

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### The New Song

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” Revelation 5:9.

“I cannot sing the old songs: they are too dear to me!”

That's the dolorous plaint of the world.

We've heard it sung and played often.

That is entirely different with the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. They say: We *will not* sing the old songs: they are too old for me!

The world cannot sing, and they will not sing the old songs: they are too dear. And I can understand that. Their life goes downward. The past was sweeter than the present: it gets worse from generation to generation. They travel to a *bathos*: a depth, the depth of hell. And the end is an everlasting dirge in the lake of fire.

The reason is also plain. The subject of their songs is the world, and the world passeth away and the lust thereof. They began their journey in corruption; and the further they travel on that path, the worse it gets. Holy Scripture says: from death to death.

But God's people tread a different pathway, the pathway of life. Of it Holy Scripture saith: “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” And of the dolorous way of the wicked the Scripture says: “The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.” But we know: they stumble over Christ, the Rock of offense.

Moreover, when the Christians speak of the old songs, they have in mind a different song than the old songs of the world. The old songs of which the Church speaks, and which songs they will not sing, are the beautiful old songs of the

first Paradise. It is the song Adam and Eve sang in the original state of righteousness. They stood in the midst of the glorious works of God, and they had to sing.

But attend to this: the meter, the rythm, the music, the melody, the contents of the old song of Paradise the first was earthy and temporal. It never rose above the earth, and earthy things. That's all our first parents knew about. It was a nice song; it was even a beautiful song. It was the song of the earthly priests who sang about the wonderful works of God.

But it is out-dated. It is past. The voice of the earthly priests was choked in death. An ugly cloud out of hell obscured the view in Adam, and a cloud of the wrath of God descended upon the face of the earth objectively.

Oh no, we cannot, and we will not sing the old songs.

\* \* \* \*

What then?

The Lord has given us a new song.

And of that new song my text speaks.

Let us listen to its strains.

John, the Apostle, saw heaven opened. And in the midst of heaven there was a great white throne, and One sat on the throne. Do you notice how I capitalize that One. I mean God, and John meant God. But the word “One” which you find in italics in your Bible is not in the text. It is put there by the translators. John is very indefinite when he speaks of that ONE! And that is right. It is God, and He is limitless, Infinite. But God sat on that throne in all His beauty.

And further, he saw in the midst of the throne a Lamb standing as if slain. And that is Jesus. So Jesus is in the heart of God, for when God is on the throne, and the Lamb in the midst of it, He, that is, Christ, is in the midst, that is, the heart of God.

Now, in the hand of God was a book, written within and on the backside, and sealed with seven seals.

That is the counsel of God with respect to the things that must shortly come to pass.

Seven seals point to the character, the identity of those things. They are the things of the Kingdom, of the Church of God.

And John was very desirous to see the contents. So, when upon the challenge of the angel, no one is found either in heaven, the earth, or in hell who is worthy to break the seals and open the book of God's love for His people, John weeps much.

But he is comforted by an elder who points to the Lamb, but he gives Him the name of Lion. He has prevailed to open the book, and He has the almighty power to cause the things of God's kingdom to come to pass.

The Lamb of God is worthy to open the book and to break the seals.

And when that Lamb takes the book from the hand of God, all of heaven breaks forth in the singing of a new song.

Ah, yes, that new song!

\* \* \* \*

They sung a new song!

Oh, everything is new, since that little book is taken, opened, and the things come to pass.

I hear of a new people, a new Jerusalem, a new land that is fairer than day, a new Prophet, Priest and King, a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness shall dwell. Everything is new. And so, the song must be new too.

Wherein does this worthiness of the Lamb of God consist?

"For Thou wast slain!"

To be slain is worse than to be merely killed. When you are slain your life-blood is drained. Hence, in the sequence we read of His blood which was the price of redemption. When you are slain you are entirely gone. It is the absolute-ness of death, and in this case: eternal death. Jesus died the eternal death for the chosen of God Almighty.

This being slain refers to all the horrors through which this Lamb of God passed. He stood in the everlasting storm of God's wrath that otherwise would have burned us in nethermost hell. And that made Him worthy.

Look at Him there in that everlasting storm of hellish torment: He sings His song of loving obedience to the Father: "Father, it is my meat and drink to do Thy will!" In the midst of all His untold and indescribable suffering He said continually: "I love Thee, o My God and Father!"

That made Him worthy to open the book and to break the seven seals of the Covenant.

And to open and to break means that He has the power to discern the hidden counsel of God, and, secondly, the power to make the things He reads therein to come to pass.

Jesus is at the helm of God's ship: Hallelujah!

From then on Jesus sits at the pinnacle of the whole Universe and doeth all things.

And the chief work He performs is the redemption of His people.

Redemption is purchasing with a price, and thus to loose from the prison of death.

From now on we are not our own anymore: we belong to our Saviour Jesus Christ in life and in death, for time and eternity. with body and soul and spirit.

And not so that we did and do not belong to God. Oh no, but so that we did belong to God from everlasting, who gave us to Jesus, so that on the basis of perfect righteousness He might do all to set us free, to redeem us, to purchase us, to loose us from the prison of death and damnation.

Furthermore, He has the power to make us unto God kings and priests.

Well, that is heaven. To be God's king means that you may rule over a new world of righteousness and beauty. And to be a priest is that you may dedicate yourself and the new world to God. It means that you may love God with all your mind and heart and strength.

Who would not sing?

\* \* \* \*

Oh yes, they sing!

The text tells us that they sung a new song.

Christ Jesus is the first one to sing this song principally. For He did all the work of this redemption. And as a reward He received a name that is above every name in this world and in the world to come. His reward is with Him henceforth and unto all eternity.

I say principally, for we hear this new song also in Adam and Eve after they have been called by God from out of the arms of the devil.

And later we hear Moses singing by the shores of the Red Sea. It shall be referred to later as the song of Moses.

But really, principally, all the singing of this new song is done by Jesus who dwelled in His people from the beginning of the new work of redemption.

Christ is singing in all the psalms of David.

All the Hallelujah's are inspired by Him.

And in the fulness of time He began to sing that song when He was raised from the dead in the garden of Joseph. Oh, how happy the Christ must have been when He came to human consciousness in His raised body, when His Spirit which He commended into His Father's care returned to earth and was united with His glorious body of the resurrection.

And He kept on singing from that moment on, on the earth during the forty days, and in heaven among the souls made perfect before His Father's throne.

Listen to the promise Jesus made in the Old Testament: "My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation: I will pay My vows before them that fear Him." Psalm 22:25.

And He fulfilled that promise when He ascended to heaven.

He inspired the great congregation to sing the praises of God because of Golgotha, the wondrous work of God.

And John received a pre-audition. And I have it in my text. John heard a great multitude singing a new song.

And here on earth we also sing, although our voice often breaks. We are yet so sinful.

The great multitude, and they are out of all kindreds, tongues, peoples and nations. That means that THE world is saved. The world is saved in the elect from out of all peoples, etc.

In another place we read that they only can sing this new song who have come out of the great tribulation. They are those who carry the precious seed in their bosom, and that seed is Christ by His Word and Spirit. And that makes them new creatures. But they are also for that very reason killed all the day.

No, we cannot sing the old songs. Not because "they are too dear to me," but because they are gone forever. They disappeared with the fall of man.

But we *will* sing the new song, the song of redemption. For Jesus' sake, and, in the last instance, for God's sake!

G. Vos.

"No one has faith, who is not thankful for it; for all those who have tasted of the grace of God show themselves thankful to God for it, and desire it more and more, as is written, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us," Romans 5:5."

Ursinus, Heid. Catechism, page 620

"We may also observe, that another reason for good works may be deduced from the consequences which result from evil works; viz., that all those who perform evil works, and continue in their wicked and ungrateful lives, cannot be saved inasmuch as they are destitute of true faith, and conversion."

Ursinus, Heid. Catechism, page 467

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## EDITORIALS

### Election and Reprobation

That Berkouwer has but little sympathy for the Scriptural truth of reprobation is evident from more than one passage of his book "The Election of God." One of these passages is found on p. 254 where he tries to explain Rom. 9:22 in such a way that it does not refer to reprobation. He refers especially to the words: "the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." And on these words he writes as follows (I translate):

"Especially the words 'fitted to destruction' are more than once mentioned in connection with the problem of the symmetry and parallelism. Calvin spoke without hesitation of the reprobate as the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction as they were appointed unto their lot even before their birth. It is true that in Rom. 9:22 no mention is made as to the manner in which they became such vessels of wrath, but this must be explained from the fact that the cause of this is hidden in the counsel of God. Calvin wants to apply this word to reprobation, to the *praedestinatio ad mortem*, a notion which at the present time is shared by but few, and that not because they want to weaken the sovereignty of God but because there occurs here a replacement which cannot be deduced from Paul's argument. No doubt Paul has in view the holy and mighty wrath of God. But everything is concentrated here around the question what is meant by the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. Undoubtedly, Paul is thinking here of Israel. Even as God wanted to show His wrath in respect to Pharaoh, thus also in respect to Israel; but at the same time and through it all He manifests His glory. Also here the reference is not to an independent analysis of the individual lot of man, but to the paths of the electing God through history. Paul does not mean to show a symmetry, two separate lines, namely, of the vessels of wrath (from the viewpoint of reprobation) and of the objects of mercy (from the viewpoint of election) but *in the way* of God's wrath over Israel the riches of God's glory is made known . . . over us "whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.'"

Is this language plain to you, reader?

It is not to me. It seems that as often as the truth of predestination and particularly of reprobation is to be denied under the cloak of being Reformed refuge must be sought in language that camouflages and is calculated to cover up the truth rather than plainly to express it.

This, to my mind, is also the case here.

What Berkouwer wants to show is that the words "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction" do not refer to reprobation or to the reprobate.

He must have nothing of Calvin's explanation that the vessels of wrath are the reprobate who were, even before they were born, i.e. in God's counsel, fitted unto destruction.

Now, rather than analyse the reasoning of Berkouwer, whereby he tries to show that Paul is not speaking of elect and reprobate, I prefer to study the text for a moment in its context.

The remote context is, perhaps, well known to us. There the apostle had made a distinction between the children of the promise and the children of the flesh. This he had further illustrated by the example of Jacob whom God loved and Esau whom He hated. He emphasized, moreover, that in all this God cannot be accused of unrighteousness since He is sovereign to be merciful to whom He will.

In the immediate context, the apostle had referred to Pharaoh and stated that God had raised him up for the very purpose that He might show His power in him and that His name might be declared throughout all the earth. And then the apostle concludes with the well-known words: "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

Now, note that in this eighteenth verse of Rom. 9 the apostle certainly puts the will of God to harden any man on a par with the will of God to show mercy to anyone. No Reformed man will deny that the will of God to show mercy to anyone is absolutely sovereign and rests in His eternal counsel of sovereign election. But then it follows that the will of God to harden man is equally sovereign and flows from the eternal counsel of reprobation. It is impossible to deny this.

That this is, indeed, the meaning is clear also from what follows. For the natural man this is a hard doctrine. Against it the sinful heart rebels. The truth which the apostle had been developing brings us face to face with the revelation of the absolute Sovereign, Who accomplishes all His good pleasure. And, therefore, the natural man immediately raises an objection. This objection, which the apostle intercepts, is as follows: "Thou wilt say then unto me, if the case be really thus, if God not only shows mercy to whom He will, but also hardens whom He will, why doth He yet find fault, seeing that surely no man can ever resist His will? If it pleases Him to harden me, I certainly cannot help it, and He surely cannot find fault with me if I sin." Such is the objection.

And how does the apostle answer this objection? Does he attempt to soften somewhat the sharp and hard lines of this doctrine? Does he, perhaps, explain that God, indeed, hardens whom He will but that this refers only to those who first harden themselves? Does he answer that he does not refer to the counsel of election and reprobation? On the contrary, he first puts man in the dust before God where he belongs: "Who art thou, o man, that answerest against God? The potter hath power over the clay to do with it as he pleases." He strictly maintains the absolute sovereignty of God in predestination. And then, in the text Berkouwer was attempting to explain as having nothing to do with election and reprobation, he maintains God's absolutely sovereign dealings with elect and reprobate, the vessels of wrath and the vessels of mercy.

Let us quote the entire passage :

"What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory."

