



REFORMED

— P A V I L I O N —

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 20

AUGUST 23, 2025

*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 The Ark of the Covenant |
|---|---------------------------------------|

| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 4 | EDITORIAL Translation Notes |
|---|--------------------------------|

| | |
|---|---|
| | THE CANONS OF DORDT |
| 9 | -Translation Comparison: Heads 3–4 -Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine: Of the Corruption of Man, and of His Conversion to God and the Manner Thereof |

| | |
|----|--|
| 21 | HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S BANNER ARTICLES Article 124: The New King and His Kingdom: Circumcision (continued) |
|----|--|



Editor: Rev. Andrew Lanning
From the Ramparts Editor: Dewey Engelsma

See reformedpavilion.com for all contact and subscription information.

And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.

—Exodus 25:10–16 (See also 37:1–5.)

The Ark of the Covenant

In the mountain God showed Moses his tabernacle, from which Moses and the people would construct the earthly as figures of the heavenly. There were seven distinct pieces of furniture in the tabernacle. Seven is a fitting number for the tent of God's covenant dwelling with Israel, for seven is the number of God's covenant.

The first piece of furniture, which was to be placed in the most holy place in the tabernacle, was the ark of the covenant. The word *ark* means *box*. The ark of the covenant would be a rectangular box of fine wood overlaid with gold. It would be three feet and nine inches long by two feet and three inches wide by two feet and three inches tall. On the top rim of the ark would be a golden border. This border added to the beauty of the ark as a kind of golden crown or wreath. This golden border would also support and hold the lid of the ark—the mercy seat—which was its own distinct piece of furniture. In the box of the ark would be placed the two stone tables of God's covenant law that he would give (Ex. 25:16; Deut. 10:1–5). For this reason the ark was often called “the ark of the testimony” (Ex. 25:22) and “the ark of the covenant of the LORD” (Num. 10:33).

No man was allowed to touch the ark (Num. 4:15) or to look inside it (I Sam. 6:19). The penalty for either was death. Therefore, the ark included golden sockets, through which ran gilded poles. These poles were never removed from the ark but remained attached so that the Levites who carried the ark through the wilderness could bear the poles without touching the ark.

The people of Israel in the wilderness saw the ark only once. On the day that the tabernacle was reared for the first time, the ark of the covenant was brought into the most holy place. The veil of the most holy place was then hung, hiding the ark from view (Ex. 40:21). Whenever the children of Israel broke camp, the veil of the most holy place would be laid over the ark to conceal it (Num. 4:5).

The ark was a very special piece of furniture in the tabernacle. The ark was God's throne in the midst of Israel. When John described God's throne in heaven, from which proceed lightnings and thunderings and voices (Rev. 4:5), he called that heavenly throne “the ark of his testament” (11:19). The meaning of the ark was that God dwelled enthroned in the midst of Israel as her protecting, conquering, victorious king. Whenever the children of Israel marched,

the ark went before them as the symbol of God's royal power. "And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee" (Num. 10:35). Whenever the children of Israel stopped marching, the ark remained among them as the symbol of God's royal presence with his people. "And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel" (v. 36). God, from the ark, led Israel through the wilderness. God, from the ark, led Israel through the Jordan River into Canaan (Josh. 3:11).

So today, God goes before his church through the wilderness of this life as her victorious king. Seated at God's right hand upon his throne is our savior, Jesus Christ (Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:33). The name written on his vesture and on his thigh is KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:16). By his blood and gospel he conquers us unto himself (Rev. 6:2) and conquers our foes beneath us (Rom. 8:37), finally leading us through Jordan into Father's house (John 14:3), there to worship at God's throne forever (Rev. 4:10–11).

—AL

EDITORIAL

Translation Notes

Appearing elsewhere in this issue of *Reformed Pavilion* is a corrected English translation of heads 3–4 of the Canons of Dordt. The current English translation of these heads that many of our readers use has some serious errors. Let us spend a little time in this editorial discussing some of the significant corrections that are necessary.

The current English translation that is in use among us was first published in 1840 by the Reformed Dutch Church in America, which today is known as the Reformed Church in America (RCA). The 1840 translation has been the standard English translation in Reformed churches in America and in the world ever since. The Christian Reformed Church (CRC—formed in 1857) originally used it, although the CRC has since made new translations. The Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC—formed in 1925) and her sisters in Singapore, Northern Ireland, and the Philippines still use it. Remnant Reformed Church (formed in 2023) still uses it.

Omissions

From the beginning in 1840, the RCA's English translation of the Canons was defective. Oh, the 1840 translation is sound in many places and

often masterfully renders the Latin into accurate and beautiful English. However, the defects are stark. For one thing, the 1840 translation entirely omitted the rejection of errors section in each head. To this day the RCA does not hold the rejection of errors as its official confession, even though the rejection of errors was part of the Synod of Dordt's official judgment against Arminianism. The other English-speaking Reformed denominations do include the rejection of errors as part of their official confession through an English translation of those sections that was made later.

Another defect of the 1840 translation is that it accidentally omitted certain phrases and sentences. At least, the undersigned assumes that these omissions were unintentional. For example, in Canons 3–4.2 the 1840 translation omits *justo Dei judicio*—"by the righteous judgment of God." For another example, in article 10 the 1840 translation omits *ita eosdem in tempore efficaciter vocat*—"so he in time efficaciously calls the same."

It is very easy to unintentionally omit phrases when making a translation. Even in some otherwise accurate modern English translations of the Canons, translators have left out entire

sentences. For example, W. Robert Godfrey's new translation in 2019 omits from Canons 3–4.12 the phrase *Atque tum voluntas jam renovata, non tantum agitur et movetur a Deo, sed a Deo acta, agit et ipsa*—"Whereupon the will, now renewed, is not only acted upon and moved by God, but by the act of God also acts itself."¹

The reality that good translators in the past have unintentionally omitted portions of the confession is enough to cause many sleepless nights for anyone who would undertake translation work on the Canons today. Nevertheless, it is high time that these omissions in our 1840 translation be corrected, some 185 years later.

Homer Hoeksema

It was Homer Hoeksema's judgment already in 1980 that the English translation of heads 3–4 needed significant revision. While some articles needed only a little work, Hoeksema went so far in other articles as to scrap the present translation and to retranslate the entire article from scratch. Hoeksema suggested at least minor changes to all seventeen articles of heads 3–4. Here is a sampling of Hoeksema's comments concerning the English translation that we have received and that is in current use among us.

Regarding article 1: "The accuracy and clarity of the English translation can be improved, although in general the translation gives the meaning of the original."²

Regarding article 2: "The above translation is far from literal and it leaves out the very important phrase 'by the righteous judgment of God.' This omission is a serious mistake" (260).

Regarding article 3: "Several departures from the original text require correction" (266).

Regarding article 4: "Even though nothing in the English translation essentially changes the meaning of the fathers, yet

there are certain fine distinctions lost in this translation that can be considered as inaccuracies" (270).

Regarding article 5: "This English translation does not do justice to the original Latin, which in the first sentence introduces a comparison that is important for understanding this article" (280).

Regarding article 8: "The above translation of this article is far from accurate. My translation with the corrections in italics is as follows" (293).

Regarding article 10: "This translation considerably softens the thought of the first part of the article" (307).

