



REFORMED

— P A V I L I O N —

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 23

SEPTEMBER 14, 2024

*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

CONTENTS

3 MEDITATION
Sanctify Them

4 EDITORIAL
The CRC, the URC, and the Well-Meant Offer of the Gospel

9 HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES
Article 75: The New King and His Kingdom (continued)



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

See reformedpavilion.com for all contact and subscription information.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai...And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives.

—Exodus 19:10–11, 14–15

Sanctify Them

Sanctify them. What does that mean? To sanctify means to set apart to God, to make holy unto God, to devote to God, to consecrate unto God. The sabbath day is sanctified (Deut. 5:12) as the day set apart from the others and devoted to God. The tabernacle was sanctified (Ex. 29:43) as the tent consecrated to God as his dwelling.

To sanctify the people of Israel meant to make them holy unto Jehovah. Separated from all other peoples, separated from their own corruption, they were devoted to God as his holy people. Their hearts, their minds, their wills, their deeds, their bodies, their souls—all were consecrated unto him and pressed into his service.

Sanctify them! The physical symbol of their sanctification was that they washed their clothes of the dust and sweat and filth of the wilderness. The physical symbol of their sanctification was also that they came not at their wives. Though such union was pure and holy and blessed of God, they forsook it for a time with consent to fix their attentions and appetites upon God (see I Cor. 7:5).

Why must they be sanctified? Jehovah was coming to them! On the third day he would descend upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. He would be among them as the thundering, burning, smoking, blasting fire. That is, he would be among them as the Holy One! Jehovah is holy! He is forever consecrated to himself in eternal devotion as the triune God! Jehovah is holy, so Israel must be holy (I Pet. 1:16.) Without

holiness Israel could not see Jehovah, much less live with Jehovah (Heb. 12:14). Not that their holiness was the reason they could see Jehovah. That honor belongs only to the righteousness and holiness of Jesus Christ. But this: it is appropriate that the holy Jehovah dwell with holy people. In the covenant, like dwells with like. Jehovah was coming, so they must be holy. Sanctify them!

How would they be sanctified? Was it finally time for Israel to contribute something? Thus far, only Jehovah had contributed. His plagues destroyed Egypt, his pillar led Israel, his breath parted the Red Sea and brought it back again, his manna fed the children of Israel, his Rock gave them water, and his might conquered the Amalekites. Now, finally, was there something for Israel to do? God forbid! If sanctification were Israel's contribution, there would be no sanctification, and the children of Israel would perish in all of their unholiness at Mount Sinai.

How, then, would they be sanctified? The same way all things had come to them thus far and always: by grace. Moses (type of Christ) would sanctify them: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them" (Ex. 19:10). Christ's blood would sanctify them (Heb. 13:12). The promises of the gospel would sanctify them (II Cor. 7:1). They would be sanctified by faith, not by works (Acts 15:9).

And the result of God's gracious sanctification of his people? The blessed fruit of obedience

to the holy God! They washed their clothes (Ex. 19:14), picture of their grateful cleansing of themselves “from all filthiness of the flesh and

spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (II Cor. 7:1).

And Moses sanctified the people.

—AL

EDITORIAL

The CRC, the URC, and the Well-Meant Offer of the Gospel

The editorial this week is a follow-up to last week’s editorial.¹ Last week we asked whether the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) holds the well-meant offer of the gospel. That question was made necessary by the pretense among Orthodox Presbyterian churches and some of their members that the OPC does not have an official position on the well-meant offer or that a man could join an Orthodox Presbyterian church without entangling himself in the Arminianism of the well-meant offer. The truth is that even the best of the Orthodox Presbyterian churches are neck-deep in the well-meant offer of the gospel, so that members of the OPC live with and live under and eventually live for the Arminianism of the OPC’s well-meant offer. The warning to those disaffected members of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) or Reformed Protestant Churches who are fleeing to the OPC is that there can be no true spiritual rest or safety for them in the OPC.

