

THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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NUMBER 18

MEDITATION

GOD'S REQUIREMENTS

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burntofferings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, o man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:6-8

It is the old story: Israel corrupted its way before the Lord.

Attend to the context of my text: the statutes of Omri were kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, walking in the counsel of these wicked men, but they cast the Word of the Lord behind them.

If you have the time and the interest in these things, read chapter 2:1, 2, 8; chapter 3:2, 3, 9; chapter 6:10-12, 16, and you will see that it is the old story: backsliding, and corruption.

And Micah, even as all the prophets in their time, is sent to demand the fruits of the vineyard of Jehovah.

In this setting, the prophet tells Israel and Judah what is the true religion, on the background of their counterfeits.

God has requirements; they are 1) to do justly; 2) to love mercy; and 3) to walk humbly with thy God.

Well, that is tantamount to saying that God's law is required of man.

Yes, there is a difference. The wording is different, and the order of the tables is different. But essentially we have here the law of the ten commandments.

That Micah reverses the tables of the law is, I think, due to the fact that the breaking of the second table is right before his eyes, which breaking is the evidence that also the first table is broken. When we are doing injustice, and hate mercy, we surely are not walking humbly with our God.

Micah says two things of the law of God in general.

First, that the Lord hath shown to Israel what is good.

The Lord did so directly and indirectly. Directly to the forefathers of his present audience, on mount Horeb. And indirectly to all men living. There is not a man that does not receive the revelation of good conduct. Attend to Psalm 19 and Romans 1. Both places tell us of that general revelation of God. That God must be thanked and served is written in the blue heavens, and is witnessed by everything He made. They show His handiwork, and there is no clime where the Voice of God is not heard. That no one will be excusable.

He has shown to us what is good. Indeed. The law and its keeping is good for man. In the keeping of His testimony is a great reward.

What is good. Attend to this that the whole law of God can be uttered in one word of four letters: love!

Oh, I assure you that no one will have any excuse in the day of judgment.

The second thing which Micah says about the law of God is this: God *requires* from every man that he conform his life to that law.

Require! That is a terrible word. I smell sulphur and brimstone in it. For man is fallen. When Adam first heard that word in his heart and mind and soul and all his affections, he sang for joy. It did not sound harsh to him. He loved God's requirements. And did them.

But since we are fallen away from God, the word *requires* has an ominous sound. And we all know it. A commentary on this terrible word is the fact that so many reprobates do not dare to die. The fear of death is over them, within them, and round about them all their vain lives.

* * * *

But let us dig into that law, such as we hear it from Micah's lips.

To do justly.

Such conduct springs from a certain virtue, and the virtue is God's.

And the name of that virtue is righteousness. And its meaning is that in all your heart and mind and works you

are in harmony with goodness. And that is what God is and does from everlasting to everlasting.

In man it is a relative virtue. When God implants righteousness in our hearts there is a beginning of that good conduct. And the happy people who receive that righteousness of God in their heart are called in the Bible the righteous. You find that appellation often in the Psalms and in Proverbs.

If you have righteousness in your heart you do justly, that is, in principle. I'll come back to that.

The second description of the second table of the law is very beautiful: to love mercy. Note here that Micah does not say: to *do* mercy, but to *love* mercy. And that is a state of heart and mind which is heavenly in its sweetness. It means that you love to do well. It is the inmost desire of your heart to bow down to your brother in want and misery with the intent to help him, to deliver him out of all his troubles and pains, to dry his tears and to bind up his wounds. O, I tell you that if you have that jewel in your heart, you are not very far from God. Where you see and hear that virtue you hear the rustling of angels' wings.

That is especially so if you do well, and love to do well, to those who spitefully use you, who persecute you, and who say all manner of evil against you falsely for God's sake. There you are very close to the heart of God.

The third thing which Micah speaks about is the loveliest. It is to walk humbly with thy God.

That is the apex, the climax, the summit of beautiful endeavor. It is also the mainspring of the other. It is the fundamental law of the Kingdom of heaven: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted!"

I think that this virtue was uppermost in the mind and heart of David. And it was also the reason why he was a man after God's own heart.

The primary meaning of the Hebrew word is *to press down*. And the form of the verb as it is used here is in the causative. And therefore the meaning is, that he who walks humbly with his God is a man who takes hold of his heart and presses it down into the dust, and he does that for two reasons. First, because God is so immeasurably great and he is so small and insignificant. That reason is the foremost and the most important, and will remain unto all eternity. You can see that when heaven is opened and when we receive a glance in the behaviour of the heavenly beings. They fall down flat on their faces before their God on the throne. Second, because he is such an abominable sinner.

To walk humbly with thy God!

It says: to *walk*. That means all the time, and from the heart. Your walk is your life as you live it from the heart.

A beautiful commentary of this virtue you find in I Pet. 3:15. There we read: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts!"

Study that sentence and marvel. It means that you step down from the throne of your heart where you sat as the sinner, directing your vain and foolish and wicked life. And

that you say to the living God, in your heart, O God! Wilt Thou deign to sit upon the throne of my heart, in order to have me prostrate myself before it?

It is the same thing as you so often read in the Bible: Speak Lord, Thy servant heareth!

It means that you dare not take one step in your life without His direction.

O, but the Law of God is beautiful!

* * * *

And what is our estimate of it? As we are by nature? This: that we care not a whit for it.

When He shouts from the heavens and says to us: I show you what is good, and it is my requirement for you, then we say: Depart from me, for I have no pleasure in Thy life! When He points to the exalted Christ and says: Behold the King of the Universe! We say: We will not have Him to be King over us! And we crucify Him!

And when He *requires*, we make a joke of hell, even while we tremble.

Do justly! It is the thunder of the law in our ears.

But we are crooked.

Love mercy! Did God say anything that is more beautiful?

But our very mercies are cruel.

Walk humbly with Thy God! The crowning jewel of good conduct.

But we strut and say: There is no God! I am a God in the depth of my Being! And we prostrate ourselves in the filth of sin and corruption.

Not as though we are not religious. O no.

We give our burntofferings, our calves of a year old, our rivers of oil. In a pinch we will even give the fruit of our body for the sin of our soul.

But one thing is lacking in all that religion: our heart is not in it!

* * * *

There is but One Man who fulfilled that beautiful law, and that Man is Jesus.

God showed Him that law and He said: it is My meat and drink to do Thy will. And why, My Father? It is because Thou hast written that law in my heart. Listen to the most beautiful psalter number in our book: "Thy law is written in My heart, 'Tis joy to do Thy will!"

You find it under number 109. I love that number more than all the others, but tremble when I sing it. More correctly: I hardly dare sing it. Hardly dare? you ask? Well, read the first line of the 4th stanza: "I never have within my heart thy faithfulness concealed!" and you have your answer. It is Jesus singing His psalms, before He was born in Bethlehem, in the prophets of old. But we may sing it too, although we should tremble when we do.

Yes, Jesus did justly. So did Adam in Paradise. But

what a difference. For Adam it was so easy. But for Jesus it meant that He had to go to hell. He had to do justly, and that meant His own damnation.

He loved mercy. And when you ask an explanation I can but point to His cross. There you hear His yearning for you and me.

And remember that this Jesus, so just, so lovingly merciful is really the manifestation of the Triune God.

And He walks humbly with His God. Do you remember how I told you of the Hiphil form of the verb? That it meant how a man takes himself and in his heart presses himself down in the dust. Look at the Christ of God! That's exactly what He did. No, there's not one like the lowly Jesus, No, not one! No, not one!

Finally, I promised that I would tell you some more of people who are called the righteous in the Psalms and in Proverbs.

Here is the concluding part of that story: when you see a just man, a loving man, and a humble man, you can make up your mind that he has Jesus in his heart. It, and it alone, explains his good conduct.

And so, dear reader, we end as always: Hallelujah! praise Jehovah!
G.V.

New Treasurer and Stated Clerk

Synodical Treasurer: Mr. C. Pastoor
929 Watkins Street, S. E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Synodical Stated Clerk: Rev. G. Vanden Berg
9402 S. 53rd Court
Oak Lawn, Illinois

Announcement

The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches convened in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on June 5, 1957, has examined brother Alvin Mulder.

The afore mentioned Synod has declared this brother Candidate for the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

This candidacy becomes effective on July 7, 1957, D.V.

G. Vanden Berg, Stated Clerk
of the Protestant Reformed Churches

NOTICE!

Those who vacation in the Holland area are requested to note that the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan has moved its temporary meeting place to its present location, 208 West 14 Street, where divine worship services are held. The Rev. James Mc Collam is the pastor.

THE STANDARD BEARER

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EDITORIALS

A Bit of Correspondence

From the Christian Reformed Church we received the following invitation:

"Protestant Reformed Church
Rev. M. Schipper, Stated Clerk
1900 Belden, S. W.
Grand Rapids, Michigan"

"Dear Brethren:

"The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church extends a special invitation to your body to appoint a fraternal delegate to the Synodical sessions of 1957, to be held from June 11 to 21, 1957, at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. By special celebrations to be held on that occasion, the Synod will observe the centennial of the Christian Reformed Church.

"As part of those observances, your delegate will be requested to bring the greetings of the Protestant Reformed Church to the Christian Reformed Church on the occasion of the centennial.

"We sincerely hope that through your delegate you will join us in our celebration of this milestone of God's favor.

"In name of the Christian Reformed Church,
/S/ R. J. Danhof, Stated Clerk."

On this letter I wish to make, first of all, a remark which may seem to be insignificant but which, to us, is, nevertheless, of principal importance. It is this, that the name of our churches is not Protestant Reformed Church, in the singular, but Protestant Reformed Churches, in the plural. We are afraid of and dislike all forms of hierarchy.

This letter was, by our stated clerk, duly brought to the attention of our synod. And in its session of June 10, 1957, it adopted the following reply:

June 10, 1957

The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church.

Dr. R. Danhof, Stated Clerk.

Beloved brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ:

Through our stated clerk, the Rev. Geo. Lubbers, we received your invitation to send a representative of our churches to your synod in connection with your centennial celebration.

Our Synod in its session of June 10, 1957, made the following resolutions:

1. We sincerely thank you for your kind invitation.

2. We hope and pray for the blessing of our God upon your churches, a blessing which can be had only in the way of the truth of His Word and, therefore, in the way of righteousness and justice as well as of brotherly love and fellowship in the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. However, it grieves us more than we can express that it is, for us, a spiritual-ethical impossibility to send a delegate with our greeting to your synod on this occasion, for the following reasons:

a. The very fact that we must receive this invitation as outsiders from the Christian Reformed Church in which we have, according to our conviction, a rightful place, is for us a cause of profound grief.

b. Your invitation, naturally, reminded us of 1924-25, when you cast out of your fellowship faithful ministers of the Word, not because of any personal misdemeanor, nor because they were not Reformed, for your own synod of 1924 testified black on white that they were Reformed; but because they could not subscribe to the "three points" of common grace so-called which, according to our conviction, are not Reformed but Arminian.

c. Your invitation grievously reminded us of the fact that, in 1924-25, you put us, Reformed ministers and their flocks, on the street, compelled us to build new churches and parsonages, and forced us to organize a new church-denomination, known as The Protestant Reformed Churches.

4. In the light of all this we cannot understand how, on your part, you could possibly ask for a representative of our churches at your centennial celebration; but you will, no doubt, understand that, before the face of the Lord, we cannot accept it.

5. Finally, on this occasion, while we sincerely wish you the blessing of the Lord in the way of His Word, we invite you to seek official contact with our churches to rehearse the entire history of 1924-25, in order that, though the two churches may not amalgamate into one, the brotherly relations may be restored.

Your brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ,

The synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches
Rev. C. Hanko, President
Rev. H. Veldman, Clerk

This reply, I trust, needs no further comment. It will be plain to all our Protestant Reformed people.

H.H.

