which the will of His decree strives. Heyns, of course, will concede this to me. He will also surely guard against this rationalism, for it is none less than the living God Himself Who reveals all this concerning Himself. But conceding this, Heyns will say: Yes, but that God is one in Being and Nature, in understanding and willing, still does not say that He also can not be two in will. To this I answer: a. that this is indeed what it says for me and for every intelligent man. Only on the position that we really became insane through sin can the contrary be maintained. b. That in any event it is then up to Heyns to prove from Scripture that God is also two and that there are in God two wills. I can add to this that all of this is also in harmony with the first and most fundamental article of our Netherlands Confession of Faith: "We all believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that there is *one only simple* and spiritual Being, which we call God." The two-wills doctrine of Heyns attacks this fundamental principle. For if there are in God two wills, then He is not one, nor simple.

2. That God alone is God. Also this is very positively and with great emphasis taught in the texts cited above. God is in Himself one, and only Lord. For there are Three which bear witness in heaven, and these Three are One. But He is also alone God. There is no one beside Him. Outside of Him, next to Him, above Him, under Him there is no God. Also this is very plain. But if God alone is God, if there is no God next to Him or above Him, or even under Him, then He is also limited (or: determined) by absolutely nothing outside of Himself in heaven or on earth. Also the creation does not limit God. In no single respect can the work of His hands limit Him in His being alone God. Heyns teaches this indeed, however. It is precisely in this way that he wants to explain how it is possible that God does not execute the will of His nature, that His will of decree is different than the will of His Being. God is limited by something outside of Him, by conditions in creation. However, if this is true, then that which has limited or determined God and still limits and determines Him is exactly God next to or above Him. And Scripture teaches in the clearest possible language that this is exactly not the case. Also the things outside of Him detract nothing whatsoever from His absolutely being God alone. With this we have also cut off the possible remark that God has let Himself be limited by His works. Not only is this in itself already nonsense, but also the above-quoted texts teach exactly most positively that this is not the case. He exactly did not will Himself to be limited, also not by the works of His hands, also not by the free will of man, also not by sin; but He willed that all His works should exactly proclaim that He alone is God. It should really have been unnecessary to contest the heresy that God can be determined by something outside of Himself. But since this has indeed become necessary, and in order to cut off all possibility of the accusation of rationalism, we simply point to Holy Scripture. God is one, and He is alone God!
3. Further, the texts cited above teach that such a conflict between God's decree and the will of His being as Heyns want to posit just exactly does not exist, but that He has from eternity formed His decree exactly in harmony with His will and Being. For, in the first place, those texts teach us that God has wrought all things for His own sake. And in order to forestall every possibility that we nevertheless would make an exception to this, God's Word adds to this: even the wicked for the day of destruction! That means that God loves Himself in the highest degree as the highest and the only Good, that He therefore wills Himself with all His Being and Nature, with all His understanding and will, that He seeks and glorifies Himself in Himself, but also in His decrees and in all the works of His hands, even in the wicked. I do not need to point out that this thought occurs in Scripture many times. He does all things for His own Name's sake, thus Scripture teaches everywhere. But, if this is so, how can Heyns then say that there should exist conflict

between the will of His decree and the will of His nature? Precisely in complete harmony with the will of His Being, according to which He wills Himself, is His counsel. In the second place, these passages also teach us that God's counsel is exactly His *good pleasure*. His counsel shall stand, and He shall do all His *good pleasure*. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart from generation to generation. And who has ever given Him counsel? The counsel of the Lord is, therefore, His good pleasure. He has pleasure in His decrees. If that king to whom Heyns refers in his example declares war, then he has no delight therein, for he is a peace loving prince and the war was forced upon him. And if God is thus, as Heyns wants to present Him, then He really is pleased to save all men; that it stands otherwise in His counsel is not His pleasure. Thus also the text in Ezekiel 33 is explained, is it not? God has no pleasure in the death of any sinner. He earnestly wills to save them all. But if God's counsel is His pleasure, and if He does all things for His own sake, and if He also forms the wicked unto the day of destruction for the sake of His good pleasure, then the presentation of Heyns certainly stands condemned by Holy Scripture. Heyns reasons, drawing a conclusion in a rationalistic manner from a few wrongly understood texts, directly contrary to Scripture.

4. Further, God's Word teaches us here that Jehovah is also the absolutely unchangeable one. He does not lie. He does not repent. He is not changed. There is with Him no change or shadow of turning. He neither increases nor decreases. For He is the Eternal One. Eternally He is the same, and He lives His divine, perfect life in all its infinite fullness continually. All that God is, humanly speaking, He is eternally. All that He ever thinks and wills, He thinks and wills eternally and fully. There is never anything added to His willing –neither in relation to Himself, nor in relation to the creation. Therefore there is in Him no change or shadow of turning. But in Heyns' conception of God this is different. According to the will of His being, the will of His nature, He wills to save all men. But something is added, from the outside, from the creation; and God is changed in His willing, so that He does not decree what He wills. Also in this respect Holy Scripture condemns the conception of Heyns most explicitly.
5. Finally, I may also point out that the passages of Scripture cited also teach emphatically that God also fully performs everything that He pleases. There is no god with Him. He kills and makes alive, He wounds and He heals: neither is there any that can deliver out of His hand. All the inhabitants of the earth are esteemed as nothing with Him, and He does according to His will with the host of heaven and with the inhabitants of the earth; and there is no one who can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou? He forms

the darkness as well as the light, the good and the evil. He works all things according to the counsel of His will. Our God is in the heavens, He has done whatsoever He has pleased. Of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things. But if this is so, how then would there be two wills in God which come into conflict with one another? How then would there nevertheless be anything in heaven or on earth by which the eternal and unchangeable God would be determined or limited? It is plain that the presentation of Heyns is an attack upon Scripture.

Hence, we arrive, not on the ground of a rationalistic process of reasoning, but on the ground of Holy Scripture itself, at the following conclusion: God is One -- One in Being and nature, in understanding and will; and He is God alone. By nothing and by no one is He determined other than by His own simple Being and His simple will, in His decrees. And since He does all things for His own sake, for His own Name's sake, therefore also those decrees are entirely in harmony with His nature, with His understanding and will. They are the thoughts of His heart. The decree is His good pleasure. And since He is the absolute and independent one, not only in His counsel, but also in His works in time, therefore also those works are in complete harmony with His decree. God's works in time are in complete unity with His counsel; His counsel is completely one with His will; His will is completely one with His Being. There is nowhere a duality in all of the revelation of God, much less still is there any conflict. And the presentation of Heyns is exactly the error against which Scripture everywhere and always earnestly warns. I am God, and there is none beside me. That is the fundamental note of Scripture.

Therefore we would also beg Heyns in all seriousness to return from his position, to retract what he has written about God, no longer to contradict Scripture and maintain that there is a duality in God. In any event, he shall now have to concede that he judged all too easily concerning his opponents, when he thought he could simply shake them off his back by an unfounded accusation of rationalistically drawing a conclusion. At issue is not what human reason could posit concerning God. At issue is all of Scripture. At issue is that which the entire Scriptures reveal to us concerning the living God. And it makes me shudder when I read what Heyns writes concerning the alone glorious God.

Chapter 3

All

It has become abundantly clear from Holy Scripture that the Lord our God is One, and not two or more, as Heyns wants us to believe. He is an only Lord, one in being and nature, in will and decrees. He is also God alone, and there is no one beside Him. He does whatsoever He pleases, and there is no one who can give Him counsel or exercise influence upon His decrees, as indeed takes place according to Heyns' assertion. And He is the unchangeable, with Whom there is no shadow of turning.

The oneness of God's willing lies in God Himself. For God eternally wills Himself. He has made all things for His own sake, also the wicked for the day of evil. He wills Himself because He is the highest and the only Good. Therefore He wills Himself also in the creature. And that, too, not only in the will of His decree, but also in the will of His command. There is no conflict here, neither is there any dualism. There are no two wills here. But there is here the antithetical revelation of the same will of God which eternally wills Himself. In the will of decree God wills Himself, both in the elect and the reprobate. And in the will of command God also wills Himself, and that both in righteous and wicked. And in that one will He is the Unchangeable and Independent One. There is indeed no one who resists His will -- neither the will of the decree, nor the will of His command. For as far as the former is concerned, God executes His counsel; and His counsel shall stand forever, the thoughts of His heart are from generation to generation, and He does all His good pleasure. And as far as the will of His command is concerned, God also maintains that eternally. For the creature who also wills that will, according to which God wills and loves Himself, is in that willing of the will of God forever blessed. God causes him to partake of His favor and blesses him, and in that favor of God he is blessed. Hence, God reveals in him, and causes him to taste and acknowledge that God alone is good. And the creature who does not will that will of God, who lives in the lie, is in that not-willing of God's will forever wretched. For the wicked, saith my God, hath no peace. God, therefore, maintains also His will of command forever in them. Never are they blessed. They are in time and eternity miserable. For the wrath of God abideth on them. And in that wretchedness of the wicked it is revealed by God that He alone is good, that he who forsakes God can expect only sorrow upon sorrow. Also hell is there, in the deepest sense of the word, only for God's sake. Hell must forever acknowledge that God is good. And it shall also do this forever. For every lying tongue shall be forever stopped. Thus God is one in His willing of Himself. And thus God also maintains in time and eternity His one will. Therefore, too, the favor of God is only upon those who fear Him. Of a common grace there is no possibility.

Thus Heyns ought to see things. Thus the Reformed Churches ought again to confess things. We must again view all things *theologically*. If we do not want to do that,

there is no place among us for the Reformed truth, no future. This is what Heyns should have taught us in school. Then, when we left school, we would have had a firm line. Now we had nothing. Instead of teaching theology, Heyns really inculcated in us that God is two. That two-wills doctrine forms the heart of his entire view. It recurs everywhere in his 'Gereformeerde Geloofsleer' (Reformed Dogmatics – GM). Everywhere it is exactly that two-wills doctrine which makes it impossible to develop a sound *theological* conception. I blame it to no little extent on Heyns that in the Christian Reformed Churches the Reformed truth is in such a sad estate.

And what proof does Heyns have now in Scripture for that doctrine of two wills in God? It is perhaps best for practical reasons that we take up this question first. On our part we shall demonstrate that God indeed reveals Himself in Scripture as a God Who does not will the salvation of the reprobate. And for us this would naturally mean the same as to say that there is in God no will which indeed wills their salvation. We would say that this would have to mean the same for even the very simplest person. God does not will the salvation of the reprobate; and, there is in God no will which wills the salvation of the reprobate -- these two have precisely the same meaning. But with Heyns that is nevertheless not so. He asserts that the latter is a *conclusion* from the former, and that, too, an unallowable conclusion. When Scripture says that God does not will the salvation of the reprobate, then we may not draw the conclusion from this that He does not also will the salvation of the reprobate. To put it more simply: that God does not will the salvation of the reprobate does not mean that He does not will the salvation of the reprobate. The reader will say, of course, that this is nonsense. And that is precisely what it is. But Heyns answers that he who reasons thus, who calls this nonsense, trusts in his reason, and that reason is, after all, affected by sin. Heyns asserts that Scripture also teaches that God indeed wills the salvation of the reprobate, although it teaches that He does not will it. And when Scripture speaks, then reason must keep silence. To the latter, of course, we readily agree. And therefore it is perhaps best first to inquire what proof Heyns adduces for his two-wills doctrine.

And then it is noteworthy that Heyns really has for this basic element of his view only two texts, namely, I Timothy 2:4 and II Peter 3:9. To prevent all misunderstanding, the reader must keep in mind that we are now speaking only about the two-wills doctrine of Heyns, about the assertion of Heyns that Scripture also teaches that God indeed wills the salvation of the reprobate. We are not now discussing the general offer of grace. The texts which Heyns adduces for this part of his view we hope to discuss later and separately. I am not saying here, therefore, that Heyns does not point to more texts in his writings. He indeed does that. And we also hope to treat those passages. But for the assertion that there is in God a *will* to save all men Heyns has two texts, and *only* two. None of the other texts speaks of a will in God, still less of a will to save also the reprobate. For the time being,

therefore, we may let those passages rest, in order to discuss them in their proper connection. At present we are discussing only I Timothy 2:4 and II Peter 3:9.

In I Timothy 2:4 we read the familiar words: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

First we give the floor to Heyns concerning this text:

And then we have yet two passages in which God's Word directly and with the very words declares that God wills that all men be saved. The first is:

I Timothy 2:4: 'Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.'

In this text 'all men' can also be translated by 'all kinds of men', and it is plain that if one believes that the fact of predestination can allow no will of God that all men be saved, one will take the stand that here we must read not 'all men' but 'all kinds of men.' The marginal notes on the Staten Vertaling (Dutch Authorized Version) say here: 'this word *all* is *also here* (italics mine) used for all kinds, as appears from the preceding second verse.' Leaving aside what the marginal notes in a manner that is neither Dortian nor Calvinistic conclude from the word *will*, for neither of those two wanted anything of such a judging of God's revealed will according to the standard of His hidden will -- leaving that aside then, the words 'here also,' 'as also,' 'as well as the fact that in the text itself, as in other translations, the Greek word is rendered not by all kinds, but by all, make us think that the translators used 'all' as including at the same time 'all kinds.' There is nothing against that. But there would indeed be something against it if they had used 'all kinds' in order to exclude 'all'. There would be against it this, that such a translation would make the expression of the apostle into something that did not need to be said, a superfluous declaration'. God wills that all kinds of men be saved would be an expression of which no one would have any need and in which there is no element of support for personal faith. Moreover, that expression could not be a ground for the admonition to pray, believingly to pray for kings and all that are in authority. The question is whether one can do that as long as they are unbelieving Jews or heathen; whether there can be with God a favorable attitude toward such kings and those in authority, on the ground of which one may trust that his prayer will be heard? To that question there is in a will of God that *all kinds* of men be saved in relation to the definite kings and men in authority for whom one prays, no answer; for a believing prayer for them there is no ground therein. But there is indeed an affirmative answer to that question and a ground of faith for such a prayer in the expression: 'God wills

that *all* men be saved.'

Calvin explains more positively than the marginal notes that 'all kinds' is meant here, but he adduces no other ground for this than that of verse 8; and of a use of 'all kinds' in order thereby to escape and to set aside 'all' as in conflict with the hidden will of God there is no mention by him. That he has no objection to the words, God wills that all men be saved, he shows when in his commentary he says: 'It is certain that all to whom the gospel is offered are invited to the hope of eternal life.' And further, he points out that we may not judge the revealed will according to the hidden will, and that a revealed will of God that all men be saved does not take away an in itself divine ordaining of what shall happen to every man."

Thus far Heyns concerning this text.

First of all, we pass judgment on his exegesis. He wants to explain 'all men' as every man, head for head and soul for soul. It may be termed amusing when Heyns points out that, as far as he is concerned, *all men*, in the sense of everyone head for head, may indeed include *all kinds of men*, and that the marginal commentators must have meant this when they wrote that this word is also used here for all kinds. Now that will indeed be true. *All men*, no one excluded, will indeed include *all kinds of men*. There is no question about that. But would the marginal commentators actually have been so naive as to want to teach us that *all men* includes *all kinds of men*? Considered by itself, this is already highly unlikely. I must admit that when I read the reasoning of Heyns about the marginal notes, I felt suspicion arising in my heart that the professor was meddling a little with the marginal notes. This led me to check up on those marginal comments concerning verse 4. And I must say, to my regret for Heyns, that my suspicion was confirmed. The marginal comments do not at all explain *all men* as Heyns wants to present it: *all, everyone head for head, including all kinds*, but they absolutely exclude the very idea of such an explanation. Heyns could also have seen that. He does not do justice to the marginal comments. He allows them to say something that they do not say at all. Now this is perhaps to be understood, for the entire marginal comment condemns Heyns, not only in his explanation of this text, but also his entire viewpoint. Nevertheless it is not to be justified on this account. Heyns should remain honorable in his reasoning. Let me give him that advice. Not only is this required for the sake of the truth; but Heyns should also keep in mind that his neighbor will come to investigate him, and that his entire argumentation begins to appear weak when one does not correctly reproduce the thought of another.

Nor must Heyns say that the reasoning of the marginal comments is neither Dortian nor Calvinistic. Pray, professor, do you think then that readers who still do a little

thinking and who know a little will not rub their eyes in amazement when they read such a judgment by you, will not read again, and then go to their 'Statenbijbel' to read the title page?

BIBLE
that is
THE ENTIRE HOLY SCRIPTURE
containing all the canonical books of the
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,
by order of the high and mighty lords of the
STATES GENERAL OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS
and
ACCORDING TO THE DECISION OF THE NATIONAL SYNOD
HELD AT DORDRECHT
in the years 1618 and 1619

(Translator's note: The reader will probably have gathered that the 'Statenbijbel' is approximately the equivalent of our King James Version, that the Synod of Dordrecht was responsible for this Authorized Version, and that in this Bible there were marginal notes explaining the text. And Hoeksema makes the point that this Bible and its marginal notes were surely Dordrechtian, or Dortian -- having been authorized by the Synod of Dordrecht and prepared by some of the very men who participated in the Synod of Dordrecht.)

But it is understandable. Either Heyns is Dortian, or the marginal comment on I Timothy 2:4 is Dortian. They are not both Dortian. That is indeed a simple matter. But you could just as well say: the Synod of Dordrecht is Dortian, or Heyns is; they are not both Dortian. Well now, says Heyns, I am Dortian, not the marginal comments. Is the reader inquisitive to see for himself the marginal comment in question? Here it follows in its entirety:

This word *all* is taken also here (not *used*, as Heyns quotes. The meaning is: we explain (take) here, as well as in other places) for *all kinds* as appears from the preceding second verse, for which this verse furnishes a reason; as also from the word *wills*, for if God wills that all men be saved, then they shall also all be saved, seeing that God does all that He wills, Psalm 115:3; Romans 9:19; Ephesians 1:11. And the same is also proved from that which the apostle here adds, that God wills that *they all come unto the knowledge of the truth*, seeing that Scripture testifies that this is a privilege of God's people. See Psalm 147:19, 20; Matthew 11:25; John 6:45; Ephesians 2:12, etc. That anyone would want to say that such is God's will if men also will it, that is to make salvation depend partly on God's will, partly on man's will, which is in

conflict with what the apostle teaches, Romans 9:16,23; 10:20; and 11:35,36, and consistently elsewhere.

Truly, it is to be understood that Heyns was disappointed when he read this marginal comment. But the reader will certainly agree that there is no possibility of sucking from this marginal comment the explanation that the word really means: all men head for head, including all kinds. It just exactly excludes entirely every idea of *all men without exception*.

For the rest, whether the Dordt Statenbijbel is Dortian, or whether Heyns is, we gladly leave to the judgment of our readers.

But note further that Heyns condemns as rationalistic the manner of reasoning which he finds in the marginal comment on this verse and which consists simply in this, that it compares Scripture with Scripture. He is compelled to do this: for those marginal comments reason exactly as we do. He must do this: for this one marginal comment proves abundantly that our Reformed fathers wanted nothing of the two-wills doctrine of Heyns. Heyns' entire series of articles here really is laid in ruins with one blow, as concerns the questions whether Heyns also stands in the historic line of Reformed thinking. He is exactly so far from it as the North Pole is separated from the South Pole.

On our part, we subscribe to the explanation of the marginal comments completely. Not as though this would decide the matter, for they also could err in their explanation. But this indeed proves that we, and not Heyns, are Dortian on this point.

Further, let us pay attention to the manner in which Heyns, in order to prove that all men must be taken in the sense of everyone head for head, exegetes. He has two arguments:

1. If the intention of the text would be all kinds of men, then the apostle would say something that did not have to be said, something that is superfluous.
2. Then the text would not be a ground for praying for kings and all that are in authority.

I call attention, first of all, to the rationalistic method of Heyns. He, the man who consistently accuses his opponents of rationalism, simply reasons freely, even has the courage to say that the apostle would say something entirely superfluous if he did not mean what Heyns thinks that he means. And what is there to these arguments? Nothing, literally nothing.

Imagine for a moment that there was in the congregation an incorrect view prevalent concerning the matter about which the apostle writes in the context; suppose, further, that in connection with that incorrect view there was also a wrong practice prevailing, namely, the practice that they prayed only for themselves, for their own congregation, for their own members, not understanding that God wills to save "all men"; can Heyns then not at all conceive of it that Paul would write to the congregation: I will that ye pray not only for yourselves, but 'for "all men," understood, of course, in the organic sense, just as Scripture would usually have that understood? And, thus understood, and especially taking into consideration also that the congregation apparently excluded from their prayer the great of the earth, kings and all that are in authority, would it then be so entirely superfluous that the apostle intended "all men" exactly in that organic sense, and did not at all think that the congregation ought to pray for every man, neither that the congregation must understand that God wills to save all men, every one head for head, but employs "all men" also here in the sense of all kinds?

And as far as the second argument is concerned, namely, that if we take the word in this sense, there is then no basis left for the prayer to which the apostle exhorts in the first and second verses, the professor himself will certainly discern that this argument does not hold whatsoever. Really it is true exactly of the professor's conception of the text. According to him, the prayer of the congregation must rest upon the assurance that God wills to save every man. If this be true, then the congregation can and may also pray for the salvation of every man. The prayer may certainly extend as far as the promise upon which that prayer is based. But the congregation knows beforehand that this prayer shall not be heard and that God will not save all men, head for head. And why will God not do this? Because He does not will it. The prayer of the congregation rested on a false basis. Even Prof. Heyns would not dare to pray that God will save every man. And why not? Because Prof. Heyns knows very well that God does not will it. But understand the text now in its connection as speaking of all kinds of men, from all peoples and tribes and ranks and positions. And then the matter is completely clear. The apostle says: I will that ye pray for all kinds of men, for you must indeed understand that God wills to save all kinds of men. Then the latter becomes exactly a firm ground for the prayer to which he exhorts us, but then only.

Hence, there is nothing left of the argument of Heyns.

But even this is not sufficient. We must have exposition of the text. The arguments of Heyns are no exposition, but a rationalistic reasoning about the text. And the enervation of these arguments does not bring us a step closer to the correct explanation of the text itself.

It is plain to everyone that in the explanation the very heart of the matter is the real meaning of the little word all, or of the term all men. If we take that term entirely apart from the context, then it means nothing less than the sum of all the individual members of the human race. Such is the unlimited meaning of the word. This is the meaning which Heyns wants.

The question is, however: does Scripture use this term here and elsewhere in this unlimited significance? And then the answer is very definitely: no, unless the context clearly indicates that this and nothing else must be the meaning. All, or also all men in Holy Writ almost never means the sum of all human individuals!

Let me cite a few examples.

II Corinthians 5:14b,15: "Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." Here the all are not all men without distinction, but those who also have died in Christ, that is, therefore, the church.

Romans 8:31: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all ..." Here all is limited by us.

Romans 5:18: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." The text itself teaches here very plainly that this latter 'all men' has in view only those who are in Christ: for justification becomes theirs, even as, and as certainly as, guilt comes into condemnation upon the whole race.

John 12:32: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." This drawing of the Savior is certainly efficacious. All, therefore, is here limited to those whom the Savior will draw.

Romans 1:5: "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name." It is plain that all nations here must be understood in the organic sense. Paul could not mean that he had received the apostleship in order to bring all nations, head for head and soul for soul, who then lived or who would still live, to obedience of the faith.

Romans 1:7: "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." Also here all does not mean all inhabitants of Rome.

Ephesians 3:8,9: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery.... "Also here the meaning of the apostle cannot be that he was called to enlighten every Gentile. II Timothy 1:15: "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me." Everyone understands how limited this all is.

Titus 2:11: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." If this would be understood in the sense of everyone head for head, then the work of the preaching of the gospel would have been finished at that time, and everyone would have heard it. But the context shows very plainly that the apostle means all kinds of men from all ranks and positions.

Enough about this. It is, therefore, established that the explanation which Heyns wants to give to all men in I Timothy 2:4 is almost never the meaning of the term in Scripture.

And in I Timothy 2:4 this explanation is impossible!

Heyns himself does not dare to say this! He limits the term all men also! For according to the explanation of Heyns the term must mean: every man in the world. The congregation must pray for every man. For God wills that everyone be saved. That is then the meaning of the text too. Now that cannot be, for the simple reason that the gospel was not proclaimed and could not be proclaimed to every man in the world. By far the greatest portion of men living at that time died without ever having heard of Paul or of the gospel. Heyns himself, therefore will have to limit his explanation by the addition: who hear the gospel. But where would Heyns find any ground in the text for such a limitation? Nowhere. He draws that out of his own reason.

Still more. Heyns does not dare to maintain his explanation, even as he wants to limit the term all, as soon as he arrives at vs. 6: "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." If Heyns would nevertheless want this, then he openly teaches general atonement. Nevertheless, strict exegesis demands that if Heyns wants to cling to his explanation of vs. 4, he must attach the same meaning to all in vs. 6.

Heyns himself will now undoubtedly see that his explanation is untenable. I am convinced that he himself will also acknowledge this. He will never again advocate his own explanation of this text.

Hence, there is but one possibility left, namely, that we give all men its content from the context. And that context is in vss. 1 and 2 of the same chapter. Paul desires that supplications and prayers shall be made for all men, that is, for all kinds of

men, namely, also for kings, and for all that are in authority. Notice that the text does not say: for the king, but: for kings, in the plural, for that class of men who are kings or who are in authority; the text, therefore, is exactly not concerned with land and people and one's own flag or king. And then he gives the ground for this exhortation in vs. 4: for God wills that all, all kinds of men, men from every rank and position, hence also kings and those in authority, shall be saved. Thus everything in the text is clear, and Scripture is explained in its context.

In his explanation of *all men* Heyns has all of Scripture against him; he has the context against him, he has the text against him, he has the marginal comments against him, Calvin against him, Kuyper against him, and everyone who wants to think in a Reformed way against him.

And what is left now of the scornful and contemptuous remark with which Heyns characterizes his opponents: "it is evident that if one believes that the fact of predestination cannot allow for a will of God that all men be saved, he will take the position that here we must read not 'all men' but 'all kinds of men'"?

And this comes from Heyns, who makes not so much as an attempt to reason from Scripture, who thinks he can explain a text with a couple of poor arguments, and who, if that suits him, flippantly casts aside the pure, Scriptural reasoning of the marginal comments as being neither Dortian nor Calvinistic!

If, therefore, the two-wills doctrine of Heyns must rest on I Timothy 2:4, then his case is hopeless.

And what about II Peter 3:9?

Prof. Heyns has the following to say about this text:

"II Peter 3:9: 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'

"In this text words are used which are not capable of any twofold translation or explanation: 'not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' Calvin says the following in explanation of this text: 'So wonderful is His love towards mankind, that He would have them all to be saved, and is of His own self prepared to bestow salvation on the lost. But the order is to be noticed, that God is ready to receive all to repentance, so that none may perish; for in these words the way and manner of obtaining salvation is pointed out. Everyone of us, therefore, who is desirous of

salvation, must learn to enter in by this way. But it may be asked, If God wishes none to perish, why is it that so many do perish? To this my answer is, that no mention is here made of the hidden purpose of God, according to which the reprobate are doomed to their own ruin, but only of His will as made known to us in the gospel. For God there stretches forth His hand without a difference to all, but lays hold only of those, to lead them to Himself, whom He has chosen before the foundation of the world.”

The reader will immediately note that also here Heyns makes no attempt whatsoever to explain the text. He simply comes with a single strong assertion that the words in the text are capable of no two-fold explanation without pointing to a single ground for such an assertion; and then he follows with an explanation from Calvin. That is indeed rather scant.

As far as the explanation of Calvin is concerned, it is true that in this instance Heyns finds support in him. I am not in agreement with this explanation of Calvin. However, let me add to this immediately:

1. That Prof. Heyns must not look for any support from Calvin for his two-wills doctrine. Calvin casts this far from him. Only note what he writes in Calvin's Calvinism: "For as to that distinction commonly held in the schools concerning the twofold will of God, such distinction is by no means admitted by us." (p. 118)
2. That at a later date Calvin himself did not maintain the explanation of 2 Peter 3:9 which is quoted by Heyns. In Calvin's Calvinism, p. 276, we read the following explanation by him:

"There is, perhaps, a stronger colour in some of the words of Peter, which might have better suited your purposes, where he says that God is 'not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance' (II Peter 3:9). And if there be anything in the first member of the passage that seems difficult of comprehension at first sight, it is made perfectly plain by the explanation which follows. For, in as far as God willeth that all should come unto repentance,' in so far He willeth that no one should perish; but, in order that they may thus be received of God, they must 'come'. But the Scripture everywhere affirms, that in order that they may 'come,' they must be prevented of God," etc.

The marginal comments Heyns simply does not quote with respect to this text. And this need not surprise us. For they read as follows:

" namely, of us, who are powerfully called and still shall be. For since God can do and also does all that He wills, therefore this cannot be understood of all and every man, seeing that Scripture and experience both testify that all men are not saved, but many go lost. This is given in explanation of "any should perish".