This week we briefly turn to the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) and the United Reformed Churches (URC) to see these denominations’ doctrine of the well-meant offer. Prior to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church’s battle over the well-meant offer in the 1940s, the Christian Reformed Church fought a public ecclesiastical battle over the well-meant offer in the 1920s. The result of the battle was the CRC’s adoption of the well-meant offer as the dogma of the denomination. The result of the battle was also

a church split in 1924, when the CRC expelled Herman Hoeksema and others for their rejection of common grace and the well-meant offer. It was because of Hoeksema’s battle against the well-meant offer in the CRC in the 1920s that Hoeksema and the *Standard Bearer* took such an interest in Gordon H. Clark’s battle against the well-meant offer in the OPC in the 1940s.

When the United Reformed Churches split from the Christian Reformed Church in the 1990s, the URC carried the CRC’s well-meant offer with her. The United Reformed denomination today is every bit as committed to the well-meant offer as her Christian Reformed forefathers were. Today some disaffected members of the Protestant Reformed Churches and the Reformed Protestant Churches may try to find refuge in the URC, just as other disaffected members try to find refuge in the OPC. The warning to those members who flee to the URC is the same as the warning for those who flee to the OPC. There can be no true spiritual rest or safety in the URC. You cannot remain opposed to Arminianism while you live under the Arminianism of the well-meant offer in the URC. Beware, brethren! You are drowning in Arminianism! Be zealous and repent, and exit the door of those denominations (see Rev. 3:19–20)!

Our tour of the CRC and URC will be brief, just long enough to establish the point. If any reader would like a refresher in the doctrine of

¹ Andrew Lanning, “The OPC and the Well-Meant Offer of the Gospel,” *Reformed Pavilion* 2, no. 22 (September 7, 2024): 4–16.

the well-meant offer, the error of the well-meant offer, and the truth of the call of the gospel over against the well-meant offer, that reader is referred to last week's editorial.

The Christian Reformed Church

The Christian Reformed Church is as prominent as the OPC in its approval of the well-meant offer of the gospel. The CRC officially adopted the well-meant offer at the Synod of Kalamazoo in 1924 as part of its doctrine of common grace. The first point of common grace adopted by the synod is that God has an attitude of grace and favor for all men, including the reprobate. To prove God's common favor for all men, synod appealed to the doctrine of the well-meant offer, which it called "the general offer of the gospel."

Touching the favorable attitude of God toward mankind in general and not only toward the elect, synod declares that according to Scripture and the Confession it is established, that besides the saving grace of God shown only to the elect unto eternal life, there is also a certain favor or grace of God which He shows to His creatures in general. This is evident from the Scripture passages that were quoted and from the Canons of Dordt, II, 5 and III, IV, 8, 9, where the general offer of the gospel is set forth; while it also is evident from the citations made from Reformed writers belonging to the most flourishing period of Reformed theology that our fathers from of old maintained this view.²

For their opposition to the doctrine of common grace in general, and the well-meant offer of the gospel in particular, Herman Hoeksema, George Ophoff, Henry Danhof, and others were expelled from the CRC. Having been expelled, they formed the Protestant Reformed Churches in 1925. The CRC continues in its dogma of the well-meant offer to this day.

The United Reformed Churches

The United Reformed Churches were formed from an alliance of churches that left the CRC in the 1990s. The occasion for these churches' exodus from the CRC was the CRC's allowing women into the offices of minister, elder, and deacon. The churches that left and organized as an alliance chose the name *United Reformed Churches* at their first synod in 1996.

Although the URC left the CRC, the URC are in complete agreement with the CRC in the matter of the well-meant offer of the gospel. When the URC left the CRC in the 1990s, the URC carried the CRC's 1924 dogma of the well-meant offer with them.

When the United Reformed Churches were forming in the mid-1990s, they held discussions with delegates from the Protestant Reformed Churches. There was a hope among some both in the PRC and the URC that the two denominations could forge an ecclesiastical relationship. After all, both the PRC and the URC had exited the CRC—the PRC by being expelled in 1924 and the URC by leaving in the 1990s. Might it be possible for these two denominations that stood in mutual opposition to the CRC to enjoy some level of formal relationship with each other?

