



# REFORMED

— P A V I L I O N —

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*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:  
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;  
he shall set me up upon a rock.  
—Psalm 27:5*

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Editor: Rev. Andrew Lanning  
From the Ramparts Editor: Dewey Engelsma

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## MEDITATION

*And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.*

—Exodus 2:3–10

**T**his is a passage about preparation. God must prepare Moses to lead God's people out of the land of Egypt. Even though Moses was still an infant, only three months old, God was already at work preparing him for his calling.

Ah, yes, preparation. For God had perfectly and graciously prepared all things for the salvation of his people. God had prepared Egypt as the iron furnace, the house of bondage, where his people would be enslaved as a type of our bondage in sin and death. God had prepared Pharaoh as the most powerful king in the world that God might show his power by hardening Pharaoh's heart according to God's eternal decree of reprobation. God had prepared Canaan as the land flowing with milk and honey as a type of the heavenly home he had made for his church. God had prepared his people's hearts by making them sigh and groan by reason of their bondage. All these things God had prepared. And now God began to prepare Moses to deliver God's beloved people.

God marked the time for Moses' preparation by making it impossible for Amram and Jochebed

to hide their son any longer. When Moses was three months old, God visited Amram's home and made it such that Jochebed "could not longer hide him." This must not merely be understood in terms of Moses' developing lungs and increasing noise. But this must be understood in terms of all the covenant rearing of a covenant home. Moses must be reared. Moses must be instructed. Moses must be disciplined. Moses must play and grow. Moses must worship with his family. Moses must gather with the other Hebrews. Moses' rearing in his home was part of God's preparation of Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt. Moses must know the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses must know and love the Hebrews, God's covenant people. How could such rearing take place in hiding? How could such rearing go on under the noses of the taskmasters, who knew Pharaoh's command to cast all of the baby boys into the river? God came to Amram and Jochebed's home to take Moses out of hiding, for Moses must be given a covenant rearing, even if only for a few brief years.

Men are hard on Amram and Jochebed for what happened next. Jochebed prepared an ark

of bulrushes, daubed it with slime and pitch, put Moses therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. Men say that Amram and Jochebed lost faith. Men say that Amram and Jochebed did not know what would happen to Moses and that Miriam stood afar off to see if Moses would live or die. But it was not so. Amram and Jochebed were not afraid of the king's commandment. Amram and Jochebed had hid Moses by faith (Heb. 11:23). They did not now cast Moses out in unbelief. Unbelief would have cast Moses into the river to drown. But Jochebed built an ark by faith and thus cast Moses into the arms of the Lord. Only the Lord can save by an ark. Miriam was not stationed to see whether Moses would live or die but to see what wonderful thing would be done to him by the mighty hand of God.

This too was God's preparation of Moses. For God had prepared Pharaoh's daughter to find the Hebrew child, to have compassion upon him, and to adopt him as her own. For a few years, until he was weaned, Moses would be nursed by his own mother and receive a covenant rearing. Thenceforth he would live with Pharaoh's daughter, receiving the training of an Egyptian prince. It was God's preparation of him. "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts 7:22).

See how perfectly God prepared all things for the salvation of his people! Always our God perfectly prepares our salvation, for behold your savior: "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. 10:5).

—AL

## FROM THE EDITOR

**T**he reader will notice that this issue of the magazine is a bit smaller. Because of the travel required for the meeting of classis this week, there was not time to complete the normal number of articles. Nevertheless, we thank God for the measure of time and strength that he has given, and we pray that the articles that do appear here will be profitable for our readers. If you have any past issues of *Reformed Pavilion* that you wanted to catch up on, this might be the perfect opportunity.

This issue features a couple of book reviews. Both books reviewed are worth a look. We also

welcome Mr. Kent Deemter back with another letter to the editor. All our readers are cordially invited to send in your letters, your questions, your comments, your book reviews, or your article contributions. *Reformed Pavilion* has been seen in twenty-eight countries. I have no idea if that is normal, high, or low in our communications age, but the doctrinal issues that the magazine deals with are of great importance. Whether you are from Singapore or Sweden, Indonesia or Italy, the United States or the Russian Federation, your contribution to the magazine is welcome.