Regarding article 13: "The above translation is incorrect because it makes an adversative relationship between the two realities stated in this article. The Latin *interim* does not do this" (323).

Regarding article 14: "This translation takes liberties with the Latin original" (327).

Regarding article 15: "Much of this translation is a paraphrase of the thought of the original rather than a translation. The paraphrase hides the original thought instead of elucidating it. Below is my translation of the article" (331).

Regarding article 16: "This translation has several errors, some of which are important. My translation is the following" (339).

Regarding article 17: "Several corrections should be made to this translation" (348).

Homer Hoeksema's comments helped the undersigned tremendously. Not only are his proposed revisions of the English translation very useful, but also his basic perspective that our English translation needs improvement is

¹ W. Robert Godfrey, *Saving the Reformation: The Pastoral Theology of the Canons of Dort* (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2019), 57.

² Homer C. Hoeksema, *The Voice of Our Fathers: An Exposition of the Canons of Dordrecht*, 2nd ed. (Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2013), 252. Page numbers for subsequent quotations from this book are given in text.

encouraging. Hopefully the reader will profit from the comments quoted above as well, especially as the reader encounters some of the more extensive changes in some of the articles.

In most instances the changes in the corrected English translation of heads 3-4 that we present here will most likely be unobjectionable. But there are two places where this corrected English translation might be challenged. First, in a different translation for the word *offer* in article 9. Second, in the retranslation of the material having to do with the means of grace in article 17. Let us take a moment to look at each in turn.

Is Christ “Offered” in the Gospel?

Article 9 has long been one of the most misunderstood articles in the entire Canons. The majority opinion in the Reformed church world is that article 9 teaches the doctrine known as the well-meant offer of the gospel. The well-meant offer of the gospel holds that God offers Jesus Christ and his salvation to everyone who hears the preaching of the gospel, with the sincere desire that every hearer would accept his offer and be saved. The doctrine of the well-meant offer of the gospel makes no distinction between the elect and the reprobate as far as God’s purpose is concerned. In the preaching of the gospel, God truly wills, purposes, desires, hopes, and longs that every single hearer, elect and reprobate alike, will accept his offer and be saved. The term *well-meant offer of the gospel* accurately captures the doctrine.

The error of the well-meant offer of the gospel is that it denies the sovereignty of God in the preaching of the gospel. God might have been sovereign in eternity, when he predestinated all men. God might have been sovereign at the cross, when he laid the sins of his people upon Christ. But God is not sovereign in the preaching of the gospel. The most that God can do is make a well-meaning offer to his hearers and plead with them with all his powers of persuasion. But in the end whether God’s hearers are saved or not depends upon the hearers, who must accept

the Jesus that God so earnestly—but ultimately so helplessly—tries to give to them.

The well-meant offer of the gospel is not good news but bad news for man. If God makes the same offer to all men with the same desire for all men, then it is up to the poor sinner to distinguish himself from the rest of mankind by accepting God’s offer. The sinner who has any sense of his own emptiness must despair, for if there is one thing that he cannot do, it is distinguish himself unto salvation. He knows that he is ungodly, the chief sinner, unworthy, and unable to do any one thing that needs to be done in order to be saved.

The truth of the preaching of the gospel is that God is sovereign, and he always powerfully accomplishes his purpose with the preaching. He causes his gospel to be preached to many, elect and reprobate alike. And God proclaims in the hearing of all, elect and reprobate alike, that all who come to Jesus Christ and believe in him shall be saved. But God’s purpose with that preaching is never a well-meaning desire to save all who hear. God’s purpose with the preaching of the gospel is that the elect are saved by it and that the reprobate are damned by it. The preaching of the gospel is always a sweet savor to God, whether it is a savor of life unto life in those who are saved or a savor of death unto death in those who perish (II Cor. 2:15–16). When the gospel is preached, both salvation and damnation are a sweet savor to God because God’s purpose with the preaching is to save one man and condemn the other. He never hopes that all men will be saved by the preaching, and he never offers salvation to all men in the preaching. God’s promise is always particular. The promise is never for all but only ever for those who hunger, who thirst, who come, who believe, who mourn, who are poor in spirit, who are sinners—that is, for the elect.

The truth of the preaching of the gospel is the most refreshing good news for man. Man, who is a sinner, cannot save himself. But God, who is sovereign, can and does save man. The gospel does not announce to man some condition

that man must fulfill in order to be saved but announces what God has done to save him. The sinner can hope and finally have relief because his salvation is of God and not of man.

In the preaching of the gospel, God is sovereign, and God is God. In the preaching of the gospel, God's people find rest and peace outside of themselves in Christ.

But defenders of the well-meant offer of the gospel claim that their doctrine is Reformed, and they appeal to the word *offer* in article 9:

It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of Christ offered therein, nor of God, who calls men by the gospel and confers upon them various gifts, that those who are called by the ministry of the word refuse to come and be converted.

The presence of that one word *offer* is supposed to establish the whole confusing and corrupt doctrine that is known as the well-meant offer of the gospel.

Our present English translation of article 9 works with the Latin word *oblato*, which is from the root word *offero* (or *obfero*). The problem with translating the Latin word *offero* with the English word *offer* is that today the English *offer* carries different connotations than the Latin *offero*. They look the same, and they sound the same, but they do not mean exactly the same thing. To most English speakers the word *offer* carries the idea of contingency and conditions. In an offer the one who is offering makes something available to the one who is receiving, contingent upon certain conditions being met. The ultimate success of the offer lies in the choice of the one who is receiving, by which choice he fulfills the conditions. Applied to the well-meant offer of the gospel, God offers Jesus to man upon the condition of man's accepting God's offer. The whole success of the offer lies with man, who must make the right choice in order to receive the salvation that God wants him to have.

However, the Latin word *offero* does not carry the idea of contingency or conditions.

The main meaning of *offero* is *to bring forth*, in the sense of *to present*, *to exhibit*, *to show*, *to display*. Even when the Latin can be translated by the English *to offer* or *to proffer*, the idea is not that of conditions but that of God's setting Jesus forth before men as the only savior from sin and death. But at no time in God's setting forth of Jesus does he hope and wish and long for all men to accept Jesus, with their salvation contingent upon their accepting God's offer.

In light of the baggage that has been loaded into the English word *offer*, the corrected English translation that appears in this magazine translates the Latin word *oblato* (from *offero*) by the English *set forth*. This corrected English translation not only avoids the baggage of the false doctrine of the well-meant offer of the gospel, but it is also more accurate. Most, if not all, standard Latin dictionaries give *bring forth* as the primary meaning of *offero*.

The corrected translation under discussion reads thus:

As for the fact that many who are called by the ministry of the gospel do not come and are not converted, this is not to be blamed on the gospel, nor on Christ set forth in the gospel, nor on God, who calls them by the gospel and even bestows upon them various gifts, but is to be blamed on the called themselves.

“Grace Is Conferred by Means of Admonitions”

The second place in our corrected translation that might be especially challenged is the last portion of article 17. The ending of article 17 figured prominently in the recent controversy in the Protestant Reformed Churches that led to the separation and reformation of 2021, in which reformation Remnant Reformed Church continues today.