The discussions revealed that the URC in the 1990s was just as thoroughly committed to the doctrines of common grace and the well-meant offer as the CRC had been in 1924. The URC may have left the CRC over whether there may be women in the pulpit, but the URC still zealously maintained a well-meant offer of the gospel in the pulpit. One man put it pithily, "Doctrinally, the URC is just the CRC without skirts."³

Indeed, when men from the URC met in their assemblies in the mid-1990s to discuss their doctrinal positions, the leaders made sure to remind everyone that the URC believed common grace and the well-meant offer. Jelle Tuininga,

² "Three Points of Common Grace as Formulated by the 1924 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church," in Herman Hanko, *For Thy Truth's Sake* (Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2000), 423; see also John Bolt, "Common Grace and the Christian Reformed Synod of Kalamazoo (1924): A Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Retrospective," <https://www.prca.org/articles/ctj1.html>.

³ Statement made in the Protestant Reformed seminary by a professor during the undersigned's studies.

one of the most prominent leaders of the URC in the early days, came out swinging in 1994.

Honesty—we need that too in our ecumenical endeavors. Let me be specific. The Protestant Reformed Churches informed the Alliance that for them to attend as fraternal delegates they would have to “lecture us” on common grace and other matters that divide us. Here I say: let’s be frank and honest with each other. If the Protestant Reformed brothers think that we must adopt their position on common grace and the well-meant offer of the gospel in order to join in federation, then forget about it. That simply isn’t going to happen. I could live in a church where there was freedom to disagree about common grace, but if I have to deny common grace in order to be a member of the same church, then the game is over. And that is even more the case with the well-meant offer of the gospel. I, and I’m sure the majority of independent churches, simply are not going to do that. Well then, let’s be honest and not pretend that we are going to work together toward federation. The door to that is closed. I consider our Protestant Reformed brothers to be dead wrong on these matters, and if they won’t even consider the possibility that they could be wrong, then talking together is a waste of time. We have better things to do. (This is not to deny that I count them brothers in Christ.)⁴

And when, a few years later, the United Reformed leadership suspected that some in the URC were developing a certain sympathy for the PRC, the United Reformed leadership was quick to stamp out that sympathy. The United Reformed leaders paraded common grace and the well-meant offer before their fellow members as doctrines that they must not relinquish in the least. A *Christian Renewal* report on the 1999 synod of the URC tells the tale.

At the most recent synod, the [Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity]’s guidelines or road to ecumenical relations and eventual church unity were adopted...

While much of the report of the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity resulted in little debate, a sticking point was the committee’s initial dealings with representatives from the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Those dealings came to public expression in a press release...which appeared to concede some major points of theology to the Protestant Reformed.

Rev. Jelle Tuininga considered committee statements following initial discussions with the PRs to have “conceded too much,” and suggested that historical differences over issues such as common grace and the well-meant offer of the gospel to have been glossed over as matters of “semantics.”

Rev. Richard Stienstra, a member of the committee, suggested, however, that the committee’s task was to “forthrightly defend the confessions and not the positions of a denomination (the CRC) to which we were once a part.

The Protestant Reformed Church was formed in 1924 following the deposition of Rev. Herman Hoeksema from the CRC over matters which centered on the issue of “common grace.”

Rev. Edward Marcusse of Calgary, Alberta, agreed with Rev. Tuininga’s concerns. “Last time I knew we still believed in common grace,” said Marcusse. “When I hear that the PRs greatly approve of our papers that makes me nervous. We are far from close to our PR brothers on these matters.” Referring to ecumenical relations with other denominations,

⁴ Jelle Tuininga, “Future Federation and Ecumenical Relations,” *Christian Renewal*, December 26, 1994, as quoted in David J. Engelsma, “Jelle in Wonderland,” *Standard Bearer* 71, no. 9 (February 1, 1995): 197.

Marcusse urged caution. “There are brothers from other denominations who are watching us, and if we go down that road they may not follow us.”⁵

And who were those “brothers from other denominations” who were watching the URC to see if they would be friendly with the PRC? The Canadian Reformed Churches, with their conditional covenant doctrine of Klaas Schilder, and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, with its well-meant offer of the gospel.

Also adopted were two recommendations to establish “Corresponding Relations” with both the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Free Reformed Churches. Both recommendations were adopted by synod unanimously and without debate. The synod also ratified synod 1997’s decision to enter into corresponding relations with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.⁶

From the beginning the leaders of the URC have been adamant that the URC stand for common grace and for the well-meant offer of the gospel. From the beginning the leaders of the URC have definitely aligned themselves with the Christian Reformed Synod of 1924. And from the beginning the leaders of the URC have explicitly rejected the PRC on the basis of the PRC’s opposition to the well-meant offer of the gospel.