—AL



## BOOK REVIEW

*The Beauty of the Truth: An Artist Looks at the Heidelberg Catechism.* Connie L. Meyer. Bloomington, IN: LifeRich Publishing, 2023. 96 pages, paperback, \$35.95. [Reviewed by Rev. Andrew Lanning]

Mrs. Connie Meyer has written and published a lovely and invigorating book on the Heidelberg Catechism. The book is unique and somewhat hard to classify. Does the book belong on one's bookshelf in the creeds section? Yes, for it expounds the Heidelberg Catechism primarily but also several articles in the Canons of Dordt. Does the book belong on one's bookshelf in the theology section? Yes, for it soundly sets forth the Reformed doctrines of God's sovereign grace, God's eternal election, God's free justification of the sinner, and much more. Does the book belong on one's bookshelf in the art section? Yes, for it not only instructs the reader in several principles of art, but it also contains beautiful photos of an old copy of the Heidelberg Catechism. Does the book belong on one's coffee table? Yes, for the cover is done in vibrant and bold colors, and the contents are vibrant and comforting theology, so that the book will be sure to capture the eye and spark conversation. What a unique book. Even the difficulty of classifying it highlights what a fresh approach to the Heidelberg Catechism it takes. This reader found it to be invigorating, expanding my understanding and appreciation of the beloved confession that is the Heidelberg Catechism. Wherever you end up deciding that the book belongs on your shelves, it belongs in your hands first.

The theme of the book is captured in the title: *The Beauty of the Truth: An Artist Looks at the Heidelberg Catechism*. The author's thesis is that truth and beauty are one and that the beauty of the truth is on royal display in the Heidelberg Catechism. From the back cover:

The Beauty of the Truth explores the beauty of the Reformed doctrine contained in the Heidelberg Catechism

through the eyes of an artist. Author Connie L. Meyer explains how looking at the catechism from an artistic point of view yields a perspective that reveals not only its beauty but also its truth. The Heidelberg Catechism aptly demonstrates how truth and beauty are one.

And in the introduction, after observing that God used Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus "to write a creed of uncommon clarity and beauty," Mrs. Meyer explains:

Because beauty and truth are one in the end, this was, perhaps inevitable. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15). Scripture has much to say about beauty, and that for much reason. Any summary of the truth, if it is a true and faithful reflection of that truth, will of necessity also be beautiful. When the Author of all truth is also the Creator of all beauty, form and content will go together that way. Both the form and content of the Heidelberg Catechism reveal this as well, along with exhibiting great skill on the part of its writers. The writers' ability in poetry undoubtedly played an important role in the catechism's overall composition, for example. The whole document comprises one astoundingly artistic and beautiful piece of argumentation. At the same time, the solidly coherent reasoning that is woven throughout its deep and searching questions and answers is as thorough as it is indisputable. The combination of its art and argument, when seen together, is nothing short of breathtaking.

Such beauty can be analyzed in order to be more fully appreciated. That is the purpose of this little volume. Just as a sculptor or painter might use the principles of design to construct an object of exceptionally eye-pleasing beauty, so might these same principles be seen and applied to artwork of all sorts including music, poetry, and prose. And in prose, numerous types of writing can be included, such as fiction, nonfiction, reports, essays, and confession. All of these may be more closely examined for the marks of beauty. Perhaps, especially, confessions. (3)

*The Beauty of the Truth* is divided into two main sections, each taking up exactly half of the book.<sup>1</sup> The first section is the author's artistic exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism. In an introduction and three chapters, the author explores, delights in, and extols the Reformed doctrine of the Heidelberg Catechism. The exposition is sound and thrilling. What makes the exposition so unique and refreshing is that the author analyzes the Catechism with an artist's eye for beauty. Drawing on principles from painting, music, and poetry, the author shows how the Reformed doctrine of the Catechism is beautiful. Not only is the doctrine of the Catechism objectively and quantifiably beautiful, as the author shows in chapter 1, but the doctrine of the Catechism is also subjectively and experientially beautiful to the child of God, as the author shows in chapter 2. Chapter 3, "The Finale," explains prayer, the final soul-stirring topic in the Heidelberg Catechism.

