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THE COVER—The picture is of the Thanksgiving food collection which is held annually in the Adams Street Christian School for distribution among the poor. This picture is of the 1951 collection.
A Serviceman's Thoughts on Thanksgiving

Sidney Cammenga
Aboard the U.S.S. Rehoboth
F.P.O. New York, N.Y.

THANKSGIVING DAY! A national holiday that has been celebrated for years, and means nothing more to the world than a twenty-four hour vacation, but what a wonderful day it is for the child of God. It is the one special day that we set aside each year for the sole purpose of giving thanks to our Lord for the many blessings that He has bestowed upon us throughout that year.

In many ways it is a dangerous day! It is so easy to use just this one day each year to express our thanks to God, just as so many “christians”, even in our own churches, set aside one day each week to worship God and go complacently about their own sinful way for the rest of the week. When all our thoughts and actions should be directed to the glory of God, we so easily lead ourselves along the road that requires special days of service. This of course is the road that leads to destruction.

But of course, to the christian, Thanksgiving Day is just the culmination of a year of service and praise. It is the one day that he sets aside to ponder on the bountiful blessings that God has bestowed on him—blessings, in nature and in grace. And that is not the end of the christian’s thankfulness by any means.

It is only the beginning, for in the year that follows he will strive all the more to serve not only his Lord and to be a living witness for Him in the midst of the world; not only on Sunday or Thanksgiving or Christmas, but every day of his life.

But of ourselves this is so difficult to do, is it not? We so easily forget the sermon that we have just heard in church. We so easily forget all that has been taught to us in our catechism classes. In a matter of minutes after we have heard the truth, we are walking in the way of the world. All that has been taught us from our youth on up, is pushed to the background.

And may I say here that I think that this is especially true of the christian serviceman—especially during the first few months in the service. Many of you may not think that this is true. It may seem strange to you that after having been brought up in a christian home and after having attended christian schools, that a young man upon entering the service, finds himself walking arm in arm with the world; but nevertheless from what I have seen and also experienced, I am sure that this is true.

And what may be the cause for this,
you may ask? The reason for this is relatively simple. For years his whole social and religious life was centered within the realm of covenant children of God. From childhood he was accustomed to devotions at every meal, weekly attendance at church and regular instruction in the truths of Scripture. During that time it was not as easy to be led astray by every little lure of the devil, due to the fact that his parents were always there to admonish and instruct him and even his friends had a strong influence on him.

Suddenly there is an end to all this. Without warning he is torn out of his Christian element and cast into the midst of the world—often times alone, without even a Christian friend as an ally against Satan and his many temptations.

But no, we cannot say that he is alone, for the Lord is on his side with the Holy Spirit to strengthen him through the perils ahead. And thanks be to God that in this time of dire need, we see that all the religious instruction that he received at home was not in vain and for his condemnation, but that through the preaching of the Word, God so worked in his heart the glorious work of salvation. Now, through the grace of God, he can shout in the midst of the world that Christ is his Savior. Even though the going may be rough and he may slip and fall many times, he knows the paths of righteousness through the bountiful instructions he received at home, and through the grace of God is brought back to walk in those glorious paths. How thankful he must be!

And now as the November issue of the Beacon Lights is about to be published and Thanksgiving Day is foremost in our minds, the thought arises, "What are a serviceman's thoughts on Thanksgiving?" What does the serviceman have to be thankful for? Are his ideas altered by the fact that he is away from home and friends, perhaps on the battlefront, separated from all religious instruction?

I think that I can be safe in saying that as the Christian serviceman concentrates on Thanksgiving Day, nothing means as much to him as the great religious heritage that he has left behind and the wonderful salvation that is his in Christ. To the child of God it makes no difference where he is or in what circumstances he finds himself, because all that he does should be for the glory and praise of his Maker. And so whether he is at home or in the service, either in training or on the battlefront, his whole life must be dedicated to the praise and honor of his Lord. And we as Christians have so much to be thankful for, do we not? Through the past year we have experienced so many blessings that it is impossible to begin enumerating them. Even the very words with which we utter our thanks are from God. Nothing that we have is of ourselves.

But even though the Christian serviceman and his covenant friends back home experience the same joys in the celebration of Thanksgiving Day, some of the gracious gifts that God has given to him are appreciated so much more than when he was at home. Of course this should not be so, but nevertheless it is. Isn't it always true that we never really appreciate anything until it is taken away from us?

And that is also true of the many blessings that God has given to us. In our daily life we are surrounded by gifts on all sides and we take them for granted. If we have a little less than our neighbor, we are prone to complain. But then comes a time in our life when we are separated from many of the good things that we have become accustomed to. It is then that we realize how great-
ly we have been blessed, and also how unworthy and ungrateful we are.

This is the situation that the service-man finds himself in, and I am not thinking here of material but of spiritual blessings; and as I mentioned before, primarily of the rich religious realm that he has left behind and the glorious salvation that is his in Christ. We as Protestant Reformed youth are blessed as none others are, in that from the cradle on, we are under the preaching of the Word in its purest form. And this is nothing to be boastful about, but should only humble us, for even though we are so richly blessed, we show our ungratefulness through our constant sinning.

One can never realize just how much it means to be able to meet with the children of God in church on Sunday to listen to the Truth proclaimed by a minister of God, and to meet in the societies during the week to discuss the glorious Gospel. And it is here that the service-man finds comfort in the fact that even though he did not appreciate the many blessings that he had while he was at home, now that he is away he begins to understand just a little, how richly God has blessed him through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. It is during his absence from these blessings, when he is surrounded by the world, that he begins to realize what all the teachings and instructions which have been given to him really mean.

It is during this period that the fruit which the Word of God bears through the Christian blossoms forth in its glory. Not that this fruit was not noticeable when he was at home, for the Word of God never returns void, but as the Christian comes in constant contact with the world, this fruit stands out as a flower in the desert. Now do not get the impression that a Christian becomes

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OUR CHILDREN AND THE
"MONEY PROBLEM"

WE COMMONLY speak of something
being a problem when we are faced with,
or are in a situation which is difficult
to clear up, or for which it is difficult
to find a proper solution.

In the case before us it is the "money
problem."

Now money is in that class which we
call "things" or tangibles. We can see
it, feel it, and handle it. Money, taken
by itself is worthless and of no value.
It is a medium of exchange and only in
exchanging it, or the use of it, for that
which it will buy has it any value. Only
a miser foolishly loves money for its
own sake.

The only scriptural way in which we
can approach the "money problem", or
any problem pertaining to earthly and
material possessions, is from the view-
point of Christian stewardship.

A steward is a servant entrusted by
his master to care for, protect, and work
with goods of his master. He is account-
able to his master, and if he is a good
steward he will not appropriate these
goods to himself, nor will he use them
to his own profit but only for his mas-
ter's.