Not Surprised

The *Grand Rapids Press*, in its issue of June 13, 1957, published, under the heading, "Unity of Reformed Bodies Sought in Letter to Synod," the following item:

Two Reformed denominations which have existed separately since 1924 may work toward closer unity as the result of a communication from the synod of the Protestant Reformed churches to the Christian Reformed church synod in session at Calvin College, Rev. Hubert De Wolf of the Protestant Reformed group said Thursday.

At its meeting last Friday in Oscaloosa, Iowa, the

Protestant Reformed church synod decided to ask the Christian Reformed church synod to appoint "a committee to meet with a Protestant Reformed group to discuss freely the differences and similarities which are found to exist." Four ministers and three elders were appointed by the synod at Oscaloosa to meet with the Christian Reformed representatives if that church accedes to the request, DeWolf said.

The letter to the Christian Reformed church was signed by Rev. Bernard Kok of Holland, president of the Protestant Reformed synod, and Rev. Walter Hofman of Bellflower, Calif., first clerk.

Groups Are Distinguished.

The group requesting conversations with the Christian Reformed church is to be distinguished from another denomination, also bearing the official name "Protestant Reformed church," and generally associated with Rev. Herman Hoeksema of this city. These two groups split in October, 1953, Mr. DeWolf said, and court litigation has been indecisive to date as to rights to denominational name. In the case of one congregation, the local First church, the Michigan supreme court has granted use of the Protestant Reformed name to the Hoeksema group. Mr. DeWolf's local group has been called the Orthodox Protestant Reformed church. However, the denominations still bear identical names.

The group seeking conversations with the Christian Reformed church has about 17 congregations across the country, four of them in this city. Rev. Andrew Cammenga, pastor of Fourth church here, is fraternal delegate to the local synod.

The communication to the Christian Reformed synod says "we have led separate existence since 1924. We are willing and ready to continue to do so if witnessing to the Reformed faith so requires. The issue is whether our witness, that is yours and ours, is similar."

Seeks Interpretation.

The letter points out that "since 1924, when the Christian Reformed church established the 'Three Points on Common Grace,' we have maintained positions that differed and have found ourselves drifting farther and farther apart.

"In the process of interpreting, criticizing and in general evaluating these points the possibility exists that we have misinterpreted your position. If this is pointed out to us we assure you that we will correct it. We ask your kind assistance in interpreting that which you have declared.

"The question is whether the cause of the Lord is best promoted and defended by you and us going separate ways or whether it is possible better to promote and defend this cause by a mutual drawing closer together."

The Christian Reformed synod is expected to act on the request later in its sessions.

The heading above this editorial states that we are not surprised.

And we certainly are not. My reasons for this conviction are as follows:

1. A distinctive church, distinctive especially from other Reformed churches, must stand on the basis of a distinctive principle. This the group that left us has not. They certainly are not Protestant Reformed as they now plainly reveal. The decision of their so-called synod in Oscaloosa as reported in the *Grand Rapids Press* is proof of this. They now plainly justify the decision of Classis East when they confirmed the action of the consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids whereby they suspended the Rev. H. De Wolf from his office as minister in the Protestant Reformed Churches because of his heretical statements. And for the same reason all the others that followed him were not and are not Protestant Reformed as they now confess.

2. They are, according to their own confession, at a loss. They know not what is the truth and, as a result, they know not what to do. They write: that "since 1924, when the Christian Reformed Church established the 'Three Points on Common Grace' we have maintained positions that differed and have found ourselves drifting farther and farther apart. In the process of interpreting, criticizing and in general evaluating these points the possibility exists that we have misinterpreted your position. If this is pointed out to us we assure you that we will correct it. We ask your kind assistance in interpreting that which you have declared."

I ask how is this possible? Are not the "Three Points" elaborately discussed and thoroughly interpreted in the past years, both by the defenders of those synodical declarations and by their opponents? Did not the late prof. Berkhof and also the Rev. H. J. Kuiper write brochures on the subject of the "Three Points?" Cannot those that now write this letter to the synod of the Christian Reformed Church consult *The Standard Bearer* and find all they can possibly expect on the subject both pro and con? Of course, they can. Or let them consult my book on the "History of the Protestant Reformed Churches" and even there they will find all the information they need to enlighten them. Yet, they grant the possibility that they may have misunderstood and misinterpreted the "Three Points" and ask the Christian Ref. Church kindly to help them understand and interpret them correctly! Do they really expect that the Synod will give a difference interpretation than Berkhof did in his brochure? Of course, they do not. But what then? My answer is: they are lost. I expect that they will ultimately adopt the "Three Points" and their interpretation as offered by the Christian Reformed Church. They certainly are not Protestant Reformed and they will be glad if the Christian Reformed Church will ultimately take them in. This is my prediction.

3. But how about the church-political question? They, indeed, suggest that they are willing to unite with the Christian Reformed Church. For they continue to write: "The question is whether the cause of the Lord is best promoted and defended by you and us going separate ways or whether it is possibly better to promote and defend this cause by a mutual drawing closer together." This, immediately, brings up the church-political question. They are, perhaps, not interested in this question. They do not mention it at all. And this is my third reason for stating that we are not surprised. They certainly should remember that, in 1924, we did not leave the Christian Reformed Church but were cast out. Faithful ministers of the Word, Reformed ministers, were deposed by Classis East and West at the time because they refused to sign and teach the "Three Points" or keep still about them. This is a very important point. Suppose that the Christian Reformed Church succeeds in convincing the writers of the letter that their interpretation, i.e. the interpretation of the Christian Reformed Church is correct, biblical and confessional. What then? Then, of course, the writers of the letter will also set their seal on the deposition of the Reformed ministers in 1924. So much as far as they are concerned. But how about the Christian Reformed Church? What will they do? Will they simply receive them as churches? Or will they consent to promote the cause of God's kingdom by drawing closer and closer together, as the letter has it? Or will they, perhaps, decide that they cannot receive them as churches, and that they can receive them only as individual members in the way of an apology?

We will see.

Perhaps, after I receive the whole letter, I will publish it and write a little more about it. I read it, but at this time I am not allowed to publish it.

H.H.

Is Kuiper Coming My Way?

I am almost inclined to believe this; yet there is strong doubt in my mind.

In *The Banner* of June 14 the Rev. H. J. Kuiper quotes me as follows: "But He, in the calling of the gospel, declares that He wants the sinner to repent and, in the way of repentance, come to Him."

With this Kuiper agrees! In fact, he claims that this is exactly what he has always been teaching, and what article 8 of the Canons teaches.

When I read this I was inclined to believe that Kuiper was converted from his error that "God is desirous that all who hear the gospel invitation should come to Christ and be saved, whether they are elect or reprobate. As far as God is concerned none need to be lost. He wants to save all men; in fact, He longs to save all men, at least as far as they hear the gospel invitation. In other words, it is not of God, but it is up to man to accept the invitation. This is supposed to be Reformed doctrine! To me this is sheer Arminianism."

From this grievous error Kuiper would seem to be converted. For he quotes me as above, in explanation of the Canons III, IV, 8, with wholehearted agreement. This is especially striking if we read the sentence which Kuiper quotes above in its context, I wrote as follows:

"The word *unfeignedly* (I am still referring to my notes) signifies that God means exactly what he says in the gospel. He never puts to shame. He is always serious and fulfills all the promises of the Gospel. Does He say in this calling of the gospel that He is desirous and longs that everybody accepts the gospel invitation? By no means. But He, in the calling of the gospel, certainly declares that He wants the sinner to repent and, in the way of repentance, come unto Him. That is the contents of the external calling of the gospel. It, therefore, does not mean that God simply 'invites' everyone that hears the gospel without distinction, but that He calls every sinner to forsake his wicked way, and in the way of repentance, to come unto Him. Hence, the way of repentance is the only way to come to God. And this God '*unfeignedly*' declares in the gospel or in the calling of the gospel."

Do you wonder that, when I first read that Kuiper agrees with this and declared that he always taught this, I rejoiced in his conversion?

But a little farther in his article he begins to change his meaning and camouflage the truth. He places a wrong emphasis and gives a wrong meaning to the term "wants" which I used in the quotation: "He wants the sinner to repent." Writes he "If we take the statement that He 'wants the sinner to repent' literally, at its face value, it can only mean that God desires that all sinners shall come to Him."

From this I must conclude, I am sorry to say, that Kuiper's conversion is, after all, not true, and that his repentance is not sincere.

For, in the first place, one that agrees with me and repents does not dishonestly distort the meaning of his opponent's words and instill his own meaning into them. This is what Kuiper does. From the context of his quotation of mine, and even from the quotation itself, it is very plain that I never meant that God desires that all sinners should come to Him.

Secondly, as to the meaning of the word "want," it is not true that the term has only the meaning which Kuiper alleges that it has. If he will consult Webster's dictionary, he will find that it also may have the meaning in which I, evidently, used the word, namely, to require or requisite. And if Kuiper will look up Webster under the word require, he will discover that its primary meaning is "to demand; to insist upon having; to claim as by right and authority." In this sense, as Kuiper well knows, I used the word "wants" in his quotation of me.

Well, I am sorry that Kuiper thus camouflages his repentance. He does not agree with me at all.

Nor with the Reformed truth.

H.H.

A Letter

B. J. Meelker
126 S. Buena Vista
Redlands, Calif.

Rev. H. Hoeksema
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dear Rev. Hoeksema,

With regard to our correspondence in *The Standard Bearer* I would not write again if it were not for the fact that you twice ask for an answer in your last article.

First of all I wish to thank you for again giving of your time and space in *The Standard Bearer* to broaden out on my question. I had hoped you would give proof from Scripture or the Church Order, that is why I wrote a second time, but I certainly highly value your opinion and thank you for answering.

In regard to your question. No, Rev. Hoeksema I did not have a case with my consistory. In my letter to you I did not mention a case. I asked a question.

Knowing that you have been highly gifted in explaining and making clear the things pertaining to God's Kingdom. I came to you for an answer to the question which was published in *The Standard Bearer* dated Feb. 15.

Yours in the Truth,
B. J. Meelker

P.S. Mr. Meelker sent me a letter asking why I did not publish the above letter, which refers to our correspondence in April, in *The Standard Bearer*. My answer is: I did not think it was meant for publication. But here it is.

H.H.

CALL TO ASPIRANTS TO THE MINISTRY

All young men desiring to study for the ministry of the Word in the Protestant Reformed Churches kindly appear at the next meeting of the Theological School Committee which will be held D.V., on Thursday, August 29th, at 7:30 p. m. in the consistory room of First Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The qualifications requisite to enrollment in our Seminary are the following:

1. You must present a letter from your local consistory certifying that you are upright in walk and pure in doctrine.
2. You must have certificate of health signed by a reputable physician.
3. You must be a graduate from High School and show evidence that you have completed a one year course in High School in History General and Church History; and have also completed the following College courses: Latin — two years, Greek — two years, German — two years, Philosophy — one year, Psychology — one year, Logic — one semester.

All correspondence relative to the above announcement should be sent to the undersigned.

Secretary of the Theol. School Comm.
Rev. M. Schipper
1636 Martindale Ave., S. W.
Grand Rapids 9, Michigan.

Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

On May 3, 1957, the First Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California, was privileged to commemorate the fact that twenty-five years ago (May 2, 1932) she was organized and added to the Protestant Reformed denomination.

A wonderful evening, in which the "sure mercies" of our covenant God received all the emphasis, was spent in fellowship, together. Among the much appreciated numbers of the evening's program were tape-recordings containing greetings and messages of Rev. H. Hoeksema, who originally organized the congregation in 1932 and again was instrumental in her re-organization in 1953; and of Rev. G. Vos, the only former pastor remaining faithful to the truth and principles of the Protestant Reformed Churches. What made the last mentioned greetings especially endearing to us is the fact that Rev. Vos was our first pastor and labored among us for more than a decade.

All our rejoicing is still in the truth in our midst and therein is "our hope for years to come." May the Lord in His mercy keep us faithful to the end.

A. Karsemeyer, Clerk of Consistory.

Announcement

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet Wednesday, July 10, in the Hope Protestant Reformed Church at 9:00 A. M. Consistories resorting in Classis East will kindly take note.