Approaching the doctrine of the Catechism through the lens of artistic principles, the author's purpose is not to exegete each Lord's Day in the Catechism. Some of the Lord's Days are explained in some detail, notably Lord's Day 1,

Lord's Day 23, and Lord's Day 24. But the author approaches the Reformed doctrine of the Heidelberg Catechism as a whole in order to show the unity of the truth, the focal point of the truth, and the comfort of the truth, among other things. I suppose *The Beauty of the Truth* could be considered a sort of "guide book" to the Heidelberg Catechism.

The author's exposition of the Catechism is moving and instructive. Some samples to whet the appetite:

Even as one can find a variation of theme and melody in many well-known orchestral works where melodies become familiar throughout the whole piece while also being presented in various forms to stay fresh and thrilling to the end, so do the themes and patterns set forth in Lord's Day 1 continue throughout the whole of the catechism in various manners. To call the Heidelberg Catechism a symphony in creedal and doctrinal form is no stretch. (7)

There is a climax and center of interest in the whole of the catechism, even as a symphony will often climax at especially one particular point in its performance. And this focal point in the catechism is, indeed, placed near the center of the whole of the confession. Lord's Days 23 and 24 demand our awe and careful study as the crowning, central ornaments of all the truth that was recovered and developed in the sixteenth-century Reformation. That central truth comes down to this: justification by faith alone. (13)

With this most integral truth of the Reformation now undeniably set forth, the symphony can go on. The basis is there for the rest of the movements. Preaching, sacraments, commandments,

<sup>1</sup> If one discounts the prefatory publication information before each section, then there are exactly 40 pages of artistic exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism and exactly 40 pages of artistic photographs of the Heidelberg Catechism. I am not sure if the author/artist deliberately arranged the book in this perfect symmetry, but I found it to be a happy feature for a book in which an artist looks at the Heidelberg Catechism.



and prayer—these are all correctly understood in light of the fact that we are righteous by faith alone in Christ alone to the glory of God alone. The truth is indeed profoundly harmonious and focused in its beauty. (19)

Knowing that grace and love [of God] and living in that grace and love, that's what the catechism is all about. In that, the catechism cannot get any more personal. Jesus Christ died for all his own in grace and love simply because they belong to him and he loves them. And how is it that they came to belong to him? It was simply God's good pleasure to own them and to love them. (30–31)

The second half of the book is the Heidelberg Catechism as photographed by Mrs. Meyer, who, in this last section of the book, turns from author to artist. The photographs are of an 1888 edition of the Heidelberg Catechism. In successive photos all fifty-two Lord's Days of the Heidelberg

Catechism are captured as they appear in the 1888 edition. Other antique books are arranged on the Catechism to draw attention to the text that is being photographed. Colorful cut flowers, rich green leaves, branches, pine cones, and other elements of the creation are tastefully arranged on the desk and on the books in each composition. The mood of the photographs is cozy and inviting, so that this reader imagined sitting in a darkened study, surrounded by shelves of old tomes, with rain pinging against the window panes, the muted sounds of thunder in the distance, and a single reading lamp illuminating the Catechism lying open on the desk. I think that feeling is called *chrysalism*. Or maybe *gezellig*. Whatever it is, I passed a very pleasant quarter of an hour looking through the photos of the Catechism.

I highly recommend *The Beauty of the Truth*. Its perspective will broaden and deepen the Reformed reader's love for the true, beautiful confession that is the Heidelberg Catechism.

