



REFORMED

— P A V I L I O N —

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 11

JUNE 22, 2024

*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;
he shall set me up upon a rock.*

—Psalm 27:5

CONTENTS

3 MEDITATION
Manna

4 EDITORIAL
I Will Come Unto Thee Quickly

9 HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES
Article 63: The New King and His Kingdom (continued)



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MEDITATION

Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you...and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.

—Exodus 16:4a, 13b–15

Manna

Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you!

Yes! Bread from heaven for our hungry souls! Bread from heaven to taste and see that God is good! Bread from heaven to nourish us unto everlasting life! How we want to fly right to Psalm 78 and John 6 and I Corinthians 10 to see the reality of this bread and be satisfied with the gospel of Jesus Christ!

But let us stand a moment in the wilderness with Israel to gather up this bread from heaven. It came with the droplets of dew overnight and was left behind each morning (Ex. 16:14). It was called *manna*, which means *What is it?* because the people did not know what it was the first time they saw it (v. 15). It was as small as the hoarfrost on the ground (v. 14). It was round and white, like a coriander seed (v. 31) or like tiny pearls (translated “bdellium” in Num. 11:7). Its taste was delicious and refreshing, like fresh oil (Num. 11:8) or like wafers made with honey (Ex. 16:31). It was versatile and could be eaten raw (Ex. 16:31) or ground into flour and baked in pans as cakes (Num. 11:8) or seethed in pots and eaten boiled (Ex. 16:23). The children of Israel gathered it in the cool of the morning, and what was left on the ground melted in the sun (v. 21). They gathered one jar per person per day (v. 16). On the sixth day they gathered enough for the sabbath, for no manna was given then (v. 26). If manna was left overnight in their jars during the first six days of the week, it would breed worms and stink (v. 20), but not when their double portion was left overnight to the sabbath day

(v. 24). The children of Israel received manna all forty years of their wilderness wanderings, until they entered the land of Canaan (v. 35). There was no manna given before in the history of the world or since, for it was a miracle, as Jehovah rained upon them bread from heaven (v. 4).

Enough. Let us fly now to the meaning of manna and be filled. Manna is Jesus Christ! The bread from heaven is Jesus Christ! This was the meaning of manna, for the earthly manna was only a picture of the true heavenly bread. This is why God called manna “bread from heaven” (Ex. 16:4) and “the corn of heaven” (Ps. 78:24) and “angels’ food” (v. 25) and “spiritual meat” (I Cor. 10:3).

Here is the bread from heaven: “I am the bread of life.” And again: “This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.” And again: “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:35, 50, 54).

How do we eat this heavenly bread? By faith. “He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:35).

How do we believe in him? By grace. “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44).

Jesus and his salvation rained from heaven for you! Let us eat him by grace through faith and be filled!

—AL

I Will Come Unto Thee Quickly

These past weeks the fearsome judgment of God fell upon Remnant Reformed Church’s grandmother, the Christian Reformed Church (CRC), and Remnant’s mother, the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC). God visited the CRC and PRC at their annual synods and poured the brimstone of his wrath upon them. God’s judgment upon the CRC and PRC at their synods is the fulfillment of Jesus’ word to apostatizing churches: “I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent” (Rev. 2:5). The CRC has not repented of her dogma of common grace. The PRC have not repented of their dogma of conditional covenant experience. In fulfillment of his word regarding apostasy, the Lord came to the Christian Reformed and Protestant Reformed synods of 2024 and cursed them.

Christian Reformed Church

God’s judgment upon the CRC at its 2024 synod was this decision:

Christian Reformed churches that are LGBTQ-affirming must repent or leave, the denomination has decided.¹

But how is that God’s judgment? It looks like a victory for the truth! In fact, the CRC may well suffer the hatred and opposition of the perverse world for its decision. The denomination will undoubtedly suffer the loss of membership for its decision. Has not the CRC shown true discipleship by denying itself and taking up the suffering of Christ?

Nevertheless, synod’s decision was not a victory for the truth but the judgment of God upon the denomination. For nestled in the heart of synod’s decision was the old 1973 CRC report—reaffirmed at Synod 2022 and acted on by Synod 2024—that only sodomite activity is sin, but sodomite attraction is not sin.