What, let us ask, is meant, according to the entire context and also according to the text itself, is meant by the phrase "vessels of mercy?" The answer is: the seed of the promise, those on whom God will sovereignly have mercy according to His eternal counsel. In other words, they simply are the elect. But if this is true, and it is true, what then, according to the very sharp contrast in the text, as well according to entire context, is meant by the phrase: "vessels of wrath?" The answer is: they are the same as the children according to the flesh, the Esau's whom God sovereignly hates, whom He sovereignly hardens according to His counsel. That this is the meaning of the text in its context there can be no doubt.

And what may be the meaning of the phrase "fitted to destruction?" Again, let us consider the last part of the text first. Of the vessels of mercy it is said that "he had afore prepared them unto glory." What can be the sole meaning of "afore prepared" according to the phrase itself as well according to the entire context? This, that before they were born, before the world was, in His eternal counsel, God had fitted them in the organism of His elect church so that they might enter into His eternal tabernacle in the new creation. If in this light we explain the phrase "fitted to destruction," there is but one answer: the rest, the reprobate, were, in the counsel of God, prepared for eternal destruction, before they were born, before the world was, yea, from all eternity.

Berkouwer does not like this, I know.

But it is the truth according to Scripture, nevertheless.

If he thinks that I am wrong, let him prove it to me, not with his own philosophy, but with sound exegesis of Holy Writ. H.H.

### Unbiblical Divorce and Remarriage

We will, first of all, analyze and criticize the different propositions about divorce and remarriage adopted by the synod of the Christian Reformed Church last summer.

The first two propositions are the original ones, the others were added later. We quote them here once more:

"1. No substantial and conclusive evidence has been produced to establish the thesis that parties remarried after being divorced on the ground of their own adultery, or divorced on non-biblical grounds are living in continual adultery.

"2. No substantial and conclusive Scriptural evidence has been produced to warrant the demand that a person remarried after being divorced on the ground of his own adultery, or divorced on non-biblical grounds, must, in order to prove

the sincerity of his repentance, cease living in ordinary marriage relationship with his present spouse."

These are, in my opinion, very strange propositions, wholly unworthy of a synod. I say this without regard to the truth or falsity of these propositions themselves.

The reason for this my opinion is that these propositions are entirely and only negative. And besides, they are negative only with regard to the attempted proof, attempted by other synods, perhaps, and by committees of synod that labored with this question before and came to the conclusion that persons, that were divorced on the ground of their own adultery or on non-biblical grounds and that remarried, lived in continual adultery and, in order to prove their true repentance, must separate from their present spouse and thus cease to live in adultery.

The result is that, in these two propositions, the synod declared absolutely nothing, at least, nothing positive.

They only declared what *thus far others had not done*.

Did the synod declare, in these propositions, that, on the basis of Scriptural evidence, persons that remarried after such non-biblical divorce lived in legal and proper intercourse with their present spouse? It did not declare anything of the kind.

Did the synod declare that such a remarriage, after a divorce on the ground of their own adultery or on non-biblical grounds, made the former marriage null and void? Again we say, it did nothing of the kind.

Did the synod even declare that those that had expressed themselves on the question before this had not furnished any Scriptural proof for their position that persons, thus remarried, after a divorce on the ground of their own adultery or on other non-biblical grounds, lived in continual adultery and, in order to prove the sincerity of their repentance? They did not even do this. Synod merely expressed that the evidence produced was not "substantial and conclusive."

Such negative propositions declare absolutely nothing. They are unworthy of any ecclesiastical assembly. No church can live by them.

Moreover, they are very dangerous.

For, although they declare exactly nothing, they nevertheless leave the impression that they express something definite and positive: that Scripture justifies such non-biblical remarriages.

This impression was left even open and by the very synod that adopted these negative propositions. For, one of the later propositions that were added to the above two, the consistories are advised as follows:

"4. The consistories are advised that people who are guilty of unbiblical divorce or who are divorced as the result of their own adultery and, having remarried, seek entrance or re-entrance into the church shall show their sorrow and genuine repentance during an adequate period of probation. Such cases shall not be settled without the advice of Classis."

Is this fourth proposition based on the two propositions

quoted above? Of course not. For the latter are negative and the former is quite positive, and you cannot possibly base a positive advice on a merely negative declaration. But the trouble is that synod either knowingly played *hocus spocus* or was itself not aware that the first two propositions were negative and that, therefore, they could not base positive advice upon them.

The only proper advice synod could have given to the consistories on the basis of the first two propositions is the following, negative advice:

"The consistories are advised that people who are guilty of unbiblical divorce or who are divorced as the result of their own adultery and, having remarried, seek entrance or re-entrance into to the church, cannot be admitted as long as no Scriptural proof is furnished that such a remarriage is, on the basis of Scripture, justifiable."

It is evident, however, that, in this fourth proposition, synod merely proceeds from the presupposition that such proof has been furnished and such entrance or re-entrance into the church is justifiable.

Such is the danger of mere negative propositions. They declare nothing but they leave the impression that they, nevertheless, announce Scriptural principles on the basis of which the church may act: a positive action on a purely negative basis!

Let us ask a moment: how often may this principle (for a principle it is after all, though its basis is negative) be applied? How often may a person commit the sin of unbiblical divorce and the further sin of unbiblical remarriage, commit this sin, confess, and be maintained as a member of the church, or be admitted as a member? Only once? But then there is something wrong with the principle. A principle must be capable of application whenever the circumstances or conditions call for its application. Besides, this is surely contrary to Scripture. For the Word of God plainly teaches that a sinner may commit a certain sin an unlimited number of times, seventy times seven, and if he repents and confesses his sin he must be forgiven and received again into the communion of saints. Hence, a person may be divorced on unbiblical grounds or on the basis of his own adultery, not only once or even twice, but an unlimited number of times, and just as often remarry, and if he repents and confesses he must be accepted, for, mark you well, he never lives in continual adultery no matter how often he is divorced and remarried. That would throw the church wide open for all kinds of adultery and even for "free love."

And all this follows from the fact that the synod based its positive advice and principle on two negative propositions.

I would, therefore, advise the Christian Reformed Church to come to its next Synod with the following positive proposition:

"The Synod declares that the Word of God, in the Scriptures, clearly teaches that the remarriage of persons that are divorced on the ground of their own adultery or on un-

biblical grounds is perfectly proper and legal in the sight of God, rendering all previous marriages nul and void, so that their sexual intercourse is perfectly holy in the sight of God. Hence, synod declares that, if such persons only confess the sin of their former adultery and divorce they must be admitted or re-admitted into the church."

You understand, of course, that I do not agree with this advice. But it is a positive proposition, and I wonder whether the synod would adopt such a proposition. H.H.

### NOTICE!

The following have been placed on trio by the Creston Protestant Reformed Church. Candidate Bernard Woudenberg, Rev. G. Vanden Berg and Rev. H. H. Kuiper.

Consistory of Creston Prot. Ref. Church

### Schedule of Feature Articles for Standard Bearer, and Replacements for 1957

Date	Feature Article and Author	Rubric and Author Replaced
Jan. 1	The Four Kinds of Soil in the Parable of the Sower. H. Hanko	Voice of our Fathers H. C. Hoeksema
Feb. 1	Old Age Pension. C. Hanko	Decency and Order G. Vanden Berg
March 1	The Significance of the Questions Asked on the Occasion of Making Public Confession. R. Veldman	Contending for the Faith H. Veldman
April 1	The Lion in the Old Testament. G. Lanting	In His Fear J. A. Heys
May 1	The Symbolism of Metals in the Old Testament. R. Harbach	All Around Us M. Schipper
June 1	The Significance of the Table of Shewbread. E. Emanuel	From Holy Writ G. Lubbers
July 1	The Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven. J. McCollam	Day of Shadows G. M. Ophoff
Aug. 1	The Significance of the Candlesticks. H. Hanko	Voice of our Fathers H. C. Hoeksema
Sept. 1	The Significance of the Altar of Incense. C. Hanko	Decency and Order G. Vanden Berg
Oct. 1	The Symbolism of Colors in Scripture. R. Veldman	Contending for the Faith H. Veldman
Nov. 1	That Dangerous High School Age. G. Lanting	In His Fear J. A. Heys
Dec. 1	The Harmony Between Righteousness and Mercy. R. Harbach	From Holy Writ G. Lubbers

The Committee for Feature Articles,

Rev. J. A. Heys  
Rev. H. Veldman

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### Chapter III

Rev. 1:9-20

#### CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS

“The things which are” refer to the things then present as a basis for the things to come, and, therefore, to the things that are always present, for as the Dutch poet Bilderdijk expressed it:

“In 't verleden ligt het heden,  
In het nu, wat worden zal.”

And “the things which shall be hereafter” are the future things as they develop according to God’s counsel from “the things that are.” From this it will be evident that we do not believe that any mechanical deivision of the book of Revelation can properly be deduced from this passage, as if “the things that are” must be found in the next two chapters, while “the things which shall be hereafter” are recorded in all that follows chapter III. For, even if the “things which are” would be applied exclusively to the seven churches in Asia *in the first place*, it cannot be denied that those churches and the sevenfold message they receive also look toward the future of the Church in the world. For those seven churches, as we have seen, represent the Church in the world throughout this whole dispensation. The contents of the first three chapters deal, therefore, with both: “the things that are” and “the things which shall be hereafter.” And the same holds true for the rest of the book. Throughout, until we come to the vision of New Jerusalem in the new creation, the whole book sheds light from above, the light of the coming Lord upon the things which are and upon the things which shall be hereafter in their organic historical development. We will find that in the chapters that follow there is repetition, but in the repetition there is progress. The same forces are at work throughout the ages of this dispensation, the same events occur in the world of men, in the universe, in the Church, but they increase in scope and intensity as time progresses. And always the end in view is the coming of the Lord in glory and the perfect redemption of the Church, the tabernacle of God with men. All things progress from the Alpha to the Omega in a straight line, without any retrogression or restraint. For the moving force behind and in all things is the counsel of the only Potentate of potentates, Who is in the heavens and doeth all His good pleasure!

#### Chapter IV

Rev. 2:1-7

#### THE BEGINNING OF DECLINE

In this chapter and the next one of the book of Revelation we have the seven letters addressed by the Lord to the

seven churches in Asia. In order to understand these messages we must bear in mind the relation of these seven churches to the seven golden candlesticks in the vision of 1:9-20. The latter are symbolic of the Church from an ideal viewpoint, perfect and holy, as it has its light and life in Christ. It can never perish. None of them can ever be removed from its place. Were the church on earth identical, with perfectly like that which is symbolized in the candlesticks, messages like those that are contained in the next two chapters of Revelation would neither be necessary nor appropriate. But the seven churches of Asia represent the church on earth, essentially holy, but still imperfect, earthy, and characterized by many infirmities and sins. Hence, they are subject to rebuke and exhortation, and even to threats of judgment and utter distinction. The candlestick of a local church, may, indeed, be removed out of its place. A church on earth may cease to be manifestation of the Church as she appears in the symbolism of the seven golden candlesticks.

Before we enter upon a discussion of the seven letters, a word must still be said about the general significance of the seven churches to which they are addressed. They were really existing churches at the time when John is commissioned to write to them, but at the same time they present a sevenfold picture of the church on earth throughout this dispensation. They were not the only churches existing at the time, but they are selected because in them was found the clearest and most complete picture of the church of all ages. The question, however, is raised whether the completeness of the church, as represented by these seven churches, must be understood as referring to a simultaneous or to a successive totality. Do these seven churches represent the church on earth as she exists at any period of this dispensation, or must we see in them seven phases in the development of the church in history? Both views have been and still are championed by interpreters of the book of Revelation.