—AL



## BOOK REVIEW

*Where Wast Thou? Selections from the Book of Job.* 8th and 9th grade art students of Grace Reformed Protestant School. Topeka, KS: Studenttreasures Publishing, 2023. 52 pages. Paper, \$22.95. Hardcover, \$27.95. [Reviewed by Rev. Andrew Lanning]

The eighth and ninth grade art students of Grace Reformed Protestant School have published a beautiful selection of their artwork inspired by God's declaration to Job in Job 38–39. Over against Job's complaint about God's difficult dealings with him, God took Job on a tour of the creation to show God's wisdom and man's ignorance. As God uncovered each new wonder of his creation to Job, God asked Job if Job had done this thing. "Where wast thou?" Job was not there in the beginning and had not worked any of the wonders in God's creation, of course. God's speech to Job overwhelmingly demonstrated that God alone is wise and good in all his works and that man is ignorant. Therefore, it is not for man to complain against God but to trust God in humble submission as God works all things according to his eternal good pleasure. The title of the students' book is taken from God's question to Job, "Where wast thou?" (Job 38:4).

The book opens with Job 38:1, 4 printed on an otherwise blank page, with different fonts drawing the eye to God's question, "Where wast thou?" The layout of this page with so much empty space is striking and draws the reader's eye to behold the text, even as God's question draws the reader's heart to behold him. "Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding."

The book then follows God on his tour of the creation. Each student worked with one verse from Job 38–39. The student wrote the verse in beautiful handwriting and prepared an original piece of art to depict the aspect of God's creation under consideration. In some cases the verse and

the artwork were combined into a single composition; in most cases the handwritten verse and the artwork were presented as two separate compositions. Students used various media, including pencil, colored pencil, inks, watercolors, and I think maybe even spray paint in one case. All the compositions are beautiful.

There were two things that I especially appreciated about the book. First, the artwork reflects that the students handled the texts reverently. The artwork is not strange, weird, or whimsical but respectful, beautiful, and contemplative. Job 38–39 is a grand and sobering passage. God reveals his infinite wisdom in all his works. God's works are infinitely higher than man's understanding; how much more the God who worked all these things! The artwork beautifully portrays the creation and reflects a respect for the creation as the wonderwork of the almighty God.

Second, the book is presented without accompanying commentary. Its presentation is very simple: text and artwork, text and artwork. I found this simple presentation to highlight the gravity of the texts and to allow the reader to contemplate the artwork without distraction.

Within twenty-four hours of first picking up the book, I had already looked through it twice. I should say that I lingered through the book twice. It is easy to pick up and hard to put down.

Thanks to the eighth and ninth grade art students of Grace Reformed Protestant School and to their teacher, Mrs. Connie Meyer, for providing us with this devotional material. Copies of the book can be purchased at [studenttreasures.com/ordercopies](http://studenttreasures.com/ordercopies). Enter the PIN 8211968 to find *Where Wast Thou?* If you buy two or more



copies, you can use the code Buy2G1 to get a free softcover copy.

Let us conclude where the book concludes, with the confession of Job and with our confes-

sion. “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5–6).

—AL

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

May 11, 2023

Dear editor,

Thank you for taking the time to respond to my letter. If I am understanding your response correctly, you are making the case that when scripture calls us to sing a *new song* it is referring only to the psalms. In your response you assert that “*Psalm 33 is the new song and Psalm 40 is the new song and Psalm 96 is the new song. From the time of David until the time that the Son of David returns on the clouds of glory, the psalms are the new songs.*” You assert; “*the songs of the Lord are not called new songs in Isaiah 42:10 because they are newly written or because they are something other than the psalms. Rather, they are new songs to these Gentiles, who will join Israel in singing the glories of God in the old-new songs that we know as the psalms.*” We are to conclude that *sing a new song* means *sing only the psalms*.

The issue that I have with this explanation of the *new song* is that it wrongly limits the new song. The flaw in this explanation is that it falsely equates “new song” with “this new song”. It falsely equates “new song” with “only the psalms”. It changes our clear calling to “sing a new song” into a calling to “sing this new song”. Concluding that *new song* means *only the psalms* goes against the clear testimony of Revelation 5. Scripture most certainly calls us to sing a new song and Revelation 5 is most certainly a new song.