And what of the URC today, some thirty years after the denomination’s formation? The theologians of the URC today are every bit as committed to the well-meant offer and every bit as opposed to Herman Hoeksema as they ever were. R. Scott Clark, who is a minister in the URC and a professor at Westminster Seminary in California, had this to say about Herman Hoeksema in light of Hoeksema’s rejection of the well-meant offer:

On the Reformed right (the so-called hyper-Calvinists), there is a strain of rationalism which one finds expressed by thinkers such as Herman Hoeksema, Gordon Clark and John Gerstner, which rejects the doctrine of the Free Offer of the Gospel as implicitly Arminian.⁷

R. Scott Clark currently trains the next generation of United Reformed ministers, who will all graduate from seminary and take up their ministries in the certain knowledge that Herman Hoeksema was a rationalist for his rejection of the well-meant offer. And the next generation of United Reformed ministers will be sure to perpetuate and promote the doctrine of the well-meant offer in the URC.

Conclusion

The well-meant offer of the gospel is not the gospel. The well-meant offer of the gospel is a denial of the gospel. After all, what is the well-meant offer of the gospel but just another way of saying, “Man”? What is the well-meant offer of the gospel but just another way of saying, “Man distinguishes himself from other men”? And therefore, what is the well-meant offer of the gospel but just another way of saying, “Man saves himself”? For in the well-meant offer of the gospel, God certainly does not make any distinction among men. In the well-meant offer of the gospel, God offers salvation equally to the elect and reprobate alike. And note well, the well-meant offer of the gospel is not the doctrine that God *proclaims* the gospel to all alike and that God *calls* to all alike that they repent and believe. Rather, in the well-meant offer of the gospel, God *offers* salvation to all alike, with the salvation that is offered being truly *available* to all alike. In the well-meant offer of the gospel, election and reprobation do not enter the picture whatsoever. Rather, in the well-meant

⁵ “‘Historic’ Step Taken Toward Canadian Reformed and Free Reformed Churches; PR Talks Raise Flags,” *Christian Renewal*, July 12, 1999.

⁶ “‘Historic’ Step Taken Toward Canadian Reformed and Free Reformed Churches; PR Talks Raise Flags.”

⁷ R. Scott Clark, “The Free Offer of the Gospel,” *The Heidelberg* (blog), September 3, 2012, <https://heidelberg.net/2012/09/the-free-offer-of-the-gospel/>.

offer of the gospel, man's *response* to God's real offer is the only thing. One man distinguishes himself from another man by that man's accepting God's offer.

In the well-meant offer of the gospel, nothing comes down to God's election and reprobation. In the well-meant offer of the gospel, everything comes down to man. In the well-meant offer of the gospel, the good news for a man is not Christ's work. In the well-meant offer of the gospel, the good news is man's response to Christ's work.

In the well-meant offer of the gospel, the gospel is man.

But man is not the gospel!

Jesus Christ alone is the gospel! Jesus is the promise that was first revealed in paradise (Gen. 3:15). Jesus is the message that was published by the patriarchs and the prophets (John 5:46). Jesus is the salvation that was represented by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the Old Testament (Heb. 10:7–8). Jesus is the fulfillment of all God's speaking unto the fathers (Heb. 1:1–2). Jesus is the good tidings of great joy (Luke 2:10–11). Jesus is the sweet savor that God smells in the preaching of the gospel (II Cor. 2:15). Jesus is the word of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:19). Jesus is good news by which God saves sinners (Rom. 1:16).

Jesus is the revelation of the righteousness of God (Rom. 1:17). Jesus and him crucified is the only apostolic message (I Cor. 1:23). Jesus and him crucified is the only apostolic knowledge (2:2).

The well-meant gospel offer's Man cannot be mixed with the gospel's Jesus. The well-meant offer of the gospel is not the gospel but a denial of the gospel. The well-meant offer of the gospel is not Reformed but Arminian.

