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April 30, 1970

Mrs. Garret Vanderkooi
13 D University Houses
Madison
Wisconsin 53705

Dear Mrs. Vanderkooi:

It was a real pleasure to receive your good letter of February 19. You asked a number of interesting questions on which I would like to write at length. Not being able to do so then, this letter was delayed. Even now there is not enough time to answer as fully as I would like.

What you said about recent graduates of Calvin distressed me greatly. When I was a student in seminary I often heard the professors speak about the fine stand for the integrity of the Word of God that was being taken by the Christian Reformed Church. Later I met many fine members of that church and was greatly encouraged by their stalwart loyalty to God's Word. It is surely sad to hear that unbelief is infiltrating it as it is doing in so many denominations.

It is truly shocking that individuals in the Christian Reformed Church should oppose the idea of salvation through faith alone, which was at the very foundation of the Reformation and is one of the most basic doctrines of Calvinism. In most Reformed churches there has always been great stress on the need for personal conversion. Thus, in the Free Church of Scotland every church numbers its people in two categories: there are a certain number in each of them: church members, who have given credible evidence of conversion, and adherents.

The matters to which you refer are by no means small or incidental problems; indeed they are absolutely essential to true Christianity. The New Testament always treats the accounts in Genesis as literal accounts of events that occurred. It says in I Corinthians 15:22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." If Adam is only a figure for various groups of people, what about Christ?

In the Old Testament, as in the New, there is a great deal that is not fully explained. There are many questions that are not answered. We should be very careful not to read into either Testament what is not there, but whatever is clearly taught in the Word of God is entirely dependable.