Regarding the *descriptive* nature of ‘new song’ in Revelation 5; it makes no difference that ‘new song’ in Revelation 5 is used in a descriptive sense rather than prescriptive sense. Scripture gives us both a new song *prescription* and a new song *description*.

The new song *prescription*:

Psalm 33:3 “Sing unto him a new song”.

Psalm 96:1 “O sing unto the Lord a new song”.

Psalm 98:1 “O sing unto the Lord a new song”.

Psalm 149:1 “Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints”.

Isaiah 42:10 “Sing unto the Lord a new song”.

The new song *description*:

Revelation 5:9a&12b “And they sung a new song, saying...Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing”.

Scripture calls us to sing a new song. In gospel freedom, the church uses the new song principle to guide her grateful singing. In keeping with this guided freedom, the church at Dordt decided that the 150 Psalms of David, the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, the Twelve

Articles of Faith, the Songs of Mary, Zacharias, and Simeon, the Morning and Evening Hymns, and the Hymn of Prayer shall be sung. What a beautiful collection of new songs to sing.

I agree that “*God’s purpose in Revelation 5 is evidently not to give the church Psalm 151*”. The new song of Revelation 5 is not Psalm 151 but rather a beautiful new song; a new song of praise to the Lamb. Every creature which is in heaven and on the earth sings “blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

In Luke 19:37–40 we read “and when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; Saying, ‘Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.’ And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.” Let the Church world over join the praise of these disciples and sing a new song; “Blessed be the

King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest”!

In Matthew 21:15–16 we read “And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David’; they were sore displeased, And said unto him, Hearst thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?” Let the Church world over join the perfect praise of these children and sing a new song; “Hosanna to the Son of David”!

The pharisees, the chief priests, and the scribes in Luke 19 and Matthew 21 sought to silence the new song. As the Church triumphant in Christ, let us boldly sing unto the Lord a new song;

“Worthy is the Lamb!”

“Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto the Lamb!”

“Blessed be the King!”

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

To the praise of God from whom all blessings flow,

Kent Deemter

## Response

A hearty welcome to our correspondent on his return to *Reformed Pavilion*. Our correspondent revisits his argument against exclusive psalmody on the basis of the *new song*. In his first letter and in this follow-up letter, our correspondent maintains that scripture’s call to sing a new song permits the church to sing more than psalms in her public worship.<sup>1</sup>

I believe that my previous reply still answers our correspondent’s concerns. Our correspondent does not agree with my reply, which is his prerogative, but he simply passes over quite a bit

of the reasoning and explanation in my reply. Rather than just rehash everything, allow me to remind our correspondent of two things that I believe will help this conversation.

First, our correspondent still has not defined what a new song is. This leads our correspondent to contradict himself when he speaks about the *new song*. For example, in one paragraph it seems that he does not allow *new song* to mean psalms (“falsely equates ‘new song’ with ‘this new song’”). But a little later it seems that he allows *new song* to include psalms (“What a

<sup>1</sup> Kent Deemter, “Letter,” *Reformed Pavilion* 1, no. 4 (May 6, 2023): 11.

beautiful collection of new songs to sing” [in Church Order article 69]). Even where there is no contradiction in our correspondent’s letter, it is not clear what he means by *new song*. Are new songs only those explicitly identified in scripture as a “new song” (as in Revelation 5)? Or can new songs also include any other song in scripture? Or can new songs also include any passage of scripture set to music, even if that passage itself is not a song? Or can new songs also include other orthodox songs that the church may newly compose that are not taken from scripture but that teach orthodox truth? And how does the church know what belongs in the definition of *new song*?

I believe that the definition of *new song* is psalms, and the reader is referred to the previous reply for why I believe that. Our correspondent has offered a few reasons that he does not agree, but he has not yet informed us what a new song is. I invite our correspondent to write in again if he wants to tell the readership his definition of *new song*. That will aid us all tremendously in being able to understand scripture’s calling to sing a new song.

