

PROTESTANT REFORMED
THEOLOGICAL
JOURNAL

This Journal is published and distributed in limited quantities, at no charge, by the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Interested persons desiring to have their names on the mailing list should address the Editor, Prof. H. Hanko, at the address of the school, 4949 Ivanrest Ave., S.W., Grandville, Michigan 49418.

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL
of the
PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCHES
Grandville, Michigan

April, 1976

Volume IX, No. 2

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EDITORIAL NOTES

-- Prof. H. Hanko --

From time to time we receive correspondence from our Journal readers in which you express your opinion of the various articles which appear. Sometimes you write questions concerning the ideas expressed. We appreciate such correspondence and promise to answer those letters which ask for an answer. Let us hear from you.

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In this issue we have something unique. The exegesis of the important passage in James 5 is completed in this issue. Prof. Decker is continuing his series on the pertinent question of the place of women in the Church. You may look for additional articles on this subject. Prof. Hoeksema is beginning a new series on the question of the simplicity of God's will. This series will be dealing with the vexing question of the legitimacy of the distinction between God's so-called hidden will and revealed will; or, as it is sometimes called: the distinction between God's will of decree and God's preceptive will. This distinction is especially important with respect to the whole question of the general offer of salvation.

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Prof. Decker will be lecturing shortly on the question of the place of women in the Church in the Grand Rapids area. If you live within driving distance of Grand Rapids, watch for announcements and attend this public lecture.

If you are not already a subscriber to the Standard Bearer, you will want to get this magazine to read a series of articles on the general offer of the gospel. This series is written by Rev. Engelsma. You may write to us for a subscription and we will see to it that your request gets to the proper office.

-- Prof. H. Hanko --

In our last two Journal articles, we presented a detailed exegesis of that important and significant passage in James 5:13-16. We ended our last article with a discussion of vs. 16 and pointed out that James is speaking here particularly of the relationships in which the saints live with each other in the church on earth. These relationships belong to what the Scriptures refer to as the communion of the saints. Within the communion of the saints the child of God finds the center of his life as a member of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. The fellowship which he has with the people of God is one of the greatest blessings which he possesses.

Nevertheless, although this fellowship is indeed a communion of the saints, the people of God, as long as they live on the earth, are still sinners. And the sins which the people of God commit are forces which work for the destruction of the church and the destruction of the fellowship which the saints have together. Just because the communion of the saints is emphatically a communion of saints, that communion can continue as a reality only in the sphere of holiness. Sin works for the destruction of these relationships because sin destroys this fellowship. And it is for this reason that James writes in vs. 16 of chapter 5: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

When the apostle speaks of the fact that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man has power, he means by this to encourage the people of God to heed the admonition which he has just made. The people of God might be tempted not to pray for one another because they might have the opinion that prayer is useless, or that perhaps prayer has no significance or importance as far as the communion of the saints is concerned. But James wants to assure the people of God that prayer is not useless and is not in vain, but rather that prayer will always accomplish that for which we ask. We need not fear that our prayers will never bring about the desired result. When we pray for one another, the bond which unites believers together will remain strong, and the communion of the saints will flourish. We must not doubt this, but we must be assured that our prayers will accomplish this goal.

In this present Journal article we intend to treat the rest of this chapter. Vss. 17 and 18 are directly connected with vs. 16. Vss. 17 and 18 read as follows:

"Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."

The apostle turns now to the example of Elijah and discusses the example of Elijah in the first place, to illustrate the truth which he set forth in the latter part of vs. 16. And in the second place, it is obvious from the language which the apostle uses, that he means to encourage us to pray for one another.

Elijah is described in the text as a man subject to like passions as we are.¹ The word in the Greek which is translated by the phrase, "subject to like passions", (ὁμοιοπαθής), really means to suffer the same thing as another or to suffer in like manner with another; and therefore, to have identical feelings or passions as another. Elijah is here described therefore, as being a man who is similar to us with respect to our affections, feelings, and passions.

The question quite naturally arises: Why does the apostle see fit to remind us of this? Why is it necessary for the text to emphasize the fact that Elijah was like us in this respect? The answer is that the text anticipates a possible objection on our part which we might raise. This objection which we might raise might take on different forms. On the one hand, we might ~~object~~ object to the fact that our prayers do not have the kind of power which James describes. And it is in answer to this objection that the apostle refers to the example of Elijah. But on the other hand, we might also object to the example of Elijah himself. We might think the example is somewhat irrelevant. And we might think that the example is somewhat irrelevant because of the fact that Elijah was a man specially chosen by God for a great work. He was appointed as a prophet in Israel. He

¹.The Greek here is rather interesting. It reads, Ἠλίας ἄνθρωπος ἦν ὁμοιοπαθής ἡμῖν. ὁμοιοπαθής is the predicate adjective. ἡμῖν is dative of comparison.

was appointed as a prophet in a time of great apostasy. The greater part of the record of Elijah's life is found recorded in I Kings 17, 18, 19, although references to his work are found also in later parts of this book. From these passages we learn that Elijah was a man of tremendous faith and was one therefore, who towers above us in many respects. It is because of the power of the faith of Elijah and the tremendous courage which he displayed in times of great apostasy in the northern kingdom that we might be reluctant to compare ourselves with him, and we might be tempted to conclude that the example of Elijah is not a pertinent example because he was so much greater than we. We who are so weak and sinful can never hope to attain to the height of faith which Elijah attained and to the victory which he accomplished on the summit of Mt. Carmel.

It is this objection which is answered by this sentence. It is true indeed, that Elijah was a prophet; but we learn from the Scriptures that in the New Dispensation all God's people who have the anointing of the Spirit of Christ are also prophets.² It is true indeed that we are sinful, weak, and frail men who have a daily struggle with our infirmities and sins; and who often sink in the struggle. But this was true of Elijah as well. We need only look at him under the juniper tree with all hope gone and the pallor of defeat on his face as he prayed to the Lord that he might die. Listen to his bitter complaint: "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." I Kings 19:4. It is with this in mind that the apostle reminds us of the fact that Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are. Although indeed he was a prophet, and although indeed he was a man of great faith and courage, nevertheless he was like us. Hence the question is not: what was he? or, what are you and I? The question is: What is the power of God's grace which made him what he was, and which can and does make us men of faith and men of prayer? Hence the example of Elijah is a pertinent example ideally suited to spur us on in our calling to pray for one another.

* * * *

² See e.g., I John 2:27; Heb. 8:10,11.

The example of Elijah is first of all the example of his prayer that it might not rain.³

In order to understand this prayer of Elijah we must first of all bring to mind the occasion for it as it is recorded for us in I Kings 17. Wicked Ahab and his wicked Queen Jezebel from Phoenecia sat on the throne of Israel. These two godless people had instituted a period of terrible apostasy. Under the influence of Jezebel, the worship of Baal, the god of the Phoenecians, had been introduced into Israel. The nation itself had been instructed in the worship of Baal. Ahab and Jezebel had tried as best they could to eradicate completely the true worship of God. They had done this by killing God's prophets and by persecuting God's people so that the church was, so to speak, driven underground. This is evident from I Kings 18:7-16, where we read that Obadiah, the steward in the house of Ahab, had hid a hundred men of the Lord's prophets by 50 in a cave and fed them with bread and water. Baal worship had become the national religion.

Under these circumstances, Elijah had appeared on the scene. He appeared suddenly from the region of Gilead clothed in camel's hair and with an air of terrible seriousness about him. One day, unexpectedly, he appeared on the steps of the palace of Jezreel, and announced to the king and to all Israel: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." This was the prayer to which James in his epistle refers. This was the prayer which was answered and heard.

There are several important things about this prayer which we must observe. In the first place, the prayer was without question the prayer of a man righteous before God. James refers, in vs. 16, to the prayer of a righteous man. Elijah was such a righteous man.

³.The literal reading of the text here is very interesting: καὶ προσευχῇ προσήγατο τοῦ μὴ βρέξαι. The translation of this is literally, "and he prayed with a prayer in order that it might not rain." The infinitive, βρέξαι, is the aorist active infinitive of βρέχω. It is the articular infinitive in the genitive case used here to express purpose. The idea is therefore, that Elijah prayed by means of a prayer with the purpose in mind that it might not rain. This emphasizes very strongly not only the content of Elijah's prayer, but also the reason why he prayed.

He was a man righteous because he believed in the promise of God and because he represented in Israel God's cause. His very name, which means, "My God is Jehovah," expressed his calling in the midst of the historical development of God's covenant. The whole northern kingdom, led by the example of Ahab and Jezebel and under the pressure of their persecution, shouted, "Our god is Baal." Against the whole nation of Israel therefore, stood Elijah the prophet who by his very name said, "My God is Jehovah."

In the second place, the prayer which Elijah made is a prayer in harmony with the will of God. We have no knowledge from the sacred text itself whether God actually sent Elijah with this message to Jezreel. Most probably God did this, but it makes no essential difference. The Scriptures are quite clear on the point that this was indeed the will of God. In Deuteronomy 28:15 ff., the Lord through the mouth of His servant Moses, spoke of the terrible curses which would come upon the nation of Israel if they followed the ways of idolatry: "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.... And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be as brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.... And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away." vss. 15-17, 23, 24, 26. Elijah knew therefore, and all Israel knew that idolatry and apostasy would inevitably result in drought and famine and pestilence.

In the third place, even though this was God's will to send a drought, the drought was brought about through the prayer of Elijah. In other words, this prayer of Elijah was essential to that end. In fact, James reminds us that it was so essential that the prayer actually effected the drought.

In the fourth place, this prayer was a Spirit-energized prayer.

This also is emphasized in vs. 16. The prayer which Elijah made which brought this disaster upon the nation was not a prayer which arose in Elijah's own heart. Elijah did not personally want to bring disaster upon Israel and see the nation suffer. He took no delight in seeing crops fail year by year, in seeing the carcasses of the cattle strewn upon the fields, in seeing the larders of the people empty, the children crying for food, widows picking up their last sticks for a last meal before they died, and he cared not to flee to a heathen land there to be sustained in the home of a poor widow woman. All of the narrative concerning Elijah is but a powerful demonstration of his love for the nation and his profound concern for the cause of the northern kingdom. But he was filled with a zeal for the cause of God; and this zeal prompted his prayer. God had to be shown to be God, and Baal had to be shown to be an idol. The elect had to be saved and the wicked had to be punished. This was his burning desire. And anything which was necessary to that end had to be done. And for that he prayed. It is for that reason that the prayer had to be answered because God always seeks the welfare of His own cause and the glory of His own Name.

But there is a second prayer of Elijah also referred to in the text: "And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."