God is our Lord and Master and we
are His stewards. He has given all
things into our keeping as His stew-
ard's; also money. To some of His
people He gives an abundance of money
and to some very little, but the "prob-
lem" remains the same. We often fool-
ishly think that the rich Christian has a
problem with all his money, but that
the poor Christian has not. This is sure-
ly not so. The sin of setting our hearts
on earthly things is each of our's by
nature. Proverbs 30 has it, "Lord, give
me neither poverty nor riches; lest I be
full and say, who is the Lord? Or lest
I be poor and steal and take the name
of my God in vain". Blessing is not in
"things" and sin is not in "things"
either.

We must therefore make proper use
of and teach our young people and chil-
dren to make proper use of, the money
God in His providence places under our
care.

Exactly what may or may not be the
proper use of money in every instance
is rather difficult to define. If, however,
the basic principle of stewardship which
we have outlined is used as a basis for
our decisions in each practical case that
presents itself, the solution will surely
not be impossible.

In order to teach our children these
principles and the practical working of
them, it would seem quite essential that
they also eventually be given practical
experience in the use of money. The
exact age and amount are a matter that
depends on family financial circum-
stances and also on the individual child's
talents and dependability in these mat-
ters. It would certainly be unwise ever
to entrust sums of considerable amount
to our younger children.

Spending money foolishly and want-
only is sin. Children must so be taught,
but parents have also to learn and by
word and example teach their children
this fact.

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GIVING THANKS ALWAYS

EVERY YEAR when our national Thanksgiving Day draws near, I am reminded of those beautiful words of the poet: “Thy Spirit, O Lord, makes life to abound, The earth is renewed, and fruitful the ground; To God ascribe glory and wisdom and might. Let God in His creatures forever delight.”

That is the case also again this year for wherever we look, everywhere we see an abundant harvest. Though during the course of the year we often criticized the weather and worried and fretted and feared, yet we stand before barns filled with the finest of grain, our store houses are bursting with supplies, and our pantries and tables are laden with the choicest of foods.

Truly, the Lord of heaven and earth was again mindful of His promise: “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” He has crowned the year with His goodness. And we may indeed sing in truth: “He waters the hills with rain from the skies, And plentiful grass and herbs He supplies, Supplying the cattle, and blessing man’s toil, With bread in abundance, with wine and with oil.”

Therefore it is but proper, now as the season has drawn to a close and another Thanksgiving Day draws near, that we humbly bow before our faithful God and that we thank and praise Him for His tender care and keeping. And therefore especially at this juncture on life’s pathway the Word of God comes to us: “In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God concerning you.”

And yet, friends, it is especially at this time of the year and at this occasion that I always feel that the calling of the Christian is one which is difficult, in fact, that it is one which is impossible for the flesh. For, first of all, there is so much for which we must be thankful, for notice, the will of God concerning us is that we give thanks in everything.

And that certainly implies first of all, that we thank Him for our corn, wine and oil, and all the things He gives us with a view to the body. For all these things are gifts from the hand of God, and as long as we dwell in this tabernacle we have need of these things for our temporal existence. Therefore every day we ask for our daily bread and on Prayer Day we pray for God’s blessing upon the labor of our hands. However, even though we need them, we do not deserve as much as a cup of cold water or a dry crust of bread. Hence, when God supplies us with rain and sunshine, food and drink, clothing and shelter, it behooves us to acknowledge Him for all these gifts and also with these things to end in Him.

But that makes our task on Thanksgiving Day so difficult, for when it comes to these material things, God gives us so much and we live in a land of plenty. Shortly after the war a few years ago, a woman wrote from the Netherlands, “During the occupation we prayed for a pair of stockings and gave
thanks for a spool of thread." In such times one learns to appreciate and to value very highly even the small things in life. However, when we live in abundance and bathe in luxury as most of us do today, the opposite is the case. Then the danger is that we become accustomed to things and take everything for granted, and it is difficult to appreciate what we have. And yet so it must be. We must count our blessings, and name them one by one—also these blessings, many though they be, for that is the will of God concerning us. What a tremendous task!

But even so we have not said enough, for we have not only a body but also a soul, and we have been created not only for time but also for eternity. Therefore we cannot live by earthly bread alone, for we have not only physical needs but also spiritual needs, and needs not only with a view to this life, but also with a view to the life eternal. And these spiritual needs are far more important than our physical needs, for Jesus Himself once said: "What is a man profited, even though he gain the whole world and lose his soul?"

But also in this respect in the bygone season our heavenly Father has made a wonderful provision. Looking back, we must confess that in the season which is now coming to a close He has again supplied us with all the spiritual blessings of His salvation. In fact, when we think of His Christ, His Church and kingdom, His Word and truth, His fellowship and communion, His guidance and direction, His presence and nearness, and when we consider the foretaste of the forgiveness of sins, of the communion of saints and of the life everlasting which is ours even today, then we must confess that His blessings are so great and so many that we cannot number them, and we must needs exclaim with the Psalmist: "Bless the Lord, O my soul" and "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits." And yet, number them we must, also these blessings, and be thankful for them, for that is His will concerning us.

But even here we cannot stop and thus we have not fully accomplished our task, for all God's work is perfect and is done in love to those that fear Him. Not only when the way is smooth and easy, but also when it becomes difficult and rough, God is good and kind to His people. Not only in prosperity, but also in adversity, He seeks the eternal well-being of His own, and both through bitter and sweet He leads them on to eternal glory. Hence, all God's ways with His people and all His gifts to them are blessings, even though many of them are blessings in disguise. The Word of God, therefore, admonishes us to give thanks in everything and for all things, which means that on Thanksgiving Day there must be no sorting and sifting, no giving of thanks for this and not for that, but instead we must thank Him for everything He has sent us for our entire way, regardless whether it was sweet or bitter.

And that we must be thankful for all these things means more than to express to God a mere word of thanks. Nor does it consist in merely bringing God a gift, while our heart is still far from Him, for God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Hence, if our thanksgiving is to be genuine it must be a matter of the heart, and it must reveal itself not only in our words but also in our deeds. Real gratitude therefore really consists in this, that in all things we see the hand of God, that we are fully content in His way with us, and that with all things we end in Him. It means that we do not grouse or grumble, do not boast or brag concerning our own ingenuity, but that with all things we
cast ourselves at His feet and exclaim: “All is of Thee and through Thee and must therefore also be unto Thee.” That, and that alone, is true thanksgiving. And that is the gratitude which God demands of us.

Since that is the case, I think you realize how extremely difficult it is to really celebrate Thanksgiving Day as we ought. It is so difficult, that it is altogether impossible for the world. Though they must, yet they cannot. But even for the Christian it is not easy. Especially not when we consider that we must give thanks in everything and for all things. In fact, also for him it is impossible for the flesh.

But also here the impossible with man has been made possible by God, and the secret of our strength is in Christ. For through Him we have been reconciled with God, we have been made heirs of the world to come, and we know that all things work together for our good.

And by grace looking to Him, we too experience and confess that we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us, also when it comes to giving thanks. In fact, through Him it has been made possible to be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and with a view to the future, with our minds and hearts to rest in God.

Hence, on Thanksgiving Day, it will not be a question first of all of a nice turkey or an abundant harvest, nor even whether we are healthy or sick, but rather whether we can say with the Heidelberg Catechism: “This is my Comfort, I am not my own but belong to my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

May we firmly stand in that assurance, for His Word stands: “Give thanks in everything, for that is the will of God concerning you!”