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mr. John Flikkema, in the death of his brother,

MR. PETER FLIKKEMA

Our prayer is that our Heavenly Father may comfort him in his bereavement.

D. Van Alten, President
R. Kamminga, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church extends its sincere sympathy to Mr. J. Prince and Mr. C. Prince, and family, in the death of their wife, mother, and grandmother,

MRS. J. PRINCE

May the bereaved experience the comfort of our covenant God in His promise of eternal life.

D. Van Alten, President
R. Kamminga, Secretary

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

CHAPTER XII

THE VISION OF THE SEALED BOOK

Revelation 5

If we accept this as the correct interpretation of the book and of the breaking of its seals, it will not be difficult to understand what follows. First of all, a challenge is sent forth to every creature in all the world, to open the book: "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" In general, we find in these words of the angel a challenge sent to every creature to open the book if he is able. A strong angel it is that John beholds. Strong the angel is, not because he holds any special office. It is not necessary to make various conjectures as to the identity of this angel. Scripture tells us nothing about him. He must be strong for the simple reason that his present task requires that strength. He must shout with a strong, with a great voice. His message must resound throughout all creation. It must reach every possible creature in the whole world. It must rebound over the earth; it must echo through all the heavens. It must penetrate into the deepest realms of darkness. All must receive the message. A strong angel, then, with a great voice, causes the challenge to go forth: "Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?"

The meaning of this invitation is plain. The angel does not merely invite everyone that will make an attempt to take the book and break the seals. No, the question is whether there is any creature that is worthy, that possesses the legal right and the power to receive and open the book. And if we now remember that the loosing of the seals of the book implies really the bringing and completion of the kingdom of righteousness and peace and bliss, the kingdom of God in all the world, the question amounts to a challenge, sent forth to all creation, to bring that kingdom and to realize it if they are able. Thus the passage becomes pregnant with significance. It is by no means irrelevant to the character of the Book of Revelation as a whole. The book pictures to us the coming of the kingdom of God in its battle against the kingdom of darkness. It must become very plain that this kingdom is a kingdom of God indeed. It is a kingdom of God, divinely conceived in His eternal counsel. It is a kingdom God Himself does historically realize and complete and lead on to its final manifestation in glory. It is a kingdom of God from beginning to end. It must become very plain that there is no creature that could possibly establish a kingdom like it. It must become evident that all the world could not produce the creature that could bring to the world the kingdom of

peace and righteousness and everlasting glory. All attempts of the creature must publicly fail, in order that the power and grace of the Most High may become plainly evident. Hence, the creature receives the opportunity first. Before the Lamb that stands as though it had been slain steps forward and takes the book out of the hand of Him that sat on the throne, every creature must receive the invitation. Hence, the message goes forth. It goes forth to the angels in heaven: "Can ye open that book, ye myriads of holy spirits, that day and night surround the throne of God? Can ye save the world? Can ye bring peace and bliss to a world of sin?" The challenge also comes to the earth, particularly, of course, to man: "Man, here is your opportunity. If you are worthy, take the book, and bring the kingdom. Send righteousness and bliss to all the world. Ye wise men of the world, ye giants of thought, hear the message resound. Do ye know how to open that book? Can you suggest the way of salvation for the world? Ye rulers and mighty ones, can ye open the book? Can ye by your laws and institutions, by your armies and power, inaugurate the kingdom of peace? All ye that speak so highly of the regeneration of society, of a better world to live in, of social righteousness, here is the challenge. Are ye important enough to take the book, and are ye able to break the seals? Come on, now, human wisdom and power, riches and wealth, science and invention, come and take now the book, and open its seals." The message goes forth under the earth. It resounds even to the depth of hell. It trembles in the ears of the prince of darkness and his angels. O, surely, he is shrewd, he is powerful and mighty. He once proposed to take the place of God, and sang the deceitful siren-song that man would be like God if he only would obey him, the devil, instead of his divine Friend and rightful Sovereign. Since then all the promises of the devil proved empty and deceiving. Sin, evil, suffering, and black death he brought to the world. Here then is the opportunity. If he is able, let him come. That book possesses the secret of power necessary to bring the kingdom. Let him now take the book, and bring bliss and righteousness if he is worthy!

All creation is silent. "And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." The angels stand in breathless silence; and their profound silence is the testimony as to their unworthiness. The devil shrinks back into the remotest corner of the regions of darkness, and fails to respond; he and all his devils must confess that they are not able and that they are not worthy to open the book. All the earth confesses mutely that no one is able to break the seals and therefore to bring in the kingdom of God.

Neither must you receive the impression that this scene merely belongs to the embellishment of the vision, and that there is nothing in history that presents us with the realization of this challenge. On the contrary, this message of the angel and the profound silence with which it is met symbolizes the vain efforts that are always being put forth by the creature,

outside of the Lamb that standeth as though it had been slain, to restore peace and bliss to the world. Men have repeatedly exerted themselves to work out their own salvation and the salvation of the world. Systems of thought, world-systems of philosophy, have been built up by human minds one after another, to show the true way to peace and righteousness and to establish an imitation of the kingdom of bliss. But they have all met with utter failure and disaster. No human wisdom has been able to call back the paradise lost. The might of the world, kings and rulers, have throughout history attempted to realize the world-kingdom, embracing all the earth. If only they would attain their end, if only such a universal kingdom could be realized, they would surely bring peace to the world. Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Caesar, Charlemagne, Napoleon, and William of Hohenzollern, and Hitler are their names. But they have failed. Their glory is faded. Their power is broken. Their name is trampled under foot. Today we are told that the glorious dawn of a new day is faintly seen at the horizon of history. Democracy will perform what autocracy failed to bring. Crowns must be removed. Thrones must tumble in the dust. And we must have the rule of the people. Besides, all the nations of the world must combine in this great movement for universal peace and righteousness. A league of nations is what we need and what has already been established. In this way righteousness shall come to dwell on the earth and peace shall reign undisturbedly. But already it may safely be predicted that also this ideal shall never be realized. Never shall it bring the much longed for kingdom of peace. Also in our day men of social service assure us that society must undergo a radical transformation. It must itself be regenerated. It must have new laws, new institutions, new customs, new relationships between capital and labor, shorter working days and better living conditions for the workingman, the abolishment of liquor and other evils of society. If thus we labor, so they say, for the regeneration of society, we shall bring the kingdom of God. All these human efforts, put forth by mere human strength and ingenuity, present the historical realization of the challenge of the angel: "Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?" And the ultimate failure of all these attempts constitutes the historical realization of the statement: "And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." History must reveal the failure of all attempts to bring the kingdom of God without the Lamb, and that simply because of the great fundamental truth entirely ignored by the men of the world, that at the basis of all trouble and confusion, all war and destruction, lies the guilt of sin and the corruption of the nature of man.

We further read in the text: "And I wept much because no one was found worthy to open the book and to look thereon." These words picture to us the effect which the silence of all creation in answer to the challenge that had

been sounded by the strong angel had upon John himself. He was very sorely disappointed. He was filled with bitter sorrow. And it seems to us that this weeping and wailing on the part of John corroborates the view that the book in the hand of Him that sitteth on the throne is not a mere copy of the decree, but a symbol of the decree itself, and therefore that the opening of the book does not merely involve a revelation of the things that must come to pass hereafter, but the realization of them and the bringing of the kingdom of heaven. It hardly seems possible to us that John would have wept so sorely and would have wept so bitterly if the keeping closed of the book merely meant to him that he would not have received a vision of the future. Hidden or revealed, John certainly would know that the future was in safe hands, and that the Almighty would bring it to pass, whether or not it was revealed to him. But now the book stands for the bringing of the kingdom itself. If that book is not opened, if it must remain sealed, the kingdom will never come. John evidently realizes this. Hence, he weeps sorely. This book is the testament of the kingdom, still sealed, but waiting for the heir that may receive and open it. And therefore that there is in all creation evidently none that is found worthy to open the book and to look thereon is to him nothing less than a terrible disaster. Hence, in the vision all are silent. No answer is given. No one appears to take the book. In the vision John has not yet seen the Lamb, for otherwise he would have fixed his hope on Him. In the vision John feels as if that book must remain closed. And in the vision he weeps. But he is also immediately comforted, and bade not to weep: "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." This is indeed a beautiful picture. The elder is representative of the church, of the church triumphant, while John is still in the church militant. And the church triumphant here comforts the church militant in her grief by assuring her of victory. Not as if there is an actual contact between the church triumphant and the church militant, except, of course, in the Spirit that dwells in them both. No, but who in the entire scene would be more worthy and more qualified to comfort the weeping apostle than this elder? John here is weeping because he cannot see how the victory will be won and the kingdom for which he hopes and longs shall ever be perfected, since no one appears worthy to open the book and to break the seals thereof. And there is the elder, already enjoying the victory of the kingdom. And therefore, by actual experience he is acquainted with the power of the Lamb to win the victory. He knows that the victory is certain. He also knows who is the Victor. And therefore, it is his privilege and honor to announce to John the Victor that is worthy to open the book.

As to the announcement itself, the one that is here proclaimed as being worthy to open the book and to loose the

seven seals is presented as the Lion of Juda's tribe and the Root of David. The lion in nature is the king of all the beasts of the field. As such he appears time and again in the Word of God. As such he is also mentioned in our text. He is the symbol of royal majesty and power, of the power to conquer and to subdue, as well as to reign and to be acknowledged as sovereign. Here we may remark in anticipation that he serves as the symbol of Jesus Christ, the glorious and victorious King. As such he stands directly over against His antagonist. The devil's symbol and ensign is the serpent, the type and symbol of sneaky subtlety. There is nothing royal about the serpent, crawling in the dust, stealthily coming for an attack in the back of his opponent, and biting his heel. There is nothing servile about the lion. Conscious of his superiority, he is ready to stare his enemy in the face, meet him without fear, and battle in the open. Thus is also the difference between Christ and the devil. Christ is the Lion; the devil is the serpent. The very onlook of them will assure you that not the serpent, but the Lion, shall have the victory. He is further called the Lion of Juda's tribe. The source of this expression we find in Genesis 49:9, 10. There we read of Jacob's blessing his sons, the heads of the future tribes of the people of God. And it is of Juda that he says: "Juda is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: He stooped down, he couched like a lion, who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Juda, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the obedience of the people be." Here we have mention made of Juda under the symbol of a lion. And rabbinical writings inform us that as the children of Israel encamped in four divisions in the desert, each under a leading tribe, and that leading tribe with its tribal ensign, the symbol of Juda was a lion. Juda therefore was the royal tribe: he should rule over his brethren. His would be the dominion over the people of God. From him would come forth the king that would lead the people of God on to victory and defend them against their enemies. But all this was bestowed upon Juda because on him the blessing and privilege was conferred to bring forth *the King*, Who would have dominion forever and reign over the people of God without end. Juda carried in his loins the Lion. All the kings that might come forth from him were after all but types of the Lion, of the Lion that would finally be brought forth, the Shiloh, after which Juda as the royal tribe and earthly type of Christ might disappear. And therefore, if you ask who is the Lion of Juda's tribe, because of whose presence in Juda's loins he might be called a lion, the answer can be but one: Christ Jesus, and He alone.