There are those who advocate the view that in these seven messages, picturing seven different manifestations of the Church on earth, we must discover a portraiture of seven distinct phases in the history of the church in the world. According to this view, it is possible to discern in the development of the church the same order of different dominant conditions as is found in these seven letters to the seven churches of Asia. Each of these seven messages must, accordingly, be applied to a more or less definite period in the history of this dispensation, from the time of John to the second coming of Christ, or, according to others to the “rapture,” the moment when the church shall be taken up to Christ in the air. But this view is plainly untenable. Already the fact that at the time when these letters were written, the church did not present one dominant feature but rather a sevenfold picture, in other words, the fact that the seven churches certainly existed simultaneously, would contradict this view. Laodicea existed side by side with Ephesus, Sardis existed in the same period as Philadelphia and Smyrna, Pergamum and Thyatira were simultaneous. Besides, the history of this method of interpretation certainly justifies the

remark of Godet: "One may doubtless, by taking up this latter standpoint, succeed in bringing out some ingeniously conceived points of harmony, but they always have a somewhat arbitrary character." We must, therefore, reject this view. Yet, there is, no doubt, an element of truth in this interpretation. Although it is our conviction that the seven churches must be understood as representative of the church in the world as it exists in any period of this dispensation, so that at any time these seven types may be observed in the church; nevertheless, these seven types are not always equally prominent in every period of the history of the church on earth. Sometimes it is the characteristics of the church of Ephesus that predominate in the church, at other times it is the picture of the church of Smyrna that is most vividly reflected. In some periods of history the church is characterized by intellectualism, dogmatism, confessionalism, in other periods by emotionalism, revivalism, pietism, in still other periods by practicism, indifferentism with respect to principles and doctrines. Now the church is cast into the crucible of tribulation and persecution to be refined as by fire; now she enjoys a period of peace and rest. Always all the features presented by the seven churches in Asia are observable in the church in the world, yet so that now one, now another of these features appear on the foreground. On this basis we may well assume that in the order in which these churches are mentioned, though it is, indeed, the geographical order, there is also an indication of the course of development the church will follow: the direction of this development will be from Ephesus to Laodicea. At the end of this dispensation the church will present the likeness of the church of Laodicea. Maintaining, therefore, that these seven churches are representative of the whole church as she is in the world at any period of history, and rejecting the view that each of them represents a limited period in the history of the church of the new dispensation, we, nevertheless, believe, that in general way there is in the order in which these seven churches are addressed an indication of the trend of development the church in the world will follow.

With respect to the formal side of the seven letters addressed to the churches in Asia, we may note that they all present much the same characteristics. Each epistle begins by addressing the angel of the church to which the letter is sent, which address is immediately followed by the self-designation of Him that sends these messages to the various congregations, the Lord of His church. Characteristics of these self-designations is that they are clothed in terms derived from or suggested by the vision of Christ in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks in chapter 1:9-20. In every one of these self-designations those terms are chosen that bear relation to the particular condition of the church addressed. For instance, to the church that lost its first love, and that is threatened with the judgment that its candlestick will be removed from its place, the Lord introduced Himself as the one that walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks; to the church in tribulation, which is encouraged

by the promise of a crown of life, He announces Himself as the first and the last, who was dead and is alive again. Thus it is in all the letters. Following this self-designation of the Lord comes the description of the peculiar condition of each congregation, usually headed by the enumeration of the commendable traits wherever this is possible. To this general rule the churches of Sardis and Laodicea are exceptions, while nothing good is to be recorded of them. On the other hand, the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia are distinguished by the fact that they receive only praise and encouragement; nothing worthy of rebuke is found in them. And, finally, each letter closes with an exhortation, containing a promise, a threat of judgment, or both, depending upon the condition of the church addressed.

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We now turn our attention to the first of these seven messages, which is addressed to the church of Ephesus. The city of Ephesus was situated on the west coast of Asia Minor, some forty miles to the northeast of Patmos. It was an important city, rich in trade and commerce, famous, too, for its culture. But it was also notorious because of its shameful idolatry, its well-known temple in honor of the goddess Diana, its frivolity and worldly-mindedness in general. It may be compared to one of our modern metropolitan cities, with all their wealth and luxury and amusement-seeking, their carelessness and levity of heart and life, their vices and social evils. We may well note that in such a world-city the Lord had established a church. The church in the big city occupies a difficult position, more so than the country church. In the metropolis pulsates the life of the world. There the antithesis is sharpest. Nevertheless, no church needs to shun the big city and seek the seclusion of the country. The Lord would have His church in the world, though never she may be of the world. In the midst of the world she is called to be a manifestation of His grace, that she may let her light shine and show forth the praises of Him that called her out of darkness into His marvellous light.

There is every reason to believe that the church of Ephesus used to be one of the strongest and most flourishing churches of that early period of the new dispensation. It had enjoyed the labors of some of the greatest, most devoted, ablest servants of the Lord. Paul had been there three times, first only for a brief period, but during his second missionary journey he abode with the Ephesian church for almost three years, during which time, as he himself testifies, he labored night and day with tears, declaring unto them the whole counsel of God. Timothy, too, the spiritual son of the great apostle to the Gentiles, had labored there, building upon the foundation laid by his spiritual father. And the apostle whom Jesus loved had spent many a year among the believers in Ephesus in hard and faithful labor. To speak in terms of our own time, the church there had enjoyed the labors of the best and most excellent preachers of the time; and He that holds the seven stars in His right hand had blessed the church abundantly.

Nor had the labors of these ministers of Christ been without effect upon the church. On the contrary, even at the time when John is commissioned to write this message to her the influence of their work is still plainly notice-able. For, we may remark, first of all, that the church of Ephesus was strong in doctrine. This is evident from the description the Lord Himself gives of her in this letter. The Lord testifies that the church had "tried them that that call themselves apostles, and are not," and that she had "found them false." These words suggest, first of all, the doctrinal soundness and strength of the Ephesian believers. True, they also indicate disciplinary action, but notice that it was discipline exercised over those that called themselves apostles, which implies that the discipline concerned a matter of doctrine. True apostles were men with authority, infallibly guided by the Spirit of Christ into all the truth. They were direct witnesses of Christ, His suffering and resurrection. Their word was gospel. It possessed infallible authority, the authority of the King of the Church Himself. Of this the church at that time was conscious, as is evident from more than one passage of the New Testament. They made a clear distinction between the word of an apostle and the word of others. For that reason the apostle Paul deems it necessary sometimes to defend his apostleship in the churches. Whenever false teachers purposes to neutralize his influence in the church, they attacked his apostolic authority, aware that only in this way they could oppose the contents of his teaching. Now, this letter to the church of Ephesus informs us, that men had appeared in their midst that called themselves apostles. Evidently, they made this claim and defended the right to this title for the purpose of exercising doctrinal authority in the church. They claimed to be divinely inspired and, therefore, demanded unconditional acceptance of their teaching. They taught a false doctrine, and for it they claimed apostolic authority. Fundamentally, therefore, the case the Ephesian church had tried concerned a matter of doctrine. Who these would-be apostles were the text does not inform us, but we are inclined to believe that they were the same as the Nicolaitans mentioned in this same letter. However this may be, certain it is that they taught a doctrine that differed from that of the apostles. But the church had tried them, had put their doctrine to the test. Probably there had been an official trial of these "apostles," and in spite of their claim to the apostleship the church had found them liars and had rejected their doctrine.

The conclusion, therefore, is justified that the church of Ephesus was sound in doctrine, well founded in the truth of the gospel. How otherwise could they have exposed the lie of these false apostles? Only those that are themselves sound in the truth can expose the error wherever it presents itself and with whatever claim of authority it may come. But where knowledge of the truth is lacking the church is helplessly exposed to every wind of doctrine. This is one of the main reasons why the church of today is in such a miserable condition. There is no knowledge of the truth, no love for

true doctrine, no instruction in the Word of God. Hence, the church of today is easily seduced, tossed about by all kinds of false doctrines. In Ephesus this was different. There was knowledge of the truth. And if there was knowledge of the truth there must have been study of the Scriptures, instruction in the principles of true doctrine. For, without continual instruction through preaching and teaching, knowledge of the truth cannot be maintained. Hence, all these were found in the church of Ephesus. They were able to discern between the truth and false doctrine, and thus they could pass judgment upon them that claimed to be apostles and were not. Ephesus was a church sound in doctrine.

The same inference may be drawn from the statement in vs. 6: "But this thou hast that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." About the origin of the sect nothing definite is known. Their name is probably derived from their leader, one Nicolaus, who must not be identified, however, with the deacon mentioned in Acts 6:5. The Lord here speaks of their works, but these works were based on false doctrine. This is evident from verses 14 and 15 of this same chapter, where the church of Pergamum is addressed as follows: "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication. So hast thou also some that hold the teachings of the Nicolaitans in like manner." It is evident that these Nicolaitans, about whom we shall have more to say in connection with the letter to Pergamum, were false teachers, that disseminated evil doctrines and thus seduced the church to spiritual fornication and apostacy. Now, the Lord gives the Ephesian church testimony that they hated the works of the Nicolaitans. This implies that their false doctrines were clearly discerned and rejected. This also leads to the conclusion that the believers of Ephesus were sound in doctrine, well founded in the knowledge of the Word of God.

From what we discussed thus far it will also have become evident that the church at Ephesus was faithful in discipline. This is usually connected with doctrinal soundness. Where the one is present, the other usually is also found. Where the church is lax in discipline, soundness in doctrine cannot maintain itself very long. Christian discipline is the reaction of the church against every form of evil, both in doctrine and life, through the preaching of the Word of God as well as through personal admonition and, ultimately, through excommunication. Also in this respect the church of today is miserably weak and wanting. The keys of the kingdom of heaven are practically forgotten. But about this we shall have more to say in our discussion of the letter of Pergamum. The church in Ephesus was faithful in the exercise of discipline. This is evident from their trial of the false apostles. Nothing can be urged against the view that they tried these false teachers officially and finally excommunicated them from the church. But besides, the

Lord writes to that church: "thou canst not bear evil men," vs. 2. The thought is that men that wrought wickedness in doctrine or life were not tolerated in that congregation. Evil workers usually could not find a place among the believers in Ephesus, and if they did find a place for time, they usually did not feel themselves at home there, because of the sound preaching of the Word and the general testimony of the members. But if they persisted in their attempt to perform their evil work in the church, they were expelled from the communion of the saints by the application of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The church was not only sound in doctrine, she was also faithful in the exercise of Christian discipline.

Nor is this all. The commendable features of the church of Ephesus are not limited to soundness in doctrine and discipline; the believers there were also abounding in the work of the Lord. It was not a church, at least not at the time when this letter was addressed to her, that was characterized by dead orthodoxy, that had an intellectual grasp of the truth, but was loath to apply to life. On the contrary, the Lord gives her the testimony: "I know thy works, and thy toil and patience . . . and thou hast patience, and didst bear for my name's sake and hast not grown weary," vs. 2, 3. This is a beautiful testimony indeed, especially if it is taken in connection with the fact, that the church was also sound in doctrine and in the exercise of discipline. In our day there are many indeed, that clamor for a so-called practical Christianity, that would have the church do nothing but labor and toil in the world "to make the world better," but who are absolutely indifferent in regard to doctrine. What one knows about doctrine and believes matters little or nothing, if he is only willing to work and to serve. This was not the case in Ephesus; they kept the gospel that was delivered unto them. But on the other hand, there are also churches that are characterized by cold and dead intellectualism and orthodoxy, who emphasize the necessity of soundness in doctrine, but are lacking in the application of the truth to actual life and in zeal for the work of the Lord. But also this could not be said of the church in Ephesus. She did not take it easy in the kingdom of God. She did not follow the line of least resistance. She labored and toiled. And she did so for Christ's name's sake. This does not refer to all kinds of work, but to the work that is in harmony with the calling of the church to hold forth the word of life, the preaching of the gospel, within the church and without. They bore testimony of Christ in word and deed. Their conversation sealed their profession. And even if their faithful confession caused them inconvenience, required them to take up the cross and suffer with Christ, even if the reproach and contempt of the world was their reward, they remained faithful. For the Lord bears them testimony that they have patience. Repeatedly this is stated. In vs. 2 it is mentioned; in vs. 3 it is repeated: "and hast patience;" and it is added: "and didst bear for my name's sake." And patience is the spiritual virtue and power to endure suffering and tribulation for Christ's sake. And do

not infer from the rest of the epistle that this testimony refers to the past, and that the church manifested this patience and faithfulness in doctrine and conversation no longer. For this would be a mistake as is evident from what the Lord adds: "and hast not grown weary." They still were strong in doctrine, faithful in the exercise of discipline, zealous in the work of the Lord, and willing to bear the cross and to suffer with Christ patiently.