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FEATURE

(Continued from page 3)
a saint being in the service, for this is not true by any means. As I mentioned before, it is very difficult to walk in the way of our Lord when we are separated from the church, and many times it is difficult to distinguish between the Christian serviceman and the world. But when our Father takes us in this low state of our depravity and through grace leads us in the way of salvation, we see how merciful and gracious He is to us, unworthy though we be.

So friends, on this Thanksgiving Day, whether at home or away, let us not only contemplate on our material blessings, but let us look toward the things that are spiritual. Let us give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the great privilege that we have, in that from childhood on, we can be under the pure preaching of His Word. Let us rejoice in our salvation!

And may that word not be for our condemnation, but may it bear fruits unto salvation, and when we go out into the midst of the world, may we be shining lights in the midst of darkness, so that it may not only be said of us, but that it may be seen of us that we are covenant children of God.

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EDITORIALS

Continued from page 4

Our desire as Christian parents is also that our teachers and school supplement our home training by instructing our children to be good stewards over the money and material things God has entrusted to their care.

God grant that in that day He may say to us, “Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

(Paper given at PTA meeting, Prot. Ref. Chr. School, Oct. 9, 1952) —S.D.Y.
CURRENT COMMENTS

REV. L. DOEZEMA
Bellflower, California

THE CHRISTIAN SUPPLIANT

LAST TIME IN the October Current Comments your attention was called to the Christian voter. The important thing in October for the American public was the campaign for presidency, and the choice to be made in November with the ballot. At least that was the important thing before the public mind. It also is such for the Christian voter’s mind as he looks at his task as citizen.

When you read this issue of November the election is a thing of the past. It will have been determined for us who will be the next president of the United States.

Reflecting a bit upon the American scene and even that of the world I perceive a rise in demagoguery. A demagogue is defined as a speaker who seeks to make capital of social discontent and gain political influence. This is more evident with T.V. There is direct contact with the masses and everything is made of it to promise the masses their desires. Because of T.V. and radio there is a proportional rise in interest in government and in the realization of the power of the masses by the people themselves. I am reminded of Acts 12:3, 21-23, “And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, (that Herod had killed James, L. D.) he proceeded to seize Peter also.” “And upon a set day Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people shouted, saying, The voice of God and not of man.” The world and our country is in need of good rulers. After election day and after the taking of office the Christian’s duty as suppliant for the rulers comes to mind. We read in article 36 of our Belgic Confession, that it is the Christian’s bounden duty with respect to those in authority “to supplicate for them in their prayers that God may guide them in all their ways, and that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” This is according to the charge of Paul to Timothy, “I exhort, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity.”

The apostle is referring to public prayers of the church as is also evident from verse eight. It must be clearly understood, from the nature of prayer that such must be made with all sincerity, from the heart. The reference is never to formal, blind repetition without purpose. It also goes without saying that the apostle does not teach here something contradictory to his other teachings of God’s sovereign election. Nor does he teach that we should pray for salvation for all rulers without distinction. Verse 4, “who would have all men to be saved” does not mean all individuals. Weymouth translates more correctly in his New Testament, “who wishes all mankind to be saved.” The Belgic Confession correctly interprets the text as referring to the duty of the Church to pray for those in authority that God may guide them in all their
ways. That follows from the text which says that supplication should be made that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life (quiet and peaceable, A.V.).

What is that purpose and motive of this public prayer? It does not imply that the Christian life must be an idyllic, pastoral life, a life far removed from the maddening crowd. We are in this sinful and sin-cursed world and our calling is not to seek a false, selfish isolation for ourselves nor for America. We are called into war, into hospitals and death scenes, into a life of public corruption, a life among publicans and sinners, into an age of appalling responsibility and judgment. Our tranquil and quiet life is not outward therefore. It is not ordained for us and especially not for our youth and children. And we are not taught to seek such in itself. Such cannot be in harmony with godliness and gravity.

Our quietness and tranquility is within ourselves. In the storms and stress of life through prayer and such prayer as is here commanded, we have the peace which passeth all understanding.

How is this effected through our prayers? Surely we are thus submitting ourselves to rulers and acknowledge publicly that all their talents and powers are from God above. We show publicly that we are not Anabaptists or revolutionists, as the Belgic Confession points out. We also as Church of Christ on earth point the civil rulers to their calling to rule in justice and punish evil doers. (Romans 13).

Having prayed for righteousness in civic affairs through the rulers in godliness and gravity we shall have persecution, but we shall also have peace. We shall be persecuted even for well-doing, but shall count it an honor.

As the Church grows into its calling, the antithesis is revealed.

A NATURAL RESULT

In April this year a boy fourteen years of age, with a younger companion, shot and killed a miner as he was entering his home. They took $19.00 from the man’s billfold and left.

At the trial of the older boy he pleaded guilty. The prosecutor asked the judge not to impose the death penalty or life imprisonment. So the consignment was to forty-two years in the state reformatory.

The prosecutor blamed the boy’s act on a broken home (his mother was twice divorced) and “the reading of comic books and listening to crime programs over the radio.”

“He became a dreamer who thought in terms of things he had learned by so reading and listening.”

So the man of the world believes that what your child reads and sees does mold his life. Do you believe this?

GIFTS RECEIVED

We acknowledge with thanks the following gifts for our magazine:

Eunice Society (2nd) ... $20.00
Priscilla Society (1st) ... 20.00
Jean Dertien ............. 3.25
Mrs. E. Blaauw ......... 1.25
Mr. and Mrs. P. Koster .. 3.25
2nd Singspiration ......... 45.19
Miscellaneous ........... 2.75

Servicemen’s Fund
Pella and Oskaloosa
 Congregations ............ $25.25
THE BENEFICENT GOAL
OF LABOR

WE HAVE seen in the preceding article that the divinely ordained purpose of labor lies in its beneficent productivity.

Now in the sinless creation in which this fundamental ordinance was first announced we can quite readily imagine the pursuit and realization of this purpose. We can imagine Adam and Eve occupied with the cultivation and development of the created paradise-world, where they would bring forth children, create a family life and altogether experience and enjoy the riches of God’s beautiful, wonderful world and on an ever richer level experience the life of communion, fellowship, neighbor-and-brother virtues, so that all their activity ended in the acknowledgement and praise of God out of whom all these wonderful things issue.

But what must we say of this after sin has entered into the situation to blast and disrupt all these relations?

In essence we shall have to hold that this same principle and ordinance is still the rule, even though it seems to dash against the facts that seem to contradict it.

For there are indeed such facts.

We can think of the slave who is simply made to do work regarding which he has nothing to say and which seems utterly valueless as to production. Then there is the fact that the earth is subjected to the curse of vanity and does not escape the ultimate decay of all its products and developments.

How many are doomed to work merely for pay so that the ultimate value of their work hardly appears or occurs to the mind.

And then there is the evil fruit that a work, in itself good, brings forth, or there is finally the cursed fruit that a valueless work brings about.