In the second place, He is announced as the Root of David. Also this expression occurs in other places of Scripture. In the first place, we find it in this same Book of Revelation, 22:16, where the Lord announces Himself, and says: "I am the Root and the offspring of David." And for its Old Testament source we must turn to Isaiah 11:1, 10: "And there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for

an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious." The general meaning of this is perfectly clear. It refers to the Christ as the off-spring of David as being of the seed of David. Yet it seems to us that we lose exactly the beauty and the power of the figure if we would say no more than this. Jesus is not called the off-spring of David without anything further. But He is named the Root of David. And no doubt, when the Savior in Revelation 22 says, "I am the Root and the off-spring of David," the meaning is: "I am the off-spring of David because I was his Root. The very fact that I was the Root of David made it possible that I am his off-spring." A brief consideration of the symbol here used will make this perfectly evident. A root bears the tree, and not the tree the root. From the root the tree sprouts forth and develops. From and through that root it derives its life and strength. And the picture that is implied in the symbolism of the text there is this, that you may level a tree with the ground; but leave its root, and the tree will again sprout forth, and that in a more glorious manifestation than before. In that sense Christ is the Root of David. David was king, and God had made a covenant with him that on his throne, on the throne of Israel, his seed should sit forever. But the essence, the root, the life, of that covenant and everlasting kingdom was not David, nor was it Jesse, nor was it Juda. It was David, because he was the type of his own Root. The essence of David and of his kingdom was Christ Jesus. That is the Root. Because he carried in his loins the Seed that was to sit on the spiritual throne of Israel in the future, therefore that everlasting covenant could be made with him. From that root of Christ, the typical manifestation of the spiritual kingdom sprouted forth in David's time, and for some years after. But this typical manifestation might disappear. It was levelled to the very ground. At the time when Jesus was born it had almost been destroyed. No one would be able to point you to the Davidic kingdom at that time. Nevertheless, it still existed, for the Root was still there. And that Root was Christ. That Root blossomed forth anew. It sprouted. A shoot came forth out of it. And that shoot will continue to develop until the tree is completed, and the kingdom of David shall appear glorious and beautiful, everlasting and without a possibility of destruction, in the day of the Lord.

H.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Aid of the Edgerton Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Henrietta Gunnink, in the loss of her mother,

MRS. BERTHA MENNING.

May the Lord comfort her and grant her the assurance that the Lord causes all things to work together for good to them that love God and are called according to His purpose.

Rev. H. Veldman, President

Mrs. Dick Bleyenbergh, Secretary

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

In commenting upon the Significance of the Table of Shewbread it seems that, among such questions as have to do with the identity of the "shewbread" and the purpose it served, we must also include and consider its proper setting, i.e., where it was found.

And the consideration of these questions, one might suppose, should simplify such a subject. However, when we notice the Table of Shewbread was found in the Tabernacle, we immediately have sufficient warning and are thus cautioned to proceed carefully. Why? Because the Tabernacle speaks "typical" and "figurative" language. Therefore, there is always the danger of "loose" treatment; the danger of "spiritualizing" (making or investing with a spiritual meaning) far beyond biblical and reasonable bounds, so that a portion of scripture actually becomes absurd because of such interpretation.

As was indicated, to determine the Significance of the Table of Shewbread, it must be viewed in its proper setting, within the Tabernacle. It constituted one of the pieces of furniture that was found therein.

"And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it."

(Exodus 25:8-9)

The Tabernacle, itself, with all its furnishings, grows out of that great truth God continued to declare unto His people, namely, "I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God." (Ex. 6:7) The result of this great truth is that God takes up His dwelling place among His people, and enters into fellowship and communion with them. It is for this purpose, then, that God says:

"And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it."

(Exodus 25:8-9)

These words God speaks however, not with any disregard of the fact that as His people continue their earthly sojourn in the midst of this world, they are a people upon whom, by nature, the curse of God's wrath, because of sin and disobedience, rests. Therefore, as God establishes His dwelling place among His people, there must be a "type of propitiation" and of fellowship and communion which must constitute that spiritual contact and association between God and His people—until such time as the reality of these things which the Scriptures reveal to us as "priestly functions," arrive.

Thus far, God had appeared unto His servants in what we know as "theophanies"; as, for instance, "the angel of the Lord," Who is *distinguished* from, and at the same time *identified with* God. (Gen. 16:7-10, 13; 22:11-12). But now He is to dwell—make His abode among His people.

Yet, we may well ask: "Why should the God of Truth, the Holy and Righteous God desire to dwell in the midst of a people who, by nature, are the very opposite of what He is?" The answer to this question, of course, not only speaks to us of the depth of God's love for those upon whom He sets His affection, but we see also the purpose of the Tabernacle namely, to reveal His Grace. For, as the plan of redemption is unfolded, God comes out from where He dwelt in the Most Holy Place and opens the way whereby His people may come into His presence, as they entered the Tabernacle where He promised to meet with them, through the appointed ministries which, in their symbolical and typical meaning, spoke to God's people of their redemption and of the Lord their God, Jehovah, and the nearness of His presence.

In *this* dwelling place of the Lord, then, is found the Table of Shewbread. And, even though it stood in the Holy Place, on the northern side, the table itself has no particular significance apart from the bread which was set upon it.

It's true, in Scripture we are shown that the table does have spiritual significance as, for instance, in Luke 22:29-30a where we read:

"I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom."

And again, in I Corinthians 10:21-22. However, in these instances there is the vital connection of that which is *set upon the table* and *performed at the table* with that which sets the figure of the table before us as representing the fellowship and communion of the people of God *with God*, in Jesus Christ.

Once the instructions for constructing the table are given, then follows the Word of God to Moses: "And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me alway." (Ex. 25:30).

With this "shewbread," we read, there were also certain golden vessels which were set upon the table. And since it is not likely that these remained empty, while we have no definite information, we may nevertheless assume that, in addition to being used for holding the frankincense and for carrying the loaves to and from the table each sabbath day, they were also used to contain either the oil or the wine which must have formed part of this offering of "shewbread." For the Table of Shewbread, like the other offerings and sacrifices, served the entire purpose of the Tabernacle itself; in other words, to unfold and emphasize some particular and comforting truth of God's plan of Redemption, as symbolized in Christ and His people whom God had given Him.

Now the bread was called "shewbread" because it was always to have a place before the Lord. It was dedicated and offered to Him and it pointed to His presence as the name indicates, and was presented to Him in accordance with the Word spoken in Exodus 25:30—"*shewbread before me alway*." Literally, we read not "shewbread" but "*bread of faces*," faces being put by a figure for "*presence*" and, as was observed, pointing to the *presence of Jehovah* in which the bread stood.

Typically, of course, this bread represented Christ who is the Bread of Life as He, Himself, declared.

"... my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven."
(John 6:32b)

"And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life."
(John 6:35a)

It is Jesus, therefore, who is the truth of this type, the "shewbread"; signified by "fine flour" and elsewhere as "the finest of wheat" (Ps. 81:16); "the corn of heaven." (Ps. 78:24)

However, Christ is not alone. Unto Him was given a people, the Church. Hence, wherever Christ is, *there* His people are also. So it is here, as this bread not only stands for Christ, but for His Body, as well. The Church.

This, we have designated for us in the fact that the bread was constituted of twelve loaves or cakes. And these twelve loaves had specific typical regard to the twelve tribes of Israel then existing under the shadows, even as the twelve stones on the breastplate of the high priest had regard to the twelve tribes of Israel. (Ex. 28:21) Nevertheless, the loaves also did signify *the whole of the spiritual Israel of God* constituted of Jews and Gentiles — *the whole Church of God in Jesus Christ* whose names are written in heaven.

Here, then, in these loaves which stood before the presence of God, we have, *in type*, the Lord Jesus Christ identifying Himself with His Covenant people. For the numeral "twelve" indicates the Church of God — the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16); "redeemed . . . out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Rev. 5:9)

And this truth is further emphasized as we note that these twelve loaves are *one bread*. The twelve loaves signify the "shewbread" and thus, in type, bear out the truth of Scripture as we read it in I Corinthians 10:17.

"For we being many are one bread, and one body."

Thus, the Church in Christ is set forth as the "shewbread" — made of "fine flour" and typifying those who are upright in heart and walk; who have the truth of grace in them and are therefore, the elect of all ages.

These, we read, had a place before the Lord's presence. He saw them; not as they were in themselves, but as they were represented in Christ. So that you have this thought. Because the people of God *are in Christ*, they always have a place before God's presence — before His face.

For this is exactly the truth embodied in the "shewbread" which is typical of Christ and His people, and which is further borne out by what we read concerning the changing of these loaves from sabbath to sabbath. The instructions of the Lord were to place the "shewbread" upon the table on the sabbath day. (Lev. 24:8) The loaves were to remain there throughout the week and, upon the arrival of the following sabbath, they were to be removed from the table and the same number of new loaves were to be put in their place. There was to be no interval that elapsed. Just as soon as the priests removed the old loaves, new loaves were placed upon the table.

Thus, the table, you see, was never empty. Therefore, typically, Christ and His people always stood before the presence of Jehovah. They were before the Lord continually — in every generation and throughout all the ages.

That's the significance of these "loaves" being changed from sabbath to sabbath. God always has His people before Him. They stand in His presence continually and

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."

(II Chronicles 16:9a)

For this reason, too, we read this "shewbread" is also referred to as "*the continual bread*." (Numb. 4:7) *Never*, in all history and neither throughout all eternity *has* God — *is* God, *nor will* God be without His people. And the very gracious and merciful regard He has for His people is exemplified in this typical bread; the "shewbread" which is before Him, continually.

Only on the background of such truth, then, can we understand the comforting words which God speaks through His servants.

"Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." (Isaiah 43:1)

"I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name." (Isaiah 43:5-7a)

"Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." Isaiah 49:16)

"This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise." (Isaiah 43:21)

In all of these Scriptures and more, God speaks to His Church the same truth He sets forth in the "Table of Shewbread." We are accepted in the Beloved. (Eph. 1:6) We have a sure and a continuing place before God's presence. For the "shewbread," typically, represents the people of God in Jesus Christ, as upheld in His presence, "by the One now crowned with glory and honour."

The Church stands secure. She is safe; safe, now — even as she has always been. This, too, is a comforting truth of the Table of Shewbread. For notice, the bread was set on the table. And the spiritual significance of the table, we observed, is that communion and fellowship of God's people with Him, in Jesus Christ.

Thus, the table takes on a meaning because of Christ. But notice, again, that table is *never empty*. In other words, as long as there is bread upon it, Christ is there. And as long as Christ is there — before God's face, His people are with Him.

Hence, we see the comfort of this truth. God has put His people in Christ; in the hands of Him who is able to keep them from falling, and out of whose hands, no man can ever pluck them. For, He is the Beloved Son in whom God is well pleased — Who has merited, by His suffering and His death

(Continued on page 424)

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Corinthians 12-14

VII.

(I Corinthians 13:4-7a)

We now continue our discussion of this most marvelous exposition, this rhapsody on love, from the pen of the Apostle to the Gentiles.

It should be remembered that Paul is here speaking of "love" in the sublime sense of "ethical perfection," the fulfillment of the law of God from a pure heart.

Besides, it must not be forgotten, that the "love" here spoken of is portrayed to us as it reveals itself in the imperfect saints, the body of Christ, the living members of the Church, as they have but a small beginning of the new obedience. Does not Paul say that we *now* "see through a glass darkened." Hence, it speaks of the "love" as it reveals itself "now!" We are "not yet" in heaven! And in the time of this "not yet" love must needs reveal itself in a certain definite positive mode, as well as that it must be said of this love how it does not reveal itself.

There are, therefore, definite *earmarks* by which love can be distinguished from that which is *not* love; these earmarks are the fruits which constitute the infallible guarantee of elective grace. By the fruits the tree may be known. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit!

We, therefore, have the mirror of the perfect law of liberty held before our believing eyes, in order that we may not be forgetful hearers, but *doers* of the word! And we must be such doers of the word with a proper sense of proportion; we must see the relative importance of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the church in their relationship to the more "excellent way" of *love*.

Just what the distinguishing and infallible earmarks of love in the midst of the imperfect saints is Paul tells us in the verses 4-7 of thirteenth Chapter of first Corinthians, which passage reads as follows: "*Love suffereth long, (and) is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh no account of evil, rejoices not in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*"

What a grand catalogue on the "excellencies" of love!

Seemingly love is here personified; in reality, however, love is here spoken of as it is the love of God, which the Holy Ghost has shed, and sheds abroad in our hearts, giving us a living faith and hope; hence, love in our hearts in this

present world, the love in the church as she lives and moves and has her being in this mortal body.

Let this be well remembered.