In 2022, Synod voted to uphold its position that same-sex relationships are sinful, but having attractions to the same sex is not in itself sinful. The denomination voted to make its stance a confessional issue, or a core belief. This meant office-bearers—including pastors, deacons and elders—and CRC school faculty must share the belief that LGBTQ+ relationships are sinful, and cannot be in same-sex relationships themselves.²

Synod 2024 will undoubtedly generate a lot of noise in the CRC and in society at large about condemning sodomite *relationships*. But God judged the Christian Reformed denomination by seeing to it that the CRC quietly continues to excuse the monstrous iniquity of sodomite *attraction*.

The truth of the matter is that even sodomite attraction is sin. Not only are sinful activities sin, but also sinful desires are sin. This is the Reformed doctrine of total depravity.

We believe that, through the disobedience of Adam, original sin is extended to all mankind; which is a corruption of the whole nature and an hereditary disease,

¹ Madalyn Buursma, “Churches Prepare to Leave CRC Following LGBTQ+ Decision,” June 20, 2024, <https://www.woodtv.com/news/grand-rapids/churches-prepare-to-leave-crc-following-lgbtq-decision>.

² Buursma, “Churches Prepare to Leave CRC Following LGBTQ+ Decision.” See also *CRC Acts of Synod 1973*, 616, available at https://library.calvin.edu/ld.php?content_id=71779694: “[Homosexuality] is the result of sin in the world as in blindness, lameness, and retardation. But as the victims of these consequences in a broken world are not personally responsible for their handicapped conditions, neither is the homosexual responsible for his disordered sex orientation, his sexual handicap, insofar as it was not of his choice and decision. To lay blame on the homosexual for his condition can be as cruel and unjust as to blame the cripple for his deformation.”

wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mother's womb, and which produceth in man all sorts of sin, being in him as a root thereof, and therefore is so vile and abominable in the sight of God that it is sufficient to condemn all mankind. Nor is it by any means abolished or done away by baptism, since sin always issues forth from this woeful source, as water from a fountain. (Belgic Confession 15)

Q. 5. Canst thou keep all these things [the requirements of the law] perfectly?

A. In no wise; for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor. (Lord's Day 2)

But in 1924 the CRC denied the doctrine of total depravity by its dogma of common grace. According to the CRC, God in his common grace for the reprobate restrains sin in the hearts of the reprobate by his Spirit, so that they are truly able to perform good works. One hundred years later, God continues to judge the CRC's denial of total depravity by seeing to it that its synod excuses sodomite attraction. God's judgment is that the CRC may not affirm total depravity. That is, God will not allow the CRC to affirm total depravity. God's judgment is that the CRC must instead affirm sodomite attraction as being morally neutral.

Why is the denial of total depravity such a fearsome judgment of God? Because if a man's corrupt nature is not sin for that man, then that man does not need his corrupt nature to be forgiven! Consider what the CRC says to those poor, ashamed sinners who find some kind of sodomite attraction in their hearts. The CRC says, "It's not your fault! It's just chemicals. It's just society. It's just psychology. It's just like having a crippled leg—certainly not your fault!" With such a diagnosis there will never be the only prescription in all the world that can bring relief: Jesus Christ and his righteousness! Excuses will not unburden the sinner of his guilt for his sinful nature; only the gospel will

bring him peace. Here is relief for the man whose depraved nature produces sodomite attraction in him: "Notwithstanding, [man's original sin] is not imputed to the children of God unto condemnation, but by His grace and mercy is forgiven them" (Belgic Confession 15). How refreshing to the parched sinner is the mercy of God in Christ!

In judgment God will not allow the CRC to affirm total depravity. In judgment God requires the denomination to continue making excuses for sinful desires. Thus there is no Christ to take away the members' guilt for their corruption. Fearsome judgment, indeed!

