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"B. H. Ploeg Continued His Arguments Over Church Matters with G. Wakker Yet One More Time in De Hollander"

B. H. Ploeg

Nella Kennedy

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17 October 1860

Holland, Michigan

B. H. Ploeg contined his arguments over church matters with G. Wakker yet one more time in *De Hollander*.

In Dutch; translation by Nella Kennedy, April, 2006.

Original in the archives of the Holland Museum.

DE HOLLANDER, October 17, 1860

To G. Wakker

Continued

It was established in Art. 37 that the consistories should meet at least once every week, but Art. 52 stipulates that both sides need to get together once a month, and for an expressed end, namely brotherly union, etc. And this union rested on solid reformed grounds, flowing from the confession, from the same doctrine of faith expressed in our Forms of Unity, which they had accepted with us.

This can be seen in the work of Jacobus Koelman, *Het Ambt and the Pligten der Ouderlingen enz.* [The Office and Duties of the Elders, etc.], printed by Rev. S. van Velzen, in 1837. Pages 167 and 168 state: "What is remarkable still that all the churches of France approved not only our Dutch Confessions of Faith in a National Synod, held in Virij [Viry], on May 25, 1583, but also at another National Synod, held in the year 1620, in Alez, in Cevennes, on October 6. [They] on oath approved the aforementioned Canons of the National Synod of Dordrecht. This was voiced this in her Canon as follows: 'The meeting, after having called on the name of God, desired the *Canones* of the *Concilie* of Dordrecht to be read to the entire Synod, and having been read, that each article be discussed carefully. This was accepted in its entirety, and approved with public agreement, as conforming to the Word of God, and the confession of the faith of our churches, having been composed with very great wisdom and purity, [and] very capable in discovering the errors of the Arminians and to counter them. Therefore all ministers and elders delegated to this meeting, each individually affirmed and declared that they consented and agreed with this doctrine, and that they would promote and protect these with all their power until their last breath. And to make this consented union authentic, and to bind all the provinces to it, the meeting commanded that this present article would be printed, and added to the *Canones* of the aforementioned *Concilie*, and that it would be read in the provincial synods and at the academies, to be approved, affirmed and signed there by pastors, elders and professors of the academies as well as those who desire to be admitted to any academic ministry. And if anyone rejects what is comprised in the doctrine of the aforementioned *Concilie*, established by the *Canones* itself, in whole or in part, or refuses to take the oath of agreement and approval, the meeting commanded that he will not be received in any church ministry or school function.'" "The subsequent National Synod of the French churches, held in Charenton in the year 1623, affirmed the same expressly."

See here, in J. Koelman, the national ecclesiastical independence in language, etc. of the Walloon (French) *Gereformeerde* churches indicated *correctly* and *clearly* in the Articles 37, 50, 52, 52 of our Dort Church Order, and the ground of her mutual union —of the Dutch with the French, and of the French with the Dutch-- expressed in the cited Synodical resolutions of the *Gereformeerde* churches of France.

And from the fact that this national ecclesiastical independence exists still today can be deduced from what appeared in DE HOLLANDER of Sept. 19, 1860. This reads: "On the 19th a public session took place in the Walloon Church of Dordrecht, open to all interested friends of Protestantism. Rev. V. H. Geryé of Amsterdam talked about the Waldensians whom he had visited. After him came Rev. T. H. Bost of Verviers, in Belgium, informing his audience of the condition, progress and struggle of Protestantism."

We can see from this and that that there was a time that the French refugees, seeking and finding a safe hiding place in the Netherlands, and once having sufficient strength in numbers, established congregations with (whenever this was possible of course) pastors, elders and deacons as leaders, conducted consistory meetings, divided into Classes, maintained Particular Synod, and thus formed an independent national Walloon (French) *Gereformeerde* church. Yet they had brotherly communion with the Dutch church and congregations once a month at consistory meetings (see Art. 52) and every third year, as a rule, in a General Synod.

From which can be demonstrated—correctly and clearly—that (as Brother Wakker says) Art. 50 and 52 show the opposite of what I said? Brother Wakker speaks about *the half-mutilated* piece from the history of the Dutch and French churches in the Netherlands, and that its power has led *inevitably to a lie* which people, who do not know history, must believe. And that to *slander* the descendants of our forefathers?