Paul is speaking of the love of Christ in your and my life; he refers to all the children of God in the entire church at any stage in history. And all men, who are of like passion as we, must needs see that without this "love" they are nothing. Howbeit, when this love is our portion through the Holy Spirit, this love of God in Christ cannot ever reveal itself different in our life than what it is here portrayed in this Chapter.

And now let us attempt to understand Paul's description here of love.

In general, we notice, that the description of "love" in its activity is here both positive and negative. We are told what love will *not* do as well as what love will most certainly do. And thus we can mirror our life whether we are actually "walking" on the "more excellent way!"

We ought further to observe that Paul *begins* with the positive manifestation of "love," and also ends with the positive description of love. "Love suffers long (and) is kind rejoices with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Paul begins by attributing "longsuffering" to love, and ends by attributing "patient endurance" to love. This is not so strange. For the "more excellent way" leads us here in the midst of *imperfect* saints, fellow-members with all their exasperating faults, and also through many situations, which require unflagging fortitude. In the former we need to be "longsuffering" and in the latter we need "endurance."

It is important to notice this "keynote" in this song on love. Only against that background will we truly understand the thrust of the clause "rejoices not in unrighteousness, but rejoice with the truth." Let it be remembered that Paul here speaks of love that rejoices in "ethical perfection," that is in pure *doctrine* and a good *ethical deportment*. And only the latter is possible where the former is present. And in that "climate," so to speak, will one suffer long. Only against the background, too, of this positive "keynote" we must also, it seems to me, read the negative description of what love can and will never do. Because "love" is what it is, it cannot possibly perform certain actions, stoop to certain faults and ethical perversions and deformities.

Let us then try to understand what it means that "love suffereth long (and) is kind."

"Longsuffering" is the translation of the Greek noun "makrothumia," which noun is a composite of "makro"—long, and "Thumia"—from the verb "thuoo"—to rush along or on, be in a heat, *breathe violently*. To be long of violent breathing, of expression of wrath; the holding back of such explosive wrath! It refers to the "spirit panting as it were in the body, and the *rage* with which the man pants and swells." (Plato) When one is "long" of such panting, his "rage" does not break forth.

Bishop Trench writes in his "New Testament Synonyms" concerning the term "longsuffering" in distinction from "endurance" as follows "Longsuffering will be found to express patience in respect to persons, while "endurance" is patience in respect to things." Chrysostom, according to Bishop Trench (*idem*) speaks of "longsuffering as holding out under *provocation*, patience holding out under *trial*."

It may be safely stated that the "longsuffering" man understands by love what it means to be "slow to wrath and slow to speech," while it is "swift to hear" the word of God. Compare James 1:19. Such a man understands that the "wrath of man," *sinful* wrath, does not work the righteousness of God. Only because he loves God can he thus will to work the righteousness of God. And whereas he must then endure much provocation from the flesh of the brother in Christ, in which "flesh" there dwells no good thing, he will crucify his own flesh, and, in this love for the brother's eternal well-being, he will be "long" of "explosive wrath!" He will bear with the *weakness* of the brother, with the imperfection of the fellow-saint, and uphold him in love, keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Thus "longsuffering" is not a merely negative attribute of the saints, but a positive attitude rooted in the love of Christ, whereby "when one member suffers they all suffer." It will be a manifestation of the "body tempered" together, rejoicing together in one another's joy, and weeping with those who weep. Such "longsuffering" is a far cry from a mere damming up of the passions, so that when the "break through" comes the storms break forth; it is the positive longsuffering, which is so "long" that it never ceases. It is as "long" as love is "strong!" And "love" is as strong as God is strong, for God is love!

Longsuffering in the saints is, therefore, always revealed toward the *object of love*. It bears with this object of love in the hope and assurance that presently all the imperfection, what causes tension and exasperation will be no more. And the love of "longsuffering" will have been the contributing factor toward this perfection.

Such "longsuffering" is the fundamental quality in those who walk in the "more excellent way." Yea, such "longsuffering" is the way, the precious way of God with his saints, and through his saints!

Incidentally, if I may refer to a certain occasion at Classis East in 1953, as long as I felt that the "brethren," who indeed have departed the truth, were not fundamentally in error, my insistence on being "longsuffering" with them, could be characterized as being "mere sentimentality," by those who were convinced of the error of those, who later became schismatics too. One cannot be "longsuffering" with error in doctrine; one "suffers long" with the irritating weaknesses of a brother — when he is fundamentally sound in confession!

I state here and now that this being "longsuffering" is rooted in love for spiritual perfection of the saints now and as it shall be in the final glory, when we shall know, even as we are known. That love, which is out of the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit in the believers is neither to be characterized as "puppy love," nor as "bull-dog love." It is a love that, in some instances, will indeed "suffer," when it sees "brethren" with whom one once went in and out, go astray! And did not Paul have a "continual sorrow?" Could he not wish himself accursed from Christ, for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh? Did not Abraham suffer to see Ishmael depart? And was there not bitterness in the heart of Isaac and Rebecca over the deportment and attitude of Esau, their son?

Be this as it may.

However, Paul continues by saying that "love" is also "kind."

We must not commit the fatal error of forgetting that only a love which "suffers long" is "kind." Such seems to be the implication in the structure in the Greek original. For the better reading is as follows: "Love suffers long and is kind," that is, it is "kind" while it is "longsuffering."

The term "kind" is a translation, a rendering of the *useful*. It emphasizes not so much the *outward demeanor* of one motivated by love, as it does the inward motive, the entire attitude of the heart. It refers to real helpfulness, usefulness. It is then the opposite of what is sharp and cutting, to be sure. But it is this from the genuine motive of desiring to help. And this may mean that such useful love of suffering long, is manifested in tears. It certainly does not reveal itself in the delight of the man and woman who prates about his lack of sentiment! Hard and factual, you must know, they are. None of this sentimentality in these champions of the truth! Methinks, that when God presently wipes the tears from the eyes of his saints, they will not have many tears for the Lord to wipe away!

May the Lord forgive them!

May I be found with those *truly useful* in the longsuffering of love of Christ, which cannot rest till it sees the object of that love perfect and without blemish, a pure and holy bride, the joy of the Bridegroom.

Sentimentality must not be confused with "kindness!" Yet, a kindness void of all sentiment is like the bride without her veil. It is a spiritual-psychological monstrosity!

If I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not this "love" which suffers long and is "kind," it profits me nothing.

Well may we pray: Lord make me full of love; make me to suffer long, and to be truly useful. For knowledge, mere knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth!

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

"A Little Round Church"

Recently we came across the expression which appears above.

It really is a beautiful thought.

You may have your massive, huge churches of square or rectangular shape, but give us "The Little Round Church." For that Church is the Church of Jesus Christ.

No question about that!

Oh, you will not find it called by that name in the Scriptures. But you do not need to look far to find God's Church pictured that way in Holy Writ.

What is more, after hearing the expression, "The Little Round Church," we recalled a passage of Scripture which teaches us that to bring up our children In His Fear we must exactly teach them that God's Church, the only true Church, the Church for which Christ gave His life is the little round church.

That the Church of Christ is little we will be able to maintain without a great deal of adverse criticism. "Many are called but few are chosen," Matthew 22:16, are the words of Christ Himself. "Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," Luke 12:32, are also His words. And He ought to know whether this is true or not. "Once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water," I Peter 3:20. Although the Church of God as it will stand upon the new creation will be an innumerable host, yet it is, in comparison with the number of those that are outside of her, a little Church.

But what we like, especially about the expression is that it very correctly denotes it as a round church.

That is, indeed, a beautiful thought and expresses what the Word of God repeatedly declares concerning the Church of Jesus Christ.

The idea is that a round church in one wherein the devil can never get you in a corner. A round church has no corners. A round church is one where you are safe from all the attacks of the Wicked One.

How beautiful, really!

Who could ever desire to have a church that did not afford that safety? To many the church is a society for the saving of souls. Revivals are urged and conducted that "many precious souls may be saved." But if the church has corners and in that church the devil can still get you in a corner, what has the church to "offer" and "promise" to all men who hear the preaching that is not also true outside the church? If the church has corners where the devil may get hold of you, why cannot a man be saved outside the church as well as in it? O, maybe it is a *little* safer in the church

than in the world. There are not so many corners. And if there is one place in that church where the devil may get a hold on one of its members, in that place that member loses his salvation. And the church is a failure.

If there is anything one wants to find in a church it is safety. Why should a man ever want it otherwise?

The Philippian jailer cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" He did not want to be told that there is no sure way to be saved because even the Church has corners and the devil can catch you in one some time.

Paul knew nothing but a "round church" when he wrote to the church at Rome, "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," Romans 5:1. No corners there where the devil may catch you. We are justified by faith; and justification is either whole, complete and sure or it is not justification. One sin whose guilt has not been taken away by Christ means hell with all its horrors as surely as a million sins whose guilt is not removed. Either all the corners where the devil might be able to demand our everlasting destruction are removed, or else we can have no peace with God. My peace of mind is gone, my fear is there even when there is only one thing left that Satan can claim as the basis for my everlasting damnation. No, I need to belong to a "round church" in order to have peace and comfort. I need to know that the Church of Jesus Christ to which I belong is "round."

You just tell your children that, too.

Listen once to the testimony of one who knew the joy of belonging to a "round" Church: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: Tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, Consider her palaces; That ye may tell it to the generations following." (Psalm 48:12, 13)

What a safe place of refuge that is!

No corners there where the Evil One may get hold of you.

And by all means "tell it to the generations following." Do not deceive your children.

In this day and age when all the military might of our nation is on display before their eyes, when the democratic way of life is lauded as being so superior to the socialistic, communistic forms of government, when the freedoms of the free nations are presented as such an advancement over what the nations of the world enjoyed in the past, by all means tell *your* children about the towers of Zion. Instruct them in the security of her bulwarks. They must not form the opinion that the devil is able to hide in those towers and break thru those bulwarks so that the children of Zion are never sure of safety.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Psalm 27:1. Of Satan? Afraid that as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ he will get me in a corner where I cannot crawl out?

And James did not know what he was talking about?

when he said, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," James 4:7. Even when a child of God is cornered by the devil, there is a way of escape. But remember that when the devil gets you in a corner, it is because you are in the world and not in the Church of Christ. Christ has removed all the corners for His people and made a safe retreat and reinforced the bulwarks of Zion so that no enemy can ever get in and hurt His people. That safe retreat is His Church.

Oh, God's people have doubts and fears. There are times when "Our sins rise up against us prevailing day by day." There are times when a child of God may lose all consciousness of his salvation. It is not a rare thing to find children of God who cannot with confidence testify that they are children of God. At best, they will simply tell you, "I hope so; but I do not see how I can be."

People of God have also had Asaph's experience. They look at the world. They see the eyes of the wicked that they "stand out with fatness." They see that these wicked "have more than heart could wish," Psalm 73:7. They are, then, inclined to cry out that "Clean hands are worthless and pure hearts are vain." There are times when it seems that to be in the Church of Christ does not compare favourably at all with being in the world.

However, do not forget that this is due to the fact that they are at *that moment* outside of that "round" Church! No, once engrafted into Christ by a true and living faith, we can never be cut off. For it is a "round" Church where the devil can never get you in a corner. Once regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, we can never, never lose that life and die spiritually. John declares, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," I John 3:9. That is the word of God. The new man in Christ can never be gotten into a corner by Satan. And if we do sin — and how often is it not that we do? — it is by the old man of sin in us who is in the world and part of that godless world. Or again, Peter declares, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," I Peter 1:23. Or again, the words of Paul in Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." No possibility, then, that once being made a living member of the Church, the body of Christ one can possibly be cast out, cut off to perish outside that Church.

But that does not mean that with our hearts and our minds we cannot get outside of that Church. Being in that Church from eternity by sovereign election, being in that Church by the spiritual bond of faith, we can look out and look away from Christ, the Corner Stone of that Church, and then lose our confidence of the safety and blessedness of that Church.