During the 3½ years in which rain had not fallen on the earth, Ahab looked in vain for Elijah, for God had hid Elijah, first by the brook Cherith and then in the home of the widow of Zarephath outside of the boundaries of Israel. But now suddenly Elijah was back -- on Mt. Carmel with all the nation and all the priests of Baal gathered there. It was there on Mt. Carmel that Baal was proved to be a dumb idol to whom all the prayers in the world could be made without any success. The taunts of Elijah were made in utter earnestness. But at the time of the evening sacrifice in far-off Jerusalem Elijah, through his prayer, called down fire from heaven which fire consumed the sacrifice and the altar and the water with which the altar and sacrifice had been doused. The result of this was that all Israel cried out, "Jehovah, He is the God. Jehovah, He is the God."

It was at this point that Elijah made his second prayer. While the preparations for the sacrificial feast were being made, Elijah

took his servant and went to the edge of Mt. Carmel overlooking the Mediterranean Sea to pray. He prayed with his head bowed down between his knees. The text in I Kings 18:41-46 reads as follows: "And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel." It was therefore, through the prayer of Elijah, that the earth was watered and brought forth her fruits once again.

Again there are several important points to be noted. In the first place this prayer too, was prayed by Elijah as a righteous man who clung to the hope of the promise of God. In the second place, Elijah prayed according to the will of God. God sent Elijah away from the home of the widow of Zarephath with the express statement, "I will send rain upon the earth." Nevertheless, although it was obvious to Elijah that it was God's will to send rain upon the earth, this rain was brought about by means of the prayer of Elijah. Elijah's prayer was the means by which God brought about this end to the drought and famine. So true is this that it can be said that Elijah's prayer brought the rain. Although it was God's will to send this drought and although it was God's will to end it, this prayer was essential to that end; so essential that James reminds us that Elijah's prayer brought it into being. In the third place this was the will of God as God's means to accomplish His purpose in the saving of His people. This was not immediately evident to Elijah, and this explains his despair under the juniper tree in the desert south of Judah. But when Elijah finally arrives at Mt. Sinai and the

Lord reveals Himself to him, the Lord assures Elijah, "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." (I Kings 19:18) The prayers which Elijah made both to bring the drought and to end it were therefore answered in order that the Lord might accomplish His purpose in Israel. This purpose, it is true, had a negative side to it as well as the salvation of the church. Also at Sinai God tells Elijah: "Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay." I Kings 19:15-17. And the point therefore, which is so emphatically made is this that whenever our prayers are according to the will of God and for the welfare of the cause of God and the coming of His kingdom these prayers will certainly be answered, for God will use these prayers to effect that which He desires to do for His church.

Hence, we come to the conclusion of the matter. The energized prayer of a righteous man is the prayer which we as the people of God must make. That is, we must pray this prayer clinging to the cross of Jesus Christ, for our righteousness is only in the cross. We must pray always according to God's will as that will is revealed in the Scriptures. And we must pray for that which is necessary for the welfare of God's kingdom. As this applies particularly to the case at hand, we who live in the midst of the household of faith and in the fellowship of the saints of God in our own congregations, in our denominations, and as members of the church of God throughout the world, must live out of a real zeal and concern for the cause of God. And that zeal must express itself in this, that the wickedness of the idolaters of our day and the apostasy which ruins the vineyard of Christ be destroyed in order that the church may be gathered and saved. It is out of that zeal for the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ that we must live within the sphere of the church of which we are members. But we must remember all the time that we have our own personal sins, sins which horribly affect our life together as

saints. They can be removed only through confession and forgiveness. If they are not removed, these are the sins which tear apart families, congregations, churches, denominations and which make life difficult within the sphere of the church. Sin always brings hard feelings, creates distrust, bitterness and strife. And the result is that the Spirit is grieved and prayer goes unanswered; for our troubles and sins intrude on our prayers, and the life of the congregation and denomination suffer. Hence we must always be ready to confess our sins one to another. But we must pray for each other. And we must pray for each other that we may be healed. And we must pray in the consciousness that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man has power. It comes forth from the Spirit for it is energized by the Spirit and it goes to God Who is able to give us beyond what we ask or think. It is the prayer for the impossible that can and will be worked for us by our heavenly Father. It is a prayer which will heal us and heal the church of which we are members, for the sickness of our soul shall be healed by the balm of Gilead and sins shall be forgiven in the blood of Calvary. The weariness of sin and guilt will fade away, the peace of God will return, the angels will sing beyond the stars, and we will bring our praises and thanksgiving to our God.

* * * *

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." James 5:19,20

The connection between these two verses and the foregoing is evident. We noticed repeatedly in connection with our discussion of the previous verses that the apostle was discussing the relationship in which we live together mutually in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is still the main subject of his discussion in vss. 19 and 20. More particularly, the apostle is discussing those relationships which exist between the saints from the viewpoint of the sins which arise in our lives and which disrupt those relationships. In connection with that the apostle discusses in these two verses our responsibility towards those who err. In vs. 16 he talked about our

responsibilities with respect to our own sins: "Confess your faults one to another." In this passage he discusses our responsibilities towards the sins of our brethren.

It is well to remember at the outset that the order here is also proper. It is impossible for us to aid our brother who has erred from the truth and to be an instrument in his conversion unless we have first of all confessed our own sins both to God and to one another. We must not revert this order by any means. And indeed we must always come to our brother to lead him from the way of his sins only after we have first of all confessed our own sins. This is not merely good psychology, but this is absolutely essential if we are to be the means whereby our brother is saved from the error of his way.

In a broader sense however, this passage stands connected to the whole of James' epistle. We noticed in an earlier article that the main thought of this entire epistle is the contrast between a dead faith or a faith which does not work, and a living faith which is the bond which unites the believer to Christ and which produces good works. In a certain sense of the word, the good work which is described in vss. 19 and 20 is the chiefest of all good works, for by it we direct our living faith in Christ towards the spiritual well-being of our fellow saints.

To turn then to the text itself, the text speaks of erring from the truth. The figure is that the truth is considered as a path or as a way in which one must walk. Many, many times in Scripture our life is pictured as a path or a way which we walk from the moment of our birth to the moment of our death. To quote but one example, we read in Proverbs 3:5,6: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not upon thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." In general therefore, the apostle has in mind a road upon which the people of God walk. It is a road however, which, in this case, the people of God walk together. It is a clearly marked way. It is a way which has a beginning -- in the life of regeneration. But it is a way which also has a destination -- our home in heaven. It is a way which we walk as pilgrims and strangers in the earth. And it is a way which includes

all the circumstances and experiences of all our life here in the midst of the world.

More particularly, this way is defined as the way of the truth. God is Himself truth and is the standard of all truth. This truth is revealed in the Scriptures which is the "roadmap" of the Christian. The Scriptures are the rule for all of faith and all of life. It is with this in mind, for example, that the Psalmist confesses in Psalm 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." That truth of God which is the roadmap according to which we must walk in our pathway in life has as its central feature the glory of God. Most fundamentally, our calling in all of life is to seek the glory of God.

But this truth is the living confession of the child of God. Therefore the term refers also to the way of righteousness which the child of God is called to walk. Hence, the reference in the text is not simply to the way of truth as far as doctrine is concerned, but it refers also to the way of truth as far as our entire life is concerned.

It is possible to depart from that way. The text reads: "If anyone among you be led away from the truth...."⁴ The passive idea of the verb, if this idea is correct, does not mean that the sinner himself is excused of his responsibility. Certainly, as James expresses it in Chapter 1 of his epistle, every man is tempted when he is led away of his own lust and enticed. But the idea is nevertheless that when a man errs from the truth and strays into the path of error, he does so because other influences are brought to bear upon him which lead him away whether that be in doctrine or in life.

Thus the figure of the text is that of other roads leading away from the way of the truth. They are ways of error in doctrine and in life. And because they diverge from the straight and narrow path

⁴ The verb $\pi\lambda\alpha\nu\eta\theta\eta$ is used here. This verb is the aorist passive subjunctive third person singular from $\pi\lambda\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\omega$. It is probably true that the verb, either in the active or in the passive, can have an active meaning. Strictly speaking, in the active the verb means, "to cause to stray," or, "to lead astray"; but it is quite possible that both in the active and in the passive voice the verb can mean, "to go astray." Nevertheless, we prefer here the passive meaning. The possibility is suggested by the third-class condition. The subjunctive mood of the verb $\pi\lambda\alpha\nu\eta\theta\eta$ is in a third-class condition which expresses possibility or probability.

of the truth, the longer one walks in these ways the farther one departs from the way of truth.

It is important to remember however, that doctrine and life stand closely related to each other. After all, all the life of the child of God as he is called to live to the praise and glory of God, is rooted in doctrine. If this point is not remembered, true religion is reduced to mere moralism. But because doctrine and life are connected to each other, it follows also that only a sturdy maintenance of sound doctrine which is according to the Scriptures can result in a life which is according to the law of God. And indeed, departure from true doctrine will inevitably result also in departure from true godliness. But because there is a mutual relationship, the opposite is also possible. It is possible in terms of dead orthodoxy for example, for the church to slip into the errors of worldliness and carnality while externally maintaining the truth. But if these sins of worldliness are not repented of, the inevitable result will be corruption also in doctrine. However, the fact of the matter is that the way which leads from the truth is a way which leads to separation from the communion of the saints and to the loss of God's favor and love.

This is a possibility in the lives of all the saints. This is stressed by James: "if any among you...." This is a general statement of the apostle and implies that this could and does happen to all God's people. And that this is a possibility for any of God's people is because of their own sinful flesh. There is, of course, the final apostasy of the unregenerate, and this apostasy of the unregenerate, though they be born and raised within the sphere of the church, will never result in repentance and confession and return to the truth. That apostasy leads ultimately to everlasting destruction. But there is also an apostasy of the people of God who in their lives can and sometimes do depart from the truth either in doctrine or in life. Because the Scriptures teach the certain perseverance of the saints, we know that God will always bring them back. But here the apostle speaks particularly of our responsibilities towards those who stray away.

Hence the text speaks of returning such a one. There is here a mutual responsibility implied which the saints have towards each

other. This responsibility is because of the communion of the saints. It is the unity of the body of Jesus Christ. It is the unity of the church of Jesus Christ which is created by Christ through His suffering and death and which is brought into being by the sovereign and efficacious operation of the Holy Spirit. This unity wrought by the Spirit is a unity of one faith and one hope and one calling. This unity is a precious gift of grace. Thus, there is an effect upon this unity when one of the members of the body sins. We are not alone in life, but we stand connected with all of God's people. We are one in such a way that our lives touch the lives of all the other saints. We cannot escape it, nor indeed would we want to if we could. It is a gift to be received with thanksgiving. But the fact of the matter is nevertheless, that when one of the members of the body sins, this sin offends the rest of the body, creates a breach in the communion, and has ill effects on the fellowship of the people of God. And it is because of this that we have an obligation over against the sinner.