And concerning "all" the following is said: "Namely the elect, of whom he here speaks."

The marginal commentary, therefore, nevertheless gives an explanation of which the words of the text are not capable, according to Heyns.

However, we also wish to furnish an explanation of this text.

We maintain, in spite of the strong assertion of Heyns that his explanation -- or rather, opinion of the text -- is the only possible one, that it is not only highly unlikely, but also altogether impossible. The text cannot mean that God does not will that any human being go lost, but that all men should be saved and come to repentance.

Here again the issue is the meaning of the little word *all*.

That the explanation of Heyns is highly unlikely follows from what we pointed out earlier, namely, that the little word 'all' or the term 'all men' in Holy Scripture almost never means all human beings. That already makes it unlikely that this word would indeed have this meaning here. This unlikelihood is made even greater by the text itself. For we read: "God is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." And since us here refers to the church, it is, to put it mildly, highly likely that all points back to us, so that we must read: not willing that any of us, of the church, should perish, but that all, that is to say, the church, should come to repentance. But this likelihood becomes absolute certainty when we consider that the explanation which Heyns considers to be the only possible one is just exactly completely impossible.

Impossible already, because God does not even have the gospel preached to all the children of men. He did not bring the gospel to all the children of men before Peter wrote this (and these also certainly belong to all human beings); nor did he bring the gospel to all human beings who lived at the time of Peter; nor does he bring the gospel to all the children of-men who lived after Peter, who live now, or who shall still live in the future. It lies on the very surface, therefore, that the meaning of the text cannot be all men, head for head and soul for soul. Hence, also here Heyns will have to limit his own explanation. However, he will have to do that arbitrarily. He

will add some such thing as: who live under the gospel. But Heyns has no right to do this. Such a distinction he does not get from Scripture but from his own preconceived view, and it is therefore purely rationalistic.

But Heyns' view is also impossible because the text forbids the explanation of Heyns.

Notice that in the last part of the text a motive is adduced for God's longsuffering.

The church lived and walked in the hope of .glory. They were strangers and sojourners in the midst of the world, for they were begotten again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. They walked in sanctification of life.

Walking as strangers, however, they had to endure much persecution and reproach from the world. In the fire of tribulation they were purified.

In the midst of that suffering for Christ's sake, however, they looked forward to the final redemption, which they thought would come quickly, more quickly than it actually came, when Christ would come again in glory on the clouds of heaven. But that final redemption tarried. The Lord left them in suffering in the midst of the world.

Besides all this, the mockers began to mock them. They also had to hear, "Where is the God Whom you expect? All things continue as they were from the beginning; where is the hope of His coming?" In that situation, now, some began to consider it slackness that the Savior still did not come to deliver them. How could God tolerate it any longer?

And now the apostle teaches in the words of the text which we are considering that they may not thus explain the tarrying of the Lord. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness. Not slackness, but longsuffering is the motive. He is longsuffering over His people, over us.

And what now is longsuffering? It is the attitude of the love of God upon His people according to which He with a divine desire longs to deliver them out of their suffering in the world and to make them partakers of everlasting glory, but does not realize that deliverance and glory until His Church shall be complete and the time for their glorification shall be ripe. Even as a husbandman is longsuffering over the harvest, waiting for the early and the latter rains, although he eagerly desires to bring in the fruits, so God is longsuffering over His people, still exposing them to the suffering of this present time, until the church shall be complete. As a doctor would perform an

operation without anaesthetic upon his child, and would proceed with the operation in spite of the anguished cries of the child and his pleas not to hurt him anymore, in order that the child may be healed, so God is longsuffering over His people, and although they cry to Him day and night, and although He will speedily do them justice, nevertheless He leads them in their suffering to the very end.

And what is the end? When can that final glorification, the complete deliverance of the Church take place? When all have come to repentance. For God does not will that any should perish. The Church is, according to His counsel, one beautiful whole, in which each of the elect occupies his own place and must serve for the manifestation of the beauty of the whole, of the fullness of Christ, of the glory of God. If only one of them would be missing, the whole would be marred. Therefore God does not will that any should perish, but that they all come to repentance. Therefore He is longsuffering over His church, over us.

But therefore Christ shall also not come until all shall have come to repentance, until the last of the elect shall have entered in. For this is plainly the meaning of the text, that Christ shall not come sooner. It is plainly the intent, that God's longsuffering waits until all shall have come to repentance.

Now explain this all in the sense of all men, head for head and soul for soul. And what is the result? This, that Christ shall never come, for the simple reason that all never come to repentance. Hence, the explanation which Heyns considers to be the only possible explanation is just exactly the only impossible one.

But read the text as it clearly ought to be read, and everything is plain. For then you read: the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us, His people, not willing that any of us, of His people, should perish, but that they all should come to repentance; and then the promise shall enter upon its fulfillment.

I trust that Heyns will concede that we have taken from his hands the stick with which he so sharply intended to strike us, namely, the accusation that we jump about with Scripture in a rationalistic way, and that he has had a few well deserved taps with his own stick. And at the same time I hope that he will discern that there is absolutely no ground in Holy Scripture for his two-wills doctrine.

Our God is an only Lord!

Chapter 4

God does not want to

The reader should keep in mind that at present the discussion is not yet about the question of a general, well-meant offer of grace and salvation on God's part in the preaching of the Gospel, but about the more fundamental question whether there is in God also a will to save all men. Heyns himself has reduced the dispute to this question. He has discerned correctly that a well-meant offer of grace and salvation to all men, as it has recently been emphasized in the Christian Reformed Churches, presupposes a will in God to save all men. And at present we are treating the question of the two-wills-doctrine as Heyns has always proposed and proclaimed it. In this connection we have pointed out, first of all, that Scripture everywhere teaches that God is one, not two; that He is also God absolutely alone, and that there is none beside Him; that He is the independent and unchangeable God, and that He is neither limited nor influenced by anything outside His own being. In the second place, we have clearly demonstrated that the two passages to which Heyns appeals in his defense of the two-wills-doctrine have no validity whatsoever, and that all in Holy Scripture never means all individuals of the human race, unless the context expressly demands that we understand the term in that sense. There is, therefore, no proof on Heyns' part for his assertion that there is in God a will to save all men.

But we shall now furnish abundant proof that Scripture very expressly teaches that there is in God not such a will to save all men, that He indeed very expressly wills that some men shall go lost, and that He Himself also executes this will. We may understand it or not understand it, we may desire it or not desire it; but the fact is that Scripture also very expressly teaches that God leads some men to destruction, and that, too, in harmony with His sovereign good pleasure. God is God. He alone is God, and He is God in relation to all things. He is and remains God with relation to the salvation of the elect; but He is and remains God alone also with relation to the damnation of the reprobate. He leads the elect to heaven. He also casts the reprobate into hell. And no one ever resists His will in this. And He does all this for His own name's sake, and that, too, in complete harmony with His being God. He maintains Himself and wills Himself.

And then we wish to point out, first of all, that the history of salvation should make it sufficiently clear, also for Heyns, that there is in God no will to save *all men*. All men simply includes all human individuals who have ever lived on earth, who live now, and who shall live to the last day. Heyns, too, cannot escape this. If Heyns says that Scripture teaches that God wills that *all men* shall be saved, then he has no right arbitrarily to limit this. Indeed, Heyns does not do this either. He teaches simply that God wills that all men, without distinction, shall be saved. And this simply includes all human individuals from all ages and all lands. But turn with

this view to the history of salvation and try to apply it. And then you soon discover that you nowhere find a trace of that will of God to save all men. On the contrary, everywhere the history most explicitly contradicts such a presentation. Immediately at the beginning the key to the explanation of history is offered us in 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." On our part it may be granted that this prophetic word centrally refers to the promised Seed in Christ; but Heyns shall have to concede on his part also that the entire course of history is here pictured in broad lines, history as it shall be characterized by a fearful, life-and-death battle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, the children of the light and the children of darkness. Besides, this struggle is here pictured as the realization of God's will and counsel. And He also executes that counsel. He Himself shall make enmity. With this announcement of the course of history to the end of the ages the presentation of Heyns, that God wills that all men shall be saved, certainly does not fit. On the contrary, here already it is absolutely shut out. There shall be a seed of the serpent and a seed of the woman. And God shall put enmity between them.

And the course of history is actually realized in harmony with this word. Thus it is already before the flood, as is plain from the fearful struggle between the descendants of Seth and those of Cain. If God wills that all men be saved, and if He does everything that He pleases, what a sad and inexplicable end of the first world we then behold when presently the whole world of men perishes in the flood, and few, that is, eight souls, are saved by the water! And after the flood the history is no different. From Noah's generation Shem is immediately chosen; out of Shem's generation Abraham is presently separated, in order, with Isaac and Jacob, to become a stranger in the earth; and out of Abraham arises before long Israel, as the bearer of the promise and of the holy seed. If God wills that all men shall be saved, how do you explain then, Professor Heyns, that in the old dispensation He had dealings only with Israel for a period of hundreds of years? Did He will then, too, that the heathen should be saved? Does not Holy Scripture teach us, not only by the history itself but also in so many words, that He let the heathen walk in their own ways until the new dispensation? In other words, does not God's Word teach us that then, at least, God did not will that all men should be saved? The testimony of history is plain and incontrovertible. There was in the old dispensation no will in God to save all men. If Heyns nevertheless wants to maintain his assertion with a view to the peoples outside of Israel before the coming of Christ, then he shall certainly have to teach that presently they shall still receive a chance to be saved.

But is it any different in the new dispensation? Does the history of salvation teach us that in the days of the New Testament God wills that every living soul shall be saved? How strange, then, is the method which God follows in the proclamation of

the Gospel! The Savior still sends His disciples only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and even forbids them to go to the heathen or to the Samaritans. Later He chooses twelve apostles, who then must bring the Gospel to all peoples. A small number of missionaries, few means for the speedy spread of the Gospel, who sometimes also had to pine away in prison for a long time for Christ's sake, who could not possibly bring the Gospel, not even with the greatest conceivable exertion, nor even with all possible help from the converts who believed their word, to even a twentieth of the people living at that time – what a strange history all this is in the light of the view of Heyns, that God wills that all men shall be saved! And later it is no different. Heyns will certainly believe with me, will he not, that in the actual fruit of mission labor we may see a revelation of the will of God? Will he not confess with me, and with the Canons of Dordt, that also the proclamation of the Gospel follows the course of God's good pleasure? Christ is after all the Missionary, is He not? Does He not call His servants? He prepares for them a place, equips them, and sends them wherever He wills, does He not? I know that Heyns will surely believe this with me. But what then is the result? This, that even after nineteen centuries Christ has allowed the Gospel to be preached to only a very small portion of all men! It may safely be said that also in the new dispensation far and away the greater portion of all men have died without ever hearing the Gospel! How do you explain all this, Professor Heyns? I once heard a lecturer on missions, who also laid claim to the name Reformed, who pictured to us in glaring colors how many heathen sank away in hell every minute, and who then drew the conclusion that this was our responsibility because we did not make sufficient haste with the King's business! That responsibility I will not accept. Neither will Heyns, I expect. And I even suspect that it did not weigh heavily upon the conscience of the lecturer. No, we shall continue to maintain that the Gospel is proclaimed in every place to which God in His good pleasure sends it. But is it then not passing strange to you, Heyns, that alongside all this you nevertheless also want to maintain that God wills that all men shall be saved?

But Heyns will undoubtedly say that he does not mean it thus, that he never intended to teach that there is in God a will to save all men who ever lived, who live now, or who shall live in the future. But what then? Heyns himself does not tell us what he really means. But we suspect that he would answer that God wills that all men who hear the Gospel shall be saved. For Heyns must have a basis for his assertion that the Gospel is a general, well-meant offer of grace and salvation to all who hear it. And for this the proposition can serve: God wills that all who hear the Gospel shall be saved. Now such a view – that speaks for itself - is totally arbitrary and without any ground in Holy Scripture. For the proposition that God wills that *all men* shall be saved Heyns could at least still find a few texts which, quoted superficially, could serve as proof, although in reality they mean something entirely different, as we have seen. But for the proposition: God wills that those who hear the

Gospel shall be saved all of them, no one else - there is in Holy Scripture absolutely no basis. Such a view Heyns gets entirely out of his own reason. Besides, with this limitation Heyns also sacrifices his own position. For then God after all does not will that all men shall be saved. Then we really obtain three circles. In the first place there is the circle of those who never hear the Gospel and of whom God does not will that they be saved, and who also are not saved. In the second place, there is the circle of men who indeed hear the Gospel, whom God indeed wants to save, but who are not saved. In the third place, there is the circle of those whom God wills to be saved, who hear the Gospel, and who also are actually saved. Of the first group Heyns would then say that God does not will that they be saved. Of the second group, that God wills that they be saved and also does not will it. Of the third group, that He wills that they be saved. That indeed becomes a strange conception. But we wish nevertheless to place ourselves before the question, with the Scriptures in hand, whether there is any truth to it, that God wills that all who hear the Gospel shall be saved.

And then we would ask Heyns in all seriousness: How do you conceive of that will of God, professor? Has God ever in any way revealed that will to save all who come under the Gospel? If God wills that all men (taken now in the sense of all who live under the Gospel) shall be saved, has God also done anything to carry out that will? Or does the Lord do something now to realize that will whereby He wills the salvation of all? Also Professor Heyns will surely hold fast to the particular character of the atonement of Christ. What does this mean? That Christ according to the intention of God and according to His own intention has not died for all men, but absolutely only for the elect alone. God therefore has not willed that Christ should make satisfaction for sin to His justice for all men. He has given Christ for His own, for the elect. That means that they through divine grace are in Christ, also were in Christ, according to the purpose of God the Father, when Christ made satisfaction on the cross. They died and were buried with Christ, they are raised with Christ, they are justified in Christ and set with Christ in heaven. Heyns also believes that. He would not want to deny that. But for those others, of whom Heyns says that God also wills to save them, Christ according to the intention of God and according to His own intention did not die. God did not will, therefore, to reconcile them unto Himself. They have not died with Christ, are not raised up with Him, and are not set in heavenly places with Him, are not justified in Him. Well then, professor, if you now do not want to deny all this, if you do not now want to say, "Yes, I believe that; but I also do not believe it," then I ask you in all seriousness: how then has God in Christ revealed that will to save all? And, what is more, how *can* God will to save also those for whom Christ has not died? Are they conceived of and willed as justified by God in another way than in Christ? If not, how then? Can God will them as saved outside of Christ? Impossible, you say. Good, but how then can God will this? That He did not will it when Christ died for His own is plain, also for Heyns: for He did not die for

all. That God then actually *cannot* will it (stated reverently: God cannot in anything will contrary to His own will) is also plain, for there is no other atonement for sins, and the atonement which is in Christ Jesus is not for all. Hence, it is very plain that there cannot possibly be in God a will to save all.

[It is significant to note that in the 1960s this inconsistency of Prof. Heyns and others of that earlier period drove Prof. Harold Dekker, and many who agreed with him, to become consistent and to opt for the Arminian error of general atonement. And the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church could not muster a majority vote to condemn Prof. Dekker's position as heretical. Neither was a majority vote mustered, however, to approve Prof. Dekker's position. The ecclesiastical way out was finally found in the very un-ecclesiastical declaration that Prof. Dekker's doctrine was "ambiguous and abstract." In the 1920s and 1930s Prof. Heyns and others were still too Reformed to accept the consequence of the general atonement. It is also significant to note that Herman Hoeksema and George Ophoff predicted that someday the specter of general atonement would raise its ugly head in the Christian Reformed Church, and that in the 1960s this actually happened. HCH]

And now do not say that I am judging again according to my reason. For, in the first place, Professor Heyns, who consistently proceeds from his reason, who does not even make a single attempt to expound a text, has certainly lost the right to say this. But in the second place, this is also not true. I reason from the Scriptures. Scripture teaches me everywhere that Christ died for the elect, for them all, for them alone. Our Confession teaches us the same. And that indeed lies in the nature of Christ's satisfaction. If I were not so convinced that Heyns dares not and will not contradict this, I would adduce abundant proof. But at present this is not necessary. We are agreed on this. The elect *are* reconciled with God according to His will; the reprobate *are not* reconciled with God according to His will. Those for whom Christ died are justified forever; their righteousness is realized at the cross forever. Those for whom Christ did not die are to eternity in their sins. Now does God nevertheless will their salvation? That would then come down to this, that next to the will of God's eternal good pleasure there is also a certain powerless will or wish in God which He does not carry out. That will, according to which God then would will to save all men, He Himself does not will to carry out. In other words, it comes down to the same thing again: that God of Heyns, who wills that all men shall be saved, is not God. He is an idol. And whereas an idol is nothing in the world, that god is also nothing. And therefore, let it be stated with all possible emphasis: *that Christ died only for the elect teaches most decidedly that there is in God no will that all men shall be saved.*

But we have not finished yet. There is much more proof. I am glad that Heyns believes with me that the subjective application of salvation is from God alone. Scripture teaches that; the Confession teaches that; and the Confession also declares most positively that he who teaches otherwise, while he feigns that he

presents his contrary view in a good sense, seeks to instil into the people the destructive poison of the Pelagian errors (Canons of Dordt, II, B, 6). If also in this regard I could not be certain that Heyns also believes and confesses this, I could adduce abundant proof. At present this is also superfluous. God accomplishes salvation with irresistible grace. He regenerates, He calls, He bestows faith and ingrafts into Christ, He justifies, and He sanctifies. And He saves whom He will. He also does not save whom He wills not to save (Scripture expresses this much more strongly, but about this later). Well, then, if, say, five hundred people come under the proclamation of the Gospel, and two hundred are through that Gospel called and saved, who does this then? God alone. Heyns also says this. And why then in the last instance are those other three hundred not saved? Because they were not willing? Surely not, for no one is willing. And although it is true a thousand times over that God also with respect to them works and treats them as rational, moral creatures, although it remains true a thousand times over that by their rejection of the Gospel their sin is brought to light and they are therefore guilty, nevertheless it is also true that they are not saved *because God does not will to save them*. Hence, also from this point of view it is raised beyond all doubt that there is in God no will to save all men who live under the Gospel.

But there is still more. Heyns could finally still say that we proceed from our reason and do not speak from Scripture, even though our entire reasoning process is ever so firmly grounded in Scripture. Therefore we shall also still let Scripture speak abundantly, in order to make plain that there is not such a second will in God. The texts for this are ready at hand. I will quote only a few examples. If Heyns would require it, I could easily quadruple them. This is not a matter of a few isolated passages, but the current teaching of Scripture. Let me point first of all to Matthew 11:25-27: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." This text occurs in the immediate context of the text which is a favorite with the proponents of general grace, "Come unto me, all ye that labor...." Those who cite it would do well carefully to investigate the context before they misuse this favorite text as they do. In any event the passage cited teaches the following:

1. That the Father hides the things of the Kingdom of God from the wise and prudent, and reveals them to the babes. This does not mean that He allows the Gospel to be preached to the babes, but not to the wise and prudent. For the context shows very plainly that the Gospel is proclaimed to both. No, but under and through the preaching of the Gospel there is a

spiritually-revealing operation of God in the hearts of the babes, whereby they spiritually see and spiritually discern the things of the Kingdom of God; the Spirit of God illumines them, gives them eyes to see and causes them to see, gives them ears to hear and causes them to hear. And so through the Gospel they are saved. But is this all? Is this the only operation of God under the preaching of the Gospel? Is there no operation of God in those who nevertheless go lost under the preaching of the Gospel? Most certainly there is. God also hides the things of the Kingdom of heaven and gives eyes not to see and ears not to hear. And this He does in the case of the wise and prudent.

2. That Christ thanks the Father for this divine arrangement, not only for this, that He has revealed these things to the babes, but also for the fact that He has kept and still keeps them hid for the wise and prudent. For in this way the Father is glorified, and that is the concern of the Servant of the Lord.
3. That this is entirely in agreement with the good pleasure of the Father, not only the revealing but also the hiding of the things of the Kingdom of God from the wise and prudent, in agreement, that is, with the will of God as God, Who for His name's sake takes pleasure in His own will.
4. That no one among the children of men can know the Father except they to whom the Son will reveal Him. Now I would ask Heyns in all conscience: would he still want to maintain that God wills to save these wise and prudent, from whom He hides the things of the Kingdom of God? Surely, Heyns himself now concedes: that cannot be; there is in God no will which would save these men, for otherwise God would be operating against His own will, something which He never does; and besides, it states here in plain words that thus was the good pleasure of the Father! But then there is in God no will to save all who live under the Gospel. It is indeed difficult to retreat from a once adopted view; but Heyns himself must surely agree now.

Another example.

Has Heyns, when he was still a minister, or later when as professor he went out preaching, never had the congregation sing, and then also preached in such a way that the congregation could sincerely sing of psalm 69:22-30:

Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they

see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous. But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high. I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.

[Note: Actually the author at this point quotes not directly from Psalm 69, but cites three stanzas of the Dutch versification of Psalm 69 based on the passage cited above. These would have been not unfamiliar stanzas to the Dutch churchgoers of that day, when there were still many well-attended Dutch services in Reformed churches. While this passage of Psalm 69 is not versified in our Psalter in so much detail, fundamentally the same note is found in Psalter number 185, stanzas 8 and 9:

Their peace and plenty be their snare,
 In blindness let them grope;
 Thy indignation on them pour,
 And desolate their hope.

Because they proudly persecute
 Those whom Thou, Lord, dost smite,
 Let them be blotted from Thy book
 And banished from Thy sight.

Similar and more detailed versifications can still be found in the Scottish Psalter, still used in some Presbyterian communions. HCH]

A heavy song, is it not? Difficult to sing. It may justifiably be questioned whether the church of our day, also the reformed church, can sing these things with and from a thankful heart! Today men rather compose hymns, which are sometimes beautiful, sometimes indeed also less than beautiful, but in which the note which you can hear in the stanzas quoted above is surely missing. With few exceptions the church no longer sings the psalms. And I add to this: they are no longer able to sing the psalms. Do not think that the stanzas quoted above are exceptions. The psalms are full of similar prayers of the church. But it speaks for itself that on the basis of the thoroughly unscriptural philosophy that God wills that all men be saved, you can never sing these psalms. Common grace is especially to the psalms completely foreign!

But you say, perhaps, this is Old Testament language? By no means. If you would really introduce New Testament hymns, you would get precisely the same note. You may safely rhyme the New Testament, and then let the church sing hymns. You would obtain precisely the same thing, as far as the essential content is concerned, as you find in the psalms. Just listen to Romans 11:5-10:

Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompence unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

Now here it is taught:

1. That even though it may appear thus to us, God never casts away nor has cast away His people. The elect alone are, of course, His people. These have obtained it.
2. That the rest are hardened, and that, too, through an operation of God: for He hath given them a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear unto this day.
3. That David sang of this Messianically, and singing about it prayed that this song should be laid on the lips of the New Testament church, to be sung by them from a thankful heart and to the praise of our great God and King. Now the question is: did God will also that these men, to whom He gave a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, ears that they should not hear, should be saved? Heyns again agrees that this could not be maintained. Also these passages of Scripture prove abundantly that there is in God no will to save all men, also not those who live under the Gospel. For the latter was also the case with these Israelites who did not obtain salvation.

Now Heyns may find this hard and terrible. He may not desire it. This is very well possible. From of old already the sinful nature has rebelled against God, Who is really GOD. There is nothing strange in this. Already against the presentation of God which the Holy Spirit gives through Paul sinful flesh murmured, "Why doth he

yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?" But this does not change matters. Such an attitude is still worse than that of rationalism. The only concern now is: what does Scripture teach? And only Scripture can teach us who and what God is. Also Heyns shall have to bow to this, and ultimately will bow. Because I am confident and also deeply convinced that Heyns knows of nothing which he can adduce against these passages of Scripture, I also still have hope that Heyns will retreat from his position and will agree that there are in God no two wills, that there is in God no will according to which He wills that all men shall be saved.

It is really a sad and strange situation that one can be called to contest an emeritus professor, who for years has taught at the Theological School of the Reformed Churches here and also has given instruction in Reformed Doctrine, because of his position that God wills that all men be saved. It is not that I lose from view the fact that Heyns also teaches that God does not will this. But with the latter Heyns I have no quarrel. I am only opposing the Heyns who teaches that God wills that all be saved; the other Heyns, who teaches precisely the opposite, I leave in peace. And then I say again that it is a strange, but also a sad phenomenon, that it appears to be necessary to attack a Reformed professor for such a position and to write this brochure with the purpose of making it plain that this is not according to Scripture and not according to the Reformed confession. Indeed, that God does not will that all men be saved, that there is not such a will in God, may be considered to belong to those things which have complete certainty among us. The Reformed have, after all, always taught this. But that it is necessary appears plainly from the fact that Heyns can write these things in *De Wachter* without as much as a word of criticism being voiced. And what is more, Zwier, who has at present taken up his pen again, already informs us that he has found the articles of Prof. Heyns very instructive. Men are therefore far gone in the Christian Reformed Churches, so far, that they can teach and write without fear of contradiction that God wills that all men, head for head and soul for soul shall be saved! And this fact spurs me on to continue adducing my proof, however unnecessary it should be and however much it goes against the grain to have to do this over against men who bear the name of Reformed.

We were busy with texts which teach that there is in God not such a will that all men be saved. We shall still call attention to a few more such passages of Scripture.

And then I wish to point also now to Isaiah 6:9ff, even as I did previously in the series of articles entitled "Grace Not An Offer." In that passage we read: "And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and

understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, And the Lord have removed men faraway, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof."

Now it makes no difference one way or the other for our controversy where you seek the final or even the immediate cause for this attitude of God over against the men of whom it is here said that God shall remove them far away. The fact is that Heyns teaches that God wills that all men shall be saved, that at least all who live under the gospel shall be saved. But fact is, too, that this passage of Scripture teaches exactly the opposite, makes it plain that there is not such a will in God. For notice that the following elements stand in the foreground in the text:

1. That Isaiah is here called to proclaim God's Word to Judah and Jerusalem of his time. The passage is therefore concerned with men who live under the preaching of the Word, who hear the Gospel, those men of whom Heyns asserts that God wills that all shall be saved.
2. That this Word is also so proclaimed that they understand it very clearly. Seeing they must see, and hearing they must hear, that is, they must emphatically hear and see. There must remain for them no excuse.
3. That it nevertheless is not at all God's purpose that these men shall be saved, but, on the contrary, that through and under the preaching of the Word they shall be hardened. "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. "The Lord says this, and there is therefore no doubt but that this is indeed the Lord's purpose with the preaching of Isaiah with a view to the men here meant. Nor can Isaiah himself realize this purpose. He cannot make their heart fat and their ears heavy and shut their eyes. God, however, can indeed do this through the preaching of His Word by the mouth of Isaiah. As we have seen previously and as Scripture teaches in various places, there is through and under the preaching of the Word not only a revealing, drawing, saving operation of God, but also a hiding, hardening, and judging operation of the Spirit. We may not desire this, and then present it as though God is not God with respect to reprobation; but Scripture teaches that it is indeed thus, and that, too, with great emphasis. He has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will,

He hardeneth. He does this indeed while maintaining the rational, moral nature of man; but this does not change the fact that He does it, and that, too, with sovereign freedom and according to His sovereignly free decree.

4. That this hardening operation works to the very end, that is, until destruction shall have come upon the land, the cities, and the dwellings of Judah, and until the Lord shall have removed them far away. The preaching of Isaiah must therefore serve to ripen the chaff as chaff, in order that it be burned.
5. That the remnant shall be saved in the holy seed, and that this remnant is the guarantee of the development of the church in the future. God does not cast away His people, even though there remains only a tenth part.

Such is the explanation of this text, as Heyns shall have to admit, If he knows of an explanation which is essentially different, we gladly give him the opportunity to develop it in our magazine. But I am convinced that he will not do this. He would rather not touch Scripture passages such as these with so much as a finger. But he shall indeed have to answer the question how this word of Scripture can be harmonized with his view that there is in God a will according to which He wills that all men – and therefore also these men should be saved. Do not confuse matters. The question is not whether God according to His ethical will, also demands of these men that they shall convert themselves and serve Him and thank Him and walk in the ways of His covenant; but the question is purely and simply whether God desires to save these men. And then the answer is: absolutely not, for He wills to harden them and remove them far away, and God certainly does not do the opposite of what He wills.

And this is the current teaching of Scripture. It is remarkable that we meet this word of Isaiah repeatedly in Holy Scripture, whether literally or whether as far as the thought is concerned. Thus, we hear from the mouth of the Savior Himself, when He furnishes the reason and the purpose of His teaching in parables. For we read in Mark 4:11,12: "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." Also here we have clear language, as soon as we only are willing to accept the plain meaning of the words. Difficult these words become only for him who simply will not accept their obvious meaning.