Can we in the light of all this still hold to the principle that our work must be motivated by the beneficent fruit?

We are forced to ask this question seriously in the light of the above objections. And still we must answer it positively.

Just as well after the fall in paradise as before it, the purpose of labor is its beneficence. Not destructive but constructive work is the calling and the pleasure of the servants of the Lord. Not ruin and waste, but building, healing, helping is the direction still.

That is the law of God, more specifically the second table of the Decalogue, also as this is worked out in detail in the Mosaic legislation, which provides that man shall work toward the welfare, security, comfort and life of his neighbor. And this is carried out in the New Testament by many precepts that teach, that man must “labor with his own hands to produce the good” Eph. 4:28, that he may also have something to distribute to the poor (idem). It is prescribed that he who will not work shall not eat. And men working with quietness shall provide their own bread. If
Thes. 3:6-13. Here the principle is that a man may not be unnecessarily burdensome to his fellowmen, but that he must provide the good for himself and others.

The teaching of the Saviour points in this same direction, namely to give to the needy, food, clothing and shelter, and to feed even the enemy if he is hungry.

That is the principle involved in the action of the merciful Samaritan and likewise it is testified of the Savior that He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil. He challenged the opponents with the question: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm; to save a life or to destroy it. And likewise, the question, Who of you will not help his sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath? Matt. 12:12; Luke 6:9.

We may not forget here that these works were done by the Son of God as a testification of His saving power and mission, but this testimony lay exactly in the presupposition that they are good, desirable, helpful restorative healing, and as such pleasing to God and worthy of honor by men.

This is not of course a matter of debasing the great works of the Son of God in order to find support for a (Liberalistic) social gospel, but it is in line with the second table as expounded by our Catechism. According to it, the Sixth Command implies, “...mercy and all kindness toward (the neighbor, and preventing his hurt as much as in us lies, and that we do good even to our enemies”. So on the Eighth Command (L.D., Q. 111) “That I promote the advantage of my neighbor in every instance I can or may.”

And once more this is the conduct becoming to the children of the Heavenly Father who causes His beneficent rain and sunshine to come on all alike (Matt. 5:44) who does good from heaven giving rain and fruitful seasons filling men’s hearts with food and gladness (Acts 14:17).

When this is the goal of the Christian’s labor and service it reaches its purpose in the glory and honor of God. For it bears testimony that the Law of God is good and that God is good in all His requirements. In the words of Romans 12:2 it proves and demonstrates what the will of God is, that it is good, that it is well-pleasing, that it is perfect. And thus it is evident that when the outcome is ruin and misery, then it is not because God’s will and ordinances are wrong, but it is because of the perversion of these good ordinances by depraved man.

It is remarkable that in our practical life we follow this principle more or less. In the most obvious cases we all accept that.

In a nurse, for example, we naturally expect that she shall do her best to alleviate suffering, to heal, to restore to health. That certainly is the minimum.

In a school teacher we apply the same standard. We expect her to do everything reasonable to teach the children in the best way possible. We are not at all thinking of a certain amount of hours a certain number of chapters in a book, a certain amount of words that she must speak, or sentences she must write. That she shall strive to teach the children is the accepted minimum.

So it is with a custodian of a public building, likewise with a house-keeper in a home. (Should it be home-keeper?)

That is why many people are employed on the basis of their special aptitudes, the reward for their work implies this and they are placed on their own initiative with the words, “You just use your own judgment in an unforeseen incident, do your best, deliver as good a work as you can and we will be satisfied.” Here the goal is presupposed, regardless of

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LIFTING THE LID

MODERNISM

Part VI

STRIPPED OF ITS CLOAK
OF PIETY

THERE IS nothing essentially new about Modernism. It already existed in Jesus’ day. It is that wicked, abominable, hypocritical, self-righteous, self-complacent, outwardly pious, and inwardly corrupt, of this world, the false, apostate church, whose prince is the devil. It is that wicked adulteress that denies that Jesus is the Christ. It is she that crucifies Christ afresh and perpetually sheds the blood of the saints. In the twenty third chapter of St. Matthew our Lord Jesus Christ give a perfect description of the hypocrites of His day and no less in our day. I will refer to this portion of Scripture rather frequently throughout this installment. In my former installments I have showed how these modern Pharisees, sitting at Moses’ seat, bind heavy burdens upon men’s shoulders, while they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers; how they shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men; for they do not enter in themselves, neither do they suffer those who are entering in to enter, because they reject the Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Door to the Kingdom of Heaven, and teach men to enter into the Kingdom through some other way (John 10:1-18); how they love the chief seats in the churches, blast a trumpet whenever they give alms, and for a pretence make long prayers from the house-tops to be seen of men, while they devour widow’s houses. Space does not permit me to list the infinite number of devices they employ to rob the poor financially, physically, morally and spiritually. Does not the hire of their laborers who mowed their fields, which of them is kept back by fraud, cry out into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. And does not the blood of many an innocent lad, who are daily being butchered by modern warfare, the result of the lust and greed for wealth and power by the men on high places, cry out unto their Maker? And so do the infinite number of heartaches of their loved ones cry out. The same is true of the countless number of starving, homeless hoary heads, women and children in war torn areas. In the coming Judgment Day it will be more tolerable (Thank God!) for many an inhabitant of our modern Sodoms and Gomorras than it will be for these modern Pharisees. I am thinking of the countless victims of dope, narcotics, gambling, drinking, and of the education obtained from Hollywood, radio, television, the public school, comic books, and other carnal literature. Let us not forget the poor victims of juvenile delinquency (or rather parental delinquency). Do not these modern Pharisees condone the above sins and continually connive with wicked men in order to call evil good and good evil?

I have also shown how these modernists compass land and sea to make one proselyte. And presently we shall see that when he is become so, they make him twofold more a son of hell than themselves. Just WHAT do these modernist ministers (!!??) preach about, seeing they reject the Holy Scriptures, crucify Christ afresh continually, and exalt man as a god in place of the Living God. Their sermons serve three purposes which do not concern the Church at all. The first is to entertain. This
is accomplished by book reviews, essays, the reading of poetry, and lectures on subjects of "intellectual interest". Yes, full well do these modernists cast aside the Bible as their rule of faith and life. Instead they turn to the vain philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, Shakespeare, Scott, Voltaire, Karl Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche, and other blind leaders of the blind. The second purpose is to benefit man. This is achieved through talks on how to win friends and influence people, how to develop a magnetic personality, and how to get ahead socially. Yes, these modern hypocrites will lay law upon law, and precept upon precept concerning modern etiquette and strictly enforce and hold fast to them, while they leave the commandments of God. They tithe mint, anise and cummin, but leave out the weightiest matters, such as, justice, mercy and faith. The stiff, prudish decorum of modern society is but a thin coat of varnish to cover up their works of darkness. (Mark 7:1-23.) And let us as true Christians BEWARE that we do not fall under this same condemnation. There are more worthwhile things to talk about before and after church services than the personal appearances and mannerisms of a brother or sister in Christ. The third purpose of modernistic sermons is to promote a social creed for the physical and material betterment of mankind: for example the improving of labor conditions, the abolition of child labor, and the extension of help to the unemployed. These objectives are NOT the concern of the church at all. Yet the propaganda for minimum wage laws, propaganda for labor unionism, propaganda for redistribution of wealth is spread forth from pulpits and mission stations all over the world in accordance with the program of the Federal Council. Dr. E. Stanley Jones, leading mouthpiece of the Federal Council, openly advocates church ac-

tion to invent that political and economic machinery necessary to carry out the social revolution whereby capitalism will be destroyed and the cooperative society brought into existence. Dr. Jones identifies the Kingdom of God with a political program aiming at the establishment of a collectivist political dynasty and dominion. This is nothing more than Communism pure and simple. It is a proven fact that many leaders of the liberal churches are also active leaders in Communistic organizations in the U.S. Modernistic leaders do nothing more than to promote the cause of Antichrist, which to my mind will emerge from the false, apostate church. They are also used by the devil to deceive the nations, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the Battle of Armagedon. (Rev.16:12-16; 20:7-9).