Therefore, let those who seek refuge in the URC not be deceived. There can be no rest or peace under the Arminianism of the URC's well-meant offer. Rather, join or form a church that maintains the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let him that hath an ear hear.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Rev. 3:19–22)

—AL



Article LXXV. The New King and His Kingdom (continued)

We emphasized that the all-comprehensiveness of the counsel of God must strictly be maintained. All things, small and great, from the hairs of our head to the wars of the world, are included in God's decree and according to that decree worked out and controlled. And when the question was asked whether also the actions of free agents of men and angels are implied in this eternal decree we answered without reservation: certainly. And we backed this assertion by the Word of God. We called your attention to the fact that in the very nature of the case, but also according to the very clean expression of Scripture, such crimes as the betrayal of the Lord and the crucifixion of Christ were predetermined from before the foundation of the world. For thus Peter presents it to the people on that great day of Pentecost, and thus the disciples in all simplicity express it when the apostles return from prison.

Surely, with regard to what constitutes the greatest stumbling block for many to accept the counsel of God: the evil deeds of men, Scripture is very explicit. And the conclusion is certainly warranted, that if the wicked actions of free agents have a place in the counsel of God, the good deeds must certainly be predetermined. But even here the Word of God does not leave us drift on our own conclusion. What is the thought of Scripture is plainly revealed in Eph. 2:10, where we read these powerful words: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." This text gives a reason why we can never boast of self. It is not of works lest any man should boast, for we are his

workmanship, etc. This is the dominant note in the whole chapter. It is God who saved us thru Christ Jesus. The ultimate source of our salvation is God's love and His rich mercy, vs. 4, a love that remained faithful also when we were dead in sins and transgression. In that great love He made us one with Christ Jesus, quickened us together with Him, raised us with Him and placed us in heaven in Christ Jesus, vss. 5, 6. The purpose of it all is the full manifestation of His grace toward us, and the display of its exceeding riches, vs. 7. And if the idea might lodge in our mind that God, indeed, finished our salvation for us objectively, but that we in our own strength sought connection with Jesus, the apostle is quick to remove it, for he emphasizes that we are saved by grace through faith, and this faith also is the gift of God, vs. 8. Man may not boast. He may have no reason to boast. The riches of God's grace must be displayed. And to remove the last possible reason or ground upon which man might attempt to boast, the apostle adds: "For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Surely, the text reveals clearly that also our good works are before ordained, are predetermined, are implied in God's eternal counsel. It also reveals more. It expresses beautifully what really is the Scriptural conception of the reward of grace. Too often we still ascribe more or less meritorious value to our good works, and we have not quite succeeded to rid ourselves of Roman Catholic bondage. True, thus the conception is frequently, God saves us completely. We are His workmanship. He prepares us unto good works. Without His grace we could never

perform them. But the fact remains that when we do good works thru His grace, pay may be expected. Thru our good works we after all bestow a favor upon God, for which favor may be expected in return. The apostle puts the case just the reverse. God not only prepares us for good works, but He also prepared the works for us, so that we might walk in them. It is grace from beginning to end. It is grace that we are united with Christ according to God's eternal good pleasure. It is grace that Christ in the fulness of time as our Head and Redeemer accomplished our salvation. It is grace that in due time we are united by a true faith to Him, so that in very fact we may receive from Him grace for grace. It is grace that we are prepared unto good works, and it is also grace that we may walk in these good works, which God has prepared for each one of us. From beginning to end it is grace. And for that reason also the reward is grace. That we walk in good works is not bestowing a privilege upon God on our part, but God's favor toward us. But however this may be, the fact is plain that also the good works of the free agent are pre-determined by God's eternal counsel.

There is, then, nothing that escapes the counsel of the Almighty.

It is absolutely all-comprehensive.

In the meantime two questions arise in this connection that demand our serious consideration for a moment.

The first question is that of the theodicy. The question: Is there unrighteousness with God?

The second is that of determinism: Does the free agent, then, lose his freedom?

It is true, these questions are very closely related to each other. They are really two aspects, two phases of one and the same question. But in our discussion they may easily be distinguished. The first question concerns God's side of the problem. The second more particularly man's side.