We can get beyond those bulwarks and outside of those towers of Zion in our thoughts and then be filled with fear.

Then we have all kinds of worries, cares and perplexities. That is what Paul wrote to the Church at Philippi, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus," Philippians 4:6, 7. Notice that these cares and worries are presented as matters of the heart and mind. When our hearts and minds are kept in Christ the peace of God which passeth all understanding keeps us from all cares and anxieties. Actually what Paul writes is that our hearts and minds are *garrisoned in Christ*.

There you have again those towers and bulwarks of Zion. There again you have the Scriptural idea that the Church of Jesus Christ is "round." No corners there at all.

We never get peace of heart and mind, we never have rest and quietness for our souls till they find themselves in that round, cornerless place of safety, the Church of Jesus Christ.

Outside of that Church there is fear. Outside a terrible monster lurks and waits to devour; and you stand in the dread danger of being cornered by him at any moment.

In the Church is also fear, but it is the fear of the Lord, the fear of amazement and awe before Him, which is the result of beholding His greatness and grace in preparing a place so secure and safe for His people. It is the fear of faith.

The "church" that teaches directly or indirectly that the Church of Christ has corners deceives God's people. What is worse, such a "church" ridicules and insults the King of that Church. It accuses Him of having made an imperfect Church. It limits the power of His blood and denies that it was able to make a perfectly safe and secure retreat for God's people. It denies the victory of the seed of the woman over the seed of the serpent. It takes away the believer's comfort and peace of mind.

Indeed, give us membership in "the little round church" and we will have peace and joy and everlasting comfort and consolation.

J.A.H.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

(Continued from page 420)

and resurrection, *the everlasting right* for His people *to dwell in the presence of God*.

And because this fruit of the Cross is the expression of the Eternal Counsel and good pleasure of God respecting His people, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." Numb. 23:21)

Furthermore, He determined to make known unto His people His loving-kindness and everlasting mercy as He made His dwelling place in their midst, and called them in Jesus Christ, of whom this "shewbread" was a type, that they might come and continually stand before His presence and be unto Him "for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory."

E. Emanuel

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

VIEWS DURING THE THIRD PERIOD (750-1517 A.D.)

THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE

GREGORY VII AND THE PAPACY (continued).

In Spain, which was as much isolated from the Continent by the Pyrenees as England by the sea, clerical celibacy was never enforced before this period. The Saracenic invasion and subsequent struggles of the Christians were unfavorable to discipline. A canon of Compostella, afterwards bishop of Mondonego, describes the contemporary ecclesiastics at the close of the eleventh century as reckless and violent men, ready for any crime, prompt to quarrel, and occasionally indulging in mutual slaughter. The lower priests were generally married; but bishops and monks were forbidden by a council of Compostella, in 1056, all intercourse with women, except with mothers, aunts, and sisters wearing the monastic habit. Gregory VII sent a legate, a certain Bishop Amandus, to Spain to introduce his reforms, 1077. A council at Girona, 1078, forbade the ordination of sons of priests and the hereditary transmission of ecclesiastical benefices. A council at Burgos, 1080, commanded married priests to put away their wives. But this order seems to have been a dead letter until the thirteenth century, when the code of laws drawn up by Alfonso the Wise, known as "Las Siete Partidas," punished sacerdotal marriage with deprivation of function and benefice, and authorized the prelates to command the assistance of the secular power in enforcing this punishment. "After this we hear little of regular marriage, which was replaced by promiscuous concubinage or by permanent irregular unions."

In France the efforts of reform made by the predecessors of Gregory had little effect. A Paris synod of 1074 declared Gregory's decrees unbearable and unreasonable. At a stormy synod at Poitiers, in 1078, his legate obtained the adoption of a canon which threatened with excommunication all who should listen to mass by a priest whom they knew to be guilty of simony or concubinage. But the bishops were unable to carry out the canon without the aid of the secular arm. The Norman clergy in 1072 drove the archbishop of Rouen from a council with a shower of stones. William the Conqueror came to his aid in 1080 at a synod of Lillebonne, which forbade ordained persons to keep women in their houses. But clerical marriages continued, the nuptials were made public, and male children succeeded to benefices by a recognized right of primogeniture. William the Conqueror, who assisted the hopeless reform in Normandy, prevented it in his subject province of Brittany, where the clergy, as described by Pas-

cal II, in the early part of the twelfth century, were setting the canons at defiance and indulging in enormities hateful to God and man (Primogeniture is the right of the firstborn to the inheritance — H.V.).

At last, the Gregorian enforcement of sacerdotal celibacy triumphed in the whole Roman Church, but at the fearful sacrifice of sacerdotal chastity. The hierarchical aim was attained, but not the angelic purity of the priesthood. The private morals of the priest were sacrificed to hierarchical ambition. Concubinage and licentiousness took the place of holy matrimony. The acts of councils abound in complaints of clerical immorality and the vices of unchastity and drunkenness. "The records of the Middle Ages are full of the evidences that indiscriminate license of the worst kind prevailed throughout every rank of the hierarchy." The corruption again reached the papacy, especially in the fifteenth century. John XXIII and Alexander VI rivalled in wickedness and lewdness the worst popes of the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The War over Investiture.

The other great reform-scheme of Gregory aimed at the complete emancipation of the Church from the bondage of the secular power. His conception of the freedom of the Church meant the slavery of the State.

The State exercised control over the Church by selling ecclesiastical dignities, or the practice of simony, and by the investiture of bishops and abbots; that is, by the bestowal of the staff and ring. These were the insignia of ecclesiastical authority; the staff or crosier was the symbol of the spiritual rule of the bishop, the ring the symbol of his mystical marriage with the Church.

The feudal system of the Middle Ages, as it developed itself among the new races of Europe from the time of Charlemagne, rested on land tenure and the mutual obligations of lord and vassal, whereby the lord, from the king down to the lowest vassal was bound to serve his lord. The Church in many countries owned nearly or fully one-half of the landed estate, with the right of customs, tolls, coinage of money, etc., and was in justice bound to bear part of the burden attached to land tenure. The secular lords regarded themselves as the patrons of the Church, and claimed the right of appointing and investing its officers, and of bestowing upon them, not only their temporalia, but also the insignia of their spiritual power. This was extremely offensive to churchmen. The bishop, invested by the Lord, became his vassal, and had to swear an oath of obedience, which implied the duty of serving at court and furnishing troops for the defence of the country. Sometimes a bishop had hardly left the altar when his liege-lord commanded him to gird on the sword. After the death of the bishop, the king or prince used the income of the see till the election of a successor, and often unduly postponed the election for his pecuniary benefit, to

the injury of the Church and the poor. In the appointments, the king was influenced by political, social, or pecuniary considerations, and often sold the dignity to the highest bidder, without any regard to intellectual or moral qualifications. The right of investiture was thus closely connected with the crying abuse of simony, and its chief source.

No wonder that Gregory opposed this investiture by laymen with all his might. Cardinal Humbert had attacked it in a special book under Victor II (1057), and declared it an infamous scandal that lay-hands, above all, female hands, should bestow the ring and crosier. He insisted that investiture was a purely spiritual function, and that secular princes have nothing to do with the performance of functions that have something sacramental about them. They even commit sacrilege by touching the garments of the priest. By the exercise of the right of investiture, princes, who are properly the defenders of the Church, had become its lords and rulers. Great evils had arisen out of this practice, especially in Italy, where ambitious priests lingered about the antechambers of courts and practised the vice of adulation, *vitium adulationis*.

The legislation against lay appointments was opened at the Synod of Rheims, 1049, under the influence of Leo IX. It declared that no priest should be promoted to office without the election of clergy and people. Ten years later, 1059, the Synod of Rome pronounced any appointments of cleric or presbyter to benefice invalid, which was made by a layman. The following year, 1060, the French synods of Tours and Vienne extended the prohibition to bishops. It remained for Gregory to stir up all Europe over the question who had the right of investiture.

By abolishing this custom, Gregory hoped to emancipate the clergy from the vassalage of the State, and the property of the Church from the feudal supervision of the prince, as well as to make the bishops the obedient servants of the pope.

The contest continued under the following popes, and was at last settled by the compromise of Worms (1122). The emperor yielded only in part; for to surrender the whole property of the Church to the absolute power of the pope, would have reduced civil government to a mere shadow. On the other hand, the partial triumph of the papacy contributed very much to the secularization of the Church.

Gregory VII and Henry IV.

The conflict over investiture began at a Roman synod in Lent (Feb. 24-28), 1075, and brought on the famous collision with Henry IV, in which priestcraft and kingcraft strove for mastery. The pope had the combined advantages of superior age, wisdom, and moral character over this unfortunate prince, who, when a mere boy of six years (1056), had lost his worthy father, Henry III, had been removed from the care of his pious but weak mother, Agnes, and was spoiled in his education. Henry had a lively mind and noble impulses, but was despotic and licentious. Prosperity made

him proud and overbearing, while adversity cast him down. His life presents striking changes of fortune. He ascended and descended twice the scale of exaltation and humiliation. He first insulted the pope, then craved his pardon; he rebelled again against him, triumphed for a while, was twice excommunicated and deposed; at last, forsaken and persecuted by his own son, he died a miserable death, and was buried in unconsecrated earth. The better class of his own subjects sided against him in his controversy with the pope. The Saxons rose in open revolt against his tyranny on the very day that Hildebrand was consecrated (June 25, 1073).

This synod of 1075 forbade the king and all laymen having anything to do with the appointment of bishops, abbots, and other ecclesiastics receiving ecclesiastical appointments from king or any temporal lord whatsoever. At the same synod, Gregory excommunicated five counsellors of Henry for practising simony.

The king, hard pressed by the rebellious Saxons, at first yielded, and dismissed the five counsellors; but, as soon as he had subdued the rebellion (June 5, 1075), he recalled them, and continued to practise shameful simony. He paid his soldiers from the proceeds of Church property, and adorned his mistresses with the diamonds of sacred vessels. The pope exhorted him by letter and deputation to repent and threatened him with excommunication. The king received his legates most ungraciously, and assumed the tone of open defiance. Probably with his knowledge, Cencius, a cousin of the imperial prefect in Rome, shamefully maltreated the pope, seized him at the altar the night before Christmas, 1075, and shut him up in a tower; but the people released him and put Cencius to flight.

Henry called the bishops and abbots of the empire to a council at Worms, under the lead of Archbishop Siegfried of Mainz, Jan. 24, 1076. This council deposed Gregory without giving him even a hearing, on the ground of slanderous charges of treason, withcraft, covenant with the devil, and impurity, which were brought against him by Hugo Blancus (Hugh Leblanc), a deposed cardinal. It was even asserted that he ruled the Church by a senate of women, Beatrix, Matilda of Tuscany, and Agnes, the emperor's mother. Only two bishops dared to protest against the illegal proceeding. The Ottos and Henry III had deposed popes, but not in such a manner.

Henry secured the signatures of the disaffected bishops of Upper Italy at a council in Piacenza. He informed Gregory of the decree of Worms in an insulting letter:—"Henry, king, not by usurpation, but by God's holy ordinance, to Hildebrand, not pope, but a false monk. How darest thou, who hast won thy power through craft, flattery, bribery, and force, stretch forth thy hand against the Lord's anointed, despising the precept of the true pope, St. Peter: 'Fear God, honor the king'? Thou who dost not fear God, dishonorest me whom He has appointed. Condemned by the voice of all our

(Continued on page 430)

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

THIRD AND FOURTH HEADS OF DOCTRINE

OF THE CORRUPTION OF MAN, HIS CONVERSION TO GOD, AND THE MANNER THEREOF

Article 12. And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture, and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid. But this is in no wise effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel, by moral suasion, or such a mode of operation, that after God has performed his part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation, or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture inspired by the author of this work declares; so that all in whose heart God works in this marvelous manner, are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe. — Whereupon the will thus renewed, is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence, becomes itself active. Wherefore also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent, by virtue of that grace received.