Protestant Reformed Churches

God's judgment upon the PRC at their 2024 synod was this decision:

That synod not sustain the appeal of Grandville PRC consistory regarding Statement #3 ("Hence, I conclude, that sanctification and its effects, are by no means to be slighted, when we treat of assuring the soul as to its justification") and make the judgment that: a) this statement, although not a clear statement of orthodoxy, is not erroneous, and b) Rev. Koole's explanation and use of the statement were not in conflict with Scripture, the confessions, and Synod 2018.³

Synod's decision is a denial of justification by faith alone. One can test this very simply by seeing if the statement that synod approved allows for anything other than faith for justification. After all, the doctrine of justification by faith *alone* is that all the good works of man are entirely *excluded* from that man's justification. A man is righteous before God only because Christ is righteous. A man knows that he is righteous before God in Christ only by faith. A man is sure that he is righteous before God in Christ only by faith. A man's good works do not enter into any aspect of that man's justification. A man's good works do not justify him—he is justified by faith alone. A man's good works do not help him to

³ Synod 2024 Committee 3 advice, II.D.

know his justification—he is justified by faith alone. A man’s good works do not assure him of his justification—he is justified by faith alone. In the language of scripture, “a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom. 3:28). In the language of the confessions, good works “are of no account towards our justification” (Belgic Confession 24).

Now take that truth of justification by faith alone and apply it to synod’s approved statement of justification. The statement allows “sanctification and its effects” to “[assure] the soul as to its justification.” Not only does the statement allow good works (the “effects” of sanctification) to assure the soul of its justification, but the statement will not suffer good works “to be slighted” in this assurance of justification. Good works must have their place in a man’s assurance of his justification.

The synod went on to qualify, contradict, and confuse what that is supposed to mean. But when all the qualifying is finished, this theology still stands: in some sense, a man’s good works assure that man of his justification. This is not the Reformed doctrine of justification by faith *alone*, which is the heart of the gospel. Rather, this is the false church’s false gospel of justification by faith *and* works.

Synod’s decision was God’s judgment upon the PRC. For years now the PRC have been teaching a doctrine of conditional covenant experience. When men and women objected, they were expelled from the PRC. When other men publicly insisted on conditional covenant experience, they were protected by the PRC. Consider Reverend Koole, for example, who as much as any other man has led the PRC into conditional theology in his tireless quest against antinomian bogeymen. He is still a minister in good standing, enjoying every protection that the denomination has to offer one of its own. And even when the denomination occasionally finds the will to object to something that Reverend Koole has said, the farthest thing from

the denomination’s mind is to expel Reverend Koole as an accursed heretic.

But God judges the PRC. God came to Synod 2024 and saw to it that the denomination would affirm justification by faith and works. In his judgment God would not permit the PRC to have justification by faith alone. In his judgment God would not permit the members of the PRC to have assurance of their justification by faith alone. God judged the PRC by seeing to it that their assurance of justification is by faith and works.

God even made it strikingly clear that he was judging the PRC by their decision, because synod’s decision to approve the heretical statement about justification was a noticeable departure from the line of thought that synod had been pursuing. When it got to the statement about justification, synod had just finished condemning other similar statements as “erroneous.” For example, synod condemned as erroneous this: “Scripture teaches that something must be done that we may be saved.” And synod condemned as erroneous this:

We must accurately distinguish between a right to life and the possession of life. The former must be assigned to the obedience of Christ, that all the values of our holiness may be entirely excluded. But certainly, our works, or rather these, which the Spirit of Christ worketh in us, and by us, contribute something to the latter.⁴

Synod was on a roll! It would have been the easiest thing in the world for synod to continue that line of thought and condemn the statement on justification as erroneous. Especially since synod had to caution itself about using the statement: “While this statement is not necessarily in error, we ought to be cautious about how we use it.”⁵ And especially since several delegates to synod argued against the theology of the statement during the deliberations. The direction that synod was apparently going demanded that

⁴ Synod 2024 Committee 3 advice, II.B and C.

⁵ Synod 2024 Committee 3 advice, II.D.1.d.

synod condemn justification by faith and works and affirm justification by faith alone.

But God came to synod and judged. And God saw to it that the PRC would not have justification by faith alone. God saw to it that the PRC instead would affirm justification by faith and works as “not erroneous.”

Why is the denial of justification by faith alone such a fearsome judgment of God? Because there is no justification by works. “By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal. 2:16). And because justification by man’s works alongside Christ’s work is gross blasphemy against Christ. “For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (v. 21).

Consider what the PRC say to the miserable sinner who is appalled at his own flesh and who finds even his best works to be riddled with selfishness and laziness and indifference: “But your works are not to be slighted for the assurance of your justification! You cannot be sure that you personally are righteous before God until you have worked!” With that kind of theology, all one’s subsequent talk about Christ and his righteousness will be utterly vain. What assurance can a man find with his eyes upon his polluted works?