Jesus also likens the hypocrites unto white washed sepulchres, which look beautiful on the outside, but inwardly they are full of stinking dead men's bones and all uncleanness; and like those that clean the outside of the cup and of the platter but within they are full of extortion and excess. Must we go to the "red light" or hoodlum districts of New York or Chicago in order to find the most spiritually and morally depraved person living today? My answer is an emphatic NO! You can find them everywhere sitting in beautiful church pews on Sunday, that blast a trumpet before every good deed they do in order to obtain the praise of men and to flatter their own selfish sinful pride. They can hardly wait until the service is over in order to resume their works of their father, the devil. Amos 8:4-6, Isaiah 5:18-23. These are the people that indulge, support, and connive in all manner of sins, such as the dance hall, the liquor traffic, the night clubs, Hollywood, the gambling dens, that hypocritical, nefarious antichristian,
satanic lodge system of our day; the slaughter of innocent victims in modern warfare (let us not forget those that are maimed for life and those that will spend the rest of their days in hospitals and in insane asylums); that wicked, law defying, troublesome labor union racket; the perversion of justice within our worldly courts, and many other sins which are too numerous to mention. It is exactly those kind of people that Jesus refers as a nest of venomous snakes. And if it were not for the Grace of God we would be just like them and would fall under the same condemnation.

The Modernists also build and garnish the graves of the righteous. During the Passion Week many so-called christians will shed crocodile tears for that “good man Jesus”. The same is true of the prophets, apostles, and reformers such as Elijah, Isaiah, Peter, Paul, Luther, Calvin, etc. Oh, if they had been in the days of their fathers, they certainly would have not persecuted nor killed them. Yet these hypocrites are filling up the measure of their fathers. Yes, they are exactly those christians that want all kinds of worldliness within the church and brand all those who conscientiously object to the same, as narrow minded, old fashioned, fanatical, etc. Even today many true servants of our Lord and Saviour are unjustly and rudely expelled from office, simply because they preach against sin and Modernism. These cases are not uncommon in our day and age. And it will be only a very little while when the Anti-christ will be ushered in by the false church. And when we, by the Grace of God, will not be able to buy or to sell because we refuse to wear the mark of the beast; there will be many christians (so-called) that will refuse us even a crust of bread or a drop of water, for the simple reason that we “refuse to work”. Yes, there will be many that will say, “Lord, Lord, have we not by thy name did many mighty works?” And Jesus will say, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, sick, naked, and in prison, and ye ministered not unto Me . . . .in as much as ye did it not unto the least of these, my brethren, ye did it not unto me.” —Matt. 25:41-45.

TRUTH VS. ERROR

(Continued from page 12)

the processes and steps that reach it. That goal is the good, the efficient.

There is one thought that we must now add as arising from this principle. This principle, namely, implies that we cannot just retire because we have accumulated “a comfortable little roll.”

If it is the principle of labor that we must do good, help the wretched, feed the hungry, be sons of the Heavenly Father in this that we do good as He does, then certainly he that has good health and special gifts of service (whether of labor or craft, or management or business) may not roll these gifts in a napkin. He has these gifts to use, to do good, “to promote the advantage of the neighbor in every instance he can or may . . . faithfully labor so that I may be able to relieve the poor.”

One cannot whitewash himself by blackening others.
The Military Mail Bag

Hello Buddies:

Military Mail Bag has just received some wonderful news. The strict censorship which formerly kept our Protestant Reformed servicemen from writing to this column has just recently been lifted.

Yezzer! The letters are coming in nicely once again and we of course are very happy. Hope the censor remains friendly to us.

Cpl. Albert Visser from Germany, Pvt. Tom Sjoerdema from Korea, and Pfc. Vernon De Vries from North Carolina are the contributors for this month’s column.

First with the date, September 11, is Albert Visser. He writes:

Dear Friends:

Short Timer, that’s what they say out here. Yes I am a very short-timer here in Germany. Only eight more days and I’ll be leaving for the Z. I. (Stateside to you civilians) again.

If all is well I hope to be back in Manhattan by the 15th of October. Between now and then I’ll be doing a lot of traveling.

I’ll give you a brief sketch of what I have been doing out here in Germany.

We have been in the field about 65% of the time. We have been out on the firing ranges a number of times. Besides this we have our field problems.

The passes in our outfit were few and far between. I did have three seven-day passes while I was overseas.

Two of them I spent in Holland, a very beautiful country. I had a chance to visit my relatives.

The last furlough is still very fresh in my memory. We went to Gormich, Germany, Switzerland and Paris. I went with two other fellows from my company and we had a swell time.

Being in the Army isn’t so nice and I do miss the church life. Yet it was worth while and I saw many things I would never have seen otherwise.

While I was in service I enjoyed the B. L. more than any other paper. Especially enjoyed the Military Mail Bag. I also enjoyed the Radio sermons.

Yours in Christ,

Al.

Thanks for the letter Al. Hope you didn’t get seasick on the way back.

Tom Sjoerdsma—the floor is yours.

16 Sept. 1952
2030 hrs.

Dear Friends:

I have just received the June and August issues of B.L. and it was a great thrill to get them. We just don’t know how we appreciate the church papers and magazines until we are separated from them for awhile. But I’m glad I receive them now and want to thank you for it.
I have been in Korea for three months now and at present am driving a truck. I bring "chow" to the boys on the front lines. The work is rather dangerous at times but we have Faith in the Lord at all times and believe that no harm can befall us unless it is His will. It is a great comfort to have that assurance.

The articles in the B.L. are very edifying because we don't get to hear very many good sermons. They are mostly just Bible stories which we hear over and over again.

Well I think I'll close for now. Don't get too much time to write but I had to tell you how much I appreciate your sending the B.L. May the Lord richly bless your Kingdom work.

So long,
Your friend,
Tom Sjoerdsma

Don't let that letter be the last Tom. We certainly enjoyed it.

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Our last letter is from Vernon De Vries.

Dear Friends:

I received my first copy of B.L. a few days ago and really enjoyed reading it. Thanks very much. Our church papers mean a lot to a serviceman away from home.