From all the foregoing we would, perhaps, be inclined to draw the conclusion that the church of Ephesus was well-nigh perfect. But in this we would be mistaken. The church of Ephesus receives a very serious rebuke. There was something lacking in the church of Ephesus. There was a certain defect in her inner life, hidden, perhaps, from the eyes of men, but known to the Lord Who tries the reins and the hearts, a defect so serious that it would lead the church to utter ruin unless she repented. Something was gnawing at the very liferoots of the church, that would cause her to die if it were not removed. The very life of the church was ebbing away. The Lord points to this serious weakness in the words: "But I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love," vs. 4. The condition described in these words has frequently been compared to a similar condition in the life of an individual Christian. Perhaps we are acquainted by experience with such a loss of first love. Immediately after our conversion, especially if that conversion was rather marked and sudden, we were filled with a fervent spirit and ardent love of the Lord. Our heart throbbed with a holy zeal. The experience of our salvation caused us to abound in gratitude. We loved to speak of Jesus and to witness of His love. It was our sincere desire to consecrate our life, our all to Him Who loved us even unto death, and by Whose power we were translated from darkness unto light, from death to life. Nothing seemed too difficult for our faith. It seemed impossible that we would ever become unfaithful to Him with Whom our hearts were united in love. But another period began. That first zeal and enthusiasm cooled down. We were not so fervent in spirit anymore as in the period of our first love. It became evident that we had not reached perfection, that sin still operated in our members, that we often did evil, when we would do good. Perhaps, we grew anxious about our own condition, and began to wonder whether our conversion has been real. We left our first love! This experience of the individual Christian has often been used as an illustration to explain the meaning of the Lord's words to the church of Ephesus: "I have against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love." Yet, this comparison is not entirely correct. There is something very normal in the experience of the individual believer we just described. In it there is really nothing to be alarmed about. Fact is, that the first experience of the love of Christ by that believer was largely a matter of emotion. He was in a state of spiritual tension that could not last. His real condition was not up to the level of his feelings. Sooner or later reality was bound to assert itself. And then it became evident that he was not so near to perfection as he first imagined. The glow of

his first enthusiasm died down. And this change, while it was a cause of grief to the consciousness of the believer, was, nevertheless, very likely accompanied by a deepening of spiritual life and love. With the passing of that first experience of love that was sustained mostly by feeling, another, firmer, deeper love appeared, rooted in the heart, the expression of a sanctified will. And in as far as this experience of the individual child of God is normal, it cannot be compared with the abnormal condition of the church in Ephesus which is here rebuked by the Lord.

Nor may the church in Ephesus be compared to those churches in our own country that need periodic revivals to keep them emotionally alive. A church of this kind is weak, spiritually anemic, needs always stronger stimulants of spiritual sensationalism to keep her on her feet. She is not instructed in the truth and not used to sound doctrine, and, therefore, is not firmly rooted in Christ. She lives on religious emotions. When her pastor has exhausted his own resources of sensationalism, the emotional interest of his congregation dies down; and the church is in need of a stronger blast of sensational preaching by some outsider who travels the country with some "soul-stirring" messages that serve like a "shot in the arm" for the churches in whose midst he appears. But this is not a true picture of the church of Ephesus. It was not a weak church that lived on the emotions. It was sound and well founded in the truth, and certainly would have tried many a revivalist preacher of today and found them liars.

No, when Jesus bring against the church of Ephesus the indictment that she had left her first love, He refers to love in the deepest sense, to the true love of God in Christ as the very life of the Church. And of this love, as it first had filled the church of Ephesus, the Lord states that it had been left, forsaken. This was a very serious matter. If it was not remedied, the church would die. For the love of God in Christ is the deepest root of all our spiritual life. If a church leaves that love, the spiritual fountain of her life will dry up.

This is the reason why we characterize the church of Ephesus as the church in the beginning of her decline. In the abandoning of her first love we must recognize the beginning of all apostacy of the church in the world. It is not true that the beginning of corruption must be sought in departure from the truth, or in laxity in discipline, or in a tendency to worldly-mindedness. These may all be manifestations, first symptoms of spiritual decline; but they are not the root. That the church of Ephesus is the first in the series of seven churches that are addressed in these letters, is not accidental or irrelevant. It is significant. From Ephesus to Laodicea may seem a long way, but it is an inevitable way. The church that abandons its first love, ultimately loses all her spiritual treasures. This is a very serious lesson for the church today! How many complaints are registered against the present day church on earth! How indifferent she reveals herself with regard to doctrine! How ignorant she is in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God! How

utterly she neglects the keys of the kingdom of heaven! How adulterous she is become her alliance with the world, her seeking of the things that are below rather than the things that are above! Yes, but if all these wretched diseases of the church, or of what still calls itself church, could be traced to their beginning you would discover that their source is the abandoning of their first love. How can a church that keeps her first love possibly apostatize? How can she become indifferent with respect to the truth as it is in Jesus? How could she become so miserable that she can tolerate evil men in her midst? How could such things as worldly amusements, worldly associations, seeking of worldly treasures and pleasures even become a "problem" in a church that clings to her first love? It is well for us to understand this clearly and constantly to bear it in mind. A good thing it is, indeed, to watch over purity in doctrine, for the church that forsakes the truth has no foundation. But let us remember that outward purity in doctrine is not enough, and that itself must be rooted in the love of Christ. Let us watch, therefore, and pray that, while we preserve the purity of the truth, we may remain rooted in the love of God in Christ!

There are questions, of course, that arise in your mind as you read these things. The first is: but how is it possible that a church abandon her first love? Is not love a matter of grace? Is not the love of God poured forth and shed abroad by the irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit? How, then, can this love be abandoned? Is there, then, a falling away from grace? In answer to this question we remark, first of all, that we must make a distinction between the church and the individual believer. Surely, there is no falling away from grace. We are saved by grace, once for all. Once a believer is always a believer. Once united with the Lord in the bond of love, is always thus to be united with Him. Our conscious faith may sometimes be weak, our conscious love may often be wanting in fervency, our prayer for the grace of the Holy Spirit may frequently be mere lip-work, but we certainly cannot be separated from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The reason for this is simply that His love is and remains always first, the never failing source of our love to God. No one can pluck us out of His hands. But what is impossible for the individual believer, may happen to a church as she appears in the world. Let us try to visualize the development of the church in Ephesus. The Lord speaks of her first love. By this He refers to the love that filled her, when first she came into contact with the gospel and was called out of darkness into the marvellous light of God. Then she had been filled with the love of Christ. All had been living members of the Body of Christ. All could profess their personal faith, and testify of their part with the Saviour. This was true of the angel of the church; and it was equally true of the members. The love of Christ was experienced. It permeated and glowed through all their activity as a church. It characterized the preaching, which was more than cold doctrine. And it marked the life and conversation of the members. If you had visited the families of the church at that time, you would have found

no difficulty to converse with them about the experiential aspect of the Christian life. The whole church was rooted in and motivated by the love of God in Christ Jesus. But all this had changed. That first love had been left by the church of Ephesus. Not as if the real love of God had died out in hearts in which it once glowed. No, but the constituency of the congregation had changed. Many years had passed since the time of that first love. A new element had been added to the church. Some had joined themselves to the congregation from without; others had been added from within by the organic growth of the church. And the church had not been watching. It had emphasized the necessity of soundness in doctrine, faithfulness in discipline, diligence in the work proper to a church of Christ; but it had neglected to stress the necessity of personal faith and love in the Lord. Outwardly the church had grown; inwardly it had become weak. Many of those that were added to the church were not Israelites in the spiritual sense of the word, possessed not the love of the Lord. They could speak of the truth objectively, but they knew nothing of its spiritual experience in the heart. And this element had increased. It gained in influence in the church. It had become predominant. There were still those, indeed, that knew the love of Christ. But they no longer were the predominating element in the church. And thus the church had left its first love. What could never be said of an individual believer, was certainly true of the church of Ephesus: "I have against thee, that thou has left thy first love!"

But you ask another question: how, if the church had left her first love, could the Lord bear such a beautiful testimony concerning her as is contained in this letter? How could she still be sound in doctrine, faithful in discipline, zealous in the work of the Lord without growing weary? We must remember that the Lord writes this warning to the church in the first stages of her spiritual decadence. Her apostasy was as yet not in an advanced stage.

In close connection with this, we must bear in mind that there were still those who possessed the love of the Lord in their hearts, that had not forgotten the days of the church's first love. No doubt, the fact that the Lord could speak so well of the church was in a large measure due to the influence of these living members. But, thirdly, it must not be forgotten, that a church may, for a time, drift onward on the current of tradition. This, no doubt, was also the case with the church of Ephesus. When the church was in the period of her first love, it had labored to keep the Word of Jesus, to know the truth, to instruct young and old, to expel evil from their midst; and it had been zealous in the work of the Lord. Now the original motive power that had impelled the church had decreased in force. But as a steamer in the ocean will continue for a while with apparently undiminished speed after the engine has been shut down, so the church in Ephesus apparently lost none of its energy, lived and labored by virtue of the momentum of that first love that had motivated her in the beginning. Partly because of the love that was

still present in the church, partly by virtue of the momentum of tradition, the church of Ephesus was still active in the work of the Lord and did not grow weary. And thus you have the phenomenon of a church that is sound in doctrine, faithful in discipline, active in all the work of the Lord, but without the motive power of her first love! It is the church in the beginning of her decline.

In view of this very serious defect of the church of Ephesus, we are not surprised that the Lord sharply rebukes her and approaches her with an urgent admonition to repent. No doubt, this admonition is addressed first of all to the angel of the church and to its officebearers whose calling it is to watch over the flock. But in and through them the Lord also admonishes the church as a whole. We may distinguish three elements in this exhortation: the call to repent, the admonition to do the first works, and the exhortation to remember whence she has fallen. The last element shows the church the way in which she may come to true repentance. The church must remember whence she has fallen. She must recall former days, the days of her first love. O, it is altogether possible that the influence of the dead, carnal element in any church may become so strong and overwhelming, that for a time even the spiritual succumb to it and fall asleep. They deplore a condition of dead orthodoxy and dead works. For a time they raise their voices in protest against the tendency to emphasize mere doctrine and external activity at the expense of true faith and love. But gradually they become more or less accustomed to the situation. Their voices are silenced. They grow passive. And they gradually forget the days of the church's first love. The past does not live in their consciousness anymore. And now they fail to notice the lack of spirituality in all the activity of the church. It was missing everywhere; it was wanting in the preaching of the Word, in the instruction of the youth, in the pastoral work. If I may speak for a moment in terms of our own church-life, when the angel of the church or the elders went through the congregation to visit the families, the subject of spiritual growth in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ was hardly broached. Such routine questions were asked as whether the services were faithfully attended, the sacraments were used, the church-papers were read, the budget was paid,—questions, in short, that all pertained to the external life and activity of the church. Everywhere the spiritual note was now missing. And the true spiritual element of the church had grown accustomed to this situation, had forgotten the former days. Hence, the Lord shows them the way to repentance. They must awake out of their slumbers. The angel and elders and members of the church must bring back to their minds those former days, when all were filled with the love of Christ, when all the activity of the church was aglow with real spiritual life. And recalling that former condition, they must be filled with an earnest longing to restore the church to that former state.

H. H.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of I Corinthians 1-4

20.

(I Corinthians 4:1-5)

It is true that in this issue of the *Standard Bearer* a new Volumn will have been begun. However, after some reflection I decided not to begin writing on a different section from the Word of God, but to continue with our exposition of I Corinthians 1-4. After all this 4th chapter too belongs with the material we have been discussing, and contains some very worth-while instruction on the proper conduct in the house of God.

In part this passage reads as follows: "*Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful . . . Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.*"

In the first verse of this chapter Paul gathers up the whole preceding argument (verses 18-23 of the former chapter) as this pertains to the wholesome attitude in the congregation toward a minister of the Gospel. If all things are of us, and we are of Christ, and if Christ is God's—then in the last analysis it is God with whom we have to do, while we are dealing with His servants.

That is sobering!

Wherefore Paul writes: *Thus* let man account us as (being) underrowers (underlings) of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God! (outoos . . . oos upeeretas Christou kai musteerioon Theou).

Indeed, Paul is a servant, a subordinate of Christ. That he is a subordinate (an under-rower) gives him stature in the congregation. He stands in the service of the King. His is not a service of weakness, but it is one of power and sobriety. Let man (anthropos) mere man, who cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of the Lord then properly judge of and act toward such a subordinate of the anointed of God upon His holy hill of Zion.

And as such a subordinate of Christ Paul is a "steward" of the mysteries of God. He is a steward. He is one who runs the affairs of the house under the master, Christ. And his duty is to have charge of the "mysteries of God," that is, of those graces in Christ Jesus which are only known through the revelation of the Word by the operation of the Holy

Spirit, who searches all things, yea, even the deep things of God.