The end of article 17 as we have it today reads:

For grace is conferred by means of admonitions; and the more readily we perform our duty, the more eminent usually is this blessing of God working

in us, and the more directly is his work advanced; to whom alone all the glory, both of means and of their saving fruit and efficacy, is forever due. Amen.

The PRC argued that the article is describing the law of God. “Grace is conferred by means of admonitions” was taken to mean that grace is conferred by means of the commandments of the law. “The more readily we perform our duty” was taken to mean our duty of obeying the commandments of God’s law. The PRC further assumed that the article described the blessing that God graciously gives his people for obeying his law, with more obedience obtaining more blessing. The Protestant Reformed doctrine, by the denomination’s interpretation of article 17, is that the law is a means of grace by which God saves and blesses his people and that by a greater keeping of God’s law, God’s people obtain a greater measure of God’s blessing.

The error of the PRC’s interpretation of article 17 has been pointed out before.³ Without going into all of that detail again, the heart of their error is that they introduce the law of God into an article about the gospel of God. Article 17 is not teaching that the law is God’s means of grace but that the gospel is God’s means of grace. Article 17 further teaches that the gospel is administered to God’s people through the preaching of the word, the administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of Christian discipline. The “admonitions” of article 17 are the sacred admonitions of the gospel, which are administered to the people through the means of grace that God has appointed: preaching, sacraments, and discipline. Reading the end of article 17 in light of the rest of the article makes it clear that the article is about the gospel, not the law.

The current English translation of article 17 does not help matters. The translation might leave the impression that article 17 at least implies a do-more-get-more theology. That is,

the more we do our duty (whatever that may be), the more we are going to get, and the better things are going to go. But that is not at all the meaning of the end of article 17. Article 17 does not end by telling us what we will get for obeying; rather, article 17 ends by pointing out some of the visible evidence that God is truly conferring his grace upon his people through the means of grace that he has appointed. The line of thinking is not this: the more you do, the more you will get. Rather, the line of thinking is this: our doing is the proof and evidence and demonstration and fruit and effect of the work that God has done in us. Not this: the more we obey, the more we are blessed. But this: our greater use of the means of grace is the clear evidence and beacon of what God has done by his grace. The corrected translation as presented in this magazine brings out this line of thinking of the fathers of Dordt.

For grace is conferred by means of admonitions; and the more readily we perform our office, the more clearly evident it usually is that the favor of God is working in us, and the more splendid does his work appear; to whom alone all the glory, both of the means and of their saving fruit and efficacy, is forever due. Amen.

Conclusion

If anyone would like to comment on the changes proposed here, you are invited to write in. Especially if anyone would like to challenge the changes proposed here, the undersigned would be delighted to hear from you. Our goal is a faithful English translation of the Canons of Dordt that can serve the coming generations, and both comments and challenges serve that purpose.

May the Lord bless the corrected translation of heads 3–4 for his glory and for his people’s profit.

—AL

³ Andrew Lanning, “Canons 3–4.17: ‘Grace Is Conferred by Means of Admonitions,’” *Sword and Shield* 3, no. 4 (September 2022): 8–18.

Translation Comparison: Heads Three and Four

| <i>Corrected Translation</i> | <i>Current Translation</i> | <i>Original Latin</i> |
|--|---|--|
| Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine: Of the Corruption of Man, and of His Conversion to God and the Manner Thereof | Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine: Of the Corruption of Man, His Conversion to God and the Manner Thereof | Tertium et Quartum Doctrinae Caput, de Hominis Corruptione, et Conversione ad Deum ejusque Modo |
| <p>Article 1. Man, fashioned in the beginning after the image of God, was adorned in mind with a true and sound knowledge of his creator and of spiritual things, in will and heart with righteousness, in all his affections with purity; and thus, he was completely holy. But, revolting from God by the instigation of the devil and by his own free will, he bereaved himself of these excellent gifts; and on the contrary he reaped in their place blindness, horrible darkness, vanity, and perverseness of judgment in his mind; wickedness, rebellion, and hardness in his will and heart; and finally, impurity in all his affections.</p> <p>Article 2. Moreover, man begat children of such nature as himself after the fall; that is, a corrupt stock begat a corrupt offspring. By the righteous judgment of God, the corruption issued from Adam into all his posterity (Christ only excepted), not through imitation (as the Pelagians of old asserted), but through the propagation of a vicious nature.</p> <p>Article 3. Therefore all men are conceived in sin and are born children of wrath, incapable of any saving good, prone to evil,</p> | <p>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.</p> <p>Article 2. Man after the fall begat children in his own likeness. A corrupt stock produced a corrupt offspring. Hence all the posterity of Adam, Christ only excepted, have derived corruption from their original parent, not by imitation, as the Pelagians of old asserted, but by the propagation of a vicious nature.</p> <p>Article 3. Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead</p> | <p><i>Articulus Primus.</i> Homo ab initio ad imaginem Dei conditus vera et saluari sui Creatoris et rerum spiritualium notitia in mente, et justitia in voluntate et corde, puritate in omnibus affectibus exornatus, adeoque totus sanctus fuit; sed Diaboli instinctu, et libera sua voluntate a Deo desciscens, eximiis istis donis seipsum orbavit: atque e contrario eorum loco cœcitatem, horribiles tenebras, vanitatem, ac perversitatem judicii in mente, malitiam, rebellionem, ac duritiem in voluntate et corde, impuritatem denique in omnibus affectibus contraxit.</p> <p>II. Qualis autem post lapsum fuit homo, tales et liberos procreavit, nempe corruptus corruptos; corruptione ab Adamo in omnes posteros (solo Christo excepto) non per imitationem (quod Pelagiani olim voluerunt), sed per vitiosæ naturæ propagationem, justo Dei judicio, derivata.</p> <p>III. Itaque omnes homines in peccato concipiuntur, et filii iræ nascuntur, inepti ad omne bonum salutare, propensi ad</p> |

dead in sins, and slaves of sin; and without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to correct the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to such correction.

Article 4. There is indeed in man after the fall some residual light of nature, by virtue of which he retains some knowledge of God, of natural things, and of the difference between things honorable and vile, and exhibits some regard for virtue and external order. But so far is he from being able to arrive at a saving knowledge of God and to convert himself to him by this light of nature, that he does not use it aright even in things natural and civil; nay further, this light, whatever it may be after all, man in various ways pollutes entirely, and holds it in unrighteousness, by doing which he is rendered without excuse before the face of God.

Article 5. By the same reckoning, what is true of the light of nature is true also of the decalogue, delivered by God through Moses particularly to the Jews. For though the law does indeed discover the greatness of sin, and more and more convicts man of his guilt, yet as it neither points out a remedy nor imparts strength to extricate him from misery, and thus, being weak through the flesh, leaves the transgressor under the curse, man cannot by this law obtain saving grace.

in sin, and in bondage thereto, and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation.

Article 4. There remain, however, in man since the fall the glimmerings of natural light, whereby he retains some knowledge of God, of natural things, and of the differences between good and evil, and discovers some regard for virtue, good order in society, and for maintaining an orderly external deportment. But so far is this light of nature from being sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God and to true conversion, that he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil. Nay further, this light, such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted, and holds it in unrighteousness, by doing which he becomes inexcusable before God.