I entered the service the 15th of May. I went from Pella to Des Moines, Iowa where I was inducted into the Marine Corps and sent to San Diego, Cali-

forria where I received my boot training.

After boot camp I enjoyed a ten day leave and was sent to Camp Le Jeune, North Carolina. I am attached to a machine gun platoon. Our training consists mostly of classes and some field problems.

I have my wife here with me. We live in Jacksonville, about five miles from the base. It sure is nice to get away from the base evenings and weekends.

Well, I will sign off for this time.

With Christian Greetings,
Your friends,

Vern and Marilyn

I still can't get over it. Three letters in one month. Keep it up, PLEASE. You have no idea how much we appreciate hearing from you.

We'll be seeing you next month, the Lord willing.

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Seeing an unused Bible lying about in his home, a small boy asked his mother whose book it was. "It is God's book," she is reported to have said. "Well," replied the boy, "don't you think we ought to return it? Nobody seems to read it!"—Selected.

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As long as a Christian lives and thinks Christ, the cause of Missions will not suffer.
LESSON 37

The Woman’s Place in the Assembly of Saints

I Cor. 11:2-16

In the following chapters Paul gives infallible direction to the Church concerning matters of order in divine assembly. Chap. 11 touches on two of these namely: the woman’s place in the service and, the proper observance of the Lord’s Supper. Our present lesson treats the first of these two. God’s Word deals with living issues. Let scientists argue what the other side of the moon looks like, God’s Word touches actual life.

In studying this lesson bear in mind the peculiar situation in Corinth. The purpose of these verses is not to bind women today to veil-wearing nor to stipulate how long her hair should be. The purpose of these verses is to remind women of all ages that God in the beginning made the woman subject to man (her own husband in particular) and she is to observe that in the church. In Corinth an unveiled woman meant an emancipated woman, and therefore the present passage emphasizes it as a woman’s task to let her subjection be known.

After commending the Corinthians for keeping the Apostolic ordinances and being concerned about the Truth, (vs. 2) Paul proceeds to re-emphasize a point of that Truth. The point is (vs. 8) that salvation is an orderly thing. Christ is the head of every man, man is the head of the woman, God is the head of Christ.

Headship here refers to authority, government. Christ came to earth to do God’s will (not His own) and thus subjected Himself to God. Redeemed man is subjected to Christ. And now the woman must be subjected to the man. This principle is binding for all ages. A point of divine order.

If a man has a covering (or a veil) over his head (vs. 4) he denies the position God originally gave him, puts himself on the level of the woman and brings shame upon himself. If a woman appears in the assembly with her head unveiled (vs. 5) she puts herself on the level of the man. She might as well be shaved, have her hair cut, so everyone could despise her (vs. 6). Then we have disorder.

What is the relation of man to woman?

Man is the image and glory of God (vs. 7). God put man in the glory-position of being “first”, having government and authority from God. In that sense he is the image and glory of God. The woman was “second”. She is (to reveal by her conduct) the glory of the man (vs. 7). If she lords it over the man she simply says that man has no glory. She is to take her proper place toward him and enhance his glory position. Therefore the man ought to have an uncovered head, the woman a covering.

How was it in the beginning? Yes, beginnings are important with God. Christ went back to beginnings too in the matter of divorce. Man was first (vs. 8). Eve was created out of Adam. First in time but also in purpose. Eve
was created a helpmeet for Adam, not vice versa (vs. 9). Because of this creation ordinance the woman ought to have a covering upon her head to declare that she is under the power of the man (vs. 10). The angels respect authority, and they (as present in the assembly) rejoice to see respect for authority in the church. Women, let the angels see your respect for authority.

Don’t conclude now that the woman is inferior. Neither man nor woman is complete without the other (vs. 11-12). In the Lord all are alike inheritors of glory. They need each other. As the woman is of the man, so in turn the man is also by (that is, born of) the woman. So God made the relationship. What is a king without subjects, and what are subjects without a king? God created the sexes for (toward) one another. Let each take the assigned place. And while, in Corinth, it is necessary to show this by wearing a veil, wear a veil.

Even nature teaches you that the woman’s long hair suggests a covering, the man’s shorter hair suggests his authority (vs. 13-15). But we want no contentions in the church (vs. 16). Let each take the place Christ has assigned, that is good for you and for the reputation of the church.

Questions for Discussion

1. Does vs. 5 suggest that at that time women prayed and prophesied? Cf. I Tim. 2:8-15. Also I Cor. 14:34.

2. Women have ability to teach and they did teach (cf. Lois and Eunice, Priscilla, etc.). What are the restrictions? Which are the opportunities left? (I Cor. 14:34 is evidently a restriction.

3. Abraham had to hearken to Sarah once upon a time (Cf. Gen. 21:12).

LESSON 38

The Lord’s Supper as Christ Instituted It

(I Cor. 11:17-34)

IN THE FIRST part of the chapter Paul has dealt with the place of women in the church. In this part he deals with the Lord’s Supper and how it is to be observed when the church comes together. Paul cannot praise them. They profane the Lord’s Supper. They celebrate it after their own whims. So Paul has to say to them: (vs 20) as for the way you are celebrating it, it is not the Lord’s Supper at all. Christ would not recognize it. I have received from the Lord what the Lord’s Supper is (vs. 23) and you must hold yourself to Christ’s institution (vs. 26-28). Because you are not doing it, God is manifestly judging you (vs. 30).

To understand this situation, it seems that the congregation came together weekly to eat and drink religiously. They had, what we might call, the “love-feasts”. Each brought a basket, together they ate. After the meal they likely took some of the bread and the wine and went right on into a celebration of the Holy Supper. When Paul says in vs. 17 that they come together for worse, sin must have crept into this church custom, as sin has a way of creeping into everything we do. It’s in vs. 21 that Paul points his finger at the sin. He says: everyone of you just goes ahead to get his hands on as much of the food as he can. Instead of waiting for (and on, vs. 33) one another, the rich men with their big baskets of food got all they wanted, and their few select friends got enough too. They became drunk. But the Christian slaves, and other poor people, who had no baskets, just went hungry and looked on while the others ate. So, while some were stuffed with
food, and others hungry, they commenced to celebrate the Communion.

That is not the Lord’s Supper (vs. 20). I heard, says Paul, that there are schisms among you (vs. 18, divisions). Worse yet, these schisms reveal that you have heresies. A schism is a heresy coming out into the open. A heresy is a departure from the revealed faith. There must be heresies among you (vs. 19). When heretics stand out, the faithful stand out too. God uses them for the purification of the church and for underscoring what grace the faithful have. The approved of God become manifest.

To return to the matter of the Lord’s Supper then, if you are hungry, eat at home (vs. 22, 34). You despise the church of God by treading upon the poor and you glory as a “have” over against a “have-not”. The Lord’s Supper as Christ commanded me to institute it in the churches is quite a different thing (23-26). There Christ, on the night when He stood with His face toward the Cross, hesitated not to give Himself for His Church. You people bring baskets of food and each seizes what he can, selfishly. But not so with Christ. Christ GAVE His own Body, His Blood, His Life. He did not serve Himself. He GAVE Himself for His people.