We must remember that in the final analysis only God can restore the erring sinner. We can never do this. We can never do this in the first place because restoration involves conversion. And conversion involves the change of heart and mind which manifests itself in sorrow for sin and which results in a fleeing to the cross of Jesus Christ for forgiveness. These things are matters of the deepest heart, and we are unable by anything we do to reach into the heart of our fellow saints and alter their hearts or bring about the necessary change which results in repentance and conversion. Only God can do this, and only God can do this by the sovereign and irresistible operation of His Spirit. That operation must also be sovereign and efficacious because we ourselves are sinful. If we stray away from the path of the truth it is because of our own sins. And our own sins which set us against God and against His truth are sins which arise out of our own depraved flesh. We are unable to effect such conversion even in ourselves apart from the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit. And it is exactly for all of these reasons too, that the apostle says in vs. 16: "Pray for one another." Unless we pray for one another we can never expect to heed the admonition of this text. When we pray for one another we humbly confess that only God can change the heart and bring the sinner to repentance.

Yet all of this does not mean that we sit in our living room in our rocking chairs praying for our fellow saints who walk in the ways of sin and doing nothing else about it. All the saints of God have mutual callings in this regard. And this is because God is pleased in His grace to use us. He uses His Word to bring to repentance; and it is that Word of God which we must bring. This is the responsibility of all the saints towards each other.

The objection could conceivably be raised that the responsibilities for returning a sinner from the error of his ways rests upon the officebearers in the church of Jesus Christ and particularly upon the elders. And it is true that the elders are appointed in the church of Christ as those who rule in the Name of Christ, and therefore, as those who exercise Christian discipline within the sphere of the church. They are called to their office by Christ Himself and given the power of the Word of God which Word of God alone is able to restore the sinner. Nevertheless, this does not alter the fact that all the saints mutually have also such a responsibility. The responsibility is theirs as members of the church of Christ. They are able to perform this work only in connection with the church of Christ, so that, organically connected to that church and under the Word themselves, they are able to bring that Word in such a way that that Word is used by God to restore the sinner from his sin.

Hence the calling that comes to each member of the church of Jesus Christ is the calling to follow the sinner into the path in which he has strayed, take him by the hand, and lead him back. But the power to do this is always and only the power of the Word of God and of prayer.

Although the text does not specifically go into this matter, it is apparent from the rest of the Scriptures what our manner must be. In the first place we are called to convert a sinner from the error of his way only by means of the Word of God which is our rule of faith and life and which is the power of our salvation. Never must we rely upon the words of men. Never must we make use of various psychological techniques or various methods of counseling. Never must we in any respect rely upon the power of argumentation or put our trust in the convincing weight of our argument. The Word of God

is the only means which will ever restore such a sinner. In the second place, we must restore such a sinner by pointing to the cross as the supreme revelation of the truth as it is in God and as the power of atonement and forgiveness. There is no other way back from error than the way of confession of sin and repentance and sorrow, for there is no other way back than the way of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the third place we must always do this in humility. We must never assume over against the sinner a holier-than-thou attitude, but we must always go in the full consciousness that we can and do also stray away. And in this way we must do all we can to turn the sinner from his sin and be sure that we do not send him to the cross but that we go hand in hand with the sinner to Calvary that we may kneel together at the foot of the cross and find forgiveness.

When God is pleased to use us to convert a sinner from the error of his ways then we may know that we have saved a soul from death and that a multitude of sins are hidden.

In general, there are a couple of things to notice concerning this. In the first place, the Roman Catholic church has an erroneous interpretation of this verse. The common interpretation in Roman Catholic circles is that the reference is to the converter, not to the converted. The idea is therefore, that if we restore a sinner, we save our own soul and cover our own sins. That is, by being the means whereby the sinner is restored we gain to ourselves certain work-righteousness merit which will aid in the payment of the debt of our own sins. This is in harmony with the entire theory of work-merit as proposed by the Roman Catholic church. But this idea is not correct; the reference is to the converted sinner.

In the second place, we must remember that we are not always successful in turning a sinner from the error of his way. This also is emphatically suggested in the text. In the latter part of vs. 19 we read: "and one convert him." The way this is formulated in the Greek means that the possibility only is suggested.⁵ It is possible

⁵ The construction here is also a third-class condition. The word ἐάν belongs not only with πλανηθῇ, but belongs also with ἐπιστρέψῃ. ἐπιστρέψῃ is also the aorist active subjunctive third person singular from ἐπιστρέφω. And the subjunctive mood of the verb is because the entire construction is a third-class condition suggesting possibility.

that the sinner continues to go astray in spite of what we do. But it must then be remembered that also this is according to God's purpose, and that ultimately this is proof that those who go astray are not really of the church. This is the truth which the apostle John expresses in his first epistle, chapter 2:19: "They went out from us, but ^{have} they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt/continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." But then too the blood of the sinner will not be required of our hands.

The points which are mentioned in vs. 20 are intended to serve as an incentive to the saints to fulfill this calling. In the first place, he who converts the sinner from the error of his way saves a soul from death.

The word "sinner" is used here because the word indicates, "one who misses the mark." The whole life of the child of God must be directed towards the goal of God's glory. When a man walks in the ways of error, whether that be in doctrine or in life, he walks in a way which is not directed towards the goal of the glory of God but which is directed towards some other goal of sin whatever that goal may be. This missing of the mark therefore, becomes evident from his walk in the way of error. It is a way therefore which is in contrast to the way of the truth which leads to heaven.

As we said before, only God can turn a sinner from the error of his way. His grace and the efficacious operation of His Spirit are indispensable. Nevertheless, God is pleased to use us in this calling; hence the emphasis of James. Because God uses us it can correctly be said that we have saved a soul from death. It is exactly because we are only instruments in the hand of God however that we must always perform this calling in the consciousness of our complete dependence upon God. But when God is pleased to use us and the sinner returns from the error of his way, the sinner is turned from a way of error which leads to hell. And it is for that reason indeed that a soul is saved from death. This is a wonderful thing because then the congregation is healed and peace and unity is once again restored in the church of Christ. See vs. 16. Even the angels in heaven rejoice according to the parables of our Lord recorded in Luke 15. How much more then does not the congregation as well rejoice when a sinner is turned from his ways and a soul is saved from

death. Secondly however, the apostle gives also this added incentive that if the sinner is turned from the error of his way a multitude of sins is covered.

Most probably the plural, "sins", is used here because walking in the way of error always involves many other sins. One sin leads to another and the way of error is the way which is filled with every manner of sin both in doctrine and in life.

The idea is emphatically that the sins of the sinner are covered. This does not mean that the church simply overlooks these sins or winks at these sins and makes believe that these sins do not exist. Never can reconciliation be accomplished in the church of Christ in such a way. But these sins are covered in such a way that they cease to exist as far as the relationships which exist between the saints are concerned. When the sinner is turned from the error of his way these sins are forever hidden and forgotten. This is quite different from that which so often happens in the church of Jesus Christ where the sins of the saints becomes the subject for choice gossip and where these sins are shouted from the housetops and are spread like wildfire by means of the telephone. Rather, these sins are covered in the sight of God. They are, through the way of repentance and forgiveness, forgotten and cast into the sea of everlasting forgetfulness. This is indeed the thought which the apostle has stressed throughout this entire section. But at the same time they are covered also within the church of Jesus Christ. They exist no longer. And he who turns a sinner from the error of his ways is the one who is instrumental also in covering this multitude of sins.

When this happens the fellowship of the saints is once again restored. What an appropriate way for the apostle to close his epistle.

The Simplicity Of God's Will

and the

"Free Offer"

- Prof. H.C. Hoeksema -

In this and future articles, the Lord willing, we propose to study the doctrine of the simplicity of the will of God from various points of view. There are some important aspects of this truth which are deserving of study. Thus, for example, there is the distinction between the "revealed" and the "hidden" will of God. The question is, first of all: is this a valid distinction? And if it is, wherein does its validity consist? But, further, if it is valid, how is it to be conceived in relation to the truth of God's simplicity? Or again, the distinction is sometimes made between the "decretive" and the "preceptive" will of God. This is a distinction not unrelated to the former one; nevertheless, it is not identical. Here, too, we may inquire into the meaning and legitimacy of this distinction, but also into its relation to the truth of the simplicity of God's will.

Anyone who is acquainted with the development of the erroneous doctrine of the so-called "free offer," or "general, well-meant offer of grace and salvation" to all who hear the gospel will also know that frequently the distinctions mentioned above have been used in an attempted partial explanation, or at least, justification of the teaching that there is a will of God which purposes the salvation of the elect only, but also a will of God for the salvation of all men. We purpose also to touch upon the validity of the use of those distinctions in connection with that matter. There are several questions that can be raised in that context. But one of the most important is, surely, whether it is at all correct -- even apart from the question of a duality of wills in God -- to speak of the alleged will of God for the salvation of all men as preceptive, in distinction from His will for the salvation of the elect only as being decretive. And the same question may be raised with respect to the distinctions revealed and hidden.

However, even apart from the question of the legitimacy of the above distinctions and the question of their relation to the doctrine of divine simplicity, it is simply a fact that the matter of God's simplicity is inextricably involved in the entire issue concerning the "general, well-meant offer" or "free offer" of the gospel (the expressions are largely synonymous in contemporary theological parlance). This has been true historically. It was, and is, true in Presbyterian circles, as is plain from the fact that the late John Murray himself recognized this -- implicitly in the booklet of which he was co-author with Ned Stonehouse,

The Free Offer Of the Gospel, and explicitly in his book, Calvin On Scripture and Divine Sovereignty, p. 69. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia very perceptively recognizes this also as a fundamental issue in their polemic entitled UNIVERSALISM AND THE REFORMED CHURCHES, A Defense of Calvin's Calvinism. But it was true long before the developments just mentioned in the controversy which gave rise to the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Nor is this mere coincidence. On the contrary, it is axiomatic. It is axiomatic because all of dogmatics is principally theology; and therefore one is necessarily positing something about theology, about the doctrine of God, whether he speaks in the realm of Anthropology, of Christology, of Soteriology, of Ecclesiology, or of Eschatology. This is unavoidable. The issue of the "free offer" lies especially in the realm of Soteriology; but the soteriological pronouncements on this subject -- both pro and con -- were necessarily, either implicitly or explicitly, at the same time pronouncements in the realm of the first locus of Dogmatics, Theology. Moreover, this was very directly and concretely true in the actual controversy circa 1924, whether it was always recognized and admitted, or not. Theologians made pronouncements about the will of God. They spoke about a will of God to save all men and a will of God to save only the elect; or they insisted that God's will was solely to save the elect only. But the point is: they spoke about the will of God. That is undeniably Theology! And inevitably, too, it was Theology which concerned the important subject of the attribute of God's simplicity.

