

Mrs. Garret Vanderkooi
13 D University Houses
Madison, Wisconsin
53705
Feb. 19, 1970

Dr. Allan MacRae
Faith Theological Seminary
920 Spring Ave.
Elkins Park, Pa. 19117

Dear Dr. MacRae:

Gary and I have a couple of questions that we would like to ask. There are more, too, but the others can wait until the summer seminar. In God's good providence, there seems to be a small (very small) reformation afoot in the local Christian Reformed church. Gary has been in contact with some of the men of the church in trying to start a Christian elementary school. This has raised the issue of the need for personal conversion. Simultaneously the same issue has been raised in their ladies' group where I am trying to work. We have been amazed at how the CR leaders stand against the need for personal conversion, and some individuals even stand against salvation through faith alone. The resulting conflict and discussion has brought up several issues now current in the CR denomination.

The first issue is that of inspiration. In your Old Testament lectures, you stressed that inspiration refers to words, not to ideas, and that the Holy Spirit prevented error in wording. In contrast, the sort of inspiration that some CR theologians postulate is something like this: what the writers wanted to say was right, because it had been shown or told them by God. However, they may not have been able to express it very well. This would be similar to the common experience a lot of people have in writing. We know what we want to say, but even the best attempt to express it in writing, contains unintended implications. If this was the case with the writers of scripture, their central theme would be dependable, but their implications (even the clear ones) could be in error. Hence the natural history taught incidently (e.g. in the lists of clean and unclean animals) needn't be reliable. I don't like this concept of limited inspiration, but don't know how to refute it. First, is this a serious or trivial departure from the historic Christian position regarding the Bible? Secondly, is there any definite passage of scripture that rules out limited inspiration?