Such "man" must esteem Paul. It makes no difference who he is. For he is the empowered envoy of God in Christ.

That is the *Status Quo* of Paul before angels and men, demons and all the hosts of hell. Great is the dignity of Paul. Let men take notice of it, and "thus" esteem him highly for his work's sake!

From the foregoing there follow a few facts which Paul cites in the face of continual bickering and foolish judging of party-faction.

Hence, Paul assures the Corinthians:

1. That the axiom of the Lord in judging of His stewards is that he seeks to find faithfulness in them. The Lord does not come to try His stewards to find them unfaithful; such is not the *purpose* of the Lord. That is far below His exalted dignity. The Lord is no carping, evil fault-finder. He is a just and good Lord, who has a just and good pride in the servants of His choice. Such is the purpose of the Lord, (hina pistos tis heurethee).

Incidentally, that is a great comfort to the servants of the Lord. While evil men criticize a "faithful" servant, looking for fault and not for faithfulness and rejoicing in the latter, the Lord looks for the faithful performance of duty in a servant and rejoices in it!

And this good expectation of the Lord is *the Criterium* of all honest and good judgement of men in the church. Let there be no mistake about that. Here is love that believes all things, that hopes all things. And it is a pleasant and good thing under the sun. It is like the dew of Hermon!

2. In the light of this good *purpose* of God in judging, whatever judgment men may make of Paul and of his work is of little consequence. It really means very little, because it has so very little meaning and validity. When Paul, therefore, says "it is a very little thing to me," he is not "indifferent" to public opinion in the wrong sense of the term. Consider how he is deeply conscious of the sentiment of the Jews concerning the temple in the book of Acts. And, again, notice how he circumcizes Timothy for the sake of the Jews. On the contrary this is the highest sensitiveness as to the things that differ. And these things are really the judgment of the living God and the judgment of men; the difference between "the Day," the day of the Lord and a "human day," (anthroopinees heemeras) a human day of judgement when man climbs on his imaginary throne. It really reminds one more or less of the mock court, popularly called "kangaroo court," this "human day." And such a judgment is to Paul a very little thing.

3. In the light of the great day that is to come, which will not be a "human day" Paul does not even feel that it would be *proper juris-prudence* that he would be a judge in his own case; he would be wholly an unfit candidate for that position. Why he does not act as judge in his own

case? Writes he: "for nothing by myself is know together." He would not know any guilty-knowledge against himself. Nor, in fact, does he. He walks in a good conscience. But that, in the last analysis, is not justification. That does not mean that he has a clean slate *up to the present moment*, (*dedikaioomai*). Why not? Because man is never the judge, and Paul is but a man. He knows and keeps his place. It is not that of judge, but that of being a subordinate to Christ!

4. Nay, the one judging Paul is the *Lord*. He is the Christ of God, the one man in whose hand all judgment has been placed; He will judge the world in righteousness. And he will proceed from the motive of finding in Paul a faithful steward. That is comforting, especially when men are carping fault-finders, and when nothing you do either meets with approval, or otherwise can escape some form of bitter criticism. Ah, then it is good to remember the Lord *is* judge! Then all the reward shall be to the faithful servants, and the judgment of men will prove, indeed, to be a very little thing. It was a little gravel in the shoes of the faithful traveler! Meanwhile he is comforted that the Lord will judge His people!

And from the foregoing follows a great warning and admonition!

It is an admonition which we all must heed. For we are not judges, but are now standing in judgment and we shall all be judged and manifested in that day. It shall, indeed, not be a "human day," a mock "Kangaroo Court!"

We should not judge before the "proper season" (*pro kairou*) set on the Court Calendar of the Lord of Hosts. That will be when the entire story of history is written. When all the faithfulness of the faithful is manifested and all the carping fault-finding has reached its ultimate against the servants of the Lord.

Here no one judges himself; he cannot place himself in the jury. It is wholly the Lord's Day.

The first element in this judgment will be the bringing to light of *all the facts*. This will not simply be the eternal acts of men, but it will be the "secrets of darkness." It will be that, which man, trying to keep secret because of his "darkness," shall be brought to light. What has been done in secret will be proclaimed from the house-tops. Men whose works were not wrought in God, and who, therefore, tried to hide them, will surely be brought to light. Yea, all the sins, even of the elect of God, will be brought to light.

Even the very "thoughts" and intentions on men's hearts. This will be true whether their thoughts came to fruition in deeds or not. It will be a righteous judgement in which God will be the righteous judge. He will look for His own; it is looked for in a steward to be found faithful. Wherefore Paul elsewhere says: I beat myself with fists, lest having preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.

In that Court there shall be no "sparing with attorneys," for the judge knows all the facts ere we enter into His court.

Here the learned and the unlearned, the clever and the less nimble in mind are all an open book.

One takes not "oath" in this court—for he God alone is true, and He knows our hearts!

The bringing to light of all the facts in the wicked is the first point on the agenda of that Day.

Then there is also "praise which each shall have, it shall come to him from the Lord, God. The reward is "praise," (*epainos*) which means: "a tale for another." Praise is therefore something which one cannot give himself. Should one attempt to praise himself—it is like a gold ring in the snout of the swine. It is uncomely.

But when we receive this "tale from another" it will not be from man, neither will it be "empty praise," but it shall be the praise which is the just due of a faithful steward.

Paul can wait till that day. Wherefore, says He, "do not judge before the time set for it."

And thus it will be with "each."

The Lord does not forget one of His faithful servants in that day. A little judgment now from men, a "human day." Be it so. It is of little account. It belongs to the suffering of this present time which is not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.

But then it shall be different.

The former things shall be remembered no more.

The carping fault-finding of evil men will be remembered no more for the joy of the "praise" from the lips of God.

Wherefore let us all remember, let every man remember, that they must not be wiser than God, who looks for faithfulness in his servants and rejoices in it in them, lest that day find them out as "judges," who shall receive the greater condemnation!

G.L.

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### Announcement

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, D.V., on Wednesday, October 3, 1956, in the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Consistories and appointed delegates will consider this an official notice.

Rev. M. Schipper, Stated Clerk

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"Christian thankfulness consists of two parts — truth and justice. Truth acknowledges and magnifies the gracious deliverance and thanks God for the deliverance and for every other benefit which by it has been given to us. Wherefore it is in truth that we find the sphere of prayer. *Justice* offers God a return of gifts; however, God requires no other gift from us than an upright service, obedience and good works."

Ursinus, Heid. Catechism, page 464

# IN HIS FEAR

## Praying in His Fear

(6)

We live in a world that prides itself on its polish, refinement and politeness.

Children are taught to say, "Thank you," "Pardon me," "Please" and the like.

The automobile has done much to take away the polite "Ladies First" policy; and our traffic situation would, indeed, be a sorry mess if that were to be the rule of procedure at the intersection, for passing on the highways or for procedure down the road.

Since women have invaded business establishments and factories as employees by the thousands, if not millions, many of them are seen standing in busses, commuter's trains, elevators, subways and the like while men, also weary from a long stand at the bench or from strenuous work at a machine, retain their seats. Men do not quickly give their seats to a woman today.

Yet we do still as a nation pride ourselves on our culture, polish, refinement and politeness.

But listen once to the everyday language of man and you see the mockery behind much of it.

So easily does the word "thanks" fall off our lips that we use it when our heart is not in it at all. Men will say "thanks" when you present them with a bill they do not want to receive. When told that their car has not been repaired on time, that their suit of clothes did not come back from the cleaners, that since their last electric bill has not been paid the power will be shut off this afternoon, men will in voluntarily say, "Thanks," when they certainly were in no thankful mood at all when they received these bits of disappointing news. It is a word that has no meaning very often when we employ it.

Are we a thankful people?

Are we thankful to God?

If we are not thankful to Him we cannot be thankful to men either. And, though we are outwardly polite, our "thankful" appearance is only a sham and detestable to the Living God.

We do well also to remember that true thankfulness will manifest itself also in our prayers to God. Yea, with the Heidelberg Catechism we hasten to add that prayer is the chief part of thankfulness to God.

Therefore we consider at this time the truth that to pray in His fear we must pray with a thankful heart.

"... in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God . . ." Philipians 4:6.

"... With thanksgiving . . ."

That does not mean that after you have come to God

with a series of requests or poured out your heart with bitterness and grief for some time about one particular thing that troubles you, there is also attached at the end a few words of thanks for past favours remembered. "... With thanksgiving . . ." does not mean that together with your requests and supplications you really ought to include a few words of thanks to God. To be sure, as creatures of time we will have to add or include in the prayer somewhere a few words of that thanksgiving. We cannot make request known and *express* thankfulness at the same time no more than we can eat and drink at the same moment or speak and be silent in the same breath. By prayer and by supplication we make our requests known; but this we do *with* thanksgiving. In other words thanksgiving must characterize that whole prayer. With thanksgiving we plead; we implore God; we request things of Him. With thanksgiving we supplicate. Praying in His fear requires a thankful heart.

Praying in His fear demands that we come to God in the only way in which we have a right to approach Him. All our requests must be for Jesus' sake. Praying in His fear demands that our purpose shall be the proper one. We must come with every request and supplication governed by the desire that God's name be hallowed, that His kingdom come and that His will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. But praying in His fear also demands that we come with the proper attitude of heart and mind. And that is expressed in these words, "... with thanksgiving . . ."

To be thankful unto God means that we consider Him to be good.

One does not, except in hypocrisy, give thanks for a thing that does not please him. One gives thanks when he considers another to be good and because he is of the opinion that the one whom he thanks has sought his good. The Hebrew word for thanks, as we might expect, expresses this figuratively and gives the idea thereof to us in a way that is easy to understand. It means to throw out the hand in a motion of pointing. In fact, if we may be a little technical for a moment, it contains the word "hand" in it. The Hebrew for hand is "yad"; and that Hebrew word for thank is "yadah." The idea is, then, that when we give thanks unto anyone we point to him — either literally with our hand or with our words — and declare that individual to be good and to have sought our good.

A thankful person is one who is appreciative of the good performed in his behalf; and thanksgiving is giving expression to that benefactor of our thoughts of thankfulness; that we deem him good. We may go a step further. When we give thanks unto God we give expression to the fact that we know that we can trust Him to do us only good. When we thank God we do not say with reservations that He is good. We do not say, Well, He is good *this time*. We say that He is good, always good, nothing but good, the overflowing fountain of all good! If we cannot say that we are not truly thankful. In the measure that we can say that, in that measure we are thankful.

It stands to reason, therefore, that thankfulness must characterize our prayers. Unless we can come to God in the confidence and sincere conviction that He is good, ethically, morally good and filled with thoughts of all good to His people, we will not approach Him in His fear.

Consider the alternative!

If our thoughts toward God as we come to Him in prayer are not that He is good, will we even care to make our requests known to Him? If we do not trust Him, can we be sincere in our prayers? And if we do not trust Him, is that coming in His fear? Is that faith? Is that reverencing Him as God? Can one first list a series of request to God while not trusting Him to do or be good and then add a few words of *sincere* thanksgiving?

The matter is worse than that!

If we cannot approach God with a heart and mind that is convinced that He is good and seeks our good, can we say that we make our requests known and seek an answer to our prayer for Jesus' sake? If we cannot say and do not believe that God is good, we deny Christ! And we cannot sincerely say, "For Jesus' sake. Amen."

All the goodness of God is in Christ. All the good we seek from His hand is in Christ. And the cross of Christ is the eternal and undeniable evidence that God is good. His ethical, moral goodness is so beautifully portrayed there in that "rather than it (our sin) should go unpunished He hath punished the same in His beloved Son Jesus Christ, with the bitter and shameful death of the cross," as the form for the administration of the Lord's Supper, used in our churches, has it stated so correctly. His hatred of sin and His just way of removing it for us display His ethical, moral goodness at Calvary. That He is ethically and morally good the cross of Christ declares. That He is good to us and blesses us with good is likewise the powerful speech of that cross. He gave us the highest good: Salvation from the depth of hell to everlasting blessedness before His face in the new creation. The Lord is our shepherd; we shall want no good thing.

Therefore thanksgiving must characterize our requests. For, surely if we are not thankful to God for all the salvation which we have in Christ and do not sincerely believe that He is good and is good to us in Christ, how shall we ever pray for Jesus' sake? If we do not know God in His goodness in Jesus Christ His Son, shall we pray to Him and request things for Jesus' sake?