Article 5. In the same light are we to consider the law of the decalogue, delivered by God to His peculiar people, the Jews, by the hands of Moses. For though it discovers the greatness of sin, and more and more convinces man thereof, yet as it neither points out a remedy nor imparts strength to extricate him from misery, and thus, being weak through the flesh, leaves the transgressor under the curse, man cannot by this law obtain saving grace.

malum, in peccatis mortui, et peccati servi; et absque Spiritus Sancti regenerantis gratia, ad Deum redire, naturam depravatam corrigere, vel ad ejus correctionem se disponere nec volunt, nec possunt.

IV. Residuum quidem est post lapsum in homine lumen aliquod naturæ, cujus beneficio ille notitias quasdam de Deo, de rebus naturalibus, de discrimine honestorum et turpium retinet, et aliquod virtutis ac disciplinæ externæ studium ostendit: sed tantum abest, ut hoc naturæ lumine ad salutarem Dei cognitionem pervenire, et ad eum se convertere possit, ut ne quidem eo in naturalibus ac civilibus recte utatur, quinimo qualecumque id demum sit, id totum variis modis contamineat, atque in injustitia detineat, quod dum facit, coram Deo inexcusabilis redditur.

V. Quæ luminis naturæ, eadem hæc Decalogi per Mosen a Deo Judæis peculiariter traditi est ratio: cum enim is magnitudinem quidem peccati retegat, ejusque hominem magis ac magis reum peragat, sed nec remedium exhibeat, nec vires emergendi ex miseria conferat, adeoque per carnem infirmatus transgressorem maledictione relinquat, non potest homo per eum salutarem gratiam obtinere.

Article 6. What therefore neither the light of nature nor the law could do, that God performs by the power of the Holy Spirit through the word or ministry of reconciliation, which is the gospel concerning the Messiah, by means whereof it hath pleased God to save such as believe, as well in the Old as in the New Testament.

Article 7. This mystery of his will God discovered to but a small number in the Old Testament; in the New Testament he reveals it to many, the distinction between various peoples having now been removed. The cause of this dispensation is not to be ascribed to the superior worth of one nation above another, nor to their making a better use of the light of nature, but is only to be ascribed to the sovereign good pleasure and gracious love of God. Hence they to whom so great a grace is given, beyond and contrary to all that they deserve, are bound to acknowledge it with a humble and grateful heart; on the other hand, with the apostle they ought to adore, without ever curiously prying into, the severity and justice of God's judgments upon the rest, to whom this grace is not given.

Article 8. Nevertheless, as many as are called by the gospel are seriously called. For God has seriously and most truly shown in his word what is pleasing to him, namely, that the called should come unto him. Furthermore, he seriously

Article 6. What therefore neither the light of nature nor the law could do, that God performs by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the Word or ministry of reconciliation, which is the glad tidings concerning the Messiah, by means whereof it hath pleased God to save such as believe, as well under the Old as under the New Testament.

Article 7. This mystery of His will God discovered to but a small number under the Old Testament; under the New (the distinction between various peoples having been removed) He reveals Himself to many, without any distinction of people. The cause of this dispensation is not to be ascribed to the superior worth of one nation above another, nor to their making a better use of the light of nature, but results wholly from the sovereign good pleasure and unmerited love of God. Hence they to whom so great and so gracious a blessing is communicated, above their desert, or rather notwithstanding their demerits, are bound to acknowledge it with humble and grateful hearts, and with the apostle to adore, not curiously to pry into the severity and justice of God's judgments displayed to others, to whom this grace is not given.

Article 8. As many as are called by the gospel are unfeignedly called. For God hath most earnestly and truly shown in His Word what is pleasing to Him, namely, that those who are called should come to Him. He, moreover, seriously promises

VI. Quod igitur nec lumen naturæ, nec lex potest, id Spiritus Sancti virtute præstat Deus, per sermonem, sive ministerium reconciliationis, quod est Evangelium de Messia, per quod placuit Deo homines credentes tam in Veteri, quam in Novo Testamento servare.

VII. Hoc voluntatis suæ mysterium Deus in Veteri Testamento paucioribus patefecit, in Novo Testamento pluribus, sublato jam populorum discrimine, manifestat. Cujus dispensationis causa, non in gentis unius præ alia dignitate, aut meliore luminis naturæ usu, sed in liberrimo beneplacito, et gratuita dilectione Dei est collocanda. Unde illi, quibus præter et contra omne meritum tanta fit gratia, eam humili et grato corde agnoscere, in reliquis autem, quibus ea gratia non fit, severitatem et justitiam judiciorum Dei cum Apostolo adorare, nequaquam vero curiose scrutari debent.

VIII. Quotquot autem per Evangelium vocantur, serio vocantur. Serio enim et verissime ostendit Deus verbo suo, quid sibi gratum sit, nimirum, ut vocati ad se veniant. Serio etiam omnibus ad se venientibus et credentibus

promises rest for their souls and eternal life to all who do come to him and believe.

Article 9. As for the fact that many who are called by the ministry of the gospel do not come and are not converted, this is not to be blamed on the gospel, nor on Christ set forth in the gospel, nor on God, who calls them by the gospel and even bestows upon them various gifts, but is to be blamed on the called themselves, some of whom, being indifferent, do not even give ear to the word of life; others do indeed give ear to it but do not take it to heart, and therefore, after the fleeting joy of a temporary faith, they turn back; others choke the seed of the word with the thorns of the cares and the pleasures of this world and bring forth no fruit. This our Savior teaches in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13).

Article 10. But as for the fact that others who are called by the ministry of the gospel do come and are converted, this is not to be accredited to man, as though one by a free will distinguishes himself from others who are furnished with suitable or even sufficient grace for faith and conversion (which the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains), but is to be accredited to God, who, as he has chosen his own from eternity in Christ, so he in time efficaciously calls the same, grants unto them faith and repentance, and, having plucked them from the power of darkness, translates them into the kingdom of his own Son, in order that they might show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness

eternal life and rest to as many as shall come to Him and believe on Him.

Article 9. It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of Christ offered therein, nor of God, who calls men by the gospel and confers upon them various gifts, that those who are called by the ministry of the Word refuse to come and be converted. The fault lies in themselves, some of whom when called, regardless of their danger, reject the Word of life; others, though they receive it, suffer it not to make a lasting impression on their heart; therefore their joy, arising only from a temporary faith, soon vanishes and they fall away; while others choke the seed of the Word by perplexing cares and the pleasures of this world, and produce no fruit. This our Savior teaches in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13).

Article 10. But that others who are called by the gospel obey the call and are converted is not to be ascribed to the proper exercise of free will, whereby one distinguishes himself above others equally furnished with grace sufficient for faith and conversion, as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains; but it must be wholly ascribed to God, who as He has chosen His own from eternity in Christ, so He confers upon them faith and repentance, rescues them from the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of His own Son, that they may show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light, and may glory, not in themselves, but in the Lord,

requiem animarum, et vitam æternam promittit.

IX. Quod multi per ministerium Evangelii vocati, non veniunt et non convertuntur, hujus culpa non est in Evangelio, nec in Christo per Evangelium oblato, nec in Deo per Evangelium vocante, et dona etiam varia iis conferente, sed in vocatis ipsis, quorum aliqui verbum vitæ non admittunt securi; alii admittunt quidem, sed non in cor immittunt, ideoque post evanidum fidei temporariæ gaudium resiliunt; alii spinis curaram et voluptatibus sæculi semen verbi suffocant, fructusque nullos proferunt; quod Servator noster seminis parabola docet, Matt. 13.