There were some who seemed rather intuitively to recognize this already in the pre-Synod controversy in 1924 in the Christian Reformed Church. The "general, well-meant offer" was not yet an explicit issue at that time; it only entered the picture when Synod incorporated it in the dual pronouncement of the First Point of Common Grace. But more than one of Herman Hoeksema's attackers at that time attacked him for his "Gods-beschouwing (view of God)," suggesting that he preached a hard, tyrannical God. There was more truth than fiction at the basis of that attack -- not in the sense that Hoeksema's view of God was evil, but in the sense that these attackers recognized, perhaps rather intuitively, that the underlying issue was a theological issue, a contest between two conflicting views of God. Somewhat later, in some of the polemical writings about the issue of the "general, well-meant offer," this became abundantly clear; and there was sharp debate which focused precisely on the truth of the simplicity of the will of God. And a little analysis of contemporary writings will show that the issue is still, at bottom, a theological issue, not only a soteriological issue. This becomes abundantly plain,

for example, in James Daane's The Freedom of God, in which he fumes and fulminates against an alleged "decretal theology" of Hoeksema and others.

All of this serves to underscore the seriousness of this issue. To make soteriological pronouncements is serious enough; when we take into account that those soteriological pronouncements are at once theological pronouncements, then matters become much more serious still. To err soteriologically is bad; to err theologically is heinous, for then we speak the lie about God Himself, about His Being, Nature, Mind, Will, Attributes, Works. Karl Barth wrote somewhere about those who imagine that they say "God" while all the time they are loudly saying "MAN!" That is idolatry. And that is the basic issue -- a spiritual, ethical issue -- in all theologizing. In our theology we must beware that we do not busy ourselves in making idols! We must beware that we do not say "Man" when we purport to say "God."

And this in itself is a sufficient justification for a serious examination of this subject of the simplicity of God's will and of various related questions already mentioned.

One of our purposes in these articles is to consider what various theologians have had to say about both the general subject of the simplicity of God's will and the specific subject of the "free offer" and the simplicity of God's will. And in this consideration we will begin at home.

Prof. Wm. Heyns was for many years a teacher at Calvin College and Seminary, already before it became a full-fledged and accredited college and seminary. In fact, he was one of Herman Hoeksema's instructors when the latter was preparing for the ministry in the Christian Reformed denomination prior to 1915. Prof. Heyns was also, more than any other Christian Reformed theologian, the father of the view which became official church doctrine in 1924 when the doctrine of the "general, well-meant offer" was incorporated in the First Point of Common Grace. In 1932-33, when he was already professor-emeritus, Heyns wrote a series of articles in De Wachter, the Dutch language weekly of the Christian Reformed Church, on the subject, "The Gospel." These articles were intended to be a defense of the doctrine of the "general offer." Surely, there was no one better qualified to write on this subject from a Christian Reformed viewpoint than Prof. Heyns: he was, after all, the father of this view and had taught it for many years. Needless to say, Herman Hoeksema replied in the Standard Bearer, also in the Dutch language. He also wrote under the title, "The Gospel," with the sub-title, "The Most Recent Attack Against the Truth of Sovereign Grace." These articles were later gathered in a 255-page book. Partly because Prof. Heyns, his opponent, was

a very neat and well-organized writer, who was rather capable of setting forth his views clearly, this particular polemical writing of Herman Hoeksema is also one of his clearest, uncluttered by many side-issues and tangential discussions. And in this book the issue of the simplicity of God and the "free offer" comes into sharp focus. For this reason, and also in order to make this material available to those not at home in the Dutch language, we present, first of all, a translation of a lengthy section of this book. The first chapter is entitled, "So Many Wills, So Many Gods." I have omitted the first of the three sections of this chapter, in order to turn directly to the pertinent discussion of the issue. Here follows a translation of Sections 2 and 3 of Chapter I and all of Chapter II.

* * * * *

Chapter I

So Many Wills, So Many Gods (H. Hoeksema)
translated

2

Heyns' Two-Wills Doctrine

We shall first attempt as much as possible to form and to offer to the reader a correct conception of the view to which the professor himself is committed.

His basic principle is that there are in God two wills.

Two wills in relation to the same matter: the salvation of men.

Two wills which as far as their content is concerned stand diametrically over against one another. For according to the one will, God wills that all men be saved. According to the other will, God wills that some men be saved, and that others go lost. This the professor teaches very plainly. Note the following:

"It is of this latter conclusion which is certainly not founded on God's Word (that there can be next to the will in God which does not will the salvation of the reprobate no will in God which indeed wills their salvation, H.H.) that we would have nothing. In our estimation that is an argument which a Reformed man must not even think of using and that is totally devoid of all proof. Where is the proof that whereas there is in God a will which does not will the salvation of the reprobate there can be in Him no will which indeed wills their salvation? Does God's Word say that? No, God's Word does not say that, but our understanding says that. That would be a flagrant contradiction, and there is in God no contradiction. Yes, indeed, thus speaks our understanding, but what does that mean? Has our understanding fathomed the infinitely perfect God in order to be able to make out what is possible in the Divine Being, and what not? Are the things of God subject to our understanding for their possibility or impossibility? And

how do matters stand with our understanding? Is it not true that our understanding is darkened and confused through sin, is still in many respects the understanding of the unregenerate, because regeneration indeed removes his blindness for spiritual things, so that he sees, but his seeing is still only a seeing, not of the spiritual things themselves, but as the seeing of a vague, enigmatic image of those things in a faulty, metal mirror, with the consequence that with respect to the details they can see no harmony and can even think to see contradiction where there is no contradiction? Shall then a man who acknowledges these things come with the argument: My understanding says so, as if our poor understanding could be qualified and capable of judging concerning Divine things? Can one actually think that such an argument would here be of any significance, that it would prove anything here?" (De Wachter, January 11)

I wish to remark at this juncture that I here differ radically with Heyns on two points.

In the first place I differ with Heyns in regard to the presentation that man through sin has become insane. This after all is the presentation. His reason is affected, so that he from a rational viewpoint sees things incorrectly. He has become so insane that he sees contradiction where there is harmony, that what he calls Yes can also be No, that if he says that God does not will something, he cannot trust his understanding to say that He therefore also cannot indeed will it. By this the subject of all revelation is annihilated. If this is so, then there is no knowledge of God possible, then every attempt to develop a theological conception is senseless. Then there can be an election, but this still does not say that some are saved; then there can be a reprobation, but that still does not say that some go lost. Then there can be a God, but thereby it is still not said that the assertion that there is no God also is not true. Heyns does not express here that the sinner is spiritually darkened; nor does he say that our understanding is finite and can never comprehend the Infinite; but that man, the natural and the regenerate man, is insane. He puts all theology at loose ends. And over against this I very decidedly hold that man is indeed spiritually darkened and blind, that he has also lost many of his original gifts, so that he also can no more know things as Adam knew them in the state of rectitude, but that he is normal in his understanding and not insane.

In the second place I do not go along with Heyns in his attack upon Holy Scripture. He asserts that we see in a faulty metal mirror. And that metal mirror is certainly Holy Scripture. But although it is true that in that mirror we do not see face to face, but a reflection of God, nevertheless I also maintain that

in God's Word we have an adequate revelation of God, upon which we can depend, and no faulty mirror. Also by this assertion Heyns simply undermines the foundations for all theology. I will accept it that he does not intend it thus; in actual fact he indeed does this. I maintain therefore that we through the means of the adequate revelation of God in Holy Scripture can come to a logically construed conception of God and His works. That that which we see as Yes can also be No by virtue of a faulty revelation and an affected understanding, that I deny with all that is in me.

This does not mean that we can fathom God. It does mean that we can rationally understand His revelation.

But this in parenthesis. Our present concern is to learn the view of Heyns. And then it will be plain that there are, according to the professor, two wills in God. According to the one will, God wills that all men be saved, or, more correctly expressed (however senseless this may be), that also the reprobate be saved. According to the other will, God wills that the reprobate not be saved.

By this Heyns himself has carried the issue between us back to its proper basic principle. That a general offer of grace and salvation must rest in a will of God which wills that all men be saved is indeed plain, but has never been so frankly affirmed as Heyns affirms it. He takes his stand here. Hence, we do not have to deal with the question whether there is a general, well meant offer of grace and salvation, but with the question: does Scripture teach that God wills that all men be saved? And it is also plain that whoever simply answers affirmatively to this question is a full-blown, or let me rather say, a simple Pelagian. The question is, of course: what is Heyns? His answer is: Yes and No. God wills it and He does not will it!

We might ask: does Heyns attempt also to explain himself more precisely? How does he conceive of these two wills in God? Such an attempt Heyns makes in the following:

"The apparent contradiction, that next to the will of the decree in God there would be another will which would will the salvation also of the reprobate, comes to stand in a somewhat different light if we remember that the two wills in God are not to be conceived as of entirely the same nature, lying entirely on the same plane, so that the willing and not willing concerning the same matter would be a directly opposite standing of the one will over against the other as light over against light, for then the one will would annihilate the other and a condition of arbitrariness (will-less-ness) would arise. (Notice that Heyns is here busily reasoning and, depending entirely upon his reason, however crooked and

perverse this may also be according to his own presentation, simply concludes what can be and what cannot be! H.H.) That can occur with a man, but not with God. (Here Heyns simply states, without proof, banking entirely on his understanding, what can not occur with God, H.H.) But also in a man two wills can exist which do not abolish one another when the ground whence they arise is different. Beside the will which arises out of his personality, out of his nature and inclinations, there can exist in man another will which arises out of and is determined by someone's relation to the circumstances outside of him. A king can be a very peace loving prince, and nevertheless through circumstances be compelled to reach the point of declaring war on another nation. To the question whether that king wills war, an affirmative answer must be given, for he has declared war and wages war; and at the same time that question is to be answered negatively, for his heart trembles for war with all its bloodshed and misery, and he has done what he could to maintain peace. His will which wills no war, the will which arises out of his person and inclination, which is, of course, proper to him, shall, unless something occurs which prevents this, determine his actions. His will which wills war, on the other hand, is the will which, instead of from his person and inclination, arose out of and was determined by circumstances outside of him, in connection with his position as king, who must protect and defend the right and freedom of his people. Of these two wills the latter can gain the upperhand over the former, so that he acts according to the latter and not according to the former; but then nevertheless the latter does not abolish the former, and still allows the former to assert itself as much as possible. While he wages war it can be said of such a king that he wills peace; and in the midst of his waging of war he will seek peace.

