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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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If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.

—Exodus 23:4–5

Do Good to Thine Enemy

God's people have a distinct doctrine of the enemy. Their doctrine of the enemy is that they do good to their enemies. What does it mean to do good to one's enemies? It means that the child of God disregards himself and his needs in order to tend to his enemy and his enemy's needs. It means that the child of God goes out of his way to help the enemy on the enemy's way. It means that the child of God counts his things—his time, his effort, his goods—to be the enemy's things for the enemy's use in the enemy's need. It means that the child of God risks suffering harm at the enemy's hands to provide safety for the enemy by his hands. It means that the child of God sacrifices himself and all that he has for the sake of the enemy, who would slay him if the enemy had the chance. It means that the child of God loves his enemy, who despises him; blesses his enemy, who curses him; does good to his enemy, who hates him; prays for his enemy, who spitefully uses him and persecutes him; turns his other cheek to be smitten by his enemy, who has already battered him; gives his coat to his enemy, who has stolen his cloak; shows kindness to the unkind; deals mercifully with the unthankful; does good to the evil—and all of this without ever expecting that the enemy will ever repay his kindness and his goodness in the least.

Consider the Israelite and his enemy, in whom the doctrine of the enemy is illustrated. There is an Israelite laboring in his field. He is pressed for time and overwhelmed with the amount of work before him. But wandering on

the road is his enemy's ox, which has escaped from the enemy's pasture. What was the Israelite to do? Ignore the ox? Finish his own pressing work? Let his enemy and his ox fend for themselves? Laugh as he imagines the foolish look on his enemy's face when he discovers that his ox is missing? No, the doctrine of the enemy is that the Israelite was to drop everything for the afternoon, secure his enemy's ox, and "surely bring it back to him again." Do good to thine enemy!

Over there is another Israelite, traveling the roads. His business is urgent. But he comes across his enemy's ass, which has collapsed on the side of the road under the weight of his burden. The enmity between the Israelite and his enemy is not the Israelite's fault. His enemy is one "that hateth thee" and for no good reason. The enemy's predicament is not the Israelite's fault. The enemy probably loaded too great a burden on his beast. What should the Israelite do? Everything in the Israelite "wouldest forbear to help him." The enemy has been so cruel to the Israelite, has inflicted wounds so deep, has spewed such venom, has told so many lies, and has been so hard-hearted to the Israelite in the Israelite's desperate hour of need. But the doctrine of the enemy is that the Israelite, who naturally did not want to help his enemy, was to "surely help...him." And not merely to help him but to "surely help with him." In the enemy's hour of need, the Israelite was to labor shoulder to shoulder, hand to hand, and side by side with the enemy who hated him. Do good to thine enemy!

Oh yes, the enemy is certainly an enemy and may always remain your enemy. Oh yes, the enemy hates you and may always hate you. Oh yes, the enemy is wicked and may be destroyed by God, to whom vengeance belongs. Oh yes, God has armed the magistrate with the sword to protect you and yours against the violence of the enemy. All this is true and incontrovertible. But alongside all that incontrovertible truth stands this incontrovertible doctrine of the enemy: do good to thine enemy!

That is quite a doctrine. It is not natural to man. Man does good to those who do good to him. Man loves those who love him. Even publicans and sinners salute their brethren. But who among men is kind and does good to his enemy?

No, it is not natural to man to love his enemy and do good to him. But it is divine. God is kind

to the unthankful and the evil. God loves those who count themselves his enemies. For what are God's people by nature but ungodly, sinful, enemies? What enemy of ours among men has ever been so vile to us as we have been to God? But behold God's love, displayed to such enemies as us: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us...when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom. 5:8, 10).

Now, you who have been redeemed from your enmity by the unspeakable gift of the death of God's Son, here is your gratitude to God: the doctrine of the enemy. Do you see your enemy's need? When thou "wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." Do good to thine enemy! For so God has richly and graciously done for us.

—AL



God of God: Nicea's Septendecicentennial (3)

“Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, and To Day, and For Ever”

It was especially the controversy between Alexander and Arius that would eventually move Emperor Constantine to call the great Council of Nicea in AD 325. Alexander (c. 250–326) was the bishop of Alexandria, Egypt—the same city in which Arius labored as a presbyter. Being the bishop of the city, Alexander had oversight over Arius and was aware of Arius' teaching that the Word—the Logos, the Son—is not God. Over against Arius' doctrine Alexander maintained that Jesus is truly God.

The controversy between Alexander and Arius was explosive and became public during a class that Alexander taught in the city of Alexandria. One historian tells the tale thus:

Arius' views came to light when he was attending a class for presbyters, bishops, deacons, and interested laity. Alexander conducted the class and was speaking at length on, and emphasizing as strongly as possible, the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Suddenly, in the midst of the discourse, Arius interrupted his bishop and began to charge him with heresy. In support of this challenge, Arius stated his own views.¹

The battle was joined and would continue to be fought in the church long after Alexander and Arius were gone. Hundreds of years later, the church would have to continue fighting heretics who were debating questions related to the controversy between Alexander and Arius. And no wonder, for it has always been the case in the history of the church that false teachers peddle their heresies to the masses. From Arius' day to this there have been many about whom the apostle John warned.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (I John 4:1–3)

The controversy between Alexander and Arius was about Jesus' identity: Is Jesus God? But the controversy came into focus in a single question: Is Jesus eternal? All were agreed that the Father is eternal. Therefore, if the Word is also eternal, then the eternal Word is equal with the eternal Father—the Word is God. But if the Word is not eternal, then the Word is not equal with the eternal Father—the Word is not God. Today we use the terms *coeternal* and *coequal* to describe this truth. Are the Father and the Word coeternal? Then they are coequal. Are the Father and the Word not coeternal? Then they are not coequal.

Arius had stated his doctrine in the words “There was when he was not.” Alexander stated his doctrine in the glorious confession of Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” Was Arius' formulation of the lie a stroke of diabolical genius? How it pales in comparison with the Holy Spirit's formulation of the truth, which is divine wisdom. The Spirit distilled all the lofty and incomprehensible truth of the Word's being coeternal with the Father into the most basic concepts that even a little child can understand: yesterday and today. What Jesus was yesterday,

¹ Herman Hanko, *Contending for the Faith: The Rise of Heresy and the Development of the Truth* (Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2010), 36.

Jesus is today. What Jesus is today, Jesus shall be tomorrow and forever. In the simple language of children, the Holy Spirit lisps to his people the highest of heavenly mysteries. The Word is co-equal with the Father, for the Word is coeternal with the Father. Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever!