X. Quod autem alii, per ministerium Evangelii vocati, veniunt et convertuntur, id non est adscribendum homini, tanquam seipsum per liberum arbitrium ab aliis pari vel sufficiente gratia ad fidem et conversionem instructis discernenti (quod superba Pelagii hæresis statuit), sed Deo, qui ut suos ab æterno in Christo elegit, ita eosdem in tempore efficaciter vocat, fide et resipiscentia donat, et e potestate tenebrarum erutos in Filii sui regnum transfert, ut virtutes ejus, qui ipsos e tenebris in admirandam hanc lucem vocavit, prædicent, et non in se, sed in Domino, glorientur. Scriptura apostolica passim id testante.

into his marvelous light, and might glory, not in themselves, but in the Lord, as the apostolic witness in scripture testifies throughout.

Article 11. Moreover, when God accomplishes this his good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, he not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by the Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit he pervades the inmost recesses of the man; he opens the closed heart, softens the hardened heart, and circumcises the heart that is uncircumcised; he infuses new qualities into the will and makes that which was dead, alive; that which was evil, good; that which was unwilling, willing; that which was refractory, obedient; and he actuates and strengthens it, so that, like a good tree, it can bring forth the fruits of good actions.

Article 12. And this is that regeneration, that new creation, that resurrection from the dead, that making alive so highly celebrated in scripture, which God, without us, worketh in us. But this is in no wise effected by the mere outward sound of instruction, by moral suasion, or by such a mode of operation that, after God has performed his part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not to be regenerated, to be converted or not to be converted; but it is entirely a

according to the testimony of the apostles in various places.

Article 11. But when God accomplishes His good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, He not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by His Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit pervades the inmost recesses of the man; He opens the closed and softens the hardened heart, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised, infuses new qualities into the will, which, though heretofore dead, He quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, He renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree it may bring forth the fruits of good actions.

Article 12. And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid. But this is in no wise effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel, by moral suasion, or such a mode of operation that after God has performed His part it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a

XI. Cæterum, quando Deus hoc suum beneplacitum in electis exequitur, seu veram in iis conversionem operatur, non tantum Evangelium illis externe prædicari curat, et mentem eorum per Spiritum Sanctum potenter illuminat, ut recte intelligant et dijudicent quæ sunt Spiritus Dei, sed ejusdem etiam Spiritus regenerantis efficacia ad intima hominis penetrat, cor clausum aperit, durum emollit, præputiatum circumcidit, voluntati novas qualitates infundit, facitque eam ex mortua vivam, ex mala bonam, ex nolente volentem, ex refractaria morigeram, agitque et roborat eam, ut, ceu arbor bona, fructus bonarum actionum proferre possit.

XII. Atque hæc est illa tantopere in Scripturis prædicata regeneratio, nova creatio, suscitatio e mortuis, et vivificatio, quam Deus sine nobis, in nobis operatur. Ea autem neutiquam fit per solam forinsecus insonantem doctrinam, moralem suasionem, vel talem operandi rationem, ut post Dei (quoad ipsum) operationem, in hominis potestate maneat regenerari vel non regenerari, converti vel non converti; sed est plane supernaturalis, potentissima

supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most pleasing, wonderful, mysterious, and unspeakable; neither lesser nor inferior in its efficacy to creation or the resurrection of the dead, as the scripture (inspired by the author of this work) declares; so much so that all those in whose hearts God works in this marvelous manner are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated and do actually believe. Whereupon the will, now renewed, is not only acted upon and moved by God, but by the act of God also acts itself. On account of which even man himself is rightly said, by virtue of that grace received, to believe and to repent.

Article 13. The manner of this operation cannot be fully comprehended by believers in this life; meanwhile they rest satisfied in this, that by this grace of God they do believe in their heart, and they do love their Savior, as they know and experience.

Article 14. Thus therefore faith is the gift of God, not in this sense, that it is offered by God to the decision of man, but in this sense, that it is in actual fact conferred, breathed, and infused into man; nor even in this sense, that God confers only the power to believe but then awaits from the will of man his consent, or his act of believing; but in this sense, that he who worketh both to will and to do, and who indeed worketh all in all, produces in man both the will to believe and the very believing itself.

supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture inspired by the Author of this work declares; so that all in whose heart God works in this marvelous manner are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated and do actually believe. Whereupon the will thus renewed is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence becomes itself active. Wherefore also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent by virtue of that grace received.

Article 13. The manner of this operation cannot be fully comprehended by believers in this life. Notwithstanding which, they rest satisfied with knowing and experiencing that by this grace of God they are enabled to believe with the heart, and love their Savior.

Article 14. Faith is therefore to be considered as the gift of God, not on account of its being offered by God to man, to be accepted or rejected at his pleasure, but because it is in reality conferred, breathed, and infused into him; or even because God bestows the power or ability to believe, and then expects that man should by the exercise of his own free will consent to the terms of salvation and actually believe in Christ, but because He who works in man both to will and to do, and indeed all things in all, produces both the will to believe and the act of believing also.

simul et suavissima, mirabilis, arcana, et ineffabilis operatio, virtute sua, secundum Scripturam (quæ ab Authore hujus operationis est inspirata) nec creatione, nec mortuorum resuscitatione minor, aut inferior, adeo ut omnes illi, in quorum cordibus admirando hoc modo Deus operatur, certo, infallibiliter, et efficaciter regenerentur, et actu credant. Atque tum voluntas jam renovata, non tantum agitur et movetur a Deo, sed a Deo acta, agit et ipsa. Quamobrem etiam homo ipse per gratiam istam acceptam credere et respiscere recte dicitur.

XIII. Modum hujus operationis fideles in hac vita plene comprehendere non possunt; in eo interim acquiescentes, quod per istam Dei gratiam, se corde credere, et Servatorem suum diligere, sciant ac sentiant.

XIV. Sic ergo fides Dei donum est, non eo quod a Deo hominis arbitrio offeratur, sed quod homini reipsa conferatur, inspiretur, et infundatur. Non etiam quod Deus potentiam credendi tantum conferat, consensum vero seu actum credendi ab hominis deinde arbitrio expectet, sed, quod et velle credere, et ipsum credere in homine is efficiat, qui operatur et velle et facere, adeoque omnia operatur in omnibus.

Article 15. God owes this grace to no one. For what could God owe to him who could not first give anything that it should be recompensed to him again? Nay, what could God owe to him who has nothing of his own but sin and falsehood? Whosoever therefore receives this grace owes and renders eternal gratitude to God alone; whosoever receives it not either cares not at all for these spiritual things and satisfies himself with his own things, or, imagining himself to be secure, he vainly boasts that he has that which he has not. Further, concerning those who outwardly profess their faith and amend their lives, we are to judge and to speak the best of them, after the example of the apostles, for the secret recesses of the heart are unknown to us. But as for others, who have not yet been called, we are to pray to God, who calleth those things which be not as though they were. Certainly in no wise are we to be haughty against them, as though we had made ourselves to differ.