Second, our correspondent is still proving too much. He rightly points out the prescription (command, requirement, demand) to sing a new song. But our correspondent still stops short of treating that command like a command. He refers again to the church’s “gospel freedom,” by which he apparently means the church’s right to decide what she shall sing. The problem is that our correspondent has already proven that the church *must* sing a new song. Our correspondent may not then transform the command into mere permission, so that the church may or may not sing a new song as she decides. The reader is referred to the previous reply to see what “gospel freedom” means in the church’s worship.

When our correspondent proves too much, it leads him into further contradictions of himself. For example, our correspondent refers to several passages that he takes to be new songs (including Revelation 5). However, these songs are not included in article 69 of our correspondent’s Church Order, which means that he may not sing these songs. Article 69, with its limiting word “only,” forbids him from singing these songs. “In the churches only....” How can our correspondent then take article 69 to be a “beautiful collection of new songs to sing,” if it does not include the new songs that God requires?

Our correspondent writes with great enthusiasm and zeal for singing Revelation 5 and other songs. Our correspondent requires the church the world over to sing these songs. Our correspondent implies that those who will not sing these songs are Pharisees and scribes. But our correspondent himself does not and may not sing these songs in his own church.

If our correspondent is going to maintain his “new song principle,” he is going to have to work with his church to expand what she sings. Perhaps he is doing this. Or, if our correspondent does not believe that his church must expand what she sings, then he is going to have to realize that there is something wrong with his principle. I would encourage our correspondent to tell the readership of *Reformed Pavilion* what he is for. Our correspondent has made it clear that he is against exclusive psalmody. But according to his “new song principle,” how should article 69 of the Church Order read?

Our thanks to our correspondent for writing. He is invited and encouraged to continue the discussion if he wants. The issue is worthy of a thorough examination.

—AL

## Article VII. The Fallen King

**A**fter we have discussed the fall of the king, we must stop to consider the king in his condition after the fall. In the first place we must consider his relation to God. In the second place we must consider the influence of his sin upon his own condition. And thirdly, the significance of his fall for his relation to the world must be determined. This is but natural. Man was king under God. And, therefore, he stood in a twofold relation. He stood in relation to God as the servant, and in relation to the world as the king over all things. How, therefore, are these relations affected by his fall, and what is his own condition?

And then we must emphasize in the first place, that in relation to God man had become guilty, worthy of condemnation and eternal death. It is of the greatest importance that we maintain this very strongly.

Man because of his sin was guilty. He was an object of God's wrath.

He was worthy of eternal death.

As sinner he is not an object of grace, nor of mercy, but as sinner he is simply an object of wrath.

Never may we allow any weakening of this truth. And especially in our own time it is well that we emphasize this truth. The sinner as such can never be anything else than the object of God's burning wrath, consuming him in everlasting hell, oppressing and pursuing him wherever he might go and to all eternity. The sinner is guilty, worthy of punishment.

In our day it is this fact of guilt that is often denied. Not sin as such is denied, not the fact that there is such a phenomenon as sin in the

world, is disputed. That were absolutely impossible. To maintain that there is no sin in the world is to assert that ours is a perfect world, is to close our eyes to reality, is to place ourselves directly over against all experience in this world. Sin is everywhere. It surrounds us, it follows us, it is within us. It looks at us from every sphere of our modern life; it speaks to us from every page of our daily paper; it taunts us at every thought and desire that rises within our soul. The fact of sin as such cannot very well be denied. But what is denied in various ways is that this sin causes our relation to God to be that of guilty ones. Sin, so we are told, is mere imperfection. No matter how you may explain that imperfection, fact is that this imperfection itself is suffering, and that the poor, imperfect sinner is an object of pity and compassion rather than of wrath and condemnation. Or, again, the feeling of guilt is mere imagination, a product of fancy. We imagine that God is filled with wrath. There is no objective reality to this guilt. We feel as if God is so righteous that He must punish our sin, but the fact is that He is a God of love and that to the sinner He reveals Himself as a pardoning Father. It is to deliver us from this imagination of our guilt that Jesus Christ came into the world. His great significance was not that He actually atoned for the guilt of sin and appeased the wrath of God, for there is no such a wrathful God. But the great significance of Jesus is that He revealed to mankind, that God is a God of love, that He never thought of punishing the sinner, that He is the Father of all mankind, and that we are all brothers!