Alexander's doctrine of Jesus—that is, the Holy Spirit's doctrine of Jesus—is refreshing to the soul of the child of God. The child of God is so weak, so sinful, so sorrowful, so empty. The child of God can do nothing but die every day anew. But behold Jesus Christ, who loves me. Behold the one who died for me, who rose for me, who ascended for me, who reigns for me, who abides with me, and who returns for me. That one who is my Lord is also my God! Who can overcome me? Who can even be against me? How refreshing and heartening it is for God's people that Jesus is God! And as Alexander wrote in a letter to his fellow bishops, the fragrance of this truth blossoms from all the scriptures, driving away the stink of Arius' doctrine.

Who that has heard the words of John, "In the beginning was the Word," will not denounce the saying of these men, that "there was a time when He was not?" Or who that has heard in the Gospel, "the Only-begotten Son," and "by Him were all things made," will not detest their declaration that He is "one of the things that were made." For how can He be one of those things which were made by

Himself? or how can He be the Only-begotten, when, according to them, He is counted as one among the rest, since He is Himself a creature and a work? And how can He be "made of things that were not," when the Father saith, "My heart hath uttered a good Word," and "Out of the womb I have begotten Thee before the morning star?" Or again, how is He "unlike in substance to the Father," seeing He is the perfect "image" and "brightness" of the Father, and that He saith, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father?" And if the Son is the "Word" and "Wisdom" of God, how was there "a time when He was not?" It is the same as if they should say that God was once without Word and without Wisdom. And how is He "subject to change and variation," Who says, by Himself, "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me," and "I and the Father are One;" and by the Prophet, "Behold Me, for I am, and I change not?" For although one may refer this expression to the Father, yet it may now be more aptly spoken of the Word, viz., that though He has been made man, He has not changed; but as the Apostle has said, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."²

Because of his heresy, Arius must be deposed from his office of presbyter.

To be continued...

—AL



² "Deposition of Arius," https://biblehub.com/library/athanasius/select_works_and_letters_or_athanasius/deposition_of_arius.htm.

A Hollow Tinkling: The PRC Centennial Celebration

Introduction: Two Views of the Centennial

There are two ways to view the upcoming centennial of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC). One perspective views it as a true celebration of God's goodness to this denomination over the past century. According to this view, the speeches, songs, and gatherings will be sacrifices of praise pleasing to God.

There is another view, however. This is a view based not on appearance but on the spiritual reality of things. According to this view, the songs, the lectures, and the gatherings will be an abomination to God. He will be "weary to bear them" (Isa. 1:10–15). According to this view, the PRC, which was once a faithful city, has now "become an harlot"; and whereas it was once filled with righteousness and judgment, it now only houses "murderers" (v. 21).

Such a judgment must not be made lightly or without proof. Scripture reserves such a judgment for a church that has truly "forsaken the LORD" (Isa. 1:4).

Such a judgment is made concerning the institution that has forsaken the truth and has pursued the will of man. The "country" is desolate (Isa. 1:7), which means the *institution* has departed from God and his truth.

The calling, then, is for the child of God who finds himself still lodging in the PRC, as Lot found himself in Sodom, to come out. This language is not inflammatory; it is scriptural, describing the spiritual state of the church that has departed.¹

There is comfort, however. That comfort is not to be found in man. Man will only ever corrupt the truth and cause the church to depart.

Man, according to his nature, only ever loves the glittering external form and the (false) sense of security offered by the false church. How could man, whose heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, save himself?

That comfort is found in God, who knows and preserves his own. "Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah" (Isa. 1:9).

Verbosity

Before I begin, I would like to address the length of this article: it is lengthy for two reasons. First, I admit my weakness as a writer; I struggle to write briefly. Second, serious charges require serious proof. I have seen men make scurrilous charges against faithful servants of God, and although the charges were false and made with evidence so flimsy it shamed the ones who brought it, the charges stuck.² These men subscribe to the Joseph Stalin school of justice; he once said, "The accusation is enough to convict." That has proven to be true. It is disgraceful that this has found a home in the church. The calling of the child of God is to speak truth to his neighbor; and that truth must be established, not merely asserted (Zech. 8:16).

Celebration or Deception?

Predictably, the May 15, 2025, issue of the *Standard Bearer* takes the first position mentioned in this article. According to this issue, the centennial commemoration is intended as a sacrifice of praise to God for his faithfulness to the PRC, with the claim that in 2025 the PRC still teach what they taught in 1925. The past hundred years to

¹ See Deuteronomy 32:32, Isaiah 1:9–10, Jeremiah 23:14, Ezekiel 16:49–50, and Revelation 11:8.

² I refer to the charges made against Mr. and Mrs. Meyer and Reverend Lanning. What man meant for evil, God turned to their profit. Blessed were they when men spoke all manner of evil against them falsely for Christ's sake (see Matt. 5:11).

today are presented as a testimony to God's preserving hand upon her doctrine, assemblies, seminary, catechism instruction, and ecclesiastical relationships.

The theme of the issue is that God has preserved the PRC. She is as true today as she was in 1925. It is fitting, then, to celebrate. It is that claim that we will investigate.

As we will see in our examination of that claim, the *Standard Bearer* employs deceit, distraction, historical revisionism, and no small measure of confusion.

Deceit

Rev. Dan Holstege, the pastor of Wingham Protestant Reformed Church, leads the way by rewriting history. This is what he has to say about the work of the *Standard Bearer* during the recent controversy:

The *Standard Bearer* endeavored to guide us through those years with many articles on the doctrinal and practical issues involved in the split.³

That claim is false. And while such accusations must never be made lightly, the evidence demands it: Reverend Holstege's statement is not merely mistaken; it is a lie. Given that a recent article in *Reformed Pavilion* directly addressed this, it is concerning that he omitted any reference to it. To help address this oversight, I will quote at length from the article that directly examined the role of the *Standard Bearer* during the controversy.

The reality is that by the time of that crucial meeting of the RFPA in 2019, the *Standard Bearer* had ceased to be a Reformed magazine. The magazine had raised the banner of Arminianism and was bearing it as the standard of the Protestant Reformed Churches. If that language sounds too harsh to anyone, remember what Editor Kenneth Koole had written in 2018 and had been vigorously defending—with the conniving of

Editor Barry Gritters and Editor Russell Dykstra—against all critics: “If a man would be saved, there is that which he *must* do.” That Arminian theology stinks in the nostrils of God. But Editor Koole enjoyed every considerable protection that the RFPA, the SB editors, and the PRC could muster for him, while those who opposed him suffered every considerable injury that the RFPA, the SB editors, and the PRC could inflict upon them. Editor Koole has his reward...