Moreover, though we do good works, we do not found our salvation upon them; for we can do no work but what is polluted by our flesh, and also punishable; and although we could perform such works, still the remembrance of one sin is sufficient to make God reject them. Thus, then, we would always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences continually vexed, if they relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior. (Belgic Confession 24)

But in Christ alone, known by faith alone, there is perfect happiness and peace.

And therefore we always hold fast this foundation, ascribing all the glory to God, humbling ourselves before Him,

and acknowledging ourselves to be such as we really are, without presuming to trust in any thing in ourselves, or in any merit of ours, relying and resting upon the obedience of Christ crucified alone, which becomes ours when we believe in Him. This is sufficient to cover all our iniquities, and to give us confidence in approaching to God; freeing the conscience of fear, terror, and dread, without following the example of our first father, Adam, who, trembling, attempted to cover himself with fig leaves. And, verily, if we should appear before God, relying on ourselves or on any other creature, though ever so little, we should, alas! be consumed. And therefore every one must pray with David: *O Lord, enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.* (Belgic Confession 23)

In judgment God will not allow the PRC to affirm justification by faith alone. In judgment God requires the denomination to continue inserting man’s works into man’s assurance of his justification. Thus Christ is displaced, and there can be no assurance of justification, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified (Gal. 2:16). Fearsome judgment indeed!

Reflections on God’s Judgment

Intriguingly, God’s judgment upon the CRC and the PRC is the very decisions of their 2024 synods. That is, God not only judges a church *after* the church makes her decisions, but God also judges a church by the decisions of the church—and by the men who make those decisions.

So it was in the days of the prophet Jeremiah, who was persecuted by Pashur the priest. Pashur’s name meant *prosperity all around*. Jeremiah informed Pashur that God did not call him by the name Pashur but by the name Magormissabib—*fear all around* (Jer. 20:1–6). This means that God had sent Pashur to Jerusalem as God’s judgment upon Jerusalem. Pashur himself was the brimstone that God rained upon apostate Jerusalem. Pashur himself was the *fear all around*

that God poured out upon unbelieving Judah. God was not judging Jerusalem *because of* Pashur, but God was judging Jerusalem *by* Pashur.

To put that in terms of the PRC today, for example, God will not judge the PRC *because of* Reverend Koole and his theology; rather, Reverend Koole *is* God's judgment upon the PRC, and Reverend Koole's theology *is* God's judgment on the PRC. Reverend Koole is the fire and Reverend Koole's theology is the brimstone that God rains down upon an apostate denomination.

Let those in apostate denominations who console themselves that it is not yet so bad take note that God's judgment is here now. The brimstone is falling.

Also intriguing is the fact that God's judgment upon the CRC and PRC both have the appearance of a victory for the truth. The CRC told churches that affirm perversion to repent or leave! The PRC condemned some heretical statements as erroneous! But the appearance of victory is only an appearance. The lie always clothes itself with the truth. Evil always parades itself under the banner of good. There are always apostles who are really false apostles; workers who are really deceitful workers; angels of light who are really Satan; ministers of righteousness who are really the devil's servants; gospels that are really another gospel; and Christs who are really another Jesus (see II Cor. 11:1–15).

But the lie can be discerned, all of its trappings of truth notwithstanding. The word of God is clear, and its light is bright. What did the CRC send its members home with after synod? Such a clear message that even the secular local news could discern it: "same-sex relationships are sinful, but having attractions to the same sex is not in itself sinful. The denomination voted to make its stance a confessional issue, or a core belief."⁶

And what did the PRC send their members home with after synod? Such a clear message that even the Protestant Reformed synod had to caution itself against its own decision:

"sanctification and its effects, are by no means to be slighted, when we treat of assuring the soul as to its justification."⁷

The strains of truth that surrounded those decisions are only the devil's lullaby. The lullaby soothes the suspicious back to sleep. The lullaby is meant to rock the cradle of those who rock the boat. Let those who are getting drowsy take note that when the lights are put out and everyone is snugly tucked back into bed, judgment comes in like a thief.

Where To From Here?

It is time to go.

