

In response to the allegations against myself (Rev. Koole) by those who separated, all that is necessary at this point are three observations.

First, they reiterate my disagreement with Rev. Hoeksema concerning what would constitute a proper response to the Philippian jailor's question (both in understanding what the jailor was asking and then taking issue with Hoeksema's response that he was to do nothing), as though my disagreement was indefensible and what I maintained could not possibly be Reformed. (As an aside, keep in mind that I apologized for saying that if anyone other than Hoeksema had stated what he did, I would have said "Nonsense." – and that is how I wrote it – but in so doing, implicated HH – therefore, the proper apology.)

In response, consider the following:

In the middle of the '1953 controversy' Rev. Hoeksema responded to a charge Rev. A. Petter made concerning HH and his unconditional covenant view, namely, that Hoeksema's covenant view meant that to the Philippian jailor's question, "What must I do to be saved?", Hoeksema would have to respond to every anxious inquirer asking that question by saying, "Nothing, you cannot do anything.". To this Rev. Hoeksema himself replied in the SB:

*This last remark by the Rev. Peter causes me to wonder whether he has ever understood the pure Protestant Reformed truth that must have nothing of conditions, but insists that the salvation which God works for us and in us is absolutely unconditional, is not even conditioned by faith. Does he really imagine that it is Protestant Reformed to answer one who anxiously inquires about the way of salvation, who therefore was already pricked in his heart by the Holy Spirit, by saying **very foolishly** to him that he must do **absolutely nothing** and that he cannot **do anything**? If that is really the Rev. Petter's conception, then he has never understood us at all. How could we ever say to a man that is anxiously inquiring for the way of salvation, or, in fact, to anyone, whether he is inquiring or not: "My dear man, you must **do absolutely nothing**; you must not even repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Just wait, like a stock and block, and you shall surely be saved."*

*On the contrary, to such a man, as well as to anyone, we simply preach the gospel, that is: we preach the Lord Jesus Christ and faith in Him as the only way of salvation. We do not hesitate to preach the way of faith even in an **imperative** form, as the apostle Paul does to the jailor in Philippi: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."*

As is apparent from his response to Rev. Petter, Hoeksema himself did not understand Paul's response (nor for that matter, Simon Peter's response to the same basic question by those pricked in their hearts on Pentecost), to mean, "You must **do absolutely nothing**." Neither does it appear that Hoeksema himself was absolutely opposed to using the word "do" in any sense when referring to the response of repentance and faith to the call of the gospel. What he was opposed to was the notion that being saved and coming to the knowledge of salvation hinged on **doing something** either in the sense of some deed a sinful man had to or could perform to undo what he had done, or based on something that a man himself had to produce. What HH and the PRC unconditional covenant theology are NOT opposed to is this: that the call of the gospel requires a response - an active, willing response, namely, that of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel not only declares that God bestows the gift of faith as a bond, but it also calls one to actively believing and confessing Jesus as Savior and Lord. This is the significance of

HH stating that “We do not hesitate to preach the way of faith even in the **imperative form.**” Not just “You must have Christ. So let’s wait and see if that takes place in your heart.” But, “Believe! While it is today.” With urgency. Lest one perishes (cf. Heb. 3:7 ff). This against all the calumnies of the critics of the PRC covenant view that charge otherwise, claiming we too are of the hyper-Calvinistic persuasion. As if we are afraid of imperatives attached to the message of the gospel and placing upon man his responsibility and calling, a gospel call that requires an obedient response. Not so, as is clear from Hoeksema’s response to Petter. With this response, I could not agree more.

I could at this point, for the critic’s sake, offer extensive quotes from Calvin in his explanation both of the exchange between the inquiring Jews and Simon Peter following Peter’s sermon on Pentecost (in the Acts 2 account), as well as quotes from Calvin’s commentary on the Acts 16 account of the exchange between the jailor and Paul. It should be clear from such that to have a different interpretation of the Philippian jailor’s question (and what he meant by “What shall I do?”) than Hoeksema did in his Philippian jailor sermon, together with Paul’s response, does not **necessarily** mean that one is not Biblical or Reformed. If that were so, Calvin himself would have to be charged either with being unReformed, or with favoring a conditional covenant view. This latter, of course, is exactly what those who left in 1953 wanted to maintain about Calvin. But as they were wrong about Hoeksema, so they were wrong about Calvin and what his explanation implies about God’s covenantal promises as well.

In the interests of brevity, we will not offer those quotes. Those interested may do so on their own.

And then, in this connection, one last remark.

In his book *Hyper-Calvinism & The Call of the Gospel*, Prof. D. Engelsma gives some wise counsel. “*If the fruit of the preaching of the gospel is that men, pricked in their hearts, cry out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”, or that a Philippian jailor says, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” it is not in place, it is not typically Reformed, to launch into a fierce polemic against free will or to give a nervous admonition against supposing that one can do anything towards his own salvation. The answer to such a question, the Reformed answer, is “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...,” and “Believe on the Lord Jesu Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 2:38; 16:31).* (p. 209, 1994 ed.)