"To a certain degree this applies also to the two wills in God; for man, also his will, is made according to God's image....

"It must be accepted, therefore, that the decrees in a relative sense were also determined by that which the world was, and consequently by things outside of God, which were indeed created by Him, but which do not belong to His Being. Were this world different, a world and another condition, then the decrees, and along with them the will of the decrees, would have been different. On the other hand by the will of command we conceive of the will which God has revealed in His commandments, of the will which is the will of God as He is in Himself, upon which the things which are outside of God can have no influence whatsoever, and which can never will otherwise than it does, and which on this account cannot possibly be abolished or set aside." (De Wachter, January 18)

In the first place, I may indeed point out that this entire philosophy is derived from the reason and the understanding of Prof. Heyns. Not in a single instance does he reason from or even refer to Scripture. Although he rubs it in to others that they trust altogether in their crooked and perverse understanding, Heyns simply boldly reasons, without so much as concerning himself about Holy Scripture. He does not even think of supporting this explanation with Scripture. And I add immediately that he would also never succeed in proving such a presentation of God from Scripture.

For this presentation is in one word terrible!

It is nothing less than an assault upon the absolute freedom of God, upon His high sovereignty, upon His very Deity!

What does Heyns teach? The following:

1. That there is a will in God according to which He wills to save all men. This is the will which arises out of His Being, His nature, His inclination. Even as the king in the example is by nature peace loving, so God by nature wills to save all men.
2. That the execution of this will is made impossible for God by circumstance outside of Him. He has been limited in His decrees by things outside of Him.
3. That God, thus limited, not simply by His own good pleasure and Being, but by things outside of Him, was compelled to come to the decree of election and reprobation.
4. That He, however, still always impelled by that first will, still also wills, conceives, seeks, offers the salvation of all men. And thus Heyns then arrives at the presentation of a general, well meant offer of grace. He says therefore to the reprobate: Men, I would greatly wish that ye also would be saved; but I am compelled by circumstances to reprobate you!

Thus there is according to the reason and the understanding of Heyns (not according to Scripture) an eternal discord in God between that which He earnestly wills and that which He was compelled to decree! A dualism between God's Being and His decree.

We must still point to one thing.

Heyns attempts to present it as though that first will, which arises out of His Being and Nature, is the will of command. But the right to this must definitely be denied him. Otherwise we get confusion in our discussion. We must understand one another well and not talk past one another. By the will of command can never be understood a will in God, according to which He wills to do something; but we must understand by this His will for us, His ethical will, according to

which He reveals what He wills that we shall be and do in relation to Him. God's will of command can never be that all men be saved. We can indeed say that all men are called to walk in His ways. This must be noticed a moment because otherwise we do not understand one another. Heyns must not speak of a will of command in this connection. That God maintains His will of command over against all men we understand very well. That, therefore, is not under discussion. No, what is under discussion is simply whether there are in God two wills according to which He thinks, wills, and does exactly the opposite. According to the one will He conceives of the salvation of all men, wills the salvation of all men, seeks the salvation of all men, proclaims His will to save all men. According to the other will, He conceives the salvation of the elect only, wills only their salvation, seeks only their salvation, and proclaims that He will save them alone.

That is the issue between us. And this issue must be decided not by reason, but by Scripture.

3

A Duality of Gods

The line runs through.

If you posit two wills in God, you undeniably proclaim two gods.

You cannot divide God, for He is God.

God's will is characterized by all His Essential virtues. For it is a Divine will.

Therefore God's will is free, sovereign, almighty, irresistible, unchangeable, wise, good, holy, and righteous. And therefore God's will is certainly executed. For our God is in the heavens; He does whatsoever He pleases, Psalm 115:3. He has mercy on whom He will, and He hardens whom He will, Romans 9:18. This is not reason or human understanding, but divine revelation.

If there are two wills in God, then both of them are characterized by all His virtues. Then both wills are free, sovereign, almighty, irresistible, unchangeable, wise, good, holy, and righteous. And then both wills are executed. Then both lines run through completely. There is simply no escape from this.

So many wills, so many gods!

Heyns has posited two wills in God.

Heyns has two gods.

He has two theological systems. For the lines run through undeniably. And that, too, according to the following scheme:

A

God wills that all men be saved, with an eternal and unchangeable, sovereignly free will.

According to His will, God has concluded all men under sin, in order that He should lead them all to the highest glory or eternal life.

According to His will, God has fore-ordained Christ as Head and Savior of all men, in order that He should open for all a chance to be saved.

According to His will, God has determined to let salvation depend upon the free will of man to believe in Christ and to be saved on condition of that faith.

According to His will, God has determined to give the Spirit of grace, through Whom he will bestow salvation upon all men, to all who will receive Him and allow Him to dwell in them, as long as they will His indwelling.

God has determined that Christ, as far as His divine intention is concerned, should suffer and die for all men, in order that He should reconcile all men with God.

According to God's will, in the gospel grace and salvation are offered to all men on God's part well meaningly, in order that all men should be saved.

God's will that all men shall be saved upon condition of faith is fulfilled in those who believe, not through almighty grace, but through their free will.

B

God wills that not all, but some men be saved, and that others be damned, with an eternal and unchangeable, sovereign will.

According to His will, God has concluded all men under sin, in order that He should lead not all, but only the elect to everlasting glory and should harden the others.

According to His will, God has fore-ordained Christ as Head of the elect alone, in order that He should lead them and them only to everlasting glory with absolute certainty.

According to His will, God has determined to bestow out of pure grace upon the elect and upon them only the gift of faith, in order that they through that faith in Christ should be able to inherit salvation.

According to His will, God has determined to give the Spirit of grace, through Whom He will bestow this salvation upon the elect and upon them only, to them, although they by nature do not will and cannot will that Spirit, and through that Spirit to cause them to persevere to the very end.

God has determined that Christ should die, not for all men, but for the elect alone, in order that He should put them and them only in a relation of reconciliation to Himself.

According to God's will, the promise of the gospel, that every one who believes shall have eternal life, is proclaimed to all to whom God sends the gospel, with the demand of conversion and faith, in order that the elect should obtain salvation and the others should be hardened.

God's will that the elect shall be saved and the others hardened is executed by Him and by Him alone: for He has mercy on whom He will, and He hardens whom He will. He gives to the elect faith and causes them to persevere to the very end.

Although God earnestly wills that all men be saved, this will is frustrated through the unbelief of many who reject the offer of grace.

God's eternal will to save the elect and them only is executed with absolute certainty. Those given by the Father enter into glory. The reprobate are condemned by a righteous judgment of God.

God is a God Who is determined and limited by the will of man.

God is God alone, and no one beside Him. He does all that He pleases.

Do not misunderstand me.

I do not intend at all to say that Professor Heyns wishes to draw the lines through thus. The drawing through of the lines is of me. Heyns does not wish to draw any lines through, but only to draw dotted lines.

But basically matters stand as stated above.

So many wills, so many gods.

Dualism from beginning to end.

Of course, the line drawn under A is the Remonstrant line through and through. The line under B is the simple Reformed line.

Basically, in the Christian Reformed Churches they wished to hold us to both of the above systems. They had two gods. And this acknowledgement of two gods came to clear manifestation in many sermons.

The unavoidable result was that all too soon they let go of one side of the dilemma. The Reformed side more and more disappeared.

The Remonstrant idol was proclaimed.

That was bound to happen. And it did happen also. One can for a time delude himself that he can hold fast to two mutually exclusive principles and maintain them. One can indeed for a little while wisely speak of a mystery and call everyone who does not accept this a rationalist; eventually this lie avenges itself. And then one lands directly in Remonstrant waters. But we wish to put this doctrine of two gods to the test, not by reason, but by an earnest and careful investigation of Scripture.

And everyone may judge for himself whether we do violence to Scripture or whether Heyns does.

Chapter II

One God, One Will

Basically, therefore, what is at issue between Heyns and those whom he opposes, between him and us, is one's conception of God. Heyns has seen that correctly. The difference between his presentation and ours, then, is not one of

minor significance, but is very profound. It is not true that Heyns and his followers and the Protestant Reformed can really live very well in one church-connection, on the basis of one and the same confession. He who thus presents the situation may have good intentions, but he nevertheless does not understand the issue. That living together in one church-connection, with the profound difference between the conception of Heyns and our conception, is impossible, 1924 proved clearly. In that respect we have no criticism of that history. Only at that time it was not decided according to truth who ought to have and ought not to have a place in the Churches which professed to stand on the basis of the Three Forms of Unity. The profound difference which we have in mind did not arise in 1924; at that time it only reached the stage of sharp manifestation and unavoidable conflict. It actually always existed in the bosom of the Christian Reformed Churches. But in 1924 Heyns, who for many years taught his conception of God, namely, his two-wills doctrine in the Theological School, triumphed. Not over us, for we still stand as we always did. But he indeed triumphed over those in the Christian Reformed Churches who still today differ radically from Heyns, but who do not dare to come into the open, who should have been leaders, but are not, who lost the day, who allowed themselves to be bound by the Three Points and who must now allow Heyns to be the spokesman concerning the doctrine of grace.

That is my criticism.

In any event it is established on both sides that our difference concerns our conception of God.

Heyns posits a dualism in God; we most decidedly deny this and maintain very definitely that God is one.

Heyns teaches, as will now be clear to everyone, that there are two wills in God, each with its own, entirely different objects; we teach that the oneness of God demands that God's will is one.

Heyns teaches that according to the one will in God He wills that all men be saved; according to the other, that some be saved and others go lost. We teach that God in singleness of willing wills that the elect be saved, that the reprobate be damned, and that He never wills, has willed, or shall will anything else.

Heyns teaches that there is conflict in God. We concede that in his article he tries to deny that he teaches this; nevertheless he indeed teaches it. The one will in God is in conflict with the other. The will of His decree stands over against the will of His nature. But the former was determined by circumstances outside of God. Because of this, the latter cannot be executed. God indeed earnestly wills to save all men, but in His decree He was limited by conditions in His creation, and therefore He has decided to save only the elect. This

is what Heyns taught us with his example of the peace loving king who against his nature was compelled to wage war.