It is plain:

1. That the Savior here makes an absolute distinction between those who are without and those who are within, that is, the distinction is made from the viewpoint of God's counsel, as is plain from the fact that those who are without are presented as absolutely *remaining* without.
2. That of those who are within, He says that it is given to them to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God. They do not do this by nature and of themselves. Then they also are blind, though they see. But it is given them through divine grace.
3. That, however, it is the purpose of the Savior's preaching with respect to those who are without: (a) That seeing they shall see and hearing they shall hear, so that with their natural understanding they shall apprehend well the things which give testimony concerning the kingdom of God. Also here this is the meaning of the emphatic: seeing see and hearing hear. (b) That, however, with all that they shall not spiritually understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but remain spiritually, ethically deaf and blind; therefore also continue to turn in the spiritual, ethical sense against the things of the kingdom of God, which with their natural understanding they clearly see and hear; so that they do not turn, although seeing they see and hearing they hear; and that their sins are not forgiven, but precisely in the clearest and sharpest light of God's judgment are exposed as sin.
4. And that the Savior therefore points in His preaching to the parables which *happen* before their eyes. For the things of the kingdom of God *happen* through parables. The earthly is image of the heavenly, the natural of the spiritual, the temporal of the eternal. Therefore in the creation and on the plane of the earthy the things of the kingdom of God are enacted as in a spectacle, repeatedly and always again. Time after time a sower goes out to sow, and the seed falls in various kinds of ground with various results. Time after time the tares grow up among the wheat. Things happen in parables, and the Savior fixes the attention upon those parables, in order that also those who are without should see a continuing testimony and hear of the things of the kingdom of heaven.

Here also, therefore, it concerns men who live under the preaching of the Word. And also here Heyns stands again before the question how he can harmonize this with his presentation that God wills that all men be saved. Positive proof for this position he has not furnished. All God's doings in the history of salvation militate against that presentation. But also to these passages of Scripture Heyns cannot possibly do justice on his basis. For after all it is plain that the Lord does not will

that these men shall be saved.

The same word of Scripture from Isaiah is also quoted by John in John 12:37-41: "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." Also these words are abundantly plain. It concerns men who lived under the preaching of the Savior, who besides have seen many wonders and signs which the Savior did. And John gives an explanation of their unbelief from the viewpoint of God's sovereign will. From this viewpoint, John teaches us, they *could not* believe, for Isaiah had already spoken of them that they would not believe the preaching, and that, too, because God had blinded their eyes and hardened their heart. Only it may draw our attention that John so quotes the words from Isaiah 6:9 that it leaves no more doubt whether the meaning of that word is that *God* is the One Who works the blinding and hardening of heart, so that they do not convert and be healed. In the word as it occurs in Isaiah the prophet is presented as blinding the eyes and hardening the heart through his preaching; but in John the Holy Spirit quotest his word in such away that it becomes plain that God is the sovereign worker of the hardening. It is therefore according to Scripture an incontrovertible fact that there is under and through the preaching of the Gospel also an operation of God unto hardening proceeding upon those who are without. And once again we ask Prof. Heyns: how do you harmonize this operation with the will of God to save these men?

There is much more in Holy Scripture that serves as proof for our proposition that there is in God no will to save all men. For God's Word teaches that Christ is set for a fall, as well as arising again, of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall bespoken against, in order that the thoughts of many hearts should be revealed, Luke 2:34,36; something that certainly points to the divine purpose of the revelation and preaching of the Christ in the midst of the world. In harmony with this testimony of old Simeon, Jesus also says of Himself that for judgment is He come into the world, in order that those who see not may see, and those who see may become blind, John 9:39; and Peter testifies that the stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner, but also a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to those who stumble at the Word, being disobedient, and that these are thereunto appointed, I Peter 2:7,8. It is also written: "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated," Romans 9:13. And what the latter means is plain from Malachi 1:3,4: "And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the

desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever." The Scripture also says to Pharaoh: "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth" (Romans 9:17). And it concludes that God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy and whom he will he hardeneth (Romans 9:18). And if then our sinful and proud heart would want to answer against God, because we do not understand and acknowledge that He alone is God, and none beside Him, then the Scripture shuts our mouth with its "Who art thou that repliest against God?" and points us to the sovereign power of the supreme Potter to make of the piece of clay, even from the same lump, one vessel unto honor and another vessel unto dishonor, Romans 9:20-22. And nothing brings any change therein. This purpose of God is surely carried out. Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet only the remnant shall be saved. The consumption of all the rest, which do not belong to this remnant, is firmly decreed, overflowing with righteousness." For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land" (Isaiah 10:22-24; Romans 9:27,28). They have stumbled at the stone of stumbling which the Lord had laid in Zion, Romans 9:32,33.

And so we could continue, for the Scripture speaks the same language everywhere. But we may consider it enough for the time being in order to prove that Heyns certainly deviates from Scripture with his proposition that there is a will in God to save all men. Especially is it sufficient with an eye to the fact that Heyns thought to be able to prove his position with a few texts of which his explanation was not in harmony with Scripture itself and which is repudiated by all Reformed men of name. The whole of Scripture testifies against the presentation of Heyns. And we may rightly expect that he himself will also see this and honorably acknowledge it. This could serve as a rich blessing for the churches: for a more insidious doctrine than that which posits two diametrically opposite wills in God is difficult to conceive. It is calculated to smuggle the entire cargo of Pelagian heresy into the churches under the Reformed flag.

Chapter 5

God's will and the prayer

More as an example than anything else, but then nevertheless to serve the purpose of making it clear that there are more such "mysteries" as the two wills in God, Heyns points also to the subject of prayer in connection with the counsel of God. And although this takes us away from our subject, nevertheless, because of the importance of the matter, we also wish to enter somewhat more deeply into this subject.

Heyns writes about it as follows:

If that argument on this point would be of significance, even of conclusive significance, then it would also have to be that for other points which present us with the difficulty that we cannot harmonize the one with the other; and where would we land then?

Take, for example, God's unchangeable decree and the hearing of prayer. The hearing of prayer in the sense that upon prayer there can be obtained from the Lord that which we would not have obtained without prayer. The hearing of prayer as the Apostle James speaks of it (James 5: 16-18) when he refers to the example of Elijah as proof that the prayer of the righteous availeth much. Elijah prayed, and there came a drought of three years and six months long; Elijah prayed again, and the heavens gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit. That is speaking as though neither the one nor the other would have come if Elijah had not prayed, and that is real *hearing of prayer*. Can we harmonize such hearing of prayer with an eternal, unchangeable, and all-inclusive decree of God?

According to a given explanation, the solution is to be found in the fact that also the prayers are included in God's counsel. In itself, of course, that is perfectly true; but a satisfactory solution of the difficulty does not lie in that direction. The matter would then come down to this, that in God's counsel it was determined to chastise Israel for their sins with a fearful drought upon Elijah's prayer, that subsequently the Lord caused Elijah to pray according to His counsel, and thereupon sent drought according to His counsel. Thus also with the prayer of Elijah and the sending of rain three years and six months later. All true, but no solution of the difficulty: for no justice is done to the reality of the hearing of prayer. There would then be in this history no actual hearing of prayer, but only the appearance of it; and then one could not find any proof here that indeed the prayer of the righteous availeth much. Actually

a choice is made between the two; and in order to maintain the unchangeability of God's counsel, real hearing of prayer is set aside or reduced to mere appearance.

The words of the Apostle James give us to understand that God's unchangeable and all-inclusive counsel in no sense takes away God's complete freedom of action, also in the hearing of prayer. Therefore it is to be considered better, instead of praying, 'If it be in harmony with Thy counsel,' referring to God's unchangeable decree, to pray, 'If it be in harmony with Thy will,' referring to the perfectly free will of God, which is always wise and good, leaving to that will the giving or not giving of what we ask. 'Thy will be done,' thus the Savior Himself prayed in Gethsemane, and thus He taught us to pray in the perfect prayer.

The given explanation can therefore not be the correct one. A better one, however, has not yet been found by anyone, and undoubtedly shall not be found by anyone. Also Scripture furnishes no solution. God's Word teaches us to acknowledge as realities both an unchangeable counsel and actual hearing of prayer, but for our understanding they stand unreconciled over against one another. If now it would be true that a general and well-meant offer of grace through the Gospel must be denied and rejected because our understanding cannot harmonize it with predestination, then it would be equally true that actual hearing of prayer must be denied and rejected because our understanding cannot harmonize such a hearing of prayer with God's unchangeable counsel. For the words of James we would then have to substitute, 'An effectual prayer may have the appearance that it avails much, but considered in the light of God's unchangeable counsel it avails nothing.'

Now it may be remarked, first of all, that these words of the professor emeritus leave something to be desired as far as clarity is concerned. If it was his purpose to leave the impression that prayer in relation to the counsel of God is an equally insoluble riddle as the two-wills doctrine, then it may be granted that he has succeeded. If with respect to prayer and its hearing we want to harmonize everything, thus the professor writes, where would we land then? And indeed he furnishes us an example of the fact that we land nowhere if, namely, we reason as the professor does. First he grants that it is perfectly true that also our prayers are included in the counsel of God. But then it seems that this is nevertheless not true; at least Heyns does not want to see in this a solution of the insoluble riddle. Then he presents as his own explanation that also in the case of prayer we must make a distinction between the counsel of God and the "perfectly free will of God, which is always wise and good." But then finally he seems unwilling even to maintain his own explanation: for after all "a better explanation (than that which seeks the

solution in the inclusion of our prayers in the counsel of God) has not yet been found by anyone and shall also not be found by anyone." But also this best explanation nevertheless does not offer a solution, for then the hearing of prayer would after all be only appearance. And with this, then, Heyns has made it very clear that we land nowhere with him.

In the second place, we may certainly emphasize that we surely may not accept the explanation which Heyns offers. Also with respect to prayer he wants to distinguish between two wills in God. The one will is then God's counsel, the other is God's "perfectly free will." That distinction is very plain, but it is as impossible as it is plain. In the counsel of God the Almighty is then not free, such is the evident presupposition. God is bound by His counsel. Therefore it is also better not to pray, "if it be in harmony with Thy counsel." For after all what is decided in God's counsel most assuredly happens, whether we pray for it or not. And according to Heyns' view of prayer, there is really no place for prayer in relation to that counsel of God. But next to that counsel of God, to which God Himself is bound, wherein simply nothing can be changed, also not by the prayer of the righteous, there is also in God a perfectly free will, which is not fixed as far as the facts of history are concerned. And in that perfectly free will of God, which is always wise and good, our prayers can then also have a place. Upon that will of God we can exercise influence through our prayers. If, therefore, we say, "Thy will be done," then we do not mean, "Thy counsel be fulfilled," but: "Lord, if that which we pray is not sinful, or even foolish and wrong for us, then we would very much desire that Thou gavest us this, regardless of whether it is thus decreed in Thy counsel or not!" It does not need to be pointed out how thoroughly wrong such a view of God's will is. If here also you do not want to think of two Gods, for it finally comes down to this again, then the matter really stands thus, that there are gaps left in God's counsel, room for play, in order to provide a place for the wholly perfect, free will of God. God has not fixed all things in His counsel, according to the professor. If He had indeed done this, there would be no place for the hearing of prayer. Now, however, it is different. There is also a free will of God. And that will decides then concerning the gaps in the counsel of God. And this decision then takes place with the cooperation of man, who in his prayer makes known to God how he would wish to see those gaps filled. Over against this view it must be maintained that God is one in His willing, that His eternal counsel in relation to that which shall take place in time is absolutely all-inclusive, so that nothing can or shall ever bring about change therein, and that yet in that counsel God is eternally and absolutely free and does all His good pleasure with complete divine freedom. God's perfectly free will in relation to all things is His eternal good pleasure. What Heyns also here wants to present as two is absolutely one, and also before our consciousness very plainly one, and not two.

In close connection with this stands the incorrect view of the professor with respect to prayer and its being heard. Repeatedly Heyns emphasizes that there cannot possibly be any hearing of prayer if that for which we pray is firmly established in God's counsel beforehand. For Heyns the hearing of prayer means that we receive something which we would not have received without prayer. But if that is to be possible, then it is plain that this something must not be in God's counsel, thus Heyns would reason: for if it were already decided in God's counsel then we would also receive it without prayer and without the hearing of prayer. Then the hearing of prayer is really nothing else than appearance. When then we also read that the prayer of the righteous availeth much, then this means, according to Heyns, that it can exercise much influence upon God, so that we move Him to bestow upon us what we very much desire. Now this is the completely Pelagian view (as was to be expected on Heyns' basis) applied to prayer. It presents the petitioner as a party over against God with a free will, a free judgment concerning things, which he then lays before God. It eliminates the petitioner and his prayer from God's counsel. And it separates the petitioner's prayer from the irresistible operations of the Holy Spirit in the heart whereby the prayer is wrought. And then it lies in the very nature of the case that if there is to be hearing of prayer, things must not first stand fast in God's counsel. There must be sufficient room left in that counsel to provide a place for the will and the judgment of this free and independent petitioner, who wants his will to apply and who through his prayer will exercise influence on the divine will. Thus, approximately, Heyns presents the matter of prayer and the hearing of prayer, entirely in harmony with his conception of two wills in God. And it lies in the nature of the case that thus prayer comes to stand in irreconcilable conflict with the Scriptural, Reformed conception of the counsel of God, even as the one divine will in Heyns' presentation stands diametrically over against the other.

This brochure is not the place to discuss the subject of prayer at length. Nevertheless, we want to say something about it, especially with a view to the relation between our prayer and the counsel of the Lord our God. And then we must take our starting point in a proper conception of prayer. And such a proper conception does not lie in the direction of Heyns' presentation, as though prayer is an asking for something which we otherwise would not receive, but indeed in the conception of the Heidelberg Catechism, which proceeds from the correct presentation, that prayer is the chief part of thankfulness. And this implies that in prayer God stands on the foreground. Prayer is concerned with God, not with the petitioner apart from God, nor with things. And in so far as the petitioner is concerned in prayer, the important thing for him in proper prayer is not things, but the favor of God, which is better than life and better than meat and drink. Indeed the Christian also prays for all spiritual and physical needs; but also his physical and spiritual needs bear an entirely different character, have an entirely different content than those of the ungodly. Prayer is in the highest sense of the word not an

asking for something which the petitioner otherwise would not receive in the sense in which Heyns intends this; but it is the acknowledgment, the highest and most noble acknowledgment, that God is God, that He is good, that He is the highest, the only Good, that He alone is the overflowing Fountain of all good. That the ungodly exactly does not acknowledge. He may now and then, especially if he is in need, or if danger threatens that the desires of his flesh will not be fulfilled, imitate the man of prayer. He can sometimes even apparently excel in zeal for prayer, as indeed appears in our days of economic depression. Indeed he knows, and in such times he also shows that he knows, that God, Whom he does not want, is nevertheless God. And when then the wicked world in its wicked way brings the things of natural life into hopeless confusion, it still wants to use God in order to set things straight again. In such times the world can still speak of humiliation and confession of sins, all in order to receive something from God. But it will never acknowledge that God, Who is God, is truly the only good, that outside of Him there lies only death and misery, that His loving-kindness is better than life. That world is and remains God's enemy. Therefore, too, the Lord is far from the prayer of the wicked, and his sacrifice is an abomination to Him. But for the man of prayer, however, this is principally different. He has learned to know God, Who is really God (not merely an idol of the imagination) as the eternal and only Good and the Source of all goodness. And in prayer he acknowledges this; it is a genuine life's need, too, for him to acknowledge this, even though he knows very well that all that he ever shall receive has been firmly and unchangeably decreed concerning him in God's counsel. It is not at all his purpose to influence the Lord through his prayer, to change His will. His very prayer would die upon his lips if he had even the very least notion that through his prayer God's will and counsel concerning him would change.

Hence, the great, all-dominating content of the Christian's prayer is then also the desire that this God, Whom he knows and delights in as the highest and only Good, may come to revelation as such, and as such may be acknowledged in heaven and on earth, by all that lives and breathes and exists. And to that one mighty, all-dominating desire, which has become the great need of his existence through grace, in his prayer he views as subordinate all things with respect to his personal life and existence, as well as the existence of church and family, of state and society; and he desires these things also only in that light and as subordinate to that one great and mighty desire of his heart, namely, that God may be acknowledged as the only Good. In that prayer he is also fully conscious of the fact that he is in harmony with the counsel of the Lord. For indeed, the universal acknowledgment that God is God and that He is good is also the purpose of God's counsel. There is, therefore, no conflict between the content of prayer as the chief part of thankfulness and the counsel of the Lord. He is also completely certain that this prayer shall be heard, precisely because it is in harmony with God's counsel. This is very plain from the Lord's Prayer. That prayer is concerned with God, and all the rest is completely subordinate to the desire

that God may be acknowledged as God. That God's Name may be hallowed, that His kingdom may come, that His will may be done in heaven and on earth, that is the primary, the great, the all-dominating element in the perfect prayer. All the rest is fully in harmony with and subordinate to that. And let me also point out that thus it is with the prayer to which James points us in the fifth chapter of his powerful letter. This is already plain, in the first place, from the fact that he speaks of an *effectual* prayer of the *righteous man*. The power of a prayer does not consist in this, that we want to compel the Lord to bestow something, and that we simply continue to pray for something and never learn to see that our prayer is not according to God's will, that we want to impose our will upon God. For that is just exactly a very weak and miserable prayer. But the power of a prayer consists indeed in this, that we pray for something as *righteous*, and therefore in harmony with the will of God. And this is even clearer from the example which James cites, the prayer of Elijah. Notice that Elijah did not pray for prosperity, but for adversity, for fearful misery, for drought and famine, for the languishing of man and beast. If someone would have the courage in our day to pray thus, and it should appear that his effectual prayer indeed availeth much, men would persecute him to the ends of the earth and tear his flesh from his body with red-hot tongues. And why did Elijah pray thus? Because in his name his entire appearance and person was expressed: *my God is Jehovah!* The prophet was concerned about God and about God alone. That not Baal, but Jehovah is God, that had to be revealed, and that had to be acknowledged by Israel. And to him it was better that the people in their Baal-worship would perish from misery, would pine away and suffer famine, than that they should forsake God and have prosperity. And only when that purpose is reached does he pray again and with the same purpose, and does there come rain from heaven. That is indeed an effectual prayer of the righteous, a prayer which is concerned with the acknowledgment of God as the only and highest good!

Therefore, too, in the third place, prayer is also a turning to that Source, to that overflowing Fountain of all good, in order to drink from that Source, with the acknowledgment that His favor strengthens more than meat and drink, that His loving-kindness is better than life. The petitioner has learned to experience and to acknowledge that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. He must have God's favor. Therefore by grace in prayer he opens his heart toward God, even as a flower opens its bud before the light of the sun, in order with and through every means to partake of the grace of God. In that sense what Heyns says is true, that in the way of prayer the petitioner receives what he would not and could not receive without prayer. When bread stands before him on a well-furnished table, the ungodly can very well eat, he indeed receives bread, and that bread will also feed his body; but he eats it under God's wrath, and the curse of Jehovah is in his house. He exactly receives no grace, although he has abundant bread. But the child of God has another need. He goes to the Source, in

order through the means of bread in thankfulness to drink from the Source even grace for grace. In a word, the pious and sanctified petitioner is always concerned about God. And whereas God is also concerned about Himself, about the acknowledgment and glorification of Himself, there is certainly never any essential conflict between the effectual prayer of the righteous and God's counsel.

But there is something further.

We must also place ourselves before the question where prayer really has its origin, what really is the idea of prayer, and how it comes into existence. And then we may certainly remark, in the first place, that the connection between the prayers of God's people and the things which happen in the world upon those prayers is without any doubt fixed in the counsel of God. God's people are of God's party. They are the people of God's covenant. God blesses those who bless them, and He curses him who curses them. And they stand for God's covenant, for God's name and cause in the midst of the world. They do this also in their prayer. As God's covenant people, as of God's party, they pray for God's cause. And in this they put their trust in the living God alone. They look away from all else, in order to put their trust in Him alone. And they stand as priests of the Most High God in Christ Jesus in the midst of the world also in their prayers, entirely according to the counsel of God's will. God has willed that in the midst of the world they should come to manifestation as of His party. Therefore God has also willed, for the revelation of His glorious name, to put the things which shall take place in connection with the prayer of the righteous, in order that it should be revealed that He is their Friend and blesses them, and that they who put their trust in the living God are never put to shame. According to the counsel of His will, it pleases God to do many things in connection with and through the prayers of the saints. Exactly because of this the prayer of the righteous availeth much, exactly as much as it has pleased God to realize through them. Heyns is of the opinion that this is only hearing of prayer in appearance, but that comes about through the fact that he conceives of the relation of the petitioner to God in a Pelagian way. That may not be. It is always: God all in all. And also in and through the prayers of the saints God is His own party. The covenant is God's alone. If Heyns understood this, he would not write in such a strange and enigmatic matter about prayers in relation to the counsel of God.

Furthermore, it must here be kept in mind that the Lord God through the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ is also the Author, the Worker of our prayers. That our prayers belong to the part of thankfulness, that they belong to good works and have among them the highest place, Heyns will certainly concede. That God has prepared all our good works, and thus also our prayers, from before the foundation of the world, in order that we should walk in them, Heyns will surely also concede, so that it is indeed established according to Scripture that our prayers in connection with

their being heard have a place in God's counsel. But to this must be added that the Lord God is also the Worker in us of our good works, in order that we may walk in them, the Worker also of our prayers which we pray according to His will. He does this subjectively through the Spirit of Christ in our hearts, through Whom alone we will God's will, honor and acknowledge Him as the highest and only Good, and desire nothing higher than the realization of His honor. It is even true of the content of some prayers that they are specifically inspired by the Spirit. It goes without saying that this is true of such mighty prayers as those of the prophet Elijah. And objectively God does this through His Word, whereby He instructs His own in the knowledge of His will, in order that they may be able to pray according to that will. Hence, the more God's people grow in the knowledge and grace of Christ Jesus, the more practiced they shall become in the high and holy art of prayer according to the will of God.

If we understand all this, it will certainly not be difficult to trace the relationship between God's counsel and the prayers of the saints. The dualism and the irreconcilable contradiction which Heyns thinks to see here fall completely away. There is the most beautiful harmony. In the first place, it may be noted that no child of God would ever think of praying for something contrary to the counsel of the Lord God. On the contrary, he very definitely desires that counsel. In his prayer he never desires anything else than that counsel of God. In a very real sense he also never prays for anything else than the realization of that counsel. And he knows, too, that only in so far as he prays according to that counsel shall his prayer also be heard. How nonsensical it is to say that the hearing of prayer is nothing more than appearance becomes plain as soon as we think in this connection of the prayer of the Mediator in heaven. He certainly prays in the very highest sense for nothing else than for God's counsel. He wills that where He is, there they whom the Father has given Him may also be with Him. Is it then nothing else than appearance, Prof. Heyns, when His prayer is heard?

But even so all has not been said. The child of God after all does not pray merely formally for the fulfillment of God's counsel, without anything more. Then, of course, he would never pray anything else than: Thy counsel be done, Lord! And this is not only in conflict with the reality of life, but is also contrary to Scripture and in conflict with the calling of God's covenant people in the world. Their prayer must also have content. They must also know the will of God, and the things of God's counsel must also become their need, do indeed become their needs. It is their life's need that God's name be hallowed, that God's will be done, and His kingdom come, that they receive their daily bread from God, with the forgiveness of sins and the deliverance from the Evil One. And therefore the child of God will apply himself to know the will of God, in order that also in his prayer he may will that will. In so far therefore as God has revealed His counsel to His people (and He has done that for the sake of His

covenant) God's people can know that counsel and can also give content to their prayer.

Of course, the petitioner does not know the details of that counsel. In general lines he understands the will and counsel of God, even to the very end of the world, in relation to all things. But in its details he does not know the way of God, and he also does not need to know it. Hence, there are many things with respect to which he does not know what he should pray. And yet it will be in his heart also to bring those things before God, to make known to God his desires and groanings, and to lay them before the face of the Lord. But with respect to those things let it be noted, in the first place, that we may never desire or pray anything that is not in harmony with the purity of God's holiness. Sinful desires, desires for earthly, worldly things, for the things of the flesh, desires which really do not have God as their highest object, must most certainly be fought against and not brought into the prayers of the saints. Our desires in relation to the things of which we do not know whether they are included in God's counsel must therefore be absolutely holy. Let our prayer always remain the prayer of the righteous. In the second place, with respect to those things of which the child of God does not know whether they are included in God's counsel the attitude of his prayer will always be expressed in the words: "Thy will be done!" And then he prays, after all, very really again for the fulfillment of the counsel of the Lord, subjecting his own desires to that counsel. And, in the third place, we must also not forget with respect to those same things, that when we know not what we should pray for, the Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God!

Chapter 6

The Gospel, according to Heyns

One of the basic flaws in the entire reasoning of Prof. Heyns is that in writing about *The Gospel* he has not taken the trouble to discover from the Word of God itself what must really be understood by the Gospel, what is the Scriptural idea indicated by this term. Nevertheless, in his articles he indeed gives a description of the Gospel; but it is a description which is not at all grounded in Holy Scripture, but which is really not much more than the presentation of a preconceived idea to which Heyns gives an appearance of truth and faithfulness to Scripture by a roundabout way in his reasoning. In this way Heyns arrives at a threefold presentation of the Gospel. It is, according to him, in the first place, the glad tidings of the forgiveness of sins, the glad tidings to the world that reconciliation with Him is possible; in the second place, the invitation of God to sinners to participate in the feast of salvation which is prepared in Christ; in the third place, an offer of grace, accompanied by a command to believe, with the assurance that he who believes shall be saved. In order to demonstrate that this is actually the presentation of Heyns, we shall quote him as fully as possible.

Heyns writes in *De Wachter* of December 7, 1932:

When the Publication Committee commissioned me to take his place during a vacation requested by Rev. Zwier as co-editor of *De Wachter*, the idea quickly came to me that the above subject was very fitting for some *Wachter* articles.

And that first of all because it is an all-important subject. It reminds us of that solemn hour when the time of the Savior's sojourn on earth had come to an end, and when He stood ready, as far as His bodily presence was concerned, to leave His disciples and to ascend splendidly to the glory which He had before, there to receive a place at the right hand of the Father. For the last time He had gathered them around in order that they should be witnesses of His ascension, and in order to give them a mandate. And a mandate given in these solemn moments, given by the only begotten Son of God, Who had come in the form of a servant, Who had borne reproach and revilement, the torments of the cross and the sufferings of death to the full, in order that the world through Him should be saved - what could such a mandate be other than a most important and salutary mandate?

Well, then, it was a mandate concerning the Gospel. "Go ye into all the world," so He spoke, "Preach the Gospel to all creatures." In that word *Gospel* He comprehended all the salvation which He had merited through His active and

passive obedience, through His obedience unto death, yea, the death of the cross. And that they must preach that to all creatures as *glad tidings* for them, included that it was intended to be glad tidings for everyone to whom it should come, tidings in which peace was preached to him, whether he was nigh or far off, by God Himself, under whose wrath and curse they lay (Ephesians 2: 17), reconciliation with God through the blood of the cross. The Lord called it a Gospel, glad tidings, and could there be gladder tidings for a world in itself helpless and hopelessly lost, for a world going to everlasting destruction? It was the tidings of which Isaiah had so jubilantly and gloriously prophesied as the tidings of the Messiah, who was sent to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified (Isaiah 61: 1-3).

And those glad tidings they may now bring not to Israel only; indeed to Israel first, but not to Israel alone. It would now no more be as formerly when He had given them commandment to go with their preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom not into the way of the Gentiles, or into any city of the Samaritans, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Now they were to go into all the world and to preach the Gospel to all peoples, yea, as if this were not yet broadly enough expressed, *to all creatures*. That was a second element of the glory of this Gospel.

And yet a third element of that glory was that the way to obtain a personal part in the full content of those glad tidings was not a way which involved much difficulty and sacrifice, nor that of a legalistic yoke, as under the Old Testament, but simply and only that of *believing* the Gospel. Nothing more. For the Gospel was the tidings of deliverance and salvation altogether freely, only out of grace. Indeed that redemption had cost the greatest possible sacrifice, but that offering Christ had brought. Thereby He had paid all the debt to the very last farthing, so that there remained nothing for sinners to pay. Instead they may accept that salvation and appropriate it to themselves, as someone may take and eat of a feast to which he is invited. "He who believes and is baptized," thus the Gospel stated further, "shall be saved; but he who shall not believe shall be condemned."

The reader should note that in the preceding quotation the author simply proceeds from the one text in which the Savior gave to His church the mandate to preach the

Gospel. And this text precisely does not tell us at all *what* the Gospel is, but presupposes that the apostles and the church know this. Holy Scripture tells us in various ways, as we hope to make plain, what the Gospel is; but all those passages of Scripture Heyns simply leaves alone, in order to proceed from a single text in which precisely nothing of the idea and the content of the gospel is told us.