That is why the Heidelberg Catechism also, in answer to the question, "Why is prayer necessary for the christian?", gives the following answer, "Because it is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us: and also, because God will give His grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desires continually ask them of Him, and are thankful for them." Note the prominent place thankfulness is given in the prayer-life of a christian. It is the chief part of thankfulness; and God will give His grace and Holy Spirit

to those only, who with sincere desires continually ask them of Him, and are thankful for them.

Thanksgiving belongs to our prayers and its omission means that we are not praying in His fear. It need not always be expressed literally. It is not literally expressed in the prayer which Christ gave to His disciples and to us as a model prayer. But we do wrong and deceive ourselves if we insist that there is no thankfulness in it. Every single petition listed there as prayed for by the child of God is uttered with thanksgiving. For, in each petition, as coming out of the heart of a regenerated child of God, breathes with the testimony that the petitioner considers God to be good and points to Him as the source and fount of all good.

And then prayer becomes the chief part of thankfulness. In song we may utter words of thankfulness to Him for all that which He is and has done for us in Jesus Christ His Son. Our walk of life when we heed His commandments and in love fight the good fight of faith expresses thankfulness to God for that great and wonderful deliverance. But prayer is the chief part of thankfulness.

In prayer we come before God's face. In prayer we commune with Him; we speak to Him not simply about Him. In song we speak about Him and tell of His glory and praises. In prayer we go to God Himself on high. We do not then say *that* God is good. We do not instruct others in the goodness of God. We are not making some public testimony of the goodness of God. Nay, we come to God Himself, our souls in most intimate communion with Him. And then "to His face" we tell Him, "O, God, how good Thou art"

Is it any wonder that such a prayer pleases Him?

Such a prayer is the very result of the goodness of God whereby He has so transformed the rebellious, unthankful, hateful heart of a fallen man into one that speaks as His Beloved Son speaks.

Such a prayer is heard; and all the petitions of such a heart are for those things which glorify His name, seek the coming of His kingdom and delight in His holy will.

Such a prayer is one uttered in His fear.

And he who prays in His fear need have no fear that God will put him to shame.

Those who pray in His fear shall taste and see that God is good.

J.A.H.

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"Pelagianism in its several forms seems to be merciful; however, it is nothing but the mercy of the Pharisee, who has no concern for Publicans. To protect the freedom of the will for a few thousand adults, and that only in appearance, proportionately it gives, in its teaching, millions of children to destruction."

H. Bavinck, Ger. Dogm., Page 61, Vol. IV

## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

VIEWS DURING THE SECOND PERIOD (300-750 A.D.)

THE LORD'S SUPPER

*The Sacrifice by Philip Schaff.*

The Catholic church, both Greek and Latin, sees in the Eucharist not only a *sacramentum*, in which God communicates a grace to believers, but at the same time, and in fact mainly, a *sacrificium*, in which believers really offer to God that which is represented by the sensible elements (the reader may have noticed that the heading above our previous article read: "The Eucharist by Philip Schaff," whereas the heading above this article reads: "The Sacrifice by Philip Schaff." It is to this that the eminent writer refers when he speaks of a *sacramentum* and a *sacrificium*. The Eucharist is the Lord's Supper proper, the eating and drinking of the Christ, whether actually (Rome) or symbolically (the Reformed view), and the sacrifice, also called the "Mass," is the sacrifice of the Christ, which always precedes the Eucharist and without which the Eucharist would be impossible — H.V.). For this view also the church fathers laid the foundation, and it must be conceded they stand in general far more on the Greek and Roman Catholic than on the Protestant side of this question. The importance of the subject demands a preliminary explanation of the idea of sacrifice, and a clear discrimination of its original Christian form from its later perversion by tradition.

The idea of sacrifice is the centre of all ancient religions, both the heathen and the Jewish. In Christianity it is fulfilled. For by His one perfect sacrifice on the cross Christ has entirely blotted out the guilt of man, and reconciled him with the righteous God. On the ground of this sacrifice of the eternal High Priest, believers have access to the throne of grace, and may expect their prayers and intercessions to be heard. With this perfect and eternally availing sacrifice the Eucharist stands in indissoluble connection. It is indeed originally a sacrament, and the main thing in it is that which we *receive* from God, not that which we give to God. The latter is only a consequence of the former; for we can give to God nothing which we have not first received from him. But the Eucharist is the *sacramentum* of a *sacrificium*, the thankful celebration of the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross, and the believing participation or the renewed appropriation of the fruits of this sacrifice. In other words, it is a feast on a sacrifice. "As oft as ye do eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

The Eucharist is moreover, as the name itself implies, on the part of the church a living and reasonable thank-

offering, wherein she presents herself anew, in Christ and on the ground of his sacrifice, to God with prayers and intercessions. For only in Christ are our offerings acceptable to God, and only through the continual showing forth and presenting of His merit can we expect our prayers and intercessions to be heard.

In this view certainly, in a deep symbolical and ethical sense, Christ is offered to God the Father in every believing prayer, and above all in the holy Supper; that is, as the sole ground of our reconciliation and acceptance. This is the deep truth which lies at the bottom of the Catholic mass, and gives it still such power over the religious mind (Freemen states the result of his investigation of the Biblical sacrificial cult and of the doctrine of the old Catholic church on the eucharistic sacrifice, as follows, on p. 280: "It is enough for us that the holy Eucharist is all that the ancient types foreshowed that it would be; that in it we present 'memorially,' yet truly and with prevailing power, by the consecrating Hands of our Great High Priest, the wondrous Sacrifice once for all offered by Him at the Eucharistic Institution, consummated on the Cross, and ever since presented and pleaded by Him, Risen and Ascended, in Heaven; that our material Gifts are identified with that awful Reality, and as such are borne in upon the Incense of His Intercession, in His Holy Hands, into the True Holiest Place: that we ourselves, therewith, are borne in thither likewise, and abide in a deep mystery in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that thus we have all manner of acceptance, — sonship, kingship, and priesthood unto God; all our whole life, in all its complex action, being sanctified and purified for such access, and abiding continually in a heavenly sphere of acceptableness and privilege. — Enough for us, again, that on the sacramental side of the mystery, we have been thus privileged to give to God His own Gift of Himself to dwell in us, and we in Him; — that we thereby possess an evermore renewedly dedicated being — strengthened with all might, and evermore made one with Him. Profoundly reverencing Christ's peculiar Presence in us and around us in the celebration of such awful mysteries, we nevertheless take as the watchword of our deeply mysterious Aucharistic worship, 'Sursum corda,' and 'Our life is hid with Christ in God'").

But this idea in process of time became adulterated with foreign elements, and transformed into the Graeco-Roman doctrine of the *sacrifice of the mass*. According to this doctrine the Eucharist is an unbloody *repetition of the atoning sacrifice of Christ by the priesthood* for the salvation of the living and the dead; so that the body of Christ is truly and literally offered every day and every hour, and upon innumerable altars at the same time. The term *mass*, which properly denoted the *dismissal* of the congregation (*missio*, *missio*) at the close of the general public worship, became, after the end of the fourth century, the name for the worship of the faithful, which consisted in the celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice and the communion. The correspond-

ing terms of the Orientals are *leitourgia, thusia, prosphora*.

In the sacrifices of the mass the whole mysterious fulness and glory of the Catholic worship is concentrated. Here the idea of priesthood reaches its dizzy summit; and here the devotion and awe of the spectators rises to the highest pitch of adoration. For to the devout Catholic nothing can be greater or more solemn than an act of worship in which the eternal Son of God is veritably offered to God upon the altar by the visible hand of the priest for the sins of the world. But though the Catholic worship here rises far above the vain sacrifices of heathendom and the merely typical sacrifices of Judaism, yet that old sacrificial service, which was interwoven with the whole popular life of the Jewish and Graeco-Roman world, exerted a controlling influence on the Roman Catholic service of the Eucharist, especially after the nominal conversion of the whole Roman heathendom, and obscured the original simplicity and purity of that service almost beyond recognition. The *sacramentum* became entirely eclipsed by the *sacrificium*, and the *sacrificium* became grossly materialized, and was exalted at the expense of the sacrifice on the cross. The endless succession of necessary repetitions detracts from the sacrifice of Christ.

The Biblical support of the sacrifice of the mass is weak, and may be reduced to an unduly literal interpretation or a downright perversion of some such passages as Mal. 1:10 f.; I Cor. 10:21; Heb. 5:6; 7:1f.; 13:10. The Epistle to the Hebrews especially is often misapplied, though it teaches with great emphasis the very opposite, namely the abolition of the Old Testament sacrificial system by the Christian worship, the eternal validity of the sacrifice of our only High Priest on the right hand of the Father, and the impossibility of a repetition of it.

We pass now to the more particular history. The Ante-Nicene fathers uniformly conceived the Eucharist as a thankoffering of the church; the congregation offering the consecrated elements of bread and wine, and in them itself, to God. This view is in itself perfectly innocent, but readily leads to the doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass, as soon as the elements become identified with the body and blood of Christ, and the presence of the body comes to be materialistically taken. The germs of the Roman doctrine appear in Cyprian about the middle of the third century, in connection with his high-churchly doctrine of the clerical priesthood. *Sacerdotium* and *sacrificium* are with him correlative ideas, and a Judaizing conception of the former favored a like Judaizing conception of the latter. The priest officiates in the Eucharist in the place of Christ, and performs an actual sacrifice in the church. Yet Cyprian does not distinctly say that Christ is the subject of the spiritual sacrifice; rather is the mystical body of Christ, the Church, offered to God, and married with Christ. Cyprian writes as follows: "There is then no reason, dearest brother, for any one to think that the custom of certain persons is to be followed, who have thought in time past that water alone should be offered in the cup of the Lord. For we must inquire whom they them-

selves have followed. For if in the sacrifice which Christ offered none is to be followed but Christ, assuredly it behoves us to obey and do that which Christ did, and what He commanded to be done, since He Himself says in the Gospel, "If ye do whatsoever I command you henceforth I call you not servants, but friends." And that Christ alone ought to be heard, the Father also testifies from heaven, saying, "This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." Wherefore, if Christ alone must be heard, we ought not to give heed to what another before us may have thought was to be done, but what Christ, who is before all, first did. Neither is it becoming to follow the practice of man, but the truth of God; since God speaks by Isaiah the prophet, and says, "In vain do they worship me, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men." And again the Lord in the Gospel repeats this same saying, and says, "Ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." Moreover, in another place He establishes it, saying, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." But if we may not break even the least of the Lord's commandments, how much rather is it forbidden to infringe such important ones, so great, so pertaining to the very sacrament of our Lord's passion and our own redemption, or to change it by human tradition into anything else than what was divinely appointed! For if Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, is Himself the chief priest of God the Father, and has first offered Himself a sacrifice to the Father, and has commanded this to be done in commemoration of Himself; certainly that priest truly discharges the office of Christ, who imitates that which Christ did; and he then offers a true and full sacrifice in the Church to God the Father, when he proceeds to offer it according to what he sees Christ Himself to have offered."— end of quote. (Notice, please, the last full sentence in this quotation: "For if Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, is Himself the priest of God the Father, and has first offered Himself a sacrifice to the Father, and has commanded this to be done in commemoration of Himself, certainly that priest truly discharges the office of Christ, who imitates that which Christ did; and he then offers a true and full sacrifice in the Church to God the Father, when he proceeds to offer it (the church, — H.V.) according to what he sees Christ Himself to have offered.— H.V.) And the view of Augustine is similar, namely that the church offers herself to God in and with Christ as her Head.

H.V.

"The human intellect is as erring as the human heart. We can no more find truth than holiness, when estranged from God; even as we lose both light and heat, when we depart from the sun. Those in every age have sunk deepest into folly, who have relied most on their own understandings."

Charles Hodge on Romans 1.