The reality is that the editors of the *Standard Bearer* were asleep at the wheel while the controversy raged in the Protestant Reformed Churches. Prior to the crucial meeting of Synod 2018, the one and only thing that the *Standard Bearer* had to say about the controversy was that protests in the assemblies were getting too long. The magazine gave no instruction in the doctrinal issues but maintained a studied silence on the controversy. After the crucial meeting of Synod 2018, when the undersigned all but begged the editors to explain the controversy in the magazine, they refused. Editor Dykstra used the pages of the SB to threaten discipline against anyone who would say that the false doctrine that had been taught in the PRC was “heresy.” To top it all off, Editor Koole bounded onto the scene by calling Herman Hoeksema's doctrine of faith “nonsense” and insisting instead that if a man would be saved, there is that which he must do.

Far from being industrious editors of a Reformed magazine in the Protestant Reformed hour of need, the three editors of the *Standard Bearer* were worse than useless for the cause of the truth. Perhaps the editors did a lot of praying, as Professor Gritters alleges, but God did not hear their prayers. And if that sounds harsh to anyone, then I invite that one

³ Daniel Holstege, “How God's Chastening Affects Our Celebration,” *Standard Bearer* 101, no. 10 (May 15, 2025): 315.

to write in with his explanation of how Editor Koole's "If a man would be saved, there is that which he *must* do" was God's gracious answer to the editors' fervent prayers.

The editors of the *Standard Bearer* slept soundly through the defamation of God's name and honor in the doctrinal controversy, but they came wide awake in defense of their own name and honor. A group of concerned men sent the editors and the RFPA board letters explaining our dissatisfaction with the editors of the *Standard Bearer*. When the editors feared that their names might be besmirched by these letters, they went on a rampage. They charged men with sin and invented their own rules for how the charged men should respond. The editors made such an awful mess of things in their hairy zeal for their own honor that even the likes of Classis East—as corrupt an ecclesiastical assembly as there is—could not uphold the editors' case.

Contrary to Professor Gritters' whitewash, the three editors of the *Standard Bearer* were not industriously and prayerfully laboring for the cause of the truth in the Protestant Reformed hour of need. Rather, they industriously and prayerfully trampled the name of Christ, while industriously and prayerfully guarding their own names.⁴

I know that the *Standard Bearer* did not endeavor to guide the denomination at all because in 2018 I went to Professor Dykstra at the seminary to ask him why the *Standard Bearer* was quiet about the controversy. Why not have a series of articles explaining the issues to the people? His response? Who would write them?⁵

It is one thing for Reverend Holstege to lie; but at what point will the members of his congregation, or even the denomination, tire of their ministers' lying through their teeth? It is the proper work of the devil (see Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 43).

On Harsh Language: Nothing New Under the Sun

Reverend Holstege is not finished, though. He also has something to say about the controversy itself.

First, there was the doctrinal controversy that began around the year 2016, intensified in the years 2018–2020, and climaxed in the split of 2021. When a highly esteemed pastor resorted to unruly means and abrasive language to wage war against what he and others considered an invasion of the heresy of works-righteousness, he was deposed for public schism.⁶

I read any reference to the controversy in the PRC with special interest. First, because I am, according to my nature, more vain than vanity itself (Belgic Confession 7). It is possible that my assessment of things was wrong, which would make my behavior during the church split erroneous. It is possible, given my propensity to err, that even at this late date, someone might write something that would reveal my error. Second, I was there for much of it when the controversy reached its peak. Shamefully, my role early in the controversy was to malign those whom God had raised to defend his truth of justification by faith alone. I dismissed what they were saying and spoke evil of them behind their backs.⁷ And then, in his mercy, the Lord plucked the scales from my eyes. Late in the controversy, I was present when the elders of Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church buckled under the

⁴ Andrew Lanning, "How to Whitewash a Sepulcher," *Reformed Pavilion* 2, no. 48 (March 8, 2025): 9–10.

⁵ See Dewey Engelsma, "Schism," *A Strait Betwixt Two* (blog), December 12, 2021, <https://astraitbetwixtwo.com/2021/12/24/schism/>.

⁶ Holstege, "How God's Chastening Affects Our Celebration," 315.

⁷ Even though I hate what I did to Neil and Connie Meyer and will take the remembrance of it to my grave, no one should ever forget what I did or what I am capable of.

pressure of the denomination and silenced the angel that God had given the congregation and when the denomination consented to his death.

Reverend Holstege's analysis of the controversy is revealing for what he omits. He says nothing of the fact that, in the words of Synod 2018, the PRC had displaced the perfect work of Christ and compromised justification by faith alone, as well as the doctrine of the unconditional covenant. Instead, he frames the entire controversy as a case of one minister who used "unruly means and abrasive language" to battle some imaginary heresy.

Though my knowledge of church history can fit in a thimble, one recurring pattern is unmistakable: in every generation there are always men like Reverend Holstege. In times of controversy they bury their heads in the sand. Only after the controversy is over and the faithful have been cast out do these men finally find their voices. And when they do, it is not to defend the truth; but with pained expressions, they wring their hands and lament the harsh and abrasive tone of those who did speak out in defense of the truth.

This was again brought to mind recently by an article about the deposition of J. Gresham Machen. One of his parishioners, a seminary professor named Rev. Dr. Henry Van Dyke, D.D. (which means you know where this is going), took great offense at a sermon Machen preached. In that sermon Machen sharply rebuked a false message that was proclaimed in a sermon on the centurion in Luke 7.

A while ago I heard a sermon which seemed to me at the time to be the worst sermon that I had ever heard—unless a man can be said to "hear" the sermons that he preaches himself. It was a bad sermon, not because it was badly preached, or because it did not hold the attention of

the congregation. On the contrary, it was most effectively preached and the large congregation was evidently impressed. But it was a bad sermon because the things that were said in it were not true...