In the second place, the reader should also note how Heyns in the above quotation, without any Scriptural proof or reasoning from Scripture already here slips into his reasoning the Arminian, general presentation of the Gospel. He writes that the Gospel was intended to be glad tidings *for everyone to whom it should come*. Scripture teaches this nowhere. Scripture indeed teaches that the Gospel is intended to be a savor of death unto death, as well as a savor of life unto life; that Christ is set for a fall, as well as for a rising again; that many are appointed to stumble at the stone of stumbling. But that the proclamation of the Gospel was intended (by God) to be glad tidings for all men is simply concocted out of the human brain. Heyns carefully avoids all definite terms and expressions of Scripture. In the text which he quotes from Isaiah it speaks of all who mourn, of those who mourn in Zion. But Heyns speaks rather of glad tidings *for a hopelessly lost world, for a world which is going to destruction*. And he also avoids carefully the Scriptural presentation of faith as a gift of the grace of God and substitutes for it that all men *may accept* this salvation as someone may eat of a feast to which he is invited. It is necessary that we immediately fix the attention on this apparently unintentional substitution of unscriptural ideas and terms, which in themselves appear to be rather innocent, but which nevertheless must serve as the basis for introducing a wrong presentation of the Gospel. It is here as with much preaching in which men seek refuge in vague and general terms. One still preaches truth then, but he does not touch *the* truth. One then proclaims indeed that he who believes shall be saved (and who would be able to criticize this?), but one does not come to a sharper definition of the nature and the origin of faith. One then says indeed, altogether in general, that the Gospel is glad tidings for sinners (and who would dare to find fault with this?), but one keeps silence about the question: for which sinners? And thus the congregation is rocked to sleep, gradually becomes accustomed to it that the sharp lines in the preaching are no longer drawn; and before they themselves realize it, they have arrived in the camp of the Arminians. Hence, we must pay close attention to the manner in which Heyns lays his broad basis for an un-scriptural presentation of the gospel.

In the following quotation he does not reason whatsoever anymore from Scripture in order to come to a correct presentation of the Gospel:

What the Gospel is, is variously expressed, and those various expressions have each their own value in illuminating the matter and helping to understand it. The one places this particular and the other that particular

more on the foreground, and so they complement one another.

The Catechism describes "the promise of the gospel", and that is the Gospel itself, the tidings which must be brought to all creatures, as follows: "that he (God) grants us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross" (Question 66).

Shorter is the most common definition that the Gospel is the offer of grace and salvation.

And in the Apostolic Confession the Gospel is meant in Art. 10 with the words: "(I believe) the forgiveness of sins:"

Let us first pay attention to the last.

All the items mentioned in the Twelve Articles are items which must be believed unto salvation, as the Catechism gives us to understand in Lord's Day 7. That among those items the Gospel should be missed is inconceivable; and if anywhere, then in Art. 10 it must be meant. Thus it is to be read from this article that the Gospel is the glad tidings of the *forgiveness* of sins, and by this the forgiveness of sins is placed on the foreground in the salvation-content of the Gospel.

The *forgiveness* of sins. That means that God in place of demanding something, of whatever nature, for the satisfaction of his enormous debt, will forgive the sinner his entire debt, in order nevermore to remember it, nevermore to reckon it against him. *Forgiving* is the direct opposite of *demanding payment*.

Notice that Heyns here first says:

What the Gospel is, is variously expressed, and those various expressions have each their own value in illuminating the matter and helping to understand it. The one places this particular and the other that particular more on the foreground, and so they complement one another.

Now we might presuppose that Heyns had in view expressions of Scripture with these "various expressions." Further, we might expect that Heyns would now lead us through Scripture, showing us how Scripture describes the Gospel in various ways, in order along that path to arrive at a correct Scriptural presentation of the matter about which he writes. Especially of Heyns we might expect this. For he can inveigh so against those who rationalistically put a certain idea on the foreground, in order

to reason from it instead of from God's Word! And yet nothing comes of all this. He appeals first to the Catechism. And also Question 66 of the Heidelberg Catechism Heyns then immediately places in a wrong light. For that question says absolutely nothing about the proclamation of the glad tidings to all creatures, but speaks about God's promise to *us*, that is, the church (the subject there is after all the Sacraments). And that question also does not speak about tidings or about an offer, but about a *promise* that God *grants to us* forgiveness of sins and eternal life out of grace. These very definite terms are certainly altogether different from the general terms which Heyns repeatedly wants to substitute. Besides, Heyns could also find a much richer answer in Question and Answer 19 of the Heidelberg Catechism:

From the holy gospel, which God Himself first revealed in Paradise; and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and represented by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly has fulfilled it by His only begotten Son.

But it becomes still worse with Heyns. Also the Catechism apparently does not satisfy him, does not bring him where he wants to be. First he lets Scripture lie. Then he lets the Catechism be. And then he comes bringing the very poor: "Shorter is the most common definition that the Gospel is the offer of grace and salvation." Now anyone who reflects seriously on this simply stands amazed when he reads something of this kind. It becomes plain that Heyns with his "various expressions" did not have his eye on Scripture whatsoever! For after all, Scripture nowhere describes the Gospel as an offer of grace and salvation! If therefore we want to learn from Heyns what the holy Gospel is, then we shall have to makeshift with a definition of which he says that it is the most customary! Here we shall most decisively refuse to follow Heyns. Heyns and I are agreed that we should reason from Scripture, not from the presentations of men. To do the latter is rationalistic, also according to Heyns. He is in agreement with me if I differ from him in this, that we must not take into account the most customary terms and expressions of men. He grants that I am right if I part ways with him at this point in order to turn to Scripture.

And what a strange bit of reasoning about the Apostolic Confession! It would be strange, says Heyns, if the Gospel was not mentioned there! If it is mentioned there, then it must be mentioned in Art. 10: "I believe the forgiveness of sins." Ergo: the Gospel is the glad tidings of the forgiveness of sins! For such a manner of reasoning there is but one word: *arbitrary*. If you please, does not all the rest of the Confession of Faith belong just as well to the Gospel? Why then is Art. 10 singled out as only speaking of the Gospel? But we shall refrain from further characterizing this reasoning. If only it has become very clear that the entire passage from Heyns quoted above brings us not one step further toward a correct understanding of the

Scriptural presentation of the holy Gospel. We must not be hoodwinked, but stick to the point.

After Heyns, following this altogether unscriptural path, has arrived at the presentation that the Gospel is glad tidings of the forgiveness of sins to a hopelessly lost world, he can proceed further, and he changes the *calling* into an *invitation* to all men to participate in the forgiveness of sins. He does this in the following:

Light is cast on the question, what is the Gospel? Also by the fact that Scripture calls the proclamation of the Gospel *a calling*. From this we may recognize the Gospel as *an invitation*, and as an invitation which can be nothing less than well-meaning for everyone to whom the Gospel comes.

To call someone means to invite someone to come. It means that in our own language and equally as much in the language of Scripture. When the Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman: "Go, call thy husband, and come hither," this meant that she must immediately invite her husband to go along with her and then to return to Jesus with him. And that is always the meaning. When in Matthew 22:3 it speaks of calling them that were bidden to the wedding, in Mark 1:20 of calling the disciples, in Mark 10:49 of calling blind Bartimaeus, in John 11:28 of calling Mary, always it is the invitation to come. The purpose of this invitation to come is our everlasting salvation. It is a being called to the peace of God (Col. 3: 15), to the fellowship of Christ (I Cor. 1:9), to God's kingdom and glory (I Thess. 2:12; I Pet. 5:10), to eternal life (I Tim. 2:16). And it takes place through the Gospel (II Thess. 2:14).

Thus on the basis of God's Word the Gospel is also to be described as an urgent invitation of God to all creatures and to everyone to whom it comes personally to come without delay and to receive a part in the salvation in Christ, to come and to sit down at the feast of salvation, to eat of the bread and to drink of the water of life freely.

The Gospel is therefore not simply the tidings of a bare announcement that there is forgiveness of sins, but the tidings of being invited, urgently invited to participate in the forgiveness of sins. That cannot be other than well-meaning. It cannot be other than well-meaning because it is a message of God, the message of Him, who has no delight in the death of the wicked, but delights therein, that the wicked turn from his wicked way and live (Ezekiel 33:11), who will have all men to be saved (I Tim. 2:4), who had sent John in order to bear witness of the light, in order that all through him should believe (John 1:7). It can also not be other than well-meaning because to invite someone to something that is to his advantage is always a presenting of oneself as

favorably inclined toward the one invited, and that all the more according as the good to which one invites is higher and more glorious. For that reason to invite to something good without intending it is always falsehood, and to invite to the highest good without intending it would be the highest falsehood. To ascribe such a falsehood to God by asserting that His invitation to His kingdom and glory is in few instances meant and in many instances not meant cannot take place without making oneself guilty of grievous blasphemy.

To begin with the last sentence, Heyns here uses very strong language. He here accuses his opponents of "grievous blasphemy." Now such language would still be justifiable if Heyns actually instructed us from Scripture. But as we have already seen, all his reasoning concerning the real meaning of the Gospel has precisely nothing to do with Scripture. And now he comes to the heavy accusation of grievous blasphemy, partly on the ground of his preceding unscriptural reasoning about the Gospel, partly through the fact that in that which we quoted above by an adroit twist he changes the calling into an invitation to accept the forgiveness of sins, that is, the Gospel. Notice, however, how little this "invitation" of Heyns has in common with the Scriptural idea of "calling". You sense this immediately as soon as you attempt to substitute "invitation" for "calling" in the texts which Heyns quotes. Thus:

Col. 3: 15: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." According to Heyns: "to the which also ye are invited." Result: nonsense.

I Cor. 1:9: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Heyns: "by whom ye were invited unto the fellowship." etc. Result: a complete change of the thought.

I Pet. 5: 10: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus...." Heyns: "who has invited us to participate in his eternal glory". Result: paralysis of the text.

Enough. Scripture speaks of calling. Heyns substitutes invitation. The Scriptural idea of the calling is that God has also called those whom He predestined, and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, these He has also glorified. Thus Heyns comes to the conclusion that the invitation is well-meaning, that God well-meaningly invites all men, that to invite someone without meaning it is false, that those who deny the well-meant character of that invitation for all men make themselves guilty of grievous blasphemy.

Heavy language.

But resting upon an adroit change of "calling" into "invitation".

Nevertheless Heyns simply says: "To call someone means to invite him to come...And that is always the meaning... The purpose of this invitation is our everlasting salvation. ... Therefore on the basis of God's Word the Gospel is also to be described as an urgent invitation of God to all creatures and to everyone to whom it comes to come without delay and to receive a part in the salvation in Christ That cannot be other than well-meaning. . .because it is a message of God who wills that all men be saved."

Thus Heyns teaches. Thus many, following him, preach.

And is that not Arminian? Seriously: explain to me then what is indeed Arminian! But the reasoning, which is as clear as crystal, rests upon a twisting of the meaning of the "calling." Just a small step, and Heyns is where he wants to be. The Gospel of God is now presented as a well-meant, general offer of grace. Notice:

There is, however, yet a third description of the Gospel, namely, that it is an *offer of grace*, accompanied by a demand to believe, and by the express assurance that whoever believes shall be saved. This description again focuses on something else, and indeed this, that the Lord comes to sinners with the blessing of salvation by way of an offering of it, in which is implied a certain putting in possession. Not a full putting in possession, for that can only follow, as with every offer, upon the acceptance and appropriation of that which is offered; and if that acceptance does not follow, the offer and what belongs to it falls away. But yet a putting in possession in so far as an offering gives a right to what is offered, a right which one cannot have without the offer, namely, the right to deal with it as his own, to take it and to appropriate it, a right, therefore, rich in gracious significance.

Also this description of the Gospel as an offer of grace, and indeed a general offer of grace well-meant for all, is grounded in God's Word and is included in our Confessions as an element of the Reformed doctrine.

The expression "offer of grace" does not occur in Scripture, but the matter itself so much the more, for that is to be found in every proclamation of the Gospel occurring in God's Word.

In how far this last is true, namely, that the matter itself occurs so much the more in Scripture, we must investigate later, when we enter into the texts quoted by Heyns. In any event we are happy with the acknowledgement that with his reasoning Heyns finally arrives at a description of the Gospel which does not occur in Scripture. This

is not of much weight for Heyns; but for him who wishes to reason out of Scripture it is of the more weight, because Scripture after all describes the Gospel in all sorts of ways, as presently we hope to see.

At present it is sufficient if we see that we, according to Heyns, should describe the Gospel as follows:

The Gospel is the glad tidings of God to a hopelessly lost world wherein God well-meaningly offers to all men the forgiveness of sins, thereby putting them in possession of salvation, but thus, that they must accept this salvation and that the being put in possession on God's part is frustrated by men if they reject the salvation, also after God has urgently invited them to the salvation.

It is also of importance that we have seen very clearly that Heyns does not arrive at this entire presentation of the Gospel through study of Holy Scripture.

We shall see further to what presentation of the Gospel we come on the ground of and through serious study of God's Word.

Chapter 7

The Gospel, according to Scripture

He who investigates Scripture with the purpose of learning from it what the real meaning of the Gospel is is immediately struck by the great importance which God's Word attaches to that Gospel. We have only to pay attention to the terms with which Scripture describes that Gospel in order to convince ourselves of its rich content and high and holy character. Very often does Scripture make mention of the Gospel; and it describes the Gospel in various ways, in order to impress upon us its many-sided significance and glorious content. Thus, God's Word speaks of "the Gospel of God," Romans 1:1. II Corinthians 11:7, I Thessalonians 2:8, 9, I Peter 4:17. It is God's Gospel, not ours. He conceived of it; never did it arise in the heart of man. He realized it. He also proclaimed it, both in the old and new dispensation. He who sets about to proclaim that Gospel, in order to say or to write something about the Gospel, must then also be on his guard not to concoct a gospel out of his own brain. He who would describe it must not inquire after the terms most commonly used among men. Let him turn to the Word of the living God Himself in order to learn what the Gospel is. According to its content, the Gospel is described as the Gospel of God's Son. It is the Gospel which God promised afore concerning His Son Jesus Christ, Romans 1:2, 3; or simply the Gospel of His Son. Romans 1:9; Mark 1:1. In the Gospel, therefore, God proclaims something to us concerning His Son and it behoves us to be careful that we do not change the image of His Son through our preaching into that of a corruptible man, as is only too often done, especially in our own times. Thus it is also called the Gospel of Christ or of Jesus Christ, the anointed of God, of the anointed Savior, Who saves His people from their sins, Romans 15:19; I Corinthians 9:12; II Corinthians 2:12; 9:13; 10:14; Galatians 1:17. It is further described as the Gospel of the glory of the alone blessed God, and our proclamation of the Gospel must not be an attack upon that glory, I Timothy 1:11. The glory of the face of Jesus Christ shines in and through the Gospel, II Corinthians 4:4. It is also the Gospel of the kingdom, Matthew 4:23; 9:34; and where the Gospel is proclaimed, therefore, this kingdom must be spoken of according to its idea, its blessings of salvation, its realization, its basis, its life and heirs, as well as according to its future. Still more, the Gospel is described as the Gospel of the grace of God, the Gospel of your salvation, the Gospel of peace, Acts 20:24; Ephesians 1:13; 6:15. When we take all these terms together, we receive the impression that in the Gospel we have to do with something divine, with something of a most glorious and holy content, which can easily be corrupted through our proclamation and robbed of its power and glory. It is the Gospel of God, the Gospel which He proclaims concerning His Son, the Gospel of the glory of the only blessed God, of the glory of Christ, the Gospel of Christ, of the kingdom of heaven, of the grace of God, of your salvation and of peace. And if we add to this that it is indeed the calling of the church to proclaim

that Gospel, and that the apostle writes to the church of Galatia that there is no other Gospel than that which he has preached and that whoever proclaims another Gospel is accursed, be he a man on earth or an angel from heaven, then we will certainly agree that Heyns took his task altogether too lightly when he thought to be able to describe the Gospel for his readers with some most commonly used terms!

Scripture employs two words in the original Greek which are very closely related to one another. They are the words *epangelia*, promise, and *euangelion*, gospel. That also in the consciousness of the church they were closely connected with one another appears indeed from the very frequently used expression: promise of the Gospel, which also occurs in our own Confession. In this expression it is at least indicated that in the Gospel there is a promise proclaimed. But this close relationship between Gospel and promise, *euangelion* and *epangelia* is better indicated when we, instead of speaking of the promise of the Gospel, turn this around and speak of the *Gospel of the promise*. By the latter expression the real idea of the Gospel is set forth correctly. It is a Gospel of the Promise. The Promise is the real essence of the Gospel. And the Gospel is the good news concerning the Promise. This is literally according to Scripture. For this idea is verbally expressed in Galatians 3:8: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed." Notice that in the last part of the text the promise is simply mentioned: "In thee shall all nations be blessed." That is the promise which came to Abraham and his seed. And the text teaches us that when God gives this promise to Abraham, then He preaches the Gospel to him. Promise and Gospel are here, therefore, so identified that the Gospel is the preaching of the Promise. Thus we find it also in Acts 13:32, 33: "And we declare unto you glad tidings (*euangelizometha*, preaching of the Gospel) how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again." It will be plain that the promise which is here mentioned and which was made unto the fathers is the same as that mentioned in Galatians 3:8. And also in the text from Acts the promise and the Gospel are simply identified. The proclamation of the Promise is the preaching of the Gospel. When Paul and the apostles proclaim that God has fulfilled the Promise, then they proclaim good news concerning the Promise and then they preach thereby the Gospel. The Gospel is, therefore, essentially the Gospel of the Promise. It strikes us immediately how far distant this Scriptural description is from the "most commonly used" description of Heyns: "offer of grace." There is here just exactly no offer. God does not offer to Abraham that in him all nations shall be blessed, but gives him in the Gospel a promise, the fulfillment of which depends altogether upon God, as lies indeed in the nature of the case. The apostles have nothing to offer, but proclaim that God has fulfilled the Promise in Jesus; and then they preach the Gospel. If therefore we would understand the Gospel, then we must before all else pay attention to this promise.

Very often Scripture speaks of the promise. Sometimes God's Word employs the plural: *the promises*. This is to indicate the manifold riches of the content of the promise. Frequently also the singular occurs in order to remind us that however manifold the riches of grace may be which God has promised, nevertheless the promise is essentially one. Of the promise Hebrews 11:13 speaks. After God's Word has here pointed to the examples of Abel and Enoch and Noah, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it continues and says: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." And at the end of the chapter, referring to all the saints of the old dispensation, Scripture says: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise." It is plain from these quotations that throughout the old dispensation there was a promise, *the promise*; the Gospel was proclaimed to the saints of the Old Testament. This promise was not yet fulfilled. They all died without seeing the fulfillment of the promise, because God had provided some better thing for us, in order that they without us should not be made perfect. But by God's grace they embraced the promise by faith and lived in the hope of that promise. With their eye on that promise, they were willing to sacrifice all, were willing to confess that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, had subdued kingdoms, quenched the violence of fire, turned to fight the armies of the aliens; had not accepted deliverance, even though they were sawn asunder, even though they had to endure mockings and scourgings, and bonds and imprisonment. So all overwhelmingly glorious and rich was the Gospel of the Promise to them that they allowed themselves to be stoned and burned, that they wandered in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth - all because of the Promise which they had never yet received but only seen from afar off. That was the power of the Gospel. The glimpse of the Promise filled the souls of the saints, filled them with that power of faith whereby they challenged and defied all in the world and, dying, conquered! In the light of all this it will surely be plain to everyone that Heyns substitutes something altogether different for this mighty Gospel of the Promise when he wants to teach us that the Gospel is nothing else than the powerless, lame, colorless, altogether uncertain offer of grace to a hopelessly lost world which is dependent on wicked men! No, no offer, but the proclamation of a divinely certain, eternal, unspeakably glorious Promise, confirmed by the oath of God - that was the Gospel in the old dispensation! Not an uncertain offer, but a certain Promise!

Of this Gospel the Epistle to the Galatians also speaks. For to Abraham and his seed were the promises made, 3:16. And, although for a time the law was imposed upon the promise, nevertheless the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, could not disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect, 3:17. Not by the law, but by the promise was the inheritance given to Abraham, 3:18. And seeing

that the real Seed of the promise is Christ, therefore are we also Abraham's seed if we are of Christ and heirs according to the promise. As far as the content of this Promise is concerned, Holy Scripture speaks of it as the promise of the Holy Ghost, which is centrally fulfilled to Christ: for He being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received the promise of the Holy Ghost, has shed forth this, Acts 2:33; and we also obtain it by faith, Galatians 3:14. Further, it is the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, I Timothy 4:8; the promise of life, II Timothy 1:1; the promise of eternal life, for this is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life, I John 2:25. It is the promise of His coming, II Peter 3:4; the promise of entering into His rest, Hebrews 4:1; the promise of becoming heirs of the world, for the promise that he should be an heir of the world is to Abraham and his seed, not through the law, but by the righteousness which is of faith, Romans 4:13. Therefore also Holy Scripture speaks of the Holy Spirit of promise, Ephesians 1:13; of children of the promise in distinction from children of the flesh, that is, of children which were born according to the promise and by the power of the promise as spiritual seed and upon whom the promise rested, Romans 9: 8; of the heirs of the promise, to whom God certainly fulfills the promise, Hebrews 6:17; 11:9, etc. And at the inauguration of the new dispensation on the day of Pentecost the Gospel is immediately proclaimed in the words: "For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." And it is the glad tidings of God to the heirs of the Promise in the midst of the world which are designated in Scripture by the term: Gospel. This thoroughly scriptural description, therefore, we place over against the "most commonly employed descriptions" of Heyns: the holy Gospel is the glad tidings of God concerning *the Promise* of God to the seed of the Promise, those chosen by God as heirs of the Promise in the midst of this dark and comfortless, lost world!

By this Scriptural description of the Gospel the presentation of Heyns is eradicated root and branch. In place of the uncertainty in his presentation there now comes divine certainty; in place of the general in the description of Heyns there now comes the sovereign and particular of Scripture; in place of Arminianism we now obtain from Holy Scripture Reformed truth. For a promise differs from an offer precisely in all these respects. An offer rests for the certainty of its fulfillment with two parties: the one who offers and those to whom it is offered. A promise is as certain as the faithfulness and veracity of him who promises. Applied to our subject, this means that an offer of grace rests in God and man for its certainty; and since a chain is never stronger than its weakest link, the offer of grace is as certain as the faithfulness and veracity of man, sinful man, a hopelessly lost and wicked world. In other words, all certainty is gone, except the certainty that the cause of God is an altogether lost cause, the certainty that the offer will never be accepted. This is the presentation of Heyns. I understand very well when I write this that Heyns will retort that alongside this line of the offer he also wants to hold fast to the line of

election; but then my answer is that I am not opposing the Reformed Heyns, but the Heyns of the general offer. Besides, I have never yet read from Heyns a Reformed presentation of the Gospel. All certainty is completely gone with Heyns. But a promise rests only in the one who promises; the Promise of the Gospel rests for its certain fulfillment only with the eternal and true God; the Gospel of the Promise is, therefore, eternally sure. For a promise is an oral or written declaration whereby the one who promises is bound to do something or to bestow something. The Gospel of the Promise is, therefore, the glad tidings that God has bound Himself to bestow upon the heirs of the Promise eternal life and all things. And this brings me to the second point of difference: an offer is in the nature of the case general and indefinite; a promise is particular and definite. If the Gospel is an offer, then it is glad tidings to all men without distinction; if the Gospel is a promise, as Scripture teaches, then it is the glad tidings of God to the heirs of the promise only.

And how could it be otherwise? Where, after all, would there be a party next to or beside God to whom He should promise something? Permit me to say it with emphasis, as a witness in our God-forgetting, watered down, colorlessly religious world, in which everyone piously worships his own little idol in his own little sanctuary, in which the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, is more than any other thing missing, because men always substitute their own little idol for the fearful and living God and exert themselves to convert the world for that little idol and to save the world by that idol: ... God is GOD! He is "the Wholly Other"! All that we ever conceive and say of God of ourselves is always a lie. We always construct an idol. All true knowledge of God has its source only in God's speech concerning Himself. We must always be still, reverently still, still in holy amazement, when He speaks, and listen and repeat after Him. He is the Absolute, Subject and Object in Himself, the perfectly Self-sufficient, the Alone-blessed, the Eternal, the altogether Other. Outside of Him, above Him, next to Him, without Him there is nothing. He is His own party. To whom then would God promise something, much less offer? Where would there be a party, outside of God, to whom God could discharge a promise? No, if there is a Promise of God, then the entire content of that Promise is of Him, then also the heir of that Promise is only of God. Then God has sovereignly known the heirs, that is, so known them, that it is precisely through that divine, sovereign knowledge, that eternal divine conception, that they are. Therefore you can conceive of no Gospel without divine, sovereign predestination of the heirs of the Promise. Then the holy Gospel is the glad tidings of God concerning the Promise to those heirs. And thus it is in Holy Scripture. For, in the first place, the Heir of the Promise is Christ. For He saith not "to seeds, as of many; but to thy Seed," namely, Christ. And in Him is the promise to the seed of Abraham, that is, to those who are of Christ. Therefore also the promise of the Gospel is so eternally certain for those heirs of the promise that we read: "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying surely blessing I

will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, *willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel*, confirmed it by an oath." To the heirs of the promise, therefore, the Promise is certain, because the certainty of it is rooted in the immutable counsel of God.

The idea of the Gospel, therefore, is such that it is the good or glad news concerning this promise which God has promised from the dawn of history to the heirs of the promise. Good news, glad tidings, that is the meaning of the word *euangelion*. It is the good news, glad tidings, in a double sense of the word. In the first place, because the heirs of the promise live and move in the midst of a world that lieth in wickedness. With that world they lie by nature in the midst of death. In that world also the heirs of the promise are subject to the suffering and death of that world. In that world they are born under the guilt and in the sin of that world, by nature children of wrath even as also the others. And the promise causes to arise in their hearts the hope of deliverance out of the night of misery in which they are sunken. It is the promise of salvation, and therefore a glorious promise. Therefore the tidings of that promise are *euangelion*, good news, which comes to them from God in the dark world. And, in the second place, the proclamation of that promise is good news because the promise is the promise of a state of glory which far exceeds all our thinking and imagination. God does not only promise to the heirs that they shall be delivered out of their present state of misery and woe in order then to be restored to the former state of righteousness in the first paradise; but through the promise He holds forth to them a state of heavenly glory and eternal life that is as exalted in its riches of blessedness as the Lord from heaven is exalted above the first Adam. It is, therefore, unspeakably glad tidings that are proclaimed through the Gospel to the heirs of the Promise. And it is indeed *news*. The Gospel has never arisen in the heart of man. Eye has never seen nor ear ever heard its content. Therefore it is God Who proclaims the Gospel concerning His Son. It comes to the heirs of the promise through revelation, even though the proclamation of the Gospel takes place through men. So that he proclaims the Gospel who in the name of God is able to say something with certainty concerning the promise, concerning the glory of its content, concerning the certainty of its fulfillment, concerning the time of its realization. Throughout all of history there are in the world heirs of the promises, who walk as pilgrims through the night of this world and who look forward to the day; who with earnest longings of soul ask: do you know anything of the Promise? Watchman! what of the night? And he proclaims the Gospel who has a certain answer to this question and who comforts the heirs of the promise even unto everlasting life!

By this idea, this Scriptural idea of the Gospel, the content of the Gospel is also determined. If according to its idea the Gospel is glad tidings concerning the Promise

to Abraham and his seed, then it follows from this that the Gospel can proclaim nothing else than that Promise. That Promise is the content of the Gospel. Nothing else. Nothing more. Nothing less. He who purposes to proclaim the Gospel must speak, as far as the content of that proclamation is concerned, of nothing else than this promise of God. He who proclaims something else is simply no minister of the Gospel. A *Verbi Dei* Minister is a proclaimer of the promise of God, or he is an impostor. And not only can his proclamation have no other content than the promise of God, but he is also called to present the Gospel as the glad tidings of a *promise*, which God certainly fulfills. He who makes of the certain promise of God an offer which is dependent for its fulfillment on the will of man, does violence to the Gospel of God. And, finally, this proclamation must be the glad tidings of the sure promise of God *to the heirs of the promise*. He who presents it otherwise, who presents it as though the promise of God is intended for all men, makes God a liar. For He does not realize His promise to all men; nor has He ever promised such a thing as salvation to all men; but He promises the inheritance to the heirs, Abraham and his seed, and that promise He fulfills as the faithful and unchangeable God. Heyns does not hesitate, proceeding from the "most commonly used" terms of men, to accuse those who refuse to present the Gospel of God as a well-meant, general offer of grace and salvation of grievous blasphemy. So be it. But there is in our heart not the least doubt whether he who hawks the Gospel as a cheap article of merchandise, who is not ashamed to present God as a peddler and offerer of the wares of salvation to all men, makes himself guilty of exactly such grievous blasphemy and casts the bread of the children to the dogs and swine, who trample it with their feet. And eternity shall reveal that those hawkers of the Gospel have made out God as a liar!