I think this denial of guilt will constitute one of the chief principles of the "Religion of the

Future.” You must be aware of the fact that we are busy talking about a new religion of the future. The old religion of the past has proved itself inadequate to serve the world and to improve humanity and to better conditions and to make this world a perfect world and to bring the glorious millennium of peace. And, therefore, we must have a new religion, not based on doctrine and creed, but on the principle of universal brotherhood and love. We must abolish creeds and differences of doctrine and all become one. Calvinist and Methodist and Baptist, Protestant and Catholic, Christian and Mohammedan and Pagan, Jew and Gentile,—all must unite on this one great principle of the love of God and man, and so come to the realization of a universal brotherhood of which God is the universal Father. But to realize this one thing must be forgotten and denied: the guilt of sin! For it is this guilt of sin that lies at the root of many other doctrines; it is this guilt of sin that seriously interferes with the realization of the universal brotherhood and unification of all religion. It is this doctrine of the guilt of sin that leads to a conception of God which cannot be tolerated, a conception of a righteous and holy and wrathful God. It is this guilt of sin that necessitates the belief in that “blood theology” which has it that God died as a sacrifice to atone for our sin. It is that guilt of sin which necessitates the belief in the divinity of Christ, the virgin birth, and many other doctrines, impossible to believe. It is the doctrine of the guilt of sin that separates man and man, believer and unbeliever, and that ultimately causes the separation between christian and christian! And, therefore, it matters not what you believe if only you do not speak about this guilt of sin. You deny the total depravity of man? That’s all right, it makes you all the more suitable candidate to become a member of this great universal brotherhood of man, if only you believe in the love and Fatherhood of God! You deny the divinity of Christ? You refuse to believe in the vicarious atonement? You do not believe in miracles? You deny that Scripture is the infallible Word of God? That’s nothing. We must become very broad. We must set aside all our petty differences and be-

come one on the great principles of the love of God and the universal brotherhood of man!

That, I think, is the religion of the future, perhaps of the near future.

I am a strong believer in that religion; I mean in the certainty of its coming . It will come. It is coming already. You can see it come. It simply is the spiritual side of the antichristian kingdom that is struggling for its dominion throughout the ages and that will finally manifest itself in all the conceit of its rebellion against God.

And for that same reason I will testify against it, oppose it, fight it, expose it, cry out against it at every opportunity and with all my might. Not to prevent its coming. No, it will surely come. But simply because it is the religion of antichrist, it is rebellion against the Most High, it is the rising up against Christ, the Son of God, the Anointed One, the King of all the world. Any religion that denies the guilt of sin and the wrath of God, is rotten at the root. And once more it must be strongly maintained, that the sinner as such stands by and for himself over against God, can never be anything else than an object of wrath and eternal condemnation. For he is guilty. The denial of this is an attack upon the sovereignty of God.

What then? Do I deny that God is love? Most certainly not! Surely, God is a God of love, the very existence of His being is love. He is love. But also of this love of God we must have the Scriptural conception. The trouble is that we are inclined in our sinful mind to compare the love of God with the love of man, and to conceive of the love of God as if it must be identical with the love of the creature. And that we may never do. It is a fundamental mistake to do so. In a sense it may be said that the love of man is the counterpart of the love of God. God is the Highest Good. And as such He loves and must love Himself above all. He cannot, He may not, He will not love anything above Himself. The moment God would love anyone or anything above Himself, He would cease to be God and the world would dash to pieces. And, therefore, God’s love is holy Self-love. He loves Himself above all and creatures