Of course, Heyns gains nothing by this as far as salvation is concerned. For even so the fact is that that king wages war and concludes no peace. And the fact is also that that king indeed very definitely wills that war under the circumstances. Or, to forsake the figure, the fact is that God, under the circumstances indeed very definitely wills the salvation of the elect and the damnation of the reprobate; and the fact is that under the existing circumstances God nevertheless does not will the salvation of all men, according to Heyns. If, therefore, you ask Heyns whether according to his presentation so much as one more man is saved than according to my presentation, then Heyns says: No. And the fact is, too, that if you ask Heyns whether the number of those who are saved and of those who are condemned is completely in harmony with God's will, then he says: Yes, but not according to that other will, for God would rather will it otherwise, but his will is limited by circumstances.

But although Heyns gains nothing here, he loses God. For he teaches that there is conflict in God between the will of His decree and the will of His nature; hence, between God's Being and His decrees. If that king decides to wage war, then this militates against his nature, according to Heyns. And if God decrees to reprobate some, then this militates against the will of His nature. And with this presentation, which I indeed consider a very serious heresy, concerning which I not only assert that it should not arise in the head of a Reformed man, but also that it can not arise in a Reformed head, Heyns has lost God, Who is really God. Moreover, except for the fact that Heyns cites a few passages of Scripture in which God's Word appears to teach, for him who reads very superficially, that God wills that all men be saved -- passages which, however, most certainly cannot have this meaning -- Heyns adduces not a single proof for his two-wills doctrine from Holy Writ. Time after time Heyns accuses his opponents of rationalism, but his own reasoning is as rationalistic as possible.

However, to make it very plain to him how completely mistaken he is with respect to our method, we will limit ourselves strictly to Scripture. We shall make it plain:

1. That all that Holy Scripture teaches us concerning God in His Being and nature and works totally condemns the presentation of two wills in God which stand in conflict with one another, and that God's Word teaches the absolute oneness, independence, and unchangeableness of God.

2. That Scripture not only teaches that God does not will the salvation of all, but also that He, entirely in harmony with His nature and Being, wills the damnation of the ungodly reprobate.

3. That the texts which Heyns cites in order to prove that there is also another will in God, according to which He would will the salvation of all men, in no wise teach this, and that even Heyns, from his own viewpoint, cannot possibly maintain that exegesis.

God's Word teaches us that God is one.

Deuteronomy 4:35: "Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him."

Deuteronomy 4:39: "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else."

Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord."

Psalms 18:31: "For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God?"

Isaiah 43:10-13: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?"

Isaiah 45:5: "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me."

Isaiah 45:6: "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else."

Isaiah 45:7: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."

Isaiah 45:18: "For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else."

Isaiah 45:21: "Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together; who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me."

God is also the absolutely sovereign and independent One.

Deuteronomy 32:39: "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand."

Daniel 4:35: "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

Psalms 33:11: "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations."

Proverbs 16:4: "The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."

Isaiah 46:10: "Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?"

Romans 9:18: "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

Romans 11:34-36: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

Ephesians 1:11b: "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

And God is also the absolutely unchangeable one:

I Samuel 15:29: "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent."

Malachi 3:6: "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

We shall not draw any conclusions from these texts, in order to forestall every possibility of Heyns' accusing us of rationalism. We only point out that these passages of Scripture which can very easily be multiplied, teach us the following:

1. That God is one. He is one as God. Exactly upon this all these passages lay the emphasis. He is the Lord in heaven and on earth. He is God, and He is one. He is an only Lord. That implies that He is one in Being, that He is one in His nature, in understanding and will; that He is one in His virtues, for He is love, light, life, etc.; that He is one in His works; and that He is also

absolutely one as far as the relation between His Being, Nature, Willing and Thinking, Virtues and Works is concerned. There is in God no duality or plural. For He is God, and He is one. Therefore there is also no discord in God, no conflict. There is in Him the most perfect harmony between His Being and Nature, His willing and His working. He is the Absolute. Therefore there can never be in Him two wills, and still less can there be conflict between two supposed wills in Him. It can never be thus, that there is in God a will of His nature against which the will of His decree strives. Heyns, of course, will concede this to me. He will also surely guard against this rationalism, for it is none less than the living God Himself Who reveals all this concerning Himself. But conceding this, Heyns will say: Yes, but that God is one in Being and Nature, in understanding and willing, still does not say that He also can not be two in will. To this I answer: a. that this is indeed what it says for me and for every intelligent man. Only on the position that we really became insane through sin can the contrary be maintained. b. That in any event it is then up to Heyns to prove from Scripture that God is also two and that there are in God two wills. I can add to this that all of this is also in harmony with the first and most fundamental article of our Netherlands Confession of Faith: "We all believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God." The two-wills doctrine of Heyns attacks this fundamental principle. For if there are in God two wills, then He is not one, nor simple.

2. That God alone is God. Also this is very positively and with great emphasis taught in the texts cited above. God is in Himself one, and only Lord. For there are Three which bear witness in heaven, and these Three are One. But He is also alone God. There is no one beside Him. Outside of Him, next to Him, above Him, under Him there is no God. Also this is very plain. But if God alone is God, if there is no God next to Him or above Him, or even under Him, then He is also limited (or: determined) by absolutely nothing outside of Himself in heaven or on earth. Also the creation does not limit God. In no single respect can the work of His hands limit Him in His being alone God. Heyns teaches this indeed, however. It is precisely in this way that he wants to explain how it is possible that God does not execute the will of His nature, that His will of decree is different than the will of His Being. God is limited by something outside of Him, by conditions in creation. However, if this is true, then that which has limited or determined God and still limits and determines Him is exactly God next to or above Him. And Scripture teaches in the clearest possible

language that this is exactly not the case. Also the things outside of Him detract nothing whatsoever from His absolutely being God alone. With this we have also cut off the possible remark that God has let Himself be limited by His works. Not only is this in itself already nonsense, but also the above-quoted texts teach exactly most positively that this is not the case. He exactly did not will Himself to be limited, also not by the works of His hands, also not by the free will of man, also not by sin; but He willed that all His works should exactly proclaim that He alone is God. It should really have been unnecessary to contest the heresy that God can be determined by something outside of Himself. But since this has indeed become necessary, and in order to cut off all possibility of the accusation of rationalism, we simply point to Holy Scripture. God is one, and He is alone God!

3. Further, the texts cited above teach that such a conflict between God's decree and the will of His being as Heyns want to posit just exactly does not exist, but that He has from eternity formed His decree exactly in harmony with His will and Being. For, in the first place, those texts teach us that God has wrought all things for His own sake. And in order to forestall every possibility that we nevertheless would make an exception to this, God's Word adds to this: even the wicked for the day of destruction! That means that God loves Himself in the highest degree as the highest and the only Good, that He therefore wills Himself with all His Being and Nature, with all His understanding and will, that He seeks and glorifies Himself in Himself, but also in His decrees and in all the works of His hands, even in the wicked. I do not need to point out that this thought occurs in Scripture many times. He does all things for His own Name's sake, thus Scripture teaches everywhere. But, if this is so, how can Heyns then say that there should exist conflict between the will of His decree and the will of His nature? Precisely in complete harmony with the will of His Being, according to which He wills Himself, is His counsel. In the second place, these passages also teach us that God's counsel is exactly His good pleasure. His counsel shall stand, and He shall do all His good pleasure. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart from generation to generation. And who has ever given Him counsel? The counsel of the Lord is, therefore, His good pleasure. He has pleasure in His decrees. If that king to whom Heyns refers in his example declares war, then he has no delight therein, for he is a peace loving prince and the war was forced upon him. And if God is thus, as Heyns wants to present Him, then He really is pleased to save all men; that it stands otherwise in His counsel is not His pleasure. Thus also the text in

Ezekiel 33 is explained, is it not? God has no pleasure in the death of any sinner. He earnestly wills to save them all. But if God's counsel is His pleasure, and if He does all things for His own sake, and if He also forms the wicked unto the day of destruction for the sake of His good pleasure, then the presentation of Heyns certainly stands condemned by Holy Scripture. Heyns reasons, drawing a conclusion in a rationalistic manner from a few wrongly understood texts, directly contrary to Scripture.

4. Further, God's Word teaches us here that Jehovah is also the absolutely unchangeable one. He does not lie. He does not repent. He is not changed. There is with Him no change or shadow of turning. He neither increases nor decreases. For He is the Eternal One. Eternally He is the same, and He lives His divine, perfect life in all its infinite fulness continually. All that God is, humanly speaking, He is eternally. All that He ever thinks and wills, He thinks and wills eternally and fully. There is never anything added to His willing -- neither in relation to Himself, nor in relation to the creation. Therefore there is in Him no change or shadow of turning. But in Heyns' conception of God this is different. According to the will of His being, the will of His nature, He wills to save all men. But something is added, from the outside, from the creation; and God is changed in His willing, so that He does not decree what He wills. Also in this respect Holy Scripture condemns the conception of Heyns most explicitly.

5. Finally, I may also point out that the passages of Scripture cited also teach emphatically that God also fully performs everything that He pleases. There is no god with Him. He kills and makes alive, He wounds and He heals: neither is there any that can deliver out of His hand. All the inhabitants of the earth are esteemed as nothing with Him, and He does according to His will with the host of heaven and with the inhabitants of the earth; and there is no one who can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou? He forms the darkness as well as the light, the good and the evil. He works all things according to the counsel of His will. Our God is in the heavens, He has done whatsoever He has pleased. Of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things. But if this is so, how then would there be two wills in God which come into conflict with one another? How then would there nevertheless be anything in heaven or on earth by which the eternal and unchangeable God would be determined or limited? It is plain that the presentation of Heyns is an attack upon Scripture.

Hence, we arrive, not on the ground of a rationalistic process of reasoning, but on the ground of Holy Scripture itself, at the following conclusion: God is

One -- One in Being and nature, in understanding and will; and He is God alone. By nothing and by no one is He determined other than by His own simple Being and His simple will, in His decrees. And since He does all things for His own sake, for His own Name's sake, therefore also those decrees are entirely in harmony with His nature, with His understanding and will. They are the thoughts of His heart. The decree is His good pleasure. And since He is the absolute and independent one, not only in His counsel, but also in His works in time, therefore also those works are in complete harmony with His decree. God's works in time are in complete unity with His counsel; His counsel is completely one with His will; His will is completely one with His Being. There is nowhere a duality in all of the revelation of God, much less still is there any conflict. And the presentation of Heyns is exactly the error against which Scripture everywhere and always earnestly warns. I am God, and there is none beside me! That is the fundamental note of Scripture. Therefore we would also beg Heyns in all seriousness to return from his position, to retract what he has written about God, no longer to contradict Scripture and maintain that there is a duality in God. In any event, he shall now have to concede that he judged all too easily concerning his opponents, when he thought he could simply shake them off his back by an unfounded accusation of rationalistically drawing a conclusion. At issue is not what human reason could posit concerning God. At issue is all of Scripture. At issue is that which the entire Scriptures reveal to us concerning the living God. And it makes me shudder when I read what Heyns writes concerning the alone glorious God.

THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH, II

- Prof. Robert D. Decker -

In the previous issue we focused our attention on I Timothy 2: 9-15. This passage teaches that the woman must, in general, be adorned with good works in harmony with her profession of godliness. This means her beauty will not be expressed in the outward things of braided hair, gold jewelry, pearls, or expensive clothing. Rather, godly women will dress modestly and be adorned with "shamefacedness and sobriety." Concerning her place in the church the passage forbids the woman to teach and rule over the man. She may not occupy either the office of the ministry or that of the elder. The woman must keep silence. In quietness (knowing her God-given place) and in the sphere of all subjection the woman must learn. This is her place in God's church. This truth finds its ground in creation itself. Adam was formed first and then God created Eve for the sake of Adam and as his complement. Secondly, Eve was deceived in an utterly unique way. She became instrumental in Adam's fall. Finally the passage teaches that the woman is saved in the way of childbearing. This is the beautiful task which God in His mercy gives to the women of His church. In the way of bearing and rearing the children of God's covenant in faith, love, and holiness coupled with sobriety the godly woman enjoys the blessings of salvation.

We emphasized too, the "deeper issue" involved in this whole matter. That "deeper issue" has to do with one's view of the Scriptures themselves. Does one accept the conclusions of the "new hermeneutic"? Then, he can make the Scriptures say whatever he pleases. The infallible Word of God becomes, according to this view, Paul's word or John's. The Bible is chained to its time and culture and is no longer normative in its teaching for all ages. Let it be repeated, this is not our stance. We believe the Bible to be what it says it is, the very Word of God Himself. Its doctrine is eternal truth and while the Scriptures certainly speak to their own times and needs the truth applies with equal force in every age and culture. This we believe without apology. Ours is the holy obligation as "servants of the Word" to discover the teachings of God's Word and apply these to our lives today. Then we shall order our lives according to the standard of the Scriptures.

In this issue we shall continue the discussion of the place of women in the church by examining several more passages of the New Testament. The first of these is I Corinthians 11:3-16:

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God."

In general the subject of this passage is not what so many seem to think it is. The Apostle is not speaking about the propriety or impropriety of women wearing or not wearing hats to church. In fact, in order to be consistent those who argue that this passage means women must worship with covered heads would have to insist that those coverings be long veils hanging down over the face. But this is not the subject. The great principle taught here is the headship of the man over the woman in God's church. This headship of the man with respect to the woman means the woman is subject to the man. This subjection must also be manifest in the woman's appearance especially in the church. The issue in this passage is just this and nothing more.

It must also be borne in mind that Scripture speaks here of matters which have to do with the public worship of the church. This is evident from the reference to "praying and prophesying" in verses 4 and 5. This is also obvious from the rest of the chapter which deals with the proper observance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the context of abuses in this regard in the Corinthian

church. And finally, chapters twelve through fourteen deal with the subject of the worship of the church from the point of view of the gifts and offices of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Specifically, therefore, the subject of the passage has to do with the place and proper appearance of the women of the church. The principle governing the inspired Apostle's teaching is that the woman is subject to her head, the man. Her behavior and appearance must reflect that especially in the public assemblies of the church. For a woman to appear in the church as if she were the head of or equal to the man is a shame. Needless to say, this fundamental principle is normative for God's church in every culture and age. Today too! In this light we must understand the teaching here.

In verse three the Apostle lays down the principle, that principle which is determinative of the practice of godliness which the rest of the passage enjoins. Charles Hodge puts it this way: "Before mentioning the thing which he intended first to condemn, he states the principle on which that condemnation rested; so that, by assenting to the principle, they could not fail to assent to the conclusion to which it necessarily led." (Commentary On The First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 206) This principle is stated in the form of three assertions: Christ is the head of every man, the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God. The head is that upon which the body is dependent and to which it is subordinate. This figure is used extensively in the New Testament. Christ, so the Scriptures teach, is the head of the body which is His church. (cf. Eph. 1:22,23; 4:15,16; 5:22ff.; Col. 1:18) This headship of Christ must be understood both in an organic and legal or judicial sense. In the former sense Christ is the head of the church from the point of view of His being the life of the church. Christ is the life-source of the church. Out of its head, Christ, through the gift of faith the church receives all of its life and being. Just as the branches live out of the vine or tree so the church lives out of its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. In the latter (judicial) sense Christ is the Head of the church from the point of view of His being the Authority to Whom the church must be subject. Christ is the Ruler, the Lord of the church. The church is governed by Christ in all things and must be subject to Him. It is the headship of Christ in this latter sense which has the emphasis in verse

three. That Christ is the head of every man means He is the supreme and absolute Ruler of every man. Every man is subject to Christ, his Head. Man must not stand above Christ but he must always be in obedient subjection to Christ.

"But", the text goes on to say: "the head of the woman is the man." Can there be any doubt about the meaning of this? Is not the analogy perfectly clear? If Christ be the head of every man in the sense that man is subject to Him, is it not plainly evident that the headship of the man over the woman must mean that the woman is subject to the man? The woman, therefore, does not stand on an equality with the man, nor does she stand over the man; but the woman stands in subjection to the man. The man is the head of the woman. Already at this point the principle becomes quite obvious. The woman rejects her proper, God-given place as well as her resultant task and calling when she rules over the man in the church of Christ. The woman who becomes pastor or elder or deacon in the church assumes a responsibility and usurps an authority which simply do not belong to her according to the teaching of the Word of God. By so doing the woman occupies a place God never intended for her and of necessity she refuses to serve in the beautiful place God has ordained for her.

Finally this third verse states: "but the head of Christ is God." In no way does this contradict the equality of the Persons of the Godhead. The Son as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity is not subject to the First or Third Persons but is co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The text speaks of God Triune as the head of Christ. Christ is the Person of the Son of God incarnate. The reference is to the only begotten Son of God Who "became flesh and dwelt among us," Who suffered and was crucified for our sins, Who was raised from the dead and exalted at God's right hand in glory. Christ is God's Anointed One; Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church. As the Christ He is always subject to God. The confession of Christ is: "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:7,8) And Christ's prayer is: "...nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke 22:42)

This, therefore, is the principle taught in verse three. The

head of every man is Christ which is to say, every man must be subject to Christ. The head of the woman is the man which means the woman must be subject to the man in God's church. And, the head of Christ is God which means that as Mediator Christ always does the "will of Him that sent me". And the relationship among these is such that in being subject to the man the woman is subject to Christ Who is subject to THE Head of all, God Himself.

This relationship between the man and the woman is further explained in verses seven through twelve. Verse seven teaches that the man: "...is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man." That the man is the "image and glory" of God means there is a reflection of God in the man. In this context the idea is that God's kingly majesty and glory as the Head of all things in Christ are reflected or mirrored in the man.* Man is the "image and glory" of God exactly in his place as the head of the woman. The woman, however, is "the glory of the man." The woman too was created in the image of God (cf. Genesis 1:26,27), but she reflects the image of God precisely as "the glory of the man." In other words, exactly in her place of subjection to her head, as the glory of the man, the woman mirrors the glory of God. And, there is nothing demeaning or disgraceful about this! No more than it is demeaning for the man of God to be subject to his Head, Christ, is it shameful for the woman to be subject to the man and through him to Christ and in Christ to God. Nor does this imply that the woman is inferior to or of less worth than the man in God's sight. To say so is to "fly in the face of" the Scriptures. The Scriptures everywhere honor the woman of God's church in her God-given place. This position, that of being subject to the man, is the lofty and beautiful place God has assigned to the woman. It is a necessary place for here the woman functions, as woman with her gifts of the Spirit of Christ, in God's Kingdom and church for the edification and blessing of her fellow saints and for the glory of God. Shall we pretend to be wiser than God by forcing the woman into a place of authority over the man?

* There is, obviously, much more involved in the whole doctrine of the image of God in man than what is stated in this paper. It is not our purpose to discuss all of this. What is important for our purpose is how this relates to the woman's place in relation to the man in the church.

The inspired Apostle states the ground of this truth in verses eight and nine:

"For not is the man out of the woman, but the woman out of the man; for the man was not created because of the woman, but the woman (was created) because of the man."

Once again, the Apostle appeals to the creation of the man and woman just as he does in his letter to Timothy (cf. I Timothy 2:13) to prove the truth of the headship of the man over the woman. All this is very plain from the creation narrative of Genesis 2:21-25. Adam was created first and from his rib God made the woman. Adam was incomplete by himself, he lacked something. God made the woman as the complement of the man. She became his help perfectly fit for him by God's own design. Literally the woman is "out of the man" for she is as Adam exclaimed: "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Thus it is that the man was not created because of or by reason of the woman, but the woman was created because of the man. She was created to complement Adam so that the two as one flesh might serve the Lord God. Hence the woman is subordinate, i.e., subject to her head, the man. And as such she is the glory of the man.

The necessity; we might say, divine necessity of the woman's place is emphasized in verses eleven and twelve:

"Nevertheless neither is the woman apart from the man nor is the man apart from the woman in the Lord; for just as the woman (is) out of the man, so also (is) the man through the woman; but all things (are) out of God."

Note that "nevertheless". There must be no misunderstanding of the implications of this relationship between the man and the woman. The principle of the headship of the man remains for: "neither is the woman apart from the man" for: "the woman is out of the man." The woman must be subject to her head and cannot exist apart from the man. But this headship of the man in no sense destroys the interdependence of the man and woman in God's church for: "...nor is the man apart from the woman in the Lord." The reason is: "...the man is through the woman." Every man after the first man, Adam, is born of a woman. Without the woman, therefore, there can be no man; he simply cannot exist. And, this is of God for: "all things are of God." Let no man imagine that he can stand apart from the woman. It remains forever true that the woman is created out of

and by reason of the man. This means the man is the head of the woman. But it is equally true that the man is "through the woman." He cannot be head of the woman and thus the image and glory of God except through the woman. In the Lord there is perfect unity of man and woman. The woman needs the man, but the man also needs the woman. Neither stands independently of the other. In the Lord they need each other and they are together. They are one. There is in this implied warning as well, especially for the man. Let no man think that because he is according to God's ordinance the head of the woman, he may exercise harsh tyranny over her. Let him never think the woman has no place in God's church, no meaningful task. Let him never in sinful pride regard the woman as of no worth or inferior to himself. Neither the man nor the woman is without the other in the Lord.