From the point of view of commonsense reading of the Bible it was quite absurd. It was a rather extreme instance of that anti-historical forcing of the plain words of the Biblical books which has become so common within the last few years. Where is it said in this narrative that the centurion did anything; where is it said that he obeyed Jesus' commands? The point of the narrative is not that he did anything but rather that he did nothing; he simply believed that Jesus could do something, and he accepted that thing at Jesus' hands; he simply believed that Jesus could work the stupendous miracle of healing at a distance. In other words, the centurion is presented as one who had faith; and faith, as distinguished from the effects of faith, consists not in doing something but in receiving something. Faith may result in action, and certainly true faith in Jesus always will result in action, but faith itself is not doing but receiving.⁸

Rev. Dr. Van Dyke's response? He was so offended that he transferred his church membership. He labeled Machen's sermon as "bitter, schismatic, and unscriptural preaching." He said all he wanted to hear was Christ and certainly not what he called Machen's "dismal, bilious travesty of the Gospel." He said Machen only preached on the controversy between the Fundamentalists and the Modernists, and most of that Van Dyke charged as being "untrue and malicious." So he gave up his pew and went elsewhere.⁹

⁸ J. Gresham Machen, "The Faith of the Centurion," *Presbyterian Guardian* 15, no. 19 (October 25, 1946), reprinted at https://www.opc.org/feature.html?feature_id=659.

⁹ Brad Isbell, "Machen in the News: 'Uncle Henry' Throws Him Under the Bus," *Presbycast* (Substack), April 24, 2025, <https://presbycast.substack.com/p/machen-in-the-news-uncle-henry-throws>, as highlighted at *Heidelblog*, May 25, 2025,

Men like Rev. Dr. Van Dyke—and Rev. Daniel Holstege—are useless to the church in times of controversy. They take offense at hard words, remain silent while the truth is under assault, and only find their voices once the dust has settled—to complain about tone.

Shimei: A Convenient Dismissal

Reverend Holstege likens those who left the PRC in 2021 over the doctrinal controversy to Shimei: “those who have left the PRC in wrath, who hurl stones and curses at the PRC as Shimei did to David (2 Sam. 16:5–8).”¹⁰ Here he follows the lead of Prof. Brian Huizinga, who made the same comparison in a speech delivered in September 2021. Huizinga labeled those who would criticize the PRC and apply fitting labels to her as only “Shimeis” and, therefore, not deserving of a serious response. His advice? “Walk away quietly.”¹¹ What a clever tactic. Label someone a Shimei, and you need never read their arguments, much less respond to them.¹² For Professor Huizinga, that arrangement suits him well—his own uniform can remain spotless, untouched by the blood and grime of controversy. And especially can his uniform remain unstained by his own blood.¹³

My counsel to Reverend Holstege is this: do not follow the well-worn political path paved by Professor Huizinga. Instead, study the issues. After you have done some reading, ask yourself if the controversy was truly only about a rogue minister with an abrasive tongue or whether something far greater was at stake, such as the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

Historical Revisionism from the Seminary

This pattern of dishonesty continues in the handling of church history. Professor Griess joins Holstege in presenting a distorted picture. He writes this regarding the Protestant Reformed view of preaching:

This confession of the Reformed concerning the central importance of preaching has also been the heritage of the PRC for 100 years, and I believe that by God’s grace it remains her current conviction.¹⁴

What Professor Griess left out was this: “Are you going to believe me or your own lying eyes?” You see, Professor Griess was the president of the meeting of classis when Reverend Lanning was deposed. At that meeting it became clear that the church visitors and a professor in the seminary—and the whole assembly by its

<https://heidelblog.net/2025/05/uncle-harry-was-a-lib/>. Perhaps the reader can help cure a bit of my ignorance about church history. From the little that I have read about times of real doctrinal controversy, it does not appear that a seminary or a church’s professors have ever been on the right side of the issue. It appears they are also on the side of the “institution” and can never find it within themselves to take a stand for the truth, which might involve them losing something. I would appreciate examples from the past where this was not the case.

¹⁰ Holstege, “How God’s Chastening Affects Our Celebration,” 315.

¹¹ Brian Huizinga, “Whom the Lord Loveth, He Chasteneth: 2021 in the PRC,” speech given at the RFPA annual meeting on September 23, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xa3x68GEJgI>.

¹² Apparently for Professor Huizinga, “walking away quietly” doesn’t preclude taking some cheap shots along the way. “This teaching of the PRCA [that covenant fellowship is enjoyed in the way of obedience—DE] is not universally embraced. Following the schism of 2021, a small group that formerly belonged to the PRCA now curses its former denomination as the great whore of Babylon that despises God, Christ, and the gospel. Many members of the PRCA have heard a refrain of opposition from those who have joined themselves to that group, which refrain goes something like this, ‘The PRCA teaches covenant fellowship in the way of obedience—that is Federal Vision heresy! The PRCA denies the gospel! The PRCA does not want Christ! The PRCA denies justification by faith alone! The PRCA teaches salvation by the law! The PRCA teaches that you become God’s friend by obeying Him! The PRCA is all about man!’ The purpose of this article is not to interact with those stones that are hurled at the PRCA any more than David interacted with the stones that Shimei, by God’s bidding, hurled at him” (Brian Huizinga, “Synod 2018 of the Protestant Reformed Churches and Holy Scripture: Enjoying Fellowship in the Way of Obedience,” *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal* 56, no. 2 [April 2023]: 4).

¹³ For more on Professor Huizinga, see Dewey Engelsma, “RFPA Update,” *A Strait Betwixt Two* (blog), March 12, 2022, <https://astraitbetwixtwo.com/2022/03/12/rfpa-update/>.

¹⁴ Cory Griess, “100 Years of ‘Going to the Sermon,’” *Standard Bearer* 101, no. 10 (May 15, 2025): 312.

silence—all affirmed the impotence of preaching in the PRC. There we learned that rebukes must not come from the pulpits but, rather, only through the assemblies.¹⁵

We also learned that in the PRC the application section of a sermon is not considered the word of God. The implication is unmistakable: it is the word of man, which you can take or leave. In the PRC, preaching, which was once the power of God unto salvation and the means by which the entire counsel of God was declared, and which was quick, powerful, and sharp and could pierce and divide and discern,¹⁶ is now reduced to a TED talk.

It turns out that you need preaching to maintain the form of church, but that doesn't mean the preaching has to have any power. As one entrusted with the training of future ministers, Professor Griess ought to be honest regarding the current state of preaching in the PRC.

Dory Syndrome

Not to be left out, Professor Cammenga asserts today the very opposite of what he taught just five years ago. Assigned to reflect on one hundred years of broader assemblies in the PRC, he makes the following statements:

The churches are self-governing. They are not governed by the state or by any other entity than the church herself.

They [synods] convened during the recent turbulent years of the COVID pandemic, despite certain restrictions.

There will undoubtedly come a day when our broader assemblies will no longer be permitted to meet.¹⁷

Reading this, my mind—endowed as it is with keen insights—immediately went to Dory

in the 2003 film *Finding Nemo*. Dory suffers from memory loss, which causes all sorts of trouble for her and everyone around her. It appears that Professor Cammenga believes his readers suffer from the same malady.