The above translation rather accurately presents the thought of the original Latin, and in most instances agrees with the Dutch rendering also. We would suggest the following changes, which, however, are not essential: 1) In the first sentence, the clause, "which God works in us without our aid," might be rendered more directly and emphatically by: "which God works in us without us." 2) In the same sentence, the series of adjectives describing the experience of regeneration could be better translated: "most pleasant, wonderful, mysterious, and unspeakable."

In this article the fathers continue their description of the nature and the manner of the work of God according to which some obey the call of the gospel and are converted, and especially speak of this matter in such a way as to rule out completely the Arminian conception. Even as it is true that the Arminians lay all emphasis upon this phase of the truth of salvation both in their doctrine and in their preaching, so the fathers recognize this as a crucial point, and bend every effort to distinguish their Scriptural conception from the false and unscriptural view of the Remonstrants.

In the first place, the article goes to Scripture for a description of the very nature of the work of regeneration: "And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture, and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid."

Notice, first of all, that here the term *regeneration* is directly employed for the first time. As we remarked in connection with Article 11, the term is used here in the broader sense, as including that which we usually denote as the calling. Of this same regeneration in the broader sense of the word the fathers continue to speak.

Secondly, the fathers go directly to the Scriptures for their terminology. This regeneration is of such a nature that it is called a *new creation*. Thus, for example, we read in II Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." It is called a *resurrection from the dead*. In John 5:25 this truth is set forth: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." In the light of both the text and context this is not a reference to the resurrection of the body, which is specifically mentioned in vs. 28, and which belongs to the "hour" that "is coming." But this is a resurrection which takes place in the hour that is coming and that now is, and can refer only to the wonder of regeneration, according to which those who are spiritually dead hear the voice of the Son of God Himself, and are made spiritually alive. Thus the Scriptures speak more frequently of this resurrection or making alive. This same wonder is described in Romans 4:17: "(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." And again, in Ephesians 2:1: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." And in vss. 4 and 5 of the same chapter: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved.)" In Eph. 4:24 we read of the new man as a new creation: "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." And, to quote no more, we read in Ephesians 5:14: "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

From the above passages, in which this terminology is used, and which also speak of this work directly as a work of God, it is plain that the fathers are entirely justified when, in the third place, they add: "which God works in us without us." This is in the very nature of the case. If regeneration is a new creation, then it must be that God works it in us without us. No more than there was any possibility or necessity of cooperation on the part of Adam when God created him, no more is there any room to speak of cooperation on the part of man when God creates him anew. No more than there was any possibility of the proper exercise of free will. As absurd as it is to speak to the dead in the cemetery, so absurd it is to tell men that they must be regenerated in such a way that you ever leave the impression that this regeneration in any degree belongs within the scope

of human accomplishments. As utterly foolish as it would have been for the Lord Jesus to have said to Lazarus, "I will raise you from the dead if you are willing and will accept my offer to raise you," so utterly foolish it is to present the work of regeneration and conversion in the same light. True, the fathers emphasize that God works this work "*in us*." And "*in us*" it certainly is, — beginning in the very depths of our being, in our inmost heart. And as we shall see in the end of our discussion, this certainly implies also that man is not a stock and block in the process of salvation. But it is no less emphatically true that what God works in us He works entirely "*without us*." This is entirely the work of God.

In the second place, therefore, the fathers describe the manner of this work. Negatively, it is in no wise effected: 1) By the external preaching of the gospel. The preaching of the gospel, considered now merely in its outward sound, unaccompanied by the inward operation of the Spirit of Christ, unaccompanied by the powerful, resurrecting voice of the Son of God, is incapable of regenerating and converting a man. When we speak of regeneration in the broader sense, we may certainly say that it is mediate, takes place through the means of the preaching of the gospel. But that preaching of the gospel is the means, not the efficient cause. 2) By moral suasion. This is the Arminian conception. It makes of the divine work a gentle advising, claiming that this manner of working is most in harmony with man's nature. According to this view, the power of the divine working surpasses the working of Satan only because God promises eternal, while Satan promises only temporal goods. Cf. III, IV, B, 7. It is, of course, this notion that characterizes much so-called preaching on the part of Arminians also today. This idea leads to all the urging and persuading and begging and pleading "to accept Christ" on the part of those who claim to be ambassadors of Christ, but who bring no authoritative message from their Sender.

And to cover every Arminian eventuality, the article adds: "or such a mode of operation, that after God has performed his part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted or to continue unconverted." This is plain language. The Reformed view is that when God through the preaching of the gospel performs His work of regeneration and conversion, there is absolutely no possibility that God will not accomplish what He sets out to do. This is what is called "*irresistible grace*." When this grace operates, it is no more in the power of the man in whom that grace operates to resist it: he must needs be converted. However, let it be noted once again that the fathers do not employ the term *irresistible* in this connection, even though they give an apt description of what we would call "*irresistible grace*." Instead, they continue to speak also in this article of "*efficacious*" grace. The reason for this is evident in their positive description of the work of regeneration, which follows.

Positively, they use the following language concerning this work of God: 1) It is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful. The work of regeneration does not belong to the things natural. It does not belong to the natural man. It is not within the scope of natural man's accomplishment. It is not of this earth and this world. It does not at all belong to the natural order of things. It is from above, heavenly, spiritual. It is God. Hence, it is not unnatural, contrary, to nature, but supernatural. And such an intrusion into the natural order of things it is that it is called "*most powerful*." It is an act of almighty grace. 2) At the same time, it is "*most pleasant, wonderful, mysterious, and unspeakable*." Here you have expressed what I consider the main objection to the use of the term *irresistible*. In other words, no matter how much you insist that when God performs His part of this work, it is no more in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted or to continue unconverted, that work is never of such a nature that man feels as though he is converted against his will, that he wants to resist God's work. No, the work of regeneration is an operation in man's very nature, in his heart. It does not compel him, but it impells him. And therefore, when a man is converted, he does not feel compelled and coerced, but there is in him the impulse of a new life. And his experience of this work of conversion is that it is unspeakably sweet and pleasant and mysteriously wonderful. One who is converted finds the only comfort in life and death, and is overwhelmed with a deep-seated spiritual joy in Christ. Hence, 3) this work is called efficacious: "not inferior in efficacy to creation (God spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast), or to the resurrection from the dead (Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth," and he came forth), as the Scriptures inspired by the author of this work declares (the Holy Spirit is the author of regeneration); so that all in whose heart God works in this marvelous manner, are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe." Here therefore, we have the summation of the entire matter. The Arminian, ascribing the obedient response to the call of the gospel to the will of man, must needs admit that this response is uncertain, fallible, the result of an ineffectual work of God, and that the actual faith is always in question. The Scriptures insist that the work of God's grace is certain (it includes all in whose heart God works, without exception), infallible (it can never fail), and effectual (it can never be obstructed or undone).

All of this, however, does in no wise abrogate the responsibility of the Christian. God does not believe and repent for him, but the Christian himself believes and repents, by virtue of that grace received. Why is this true? Negatively stated, it is true because God never violates the work of His own creation, never violates the nature of a man. That is, God, in the execution of His good pleasure, never interferes between the heart and will and mind of man, on the one hand,

(Continued on page 430)

DECENCY and ORDER

Matters to be Treated

Article 30 D. K. O. (Continued)

Matters to be treated in the major ecclesiastical assemblies are of two sorts. First of all there are those things which cannot be finished in the minor assemblies. To these things belong matters of protest, matters that are too complicated and difficult for a minor assembly to decide, and overtures from local churches. In respect to the first mentioned, one party or several parties are dissatisfied with the decisions taken in the minor assemblies and, consequently, appeal to the broader gathering. In the second named, the matter in question may be very consequential and a consistory may deem it wise to seek the advice of the major assembly before taking a definite stand on the question. In such cases it is better that the consistory present the material in question in the form of an overture for if it does not do so, it faces the likely possibility that its material will be rejected in the major assembly on the ground that it cannot treat what has not first been treated in the minor assembly. This has been done more than once in the past and is certainly in accord with the stipulation of the article of the church order we are discussing. The third mentioned matter deals with those things which a certain church may feel are important enough to be made the established practice of all the churches within the denomination and so overture the broader assemblies. Of course, all of these matters must be treated first by the minor assemblies. They may be brought up by any member of the church, treated by the local consistory, and ultimately brought to Classis and Synod. They may not be dropped on the floor of the Synod, for example, without having followed this orderly process. This is simply a matter of good order through which the authority of the broader ecclesiastical assemblies is rightly limited.

In addition to the aforementioned matters, there are also those things to be treated by the broader assemblies which concern and pertain to the churches in common. We might mention some of these things since these are matters that do not have to be treated and decided first by the local church. Synod, for example, treats them annually because they are matters in which all the churches have a common interest. Frequently such things are constantly dealt with by Standing Committees which submit reports of their activities to the annual Synod. Thus, there is the matter of Missions, both domestic and foreign. There is the matter of maintaining a Theological School, the graduation of candidates for the ministry of the Word, and the function of declaring such candidates eligible for calls in the churches. Undoubtedly these are the two most important items but there are also such things as: (1)

Establishing and maintaining correspondence with other churches, (2) Emeritation of ministers, (3) Providing for needy students for the ministry, (4) Revising and correcting the liturgy and church order of the churches, (5) and other matters as dictated by circumstances. All these things which concern all the churches may be treated in the broader assemblies without formal overture or request to do so. Dr. H. Bouwman says, "This phrase concerns matters mutually agreed upon by the churches, and which concern continued denominational fellowship and the maintenance of principles set forth in the Bible, and (consequently) in the Confessional Standards and Church Order."

From this Monsma and Van Dellen draw a conclusion with which we cannot wholly agree. They write: "And thus matters which are of a general interest for all the churches of a Classis or Synod may be taken directly before these bodies, and these bodies may also take action upon such matters upon their own initiative." Thus far we have no objection but then the authors continue with this example: "So, f.i., our Synod may decide to initiate a consideration concerning the proper mode of observing the Lord's Supper, whenever it so desires, for this is a matter which concerns all the churches, and not just one or a few."

If by this is meant that the Synod may establish which Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper is to be used in the churches, we could agree because that is a matter of liturgy rather than "mode" but, if this means that the Synod shall be empowered to tell each church how the Lord's Supper is to be administered, we would object since this is contrary to the Church Order which in Article 62 states, "Every church shall administer the Lord's Supper in such a manner as it shall judge most conducive to edification" Hence, we would say that when speaking of the powers of the broader ecclesiastical assemblies to deal with matters which pertain to the churches in common, a qualifying phrase ought to be added in which these powers of the Synod are limited to "the confine of the Church Order." It should not really be necessary to express this but apparently it is for it is not always understood. Synod is surely not above the church order but is governed by it and, consequently, those matters which the church order stipulates belong to the province of the local church must be left there by the Synod. By such restriction of the authority of Synod, the rights of the individual churches remain properly protected.

Major and Minor Assemblies

A few words ought to be written about this distinction in the present connection since it is mentioned in Article 30. However, let it also be remembered that the question concerning the authority of the various ecclesiastical assemblies and their relation to each other belongs properly to Article 36 and will be considered in that connection. Here we want only to ask what ought to be noted with

regard to the terms "major assemblies" and "minor assemblies" which the Synod of Dordrecht, 1578 designated by "grooter en minderen versamelinghen" and the present Holland Church Order denotes with "meerdere en mindere vergaderingen."

Concerning this matter, we pass on to our readers the following quotation from "The Church Order Commentary," pg. 138.

"This latter provision of Art. 30 is also very important. It is typically Reformed. It is fundamental for Reformed Church government.

"Reformed church polity does not know a system of lower and higher courts in the usual sense of the word. It does not, as is done particularly by the Roman Catholic Church and to a certain extent by some Protestant bodies, attribute a small and limited measure of authority to the governing body of the local congregation, a somewhat greater and more extensive measure of authority to groups of neighboring churches convening together, and a still greater and still more extensive measure of authority to assemblies next in order, and finally the greatest and most extensive measure of authority to the gathering representing all the churches. If this this were the case, the Church Order might speak of lower and higher assemblies. For in that case Consistories would have only a limited and smaller degree of authority, while our Classes would exercise an intermediate measure of authority. But Reformed Church polity does not hold that Consistories have a lower and more limited degree of authority, and Classis and Synod a higher and more extensive degree. Consequently, our church order speaks of major and minor assemblies, and not of higher and lower assemblies.