What is implied in the question of the theodicy is not so difficult to understand. We maintain that God's counsel is absolutely all-comprehensive, that nothing is excluded from it. We

stated that also the deeds of the free agents are implied in that counsel, even the evil deeds. We maintain moreover, that according to that counsel God irresistibly works all things in time. Now, then, who can resist or even did resist His will? Is not God, then, the source also of evil in this world? How is the presence of evil, both physical and moral, suffering and sin, to be harmonized with this all-comprehensive counsel of God, if He is, indeed, holy and righteous, wise and good? Is there, then, unrighteousness with God?

This question has, throughout the history of this sinful world, arisen repeatedly in the minds of sinful men. Scripture speaks of it how the children of God stood face to face with this problem more than once and made an attempt at solution. It is the fundamental problem of the book of Job. For Job was a righteous man, more righteous than any of the children of men at his time. He was so tenderly righteous that he would make an offering for his children when they feasted. It might be they had committed some wrong. Yet he was cast in severest suffering and bitterest woe. And although Job at first assumes the right attitude and concludes that the name of the Lord must be praised, yet gradually the question of the theodicy arises. Was there unrighteousness on the part of God in all this affliction? The same question kept the mind of Asaph busy, as he relates in the seventy-third psalm. As he looked about in the world he found a bitter thing. The wicked prospered. They that cursed the name of Jehovah met with no affliction. They abounded in wealth and prosperity and never walked in the darkness of affliction. But the punishment of the righteous is there every morning. That they may wash their hands in innocency is all in vain, for they meet with suffering and affliction day by day. Is there, then, unrighteousness with God? Is there actually no knowledge in the Most High? The question was a painful one for Asaph to understand. And, to mention no more, we all know that Paul puts the question in that very form in Rom. 9:14: "What shall we say, then? Is there unrighteousness with God?" He had been dealing with the

question of predestination. Not all that are called Israel are really of Israel. The children of the promise constitute the holy line. And that according to the free election of God. Historically this is illustrated already in Isaac. Ishmael was a child of Abraham according to the flesh. Yet, Ishmael is rejected and: “In Isaac shall thy seed be called,” according to election. Esau was of Abraham’s seed as well as Jacob. Yet Esau was hated and Jacob was loved. And this was said of them before the children were born or had committed either good or evil. All according to the free election of God. Well, then, the apostle feels that the question must arise in the minds of his readers: “Is there unrighteousness with God?” And boldly he faces it.

But not only in Scripture and not only in the minds of God’s people does this question of the theodicy arise. On the contrary, philosophy faced this question many a time. Especially in recent days the question pushed itself on the foreground. Naturally. The question of the theodicy concerns itself especially with the relation of God to the presence of evil in this world. Now, there hardly was an age in which so much evil was witnessed as our own. The world was cast into the woes of a world war. In spite of sweet dreams of a coming world peace that was lasting, the god of war of a sudden revealed itself in the world and dealt out his most cruel blows. All the wisdom and ingenuity, all the power of man was for years in succession exercised preeminently and almost exclusively for destruction. The suffering was tremendous. The world was

literally bleeding. One tremendous outcry of woe and agony, of pain and grief was heard in most every land. Bitter was the hatred. Black were the sins committed. The evil of this world was more evident than ever before. And the minds of men turned themselves to the question of the relation between this evil world and God. It was the question of theodicy. Is there, then, unrighteousness with God?

The question gave rise to such novels as those of Mr. Wells, in which the attempt is made to defend the goodness of God in the face of obvious evils in the world, but in which the infinitude of God is surrendered. God is finite. He is limited. He is not omnipotent. Hence, he cannot be blamed for the evil in this world because many things are beyond His power. His goodness is saved at the cost of His omnipotence. Or again, a still more recent solution has been presented by Dr. Tennant in his conception of a “determinate God.” (Reviewed in *The Princeton Theological Review*, April, 1920.) God is not a finite God, but He is nevertheless determined by His own creation of a moral system and of free agents. He could not possibly have created a moral world without evil. And the fact that He created moral beings, free agents, made Him limit His own omnipotence. Also here the attempt is made to save God’s goodness, but at the cost of His omnipotence.

Thus the question is a serious one. And it is a question that is actual today more than ever: Is there unrighteousness with God?

—Grand Rapids, Mich.