We are barely five years removed from Professor Cammenga's scathing letter to every Protestant Reformed minister and professor opposing Byron Center PRC's decision to worship in spite of the governor's shutdown orders. Byron Center's argument—that the state does not govern the church—was dismissed by Cammenga as “extreme and inconsistent.” He insisted that the state did have the authority to restrict the church's worship, stating that “the motivation and reason for the governor's decision must be taken into account.”¹⁸

This was at a time when Ace Hardware was deemed essential, but the church was not. But today? Now Professor Cammenga would have us know that the church is “not governed by the state.”

You would expect to find this bland restatement of history in some dystopian novel, not in a church paper. One might stretch the definition of charity and say that Professor Cammenga is merely a poor scholar. That may be true, but what is far clearer is that Professor Cammenga and the rest of the *Standard Bearer* staff, including the editors, know that it really doesn't matter what they write. The form of a church simply demands that she has a church paper. It does not, however, require that the paper operate with honesty and integrity.

Doctrinal Confusion

Rev. Richard Smit was assigned to reflect on the “doctrinal heritage that Jehovah graciously has preserved” in the PRC.¹⁹ Strangely, in an article dedicated to doctrine, he makes no mention of

¹⁵ See Dewey Engelsma, “Preaching,” *A Strait Betwixt Two* (blog), March 16, 2021, <https://astraitbetwixttwo.com/2021/03/16/preaching/>.

¹⁶ See Romans 1:16, Acts 20:27, and Hebrews 4:12.

¹⁷ Ronald Cammenga, “One Hundred Years of Broader Assemblies,” *Standard Bearer* 101, no. 10 (May 15, 2025): 311–12.

¹⁸ See Dewey Engelsma, “COVID,” *A Strait Betwixt Two* (blog), April 19, 2021, <https://astraitbetwixttwo.com/2021/04/19/covid/>.

¹⁹ Richard Smit, “Our Doctrinal Heritage,” *Standard Bearer* 101, no. 10 (May 15, 2025): 300.

the recent controversy or the fact that the PRC compromised many of the doctrines that he now touts as proof of divine preservation. That seems like it would have been the humble thing to do (more on that later). What stood out to me the most was that on two of the doctrines considered most fundamental, there is not even agreement within the PRC. This is what he wrote regarding marriage:

Although divorce is permissible in the case of adultery, it does not dissolve the marriage bond and does not permit the remarriage of those divorced.²⁰

I happen to agree with him, but is that the position of the PRC today? Or is it the position set forth by Reverend Eriks in the May 1, 2021, issue of the *Standard Bearer*?

One danger is that a church that loves Christ and His truth and loves the members of the church begins to depart from what the Bible says about sexuality and marriage. This begins with the acceptance of divorce for reasons other than adultery and desertion.²¹

So much for marriage; what of the covenant, another cardinal truth of the faith? Reverend Smit explains what the PRC teach regarding the covenant:

Membership therein is not conditioned on man's activity of believing and acceptance of an alleged well-meant offer of salvation.²²

Phew! That's a relief—because I was a bit concerned when I came across Georgetown PRC's Vacation Bible School promotional material, which states that children will “be encouraged to embrace the salvation Jesus offers and

challenged to live for his glory as we wait for his return.” Either that was a typo, or Georgetown PRC hadn't yet read this issue of the *Standard Bearer* to learn what the denomination supposedly believes about salvation.²³

If anyone took the *Standard Bearer* seriously, they would probably want to reconcile these contradictions. But the writers know their audience. It doesn't matter what they write, as long as they don't rebuke the denomination. That way their cushy life can continue.

At any rate, let us never again hear that the theology of the PRC in 2025 is the same as the theology of Herman Hoeksema and the PRC in 1925.

Chastening

Although the words “humility” and “chastening” are sprinkled throughout the issue, no one ever plainly states what the PRC have been chastened for or how they have been humbled. Reverend Holstege tells us that God has laid a “severe chastening” upon the PRC in recent years,²⁴ which sounds ominous, but he never specifies the nature of the offense.

Rev. Heath Bleyenberg, careful not to accuse the PRC too directly, seems to suggest that the denomination may suffer from doctrinal pride. He writes that pride “can also manifest itself in a church or denomination. It becomes evident when that church thinks she is morally and doctrinally superior than others.”²⁵ He has learned the lesson well not to rebuke the denomination or point out her errors, so the reader is left to infer that this might apply—perhaps, possibly, maybe on some level—to the PRC. Professor Huizinga reinforces this impression when he writes, “The greatest threat to the church lies

²⁰ Smit, “Our Doctrinal Heritage,” 302.

²¹ Garrett Eriks, “Thyatira: The Church Tolerating Immorality,” *Standard Bearer* 97, no. 15 (May 1, 2021): 350.

²² Smit, “Our Doctrinal Heritage,” 301.

²³ No one in the PRC should be too hard on them, though. Georgetown PRC has learned well the Protestant Reformed message of how a man is saved. “That truth is found in His Word, the Bible, which explains that through repentance and faith in Christ alone, we are truly and eternally set free” (Georgetown PRC flyer).

²⁴ Holstege, “How God's Chastening Affects Our Celebration,” 316.

²⁵ Heath Bleyenberg, “Humble Celebration,” *Standard Bearer* 101, no. 10 (May 15, 2025): 296.

within her walls, and it is the inclination to annual self-congratulations and self-praise.”²⁶

However, these vague and sanitized references to humility, chastisement, or pride are easily dismissed by any reader seeking a reason to remain within the PRC and continue reading the *Standard Bearer*. They mean nothing, which means they cost nothing and ultimately change nothing.

Perhaps it is the case that these men thought long and hard and could not come up with any specific instances where the PRC exhibited any pride. In that case I am happy to help them out and provide them with an instance of towering, rotten pride that stinks all the way into hell. In 2019—following Synod 2018, which allegedly changed everyone’s heart and set things straight in the denomination—then Rev. Ronald Van Overloop made one of the most egregiously heretical statements ever to come from a Protestant Reformed pulpit.