Article 16. But just as man by the fall did not cease to be man, endowed with intellect and will; neither did sin, which pervaded the whole of mankind, deprive him of the nature of mankind, but rather corrupted him and spiritually slew him; so also this divine grace of regeneration does not deal with men as with stocks and blocks, nor does it abolish the will and its properties, or otherwise forcibly

Article 15. God is under no obligation to confer this grace upon any; for how can He be indebted to man, who had no previous gifts to bestow, as a foundation for such recompense? Nay, who has nothing of his own but sin and falsehood? He therefore who becomes the subject of this grace owes eternal gratitude to God, and gives Him thanks forever. Whoever is not made partaker thereof is either altogether regardless of these spiritual gifts and satisfied with his own condition, or is in no apprehension of danger and vainly boasts the possession of that which he has not. With respect to those who make an external profession of faith and live regular lives, we are bound, after the example of the apostle, to judge and speak of them in the most favorable manner. For the secret recesses of the heart are unknown to us. And as to others, who have not yet been called, it is our duty to pray for them to God, who calls the things that are not as if they were. But we are in no wise to conduct ourselves towards them with haughtiness, as if we had made ourselves to differ.

Article 16. But as man by the fall did not cease to be a creature endowed with understanding and will, nor did sin which pervaded the whole race of mankind deprive him of the human nature, but brought upon him depravity and spiritual death; so also this grace of regeneration does not treat men as senseless stocks and blocks, nor takes away their will and its properties, neither

XV. Hanc gratiam Deus nemini debet. Quid enim debeat ei, qui prior dare nihil potest, ut ei retribuat? Imo quid debeat ei, qui de suo nihil habet, præter peccatum et mendacium? Qui ergo gratiam illam accipit, soli Deo æternas debet et agit gratias; qui illam non accipit, is aut hæc spiritualia omnino non curat, et in suo sibi placet: aut securus se habere inaniter gloriatur, quod non habet. Porro de iis, qui externe fidem profitentur, et vitam emendant, optime secundum exemplum apostolorum judicandum et loquendum est, penetralia enim cordium nobis sunt incomperta. Pro aliis autem qui nondum sunt vocati, orandus est Deus, qui quæ non sunt vocat tanquam sint. Neutiquam vero adversus eos est superbiendum, ac si nosmetipsos discrevissemus.

XVI. Sicuti vero per lapsum homo non desiit esse homo, intellectu et voluntate præditus, nec peccatum, quod universum genus humanum pervasit, naturam generis humani sustulit, sed depravavit, et spiritualiter occidit; ita etiam hæc divina regenerationis gratia, non agit in hominibus tanquam truncis et stipitibus, nec voluntatem ejusque proprietates tollit, aut invitam

compel the will against itself; but it spiritually quickens, heals, corrects, and, in a manner at once both pleasant and powerful, bends it; so that where before the rebellion and opposition of the flesh had full dominion, now a ready and sincere obedience of the Spirit begins to reign, in which the true and spiritual renewal and freedom of our will consists. Wherefore, except the admirable Author of all good dealt thus with us, there could be no hope for man, as though he should arise from his fall through that same free will by which he, when he stood, plunged himself into ruin.

Article 17. Likewise, just as that almighty operation of God whereby he brings forth and sustains this our natural life does not exclude but requires the use of means, by which God in his infinite wisdom and goodness hath determined to exercise this his power, so also this aforementioned supernatural operation of God by which he regenerates us in no wise excludes or subverts the use of the gospel, which the most wise God has ordained to be the seed of regeneration and the food of the soul. Wherefore, as the apostles and the teachers who succeeded them piously instructed the people concerning this grace of God, to his glory, and the abasement of all pride, and yet in the meantime neglected not to keep them by the sacred admonitions of the gospel under the administration of the word, sacraments, and discipline; so, even to this day, be it far from

does violence thereto; but spiritually quickens, heals, corrects, and at the same time sweetly and powerfully bends it; that where carnal rebellion and resistance formerly prevailed, a ready and sincere spiritual obedience begins to reign, in which the true and spiritual restoration and freedom of our will consist. Wherefore, unless the admirable Author of every good work wrought in us, man could have no hope of recovering from his fall by his own free will, by the abuse of which, in a state of innocence, he plunged himself into ruin.

Article 17. As the almighty operation of God whereby He prolongs and supports this our natural life does not exclude, but requires, the use of means, by which God of His infinite mercy and goodness hath chosen to exert His influence, so also the before mentioned supernatural operation of God by which we are regenerated in no wise excludes or subverts the use of the gospel, which the most wise God has ordained to be the seed of regeneration and food of the soul. Wherefore, as the apostles and teachers who succeeded them piously instructed the people concerning this grace of God, to His glory, and the abasement of all pride, and in the meantime, however, neglected not to keep them by the sacred precepts of the gospel in the exercise of the Word, sacraments, and discipline; so, even to this day, be it far from either instructors or instructed to presume to tempt God in the

violenter cogit, sed spiritualiter vivificat, sanat, corrigit, suaviter simul ac potenter flectit: ut ubi antea plene dominabatur carnis rebellio et resistentia, nunc regnare incipiat prompta, ac sincera Spiritus obedientia; in quo vera et spiritualis nostræ voluntatis instauratio et libertas consistit. Qua ratione nisi admirabilis ille omnis boni opifex nobiscum ageret, nulla spes esset homini surgendi e lapsu per liberum arbitrium, per quod se, cum staret, præcipitavit in exitium.

XVII. Quemadmodum etiam omnipotens illa Dei operatio, qua vitam hanc nostram naturalem producit et sustentat, non excludit sed requirit usum mediorum, per quæ Deus pro infinita sua sapientia et bonitate virtutem istam suam exercere voluit: ita et hæc prædicta supernaturalis Dei operatio, qua nos regenerat, neutiquam excludit, aut evertit usum Evangelii, quod sapientissimus Deus in semen regenerationis, et cibum animæ ordinavit. Quare, ut Apostoli, et qui eos secuti sunt doctores, de gratia hac Dei ad ejus gloriam et omnis superbiam depressionem, pie populum docuerant, neque tamen interim sanctis Evangelii monitis, sub verbi, sacramentorum, et disciplinæ exercitio eum continere neglexerunt: sic etiamnum, absit, ut docentes aut discentes in Ecclesia Deum tentare præsumant, ea separando, quæ Deus pro suo beneplacito voluit

either the instructors or the instructed in the church to presume to tempt God by separating those things that God in his good pleasure hath willed to be most tightly joined. For grace is conferred by means of admonitions; and the more readily we perform our office, the more clearly evident it usually is that the favor of God is working in us, and the more splendid does his work appear; to whom alone all the glory, both of the means and of their saving fruit and efficacy, is forever due. Amen.

church by separating what He of His good pleasure hath most intimately joined together. For grace is conferred by means of admonitions; and the more readily we perform our duty, the more eminent usually is this blessing of God working in us, and the more directly is His work advanced; to whom alone all the glory, both of means and of their saving fruit and efficacy, is forever due. Amen.

esse conjunctissima. Per monita enim confertur gratia, et quo nos officium nostrum facimus promptius, hoc ipso Dei in nobis operantis beneficium solet esse illustrius, rectissimeque ejus opus procedit. Cui soli omnis, et mediorum, et salutaris eorum fructus atque efficaciae debetur gloria in sæcula. Amen.



Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine: Of the Corruption of Man, and of His Conversion to God and the Manner Thereof

Article 1. Man, fashioned in the beginning after the image of God, was adorned in mind with a true and sound knowledge of his creator and of spiritual things, in will and heart with righteousness, in all his affections with purity; and thus, he was completely holy. But, revolting from God by the instigation of the devil and by his own free will, he bereaved himself of these excellent gifts; and on the contrary he reaped in their place blindness, horrible darkness, vanity, and perverseness of judgment in his mind; wickedness, rebellion, and hardness in his will and heart; and finally, impurity in all his affections.

Article 2. Moreover, man begat children of such nature as himself after the fall; that is, a corrupt stock begat a corrupt offspring. By the righteous judgment of God, the corruption issued from Adam into all his posterity (Christ only excepted), not through imitation (as the Pelagians of old asserted), but through the propagation of a vicious nature.

Article 3. Therefore all men are conceived in sin and are born children of wrath, incapable of any saving good, prone to evil, dead in sins, and slaves of sin; and without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to correct the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to such correction.

Article 4. There is indeed in man after the fall some residual light of nature, by virtue of which he retains some knowledge of God, of natural things, and of the difference between things honorable and vile, and exhibits some regard for virtue and external order. But so far is he from being able to arrive at a saving knowledge of God and to convert himself to him by this light of nature, that he does not use it aright even in things natural and civil; nay further, this light, whatever it may be after all, man in various ways pollutes entirely, and holds it in unrighteousness, by doing which he is rendered without excuse before the face of God.

Article 5. By the same reckoning, what is true of the light of nature is true also of the decalogue, delivered by God through Moses particularly to the Jews. For though the law does indeed discover the greatness of sin, and more and more convicts man of his guilt, yet as it neither points out a remedy nor imparts strength to extricate him from misery, and thus, being weak through the flesh, leaves the transgressor under the curse, man cannot by this law obtain saving grace.

Article 6. What therefore neither the light of nature nor the law could do, that God performs by the power of the Holy Spirit through the word or ministry of reconciliation, which is the gospel concerning the Messiah, by means whereof it hath pleased God to save such as believe, as well in the Old as in the New Testament.

Article 7. This mystery of his will God discovered to but a small number in the Old Testament; in the New Testament he reveals it to many, the distinction between various peoples having now been removed. The cause of this dispensation is not to be ascribed to the superior worth of one nation above another, nor to their making a better use of the light of nature, but is only to be ascribed to the sovereign good pleasure and gracious love of God. Hence they to whom so great a grace is given, beyond and contrary to all that they deserve, are bound to acknowledge it with a humble and grateful heart; on the other hand, with the apostle they ought to adore, without ever curiously prying into, the severity and justice of God's judgments upon the rest, to whom this grace is not given.

Article 8. Nevertheless, as many as are called by the gospel are seriously called. For God has seriously and most truly shown in his word what is pleasing to him, namely, that the called should come unto him. Furthermore, he seriously promises rest for their souls and eternal life to all who do come to him and believe.

Article 9. As for the fact that many who are called by the ministry of the gospel do not come

and are not converted, this is not to be blamed on the gospel, nor on Christ set forth in the gospel, nor on God, who calls them by the gospel and even bestows upon them various gifts, but is to be blamed on the called themselves, some of whom, being indifferent, do not even give ear to the word of life; others do indeed give ear to it but do not take it to heart, and therefore, after the fleeting joy of a temporary faith, they turn back; others choke the seed of the word with the thorns of the cares and the pleasures of this world and bring forth no fruit. This our Savior teaches in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13).

Article 10. But as for the fact that others who are called by the ministry of the gospel do come and are converted, this is not to be accredited to man, as though one by a free will distinguishes himself from others who are furnished with suitable or even sufficient grace for faith and conversion (which the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains), but is to be accredited to God, who, as he has chosen his own from eternity in Christ, so he in time efficaciously calls the same, grants unto them faith and repentance, and, having plucked them from the power of darkness, translates them into the kingdom of his own Son, in order that they might show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light, and might glory, not in themselves, but in the Lord, as the apostolic witness in scripture testifies throughout.

Article 11. Moreover, when God accomplishes this his good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, he not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by the Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit he pervades the inmost recesses of the man; he opens the closed heart, softens the hardened heart, and circumcises the heart that is uncircumcised; he infuses new qualities into the will and makes that which was dead, alive; that which was evil, good; that which was unwilling, willing; that which was refractory, obedient; and

he actuates and strengthens it, so that, like a good tree, it can bring forth the fruits of good actions.

Article 12. And this is that regeneration, that new creation, that resurrection from the dead, that making alive so highly celebrated in scripture, which God, without us, worketh in us. But this is in no wise effected by the mere outward sound of instruction, by moral suasion, or by such a mode of operation that, after God has performed his part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not to be regenerated, to be converted or not to be converted; but it is entirely a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most pleasing, wonderful, mysterious, and unspeakable; neither lesser nor inferior in its efficacy to creation or the resurrection of the dead, as the scripture (inspired by the author of this work) declares; so much so that all those in whose hearts God works in this marvelous manner are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated and do actually believe. Whereupon the will, now renewed, is not only acted upon and moved by God, but by the act of God also acts itself. On account of which even man himself is rightly said, by virtue of that grace received, to believe and to repent.

Article 13. The manner of this operation cannot be fully comprehended by believers in this life; meanwhile they rest satisfied in this, that by this grace of God they do believe in their heart, and they do love their Savior, as they know and experience.

Article 14. Thus therefore faith is the gift of God, not in this sense, that it is offered by God to the decision of man, but in this sense, that it is in actual fact conferred, breathed, and infused into man; nor even in this sense, that God confers only the power to believe but then awaits from the will of man his consent, or his act of believing; but in this sense, that he who worketh both to will and to do, and who indeed worketh all in all, produces in man both the will to believe and the very believing itself.

Article 15. God owes this grace to no one. For what could God owe to him who could not first

give anything that it should be recompensed to him again? Nay, what could God owe to him who has nothing of his own but sin and falsehood? Whosoever therefore receives this grace owes and renders eternal gratitude to God alone; whosoever receives it not either cares not at all for these spiritual things and satisfies himself with his own things, or, imagining himself to be secure, he vainly boasts that he has that which he has not. Further, concerning those who outwardly profess their faith and amend their lives, we are to judge and to speak the best of them, after the example of the apostles, for the secret recesses of the heart are unknown to us. But as for others, who have not yet been called, we are to pray to God, who calleth those things which be not as though they were. Certainly in no wise are we to be haughty against them, as though we had made ourselves to differ.

Article 16. But just as man by the fall did not cease to be man, endowed with intellect and will; neither did sin, which pervaded the whole of mankind, deprive him of the nature of mankind, but rather corrupted him and spiritually slew him; so also this divine grace of regeneration does not deal with men as with stocks and blocks, nor does it abolish the will and its properties, or otherwise forcibly compel the will against itself; but it spiritually quickens, heals, corrects, and, in a manner at once both pleasant and powerful, bends it; so that where before the rebellion and opposition of the flesh had full dominion, now a ready and sincere obedience of the Spirit begins to reign, in which the true and spiritual renewal and freedom of our

will consists. Wherefore, except the admirable Author of all good dealt thus with us, there could be no hope for man, as though he should arise from his fall through that same free will by which he, when he stood, plunged himself into ruin.