Beware of partaking unworthily, as an unfit. (vs. 27). If you profess to be proclaiming the death of Christ, but in the meantime deny His death by your selfish conduct, you profane the Communion Table. You make it seem as if Christ’s death is calculated to support you in your wickedness. Paul condemns not only the particular sin of these Corinthian: but all profanation (Catechism Ques. 82).

Examine yourself (vs. 28). Instead of stuffing yourself with worldly lusts and then casually going to the Table, examine yourself, know your sins, be truly penitent and so come to the table. In Corinth God had evidently made very plain His judgment against profaners. God sent judgments (vs. 30). Some became sick, some impotent, some had actually died. God was literally judging among them. It is better that we judge (or scrutinize) ourselves and conclude that we are being disciplined of the Lord for our wrong doing. God chastizes those Whom He loves, to deliver them from the condemnation under which the world lies (vs. 32). So holy is, then, the Communion. God stands guard over it with great jealousy. He knows you and me. Let our self-examination lead, not to Pharisaism, but to richer faith in Christ’s meritorious work, and to give ourselves for one another as Christ gave Himself for us.

Questions for Discussion

1. Acts 2:42 and 2:46, Acts 20:11 speak about breaking of bread. Discuss. Did they do it every day, every week, or what? Could we conclude that Christ instituted the Lord’s Supper to be observed as often as the faithful came together?

2. “Discerning the Lord’s Body.” (vs. 29). Did they fail to see the Lord’s Body IN the bread, as connected with the bread, or what? Joh. 6:54.

3. Wherein does the self-examination consist? (Cf. Lord’s Supper Form). Cf. also Catechism Ques. 81.

LESSON 39

Flood of Spiritual Gifts

(I Cor. 12:1-11)

THE LAKE WAS far too small. The flooding rains came. The rising waters burst through gates and dams, swirled over piers and beaches and covered the country for miles around. That thought
comes to me as I approach chapter 12 of Corinthians about how the Spirit flooded the Church with gifts. A river flows from the throne of God (Ezek. 47). A fountain is opened (Joel 3:18). The Spirit of the ascended Christ comes into the Church and it floods the church with the riches of Him, “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (Col. 2:3).

I Cor. 12 is evidence of how the Spirit of Christ has come, how it saturates, as it were, the believers, runs over the hearts and lips of the faithful and becomes a grand display of what God can do for them that fear Him. Gifts of healing, of interpretation, of miracles, all kinds of gifts. Joel had spoken of it that sons and daughters would prophesy, that old men, young men, servants and maidens would be energized (Joel 2). Pentecost was proof of it (Acts 2). Signs shall follow them said Jesus (Mk. 16:17-18) and here in Corinth it still rained “charismata” — (special gifts). Where such energizing powers filled the early church it was needful that there be order. The Corinthians must know the why and the wherefore of these gifts, be careful in using them in dedication and humility. Where there is so much energy, order is extremely necessary.

So in vs. 1 Paul begins his directive concerning these gifts and their use unto edification. I do not want you to be ignorant about these things, says Paul, neither do I want you to become sectarian or superstitious with what you have. Formerly many of the Corinthians were heathens, blindly letting Satan and his heathen priests lead them to idols (vs. 2). And what could a dumb idol do for his devotees? A dumb idol cannot speak, nor give gifts. But the God we worship can speak and, speaking, He can bless us with gifts from the sky and you see these gifts in the church. Even to open our mouths to confess Jesus, that is a gift of God (Matt. 16:17). If anyone in the church claims to have the “gift” but meanwhile says: let Jesus be cursed, mark that man as a liar. Where the Spirit of God is, there you hear the good confession. The greatest gift we have from heaven is this: that we have grace to confess Him.

From vs. 4 forward, Paul enumerates or rather takes inventory of the gifts God gave unto the believers. There are varieties of gifts (vs. 4) and Paul will explain that in just a moment, but he wants first to emphasize that they all come to the believers and are distributed to them, parcelled out to them, by the same Holy Spirit. Paul, in vs. 4-6, points the Church to the Triune God as the “overflowing fountain of all good.” What have we that we have not received?

With these gifts we must serve the general good (vs. 7). God gives to each as He pleases, and each is to use his gift unto the profit of others. That is the communion of saints (Catechism 55). The Corinthians are in danger of abusing the gifts and using them for selfish designs. Grieve not the Holy Spirit, brethren. Remember the communion of saints. Let each church member today too discover the gift he has of God and then use that gift “for the advantage and salvation of other members.” So Paul enumerates the various gifts which they had in the early church. Notice the sovereign distribution; the diversity. Nine kinds of gifts are mentioned. Here is a brother in the church who has the “word of wisdom”, i.e., he receives special revelations and sees things others do not see (I Cor. 14:26). Here is one who has a word of knowledge, i.e., he can exegete, explain and expound revelation. This one has the gift of faith, i.e. special ability to testify of the Christian doctrine so that no man can resist him (Acts 6:10). An-
other has the power to heal the sick, another to work such miracles as raising the dead, still another can give prophecy (Acts 21:11), another is a genius at judging whether a given message comes from God or from the imagination of some unstable person. Another speaks in foreign languages and still another translates and applies what was said (vs. 8-10).

And all this gift-display is worked by the Spirit. There is ONE God. The gifts reveal that unity and the communion of saints must reflect a unity also. All these things come from God, in service to the brotherhood, they must return to God.

Questions for Discussion

1. Is it correct to say that the early church had these special gifts, but we have lost them? Is the church poorer today than it was then, or richer?

2. Some have the work of special office in the church, some hold general duties, but how will all function? Or what does the communion of saints (Cat. Q. 55) mean in practical church life today?

3. Would you speak of unbelievers as being “talented” or having gifts to do certain things?

LESSON 40

Many Members, One Body
(I Cor. 12:12-20)

AS IN EPHESIANS 4 and Romans 12, here too the Scripture distinguishes the church from anything there is in the world. It is unique. It is His new creation in Christ. Paul is still speaking in this connection of the “gifts” which God has sovereignly given to His Church. THE gift is the Holy Spirit, and that Spirit divides to every man severally as He will (vs. 11). If therefore every believer has a gift, what then? Shall they live along side of each other, or compete with each other, or be jealous of and envious toward one another? By no means. Christ is ONE. Is Christ divided?, Paul had earlier asked in this epistle to the Corinthians?

Vs. 12 starts out, not with an “and” but with a “for”, explaining vs. 11. Unity amid variety. The Church of Christ is presented under the figure of a human body. As the body has many members, yet all the members are one body... so also is Christ. You might have expected Scripture to say: so also is the Church, but it says: so also is Christ. Pointing up, I think, the mystical union between Christ and the saints. We have something of this also in Joh. 17:21 and again when that voice from heaven says to the church-persecuting Saul: “why persecutest thou me” (I underscore the word ‘me’) Acts 9:4. Christ is ONE, and this glorious unity is seen in the Spirit-united saints.