When he says in verse 20, “If any man will hear my voice,” he’s not establishing, of course, a condition. There are none. But he is talking about, not the condition to establish a union, but he is establishing a condition that deals with communion. Not union. That’s grace. It’s all grace. Only grace. But communion—fellowship.²⁷

A couple protested the sermon to Van Overloop’s consistory at Grace Protestant Reformed Church. The response they received from the consistory is a case study of stinking pride. After rebuking the couple for not exhibiting charity and going to Van Overloop directly, and then defending Van Overloop and his sermon and orthodoxy, the consistory further rebuked the couple for their “attitude” and “approach.” The consistory then wrote this:

Why do you assume to yourselves the ability and authority to judge our response with Scripture and the creeds, especially when, as you point out, this is the work of the consistory? While you do have the office of all believer, do you believe that a consistory of a Protestant Reformed Church would present something contrary to Scripture and the creeds?²⁸

This was after Hope PRC and Classis East had compromised the truth of justification by faith alone and persecuted the precious few righteous men and women who dared to defend the truth. The elders of Grace PRC revealed themselves to be as proud a bunch of Pharisees as the world has seen, and they aren’t sorry about it.

I hope this helps with future issues of the *Standard Bearer*, so that when the writers make more bland references to “pride,” “chastening,” and “humility,” they can now actually point to a specific instance of their denominational pride.

Here is the truth: the Protestant Reformed Churches are not sorry—not for compromising the truth, nor for silencing those who defended it. Yes, she regrets the public shame for mishandling some abuse cases. But for what she did to the truth? She doesn’t even have the decency to blush.

Gratitude

This critique comes not from bitter exiles but from grateful sons devastated by betrayal. We could list countless things for which we are thankful, but for now one example will suffice. The PRC taught us how to rightly interpret the false charges that inevitably come when one must finally leave a church for the sake of the truth and either join or form a faithful church.

The fault for the separation and disruption of the unity of the church is that of the unfaithful denomination, not that

²⁶ Brian Huizinga, “The 100th Anniversary of the PRCA,” *Standard Bearer* 101, no. 10 (May 15, 2025): 298.

²⁷ Ronald Van Overloop, “The Church of Christ at Laodicea,” sermon preached on June 23, 2019; see also minutes of Classis East, January 13, 2021, 6.

²⁸ See Dewey Engelsma, *Violence, A Strait Betwixt Two* (blog), May 20, 2021, <https://astraitbetwixtwo.com/2021/05/20/violence/>.

of the congregation that separates. The apostatizing body, of course, will scream, “Schism.” As patriotism is the last refuge of scoundrels, appeal to church unity is the trump card of the false church. But the faithful congregation, or believer, separates on behalf of the unity of the church, which is always and only a unity in the truth of the gospel.

Every believer must insist on the truth in his or her congregation and in his or her denomination. This is not unreasonable. This is what God insists on.²⁹

The PRC also taught us to place a love for the truth above all else, which is to say, to love the name of Jesus Christ above all else.

Today, the mouths of many believers in departing churches are silenced by the shrewd plea of the rulers for “peace and unity.” Some who know better quietly remain in departing churches for the sake of “peace.” Where is love for the truth? such a love as bears reproach and persecution? such a love as is willing to go out into the ecclesiastical wilderness for the sake of the confession of the truth? such a love as, in the case of the French Reformed in Calvin’s day, risked property and life? And what is the worth of peace attained at the expense of the name of Jesus Christ?³⁰

Neither is this judgment rooted in bitterness against members of the PRC. We harbor nothing but love for them. How could it be otherwise? They are our former friends and family. And how should love express itself, if not in warning of the grave spiritual danger they face? Where else will they hear it?

They will not hear it from their ministers, whose preaching has become emasculated.³¹

They certainly will not hear it from NAPARC churches, which churches the PRC now chase after with ardent zeal.

And so the PRC have become like Ahab’s court, filled with four hundred prophets proclaiming, “You shall have peace” (see I Kings 22). May God yet bring to their hearts the witness of the few who still love her enough to speak the truth.

Belgic Confession Article 29

Against the fog of deceit, distortion, and historical revisionism stands the clarity of article 29 of the Belgic Confession. Then it becomes clear for the child of God where he must maintain his membership and where he may not.

A true church is known by these marks: she preaches the pure doctrine of the gospel, rightly administers the sacraments, and faithfully exercises church discipline.

A false church, by contrast, claims more authority than the word of God grants, refuses to submit to Christ’s yoke, corrupts the sacraments, and persecutes those who walk in holiness and who dare to rebuke her.

That can all be summarized this way: a church is known by what it does with the truth. And what did the PRC do with the truth? She corrupted it. Her own synod acknowledged that she compromised the doctrine of justification by faith alone and the unconditional covenant, thereby displacing Christ.

When an elder stood for the truth, he was cut down almost immediately and left to languish under discipline for three years. After he was cut down, his wife took up the cause; and together they were both subjected to the most vile spiritual

²⁹ David J. Engelsma, *Bound to Join: Letters on Church Membership* (Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2010), 122.

³⁰ Engelsma, *Bound to Join*, 143.

³¹ In the June issue of the *Standard Bearer*, Professor Huizinga writes about the shortage of ministers in the PRC (Brian Huizinga, “Historical Perspective with All These Vacancies,” *Standard Bearer* 101, no. 11 [June 2025]: 329–31). First, he ought to be lamenting the famine of the word that the PRC experience among those men that currently fill her pulpits. Second, the PRC should be rebuked for cutting down a faithful minister that God did give her. If Professor Huizinga wishes to know more about this history, he is invited to read the blog *A Strait Betwixt Two* (<https://astraitbetwixttwo.com/blog/>).

abuse.³² When a pastor preached rebukes, he was cut down and silenced.

And those who taught or defended error? The PRC rallied her full strength to protect them. Even before the dust had settled, she promoted them.³³ Meanwhile, the false doctrine condemned by Synod 2018 continues to be taught—both from the pulpits and from the decisions of her assemblies—to this very day.

These things are not hidden. As the Belgic Confession declares, the false church is “easily known and distinguished” from the true.

And what of the people? They could not rouse themselves at all during the controversy, when Christ was being displaced and justification by faith alone was being compromised. That evoked a collective yawn. But when they were rebuked? Then they rose as one to condemn those who dared to speak. Men and women who hadn’t the foggiest clue about the controversy were suddenly looking for swords to cut down those who had dared rebuke them.

And now, with the clarity of hindsight, what is the response of the *Standard Bearer*? Reverend Holstege rewrites history and then laments the tone of the truth-tellers. Professor Cammenga writes things that represent the opposite of how he actually behaved. Normally you would wait a few years before doing something like that—unless, like Professor Cammenga, you know your audience.

Wearisome Feasts

The sounds that rise from the PRC’s centennial celebration will not ascend as sweet-smelling

sacrifices to God. Even when the whole assembly joins in singing “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” and there is scarcely a dry eye in the room, that sound will not be the sound of true praise. It will be the hollow tinkling of a few baubles strapped to a woman’s ankle.

Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet... (Isa. 3:16)

We can rightly judge that the PRC’s centennial will be a stench in the nostrils of God—not because we know men’s hearts but because we can see the fruit of the institution. And the fruit is that of a false church. Scripture tells us how God regards the worship of such a church:

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. (Isa. 1:14–15)

Comfort

There is comfort, however. The comfort is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ—the same gospel that brings good news to the poor, heals the brokenhearted, proclaims liberty to the captives, gives sight to the blind, and sets the oppressed free (Luke 4:18). That gospel also carries this enduring promise: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27).

—DE

³² There are those in the PRC who make much noise about wanting to stand up against the abuse that has taken place in the PRC. There is no doubt that such abuse has taken place. However, to denounce one form of abuse (sexual abuse) while ignoring another (spiritual abuse) calls into question the consistency of their concerns.

³³ See Dewey Engelsma, “Trusting in the Shadow of Egypt,” *Reformed Pavilion* 1, no. 32 (November 18, 2023): 6; Andrew Lanning, “Letter to the Editor,” *Reformed Pavilion* 1, no. 34 (December 2, 2023): 5.

Two Free Public Lectures

Speech One:

THE SOVEREIGN GOD OF SALVATION

How can a sinner be saved? That question is not hypothetical but very personal and real. It is not a question about some person somewhere – how can he be saved? Rather, it is a question about you; it is a question about me. How can you be saved? How can I be saved? There are really only two possible answers to that question. Either God saves us, or we save ourselves. Either God is the Saviour, or Man is the Saviour. Either God is sovereign, or Man is sovereign. Either God is God, or Man is God. If I must save myself, even by the smallest contribution, then I am lost. But if God saves me, completely and fully, then I am saved, indeed.

Thanks be to God that God is God and that He sovereignly saves His people through Jesus Christ. On Saturday, 7 June, join us for a lecture on this most comforting truth of God's sovereignty in salvation.

Theme: The Sovereign God of Salvation
Speaker: Rev. Andrew Lanning

Date: 7 June 2025 (Saturday)
Time: 10 AM

Speech Two:

THE PSALMS OF JESUS

God gave His people a lovely song book called The Psalms. The book of Psalms opens with a resounding blessing: "Blessed is the man" (Psalm 1:1). The book of Psalms closes with a ringing doxology: "Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 150:6). In between are all the things that belong to God's people in this life -- joys and sorrows, sin and righteousness, suffering and victory, death and life. No matter what God's people are going through, the Psalms help them give voice to it. What makes the book of Psalms especially lovely is that the Psalms are Jesus' songs. Jesus is the blessed man of the opening blessing and Jesus praises God in the closing doxology. All the things in between that belong to God's people in this life first belonged to Jesus -- joys and sorrows, sin and righteousness, suffering and victory, death and life.

What a lovely song book God has given us: the Psalms of the blessed man for the praise of God! On Saturday, 14 June, join us for a lecture on this most lovely book of Psalms.

Theme: The Psalms of Jesus
Speaker: Rev. Andrew Lanning

Date: 14 June 2025 (Saturday)
Time: 10 AM

Venue: 371 Beach Road, #02-42, City Gate, Singapore 199597

Directions: Nicoll Highway MRT (Yellow Circle Line), From MRT station, walk along link bridge to City Gate

Programme: Lecture followed by Q&A, fellowship and refreshments

Organiser: Remnant Reformed Church and Redeemed Reformed Fellowship

Article CXII: Dr. Janssen's Notes

In his last article Dr. Janssen enters upon the discussion of our charges against his teaching as contained in the notes taken in his classes. He does so by selecting two matters, and in connection with them making the charge that we falsified his notes. He would have the public understand that there are two versions of his notes, one version as I quoted them and another version as they are in the possession of the professor.

Now, I wish to have it clearly understood that I falsified no notes whatever.

In the first place, let me call your attention to the fact that in the passages referred to by Dr. Janssen in his last article I never pretended to quote literally. I had no space to do it. But I stated briefly what were the teachings of Dr. Janssen as the notes reflected them.

In the second place, I want to state once more that what I wrote is true. It is entirely true. And, as we shall show, much more is true. And, therefore, we shall proceed to quote literally.

The passage concerning Rebekah is literally as follows:

“Rebekah to become mother of twins. The embryos struggle or rather ‘act violently.’ Rebekah regards this as an omen. Resorts to sanctuary to inquire about it. Functionary at sanctuary has a response for her. ‘Two nations are in thy womb. The older shall serve the younger!’ The oracle is given in the style of priestly oracles. The oracle has the characteristic of indefiniteness. Language of antique form. Subject of the sentence may either be ‘the older’ or ‘the younger!’”

This is the passage we referred to. We ask: Where does the professor get his proof from

Scripture that Rebekah went to a sanctuary? That there was at that sanctuary a priest who gave her an oracle from Jehovah? If the professor objects to our statement that this sanctuary was in Canaan, where was it? What does the professor mean by intimating that the response can be interpreted either way? That it is characterized by indefiniteness? Did Jehovah intentionally speak indefinitely so as to leave the meaning ambiguous? Did not the words convey a very definite meaning to Rebekah?

The passage concerning the Pentateuch reads as follows:

“At present the theory is that the whole Pentateuch was originally written in Babylonian. If these narrations go back so far, there is good reason to favor such a theory.”

Again, we ask: Does the professor mean that Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch in Babylonian language? That would be strange. In the preceding paragraph the professor speaks of the fact that at the time of Abraham Babylonian civilization and language had spread to the West. It was a world-language at the time of Abraham. And then he goes on to say what was quoted. Besides, if that could be the meaning, what does the professor mean when he says, “If these narrations go back so far?”

The passage concerning the sale of Sarah reads as follows:

“Abraham is a Babylonian, leader of a tribe, and an important man. Hence, he wants relationship with Egyptian court. He needs this. By giving Sarah he will get it.

“Abraham thinks by this trick he will become unobjectionable to the Egyptian kings.

“The petty kings of Palestine as well as those of Babylonia sent sisters to Egyptian kings to establish friendly relations.

“Abraham thinks to do the same thing and now thinks it wise to remind Sarah of the agreement he made already at Babylon.

“Abraham makes it a business proposition. The marriage of a daughter or brother was accompanied with profit to parent or brother. Abraham, therefore, says, ‘that it may be well with me and I may live.’ This shows two purposes. The princes speak well of Sarah. 12:16 seems to indicate the reward of Abraham. Gets cattle and servants. Later with the Philistines and Abimelech the same story. It looks as a bride price for his sister.