Article 17. Likewise, just as that almighty operation of God whereby he brings forth and sustains this our natural life does not exclude but requires the use of means, by which God in his infinite wisdom and goodness hath determined to exercise this his power, so also this aforementioned supernatural operation of God by which he regenerates us in no wise excludes or subverts the use of the gospel, which the most wise God has ordained to be the seed of regeneration and the food of the soul. Wherefore, as the apostles and the teachers who succeeded them piously instructed the people concerning this grace of God, to his glory, and the abasement of all pride, and yet in the meantime neglected not to keep them by the sacred admonitions of the gospel under the administration of the word, sacraments, and discipline; so, even to this day, be it far from either the instructors or the instructed in the church to presume to tempt God by separating those things that God in his good pleasure hath willed to be most tightly joined. For grace is conferred by means of admonitions; and the more readily we perform our office, the more clearly evident it usually is that the favor of God is working in us, and the more splendid does his work appear; to whom alone all the glory, both of the means and of their saving fruit and efficacy, is forever due. Amen.



Article CXXIV: The New King and His Kingdom: Circumcision (continued)

In obedience to the special commandment of Jehovah, his God, Abraham and all his house were circumcised immediately. "And Abraham took Ishmael, his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day as God had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety and nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael, his son, was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised and Ishmael, his son. And all the men of his house, born in the house and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him" (Gen. 17:23–27). Thus Abraham obeyed God immediately. When he was ninety and nine years old, shortly before Isaac was born, he was circumcised. Soon after this we find that the institution of circumcision had become a well-established rite. Faithfully the command of God with respect to the sign of his covenant with his people was heeded. In Gen. 21:4 we read that Isaac was circumcised on the eighth day, as the Lord had commanded Abraham. And at the time of Jacob's return from his uncle Laban it seems to be so well established as to be recognized by Jacob's sons as the sign that distinguishes them from the nations about them, to disregard which would be a reproach unto them. For when Hamor, the father of Shechem, proposes to the sons of Jacob that they intermarry and that their sister Dinah be given to his son for wife, they answer him: "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us.

But in this we will consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised, then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you and we will become one people. But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised, then will we take our daughter and we will be gone" (Gen. 34:14–17). Now, whatever may be said about the strange proposal of the sons of Jacob in this instance, and about their treacherous assault upon the inhabitants of the city, the incident clearly shows that circumcision by that time had become the distinguishing sign between them and the nations around them. They could not mingle with the uncircumcised. Such were a reproach unto them.

Its legal institution in the laws of Moses is recorded in Lev. 12:2, 3: "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed and born a man child, then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised." And thus we understand what the Lord tells the Jews according to John 7:22, 23: "Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers) and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry at me because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day?" The law of Moses stipulated that a manchild should be circumcised on the eighth day. And when that eighth day came on a Sabbath, the child was circumcised on that day of rest. But although this was legally stipulated in Moses' law, and in

that sense circumcision might be called a Mosaic institution, yet it did not find its origin there. It was of the fathers. It is in the same law of Moses that a close connection is established between circumcision and the passover. No uncircumcised person might eat the passover with Israel. But if a foreigner sojourned with Israel and was desirous of eating the passover with them, he and all his males first had to be circumcised. "This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof. A foreigner and a hired servant shall not eat thereof. * * * And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover of the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land, for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof" (Ex. 12:43, 44, 48).

The covenant of circumcision was violated and seems to have been forgotten during the sojourn of the people of Israel in the wilderness. This is plainly expressed in Joshua 5:2-9: "At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. And Joshua made him sharp knives and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. Now all the people that came out were circumcised; but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised. For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war which came out of Egypt were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord: unto whom the Lord sware that he would not shew them the land, which the Lord sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey. And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised because they had not circumcised them by the way. And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising

all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp till they were whole. And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day." Plain it is that the generation that was born in the wilderness was not circumcised. They were the children of that generation of which the Apostle Paul speaks in 1 Cor. 10. They all left with Israel from Egypt. They all lived right under the stream of God's grace. They were baptized with Israel unto Moses. They all drank of the Spiritual Rock, Christ. They all ate of the manna in the desert. But God was not pleased with them. He threw them down in the wilderness. Though they were with Israel, yet they were not of the people of God in the true sense of the word. And when their unbelief had appeared, and their sentence had been expressed, they did not keep the covenant of circumcision. Perhaps it was a wanton violation of God's covenant on their part; perhaps God took away from them the right to give to their children the sign of his covenant; perhaps it was both. But certain it is that the wicked generation that broke the covenant of God in the wilderness did not circumcise their children. Until Israel arrived in the land of promise circumcision fell into disuse.

From that time forth, however, the institution was faithfully kept, and even rigidly observed. To be uncircumcised was a reproach. More and more it acquired, in the consciousness of the true Israelite, the meaning of a distinguishing sign between the people of Jehovah's covenant and those that were not of him. An uncircumcised person was an abhorrence to Israel. More than once this distinction is emphasized in the history of Israel. And when Isaiah must comfort the people of Zion that is in captivity, but about to be redeemed, he calls out to them: "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." Circumcision was to Israel the distinguishing mark of Jehovah's people, the mark of demarcation between God's people and the world.

It does, therefore, not surprise us that at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, when Israel was sorely oppressed by the power of a foreign hand, that monster of iniquity, that type of Antichrist, tries to prevent the observance of this distinguishing rite. He was in every way the opponent and oppressor of God's people as such. It was his evident purpose to obliterate every distinction between Israel and heathendom, between God's people and the world, and those that refused to obey him for God's covenant's sake had to be killed. We read of this cruel tyrant in the first book of the Maccabees, one of the apocryphal books that is of great historical importance for the period between the captivity and the coming of the Messiah. There we are told how Antiochus commanded to defile the sanctuary, to desecrate the Sabbath and the holy days; how he forbade the offering of the burnt offering, of the daily sacrifice and the drink offering. And there we are also told that he would prevent the children of Israel to be circumcised. The penalty of death was threatened and actually executed upon parents that had their children circumcised in spite of the command of the king. Children that were circumcised were hanged at the neck of their mothers, the parents were killed, and so

were they that performed the rite of circumcision upon them. And here we also learn how the children of Israel had learned to consider circumcision as the mark that distinguished them as a people of God from the nations around them. Many, we are told, became unfaithful. But not so the true Israelites. They refused to obey. And loving the covenant of Jehovah above their own lives, they chose rather to die than to obey the king. To obey the king or to receive the sign of circumcision was equivalent to receiving the sign of the beast or to have the sign of the people of God (1 Macc. 1:48–65).

In the new dispensation, when all that was of national Israel fell away, and the nations of the world entered into the inheritance of God's people, baptism replaced circumcision. Christ Jesus, in whom the people of the old dispensation and those of the new covenant were united into one Head, was both circumcised and baptized. After that there is first a period of conflict, in which circumcision and baptism exist side by side partly. But soon the Church learned to understand that circumcision was a thing of the past and that the sign of the new covenant was baptism.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.