This is the principle taught here. This is the unalterable truth concerning the relationship between the man and woman in the Church of Jesus Christ. Let it be emphasized this principle never changes. This is not something conditioned by culture or bound by time. It simply cannot be that in New Testament times the headship of the man applied but in our day man and woman are equal. The woman is ever to be in subjection to her head in God's church. Never may she rule the man. The conclusion is inevitable. The woman is forbidden to occupy the offices of the church which offices in the very nature of the case imply headship and rule. No one may argue otherwise on the basis of this passage. The only way one is able to contend for the position that it is permissible for the woman to serve in the office of Christ in the church is for him to contradict the plain teaching of the Word of God. He must (and many do in fact!) regard I Corinthians 11 in the same manner that he regards I Timothy 2 as merely the words and opinion of the man, Paul. He must take the position that in the Bible we have both God's Word and man's word and here are two instances where we have man's word and not God's! But, I submit that the moment one says "both...and" with respect to the Scriptures he will have only the "and"! He will lose the Word of God. The fact forever remains these passages do not allow the woman to serve in the offices of the church. Anyone who in child-like faith believes every Scripture to be God-breathed; anyone who

accepts what the Bible itself says about itself; anyone who has the witness of the Holy Spirit in his heart that this Word is God's will have to reach this conclusion.

But what does this great principle mean for the church at Corinth and for the church now? The answer is found in verses four through six, verse ten and verses thirteen through fifteen:

"Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered...For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels...Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering."

That "praying and prophesying" has reference to the public praying and prophesying of the church. These are the "solemn prayer in public" and the "declaring the mysteries of God for the edification of the hearers." (Cf. John Calvin, Commentary on I Corinthians) The apostle speaks then of the public worship of the church. Note too that the passage (especially verse five) does not sanction the practice of women leading the worship of the church. The passage says nothing about who does the leading in this praying and prophesying. Certainly in the light of verse thirty-four of chapter fourteen where the Apostle expressly forbids woman to speak in the church the passage cannot mean that the woman is allowed to lead in these spiritual exercises as office bearers. The simple meaning is that the woman engages in these exercises as part of the congregation and the men either officiate if they be office bearers or participate as part of the congregation.

The man must not appear in public worship with veiled head. That "covering" is literally, "having something hanging downward from the head," in other words, a veil. The man who prays that way dishonors or disgraces his head. On the other hand the woman who prays or prophesies with unveiled head dishonors her head. What is more, the unveiled woman might just as well be shaven, "...for it is one and the same thing with the one shaven." (vs. 5) For, the Apostle

argues, if the woman be unveiled let her also be shorn. But if it be a shame (and it is!) for a woman to be shorn ("have close cropped hair") or shaven (and it is!) let her be veiled. Finally, the Apostle calls upon the Corinthians themselves to do the judging among themselves on this matter. Is it fitting for a woman to pray to God unveiled? The assumed answer is no. Even the natural order of things teaches us that long hair is a shame unto the man, but it is a glory to the woman, for God gives the woman her long hair as a covering. What is more the Apostle writes: "If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." If any one after all this wants to argue the point ("contentious" means to be argumentative or to argue merely for the sake of arguing) the Apostle refuses to contend with him. This is not merely the custom of either the Apostles or the churches. This is according to God's own ordinance.

The question is why must the man be unveiled and the woman veiled? The man is the image and glory of God and he is the head of the woman. For this reason he must not have the sign of subjection (the veil) on his head. The woman must for she is the glory of the man and was created for the sake of the man and: "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels." (vs. 10) There are many unsatisfactory explanations of that tenth verse and we need not consider them. That explanation of this rather difficult verse which makes the most sense is that of Calvin and H.A.W. Meyer (cf. their Commentaries on the passage). The term "power," is really authority. What the passage is saying then is that the woman because of her subjection to her head, the man, must have the sign of the man's authority on her head. This is what the veil signifies. She must have that "because of the angels". Angels are present and involved in the worship of God by His church. In the presence of the angels it behooves the woman, therefore, to have the sign of authority upon her head. She must be veiled. But, whether one agrees with this interpretation or no, it makes no difference at all as far as the interpretation of the passage is concerned. The principle remains. The head of the woman is the man and this precludes the woman's ruling over the man in God's church.

But why is the Apostle so insistent that the woman of Corinth be veiled? The answer is not at all difficult. The honorable woman of the Grecian world wore a veil. The unveiled woman was the slave or what is much worse, the woman of the street, the prostitute. (Female slaves were in many cases shaven as well.) The point is obvious. For a woman of the church to worship or go about in public for that matter unveiled would be an identification of herself with the woman of the world, the ungodly, the prostitute. It would be, therefore, a denial of her proper and God-given place in subjection to her head, the man. Positively the passage teaches that also her appearance must be consonant with the woman's place and calling in God's church. This is the principle here and this principle is in no sense "time bound" or "culturally conditioned"; it is an eternal truth and for this reason applicable in every age and place. Even though it is no longer necessary for the woman to be veiled in our time, the principle remains true. The woman must always manifest in her speech, her dress, and in all her life that she is subject to the man, her head, and thus subject to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of every man. This, in brief, is the teaching of God's Word in I Corinthians 11. And once more, let it be emphasized, one cannot argue for "women in office" from this passage without distorting and denying the plain meaning of God's Word.

This same truth is taught in this same context in I Corinthians 14:34,35:

"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

These verses are so clear they hardly need explanation. The woman must keep silence in the churches which means she is not allowed to speak. That speaking must be taken in the sense of preaching and teaching in God's church. This the woman is forbidden to do. It is not at all unlikely that among the many other abuses in the Corinthian church the woman was being allowed to participate in the leading of worship. This is not permissible writes the Apostle. The reason being the woman is commanded to be in subjection, "as also saith the law." The law of God places the woman in subjection to her husband. God said to Eve and thus to all women: "and he

shall rule over thee." This means the woman must "keep silence" in the churches. If the woman wishes to learn anything she must ask her husband at home: "for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." A shame, mind you! "Let all things be done decently and in order," also in this respect in the church of Jesus Christ. (vs. 40)

Invariably after explaining away the simple truth of the above passages and the I Timothy two passage those who advocate women in office in the church call attention to Galatians 3:28. The teaching of the Corinthian and Timothy passages is passed off as being "time bound" or "culturally conditioned" or it is said that the Apostle Paul was influenced by his rabbinical background and training; but, for some strange reason this same Apostle is writing the Word of God in Galatians 3:28. This latter transcends all times and cultures. Who decides these things? By what criteria are these things determined? And how much advanced theological training does one need to become the arbiter of what in the Bible is God's Word and what is Paul's? The text reads:

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

What this verse has to do with the question at hand completely escapes this writer. In fact the Apostle in Galatians three is not at all concerned with the place of women in the church. He is concerned to answer the Judaizers in the Galatian church. These were teaching that one had to be circumcised and keep the ceremonies and practices of the age of the Old Testament shadows in order to be in the Christian church. In this third chapter the Apostle admonishes these "foolish Galatians" sharply and in the course of his teaching speaks of the relationship between the law and the promise as well as the true seed of Abraham to whom the promise was made. The Apostle makes clear that salvation is by faith and not by the works of the law. Abraham was justified by faith and those who are of faith are considered the children of Abraham. To Abraham already God spoke of the day when in him all nations would be blessed and God would justify the heathen through faith. The law cannot justify but only curse. Christ redeemed the church from the curse of that

law by becoming a curse for us. In Christ, through faith, the blessing of Abraham comes also upon the Gentiles. And the law could not disannul or make of no effect the promise. The purpose of the law was that as a schoolmaster it led the Old Testament saints to Christ in order that all might be justified by faith. Therefore, the Apostle argues, there is but one way of salvation for but one seed of Abraham. That one way is the way of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That one seed of Abraham is Christ and all the elect who are in Him by faith. (Cf. vss. 16,29) And all these are one, perfectly one in Christ. Nationality, class distinctions, sex difference; none of these makes any difference. All who are united to Christ and have been baptized into Christ belong to the seed of Abraham to whom the promise was made. All these are one in Christ.

The teaching of the New Testament is perfectly obvious to the believing mind. The woman is forbidden to teach or rule in the church. She is saved in the way of childbearing (I Timothy 2). The woman must keep silence in the church and is not permitted to speak for she is commanded by the law to be in subjection to her husband. (I Corinthians 14:34,35) The woman is the glory of the man who is her head. She must, therefore, manifest in her appearance her place in subjection to the man. (I Corinthians 11) This too would preclude the possibility of the woman teaching (office of the ministry) or ruling (office of elder, bishop) in the church for these offices certainly imply headship.

Besides the above passages this is the prevailing assumption of the Scriptures. Consider that there were no women in office in New Testament times. Though there were several women prominent in the life and ministry of Jesus and part of the little company of His faithful disciples none was called to be an Apostle or even an Evangelist. There were several women among the one hundred and twenty upon whom the Holy Spirit was poured, but none became preacher, elder, or deacon in the early New Testament church. To be sure, they assisted the Apostles and other office bearers; but, always in subjection and never as office bearers themselves.

The same is true in the subsequent history of the church. The church has always insisted that men only shall serve in office. To grant women office today is among other things to say the church

has been wrong all these centuries. Only now after nearly two thousand years since Christ and the completion of the Canon of Scripture is the church "catching up" and realizing that women have been denied their full and proper place in the church!? Nonsense! Such a position betrays an attitude of insufferable pride and a total lack of appreciation for the tradition of the church in the past. The New Testament church has barred women from office precisely because the Scriptures teach the headship of the man and that the woman must keep silence in the church. This is why too, all those passages which speak of the qualifications for office (Cf. I Timothy 3; Titus 1:5-9) assume that men shall occupy these offices.

According to the overwhelming testimony of the infallible Scriptures: "It is not permitted unto the woman" to preach, teach, or rule in the church. One either believes this in faith or rejects this teaching in unbelief. For that is the deeper issue! There is no question and can be no debate or misunderstanding about what the Bible says.

Certainly this does not at all mean there is no place for the woman in the church. She has a necessary and a beautiful place in the church, a God-given place where she is called to serve the Body of Jesus Christ and in this way the glory of God. But that place is always in subjection to her head, the man. A study of this calling of the woman shall occupy our attention, D.V., in the next issue.