“Morality of his deed:

“1. May be questioned, for Abraham allows a half truth to pass for a truth. Allows his wife to become member of the Egyptian harem. Moral offense still greater if his purpose is to become rich and save his own life. In case of Abimelech we know he obtained gifts and these before Sarah was given back.

“2. How serious was the offense:

“For him the standard of morality and religion was not what it was later. Still Scripture condemns his deed as objectionable. However, Paul himself says that he himself had unwittingly done wrong. This an excuse therefore. But from later viewpoint his conduct cannot be defended.”

Mark, Abraham deliberately sells Sarah to the Egyptian harem. And this is not presented as a fall into sin, but as a custom. It is a question whether Abraham knew any better! Perhaps he did wrong unwittingly! This may be true of a Babylonian Abraham, but how about the Abraham of Scripture?

About Abraham’s view of the future the notes have the following:

“Nowhere in his whole life is any mention made of the hereafter. If this was absent, we conclude that a deeply religious life and high morality is possible without being concerned about the life hereafter. Such an intense religious life as that of Abraham did not give room for such thoughts of immortality.

“And although the N.T. has an essential element of thought on the hereafter and immortality, still even at present one’s thoughts are mainly taken up with present religion. If we live a full Christian life we need not concern ourselves about future life.”

We ask: Does the professor ignore Heb. 11? There we read that Abraham felt himself a stranger in this world and that he looked for the city that hath foundations; and that he was one of them that desired the heavenly country. But, besides, must we not change our entire view of religion to get in harmony with the professor’s view in this matter?

(To be continued)

—H. Hoeksema

The Erroneous Views and Unwarranted Criticisms of Rev. H. Hoeksema (continued)

First of all a small yet important correction. In my last article occurs the following quotation, “At present the theory is that the whole Pentateuch was originally written in Babylonia.” Instead of “in Babylonia” it should have been “in Babylonian.” (Babylonian was the world language of the Mosaic Age. The kings of Syria and Canaan corresponded with the kings of

Egypt in Babylonian in that age. Some 350 letters in Babylonian, several of them written by the king of Jerusalem and addressed to the king of Egypt, have been dug up in recent times at Tel el Amarna in Egypt. A conservative Reformed Swiss theologian first advanced the theory that the entire Pentateuch, i.e., the very laws of Moses were originally written in the Babylonian language.)

The manuscript which was handed in by me and which is still on file at The Banner office contains the correct reading. An oversight of this kind in the proofreading easily happens. The quotation as corrected, it is to be borne in mind, is taken from the notes of the students. The reading “in Babylonia” would materially affect the passage and constitute a serious difficulty for the thought.

We now pass to new material. We were to devote a brief paragraph to Rev. Hoeksema’s novel ideas on evil spirits and expulsion of evil spirits. In commenting on the students and their taking notes, Rev. Hoeksema spoke of an evil spirit being present in the classrooms of the Seminary, controlling the students to such an extent that they were no longer able to take notes properly. He also added that it were high time to cast out the evil spirit. This line of thought of Rev. Hoeksema we regarded as very significant and demanding a brief inquiry. We have seen that the Reformed theologians in their exposition of the doctrine of common grace point out that the denial of common grace is characteristically Anabaptistic. The Anabaptists are the sect that believe in but one grace, the grace which is in Christ Jesus. They will have nothing to do with common grace. This for one thing. But Reformed theology also tells us that the Anabaptists were by their denial of common grace inevitably led to a belief in evil spirits influencing and controlling “de dingen des gemeenen levens.”¹ Buildings and persons were frequently held to be dominated by evil spirits. But the Anabaptists also knew of a remedy by which to overcome the influences of the evil spirit, a method “om de dingen des gemeenen levens te zuiveren,”² to quote from our Reformed authorities. The Anabaptists suggested “duivelbezwinging,” exorcism or demon-expulsion, as an efficient means to counteract the malignant influences of an evil spirit. It will be seen that we have here in what Rev. Hoeksema says about evil spirits and the casting out of evil spirits something exactly similar to

the Anabaptistic beliefs under this head. In unlooked for ways the Anabaptism of Rev. Hoeksema, which came to expression so unmistakably in his denial of common grace, asserts itself elsewhere, showing the potency of its force in his thought in general.

We can now resume our inquiry and examine a little further the statements of Rev. Hoeksema from the point of view of their truthfulness. Last week’s article with its initial examination of Rev. Hoeksema’s statements,—“facts” he calls them,—brought already convincing evidence that he writes untruths. He bears false testimony and falsifies matters. We shall take another look at some things he says and see whether they are true or false, remembering all the time that he assures the readers that his statements are “facts gathered from the notes of the students.”

Rev. Hoeksema writes (Banner Jan. 27) as follows: “1. Prof. Janssen proceeds from the principle that the chief element in science, also in theology, is that of search. Not to know the truth, but to search for it is the chief element of theological joy.” Rev. Hoeksema adds, “See notes on Old Testament Introduction, pp. 1, 2.” Let us turn to these notes and examine the material there. Among other things the notes tell us that Old Testament Introduction “is a science.” And science, it is stated, “is a discipline that has for its aim the discovery of truth.” “Science searches for truth” and “man longs to find truth,” we are told. The sciences “have truth for their goal.” “In every science there is still truth that must be obtained.” “New discoveries are still being made.”

These sentences as I have given them are all literal quotations from the students’ notes. Do these quotations leave us in doubt as to what the nature of a science, the nature of theology is? Do they not make it plain that the chief element in science is not that of **search**, of **seeking** merely, but on the contrary that of **finding**? In the definition that is given in the notes of science

¹ English translation: “the things of common life.”

² English translation: “to purify the things of the common life.”

search is even conspicuously absent. The “**discovery** of truth,” to repeat, is what science is after. Man longs “to **find** the truth,” and science has “truth for its **goal**.” It is true, search or investigation is spoken of, and **justly** so, but it is expressly mentioned only as an element, not as “the chief element in science,” as Rev. Hoeksema claims. Yet in spite of all this, in spite of the fact that “**discovery**” of the truth, **finding** the truth, or truth as the “**goal**” is given as the main thing in science, Rev. Hoeksema tells The Banner readers that “Prof. Janssen proceeds

from the principle that the **chief element in science**, also in theology is that of **search**.” (The heavier type is mine.)

What are we to think of all this? The conclusion here, as in the previous cases discussed last week, is unavoidable that we are again dealing with a falsification of the notes. Rev. Hoeksema here, as in other places, is presenting false testimony to the Banner readers.

(To be continued)

—R. Janssen