## 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

#### *Introduction*

The subject of this present section of our *Canons* is two-fold, as also the title indicates. This has, as we indicated previously, its reason in the historical background of the *Canons*. Because the *Canons* are an answer to and judgment of the *Five Articles of the Remonstrance*, and because the third and fourth articles of the latter must be viewed in connection with each other, therefore the *Canons* combine the two subjects in one chapter. The subject is not simply the corruption of man; nor is it merely the conversion of man to God. But in a sense the main subject of this section is the manner of man's conversion to God. And in order to treat that subject it is necessary to treat the subject of man's conversion as such. But in order to treat the latter, it is necessary, first of all, to say something about the man who must be converted, namely, corrupt man, and to define that corruption. It is in that corruption that the necessity of conversion lies: if a man were not corrupt, he neither could be nor would need to be converted. Hence, it is of prime importance to define the nature of and the degree of that corruption of man. And it is from this point of view solely that the subject of the depravity of man enters into the present section of the *Canons*. Surely, one might also view that subject of man's corruption from another standpoint, and consider it in its relation to *redemption*, for instance. But here it is treated only from the viewpoint of its bearing on the true doctrine of conversion.

The Arminians, however,—and that too, undoubtedly with malicious intentions,—seem to ignore this relation between man's depravity and his conversion. Taken by itself, the article is in a way a rather strong statement of man's corruption: "That man has not saving grace of himself, nor of the energy of his free will, inasmuch as he, in the state of apostasy and sin, can of and by himself neither think, will, nor do anything that is truly good (such as saving Faith eminently is); but that it is needful that he be born again of God in Christ, through his Holy Spirit, and renewed in understanding, inclination, or will, and all his powers, in order that he may rightly understand, think, will, and effect what is truly good, according to the Word of Christ, John 15:5: 'Without me ye can do nothing.'" It is true that stronger and clearer descriptions of man's depravity can be found, and that our *Canons* furnish a definition of the nature

and degree of man's corruption that is far to be preferred. But any Reformed man could subscribe freely to this third article of the Arminians, *as long as it is viewed all by itself*. I say again: undoubtedly the Arminians, being well acquainted with the strong emphasis of Reformed doctrine upon the totality of man's depravity, were intentionally malicious and deceitful when they formulated this article. They wanted to leave the impression that they were strongly Reformed, and thus lull people into a sense of false security and trust. They wanted people to think exactly as many did in the Arminian controversy, that anyone who so strongly spoke of the corruption of man could be guilty of any heresy as far as the salvation of man is concerned. But the "sleeper" comes in the next article, in which the Arminians openly avowed that "as respects the mode of the operation of this grace, it is not irresistible . . ." It is plain, then, that when nevertheless the Arminians maintain that the **grace of God** is dependent upon the resistance or non-resistance of the will of man, they overthrow all that they **have said about the** depravity of man, and never intended at all to maintain the Reformed doctrine concerning that depravity. For either grace is resistible and man is totally depraved, and then no man is ever converted because a totally depraved man can do nothing else than resist the grace of God. Or else grace is resistible, but man's depravity is not complete as to prevent him from accepting and cooperating with that grace, that thus he may be saved. The latter is the Arminian position, and fully in harmony with the universal atonement doctrine of their second article. And it is this position which the fathers of Dordrecht oppose in the Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine by first of all setting forth the true doctrine of man's corruption very thoroughly, and then explaining the true doctrine concerning man's conversion and the manner thereof.

This already brings us to the question of the relation between the present chapter and the Second Head of Doctrine. We must be careful to understand that there is an intimate relation between our view of redemption and our view of the natural man. The relation is such that one's view of redemption determines his view of the natural man. If the scope of redemption in God's intention is conceived as general, then the power to will and to accept that redemption must be left to the natural man. And if the power to will and accept that redemption must be left to the natural man, then the complete depravity of the natural man must needs be denied. At bottom, however, it is perhaps nearer to the truth to say that one's basic view of man determines his view of redemption. For that is after all ever the issue between true and false doctrine: God or man! If one has to begin with a proud and highly exalted conception of man, then he spontaneously arrives at a false conception of God's redemption of man, and at a false conception of the kind of redemption that is needed by man, as well as a false conception of the way in which man can come into possession of that salvation. When one does not want man to be what he really is,

nothing, then he begins to conceive of a salvation which is dependent on the natural man for acceptance.

And thus we arrive at the relation between this present chapter and the First Head of Doctrine also. There is an inseparable relation between one's view of God and his doctrine of man. In last instance, the reason why men do not want man nothing is that they do not want God to be all. The whole-hearted confession of the sovereignty of God is quite content to leave man as he is by nature, apart from the grace of God, dead in sin and misery. Conversely speaking, in the same degree in which the sovereignty of God and His grace are denied, in that degree man must be represented as having some goodness and power to do good. And ultimately, of course, that reaches to the doctrine of sovereign predestination, which is the fountain and cause of every saving good. This is very obvious in the Arminian controversy. They began with a conditional election. Understandably, therefore, they had to continue with a universal atonement. But from thence there was no turning back. As soon as they made atonement a mere possibility for all men, they had to follow by making the application of that atonement dependent upon the natural man's free will. The point of contact between God's salvation and man's being was a condition in the counsel of God; and it had to be a condition in the historical unfolding of that counsel also. Hence, the relation between the First Head of Doctrine and the Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine is that the former is determinative of the latter. Leave God GOD, and there is no danger that you will go astray as respects any other doctrine.

\* \* \* \*

Article 1. Man was originally formed after the image of God. His understanding was adorned with a true and saving knowledge of his Creator, and of spiritual things; his heart and will were upright; all his affections pure; and the whole man was holy; but revolting from God by the instigation of the devil, and abusing the freedom of his own will, he forfeited these excellent gifts; and on the contrary, entailed on himself blindness of mind, horrible darkness, vanity and perverseness of judgment, became wicked, rebellious, and obdurate in heart and will, and impure in his affections.

Our English version could be improved upon as far as accuracy and clarity are concerned, although it may be granted that in general the translation gives the meaning of the original. Our corrections are as follows. First of all, in the original one finds no direct statement, as in the English, that man was formed after the image of God. In the original the entire article is one long sentence, and the indication that man was formed after the image of God is given only by a prepositional phrase: "Man from the beginning according to the image of God (*ad imaginem Dei*) was seasoned (*conditus*) with a true and beneficial (saving, advantageous, *salutari*) knowledge of his Creator and of things spiritual in his mind, and with righteousness in will

and heart, purity in all his affections was adorned, and thus was completely holy . . ." In the second place, the translation does not make it clear that all the vices mentioned, from "blindness" to "perverseness of judgment" apply to man's understanding. A correct translation would be: "and on the contrary, he contracted in their place blindness, horrible darkness, vanity, and perverseness of judgment in his mind; wickedness, rebellion, and hardness in will and heart, and finally impurity in all his affections." You will notice, in the third place, that in the first part of this article we substituted the word "beneficial" for "saving." This is not because the Latin *salutari* cannot mean "saving," but rather due to the fact that one can hardly speak of man in the original state of righteousness as having a *saving* knowledge of God. He had nothing to be saved from. He had a true knowledge; and that true knowledge was a living, spiritual, experiential knowledge. He had the knowledge that is life. But a "saving" knowledge it can hardly be called. And finally, we may remark that the word "abusing" as it occurs here in the phrase, "and abusing the freedom of his own will," does not occur in the original, but is a rather free translation. The original has simply: "but revolting from God by the instigation of the devil and by his own free will, he deprived himself of these excellent gifts."

Here, then, we have a concise statement concerning the fall and corruption of man,—far more carefully construed than the third article of the Arminians. And it is worth our while to call attention in detail to the various elements of this proposition.

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

#### JEHOVAH'S PERFECT LAW

Jehovah's perfect law,  
Restores the soul again;  
His testimony sure  
Gives wisdom unto men;  
The precepts of the Lord are right,  
And fill the heart with great delight.

The Lord's commands are pure,  
They light and joy restore;  
Jehovah's fear is clean,  
Enduring evermore;  
His statutes, let the world confess,  
Are wholly truth and righteousness.

They are to be desired  
Above the finest gold;  
Than honey from the comb  
More sweetness far they hold;  
With warnings they Thy servant guard,  
In keeping them is great reward.

Psalm 19:1-3

## DECENCY and ORDER

Article 26, D.K.O.

### The Diaconate and Other Almoners

Continued

The task of the deacon is manifold. If our discussion of this office has been somewhat prolonged, it is only because we desire to emphasize the importance and difficulty of the labors of these spiritual ministers of mercy in a time in which much of the proper esteem for this office has been lost. The deacon is more than a financial advisor, book-keeper or accountant of the church. His is the task to diligently collect the alms and to faithfully distribute them so that the widows, orphans, distressed and such as have need are adequately assisted so that as much as possible all suffering and want is alleviated in the church on earth. In this manner they are to emulate Christ Who took upon Himself the sufferings of His people. They are ministers of His mercy who are called to comfort the sorrowing, bring solace to the distressed and bind up the wounds of those that are afflicted. To their office there is both a material and spiritual side and these two must not be separated but rather integrated.

Frequently the material side of this labor is infringed upon by the government and other worldly organizations. Although the church would no doubt become very alarmed if these same agencies would begin to assume the tasks of the ministers and elders, there is very little concern shown when they virtually obliterate the functions of the deacons. In many instances this infringement is even welcomed by both the congregation and the deacons. It makes the latter's task more simple and of the former less sacrifice is required. A man losses his home and possessions in a fire and the deacons can sigh with relief when they learn that the loss is "fully insured" for now their charity fund can remain intact. Another's home is swept away by flood or tornado but the Red Cross is first there to make restitution and so again there is no need for any expenditure or aid by the diaconate. They do not have to solicit the congregation for alms and the congregation has no occasion to give to aid the needy brother. The "security" and "worldly charity" of our day has made the task of the diaconate so simple that in many instances it has practically erased it.

With this neither the church nor the diaconate should be satisfied. She has a calling in this regard that she cannot lightly disregard. Christ did not institute this office in the church as a temporary measure to be supplanted by worldly organizations. He has given the church the task and calling to care for her own poor and distressed and this responsibility she may not relegate to others. It would perhaps be very difficult to fully restore the function of true christian charity

to its rightful place under today's social and economic structure but it would be greatly revitalized if the following evils were more militantly opposed since in them is to be found the causes of the present unspiritual situation:

1. A spirit of materialism! We are living in a materialistically minded age. Too much emphasis and value is placed upon mundane things while far too little appreciation of the spiritual is manifest. To this influence the church, speaking in general, has also become susceptible so that when circumstances deprive her members of their earthly goods, they turn for relief to those sources from which they receive the greatest material return—the "worldly charities."

2. A false sense of values! Closely akin to the foregoing it follows that we have apparently forgotten that "we have here no continuing city; we are strangers and pilgrims here below" and instead of regarding all things as means to further our pilgrimage, we look upon the material things of life as ends in themselves. We begin to regard life as consisting of "the abundance of the things which we possess"; an evil against which the Lord Himself solemnly warned. We are not far removed from the rich fool of Luke 12:15-21. Although we do not, perhaps, build barns to store our goods for many years, yet hundreds of dollars are spent annually to make secure our automobiles, houses, furniture, life, savings, etc. While we complain that the church budget and the demands of legitimate, christian charity are too high. Which was greater during the last year, the amount spent in insurance premiums to secure all the above mentioned items or the amount asked to support the church and her poor? When the former demand a higher premium than the latter there is evidence of a false sense of values for the material things of life then become more endearing than the spiritual.

3. Refusal to truly acknowledge the providence of God! The bread-earner of the family is smitten with prolonged illness; hail rains from the sky inflicting great loss upon the farmer and depriving him of his annual income; floods, earthquakes and tornados destroy homes and possessions so that the christian as well as the ungodly are affected by these Divine visitations. Yes, we acknowledge that God does it. Doctrinally we admit that nothing comes by chance and all things are done according to His will and counsel but in our need we refuse to turn to Him or to the institution which He has appointed to dispense mercy and relief but rather turn to the world where the likelihood of a larger material return is greater. We will not bow under His hand while the world will make us rich. It is no longer as with Job who said, "The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away, blessed be the Name of the Lord." Now this beautiful cry of humble submission to God's ways is practically distorted to read: "The Lord taketh away, the world giveth, blessed be the world."

4. Failure to rightly regard the diaconate! This holds from a two-fold point of view. On the one hand the vastness of the task of the diaconate is not comprehended and the result is that adequate means are seldom provided to fully perform the labor. The limitation of diaconate aid induces

those who need help to seek it elsewhere. On the other hand, there is the reluctance on the part of the needy to inform and acquaint the diaconate with their circumstances.