"The Latin word minor, signifies "less," and the Latin word major "more." If our fathers had desired to indicate that our Classes and Synods are invested with higher authority than the consistories, higher in the sense of having inherent powers not vested in the ruling bodies of the local churches, then they would have used the comparative of some other Latin word, f.i., altus, signifying "high." But they used major, inasmuch as the authority of our major assemblies (Classes and Synods) is the same in essence as the authority vested in the local church."

Continuing the quotation, we read: "In fact Reformed Church polity knows of only one type and degree of authority; that vested in the local congregation or its ruling body, the Consistory. The authority exercised by the major assemblies is no higher and greater essentially, but merely the sum-total of the authority exercised by the individual Consistories meeting as Classis or Synod. The authority of our major assemblies may therefore be looked upon as an accumulation or combination of consistorial authority.

"Furthermore, the authority of our consistories is not less extensive than that of our Classes and Synods, but more extensive than that of Classes and Synods. That is to say,

the domain over which our Consistories have authority is much more extensive than that of Classis and Synods.

"Many denominations, Roman Catholicism especially, regard their denomination as being a large super-church, and the local churches as mere subdivisions of the one large church. Consequently, the highest authority they find inherently in the high courts or judicial bodies of their church. And to these superior institutions they also attribute the widest scope of authority. The Reformed system, however, maintains that each local congregation is a complete Church, a complete manifestation of the body of Christ. In that sense and in so far each church or congregation is independent in essence (zelfstandig). Local churches can even exist without denominational federation, but a denomination cannot exist without local churches. The real unit is therefore the individual church. And the local churches do not exist for the sake of the denomination, but denominations exist for the sake of the local and individual churches.

"The term 'major' and 'minor,' in Art. 30, do not, therefore, refer to a system of lower and higher ecclesiastical courts, exercising various inherent degrees of authority, but they designate, in the first place, that at major assemblies a *number of churches* are gathered together, and that consequently, in the second place, at major assemblies, a *larger measure of authority is present* than at minor assemblies, even as ten men have more strength than one alone."

We quoted all this because in this quotation some very vital principles of Reformed Church Polity are touched upon. We shall have to wait, however, until next time to comment upon the portion we quoted in this installment.

G.V.D.B.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

(Continued from page 426)

bishops, quit the apostolic chair, and let another take it, who will preach the sound doctrine of St. Peter, and not do violence under the cloak of religion. I, Henry, by the grace of God, king, with all my bishops, say unto thee, Come down, come down!"

The Lord willing, we will continue with this description by Philip Schaff of the tremendous controversy between Gregory VII and Henry IV in our following article. H.V.

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS

(Continued from page 428)

and the actions of that man, on the other hand. On the contrary, the act of faith and repentance proceeds from the will of the man: that man believes, that man repents. But he believes and repents only by virtue of the grace received. God renews him. God actuates and influences that renewed will. And in consequence of that influence (infallible and effectual) the renewed will also acts. Hence, man is *rightly* said to believe and repent.

H.C.H.

ALL AROUND US

Another Prediction Coming True.

The Grand Rapids Press, reporting on matters coming up at the synod of the Christian Reformed church, reveals among other things that the schismatic group which recently left us has sent a letter to the above named synod in which they ask for closer unity with the Christian Reformed church.

Almost immediately after the split we predicted that they would ultimately seek admission in that church. This is the first step in that direction on an official basis. Within the last year two of their ministers, Van Weelden and Vermeer, were admitted into that church; and now the whole group is in the process of getting in. We predict that the Christian Reformed synod will gladly open their doors to this group and will ultimately swallow them up. We base our prediction on two factors. The first is, there is no essential difference between the two groups on a doctrinal basis. The second is, the schismatic group that left us has no real leaders, no theological school, no future if they remain separate.

The press informs its readers that "two Reformed denominations which have existed separately since 1924 may work toward closer unity as the result of a communication from the synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches to the Christian Reformed church synod in session at Calvin College, Rev. Hubert De Wolf of the Protestant Reformed group said Thursday.

"At its meeting last Friday in Oskaloosa, Iowa, the Protestant Reformed church synod decided to ask the Christian Reformed church synod to appoint 'a board committee to meet with a Protestant Reformed group to discuss freely the differences and similarities which are found to exist.' Four ministers and three elders were appointed by the synod at Oskaloosa to meet with the Christian Reformed representatives if that church accedes to the request, De Wolf said.

"The letter to the Christian Reformed church was signed by Rev. Bernard Kok of Holland, president of the Protestant Reformed synod, and Rev. Walter Hofman of Bellflower, Calif., first clerk.

"The group requesting conversations with the Christian Reformed church is to be distinguished from another denomination, also bearing the official name 'Protestant Reformed church,' and generally associated with Rev. Herman Hoeksema of this city. These two groups split in October, 1953, Mr. De Wolf said, and court litigation has been indecisive to date as to rights to denominational name. In the case of one congregation, the local First church, the Michigan supreme court has granted use of the Protestant Reformed name to the Hoeksema group. Mr. De Wolf's local group has been called the Orthodox Protestant Reformed church. However, the denominations still bear identical names.

"The group seeking conversations with the Christian Reformed church has about 17 congregations across the country, four of them in this city. Rev. Andrew Cammenga, pastor of Fourth church here, is fraternal delegate to the local synod.

"The communication to the Christian Reformed synod says 'we have led separate existence since 1924. We are willing and ready to continue to do so if witnessing to the Reformed faith so requires. The issue is whether our witness, that is yours and ours, is similar.'

"The letter points out that 'since 1924, when the Christian Reformed church established the 'Three Points on Common Grace,' we have maintained positions that differed and have found ourselves drifting farther and farther apart.

"In the process of interpreting, criticizing and in general evaluating these points the possibility exists that we have misinterpreted your position. If this is pointed out to us we assure you that we will correct it. We ask your kind assistance in interpreting that which you have declared.

"The question is whether the cause of the Lord is best promoted and defended by you and us going separate ways or whether it is possible better to promote and defend this cause by a mutual drawing closer together.'"

There are three or four observations I would like to make concerning the above report to the Press.

In the first place, our readers ought to notice who they were who signed this synodical letter addressed to the Christian Reformed synod, as well as the name of the fraternal delegate appointed to attend that synod. All three of these men, i.e., Kok, Hofman, and Cammenga, were erstwhile missionaries in our Protestant Reformed churches. They were men who told us that they believed the doctrine taught in the Protestant Reformed churches. They promised to not only defend these doctrines, but also to preach them wherever they were sent in the performance of our mission work. Concerning the Rev. B. Kok, most of our readers will remember how with great boldness he went about laboring in Christian Reformed communities, challenging the leaders of that church to debate with him on the issues wherein we differ. So much was this true that in Manhattan, Montana, he was accused of going into the consistory room of the local Christian Reformed church to offer debate. The result of his labors in Manhattan was that a congregation was established and joined to our churches. And now that same Rev. Kok is helping that congregation along with the others he helped to establish right back where they came from. The fact of the matter is that all three of these men labored for years among Christian Reformed people with the express purpose to open their eyes to the error of 1924. They, in preaching and writing, endeavored to show that the world and life view of the Christian Reformed and Protestant Reformed churches is as far apart as the poles. Now they are asking the synod of the Christian Reformed church to review these differences on the ground that "the possibility exists that we

have misinterpreted your position." This it is impossible for me to believe. Rather I believe that they always were Christian Reformed at heart. To borrow an expression used years ago in *The Standard Bearer* respecting another individual who returned to the Christian Reformed church, they are big frogs in a pond much too small for them. They need bigger waters.

In the second place, the article states that "court litigation has been indecisive to date as to the rights to denominational name." De Wolf correctly informed the reporter that the group he represented in litigation of First church lost the name "Protestant Reformed," and the group represented by Rev. Herman Hoeksema was granted the use of that name by the Michigan Supreme court. However the two denominations in the split still bear identical names.

But how can the name be important at all to a schismatic group that now seeks unity with the Christian Reformed church? This group does not want the name "Protestant Reformed," and would gladly carry on under the name "Christian Reformed." I'm wondering what the judges of the Michigan Supreme court will think of this if they read the article of the Press. Presently they will have render judgment in the case of the Second Protestant Reformed church of Grand Rapids, where also the name "Protestant Reformed" is in dispute. How is it possible for also this schismatic group to vie for the name before the courts which they do not care to retain as is clear from their endeavor to lose their name in the Christian Reformed church? It seems to me that the judges will see clearly that the schismatics who left us have no right whatever to the name "Protestant Reformed."

In the third place, more important still is what this schismatic group says in the letter addressed to the synod of the Christian Reformed church. The letter states that "the issue is whether our witness, that is yours and ours, is similiar," and "in the process of interpreting, criticizing and in general evaluating these points (the Three Points of Common Grace) the possibility exists that we have misinterpreted your position. If this is pointed out to us we assure you that we will correct it."

The question that came to my mind when I read this was, Do they really need to have this pointed out to them again? Did not our Classis East and our synod clearly point out to them that their doctrine to which they subscribed when they put their blessing on the two statements of De Wolf was essentially the Three Points of 1924 all over again? And now they ask whether their witness and that of the Christian Reformed church is similar? Such stupidity, it seems to me, defies description. It is hard to believe that after some thirty years of criticizing and preaching against the doctrine of common grace they can suggest that maybe the Christian Reformed synod can now help them to see that they wrongly interpreted the position of the Christian Reformed church on the matter of common grace. I cannot believe this at all.

Rather, I consider this merely bait to lure the Christian Reformed church to graciously take them back into her bosom. I would like to urge the Christian Reformed church to bite on this bait, and that for the two reasons I already mentioned. This schismatic group that seeks unity with you is in perfect agreement with you doctrinally; and, they have no future if they continue as a separate group. I might add to this that their leaders are very industrious to expand. Since it appears that in recent years your church is expanding rapidly, you will find it advantageous to your cause to allow them to ride with you on the band wagon. I said that they agree with you doctrinally. Perhaps I should add to this that they are even stronger than you are doctrinally. They do not like the wording of the First Point which states that God is gracious to the reprobate when He offers him salvation in the preaching of the gospel. They prefer to say that God promises salvation to all who hear the gospel on condition that they believe. That, you must admit, is a much stronger statement than that which you declared in the First Point. So you won't have to be afraid that they won't agree with you on a doctrinal basis. To add to your already expanding denomination seventeen new congregations is no small item, especially where they are so much like you. And I say once more, if you do not take them in, they will not be able to continue as a separate denomination. They will come to you piece-meal anyway. So by all means you should heed their pleading.

Finally, inspite of all that we have said concerning the leaders of this schismatic group, it is hard for us to believe that all the good people who were mislead by these leaders and who left us recently will go along with the decision of their synod to seek affiliation with the Christian Reformed church. I cannot forget some good people I know in Manhattan and in the First and Second churches in Grand Rapids, some of whom even taught me the error of common grace. How they could go back to the Christian Reformed church as long as this church retains the error of 1924, it is difficult for me to conceive. That they could be misled to believe that the two statements of De Wolf were innocent is difficult for us to understand after all that has been written concerning these errors. Yet, I suppose it is very well possible that some have gone along with these errors under pressure of their leaders. But how they could return to the Christian Reformed church whose errors of 1924 they once clearly repudiated is impossible for us to understand. It seems to me that if ever they are going to see how they have been lead in the way of error it will be now when they learn how their leaders by synodical decision are attempting to bring them back to the church they left years ago under strong convictions. I still pray that the Lord will open their eyes, and give them grace to repent and return to the truth as it is purely proclaimed in the Protestant Reformed churches.

M.S.