This glorious unity is further elucidated in vs. 13. By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, rubbing out the racial and social distinctions. In Christ all become one. The baptism refers to that mighty work of the Spirit in the elect whereby they are ingrafted into Christ and all are made to drink into one Spirit, i.e., became genuinely partakers of that One Spirit. Our unity therefore lies in our being ingrafted into Christ. A thing the believers in Corinth did actually experience.

“For the body is not one member, but many,” vs. 14. There are Jews, Gentiles, bond, free and there are differences of gifts, etc. As in the human body there are feet, hands, eyes and ears, so in the church there are many members and all members of the body are useful. Paul speaks of this also in Eph. 4:16 and Rom. 12.
In vs. 15-17 he emphasizes unity and cooperation between the believers. Suppose the foot should complain that since it is not the hand, it is not of the body. Is that a correct conclusion? By no means. And suppose the ear should get the notion that since it is not the eye, it is of no use to the body. That too would be the wrong conclusion. The body needs ears as well as eyes. The body needs the many members and its welfare depends on these members functioning according to the gift. What would you have if the whole body were an eye, what would it do for hearing? If the whole body were hearing, what would it do for smelling? Would that not be chaos?

Very wisely and sovereignly God has set each individual member in the body so that it can carry its peculiar function toward the welfare of the entire body. If there were but one member there could be no body, neither could it be a body if there were not various members.

All this the Corinthians must remember. Some coveted the gifts others had, some sought to out-rush others, some compared themselves to others and concluded that they were useless. Let it not be so in the church. God has “set” the members in the body, and they must be neither proud nor envious. The primary thing is to be so filled with the Spirit and so united in that Spirit, that they may function as servants of Christ.

That is the communion of saints. God Himself creates that communion in Christ and the believers are exhorted to reveal it in their congregational living. Let there be no schism, no jealousy, no selfish ambitions, but unity.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the pluriformity of the Church?


3. Bear in mind Eph. 4:7-16 in discussion of the present lesson.

CHEROKEES SHAME US

The North Carolina Cherokee Indians have requested sightseers to stay away from their reservation on the Sabbath Days. They have been taught through the Cherokee Baptist Association to remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. But curious tourists flock in and make it impossible for the Christian Indians to quietly observe their services of worship. Too many professing Christians are joining the sinners’ parade of gallivanting motorists seeking their own pleasures on the Lord’s Day.

WHY HE QUIT GOING TO CHURCH

Farmer Jones had always attended church services regularly until the new minister arrived. A neighbor, surprised by his absence, inquired as to the reason for the change of attitude.

“Well,” said Brother Jones, “I always sold butter, milk and cheese to Rev. Williams. He patronized me and I patronized him. But when this new fellow came, he got a cow of his own, so I said to myself: ‘O.K.—if he wants to supply his own milk, I’ll show him that I can get along on homegrown religion.’"
THE TENTMAKER by Julius Berstl.
Published by Rinehart and Co., Inc.
Murray Hill, New York.

"The Tentmaker" is a novel based on the life of St. Paul. Or rather a novel of St. Paul up until the time that Paul becomes a missionary for the church of the New Dispensation.

The Author begins his story in the late childhood and early manhood of Saul who is called Shaul in the novel. He is pictured as a sensitive, inquisitive lad whose burning ambition it is to become a Rabbi in the Jewish faith. As a young man he incurs the wrath of his father Hanan, because he is more concerned with spiritual things than those earthly things which have made his father rich. Shaul is constantly sitting at the feet of Rabbi Manasse learning of the Promised Land of Canaan, the land of his forefathers. As Shaul becomes older this zeal for Canaan causes him to break with his fathers house and journey to Canaan and Jerusalem.

Once in Jerusalem Shaul studies at the feet of the Scribes and the Rabbis in the Temple. However the continual bickering and controversy amongst the Jews soon causes him to realize the Canaan of his dreams is not the reality. Finally in Jerusalem also, his soul finds no peace and he seeks release from his despair by seeking to be baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. However by the time he gets to the Jordan, John is killed by Herod, and Shaul seeks solace amongst the Essenes, a group which does not believe in sacrificing. It is while Shaul is with the Essenes that he hears of the crucifixion. His soul is tormented and he returns to Jerusalem.

Eventually after his return to Jerusalem Shaul finds it to be his calling to persecute the followers of Jesus and instigates the stoning of Stephen. Soon after this Shaul goes to Damascus and what happens there and enroute to the city, follows as we also know the history of that occasion. One glaring fallacy in this part of the novel is that the Author has Shaul talking to the Spirit of Stephen during the night previous to his enlightening.

These are many indications of an over active imagination on the part of the Author. Scripture does not reveal to us the exact nature of Paul’s early manhood. The reports concerning St. Paul as a young man are sparse and full of gaps. They are sufficient, nevertheless, to allow the apostle to appear as one of the liveliest figures of the New Testament. There are two ways of bringing the development of Paul’s character and of his view of life near to the reader of today: that of the historian (and theologian) and that of the artist. In this novel the Author has assumed the role of the novelist or dramatist, who like an artist is painting a new picture, and uses his art to convince the beholder of the liveliness and truthfulness of his representation. Apparently the Author has spent a great deal of time and effort in attempting to capture the funda-
mental mood of the peri the. The unrest and turmoil of Jerusalem at that time is vividly painted in words.

In scouring away the varnish of traditional concept, Julius Bierstl examines the remarkable personality of Paul from three vantage points—as a theologian, historian and poet. Out of the Author’s own conception then emerges not only one of the most fascinating men in his story, but also the three worlds in which he lived—the Jewish, Greek and Roman.

It is a study which may prove to be most interesting to some and not so to others. As a novel it concerns itself too much with many of the philosophies and theories of the period. As a collection of historical facts it contains too many additions in religious portraiture. It certainly is not worth its price of $3.50. It would not be fair to say that the book is dangerous for our young people. Its erroneous conception of many events in the history of Israel are immediately evident and should be no stumbling block to anyone acquainted with the fundamentals of our Reformed Faith.

THE VALUE OF BEING DEFINITE

These are days of religious indefiniteness. The more vague a man may be in stating what he believes, the better he seems to be in step with the times. Along with this indefiniteness has come a certain broadmindedness, which is hailed on all sides as a good thing. And yet there is danger in this situation. The question whether we are not really just becoming shallow while we think we are becoming broader. It is possible to see so many sides to a question that you yourself have no side at all.

IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS IN THE HOME

Dealing one night with an unsaved young man, a preacher engaged with him in the following exchange:

"Is your father a Christian?"
"Don't know; he has been a steward in the church for several years."
"Is your mother a Christian?"
"Don't know; she has been the superintendent of the Sunday school of the same church for some time."
"Have you a sister?"
"Yes, sir."
"Is she a Christian?"
"Don't know; she has charge of the primary department in the Sunday school."
"Do your father and mother ever ask the blessing at the table?"
"No, sir."
"Did your father, mother or sister ever ask you about being a Christian?"
"Mr. Preacher, as long as I can remember, my father, mother or sister never said a word to me about my soul. Do you believe they think I am lost?"

How many of our loved ones, or neighbors or friends, could justly bring the charge against us, "They don't act as though they believe we are lost?"