only for His name's sake. It is that holy self-love of God which comes to expression in His Law. And for that reason the principle of the Law could never be anything else than love. The Law demands Love! Love is the fulfillment of the Law. But naturally, when that holy self-love of God expresses itself in the Law to man, that Law can demand nothing else than that the creature also love God above all. He loves Himself above all. He has made all things for His name's sake. All creatures exist for Him, and man must love Him above all. What is holiness in God, namely that He loves Himself above all is terrible sin in man. God must love Himself above all, man may not love himself above all. And what now is the relation? This, that the sinner, who nevertheless violates the law, refuses to love God above all and places himself in rebellion over against the God of his life, that this sinner really makes a bold attack upon the very Being of the Almighty, impudently grabs into this holy self-love of his Sovereign, attacks Him in His sovereign majesty. And what then is the result? This, that this love of God turns against the guilty sinner as a consuming fire to kill that rebellious creature. The wrath of God is not different from His love. It is much His holy love of Self turned against the guilty sinner that attacked him. Just because God is love, purest, highest, divine love, He is also a consuming fire, a God of wrath, a righteous God, the Judge of heaven and earth, and the sinner stands guilty and condemned over against Him.

It is because of the same fact, that we must never conceive of the wrath of God in human form. Human wrath in the first place is a cause of great trouble to its subject, to him that is filled with wrath. The man that is wrathful suffers often much more than the person against whom wrath is directed. That is not true in regard to God's wrath. God's wrath is simply the expression of His Being against the guilty sinner. It is a manifestation of His divine love. And in the second place, it is for the same reason that we may never conceive of the wrath of God as being momentary and flitting. It is as constant as His love. And, therefore the sinner

that dared to attack the Holy One in His very Being and rise in rebellion against Him, cannot find one spot in all creation, and not one moment in all eternity in which this wrath of God does not oppress and choke and kill him. As long as God is love He is a God of wrath to whosoever attacks this love, and therefore, the punishment of the guilty is eternal.

Do not say that the punishment is altogether out of proportion to the sin committed. This is often expressed. It is alleged that the eating of one single fruit brought on the eternal wrath of God, and that there is no harmony whatever between the crime committed and the punishment inflicted. But this is very superficial talk. We must remember the situation. Adam was king over the world. As such he had dominion over all the earth, but as such he was obliged to bow in the dust before his highest Sovereign. For after all God is King and man was simply His viceroy. He might not rule according to his own free will, but he was obliged to rule according to the ordinances of God. The moment this viceroy would refuse to rule according to the Word of God, God's sovereignty would be attacked and the Kingdom in rebellion against Him. Besides, there was an enemy of the Kingdom, the devil, who surely would attack the sovereignty of God as it was represented in man. And, therefore, God entered into covenant relationship with man. Man was God's party in the world, over against Satan. Now God speaks a word. He issues a command to His servant, man. The word is: Thou shalt not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil! True, the command was entirely arbitrary. There was no earthly reason why man should not eat of that fruit, for it was as good as any fruit in Paradise. There was no poison in it. But the Word of God was connected with it, and that was sufficient. Because of the command of God man was to abstain. And on the other hand, if it be true, that the command was simple, it is also a fact that it was very easy to obey. If the command had been as Satan tried to change it, so that they might eat of that one tree and not of all the others, it would have been more difficult. But now it was easy. All the fruit of all the trees of Paradise



was at their disposal. Only of the one tree they might not eat. And therefore, the sin was all the greater. However this may be, the sin must not be pictured as insignificant because of its consisting of the eating of a single fruit. The essence of it was rebellion against the Word of God, and subjection to the word of the devil. It was the surrender of the king of the world to the slavery

of Satan. Man had decided that not God, but Satan should be his sovereign, and that he should rule in the name of Satan.

God's sovereignty, therefore, was at stake.

And where that sovereignty of God is at stake, the guilty creature must die!

—Holland, Mich.



# REFORMED

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