Members of the CRC who have long lived with the lie of common grace, it is time to go. Members of the PRC who are vexed by the loss of the gospel, it is time to go. I write to you as one who was ensnared in the lie myself and who was graciously delivered. I could find sermons and writings of mine—less than a decade old—that sound too much like the Protestant Reformed synod. And if I now write as if the PRC are full of heretics, then know that I was the arch-heretic and am capable of being so again. I am a brand plucked out of the fire, for God was gracious to me. My fellow brands, it is not too late. It is time to go.

This is the word of God: "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof? O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem" (Jer. 5:20–6:1).

This is the word of God: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

Leaving one's denomination is very difficult. Impossible, really. Especially when the denomination is one's life. But I can tell you that there is nothing better than losing one's life for Christ's sake and the gospel's. There is nothing left in the world for you, but the whole kingdom of

⁶ Buursma, "Churches Prepare to Leave CRC Following LGBTQ+ Decision."

⁷ Synod 2024 Committee 3 advice, II.D.

heaven is yours. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

For the apostate church, Jesus' announcement that he comes quickly is sobering and terrifying. "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place"! (Rev. 2:5). But for the true church of Jesus Christ,

Jesus' announcement that he comes quickly is welcome and lovely. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (v. 7).

—AL

HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES

The Banner

January 29, 1920

(p. 70)

Our Doctrine by Rev. H. Hoeksema

Article LXIII. The New King and His Kingdom (continued)

We are discussing the relation between the Father and the Son.

The church, as we found, always expressed this relation by saying that the Father from eternity to eternity generates the Son, and that by that eternal act the Son is generated.

We also found that this doctrine of eternal generation was no human philosophy but truth of God revealed in the Scriptures. A few passages we examined. On the one hand Scripture teaches that the Son is begotten of the Father, that from the Father He receives His life; on the other hand, however, the Son claims equality with the Father, oneness in essence, is as eternal as the Father. And the apparent anomaly thus created finds its most adequate expression in the phrase "eternal generation."

We must still investigate a few passages from Scripture that throw light on the particular place and significance of the second person in the Holy Trinity, specifically in relation to the Father.

Pregnant with significance from this point of view is first of all John 1:1, where we find the well-known words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word

was God." Three elements in the text especially draw our attention. In the first place, the fact that the only begotten Son of God, who is in the bosom of the Father (see vss. 14, 16) is here called "the Word." In the second place, that this Word is being presented as being from eternity "with" God. And in the third place, that this Word, being "with" God from all eternity, was God Himself. Correctly, interpreters have conceived a striking similarity between the prologue of John's gospel, especially the first verse, and the beginning of the book of Genesis. In the Gospel it is: "In the beginning was the Word." In Gen. 1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In the gospel we read, vs. 3, "All things were made by him: and without him was not anything made that was made." In the first chapter of Genesis we have the account of the creation of all things by the Word of God's omnipotence. There is hardly any room for doubt but that this similarity between the first verse of Scripture and the first verse of the gospel according to St. John is intentional. The beginning of which John speaks is the same as the beginning referred to in Gen. 1:1. It is not the beginning of the gospel age, as some who unscrupulously would distort Scripture have it. But

it is the beginning of time and of all things that are made. And if this is established, as may also be inferred from the fact that in vs. 3 the apostle makes mention of creation, it is at the same time certain that the subject about whom the apostle is writing in the first verse, the Word, is eternal. For of Him he says that in the beginning He was. He was not made at the beginning. He was not born at the beginning. But he was. Before the beginning of things, therefore, this Word existed. When all things still had to be made, this wonderful Word was. The Word of God, subject of the prologue of the gospel according to St. John, is eternal and from everlasting.

He is here called the Word, the Logos. Now this word according to the original may in the first place mean "Reason." In Greek philosophical writings it frequently occurs in that sense. And those who would deny the personal existence of this Logos would maintain that also in this text it has the same meaning. The meaning then would be: "In the beginning was Reason, and Reason was with God, and Reason was divine." The reference, then, is simply to the wisdom and thought of [God. And this explanation] would deny the personal existence of this Son.¹ But this is untenable. The personal character of the subject of whom John is writing in this passage is plain from the entire prologue. The Logos is not an abstract principle, not some impersonal power, but the person of the Son, the only begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father. Neither must the term be translated as "reason," but the translation as we find it in our own versions must be maintained: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The word in general is the outward manifestation of thought and reason. It is the very embodiment of thought. In the word we express what lives in our hearts and minds. It is the outward revelation of our inmost life. And thus the Son of God is the Word in relation to the Father, the Word in relation to the entire Godhead. What the word is in relation to reason, the Son is in