We must still speak further concerning the proper content, the historical realization, and the preaching of the Gospel.

If the Gospel, according to the Scriptures, is the glad tidings concerning the promise, then it lies in the nature of the case that the content of that promise of God must also be the content of the holy Gospel. Now we can, from this viewpoint, distinguish the content of the Gospel according to its objective and its subjective aspect. Objectively the central content of the promise, and therefore also of the Gospel, is Christ and all His benefits. Christ is at once the heir of the promise, for indeed God says not "and to seeds" as of many, but "and to thy Seed," which is Christ; and the fulfillment of the Promise, for He is the promised Seed, on Whom the heirs of the Promise fix all their hope. And He is the fulfillment of the Promise because God realizes His eternal covenant in and through Him. Hence, in the Gospel Christ must be preached in all His significance, according to His incarnation, His person and natures, His offices and relation to God's covenant and kingdom, according to His Word, wherein He has revealed to us the full counsel of God concerning our salvation, according to His work, His suffering and death, His resurrection and exaltation at

the right hand of the Father, His rule and dominion over all things, and His return for judgment, in order to make all things new and to subject them to the Father. And the Gospel proclaims then that God in Christ has reconciled the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and prays in Christ's stead: be ye reconciled with God! Heyns wants to make of this reconciliation "a possibility of reconciliation," completely in harmony with his general offer. But this is not according to the Word of God. He who proclaims the possibility of reconciliation does violence to the Gospel. For the Gospel is the fulfillment of the Promise of God by God. The reconciliation is an accomplished fact. Nineteen hundred years ago God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and the "world" is therefore reconciled.

We must understand this well: for the pure preaching of the gospel hangs in the balance precisely at this point. Reconciliation is the objective blotting out of our guilt through satisfaction in the blood of Christ. It is therefore also purely an act of God. It is not a fact which comes into existence through an act on God's part *and* an act on our part. It comes into existence only by a work of God. Among men reconciliation is a reciprocal action. Men cannot blot out sin. Therefore men reconcile with one another. But this may never be applied to the idea of reconciliation with respect to God and His people. We do not reconcile God. Neither do we reconcile ourselves with God. Neither does God reconcile Himself. One finds all these confused and incorrect presentations frequently in writings and in preaching. And by all such false presentations men always and again conciliate Arminianism and meet it half way. No, there is but one correct, Scriptural presentation of reconciliation: God has reconciled us unto Himself. Reconciliation is not a possibility, but an accomplished fact. We enter into reconciliation by faith. But never may reconciliation as such be presented as a possibility, neither as far as the power and completeness of that reconciliation is concerned, nor as far as the participants in that reconciliation are concerned. For Christ has died for the elect; God has reconciled the elect unto Himself through the blood of Christ, not imputing their sins unto them. That reconciliation, therefore, is also not conditional. It does not depend upon our faith; it does not come into existence through our faith; it is not made void through our unbelief; in all its significance it is an historic fact, the fulfillment of the sure promise of God, and must be proclaimed as such.

And this is not only true of the objective fact of reconciliation and atonement, but of the entire central fulfillment of salvation in Christ Jesus, of the resurrection and the ascension and the sitting at the right hand of God and the victory and reign of Christ over all things. Christ's resurrection is the resurrection of the elect: for they are in Him, and He is their head. We are then also raised with Him and set with Him in heavenly places; with and in Him we have the victory and are more than conquerors through Him Who has loved us. Exactly for that reason also it is not correct to speak

of the militant and the triumphant church: for also the church on earth is triumphant. We *are* come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel, Hebrews 12:22-24. All of this belongs to the content of the gospel of God which He proclaims concerning His Son. It is the fulfillment of the promise which is and must be proclaimed by the gospel.

But there is also a subjective side to the gospel which is according to its content the fulfillment of the promise. To the content of the promise belongs also the fact that God makes us actual partakers of all the benefits of salvation in Christ Jesus, and that, too, through the Spirit of God as the Spirit of Christ. The promise is after all also the promise of the Holy Spirit. And this promise of the Spirit is again first of all and centrally fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, and thereupon and through Him also to the church, which is His body. He has received the promise of the Spirit and poured out that Spirit in the church on Pentecost, and through that Spirit is come to dwell in His own. And it is through that Spirit that He imparts Himself and all His benefits to the church. Hence, also all the work of the Holy Spirit belongs to the promise, belongs to the content of the gospel and to true gospel-preaching. Regeneration and the effectual calling through the Word unto true life and light, justification and sanctification, along with perseverance to the end and the final glorification, life, love, faith, and hope and all that belongs to the life of the Spirit of Christ as He accomplishes it in the church – all of this belongs to the content of the promise of God to His people and must be proclaimed as the work of God, the sure work of God in us through His grace, in the preaching of the gospel. Also here you do not do justice to the work of God should you want to present this as an uncertain or conditional offer. As little as the objective benefits of salvation in Christ may ever be presented as depending for their realization upon the will of men, so little also can the subjective benefits of salvation ever be proclaimed as a general offer. God, Who cannot lie, has also promised these benefits to the heirs of the promise and has sworn to them with an oath. That God fulfills the promise of the Holy Spirit to the elect as certainly as He has centrally fulfilled it to Christ must be proclaimed in the preaching of the gospel.

We understand very well that the content of salvation, that the blessedness of God's covenant and kingdom, bears a spiritual, ethical character, and that we are taken up into the whole of God's work of salvation as rational, moral beings. If the work of salvation were simply a deliverance from hell and a being taken to heaven, then it could in last instance take place outside of us in the sense that our inner soul-life, our ethical consciousness, had nothing to do with salvation. But now that is

different. Through the work of salvation we are translated out of darkness into light, out of death into life. Through that work a radical change takes place, a change which reaches into the very root of our life and of our person. A change in our judicial and spiritual, ethical relation to God! Therefore that spiritual benefit comes to us as rational, moral creatures. Therefore also it comes to us through the Word of God. And through that Word God speaks to us. Through the Word He brings that salvation to our inmost consciousness. He addresses us. Through the Word He directs Himself to our understanding. And with that Word He places Himself before our will. He teaches, enlightens, instructs, reveals, warns, demands, admonishes, calls to the obedience of the gospel, invites, allures, even prays, encourages and comforts, awakens and calls to the battle of faith to the very end. Never are we stocks and blocks. Also the proclamation of the gospel places us always and again before the unavoidable: Yes and No! And seeing that this proclamation of the gospel by men comes to many more persons than to the elect, the ungodly reprobate are also compelled to say Yes and No, sin comes to manifestation as sin, and God is justified when He judges. But that does not change the fact whatsoever that the preaching of the gospel is not a general offer of God to all men, but the proclamation of the content of the promise which God surely fulfills to the heirs of the promise.

Thus it is also to be understood that this gospel has been there from the dawn of history and was proclaimed by the Lord God, but that its fulfillment has nevertheless come about in the way of an historical process. Therefore also the Catechism speaks of "the holy gospel, which God Himself first revealed in Paradise; and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and represented by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly, has fulfilled it by his only begotten Son." Two things always go together in the history of the holy Gospel: God fulfills the promise, and He declares to the heirs of the promise what He does, that is, He proclaims to them the gospel.

Thus it was already at the setting of the sun in the first Paradise when the world sank into the night of sin and unrighteousness. Beautiful it had been in Paradise. An image of the heavenly things, not those things themselves, God had formed at the beginning of the world. For Adam was an image of Him Who was to come. He was of the earth earthy, not the Lord from heaven. The tree of life was an image of the tree which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. Paradise itself was a figure of God's eternal dwelling with men as that shall presently be revealed in its full heavenly glory. But also that image was beautiful; and the first man, as he was of the earth earthy, nevertheless tasted the life of the friendship of God and could reign as God's friend-servant over the earthly works of God's hands. At the dawn of creation the sun shone in glorious splendor. But the sun set again when it was scarcely risen. It set at the eastern horizon in the morning of creation. Adam sank into a night of misery, of guilt and sin, of curse and suffering and death, from which no escape

appeared possible. And he bore the seed of the promise in his loins. With him also the heirs of the promise descended into the night of fearful suffering which spread its dark cloak over the world through the fall. But God had in view for them something better than the first Paradise, and that something better begins immediately to be fulfilled. God begins the work of His holy gospel. And He also immediately proclaims to the heirs of the promise what He is doing: "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." This is the very first proclamation of the holy gospel, the proclamation of the promise, that the Sun shall presently rise again, and that, too, in everlasting and glorious splendor!

With that promise of the holy gospel the heirs of the promise must sojourn in the night and must walk as pilgrims of the night in this dark world, living in hope. The night is dark, and the battle with the children of darkness and the night of sin is dreadfully fearful; but they walk by faith in the light-path of the holy gospel. And although the way is dark, the light of the promise becomes steadily brighter. For God follows a straight course in the fulfillment of the promise; and according as the final fulfillment approaches, He also proclaims in an ever richer gospel His work to the heirs of the promise. Thus it was before and through the flood. Heavily did the curse descend upon the world and upon the ground which the Lord had cursed; fearful was the battle between the seed of the promise and the children of darkness; but in Noah comes a seed which shall comfort them concerning that curse and in that battle and shall give them rest. He finds grace in the eyes of the Lord. God makes him victorious and heir of the world when He saves him through the waters of the flood. With him and with his seed God established His covenant; and He proclaims to him the holy gospel, giving him the sign of this in the bow which is set in the clouds, a promise of the day which shall finally break through the night of curse and suffering and death. Not a common grace sign is that bow in the clouds, but the sign of the promise of God to the heirs of the promise that they shall be heirs of the world, a sign of the breaking through of His all-conquering grace, a sign of the holy gospel.

Dark is the night and fearful is the struggle when the mighty of the world in proud contempt set out to build the tower which shall reach to heaven, when mighty, sinful man sets out to maintain and to realize his kingship and the accursed world. And also thereafter, when God has made vain that attempt of the world and has called His friend Abraham out of Ur and Haran, it nevertheless remains dark. For in reality Abram and Isaac and Jacob become strangers in the earth. The holy patriarchs dwelt in tents and did not obtain the promise. But in the light of the gospel which God proclaimed to them they saw the promise afar off and believed and died in faith. Dark it is when presently the seed of Abraham is oppressed in Egypt and threatened with destruction. But the Lord fulfills the promise given to Abraham and his seed. He leads Israel out of the house of bondage by His great power. He

leads them through the fearful wilderness by the Angel of His presence to the land of the promise. There He dwells in the midst of His people. There He constantly proclaims the promise in type and shadow; but the reality still tarried. And also the shadow presently disappears. More and more it becomes plain that in the earthly Canaan the rest which remaineth for the people of God is not yet attained. Presently Israel goes into captivity. The glory of David's house fades and disappears. The temple is destroyed. The city of God lies in ruins. But also in that fearful Babylonian captivity the heirs of the promise continue to look forward to the final fulfillment. For according as the shadows disappeared, God proclaimed in ever clearer terms that the time was at hand and that the promised seed would come speedily. Presently a remnant returns out of Babylon, but only to become the plaything of the nations round about. And in the fearful time of Antiochus Epiphanes the heirs of the promise are killed all the day long. Indeed it seemed as though the light would never dawn over Zion. But hoping against hope they continued to look forward to the fulfillment of the promise, walking in the light of the gospel. And with ever increasing expectation they inquired of the prophets of old: "Watchman, what of the night?"

And the Lord God fulfills the promise! When the need appears at its greatest, when there is nothing left of the house of David but a root out of the dry ground, when the sceptre is well-nigh departed from Judah, when there is no strength to bring forth, God the Lord fulfills the holy gospel and Immanuel is born at Bethlehem. And again the proclamation of the gospel goes hand in hand with the fulfillment of the promise. Who would have had even the slightest inkling that there in Bethlehem the Wonder of grace came to pass and that in that Babe in the manger one might contemplate the fulfillment of the promise? But the angels descend in order to proclaim the holy gospel to the shepherds, heirs of the promise, who perhaps, yea, very likely had repeatedly asked and inquired after the time of the promise. And multitudes of heavenly hosts caused the night to ring with the song of the everlasting dawn: "Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth in men of God's good pleasure!" But presently the Sun again goes down! He of Whom the heirs of the promise had hoped that He should deliver Israel descends into the depth of suffering and by wicked hands is crucified and slain. Dark, dreadfully dark it is at the cross of Golgotha. But the heirs of the promise could have known it; it had after all been proclaimed to them that the way to the light lay through the pitch black darkness of the cross of the Savior, that the way to life lay directly through His death. And the promise is fulfilled! For He is raised from the dead; He is taken up into heaven; He is exalted at the right hand of the Father and has now received a name that is above every name. The Seed of the promise is become heir of the world!

But still the full revelation of the fulfillment of the promise has not been reached. Still there are always heirs of the promise who walk in the night of this world, bowed

down under the suffering of this present time. But God has now proclaimed to them the full gospel, the fulfillment of the promise in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ! He draws them out of the darkness of sin and death and causes them through faith to walk as those who are justified in Christ Jesus. He comforts them and encourages them in the battle, causes them to walk as citizens of heaven, with their eye on high and their heart directed above, looking forward to the day when the Lord their God, Who is not ashamed to be called their God, because He has prepared for them a city, shall make all things new, and the tabernacle of God shall be with men forever!

That is the gospel!

The glad tidings concerning the promise! The *Euangelion* of the *Epangelia*!

The gospel which God has proclaimed concerning His Son. The gospel of Jesus Christ, of the glory of the only blessed God, of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, the gospel of the kingdom, of peace, of salvation. The gospel that does not come with a weak and miserable offer that would have to be dependent upon men for the fulfillment of its content, but the glad tidings of God concerning the fulfillment of the unspeakably rich and eternal and sure promise to Abraham and his seed!

That gospel now must be proclaimed by men. It must be preached. Thus Holy Scripture teaches. Heyns himself concedes that Scripture never speaks of an offer of grace. That should have given him food for thought instead of simply continuing with his writing concerning the most commonly used terms of men whereby they describe or indicate the gospel. The gospel cannot be offered. In the first place, this is already impossible because according to its content it is a promise, and a promise is surely fulfilled by Him Who promises. But, in the second place, this cannot be because there is literally nothing in the gospel, whether you consider it from its objective or from its subjective side, which can be fulfilled by man. It is from beginning to end, in its objective realization and in its subjective application, the gospel of God. But it is also a fact that nowhere do we read of such an offering of the gospel in Holy Scripture. And this is not because Holy Scripture does not speak at all of the proclamation of the gospel. On the contrary, Scripture speaks of this often. But always Scripture employs a word which means to proclaim, to preach, to testify, to speak, never a word similar to offer. Of the Savior we read that He preached the gospel of the kingdom, Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 24:15; 26:13. Paul preached the gospel among the heathen, Galatians 2:2; I Thessalonians 2:9; or he speaks the gospel to them, I Thessalonians 2:2; or he testifies the gospel of the grace of God, Acts 20:24. Frequently also a word is used which really means to *proclaim glad tidings*, as in I Corinthians 15:1; II Corinthians 11:7; Galatians 1:11; Revelation 14:6. But always the same idea is expressed: the gospel must simply be proclaimed. Of an offer we read nowhere.

And that gospel must also very emphatically be preached in such a way that the heirs of the promise know that it is intended for them. In practice the proclamation of the gospel in the form of an offer of grace, such as Heyns wants, is also very pernicious. It lies in the nature of the case that not a single soul more than those whom God has chosen is saved through the preaching of the gospel: for it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. Even though Heyns offers his gospel and the grace of God never so broadly, though he begs and pleads with men to accept the grace of God and though he twists and turns in all kinds of contortions, there is not a single soul saved more than those whom God effectually calls. Heyns therefore gains nothing with his general offer, for God does not act according to the general offer. But the elect are also through such lax and unsubstantial preaching not built up and strengthened and assured of the firmness of God's promise for them. Therefore we maintain that the gospel is for the heirs of the promise and that it must also be proclaimed in such a way that they are called by name. No, understand well, we do not hold the view, as some have only too foolishly accused us, that we should preach only for the elect. This would not only be impossible, but it is also contrary to the will of God. The proclamation of the gospel is general, though it is ever so particular in content. But the heirs of the promise must indeed be named according to their spiritual name in the preaching of the gospel, in order that they may appropriate to themselves the promise. It is those who mourn in Zion, the hungry and thirsty, the weary and heavy laden, those who complain because of their sins, those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who are saved. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. They must be satisfied and comforted, and assured in their faith, walk in the hope of everlasting life, fighting the good fight of faith. In order that no man take their crown!

Chapter 8

Offer

We have in our opinion plainly demonstrated that the description which Heyns offered us of the gospel, though indeed in harmony with the most commonly used terms and manner of speaking among men, is nevertheless not in harmony with Holy Scripture. He who does not wish to live by human reason, but by the revelation of Holy Scripture will therefore not be able to cling a moment longer to the view of Professor Heyns.

We must now review the proof which the professor claims to find in Scripture for his assertion that the gospel is a general offer of grace, well meant for all men on God's part. But in order to prevent all misunderstanding we shall first attempt to learn from Heyns what he really means when he speaks of an 'offer' (The Dutch term here is *aanbod*. HCH). There is considerable difference of opinion concerning this term. Sometimes it is claimed that the difference between us and those who want to cling to the view that the gospel is a general offer of grace is really only a difference of terminology. That this is not the case will become plain when we first allow Heyns himself to say what he understands by that term, in order then to present our own view over against it.

Prof. Heyns writes as follows:

That the term *offer of grace*, as a term which implies that the gospel is not simply a bare proclamation that there is forgiveness of sin, but an *offering* of the forgiveness of sins to the sinner to whom the gospel comes, is entirely in harmony with Scripture and the Confession, appears from this, that both employ words and expressions which mean the same thing and that even in a more emphatic sense.

Distinction is to be made between what can be called being placed objectively and subjectively in possession and being objectively and subjectively in possession. That the words objective and subjective are particularly happy expressions for what is meant cannot be said, but there do not seem to be better terms. What is meant is this:

There is a difference between participating in the goods of an inheritance *before* the death of the testator and participating in those goods after the testator has died and the inheritance has been divided according to the stipulations of the last will and testament. Before the death of the testator the heir does not have control over so much as a penny; it is possible that he is

even in a condition of poverty. But that is not to say that the heir really has no advantage over a stranger, for the contrary is the case. The heir has a right of possession to the inheritance that the stranger would gladly have but does not possess, a right of possession which guarantees to him, unless he should be disinherited, the full possession in the future: for at the determined time on the ground of that right of possession his portion will be dealt out, and then he shall have full control.

Thus by being placed objectively in possession and being objectively in possession is meant a placing in possession as that with which a testator benefits someone by putting that person's name in his will, and a being in possession as that of an heir as long as the testator lives. It is in such a way that the sinner by the Gospel as offer of grace, is placed in possession, and is in possession of the righteousness of Christ and the benefits of salvation. And by being placed in *subjective* possession and being in possession is meant a placing in possession and being in possession such as is brought about by the death of the testator and the distribution of the inheritance, as that takes place through the application and impartation of the Holy Spirit in the way of faith and repentance. Thereby the sinner receives the full possession of the righteousness of Christ in such a way that he is justified by God, is acquitted of guilt and punishment, and receives the right to everlasting life.

That the possession of the benefits of salvation through the Gospel as offer of grace is an objective possession, a possession which indeed bestows a right as that of an heir to the righteousness of Christ and even to the actual being made a partaker of it by the Holy Spirit, a right freely to come and to take the bread and the water of life, which he could not have without that offer of the Gospel, but not a possession that can be the ground for his justification, appears abundantly from the fact that the Gospel always and again comes with the emphatic demand of faith, and connects salvation not to the offer but to true *faith in the offer*, adding thereto that he who does not believe shall go lost, shall be condemned. He that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16); that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16); he that *believeth* on the Son hath everlasting life (John 3: 36); he that *believeth* in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live (John 11 :25); on the contrary: he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16); he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

For this being placed in objective possession we use the term *offer of grace*. Far from that expression being unbiblical or unreformed, the Word of God and the Confessions employ words which express even more strongly than *offer*

expresses that indeed the benefits of salvation are by the Gospel placed in the possession of the sinner to whom the Gospel comes in such a manner. We refer to the words *give, bestow, being bestowed, being forgiven*; and that those words denote a being placed in possession is not to be contested.

Now it may be difficult to form a clear conception of the matter itself which the professor here expounds, and still more difficult to grasp how a Reformed believer can even allow such things a place in his thoughts, but what the professor here writes is plain enough. This must be said for Heyns, that after his description of the meaning of the term *offer*, we do not have to ask any more what he really means by it. For him the offer of grace is an objective placing in possession (an objective bequest) on God's part of salvation in Christ to all men. This is plain from the figure of the testator and the heir. The testator has inscribed the names of the heirs in his will. These, therefore, have an actual right to the inheritance. That they received this right did not depend on the heirs, but only on the disposition of the testator. Applied to the matter under discussion, the presentation of Heyns therefore would have it that God, the Testator, has given to all men, the heirs, the right to eternal life, the right to the blessings of salvation in Christ Jesus, and even the right to the bestowal of those blessings, to the application of salvation by the Holy Spirit. The testator has arranged in his will that after his death the goods of the inheritance shall indeed be distributed among the heirs mentioned by name; thus God has in His testament arranged that the Holy Spirit shall impart the benefits of salvation to the heirs, that is, to all men. Do not say now that we present Heyns incorrectly. If his words, which we quoted above, mean anything, then they certainly mean all that we have said of them. Read for yourself: "*The possession of the benefits of salvation through the Gospel as offer of grace (is) an objective possession, a possession which indeed gives the right as that of an heir to the righteousness of Christ and even to the actual being made a partaker of it by the Holy Spirit.*" It can indeed be that Heyns himself does not rightly realize the full significance of that which he here writes, although I am convinced that he indeed really does realize it and also intends to teach and always has taught what is expressed and included in the words quoted above; but in any event he is responsible for his words. And his words are influential in a broad circle, not only through the articles which he wrote in *De Wachter*, but even much more through the instruction which he has given for years in the Theological School of the Christian Reformed Churches. What Heyns here writes has been imbibed by many young men who are at present ministers in the Christian Reformed Churches and is proclaimed in most of the pulpits of those churches. That is the sad and the hopeless aspect of the condition of those churches.

For what is quoted above of Heyns is pure Arminianism!

Nothing else.

God gives all men the right to the benefits of salvation. He has given to all men a right to that which Christ has merited. And He has given to all men the right to the application and bestowal of that salvation, to being made partaker of it by the Holy Spirit. Pay attention to what this means. For this can mean nothing else than that Heyns also presents that grace of the Spirit as resistible. If Heyns does not mean that, his words are pure nonsense. Notice what it means if I say that God, Who cannot lie, has given to all men the right to the *irresistible* grace of the Holy Spirit. God has given to all men the right by the irresistible grace of the Holy Spirit to be regenerated, to be called, to be justified, sanctified, glorified. And, of course, God maintains that right. He does not withdraw that right. For God is God. What then is the undeniable consequence? This, that all men actually become partakers of salvation. That is as clear as the day. If Heyns wants to maintain the irresistible grace of the Spirit, then all men are surely saved. For if that grace is irresistible, and all men have the right to it, a right bestowed on them by God, then there is also absolutely nothing in man that can make him lose that right. All men, then, are surely saved.

But this is not what Heyns means. That speaks for itself. He knows all too well that all men are not saved.

What Heyns means is that although all men indeed have a God-given right to the grace of the Holy Spirit whereby the benefits of salvation are indeed bestowed on them, they nevertheless do not receive that grace. And that they do not receive that grace of the Spirit to which God gave them the right, that is then to be ascribed to the man who does not will to receive that grace. In other words, Heyns indeed presents the matter thus, that the grace of the Spirit whereby He makes men partakers of the benefits of salvation is resistible. God offers that grace of the Spirit (the objective right to it). Man refuses to accept that grace of the Spirit. And therefore the heirs do not receive the inheritance.

That is the end of the matter as far as Heyns' view is concerned.

But from this it also appears clearly how thoroughly Arminian the presentation of Heyns is. This was after all the real point of the Remonstrance of 1610. In that Remonstrance everything seemed so Reformed! Apparently much more Reformed than the presentation of Heyns. Man was wholly corrupt, wholly incapable of any good. In order to be saved he was wholly dependent on grace, pure grace. And that grace must be imparted to him from beginning to end by the Holy Spirit. But whether that grace was irresistible, notice, that the Remonstrants wanted to make disputable! Before they would believe and confess that, the matter had to be investigated without bias. And what now is the difference between the presentation

of the Remonstrance and that of Heyns? This, that Heyns no longer presents it as disputable. He wants it to be preached: God offers you the grace of the Holy Spirit; He has given you the right to it; you are all heirs, whoever you may be, for God wills that all men shall be saved; if you are not saved, then this happens because you resist the grace of the Holy Spirit Who will impart to you the benefits of salvation!

That is the gospel of Heyns.

That is the idea of the 'offer of grace'.

And against that presentation we have various objections.

In the first place, the objection that this presentation clashes diametrically with the doctrine of predestination. It is a denial of it. I am well aware that Heyns will answer this objection with the silencer which one can always hear nowadays in so-called Reformed churches and circles, namely that we may not reason in rationalistic fashion from God's counsel. Purposely I have in these chapters therefore avoided even all appearance of wanting to reason from predestination. But Heyns also may proclaim no doctrine which clashes with the truth of predestination and is in fact a denial of it. And that his presentation is indeed such will be plain to everyone who does not willfully close his eyes to the danger of Arminianism with which we are threatened by the conception of Heyns. For if God in the gospel has given to all men the right to the benefits of salvation in Christ and to the subjective application of those benefits by the Holy Spirit, then that is also the case in God's eternal decree. Then the matter also stands thus in God's counsel that God has really decided to save those who shall believe in Christ. The Remonstrants also said this. Then the decree of God is conditional. Then there is no absolute election, still less an equally absolute and sovereign reprobation. If there is a reprobation, then God has in His eternal decree certainly not given to all men the right to the benefits of salvation in Christ. And if the Lord God has not done this in His eternal and unchangeable decree, then He certainly does not do it either in the gospel. I understand very well that Heyns wants to present this thus. In God's eternal decree the sovereign God gives the right to the inheritance only to the elect. In the book of God's counsel there are only the names of the elect. But in the gospel God lets it be proclaimed that all men are heirs of the promise, that they have the right to salvation. And Heyns then calls that a mystery. Whoever will not accept that mystery is rationalistic. Now I do not accept that presentation, and I also refuse to accept that there is a mystery in that view. What is indeed in that view is this, that Heyns makes God a liar.

Let me apply for a moment the figure of the testator and the heirs which Heyns uses. A testator makes his will and seals it to the day of his death. He has a hundred

relatives, all of whom could expect that they would come into consideration as heirs. The testator, however, gives the right to the inheritance to only twenty-five in his will. However, while matters stand thus in his sealed, as yet unopened, will, he lets it be proclaimed to all his hundred relatives that they have received from him the right to his goods and that he will distribute them among them all. What is your judgment concerning such a testator? You say: "he is a liar". But that is exactly the presentation which Heyns offers us of God. In His eternal counsel God has mentioned by name the elect, and those alone, as heirs. In the gospel God lets it be proclaimed that He has given to all men the right to the inheritance. What is your judgment? This: Heyns makes God a liar.

Of course, also Heyns does not want this. Indignantly Heyns would cast it from him if you would accuse him that he wants to present God as a liar. Only, in his dogmatic conception he indeed presents God as a liar. And whereas Heyns indeed knows, and all who present the matter thus also know, that God is not a liar, therefore this entire presentation in the practical situation of preaching and instruction comes down to this that men are silent about predestination and speak only of that offer of the gospel in which God gives to all men the right to the benefits of salvation. That this is not merely an abstract conclusion which we draw from the presentation of Heyns, but is concrete reality is plain from the preaching in the Christian Reformed Churches.

But thus it is not. The truth is different.

Thus it cannot be. And thus Scripture also does not teach. It cannot be thus exactly because God is the True One, Who cannot lie, Who also in His holy gospel never can and never will proclaim anything other than that which He has determined in His eternal counsel. If in that counsel God has determined that the elect have a right to the benefits of salvation in Christ, then God also proclaims that in the holy gospel. But Scripture also does not teach this view of Heyns. Where in the gospel would God let it be proclaimed that He has given to all men the right to the inheritance, that they are all heirs? As we have pointed out earlier, exactly the contrary is true. The heirs are mentioned in Scripture by name. And those heirs are not all men, but Abraham and his seed, Galatians 3. And lest we should make a mistake and understand this seed of Abraham in too broad a sense, Scripture also teaches emphatically that not all the children of the flesh belong to the seed of the promise. But if we are of Christ, then are we Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise, Romans 9, Galatians 3. And to those heirs God swears with an oath by Himself that He shall bless them, in order that He may more abundantly show the immutability of His counsel, Hebrews 6:13ff. In the gospel God does not have something other proclaimed than what He has determined in His counsel. For God is one; and He is the True One, Who cannot lie!