As long as all this prevails the diaconate is, to say the least, seriously handicapped in their labor and the more these evils increase, the more the office of deacon will fall into disrepute. Because the office is spiritual, the proper function of the office requires that those who serve and are served by it live on a high spiritual plane. And this includes not only the deacons and the needy but also those who are privileged to provide the alms for the service of the diaconate. Blessed, wonderfully blessed is the church that can properly maintain her diaconate.

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Finally, we must make a few remarks about the last part of the twenty-sixth article which does not appear in its original but was added later. This part of the article specifies that the deacons "shall make it possible for the poor to make use of institutions of mercy and to that end they shall request the board of directors of such institutions to keep in close touch with them. It is also desirable that the deaconates assist and consult one another, especially in caring for the poor in such institutions."

Dr. F. L. Rutgers informs us that in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands there are institutions of mercy that are managed by large diaconates and are under the supervision of the consistories. Whether or not this is proper is subject to debate. There are those who favor it and there are those who are opposed to it.

In our own country we do not have this. The provision of this article undoubtedly has in mind such institutions as the Pine Rest Psychopathic Hospital in Cutlerville, Michigan and the Bethesda Sanitarium in Denver, Colorado which, though not under direct ecclesiastical supervision, are nevertheless supported and maintained by the people of Reformed Churches. To this might also be added the various Homes that are established for the Aged and other similar institutions.

To be admitted to such institutions and to receive proper care, medical, psychical or otherwise, for any length of time involves considerable expense. Frequently those needing such care are not in a position to pay for it and, consequently, it is but proper that the diaconate extends a helping hand. None of the sheep of Christ who are afflicted with mental or physical illness or are aged and unable to maintain themselves ought to be deprived of proper institutional care because of lack of funds. Neither should they be compelled to enter a state institution which is supported by taxation. Let the brethren in the faith come to their aid through the diaconate. The latter must then, of course, maintain a close contact with the Board of Directors of the institution through which they may be informed of the needs as well as the

progress of the patient where distances make it impossible for the office-bearers of the church to visit the patient.

It may be, however, that a diaconate of a small church is confronted with a circumstance of this nature and that it is unable to shoulder the burden with the means provided by the little church. This should not deprive the patient, a member of such a small church, of the needed care. There are other diaconates of other sister churches — perhaps larger churches — that are able to render assistance. As the church order states, "It is also desirable that the diaconates assist and consult one another, especially in caring for the poor in such institutions." The denominational unity of the churches implies as much. We are all members one of another.

"Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:2)

G.V.D.B.

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### Eastern Ladies League

There will be a meeting of the Eastern Ladies League on October 18 at 8 p. m. in our First Protestant Reformed Church. Student Al Mulder will be the speaker.

Come and enjoy an evening of Christian fellowship.

Mrs. Gerrit Pipe, Vice Sec.

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### ALL NATIONS, CLAP YOUR HANDS

All nations, clap your hands,  
Let shouts of triumph ring,  
For mighty over all the lands  
The Lord Most High is King

Above our mighty foes  
He gave us power to stand,  
And as our heritage He chose  
The goodly promised land.

With shouts ascends our King,  
With trumpets stirring call;  
Praise God, praise God, His praises sing,  
For God is Lord of all.

O sing in joyful strains,  
And make His glory known;  
God over all the nations reigns,  
And holy is His throne.

Our fathers' God to own  
The kings of earth draw nigh,  
For none can save but God alone,  
He is the Lord Most High.

Psalm 47

## ALL AROUND US

### *The First Three Days of Creation-Week*

Skimming through several issues of the *Church Herald*, weekly publication of the Reformed Church in America, particular attention was drawn to Youth Forum edited by Eugene Osterhaven who answers questions sent in to this department. In the June 29, 1956, issue he attempts an answer to the question: "In the first chapters of Genesis it relates what was made on each of six days. Were the days the length we think of a day today before the fourth day of creation? When was coal formed which they tell us took thousands of years?" He answers as follows:

"The two Biblical scholars whose judgment I regard most highly in this matter are Dr. A. Pieters and Dr. G. Ch. Aalders, both of whom argue that the days should not be thought of as days just like our 24-hour days. Dr. Pieters, in his *Notes on Genesis*, discusses this at length. Dr. Aalders, conservative professor of Old Testament at the Free University of Amsterdam, has a large, 550-page book in Dutch with the title (translated) *The Divine Revelation in the First Three Chapters of Genesis*. He says the days of creation bear an extraordinary character. They are not to be thought of as 24-hour days, but they are God's 'work days,' he says (p. 246ff.).

"A Southern Baptist, Bernard Ramm, has written a book in which he discusses such questions. It is *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*. In a lengthy discussion he concludes by saying that 'creation was *revealed* in six days, not *performed* in six days. We believe that the six days are *pictorial-revelatory* days, not literal days nor age-days. The days are means of communicating to man the great fact that God is Creator, and that He is Creator of all (p. 222).' I quote from this book, not because I necessarily agree with it, but because it is an attempt to wrestle with the problems and because the learned author, Director of Graduate Studies in Religion at Baylor (So. Baptist) University, has the courage to oppose some of his own church-men whom he feels prejudice the cause of Christianity by shutting their eyes to scientific fact.

"All evidence now points to this universe being many millions of years old. First-class scientists, Christian and non-Christian, inform us that this present universe probably had its beginning between three and five billion years ago. But *it had a beginning!* I shall try to say a few things about that in another article. It is interesting to note that even scientists who will have nothing to do with the Biblical story of creation admit that a creative process was at work or is now at work.

"With my training in theology I cannot come to an independent scientific judgment with respect to the probable age of the world. But I have read with interest statements by conservative churchmen (Roman Catholics, who in this

are conservative, Lutherans, Baptist *et al*). For example, in *The Banner* there was a statement by a Synodical committee of the Christian Reformed Church, two members of which were scientists, warning the Church against a dogmatic assumption that the created order is only a few thousand years old, as our fathers had held (March 13, 1953, p. 339).

"It took many, many thousands of years to form coal, petroleum, coral beds, diamonds and other treasures in the earth's crust. God could have placed all those things there just as we have found them, but His book of nature indicates that He laid them down there over a long period of time. In my mind this all adds to the glory of Him concerning whom it could be said, 'Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.' No matter how old the earth, God is infinitely older, and wiser."

I was reminded, when I read this answer, of a conversation I had with our family doctor during the time I was serving my first charge. He was a man of Reformed background. And though a doctor of medicine, was nevertheless interested in theological and biblical discussion. He proved to be more efficient, however, in the application of the science which gave him the title of Doctor of Medicine. For when we got into a discussion on the subject of the First Three Days of Creation Week, he tried desperately to cram down my throat the philosophy Dr. Osterhaven sets forth in his answer.

I said to the doctor, "You are a man of science. In your vocation you seek to apply all the laws of healing science as you learned them in the preparation of your profession. Is that right?" His answer was, "Yes, that is right." I said further to him, "I also am a man of science. I have studied the science of exegesis, the science of Scriptural interpretation. One of the fundamental laws for Scripture interpretation is that a word appearing in the same context more than once must have the same meaning unless the context definitely shows that it has another meaning. Will you accept this?" Then I showed to him that the word "day" as it appears almost a dozen times in the first chapter of Genesis must have the same significance. If he would agree with me that all the days beginning with the fourth through the sixth day were days of 24-hours, he would also have to agree that the first three days had also the same meaning. With this argument the doctor admitted he could not cope. I also pointed out to him that to maintain that the first three days of creation week were long periods of time, perhaps millions of years, was a reflection on the wisdom of God. I asked him when he had his house built if he would be so silly as to have the contractor lay its foundation ten years before he put the super-structure on it. I closed our discussion by asking him if he believed that God was more foolish than he. Would the all-wise God Who calls into being the things that are not as if they were out of His eternal counsel into time cause the green herb and grass to exist millions of years before he created the cattle and man to eat it?

Dr. Osterhaven at the conclusion of his answer reflects on

the wisdom of God. But I fail to see any wisdom or power of God in his philosophy. He states, "With my training in theology I cannot come to an independent scientific judgment with respect to the probable age of the world." This does not say much for his training in theology. It does say quite a bit for his evolutionistic conception which he evidently imbibed from the men of science.

*President Signs Clergy Plane Fares Bill.*

In the August 31, 1956, issue of the *Church Herald* we noticed a brief article under *Church News* appearing under the above title which we thought would be of special interest to our ministers.

"Washington, D.C. (RNS) — President Eisenhower signed into law a bill authorizing commercial airlines to grant reduced fares to the clergy on a 'space available' basis. The new legislation permits airlines to offer lower rates on a stand-by basis, where the clergyman will not be able to make reservations, but will have to wait at the airport to see if space is available at departure time. Although airlines will not be required to lower plane fares, most domestic carriers have indicated they will. The reduced rates will not go into effect until the Civil Aeronautics Board and airline representatives have drafted regulations for the application of the clergy air fares. Earlier, the President signed a bill making 'In God We Trust' the official motto of the United States."

For those of our ministers who wish to take advantage of the convenience and speed of air travel and who are willing to wait at the airport until all other possible passengers have had first opportunity to obtain seats, they may find it a bit more economical henceforward to use this medium of travel.

The amusing thought that came to my mind as I read this notice was the possibility that a Protestant Reformed minister might find himself in the predicament of having to wait for the ticket agent to decide which minister shall have the preference when, let us say, ten ministers of different denominations are waiting in line for a reduced fare to his destination. Perhaps it might be well for that minister of ours who wishes to take advantage of this new deal to inquire first if there are any other ministers waiting for a ride before he asks the ticket agent if his company offers a reduced rate to the clergy.

*The Free Offer of the Gospel.*

Such is the title of an article written by Dr. James Daane and appearing in the *Reformed Journal* of Sept. 1956. Dr. Daane borrows this title from a pamphlet written by the Drs. Murray and Stonehouse of the Orthodox Presbyterian Seminary who published the pamphlet under this title.

Daane gives his readers a favorable appraisal of this little treatise. He writes: "Although no such references are made (to the Three Points of 1924 — M.S.), and although the term 'common grace' and 'well-meant-offer' are not used, yet it is unmistakably clear that the position of Murray and

Stonehouse stands in the theological tradition of the First Point of 1924, namely, that the gospel is a genuine, authentic offer of salvation to all who are addressed by it."

Dr. Daane's article, which is too long to quote in its entirety, also contains the following which drew our special attention:

"If I mistake not, the authors have put the case for the general offer of the gospel more sharply, more clearly, than has been done before. They assert, for example, that 'it is absolutely and universally true that God does not delight in or desire the death of a wicked person. It is likewise absolutely and universally true that he delights in the repentance and life of that wicked person.' God is said to 'will,' to 'desire,' to 'delight in,' the salvation of everyman, including those who are reprobate. Furthermore, they urge that this divine will (desire) expressed in the gospel is 'not simply the bare perceptive will of God,' that is, is not merely the manner in which God's will and desire appear or sound to us. Rather this desire, or delight in the salvation of every man, is an expression of an actual, internal disposition of lovingkindness and favor within God himself. Furthermore, they repudiate the notion that the will to save expressed by Jesus, for example in his desire to gather the children of Jerusalem as a hen gathers her chicks, is merely the human will of Christ. Nor are they afraid to say plainly that this divine will to save all is in fact opposed to what actually happens; their idea of sovereignty does not exclude the recognition of a divine will to an end that is not in fact actualized."

If what Daane writes concerning this pamphlet is true, (we have not seen the pamphlet to check his comments), then we agree with Daane that Murray and Stonehouse stand in the theological tradition of the First Point of 1924. We would expect them to do this on the basis of other writings coming from their pen which we have read.

We want to remind Dr. Daane that to us it is neither "refreshing" nor "heartening" to see these men, or any others for that matter, departing from the Scriptural and Reformed truth that the gospel is no offer at all, nor an offer to all men, elect and reprobate alike, but a particular promise of salvation to God's elect in whom the promise declared in the gospel is realized. We grieve over their departure from the straight lines of the truth into the camp or Arminianism.

Moreover, we emphatically deny that this delight or desire of God to save all men is established by Christ when he expressed his desire to gather the children of Jerusalem as a hen gathers her chicks. That Christ is both divine and human does not make that expression of Christ to be divine. In fact, we maintain that if Daane and the men of the O. P. Seminary maintain that Christ spoke these words according to his divine nature, they make Christ to be in conflict with the eternal and divine purpose of predestination. No Reformed man would ever explain the text of Matt. 23:37 that way. To take the position of these men and be consistent, they must deny the will of God's decrees. M.S.