relation to God. He is the very manifestation of the inmost life of God, God revealed and objectified. And this is to be understood in the most perfect and absolute sense of the word. With us a word is always imperfect. In the first place, we shall never succeed to express our inmost being in a single word. We must employ a multitude of words to express a single thought. In the second place, this multitude of words is after all a very imperfect vehicle to convey our thought. It is imperfect. It does not perfectly express what lives within us. We must often struggle to be concise and exact, not to be misunderstood. And, therefore, a word with us is very imperfect, a very relative manifestation of what lives within us. But the Son of God, the personal Word, is the perfect expression of God. In Him the manifestation of the Godhead is absolute. He reveals to perfection the fullness of God's life. He is the perfect Word of God.

That this is the meaning will be all the more evident if we take this truth in connection with the doctrine of eternal generation. The latter implies that God the Father from eternity to eternity, with a continuous, perfect, absolute act, pours out the fullness of His divine life into the Son. He gives the Son to have life in Himself. The eternal result of this act of generation is that the Son is the full and absolute manifestation of the Father. And, therefore, the Father is God Revealing, the Son is God Revealed. God as Father expresses himself in God as Son. By an act of eternal generation, God as Father from all eternity to all eternity reveals, manifests, objectifies Himself in God as Son. The Son is the expression of God as Father. He is, therefore, the Word. It is in complete harmony with this personal place and significance of the Son in relation to the Father, when He says in John 5:19, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." Even as in His personal existence the Son is the manifestation, the perfect revelation of

¹ Something appears to have been left out of the original, which reads: "The reference, then, is simply to the wisdom and thought of would deny the personal existence of this Son." The editor added the words in brackets as his best attempt to supply the missing words.

God the Father, so also in His life and action the Son copies the Father. He does those things he sees the Father do.

Rich, too, is the second clause of this significant text: “and the Word was with God.” In our translation much of the beauty and significance of the original expression is lost. No other language than the Greek, perhaps, could so exactly and beautifully express the relation between the Father and the Son. To express somewhat the meaning of this clause, we could probably best paraphrase it and say: “and the constant tendency of the Word, the direction of His whole being, is toward God.” In the beginning was the Word. And that Word is the expression of the Father, the manifestation of the Godhead, God revealed, objectified. But now this Word, generated by the Father, turns Himself with all His being, with the whole tendency of His existence, toward the Father. He is not merely the manifestation of God to other beings outside of God. But He is the Word within the Holy Trinity. He is the revelation of God in the first place to God Himself.

In itself, the fact that the Son is generated by the Father, that He is the Word, the very expression of God’s being, might probably make us think exactly the opposite. We might think that this Son proceeds from the Father, continually turns in a direction away from Him. Yet this is not the case. Though the Son is generated by the Father, yet the direction, the tendency of this Son’s being is not away from God but toward Him. The Son is facing the Father. Being in Himself the manifestation of God, he turns with

personal freedom and love continually toward the Father. The Word was with God.

How this must be conceived is a question of later date, when we discuss the relation of the Spirit to both the Father and the Son. Now we must first of all conclude that the relation between the Father and the Son is such that from eternity to eternity the Son as the Word, the full and perfect manifestation of God the Father, constantly turns Himself toward the Father.

The Father reveals Himself in the Son.

The Son, with personal freedom and friendship, turns Himself within the Holy Trinity toward the Father, reveals God to God.

God as Father knows and loves Himself in God as Son. God the Son knows and loves the Father in Himself.

And in connection with it all we must never forget that Father and Son are not two Gods, but two persons, each possessing the whole Godhead. This we have discussed before. But this must be emphasized in this connection. Never must we separate the Father and the Son. Never may we for a moment receive the impression that these two persons are two gods. And for that reason John at the very beginning of his gospel emphasizes this same truth when he says: “and the Word was God.”

The Word is the expression of the Godhead. The manifestation of God to God.

Yet, that same Word is God. One in essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit!

—Holland, Mich.