Besides, the entire presentation of Heyns is in conflict with the truth of the particular atonement of Christ. God, says Heyns, gives to all men the objective right to the righteousness of Christ. However, if this were to be true, then it could not be otherwise than that God has also objectively realized that right in the atoning death of our Savior. After all, the righteousness of which Heyns says that all men have a right to it and receive it in the gospel is the righteousness which is rooted in and rests upon the suffering and death of the Savior and which is sealed and brought to light in His resurrection. The righteousness is therefore objectively realized for all who are objectively in Christ, who were represented by Him on the cross. If now that is all men, then there is objective righteousness for all men; then it can also be proclaimed that all men have an objective right to the righteousness of Christ. If that is the elect only, then there is only for the elect an objective right to that righteousness merited by the death of Christ; and then also it cannot possibly be proclaimed that all men have a right to that righteousness of Christ. For how would God have something proclaimed which is not there, which does not exist, the very possibility of which is forever cut off? Now the truth is that Christ has not died for all men, that therefore also there is objectively no right for all men to the righteousness of Christ, and that this also cannot be proclaimed. The right to the righteousness of Christ is only for the elect. The atonement of Christ is particular. Heyns will concede this to me. I know that very well. But then he must also concede to me that that other presentation by him, that God gives to all men the objective right to the righteousness of Christ, is diametrically opposed to the Reformed, Scriptural truth of particular atonement.

That the presentation of Heyns is also in conflict with the Scriptural and Reformed truth of the irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit, whereby salvation is bestowed on the elect and is wrought in them, we have already demonstrated above. However, we still want to point out that Heyns in the further development of his presentation indeed also denies the irresistible grace of the Holy Spirit. He does this when he says that salvation is not tied to the offer, that is, to the right to salvation which God gives everyone, but to the faith of man, and when he then presents that faith not as a gift of God whereby He puts me in possession of the salvation, but as a *demand* of God with which man must comply in order to be saved. For thus Heyns writes:

But that the possession of the benefits of salvation through the gospel as offer of grace is an objective possession, a possession which gives a right as that of an heir to the righteousness of Christ and even to the actual being made a partaker of it through the Holy Spirit, a right freely to come and to take the bread and the water of life, a right which he could not have without that offer of the gospel, but not a possession which can be the ground for his justification, appears abundantly from the fact that the gospel always again

comes with the emphatic demand of faith, and connects salvation not with the offer but with true *faith in the offer*, adding to this that whosoever will not believe shall go lost, shall be damned.

Let us get clearly in view what Heyns here says, in connection with what he wrote earlier about the objective right to the blessings of salvation.

First Heyns has taught us that God bestows on all men an objective right to the blessings of salvation in Christ. Emphatically he has written and writes in the words just quoted that this right, which God bestows on all men, also includes the right to the grace of the Holy Spirit whereby He makes us partakers of those benefits of salvation in Christ. The latter includes this, that God has it proclaimed to all men in the gospel: I, the Lord, offer to you, that is, have given you the right to regeneration by the Holy Spirit, to the effectual calling, whereby you will be translated out of darkness into My marvelous light, to faith, whereby you will be filled with true confidence that I not only to others, but also to you grant the forgiveness of sins and eternal life out of grace, unto sanctification as well as to justification, to perseverance, and to glorification.

Now one would say that if the matter actually stands thus, all men shall also actually be saved. For, on the one hand the matter stands thus, that the man to whom this proclamation comes has nothing in the proclamation of this right to the Holy Spirit as long as God does not also realize that right and actually bestow on him the Holy Spirit and His grace. Man is dead in trespasses and sins, and he has nothing in an objective proclamation of a right to the Holy Spirit. And on the other hand, it must nevertheless certainly be accepted that if the Lord God proclaims to man such an excellent right to something which He alone can bestow, He will also realize it. And then that man is certainly saved. There is no escaping it, that on a Reformed, Scriptural basis, if God gives to all men this right, all men shall be saved. But now Heyns teaches us that there are also men who are damned, and that in spite of the fact that they have received a divine right to all these subjective operations of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Now how can that be? How can a man go lost? Heyns says: because and through the fact that he does not believe. Good. But how can a man die in unbelief who has received from God a right to the gift of faith? How can a man go lost through unbelief to whom God has promised that He will bestow upon him faith? This last - and Heyns also sees this - can, of course, not be. Therefore Heyns then also really eliminates faith from the operations of the Holy Spirit and now presents it *as if faith is a demand with which man must comply in order also to get in his subjective possession the salvation to which God has given him an objective right*.

There is the point. There it becomes plain again how thoroughly Arminian the

presentation of Heyns is.

Do not say now that Heyns does not mean it thus. He means this indeed; and this is indeed the way it is also proclaimed from many pulpits.

The matter stands thus for Heyns:

1. God offers salvation to all men in the gospel. That is, He has it proclaimed to all men: I give you a right to the blessings of salvation, both as they are objectively realized in Christ and as those blessings are subjectively applied and bestowed by the Holy Spirit. As far as I am concerned, you can indeed be saved. I will that all men be saved and will bestow upon you all that is necessary unto salvation.
2. However, He demands faith as a condition. God has it proclaimed: if, however, I am actually to bestow on you the salvation and give you the grace of the Holy Spirit, then you must believe in My gospel. Faith is then also for Heyns a bare acceptance of the gospel for true. If the sinner accepts the gospel, then he believes that God has given him a right to the blessings of salvation, and then God bestows on him the grace of the Holy Spirit, and then he is saved.
3. However, if a man does not comply with that demand of faith, does not accept the truth of the gospel, then God does not bestow on him the grace of the Holy Spirit; then he is condemned because he will not believe. And so it comes about that a man who had received from God the right to the grace of the Holy Spirit nevertheless goes lost. But what is this now, except the pure Arminian presentation? It all comes down to this: we are saved by grace, by pure grace; God must do everything through the grace of the Holy Spirit? But whether He will do this depends on whether a man shows a willingness to receive that grace by accepting the gospel!

And that is Arminianism of the purest water!

Chapter 9

The proofs by Heyns

We have pointed out the meaning which the term "offer of grace" has with Prof. Heyns. For the professor this term expresses the same as "placing objectively in possession." And the professor thinks he is able also to adduce proof for the correctness of this presentation from Scripture and the Confession. However, in order to be able to do this he goes a step further and asserts that 'offer of grace' can also mean the same as 'give and bestow'. Or rather, he wants to claim that the terms 'give' and 'bestow', whenever these appear in Scripture and the Confession, often could be exegeted in such a way that they mean the same thing as 'offer of grace and salvation'. In this way the professor finds a considerable amount of proof that his presentation is Scriptural and Reformed.

Let us allow him to speak:

To the Jews of Capernaum the Savior said: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.'

The Catechism in Lord's Day 25, Question 66, describes the promise of the gospel as the glad tidings 'that he grants us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross.' (The Dutch here for 'grants' is '*schenkt*,' one of the two Dutch terms which Prof. Heyns claims have the same meaning as 'offer of grace and salvation' HCH).

In Lord's Day 7, Question 21, the Catechism describes 'true faith,' that is, the faith that is necessary to be 'saved by Christ,' Question 20, saving faith therefore, faith in the gospel, in harmony with the description of the 'promise of the gospel' in Question 66, as follows:

True faith is not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word, but also an assured confidence, which the Holy Ghost works by the gospel, in my heart; that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely *given* by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits.

The Compendium sums up this description in the words: 'It (true faith) is a certain knowledge of God, and of His promises revealed to us in the gospel, and a hearty confidence that all my sins *are forgiven* me, for Christ's sake.'

And after the administration of baptism the Form places on the lips of the congregation a thanksgiving which begins as follows: 'Almighty God and merciful Father, we thank and praise Thee, that Thou *hast forgiven* us, and our children, all our sins, through the blood of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, and received us through Thy Holy Spirit as members of Thine only begotten Son, and *adopted* us to be Thy children, and sealed and confirmed the same unto us by holy baptism.'

The words *give* and *grant* can mean to make actual partaker, to put directly in possession. Thus, for example, when Scripture says that God Himself *gives* to all life and breath and all things. That is giving in the subjective sense. But they can as well mean to extend something to someone in the objective sense, in the sense of offering. It is also giving when one extends a gift to someone, offers to him a gift, in such a way that that gift must be accepted by him and becomes his property only through acceptance. In which sense these words are intended must be determined from the connection in which they appear.

And in all the above-mentioned expressions of Scripture and the Confession the context shows plainly that those words are used in the sense of putting in objective possession, in a sense essentially like the meaning of offer.

Of the Jews in Capernaum we read in the subsequent context of the chapter of nothing except unbelieving resistance, speaking of Jesus contemptuously, of being offended at Him, and of permanently forsaking Him. It was to such Jews that the Lord said: 'My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.' And giving expresses making a partaker. But here there is no possibility of making a partaker in the subjective sense, of making a partaker through the operation of the Holy Spirit in the way of faith, but only of objectively making one a partaker through the gospel that was proclaimed to them by the Savior Himself. In that gospel they received from the Father the true bread from heaven, in such a way that they would be saved if they believed and accepted it, but aggravated their judgment if they did not believe it.

And when the Catechism describes saving faith as 'an assured confidence that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are *freely given* by God' the meaning of this *are freely given* cannot be a being bestowed through the saving impartation of the Holy Spirit. For from this it would follow that saving faith was here described as a firm confidence in one's own saving possession of the benefits of salvation. That would mean that what is here described is what we call the assurance of faith, which is a fruit of saving faith and which is born from saving faith, so that it

is not the same as saving faith, but something else. The Catechism would then make the mistake of answering the question for a definition of saving faith (for the relation in which this question stands to the preceding shows that this is the point) with a description of something else, and such a mistake may not be ascribed to the Catechism. It is true that in this answer a strong faith is described, but then nevertheless a strong saving faith, and that can never be a faith concerning one's own condition, for that is not saving; it is even possible with it to end up being deceived (Matt. 7:22, 23); but saving faith is always faith in the gospel. Thus it is also described here, and consequently 'are freely given' is meant as that takes place through the gospel as offer of grace.

This is equally true of the rest of the passages of the Confessions referred to. For in all of them the words *give* or *grant* are used in connection with the gospel. Giving in the sense of putting in subjective possession, however, does not take place through the gospel, not even in general, but through the Holy Spirit, Who works faith and does so only in the elect.

To this the expression 'are freely given' and 'hast forgiven' do not constitute an exception. Similar expressions are used in the parable of the Unmerciful Servant of Matthew 18. The lord, thus it is stated there, 'loosed him, and forgave him the debt' (vs. 27), and we hear him saying: 'I forgave thee all that debt' (vs. 32). And yet, when that servant treated his fellow servant as he could not have done if he had felt anything of the benefit shown to him and accepted it with any thankfulness, the lord took back that forgiveness, and delivered him over to the tormentors, until he should have paid all that he owed.

Let us attend first to the proof which Heyns thinks to find for his presentation in the Confession and in our Baptism Form.

We ought to be careful here, for actually Heyns here reasons in a circle and tries to confuse us. What Heyns must prove from Scripture and the Confession is not that *giving* and *bestowing* indeed occur in the sense of 'objectively putting in possession', but that the Gospel is an offer of grace to all to whom it comes. Heyns, as far as we have now followed him, has reasoned as follows:

1. The Gospel is a well-meant offer of grace and salvation on God's part to all men.
2. 'Offer' means the same as 'to put in objective possession', to give objective right to the inheritance by the testator.
3. God thus gives in the Gospel to all who hear it this objective right to the

inheritance.

4. But with this God then demands faith in the Gospel. He who does not believe the Gospel had indeed a right to salvation in the objective sense, but nevertheless goes lost.

For this presentation Heyns must now offer proof. Not for the proposition that 'giving' and 'granting' are sometimes used in the sense of 'putting in objective possession'. Now then, when we pay attention to what Heyns quotes from our Heidelberg Catechism, then it will immediately strike us that the power of proof for the proposition of Heyns is entirely lacking in it. We feel this already immediately as soon as we try to substitute the term *offer* for *give* and *grant* in the passages quoted from the Confession. This should after all be possible without doing violence to the sense of the words if the presentation of the professor were correct. For it is his contention that the latter terms are used in the same sense as the former. However, if we apply this, we get the following in Question 66 in our Heidelberg Catechism: "The sacraments are holy visible signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof, he may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel, viz., that he *offers* (in place of: *grants*) us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross." We feel immediately that this does not fit. The meaning of the words would be emasculated by this if we substituted *offers* for *grants*.

Now where does Heyns' mistake lie? First of all in this, that he wants to give to the term *offer* the meaning of 'putting in objective possession'. And *offer* does not mean this in our time. *Offer* formerly meant *present* or *set forth*. And now it does not mean to *give the right to something*. The idea of *right* is not at all present in the term *offer*. *Offer* simply means to make known a willingness to grant something to someone. If that someone accepts it, then he receives it; if he will not accept it, that is altogether his business. The offerer cannot take it ill of the person to whom he offers something that he does not accept that which is offered. But Heyns, with respect to salvation, has given to the term *offer* the content of 'to give the right to something', in this case to the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. And because *offer* can indeed not have this meaning, the word 'offers' does not fit in Question 66 of the Heidelberg Catechism in place of 'grants'.

The second mistake which Heyns makes in this connection is that he wants to understand 'grants' in the sense of 'gives the objective right', without anything more. The subjective application is according to him not included in this word. And also this is mistaken. For the subject in Question 66 is the *promise* of the Gospel. And as we have seen previously, the promise of the Gospel is not only that God has objectively accomplished salvation in Christ and that therefore there is forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, but that promise also includes the promise of the Holy

Spirit, the promise of the subjective application of salvation, the promise of regeneration, of faith, of the forgiveness of sins, justification, and sanctification, and glorification. Concerning that promise of the Gospel Question 66 speaks. If someone believes the promise of the Gospel, then he does not only believe that God has prepared objective salvation, but also that He applies that salvation and makes the elect partaker of it. He *forgives* sins. He *makes alive*; He justifies and sanctifies and glorifies. And saving faith is not simply an accepting for truth of a promise that is set forth, as Heyns wants it, but it is indeed properly the spiritual knowledge of the blessing of forgiveness, the faith not only that God *offers* me forgiveness, but that He grants to me personally that forgiveness, has made me a partaker of it. It is the spiritual knowledge that I am Christ's property, that Christ has died for *me*, that God has reconciled *me* unto Himself, that He has indeed drawn *me* out of darkness into His marvelous light, out of death unto life. All of that is then for *me* the promise of the Gospel. That God grants *me* all of that, objectively and subjectively, then becomes the object of my faith. There is in faith, as Heyns wants to understand it, no life. It is dead. It is really the fruit of a dead and cold reasoning. The reasoning of faith according to the barren and dead presentation of Heyns is always again as follows:

1. God offers to all men salvation in Christ.
2. I am a man, and therefore God offers me salvation.
3. I believe the offer, therefore I am saved.

But it is not thus with true saving faith. Faith is living out of Christ. It is the true spiritual knowledge that I am His property through God's grace, the confidence of love that God has forgiven me all my sins for Christ's sake, the operation in understanding and will of the spiritual tie to the Savior. And therefore *grants* in Question 66 also has a much richer sense than the 'offer' or the 'objective putting in possession' of Heyns.

In the third place, we must not overlook the fact that even though the word 'grants' in Question 66 should have the meaning of 'objective putting in possession' without anything more, and that the latter again could mean the same as 'offer', Heyns nevertheless does not get one step farther in his attempt to prove that the Gospel may be called an offer of grace to all men as far as our Confession is concerned. In Question 66 after all the reference is not to all men, but only to the believers, and therefore only to the elect. The reference is to those in whose hearts the Holy Spirit has worked faith and in whom God will strengthen that faith through the means of the use of the Sacraments. God has instituted the Sacraments in order that He may the more fully declare and seal to *us* the promise of the Gospel, that He grants *us* freely the remission of sin and life eternal out of grace. Now take this granting simply in the sense of objectively putting in possession, and understand the promise of the Gospel simply in that limited sense (something which is not according to Scripture), and then you nevertheless have in Question 66 nothing else than the

truth that God gives the elect the right to the forgiveness of sins and life eternal. Heyns will surely concede this to me. He cannot do otherwise. For his proposition that the Gospel is a well-meant offer of grace and salvation to all sinners who hear it he has produced absolutely no evidence from the confession.

What we wrote above concerning the meaning of Question 66 can also be applied to Question 21 of the Heidelberg Catechism. Especially our last observation is also applicable to that question. For it is the believer who speaks in answer to that question. Even though the 'freely given' in that answer is simply understood as Heyns wants it, one nevertheless thereby advances absolutely nothing by way of proof that the Gospel is an objective putting in possession of salvation for Christ for all who hear it. The believer speaks there. The believer is the elect. To him God has certainly given the right in Christ to everlasting salvation. And it is this that the believer confesses in the answer to Question 21.

That there then also remains no distinction in the presentation of Heyns between the congregation of the Lord and *all men*. between the line of the covenant and the generations of those who are without, between the entire world and us and our children, as far as the promise of the Gospel is concerned, is already self-evident; but it becomes especially clear when we consider what meaning Heyns wants to attach to the prayer of thanksgiving in our Baptism Form. There we read that the congregation thanks God the Father that He has forgiven us and our children all our sins, has received us through the Holy Spirit as members of His only begotten Son, and adopted us to be His children, and that He has sealed and confirmed all this unto us by Baptism. Now Heyns wants to understand all of this in the sense of 'objectively putting in possession' and therefore of 'offering'. According to him we can also render this prayer of thanksgiving as follows: "We thank and praise Thee that Thou dost offer us and our children through the blood of Thy beloved Son the forgiveness of all our sins, the being members of Thine only begotten Son, and the adoption unto children, and that Thou dost seal and confirm this offer by holy baptism." This is strictly according to the presentation of Heyns. Notice now, however, that this 'offer' according to the presentation of Heyns, comes not only to the church, but to all men who hear the Gospel. The Gospel is a general, well-meant offer of grace and salvation. And then you will also see that Heyns removes from the prayer of thanksgiving after baptism all that is specific. He has no church left. What is true for the church is also true for the whole world in so far as it comes into contact with the Gospel of salvation. According to the presentation of Heyns, you could as well pray the prayer of thanksgiving after baptism after an evangelistic sermon on a street corner! Now I know very well that Heyns tries to rescue himself from this difficulty by the assertion that the special privilege of the child of the covenant consists in this, that he receives a certain subjective grace whereby he is put in position to accept or to reject that offered salvation. The covenant child, according to

Heyns, really has a free will unto good and unto evil. But by this the matter is only made worse. This simply demonstrates how dangerous it is once to depart from the pure Reformed truth. And he who then keeps in mind that these things have been taught for years at the Theological School of the Christian Reformed Church, so that many young men have gone into the congregations with this thoroughly false presentation, does not have to wonder any longer at the fact that the situation with respect to the Reformed truth in these churches is so sad.

However, Prof. Heyns appeals for his view also to Holy Scripture. First of all he appeals to John 6:32, where the Savior says to the Jews: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." According to the explanation of Heyns this verse must mean: "My Father puts you objectively in possession, offers you all, head for head, the bread that cometh down from heaven." Now there were among the Jews to whom Jesus directed the word many who did not believe and who were offended at Him. Therefore it must follow that if the explanation of Heyns is correct, we have in these words a general offer of grace. However, there is also another explanation possible. According to this other explanation the word 'giveth' retains its ordinary and full meaning of 'to impart, to make one a possessor'. Only then the 'you' does not refer to all the Jews, head for head and soul for soul, but must be understood in the organic sense. The Savior is speaking to the Old Testament Church, to Israel. That church was also represented among those to whom Jesus was speaking there at Capernaum. For He says to them just a little later: "But there are some of you that believe not," in which it certainly is implied and included that there were also those who did indeed believe. Besides He spoke also to His own disciples. The word of Jesus then means: "My Father gives you, His church, His people, the true bread from heaven." This explanation has everything for it, and nothing against it. In the first place, it has in its favor that it is the ordinary manner of speaking in Holy Scripture. Although Israel is never so wicked, Scripture always addresses the people as the church of God. In the second place, with this explanation we do not need to tamper with the word *giveth*, as Heyns certainly does when he wants to change it into *offers*. And finally, this explanation is also much more in harmony with the context. As far as the word 'giveth' is concerned, this occurs more often in the context. And it occurs not in the sense of *offers*, but in the sense of actually bestowing, imparting, putting in possession. Thus, for example, in verse 37: "All that the father giveth me shall come to me." The present tense of the word *giveth* which is here used proves indeed that it does not have reference to an objective putting in possession, but to the bringing of His own to Jesus by God. Otherwise the Savior would have said: "all that the Father *has given* Me." Thus also in verse 65: "And he said, therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my father." Also here it is plain that the word *give* is used in the sense, not of offer, but of actual putting in possession. And besides the entire context, as already

appears from the verses quoted above, is particular. Thus it is also in verse 39: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." The entire context, therefore, militates against the presentation of Heyns and pleads for our presentation.

The parable of the unmerciful servant, to which Heyns points in conclusion, apparently offers some difficulty. For if we apply the parable in all its parts and transfer it to the reality of the Kingdom of heaven, then it appears to teach that God makes the forgiveness of our sins dependent on our forgiving one another's trespasses. And this also appears at first glance to be the meaning of the conclusion which the Savior draws at the end of the parable: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses." Thus Heyns wants it. The professor has no difficulty. He does not see anything against it to read in a text the presentation that the Lord can forgive someone's guilt in order nevertheless later again to reckon that guilt to his account. But he who values the principle of explaining Scripture with Scripture and who wants to abide by the pure Reformed truth can never find satisfaction with such a method of explanation. For he knows that God is unchangeable. He also knows that with God the forgiveness of debt means the *blotting out* of the debt in the blood of Christ. There is no forgiveness except through atonement, and there is no atonement except through satisfaction, and there is no satisfaction except through the payment of the debt and the bearing of the punishment. If Christ has suffered for someone and has paid the debt for him, that person's sins are forgiven, and that, too, forever, and they can never again be imputed to him. Therefore also another explanation of the parable shall have to be sought, and it will not be possible simply to transfer the parable in all its parts to the spiritual reality of the Kingdom of heaven. And then the explanation is certainly not to be sought in a change on God's part, so that He at one time forgives someone's sins, only to impute them to him again later; but the explanation is to be sought in the subjective experience of the forgiveness of sins. He who is altogether unable to forgive his brother his trespasses has also never felt the need of the forgiveness of his own sins, much less tasted the great blessedness of that forgiveness. But also in the relative sense of the word it is true that the child of God cannot taste and experience the forgiveness of his sins, that the Holy Spirit does not cause him to experience that grace in his heart, that the prayer for forgiveness dies on his lips and the heavens remain closed for him, as long as he does not forgive his brother his trespasses. He who never can forgive does not only not taste the forgiving grace of God, but such a person's sins are also not blotted out, and his debt is also not remitted in the objective sense of the word. But he whose sins are indeed blotted out in the blood of Christ also does not always *taste* the forgiving grace of God, namely, not when he does not forgive the brother. In that sense it is true that our heavenly Father does not forgive us our trespasses unless

we also forgive one another from the heart. And therefore, for the forgiveness of our sins it is precisely requisite that we can pray from the heart: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors their debts".

Chapter 10.

Heyns' appeal to Scripture

Now that we have somewhat reviewed and judged Heyns' method of argumentation, it does not surprise us that with him we find many more texts which are supposed to prove that Holy Scripture teaches a general, well-meant offer of grace and salvation than with anyone else. If such terms as 'proclaim', 'bestow', 'forgive', etc. are supposed to mean the same as 'offer', then Scripture is simply full of the general offer. That this method of reasoning, however, does not hold water in the light of Scripture and in the light of our Confessions became clear in the preceding chapter. Nevertheless we also want to pay attention in detail to some of the most important passages of Scripture to which Heyns appeals, in order to prevent even the appearance of evil, as though we intend to pass by in silence the texts which Heyns holds before us. Even though it is true that on his part Heyns does not touch with so much as a finger, and also can never explain, the many passages of Scripture to which we have repeatedly called attention in order to prove that Scripture clearly teaches the very opposite of a general offer, we shall not follow that tactic with respect to the texts adduced by him. However, do not take it ill of us if we do not treat every single text mentioned by him. Many of these we have previously discussed repeatedly, as in "Grace Not an Offer" and in "A Triple Breach". It will be sufficient to refer to these works. Besides, the texts cited by Heyns really all come down to the same thing. In his explanation and application of them to the matter of the general offer the professor always commits the same error. Hence, it may be considered sufficient if we here call attention to some of the most important texts.

[Translator's note: The author in this paragraph calls attention to two booklets from his pen which deal with the same subject and in which many of the texts adduced by Prof. Heyns are explained. One of these was published in an English translation: *A Triple Breach in the Foundation of the Reformed Truth*. This was originally written and published in the Dutch language. *Drie Scheuren in het Fundament der Gereformeerde Waarheid*, and was a reply to a brochure by Prof. L. Berkhof entitled *De Drie Punten in Alle Deelen Gereformeerd (The Three Points in All Parts Reformed)*. The other had as its full title *Een Kracht Gods Tot Zaligheid of Genade Geen Aanbod (A Power of God Unto Salvation or Grace Not an Offer)*. This was written in response to articles by a Rev. H. Keegstra in the Christian Reformed magazine *De Wachter*. This latter work has to date not been translated into English. HCH]

And then we call attention first of all to the fact that Prof. Heyns really has found two *loci classici*, two standard texts, according to which he wants to explain the whole of Scripture, at least when it comes to two elements of his view. With respect to the first element in his argumentation which must be proved, the professor refers

to Isaiah 45:22. However, let us allow him to say what he wants with this passage. He writes as follows:

With respect to the preceding concerning the Gospel as a general, well-meant offer of grace, there are two things which had to be established by declarations of Holy Scripture, but for which up to now no proof has been furnished.

First of all, that limitation to the elect in the manner in which that must take place on the basis of God's Word with such texts as I Cor. 15:22 may not take place with such Gospel invitations as Isaiah 55:1 and Matthew 11:28-30, not only because there is no basis for this in God's Word, but because this brings God's Word into conflict with itself.

Proof for this is to be found in the Gospel invitation, in the offer of grace of Isaiah 45:22, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Here there comes in words not capable of a twofold explanation the invitation to come to God and to be saved by Him Who only can save to *all men* to the utmost bounds of the inhabited world, altogether in harmony with the mandate of the Savior to preach the Gospel to *all creatures*.

More proof is not necessary for him who acknowledges that Scripture must be explained in harmony with itself. A Gospel invitation, an offer of grace and salvation so unmistakably and incontestably to all men, whoever or whatever they may be, as a personal message for them and to them, is decisive for the conception which we must have of all other passages: for no other passage can be in conflict with it. Isaiah 45:22 exposes the limitation of other Gospel invitations to the elect or to the spiritually qualified - in any event to the few to the exclusion of the many - as a twisting of Scripture with the help of arbitrary eisegesis. Besides, this will be established by the Scriptural proof to which we can appeal for the other (element).

Now Heyns should not take it ill of us if we express our amazement at the method which he here defends. We have asked ourselves whether our esteemed opponent, who can so sharply attack the rationalistic method of explaining Scripture, who calls the devil the chief teacher of the method which wants to explain Scripture in the light of the *many* texts which *clearly* teach predestination (and it is also not at all a question *who* the professor has in view when he writes this) does not now himself carry the rationalistic interpretation to the extreme when in the light of one single text he considers even the possibility to be excluded that other texts could be explained in a limiting sense. But we have noticed more often that with all his sharp language and severe judgments and accusations, Heyns himself does precisely the

things of which he accuses others. But besides, this is too naive, is it not? One single text could be deemed sufficient for the proposition that Scripture may nowhere be understood in a limiting sense? That has certainly never yet been the method of Reformed men.