I myself think just the reverse of Brother Wakker. I said and asked in my piece, or letter, of March 21, 1860: "Did our American brethren, etc. . . . request the sacrifice of our national ecclesiastical independence, etc. etc. from us? Then, no, then our American brethren were not quite so *generous* with us, as our Dutch Gereformeerde church in the previous centuries toward our Walloon (French) brethren or fleeing immigrants, etc. Does this deserve your (and undoubtedly also your friends) label "mutilation of history?" In order to believe lies? To slander the descendants, etc.? The public can and will judge this and how it is done is our responsibility.

Yet, you continue and ask: "Is this not to be lamented greatly, the more so when it pretends to have been done out of love for truth and faithfulness?" Which, Brother Wakker says, is lamentable. 1. The partial and mutilated presentation from the history of the Dutch and French churches in the Netherlands, in order to cause the people to believe inevitably in *a lie*. 2. Pretending, as I am said to do, *to do so from love for truth and faithfulness*.

But (Brother Wakker would like to say with this) if you would only know Ploeg's heart and intentions, as I (Wakker) know and see through, you would lament his actions with me. So people! This is the guideline: do not let yourselves be misled by Ploeg. It is only pretense, seemingly out of truth and faithfulness, but this deceptive.

The truth of the history, labeled a lie by Brother Wakker, yes, I trust I have demonstrated as clearly and plainly to everyone. But, brother Wakker continues, "O, were Ploeg's

heart filled with the fear of God and the love of Christ to promote the well-being of souls, he would be alarmed by stirring up the so dearly-bought church of the Lord with *such things* (which things? National ecclesiastical independence, in language, etc. etc., banning of hymns from churches and schools, Art. 69, education of youth in their own language, etc., see Art. 21 of our Church Order, of which the last-named Art. says: "The consistories in every congregation shall be careful to provide good school masters, not only to teach the children in reading, writing, grammar, and the liberal sciences; but also to teach them the catechism and godliness)."

Such a church of the Lord must, it seems to me, have sunk already so deeply when she has been alerted to such a direction, stirred by the most treasured matters, and is not gladdened, and reveals her distaste of those things, the more so when she is strengthened in this by an overseer in public. Does the innermost heart of such a speaker encourage the direction of the well-being of the soul, fear of God and love for Christ?

[Translation: Nella Kennedy,
April 2006]

HOLLANDER

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Handel en Doodberigten.

Aan G. Wakker.

In Art. 37 wordt bepaald, dat de Kerken...

Dit kan gezien worden in het werk van Jacobus Koelman.

De waarheid der geschiedenis, welke door Dr. Wakker...

Zulk eeno Gemeente des Heeren, goet, denkt mij, al zeer diep...

Truuk neman. Volgens verklaring van den vroeger Engelschen gezant...

LET OP DE TEEKENS DER TIJDEN. Het Engelsche gouvernement...

LEEDERBOEK. Heel- en Verloskundige.

GUSTUS W. TAYLOR, regter enz. voor Ottawa County.

L. VAUPELL, adol- en Tuigmakor.

onze Ned.-Naudsche Gereformeerde Kerk in de vorige eeuwen...

Doeh, aldus gaat Ubbel. voort en vraagt: "Is zulk een doen niet...

Doeh (wil Dr. Wakker hier door zeggen) als zij Ploeg's hart...

Zulk eeno Gemeente des Heeren, goet, denkt mij, al zeer diep...

Truuk neman. Volgens verklaring van den vroeger Engelschen gezant...

LET OP DE TEEKENS DER TIJDEN. Het Engelsche gouvernement...

LEEDERBOEK. Heel- en Verloskundige.

GUSTUS W. TAYLOR, regter enz. voor Ottawa County.

L. VAUPELL, adol- en Tuigmakor.

Tots mit Nederland.

Zoo als wij vroeger bekend maakten, had de 4ste vergadering...

Doeh, aldus gaat Ubbel. voort en vraagt: "Is zulk een doen niet...

Zulk eeno Gemeente des Heeren, goet, denkt mij, al zeer diep...

Truuk neman. Volgens verklaring van den vroeger Engelschen gezant...

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