Further, the critics charge me with maintaining that “There is an action that a man must do prior to the conscious reception of one’s salvation so that one is consciously aware of his salvation.”

This is a gross misrepresentation; I am inclined to say, willful. Never do I speak of “an action” that a man must do prior to the conscious reception of one’s salvation. Rather I maintain that for the conscious reception and appropriation of one’s salvation (that is, knowing and being assured of one’s own salvation) a response is required, namely, the response of believing and repenting. One must actively repent and believe. Then the Spirit testifies within, “Thou art saved. Thy sins be forgiven thee.” This is Reformed and Biblical. This is what the gospel call is all about. As Christ himself declared to his disciples as he commissioned them to preach the gospel, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.” (Mark 16:16) Notice, “shall be saved”, future tense, following repentance and believing. Saved in what sense? Not to obtain the gift of salvation itself (regeneration). For one to repent and believe, one must already have been renewed unto salvation and received the

seed of faith. But “shall be saved” in the sense of **consciously receiving it (appropriating it)** for oneself as one actively chooses Christ and life, repenting and believing. (Rev. 22:17) This, as other brothers responding to these misrepresentations have demonstrated, is how God has ordered the conscious appropriation of one’s personal salvation. This is made possible by God’s irresistible, heart-transforming gracious operations of the Holy Spirit.

This is the language of the apostles as well, as Peter declared to the Jews, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins **may be** blotted out.....” (Acts 3:19). First there is the response to the law being applied and the gospel being declared, namely, the activity of repentance; then the blotting out of one’s sins, that is, the personal application and the **knowledge that it is so**, as the Spirit testifies in one’s heart. This is Biblical, Reformed theology 101.

And finally, in response to finding fault with the Exodus 16 sermon’s statement, “In order to live in accordance with God’s word, beloved, we must seek the grace that is available to us”, we point out, it is a statement to be interpreted in the context of its explanation. The question is, grace in what sense? Because God’s grace in the sense of undeserved favor is always towards His children. But, as we made clear, we are speaking of the other aspect of grace, that is, grace as a power with its operations, namely, grace as it has to do with the **gracious operations of the Holy Spirit**. And that is to be sought every day anew if we are to live as Christians, that is, if we are to make progress spiritually through the waste howling wilderness of this life. It is to be sought daily if, when confronted by temptations or that which tests faith as Israel was, we are to be kept from falling into the sins of disobedience or of murmuring in complaint.

This is why, to clarify what aspect of grace I was speaking of, I mentioned the H. Catechism. Lord’s Day 45 follows upon Lord’s Day 44, which LD summarizes our calling to live according to the commandments of God, that is, the Law as the life of gratitude. One of the points of LD 45, as it sets forth the necessity of prayer for the believer, is that no man can live according to the commands of God apart from the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit. What the Catechism is pointing out is, this is what makes prayer necessary. The saved child of God must pray day by day, because not even the child of God can live according to God’s word apart from prayer, prayer uttered every day anew. Without prayer, we will surely fall to temptation. What does one need in order to withstand temptation and not complain when one is tested? One needs the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit.

I stated that they are **available** to us to underscore two points. First, that Christ himself has purchased for us the right to this aspect of grace’s operations (His Spirit’s). And second, to make clear that God has ordained not to give us the grace (the undeserved operations of the Holy Spirit) to withstand temptation to sin or to murmur apart from seeking it in prayer. God will have us express our conscious dependency upon Him day by day. We must not imagine that apart from dependency on God through prayer we can yet live as Christians, having victories over sin and temptation. If we think so, we will stumble like Israel in the wilderness and like Simon Peter as he denied his Lord. Why did Peter fall so low? Because as Christ himself stated in Mark 14:37,38, “Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray [!], lest ye enter into temptation..” The gracious operation of the Spirit and His power was available, his for the asking, to be laid hold upon by prayer. But Simon, in self-confidence, did not think he needed it. With devastating consequences.

And notice, the phrase I used was, “In order to live **according to God’s Word**”. I did not say “In order to have fellowship with God.” The accusers impose their own conclusions on my statement. The

statement made in the sermon is in accordance with the Catechism and the Scriptures. As James declares, "Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, **because ye ask not**. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss..." (4:2,3) Then 3 verses later (vs. 6) James states, "But He giveth **more grace**. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." And who are the humble? Those who by grace know they need more (on-going) measures of grace if they are to live as Christians and keep the pure and undefiled religion of their Lord (James 1:27). Which grace (the operations of the Spirit to strengthen and arm oneself spiritually) is to be sought. (Luke 11:9, 10; Eph. 6:10-18)

I will leave it there.