In addition to this there is the fact that Isaiah 45:22 can certainly not serve the purpose which Heyns imagines. If the professor had been willing to take the trouble to investigate the text carefully, especially also in the light of the context, he would surely not have appealed to it as a standard text for his view. In the first place, we do not have here an offer, but a calling and a promise which is completely limited by the content of the calling. "Look unto me", - that is the calling. That is altogether different from an offer. And note carefully that it is God, the Lord of heaven and earth, Who has created the heavens and formed the earth and made it, Who is the Lord, and there is no God beside Him (vss. 18, 21), Who here calls. And when He calls, then no creature has the right to neglect that calling, to cast it to the winds, to despise it, to act as if He does not call. The creature must answer. He must say Yes or No. For God is GOD. And the idols are no gods. "Look unto me" means: "Turn away from the idols, forsake them, and bow down before Me in the acknowledgement that I alone am God, and that there is none beside Me." And then the creature says, "Yes, Lord, Thou alone art God", or he says, "No, Lord, I will never acknowledge Thee", and, "Yes, idol, thou art my God". And in both instances God is justified when He judges. He judges concerning the first: be saved; and over the second: be accursed! There is no offer whatsoever in the text, therefore. *Precisely because God is GOD, He can never offer anything.* Offering is not a divine work. He who says that God offers something does not know God, reduces God to an idol! What we do indeed have in the text is: calling and promise. The text is thoroughly particular in its content. Expressed dogmatically, the text intends to say: "He who looks unto me shall be saved: for I am God, and there is none beside Me!" But I will go even further. I will also deny that the *general* element which Heyns thinks he finds in the text, as though here salvation is offered or promised to all men, head for head and soul for soul, is altogether missing from it. Heyns wants to make of the text an offer, and to make of "all the ends of the earth" all men. And in both instances he does violence to Scripture. Not only do the words "all the ends of the earth" surely not mean *all men*, but also in the light of the context they cannot possibly mean that. Notice that the following context also very plainly teaches that God does not only call all the ends of the earth, but that all the ends of the earth also actually come and are saved. For the chapter continues as follows in the immediate context: "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." And that this is intended in the saving sense appears plainly from the immediately following verse (24): "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come." The ends of the earth, therefore, also come. From the east

and west and north and south they look unto the Lord. And they are also saved. Now is that all men? Certainly not, for at the end of verse 24 we read: "and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed". And if then you finally ask: but who then are these ends of the earth which look unto the Lord and are saved by the almighty word of righteousness that is gone out of his mouth? Then verse 25 tells us that all the seed of Israel is meant: "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory". And if Heyns understands prophecy and is not a Chiliast, then he will grant me that 'the ends of the earth' and 'every knee and tongue' mean the same as 'all the seed of Israel', the same also as 'all Israel' in Romans 11:26, i.e., spiritual Israel, the elect from the ends of the earth. [The author later changed his interpretation of 'all Israel' in Romans 11:26, cf. his *God's Eternal Good Pleasure, in loco.*] But 'the ends of the earth' never mean all men. This is not even true if you should understand verse 21 as referring only to the external call. It was still eight hundred years after this word was spoken by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah that even that external call, in so far at least as it goes forth through the preaching of the gospel, came to all the ends of the earth. And even thereafter it did not go forth to all men. There is, therefore, no single respect in which the explanation which Heyns wants to give of this text holds good. His explanation is in every respect wrong. There is no offer; the entire context is very particular; Heyns himself is compelled to understand *every* knee and *every* tongue in a limited sense; and his explanation also does not fit reality. Heyns will now also concede this to me. And, if he is willing to accept advice from me, serious advice, then I would counsel him, in the first place, not to let everything depend on one text; but in case he nevertheless wants to do that, then not to treat that one text so superficially. At stake, is it not true, is the knowledge which God's church will have of Scripture.

The second element in the reasoning of Heyns he wants to prove especially with an appeal to Ezekiel 33:11. This second element which must be proved is that God wills the salvation of all men without exception. Also here we shall allow Heyns to speak for himself:

That other element is that with which we concluded our preceding article, namely, that although God unchangeably executes His decrees of election and reprobation, He nevertheless is and remains the God Who, as He expressly and repeatedly declares in His Word, does not will the destruction but the salvation of all His creatures.

Such a declaration we have *par excellence* in Ezekiel 33:11, I As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

This declaration is expressly directed to the *wicked*, testifying to the wicked that God has no pleasure in their death but in their life in the way of conversion. It is a declaration sworn with a solemn oath; and it is a declaration in which lies the ground for a serious admonition and a poignant question.

Undoubtedly that word *wicked* is used by the Lord intentionally. A wicked man is a man who lives wickedly, who is not concerned about God's commandments and who walks in a way of unrighteousness, who even among men is recognized as a wicked man and is considered wicked by them. If the Lord has no pleasure in the death of such a wicked man, then it is certain that He has no pleasure in the death of any man. His death, which according to the righteous judgment of God shall certainly strike him if he does not repent, is to the Lord not a matter in which He has pleasure, not something which He desires, which is enjoyable for Him. To declare that is to declare that there dwells in the heart of God love toward the wicked, a love of sinners, love which desires and seeks for its objects not evil but good. If the text only stated that God has pleasure therein, that the wicked turn and live, then we could still think that the wicked, so long as he does not turn, so long as he is a wicked man, is the object of God's undivided wrath and aversion; but by the words that He has no pleasure in their death it is expressed that this is not so, that with God love toward the wicked is not excluded, but that there is with Him a love toward the wicked which asserts itself so much that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Once again, that is love for sinners.

* * * * *

"When, however, one thinks that the Gospel can be a well-meant offer of grace and salvation not for all to whom it comes, but only for the elect, then this text would have to be read as follows:

As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the elect wicked, but that the elect wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye from your evil ways, O elect of the house of Israel, for why will ye die?

Can that be? Does such a reading make good sense? Does it fit in the context of the text? Or does such a reading do violence to the text?

And then Heyns proceeds to make it plain that the attempt to read here 'elect wicked' does violence to the text.

Now to begin with the last item, we can certainly agree with the professor when he says that we would do violence to the text if we would read: "I have no pleasure in the death of the elect wicked, but that the elect sinner turn and live. Turn thou, O elect

sinner!" I do not believe that Heyns has ever heard of such a reading. He exactly demonstrates by writing this that he understands neither the text nor the explanation of his opponents. At least I do not want to believe that he does not write about these things in all seriousness. And thus he here makes a straw man, in order then in the following paragraphs in all seriousness to take aim at it. Surely, if there would be found anyone who would read the text in this manner, he would not only do violence to the text, but he would rob the text of all its power. And that, not because there is in this text even the least comfort for the reprobate (the sinner who does not turn), still less because the text teaches that God loves the reprobate (the sinner who does not turn); neither because there is here a well-meant offer of grace for the reprobate wicked (the sinner who does not turn), for the latter could not even understand the text thus; but for the simple reason that the viewpoint of the text is not that of God's sovereign predestination, neither of election nor of reprobation. The viewpoint is *ethical*. The question is: how shall we then live, if we pine away in our sins? Is there hope for the sinner with God? Therefore the answer is: Most assuredly, in the way of conversion. The sinner will taste that God is merciful and kind, that He abundantly forgives, *if he turns*. The viewpoint, therefore, is thoroughly ethical. Indeed, the sinner who turns is the elect; and indeed, the sinner who does not turn is the reprobate. But you would nevertheless do violence to the text if you would insert the terms of predestination here in the place of *wicked* and *converted*. For the divine *demand* of conversion does not come only to the elect, but also to the reprobate; and it comes not to the elect and the reprobate *qua talis*, that is, considered as predestinated, but as rational, moral creatures. And viewed thus, it then remains forever true that the way of life for the sinner is the way of conversion. Heyns can also see this. We do not read the text as Heyns presents it.

In the second place, it will also not be difficult for professor Heyns to discern that there is in this text not only no general, well-meant offer, but even *no offer whatsoever*. Heyns says that there is, but he will never be able to make this plain. If you carefully analyze the text in all its parts, then you get the following:

- a. God says something about Himself. He says that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; that He indeed has pleasure in his turning and living.
- b. God swears that which He says of Himself with an oath: "As I live...."
- c. On the ground of this oath, in which God makes known what pleases Him, He comes to the house of Israel with the demand and the calling to turn.

If God indeed has pleasure in the turning and the life of the wicked, why then should they die? Surely, only because they hate God and love the way of wickedness! There is therefore absolutely no offer in this text. Even if it should be true that we may read the text, "I have no pleasure in the death of any wicked", Heyns would still gain nothing by way of proof for his presentation of a well-meant offer. Also this the professor will surely discern.

In the third place, I also believe that it will not be difficult for me to convince Heyns that there is also in the text no element of a *general love for sinners*. If people had not long become accustomed to such terms in the Christian Reformed Churches, they would be horror-stricken if they would read of a professor in the Theological School that he believed in a general love for sinners. Pray, what is after all the difference between such a general love for sinners and general saving grace? Everyone will grant that there is no difference. Heyns himself can discern no difference. And what now is the difference between this presentation and that which our fathers at the Synod of Dordt condemned as unscriptural and un-Reformed? There is no difference. And yet Heyns proclaims this general love for sinners in the above-quoted paragraphs without scruple. God desires the salvation of all His creatures, writes the professor; that is here, therefore of all men. Therefore the term *wicked* may not be limited in Ezekiel 33:11. God loves all the wicked, with the desire to save them, with a great love for sinners. And He swears this here with an oath! And when Heyns writes all this then there appears to be no one whose hair stands on end, then there is no one any more in the Christian Reformed Churches who reaches for his pen! How is the gold become dim! And yet it is not difficult to convince even Heyns that the text in Ezekiel 33:11 precisely does not teach this, teaches it so little that no wicked man could even receive that impression from the text. I will not now speak of 'elect' and 'reprobate' wicked as Heyns thinks I have to do in order to deny a general offer. This is not the viewpoint of the text, as I have already remarked. But I shall indeed make distinction between 'wicked who turn' and 'wicked who do not turn'. This distinction is very plainly based on the text itself. And then I make bold to say that also Heyns does not have the courage to read the text thus: "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, whether he turns or does not turn." In the first place, this would be altogether in conflict with Holy Scripture. For His Name's sake God indeed has holy pleasure, not in this, that the wicked do not turn, for that displeases Him; but indeed in this, that He casts the wicked who does not turn into everlasting destruction. God shall even laugh at his destruction. To prove this I would have a hundred texts at hand, but I proceed from the supposition that Heyns knows these texts as well as I. In the second place, such an explanation does not take into account the second part of the text. It simply will not do to apply *wicked* in the first part to *all* wicked without distinction. Such an explanation also does violence to the text. For in the first part the Lord says in what He has *no* pleasure; in the second part He says in what He *indeed* has pleasure. We have to do here, therefore, with a contrast. Now the Lord says in the second part that He has pleasure herein, that the wicked *turn and live*. He has pleasure, therefore, in the life of the wicked *only* in case he turns. Turning and life are inseparably tied to one another. But from this it also follows then that the wicked who do not turn are in the first part of the text excluded. So that we must undoubtedly read the text as follows: "I have no pleasure therein, that the wicked does not turn and dies, but therein, that he turns and lives". He who does not turn is certainly slain by God with everlasting death;

and in death as the punishment of sin God certainly has pleasure, for it is a demonstration of His righteousness. But he who turns shall live, *not because he turns*, for that could never merit life for him, nor could it blot out his previous sins; but because God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked who turns, but in eternal mercy has blotted out his transgressions! And thus Heyns shall have to grant me that there is precisely no general love of sinners in the text, but exactly a love to the sinner who turns.

And so, finally, Heyns shall also have to concede that although no mention is made here of the elect and the reprobate as such, the text is nevertheless so particular in its content that there is absolutely no possibility that the reprobate ungodly could gain the impression that God here promises or offers him something. He has no part in these things. For he just exactly never turns. On the other hand, the text, also by virtue of its context, is precisely intended as rich comfort for God's elect people. For they are after all the wicked who do indeed turn. And Heyns will grant me that that turning is a gift of God, a gift of His grace, through His Spirit and Word. The professor will also grant me that God bestows that gift of conversion on whom He will, and that He bestows it only out of pure, sovereign grace on His elect. And if then those elect, those wicked who turn, cannot comprehend that they even in the way of repentance shall receive life - after all, their conversion does not blot out their guilt and does not give them the right to life - then God swears by Himself that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but therein, that in the way of conversion they should receive life. Turn ye, turn ye, O house of Israel (God speaks here after all also to the church), for why should ye die? If I had not been merciful toward you with an eternal mercy, then you would have to die in your sins; then no turning would be of any avail, nor would a way of conversion be open. But now it is different. There is no reason why ye should die. Turn to Me, then, and live!

Chapter 11.

Heyns' appeal to Scripture (continued)

Although Professor Heyns thinks that the two texts which we discussed in the previous chapter may really be considered decisive for the whole issue, he nevertheless refers to many texts which, according to him, teach a general, well-meant offer of grace and salvation. We shall discuss the most important of these.

And then we may mention, first of all, Matthew 11:28-30:

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.

Under discussion here is especially the first verse of this section. Heyns thinks that we may not here limit 'ye that labor and are heavy laden', but that this refers to all men without distinction. And thus the professor thinks that he is finished with the proof for a general offer in this text.

Now we may remark, first of all, that even though we would concede to Heyns that the laboring and heavy laden mentioned in the text are all men, he would still be not one step farther with his proof for a general offer. The case is simply this, that also here we have no offer. Heyns reads an offer in every text. But if he looks carefully and studies the text somewhat, then he himself will discern that there is in this text not only no general offer, but no offer whatsoever. What we have also here - this is so plain that the simplest can see this immediately - is a calling and a promise; and the promise is not to all without distinction, but only to those who heed and obey the calling. The calling is: "Come unto me!" The promise is: "I will give you rest." If therefore we cast the text in the form of a dogmatic declaration, then we get this: Christ promises all who come to Him rest of soul. Thus the Canons have it also, in head 3/4, article 8. Well. But now Heyns shall also discern for himself that this is, in the first place, no offer: and that, in the second place, there is no general element in it. What Heyns sees as an offer is a calling and a promise. And what Heyns asserts to be general is precisely very particular: the promise pertains only to those who come to Christ. And this coming to Christ is an act of faith. Coming to Jesus is by no means as simple as it is presented to be in many Methodistic revival meetings and in street preaching, or as it is presented to be in many corrupt hymns. It implies, in the first place, that he who comes to Jesus has knowledge, spiritual knowledge, of his own sin and misery, and has come to acknowledge before the Lord that all his righteousnesses are filthy rags, so that his own works cannot serve as righteousness before God. He is lost in himself. He is a poor sinner. He is empty. There is in him no righteousness and holiness, no wisdom and no knowledge; nothing but guilt and sin and corruption, nothing but foolishness and darkness and enmity

against God. It implies, in the second place, that he has learned to know Christ in all the fullness of His salvation, of righteousness and holiness, of wisdom and knowledge of God, and complete redemption: has learned to know not merely in the sense of knowing about Him, but in the spiritual sense, which becomes manifest in the longing to possess Him, in order that His fullness may fill his own emptiness. All that is of Christ has become altogether desirable. This coming to Jesus includes, in the third place, that one completely casts away his own work, in order to cast himself at the feet of the Savior, trusting only in His suffering and death and resurrection, with the plea, "Be merciful to me, a sinner!" And it implies, in the fourth place, finally, that a man embraces Him through faith, becomes conscious that he belongs to Him, and now is a partaker of all His benefits.

Now to those who thus come to Jesus, in order to abandon themselves upon Him alone, the Savior promises rest: rest of soul, consisting in this, that the soul enters into the finished work that has come to light through the resurrection of Christ and the everlasting rest that remaineth for the people of God. And thus understood, Heyns also will no longer maintain that we have here a general offer of grace and salvation, but discern that we have to do with a very particular promise. This will become plain to the professor especially if in this connection he keeps in mind that the Savior Himself very plainly teaches us that those who come are the elect. For: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." And also: "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father" (John 6:37, 65). And again: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him," verse 34. Heyns also knows these texts. He also, with me, wants to explain Scripture in its own light. Well, then, let Heyns then simply bring these words of the Savior in connection with Matthew 11:28, and he will see that his assertion that we have in the latter passage a general offer of grace and salvation is not valid. The Savior promises rest. To whom? To those who come to Him. Who are those who come to Him? They who are given Him by the Father, they who are drawn by the Father. And who are drawn by the Father? The elect. There is no escaping it. Also Matthew 11:28 is thoroughly particular. And the particular character of the text does not for a moment depend upon a certain explanation of 'laboring and heavy laden', as Heyns thought.

Furthermore, we do not concede, even though the particular character of the text does not depend on this, that 'laboring and heavy laden' are all men. And we also deem it important that the text should not be explained in that general sense, because precisely those to whom the promise pertains would lose the comfort and encouragement which is in this word for them, through such an explanation. And this may not be. The bread of the children may not be cast before the dogs. Also Heyns must see himself placed before the unavoidable question, if he wants to

explain the text: in what sense does the Savior mean laboring and heavy laden here? Someone can be weary and heavy laden in the physical sense of the word, and Heyns will grant me that these can be excluded here. Men can also be weary of soul in the natural sense of the word. They can be bowed down under the burdens of life, burdens of every sort. And also such men are not meant by the Savior. About this there is no dispute. No; this weariness belongs to the same category as the rest which the Savior promises. And therefore it must be understood in the spiritual sense. There are men who are weary because they seek after righteousness, but can find nothing else but sin. Men who say of their sins that as a heavy burden they are too heavy to them. And this can simply not be said of all men. Although therefore we freely concede that there are all sorts of burdens borne, also all sorts of weariness in the world and that apart from the text under discussion it certainly can be said that all men are weary and heavy laden, nevertheless we maintain that they are not weary and heavy laden in the sense in which the Savior promises them rest, that is, in the true spiritual sense of the word. Although therefore this call of the Savior indeed comes to all who hear the Gospel, nevertheless every hearer of this call demonstrates by coming or not coming whether he is weary of sin or whether he loves sin. Through the calling separation comes about. And through the calling the Savior mentions His own by name. They come and receive the rest which remains for the people of God.

Finally, this altogether particular character of the text is very plainly confirmed by both the broader and the immediate context. In the broader context the Savior speaks of two sons of men from the viewpoint of their attitude over against the preaching of the kingdom of heaven. The one class is the violent, who since the days of John the Baptist already take the kingdom of heaven by force. It makes no difference to them who proclaim the gospel of the kingdom. They certainly enter in. They have waited long for that kingdom. And now John proclaims that it is at hand, and as it were through his preaching sets the door of that kingdom ajar and they press to enter in. And also when Jesus comes and proclaims the same Gospel, they manifest themselves as the same violent who are desirous to enter in. But over against that spiritually strong generation there is also another generation which the Savior compares with children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows: "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." They always stand wrong over against the kingdom of heaven and never enter in. They always find an excuse for their refusal to enter in. In the case of John they piped, and wanted him to dance; but John the Baptist was a Nazarite and could not dance. He came neither eating nor drinking. And when John did not dance to their piping, they said of him that he had a devil. Who can endure it in the desert, with locusts and wild honey? But then came Jesus, Who was no Nazarite, Who could not be conquered by the world, but came in order to overcome the world, Who therefore came eating and drinking. But when He came, they

mourned unto Him and wanted Him to lament. And when Jesus continued to eat and to drink, they said of Him that He was a glutton and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. Meanwhile, neither upon the preaching of John, nor at that of Jesus, did they enter in. And then follows the pronouncement of judgment upon that miserable generation as it came to manifestation especially under the preaching of Jesus and under His many works at Capernaum, at Chorazin, and at Bethsaida. And as far as the immediate context is concerned, there the Savior resumes as it were that twofold effect of His preaching, revealing and hiding, and with it turns in thanksgiving to the Father, to Whom He ascribes that twofold fruit. It is all according to the good pleasure of the Father: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." In the light of this context, Heyns will grant me, the very possibility of suddenly thinking in verse 28 of a general, well-meant offer of grace and salvation fails.

In Isaiah 55:1, 2, to which the professor also refers, we have to do with a text similar to Matthew 11:28. Hence, we do not consider it necessary to discuss this passage in depth.

As far as II Corinthians 5:20 is concerned, we have already pointed out earlier that the English translation is undoubtedly preferable: "Be ye reconciled to God." In the first place, this is in harmony with the form of the original word here used: but, in the second place, it also adheres more closely to the idea of reconciliation. The Dutch *'laat u met God verzoenen'* leaves the impression as though reconciliation is really a work which comes about through both God and man. There are then two parties who reconcile with one another, just as is the case among men. Now that God is already reconciled, you must now also be reconciled with God, even as God has reconciled Himself with you, and reconciliation is an accomplished fact. As long as you do not become reconciled, reconciliation is finished only from one side; then it is not complete. But if you become reconciled with God, peace is accomplished. Or, if they do not present it thus, they nevertheless come with the presentation that God is indeed willing to reconcile you; if now you also let yourself be reconciled, something to which God then prays you through the Gospel, you are actually reconciled with the Most High. But neither of these presentations is according to Scripture. *In reconciliation God is His own party.* Thus it is also with God's covenant in general. There is no covenant concluded between God and man. God is GOD! Man is never a party over against God. God's covenant is solely God's. And He establishes His covenant with whom He will. It is no different with reconciliation. God and man do not reconcile with one another. Whoever would say that would thereby reveal that he understood nothing of it, would especially show that he does not understand that God is GOD. God reconciles. And He reconciles not Himself, but the sinner, His

people. And that reconciliation is the blotting out of guilt through satisfaction of the justice of God over against sin in the blood of the cross. It is then also an accomplished fact through the death and resurrection of Christ. Whether anyone is reconciled with God does not depend on him, but only on his being in Christ Who died for us and is raised again. And on the ground of that objective fact of reconciliation God now comes, not with an offer of reconciliation to all men, but with the serious calling, with the prayer to His people: "Be ye reconciled to Me! Reconciliation is an accomplished fact, for I have reconciled you in Christ; believe now My word of reconciliation which I have laid in the apostles, and through faith enter into that reconciled relationship also before your own consciousness and with your entire life! Let that reconciliation rule your entire life, so that you no longer live unto yourself, but unto Him Who died for you and is raised again! For if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, Old things are passed away; behold, all is become new."

If Professor Heyns carefully reads the context of this text, he shall have to agree with this explanation. For the apostle writes here to the church. This may not be overlooked. In the context this even stands emphatically on the foreground. The context is precisely concerned with the light in which the apostle views the congregation and according to which he judges her. It is the judgment which is determined by the love of Christ toward His church. That love constrains Him unto this judgment, that if one died for all, then are all dead. That *all* is the elect (verse 15). Heyns will grant me this if he does not want to embrace entirely the error of a *Christus pro omnibus*. Well, then: He has died for all in order that they should no more live to themselves, but to Him Who died for them and is raised again. Therefore the apostle judges that the congregation must be considered as the gathering of new creatures; the old is passed away, all is become new. That this does not hold for all, head for head, who belong to the church on earth, makes no difference as far as this judgment concerning the congregation is concerned. The apostle knows no man after the flesh. Now then, all these new things are of God and find their basis in reconciliation. For God was in Christ reconciling the world (here, the elect world out of all nations) unto Himself (not Himself with the world), not imputing their trespasses unto them. Reconciliation, which is the firm basis of the preaching, is an accomplished fact. And because He has committed the word of reconciliation unto the apostles, therefore the apostles must preach that reconciliation and on the ground of it come to the congregation and to all whom the Lord will call thereto, with the lovely prayer: "Be ye reconciled with God!" Also according to the context, therefore, you have here a very particular basis in reconciliation, a very particular call of God to His church on the ground of that reconciliation, and a very particular outcome: the elect enter into that reconciliation by divine grace through faith and become new creatures.

This does not mean, of course, that the preaching of reconciliation and the prayer of God to enter into that reconciliation is not heard by others than the elect. The preaching of particular reconciliation, the demand of God unto repentance, is general, or at least common. This hearing of the general proclamation of reconciliation also compels an answer. And the negative answer of the natural man, "I will not be reconciled with God!" also aggravates his judgment. For it brings to manifestation the dreadful character of sin as enmity against God. But this does not change the fact that you do not have here a general offer, well-meant on God's part, in which He offers to all men to reconcile them with Himself, but the proclamation of a very particular reconciliation, on the ground of which the church enters into salvation.

Chapter 12.

Heyns' appeal to Scripture (continued)

Though everything should have warned him that an appeal to Proverbs 9:1-6 would end in disappointment, Heyns nevertheless also turns to this passage of Scripture to find support for his contention that God wills that all men shall be saved and that the Gospel is a well-meant offer of salvation on God's part to all men.

What should have restrained him is, first of all, the character and the content of the book of Proverbs. For that character is thoroughly spiritual-ethical. Proverbs deals throughout with spiritual-ethical values. It speaks of wisdom and prudence, of knowledge and understanding, of righteousness and purity, of truth and justice, of beneficence and mercy, of humility and valor, of diligence and skill, of correction and moderation. And it presents all of these as arising out of the deep principle of the fear of the Lord. It is not simply an external life according to the law that Proverbs has in view; no humanistic worldly wisdom is proclaimed in this book; but the book assumes throughout the absolute position that there is no knowledge and understanding, no wisdom and prudence, no righteousness and purity, etc., apart from the fear of the Lord. This explains the fact, too, that the book of Proverbs is so stringently antithetical. Over against wisdom, etc., stand foolishness, lewdness, stupidity, filthiness, lying, unrighteousness, unfaithfulness, gluttony, injustice and oppression, cruelty which even in its mercy is still cruel; and all these are rooted in the principle of ungodliness; they are present where the fear of the Lord is missing. Already this spiritual-ethical character of the book should have restrained the professor from seeking comfort from this passage of Scripture. For all that has to do with spiritual-ethical values runs along a very strict line, does not allow for delusion, cannot be twisted, and also cannot be generalized. You simply cannot hawk the wares of wisdom and of righteousness on the path of folly and wickedness. You cannot sweetly offer to everyone the blessedness which can only be known and tasted in the way of the fear of the Lord. In the sphere of the spiritual-ethical everything is inexorable. You can proclaim woe to the ungodly if he does not forsake the way of wickedness. You can promise blessing and salvation to all who forsake the way of wickedness and who turn to the Lord. But you cannot distort things. And the deep cause of this lies again in this, that God is GOD. It always comes down to this. Heyns has a wrong conception of God. He has a God Who loves also the wicked *as such*. Who is filled with pity toward him. Who in mercy seeks his good even in the way of wickedness. And that God is no God. If Heyns would understand that this can never be, that God cannot love the sinner *qua talis* even for the smallest conceivable moment, then he would as a matter of course arrive at that God Who in sovereign love has so known and willed His people from before the foundation of the world that He sees in them no transgression. Then he would always and again

arrive at election. Then he would always have to acknowledge that God loves the people whom He sees in Christ from eternity. And that is the God of the Scriptures!

In the second place, also the context following upon Proverbs 9:1-6 should have restrained Heyns from appealing to this passage for a general, well-meant offer of grace and salvation. I can hardly imagine that Heyns did not read that context. If one reads verses 1-6, can he simply stop reading at that point? And if Heyns did indeed read the following verses, then I do not understand how he nevertheless persisted in his intention to hold the first six verses of this chapter before us and to appeal to them for the doctrine of a general offer. For in the verses which follow it becomes as clear as can be that Wisdom simply does not approach all and does not intend to cast her pearls before the swine, neither intends that her 'maidens' shall do this. Let us read these verses in their context:

Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the highest places of the city. Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him. Come, eat of my bread. And drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

[Translator's note. In the edition of the Dutch Authorized Version (*Statenvertaling*) in use when this was written, verse 4 reads: "Wie is slecht? Hij keere zich herwaarts! Tot den verstandelooze zegt zij.... This is in English: "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him...." The argument in this section turns on the meaning of the Dutch word *slecht*, which does not even appear in later Dutch editions, and which is translated 'simple' in the KJV, and correctly so. The reader should keep this in mind when he reads this segment. Incidentally – and this is something to which the author does not call attention – Prof. Heyns in this instance evidently failed also to work from the original Hebrew; if he had done so, he would not have made this erroneous argument based on a misapprehension of the Dutch term *slecht*. HCH]

Thus far runs the passage, verses 1-6, to which Heyns appeals. But Wisdom continues and says:

He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

If Heyns will take the trouble to pay attention to these latter words and to read the preceding verses in their context, then he will, with me, have to come to the following explanation. Wisdom does not turn here to the scorners and to the wicked. The scorner and the wicked are the same. A wicked man is basically always a scorner, or

mockers. He mocks wisdom and despises correction. Therefore he who rebukes and corrects the wicked gets to himself shame. To him, therefore, Wisdom does not turn. It would be casting pearls before the swine. He turns to the wise and he instructs the righteous. Also the righteous, or just, and the wise man are the same. The righteous is the wise, and he alone. For wisdom in the book of Proverbs is not an intellectual but a thoroughly spiritual and ethical concept. Through instruction a wise man will become still wiser and the righteous man will increase in doctrine. Heyns will grant me this. But then still more will become plain to him. If Wisdom so emphatically refuses to instruct the scorner and the wicked man and to cast her pearls before the swine, then it will also be clear that she does not do this in verse 4: "Whoso is simple (Here, remember, is the word *slecht* in the older Dutch version. HCH), let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." It is foolish to suppose that in verse 4 Wisdom goes flatly contrary to her own admonition of verse 8. There is then but one conclusion possible: the simple (Dutch: *slechten*) and those wanting understanding of verse 4 are *not* the *scorners* and *wicked* of verses 7 and 8, but the *wise* and *just* of verse 9. And do not say now that this is impossible, because a wise man cannot be lacking in understanding and a righteous man cannot be *slecht*, for then you would only make it impossible to understand Scripture here. [I purposely use the Dutch word *slecht* ("simple" in the KJV) because here that Dutch term is crucial to the argumentation. In modern Dutch it means "bad, evil," and this is the way Heyns mistakenly took it. HCH] *Slecht* here does not have the meaning of evil or wicked, but of *simple*, and refers to those who are not yet far advanced in the knowledge of wisdom. Who therefore are in the midst of the world easily exposed to the lusts of temptation. This is the meaning of the original word. Thus it is also translated in the English version: "whoso is simple." This is also the meaning of the same word in Psalm 19:8, "... *den slechten wijsheid gevende*." [Translator's note: Here you have the same differences of rendering. The more recent Dutch version has, "...den eenvoudige wijsheid gevende." And this is similar to the English of the KJV in this verse: "... making wise the simple" HCH]. And thus everyone among us who is somewhat acquainted with the Dutch language knows the word 'slecht'. But thus there is nothing inconsistent about speaking of '*een slechten rechtvaardige*' (a simple righteous man). Such a one is simply a righteous man who is still inexperienced in the way of righteousness in the midst of a world which is in darkness. Merely instruct him, and he will increase in understanding. And it is no different with the connection between a man who 'wanteth understanding' and a 'wise man'. In the original you find for the word which is rendered in our English (or Dutch) Bible by 'wanteth understanding' (Dutch: *verstandeloze*) a combination of two words which mean literally 'lacking in heart'. And since the heart is the seat of knowledge, therefore the term means 'someone lacking in knowledge'. And if now you keep in mind that in the book of Proverbs 'the wise' is an ethical concept, denotes someone who has the fear of the Lord in his heart and therefore wants to walk in the way of

true wisdom and righteousness, then there is nothing inconsistent in connecting 'one who wanteth understanding' and 'a wise man'. You simply have the idea, then, that there is a wise man who is lacking in knowledge and who must be instructed by Wisdom. I am certain that if Heyns investigates the text carefully, he will grant me that this is indeed the meaning of the words and that Wisdom therefore is here calling and inviting the wise and the just who are lacking in knowledge and experience, and who therefore will allow themselves to be instructed by Her. And with this Heyns's entire proof, in so far as he would find it in this passage, fails.

Finally, there is in the first six verses of Proverbs 9 no general offer of salvation whatsoever, even though you should read verses 4-6 in such a way that they include all men. Then you still have nothing other than a *calling*, with a *promise* for those *who heed the calling*. "Let him turn in hither! Come! Forsake the foolish!" That is the calling. And the promise is: "Eat, drink, and live!" The furnished table of Wisdom is after all only for those who forsake the foolish, who walk in the way of understanding, who come in response to the calling of Wisdom. And the wicked and scorners surely do not do this. He who rebukes the wicked only getteth a blot, and he who reproves the scorner is hated by him. The wise and the just man hears and comes upon the calling of Wisdom. The furnished table is for him. There is simply no escaping this. You cannot make these things general.

In this connection we may also refer to the parable of the king who prepared a wedding feast for his son. Heyns also appeals to this parable in the defense of his 'general offer.' And this is done more often, also by others. Now one should grasp well the difference between us and those who want to see a well-meant offer in this passage of Scripture. That difference does not lie in this, that Heyns and others explain that according to this parable many are called who do not enter into the wedding feast, while we deny this. This is very plain, and that not only from this parable but also from many other passages of Holy Scripture, as well from reality. Not all who live under the Gospel are saved. Nor does the difference lie in this, that they maintain that this calling, also for those who do not enter into the wedding feast, was serious and well-meant, while we would deny this. Also this is completely clear to us, and we do not think of denying it. In the third place, the difference also does not lie in this, that they would here maintain the responsibility of those who are called and emphasize their guilt when they refuse to come, while we would deny this. But this difference lies in this, that Heyns wants to view the voice that goes forth to those who are bidden as an *offer*, while we see in it a very serious *calling*. Heyns presents it as though in the parable it really concerns causing those who are invited to enjoy eating and drinking for a change. To them a delicious meal is offered. The feast is ready; the oxen and fatlings are slain; now let the people come and eat! But those people had no hunger. Perhaps they also had enough to eat and to drink at home. They were also busy with their fields and with their merchandise.

Hence, they simply did not accept the offer to eat with the king. Such is the presentation of Heyns. It concerns that eating! And it is well-meaningly offered to all to come and feast deliciously! However, to stay with the parable for the moment, if now it really concerned that, was it then such a great sin of those people not to come? One would say then: the offer is well enough intended, and those people were indeed greatly honored by the king; but it remained their right not to come. And if then they were not hungry and were simply not attracted by a delicious feast, who then could take that ill of them? An offer is after all an offer! And if someone does not accept my offer, then I certainly do not become angry at him. Or, to remain with the parable, if someone does not accept the offer of a king, then the king surely does not put him to death for this! And yet this is the viewpoint from which Heyns considers this parable. Read it for yourself:

What else is the invitation to the Great Supper (Luke 14:16-24), or to the Royal Wedding feast (Matt. 22:2-10), with the words: "Come, for all things are now ready," than an offer of all of the dishes which the host had prepared to those who were invited, whereby a right was given to them to the oxen and the fatlings which he had slain, in order to take of them and to eat to satisfaction? And that a general and well-meant offer for all. A general offer, for the servants must bring the invitation to all whom they would find along the highways, and according to that mandate they invited and brought in both evil and good. And a well-meant offer for all, for the host gave his servants the mandate to compel those whom they should find to come in, in order that his house should be full.

Now our difference lies precisely at this point. To remain with the parable, it did not concern the eating of a delicious meal, but the honor of the king who had prepared the wedding for his son. And indeed those who were bidden could depend on it that they would be well entertained by the king, but no offer of a delicious meal was extended to them, but they were *called* by the king to the wedding. The parable therefore is precisely not at all concerned with the question which men had a right to fatlings. On the contrary, it concerns an *obligation* of those who were called to the wedding. That solemn obligation was to come. When the king called, they had *no right* any longer to stay away. That the king would royally entertain them indeed made it all the worse, indeed deprived them the more of every excuse, but it is the calling of the king which is here decisive. Not to come was not simply a friendly decline of an invitation or the rejection of an offer with sincere thanks. It was, in the first place, disobedience to the king's call; and, in the second place, a trampling of the king's honor, a refusal to acknowledge him and his son.

That Heyns has not grasped the viewpoint of the parable; that it is not an offer of fatlings, but a serious calling, which the called were obligated to heed, appears from

everything. In the first place, from the emphasis upon the word *call* in the entire parable. Even the word which we translate by 'invited,' or 'bidden', still means in the original 'called'. In the second place, this appears from the attitude of those who were called. They did not politely decline the invitation, but they would not come, they did not respect the calling of the king, they continued to go their own way, and they intreated the servants of the king who called them spitefully and slew them. It is very plain that what is involved is something entirely other than the eating of a delicious meal. It concerns the king and his son. And this appears, finally, also from the attitude of the king over against these subjects who refused. He became very angry. He sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city. Such is presentation of the parable.

And thus it was in reality, and that with much more seriousness than it ever could be with an earthly king and his subjects. For after all, that king is God. That son is Jesus Christ. That wedding is the Kingdom of Heaven. And the calling to enter into that wedding is not simply an *offer* of salvation, but a very serious *calling* of God to forsake all the ways of sin, unrighteousness, and self-righteousness, and to enter into the communion of all the spiritual, ethical blessings of salvation prepared by God in Christ. In that kingdom it concerns God in Christ. And indeed, he who enters into the wedding of the Son shall inherit salvation, for only in that kingdom is salvation, peace, and happiness, and eternal life. But this comes about precisely through the fact that *God alone is good*. He who forsakes Him has nothing but sorrow upon sorrow to fear. He who turns to Him finds in Him the highest blessedness. When that God, therefore, calls us to the wedding of His Son, then that is not an offer which men can accept or reject, but a deeply serious calling, whereby God addresses man in the depth of his rational, moral existence; a calling the refusal of which is deeply sinful. Thus it was also in reality. For those who are bidden or called are the ungodly Jews of the old dispensation. They were called, called time after time, through the servants sent to them, the prophets. They are children of wickedness. They kill the prophets. They rebel against the Most High. They do not want His covenant. They choose their own ways. And when all things are ready and the fatlings are slain, they do not enter in. Their city is burned up, and they are destroyed.

When Heyns discerns this, he will surely also concede that there is in the parable of the Great Supper or of the king who had prepared a wedding for his son no comfort and no support for the doctrine of an offer. On our part we have nothing against the external calling which also comes to others than to the elect, but we are indeed opposed to the presentation that salvation in Christ and the grace of God are the object of an offer which on God's part comes to all men well-meaningly. For the latter is Arminianism of whole cloth.

With this I consider the chief passages of Scripture to which Heyns appeals sufficiently discussed. It is certainly not necessary to treat in depth all that Heyns adduces as proof for his view. Thus, Heyns sees a general offer in John 7:37, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." It is really so little necessary to demonstrate that here there is surely no general offer of grace and salvation that it might much rather produce wonderment that Heyns detects an offer here. What you have here is a calling of the thirsty, not of all men. Even the form of the text already presupposes that not all men are thirsty: *if any man thirst*. Still less is it to be understood how Heyns can read a general offer in Ephesians 2:17: "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." I understand very well that Heyns wants to read 'offered' for 'preached' here, but in conflict with the text and very much at the cost of the meaning of the words. In fact, the whole meaning is violated by this. If God has peace preached, then this means that He has made peace. The peace is an accomplished fact in the blood of the cross. That that peace shall come into existence does not depend on man. If, however, God offers peace, then the peace first comes into existence if the offer is accepted. Then the realization of that peace depends in last instance upon man. Besides, the text here also does not speak to and about all men, but about 'them that were nigh' and to 'you which were afar off'; hence, it speaks of and to the Church from Jew and Gentile. And thus it is also with Revelation 22:17: "And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Even a child in catechism would answer every Arminian who would come with this text (and it is always the Arminian who comes with such texts) that not all men thirst after the water of life, and that also the will to come and to take that water is already the fruit of divine grace!

We shall therefore end our discussion of the Scriptural proof which Heyns thinks to have at this point. We believe we have discussed it sufficiently to demonstrate that not we depart from Holy Scripture, but that it is precisely Heyns who in various ways must do violence to Scripture in order to read in it a general offer of grace and salvation. If only he would be convinced and would retract his error on this point!

Chapter 13.

Practical objections

Besides his supposed Scriptural proof, Professor Heyns also has some practical considerations over against those who reject a general, well-meant offer of grace and salvation. In his opinion the error of the denial of the offer-doctrine is a very serious one, so serious that it must be contested and rejected with all that is in us, at least as serious as the error of Arminianism. We shall therefore also pay attention to the practical considerations on which the professor bases this judgment, in order to conclude with the mention of some practical objections which we, on our part, have against the presentation of the general offer.

The first objection which Heyns raises is indeed that, strictly speaking, on the standpoint of those who deny a general, well-meant offer of grace and salvation one must also deny the well-meant and binding character of God's commandments. In order to make it especially clear where such a denial would have to lead us, the professor calls the attention of his readers to the example of a murderer. Someone has committed a murder. He committed that murder in harmony with the counsel of God. God willed, therefore, that man committed a murder. But now proceed from the logical consequence that God cannot at the same time will some thing and also not will it, and you hold simply to the one fact of God's unchangeable counsel and say: God willed that that man committed a murder; it is therefore impossible that He can also not have willed it; thus the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill", did not hold for that man and does not hold for any murderer, is valid really only for those who never murder. Therefore the logically consistent position of those who deny that there are two wills in God also leads to the denial of the general binding character of God's commandments. If there are no two wills in God, then there is no general offer; that Heyns has grasped well. But, if there are no two wills in the Most High, then there is also no generally binding law of God.

When I read this, I thought that this was rather cleverly conceived by the professor; such a horrible presentation of our view is indeed intended to frighten the 'inexperienced.' Imagine, people will say, that Rev. Hoeksema of Grand Rapids also teaches now that God wills that men shall murder! That is a proof of what a terrible error the denial of common grace is! Indeed, men ought to shun such an error like the plague! Meanwhile one can also lay it on too thick. And although there are perhaps also people who are foolish enough to accept all this as genuine coin, everyone who thinks a little for himself will immediately come to the conclusion that the professor is here certainly engaged in exaggeration. We trust that the professor himself is also friendly enough to acknowledge that *we* do not carry our logic through so far. But, if we from our position would reason through consistently, we would have to

arrive indeed at such a monstrous view as that which Heyns wants to shove in our shoes!

The reader has, of course, already grasped that we not only do not carry our logic so far, but that the logic of the professor is also not ours. The professor has somewhere in his articles asserted that our logic has been affected by sin, so that we can no longer trust it. When I read the above reasoning of the professor, I almost begin to believe it. The situation is that the professor is not to be trusted to draw conclusions from our basic principle. He gives a handy turn to the course of the reasoning by which it has all the appearance that he is right and that his 'consequenzmacherei' is actually our logic. But whoever considers it carefully for a moment will soon observe that there is sophistry at play here. The reasoning of Heyns runs approximately as in the well-known syllogism:

1. Is that your dog? Yes.
2. Is that dog a mother? Yes.
3. Then that dog is your mother!

Or, as the enemies of the grace of God imputed already to the Apostle Paul:

1. We are justified freely, without works.
2. The more we sin, therefore, the greater the grace.
3. Let us then sin, in order that grace may abound!

The method of Heyns therefore is a little low down.

[Note: In the original Dutch there is a play on words in this sentence which cannot very well be reproduced in English. For those who can understand the Dutch we will quote it here: "De methode van Heyns is dus een beetje gemeen (ge moogt *gemeen* hier nemen in denzelfden zin als in *gemeene gratie*)." HCH]

Now where does the error lie in the reasoning of Heyns? When we on our part deny Heyns' two-wills doctrine, then we deny the doctrine that God *in the same sense and with relation to the same objects can will precisely the opposite*. That is the doctrine of Heyns. He says:

1. God wills that all men shall be saved.
2. God does not will that all men shall be saved.

As these two propositions stand, they simply embody the greatest nonsense. I even assert that no man can accept both of those propositions. There is no faith that can embrace them. I do not hesitate to say that Heyns himself also does not believe them. If he says that he believes that first proposition, then he has thereby already asserted that he does not believe the second. In order to make these contradictory propositions, however, somewhat acceptable, Heyns has explained the first will, whereby God wills that all men shall be saved, in the sense of *longing* or *desiring*; the second he has explained as *decree*. God desires that all men shall be saved; but, because something from without, which hinders that desire, has intervened, God has

decreed to save only the elect. And thereby Heyns has *annihilated God*. Heyns has no God left! But what does Heyns now do? He asserts: if you deny two wills in God, then you must also deny the binding character of God's commandments. And what is his error? This, that he, intentionally or unintentionally, loses from view the distinction between God's decreeing and His ethical will. The reasoning that Heyns ascribes to us runs as follows:

1. God wills (according to His decree) that someone commit a murder.
2. God therefore wills (ethically) a murder.
3. God cannot intend the sixth commandment seriously.

Now we have never taught that. No Reformed man has ever gotten anything like this in his head. Besides, this is no logic, but sophistry. The error is that Heyns inserts *his own* dualistic dividing of the will of God in that which he presents as *our* reasoning and then wants to impute *his* crooked conclusion to *us*.

But we do not reason thus. On the contrary, we reason as follows:

1. God has eternally, sovereignly willed (God's counsel) that that which He hates (ethically) should be there and should happen (the sinner and his sin); and that, too, in order that His righteousness and holiness as hatred against sin should become revealed. God's counsel is not dualistic, but antithetical. As God therefore has eternally known and knows His own with a sovereign love, so He has also eternally known the reprobate with a sovereign hatred of His good pleasure and knows them eternally. In His counsel the elect *are* known, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified. In His counsel the reprobate *are* rejected, fallen, lost, cast out into outer darkness. What takes place in time God has eternally before Him and with Him. He has eternally loved Jacob; He eternally hates Esau. God therefore, hates the wicked and their doings eternally! For, and that Heyns always and again forgets, God is GOD!
2. When, therefore, the ungodly, in the accomplishment of his sin in time, *carries out God's counsel*, then he, as a rational, moral, willing, and conscious creature, does that *which God hates*. That they carry out God's counsel has nothing to do with the fact that they in the carrying out of His counsel do that which is in conflict with God's will and that which He hates, so that they become the objects of His avenging justice. This is the teaching of Holy Scripture. When the wicked Jews crucified Jesus, then they accomplish according to God's counsel that which He hates. Thus also Pharaoh stands completely according to God's counsel in order loudly to say 'No' against God. As he stands there in Egypt, thus he stands eternally in God's counsel, and that, too, in order that God might show in him His power. And as God hates him there in Egypt in all his wicked rebellion

against the Most High, so God hates him eternally, with a sovereign hatred of His good pleasure in His counsel.

3. When the ungodly carry out God's counsel in time in the doing of that which God hates, then God maintains Himself over against him and shows him that He hates him in his wicked doings, even as He has hated him in His counsel, and He therefore continues to demand of that ungodly man: "Thou shalt love Me and keep My commandments." Over against that demand of God's law, in which God maintains Himself as the Eternal Good, that ungodly man stands also in God's eternal counsel. Over against that demand he stands also in time. *Everything* indeed stands firm in the sovereign good pleasure of God, Who is really GOD.

In the logic of the above Heyns will not be able to discover any error. He will also grant me that in this manner, without a two-wills dualism, we nevertheless maintain the binding character of God's law for all men. Heyns might be able to retort that in this manner we get an altogether terrible presentation of God. But that is no objection, but a proof of the veracity of my presentation. For note carefully, God *is* altogether terrible! Or has Heyns never thoughtfully sung the words of Psalm 68?

How great, how terrible art Thou!
From out Thy high and holy place,
Oh Thou exalted Majesty!

[Note: The above lines are a rather free translation of a few lines of the last verse of the rhymed version of Psalm 68 in the Dutch *Psalter*. HCH]

And if the 'fear of the Lord' is ever again to thrill the souls of God's people of our watered-down age, then we must not form for ourselves any goody-goody two-wills idol, after our own imagination, who sweetly offers us some fatted oxen; but then we must again know that God and live before the face of Him before Whom even the seraphim tremblingly hide their faces! Oh, if only our Reformed people will turn to that living God! Turn ye! For why should the Reformed Church die?

We can treat the remaining practical objections of Heyns against our presentation of the truth more briefly. He asserts that we attack God's honor. We do that, first of all, according to the professor, because we place our own reason above the Word of God. That Word teaches plainly a general offer; and we deny it, because it is not consistent with our reason. We do not now have to enter into that objection again. In the preceding we have, we believe, shown clearly enough:

1. That this accusation is not true and that we reason from Scripture;
2. That Prof. Heyns himself makes himself guilty again and again of the

method which he wants to impute to us; he reasons frequently simply at random, without bothering about the meaning of Scripture; think only of his description of the Gospel;

3. That God's Word, provided it is correctly explained, precisely teaches no general offer whatsoever, and does not even present the matter of grace and salvation as an offer.

Further, we attack the honor of God, according to Heyns, because we deny God's virtues. Thus, we deny, for example, God's veracity and present matters as though God is false. For according to our presentation God offers something to men while He does not will that they shall accept it. The offer is for most men not well-meant. To this we reply that this accusation is precisely not applicable to us, but is indeed the presentation of Heyns. It does not apply against our view, for we do not teach that God offers something to men without meaning it. We just exactly do not teach at all that He offers something to men. We teach that grace is no offer, but an irresistible work of God. We do not teach that God in the Gospel proclaims that He wills that everyone shall be saved, nor that He promises salvation to all who hear the Gospel. We teach indeed that God promises salvation to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that He also works this faith in the hearts of the elect. He therefore does not proclaim a general, but a particular Gospel. And in this God is true. We also proclaim that God wills that the sinner shall turn and that He demands this of him righteously, maintaining Himself over against the sinner as the Only and Eternal Good. But we do not proclaim that the sinner can contribute anything to his own conversion, nor do we proclaim that God wills to convert all men. And also in this God is true. We do not, therefore, attack God's veracity. But Heyns indeed does that. For he teaches that God also offers salvation to them whom He has from eternity rejected, whom He certainly will not save, who also can have no part in accepting salvation. God offers salvation to altogether impotent men, who only then, when it pleases God to bestow grace upon them, can accept the proffered salvation; but grace God does not bestow upon them. And that is mocking with the sinner. To act thus among men would indeed be termed false.

Further, Heyns raises the objection that the Gospel, in the manner in which we present it, is unbelievable and unacceptable! Here the Arminianism of the professor again raises its ugly head. He has felt this himself, for he tries in the remainder of the article in which this appears to make it good, but without result, as was to be expected. Through the consistent presentation of the Reformed truth the gospel becomes unbelievable and unacceptable! If we do not preach that God is willing to save and well-meaningly offers salvation to all who hear, no one will ever be able to believe. Heyns makes a double mistake here. In the first place, he overlooks, or he denies that the Gospel is indeed unacceptable and unbelievable for every natural man. And, in the second place, this position is a denial of the Reformed truth that

God works faith in the hearts of the elect, and that, after God works this faith in the hearts of the elect and has effectually called the hearer, it is impossible that he should not believably embrace the Gospel. For Heyns, however, the possibility of believing the gospel rests upon this reasoning:

1. God offers salvation to all men well-meaningly;
2. I belong to all men;
3. Therefore I may accept the gospel.

But this is precisely quicksand. He who builds his salvation on the ground which Heyns here presents, who has nothing else than this reason-faith, certainly goes lost. That is the insidiousness of the presentation of Heyns.

Of a similar nature is the further objection of Heyns that our presentation makes men passive. Man, says Heyns, must do something in order to be saved. You cannot simply say to him: you need do absolutely nothing! No, he must believe and repent! Doing that, he shall be saved. Now about this we are surely agreed. We are even not in agreement with Heyns when he asserts that little children are not saved through faith. Certainly, in the way of faith and repentance man is saved. But we are not in agreement with him when he maintains that an offer of salvation puts man to work. He wants to say that if we proclaim no general, well-meaning offer of grace, man simply sits down passively and waits upon God as a stock and block. However, Heyns again overlooks two things, because he simply does not think in a Reformed way. He overlooks the fact that no offer of grace will ever put man to work. And he also overlooks the fact that almighty grace precisely does this undeniably. There is absolutely no danger that he who has been drawn by the grace of God becomes a stock and a block, even as there is no danger that the ungodly will posit himself as a stock and block over against the Gospel. No, under sound Reformed preaching everyone comes to stand before the face of the living God. The ungodly is pricked in his conscience and is condemned when he says always and again, "No, I do not want God!" And he who is touched by God's grace can never fail to cry: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner!" And God is justified in the conscience of both when He judges.

How thoroughly Arminian the presentation of Heyns is may finally become plain from his explanation of that which he calls the 'grace-demand'. Heyns wants to make distinction between a 'demand of God's justice' and a 'grace-demand'. After he has attempted to make plain what he understands by the former, he continues to say concerning the 'grace-demand' the following:

This however does not hold for the grace-demands of God, which do not have for their purpose the maintenance of God's justice, which has been satisfied by Christ, but the salvation of men. Such a demand to a sinner who is in himself all together unable to perform it must include that God at the same time with His demand gives the ability and the power to do what He commands the

sinner to do. Otherwise it could not be a grace-demand, a command unto the sinner's salvation, a demand in which God intends the good of the sinner, as He intends good with the sinner in His Gospel. Disobedience to the gospel is then for him to whom the demand of faith and repentance comes not a matter of *not being able* but of *not willing*. Those who go lost under the Gospel go lost because they *did not will*. In the fact that God commands him, the impotent, to believe and repent in order to save him, and therefore out of grace, there lies for the sinner the assurance of divine enablement unto this end. Obeying, he will perceive that he can obey, that he indeed received that enablement. Not to obey such a command, such a plea, is the manifestation of not being willing.

I need not add much here. Heyns writes clear language here. All who hear the Gospel receive of God also the grace which enables them to accept it or ... to reject it! He to whom the demand of faith and repentance comes can also accept the Gospel. For him disobedience to the Gospel is not a matter of inability, but simply of unwillingness. We esteem the fact in Heyns that he is in any event consistent. He has the courage of his convictions. He continues in the line of his basic position. He has grasped well that with the doctrine of the general, well-meant offer of the gospel that of the total inability of man does not fit. And he indeed does not deny the natural inability of man, but he teaches that all the hearers of the Gospel receive of God power to be able to accept it if they will. How such a thing is possible from a spiritual, ethical point of view we leave out of the discussion at present. The fact is that the acceptance of the Gospel is left to the free will of the hearers, a free will which they also all receive with and under the 'grace-demand'! And with this the Arminian presentation of Heyns is complete, be it then that it wants to fly under the Reformed flag!

And with the latter I have also given expression to that which I will call my chief practical objection to the entire presentation of Heyns. Principally my chief objection is that Heyns does not leave God GOD. Repeatedly I have referred to this. Practically speaking, my chief objection is that with the presentation of Heyns one *is* Arminian but *pretends* to be Reformed.

And that is false!

It is the doctrine with two faces.

Officially one is Reformed. One subscribes to the Three Forms of Unity without conscientious objection. That one does this without conscientious objection finds its cause in this, that one has learned that it is purely Reformed to maintain that God wills to save the elect alone, and next to this, that God wills that all men shall be

saved. One believes that grace is particular, but also that the same grace is general; that the matter of salvation is a matter that depends upon irresistible grace, but also that it is also a general offer; that man is totally unable to accept salvation, but also that he is not totally unable. And one *continues* thus to confess this without conscientious objection because one does not take the trouble independently to investigate the truth. Of basic searching of the Scriptures there is not much. The Three Forms of Unity most people do not know, and many do not even know them by name. And much of what I write here is true not only of ordinary church members, but also of preachers. That this is the situation, men in the Christian Reformed Churches know as well as I.

But it is a foregone conclusion that no one, especially not a teacher of the people, can in practice continue to occupy this ambiguous position. It simply does not work to follow the lines of the two-wills doctrine consistently. Through this it comes about, in the first place, that as far as the development of the Reformed truth is concerned, men are on dead center. They can make no progress. They want to explain Scripture along two lines, but God's Word is one. Hence, on the basis of the dualistic position of the two-wills doctrine one can retain indeed an appearance of Scriptural-ness as long as he remains superficial, but the riches of Scripture can never be understood with such a position. At best, one then chews over in a traditional, but thoroughly lifeless and dry manner what has been chewed and re-chewed already a hundred times. That, however, is not the worst, although it is bad enough. Worse is the fact that the dualistic position in practice is untenable and that the necessity of logic finally more and more compels one to forsake the one side of the dilemma which he has imagined. And it lies also in the nature of the case that the line which one forsakes is that of predestination. Reprobation he has already long silenced to death. Election soon follows. Thus it is with the preaching in actual practice. And thus it is also with the instruction. One of the most recent proofs of this I find in the catechism book published not long ago by Dr. Y.P. Dejong under the title, *Primer of Reformed Doctrine*. In it predestination, with election and reprobation, is not only not developed, but it is not even so much as mentioned! It is almost unbelievable that a Reformed minister would publish a booklet to serve as a guide in instruction in Reformed doctrine and would forget predestination, or purposely pass it by! That is the issue. That is the reason why so many of the Christian Reformed Church go everywhere and especially follow someone easily who still has some warmth in his preaching, but is thoroughly Arminian.

Finally, the presentation which Heyns offers of the truth is insidious because it is basically devoid of deep, spiritual, ethical, life-and-death seriousness which characterizes Scripture and the Reformed truth. The concern in the view of Heyns is not God, but the sinner. His view is concerned with the salvation of the sinner; and that salvation then really consists in this, that at his death he goes to heaven. This

is offered him. The concern is about oxen and fatlings. Out of the motive of becoming a partaker of that carnally conceived salvation, it is urged upon the sinner to repent and to believe. From many a Reformed pulpit, as well as the corners of the street, one can hear "Accept Christ today, for tomorrow it could be too late!" That it concerns the living God and the acknowledgement that He is the eternal and only Good; that our misery consists in this, that we turn from that living God; and that our salvation consists in this, that by eternal and sovereign grace we are delivered out of that misery, in order to participate in the heavenly perfection of God's covenant - oh, men no longer understand this! What they proclaim is really a caricature of all true religion!

And therefore I end with the earnest plea to the Christian Reformed Churches that they return to the old and proven paths of the Reformed truth; that they repeal and make confession of the sin committed in 1924, when the view of Heyns triumphed at the Synod of those Churches and when they ousted Reformed office-bearers; and that they with us then stand on the only true basis, that God is GOD, and that His grace is particular.

Then only is there hope for the future!