

PROTESTANT REFORMED
THEOLOGICAL
JOURNAL

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL
of the
PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCHES
Grand Rapids, Michigan
December, 1970 Vol. IV, No. 1

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, 1145 Franklin Street, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Both articles in this issue are continuations of discussions begun in earlier issues of our Journal; and both are, we believe, of current interest and importance in view of the tensions which continue to surround the doctrine of Holy Scripture at this time. It is our hope that the reader will find these articles helpful in the understanding and maintenance of the truth of the Word of God.

We have two items which we wish to call to your attention. In the first place, we invite additions to our mailing list. If our readers know of any persons who might be interested in the Journal, we invite you to send their addresses to us. We are gratified by the response to this little publication effort and by the growth of our mailing list; and while we are not interested merely in having our mailing list grow, we do wish to emphasize that the addition of the names of potential readers is welcome. In the second place, we are enclosing with this issue an up-to-date list of a few of our Seminary publications --some old, some new--which may be obtained for the prices indicated by writing to our Bookstore Manager.

THE CHRIST OF HISTORY

--Prof. H. Hanko--

The expression which forms the title of this essay is one bandied about a great deal in our day. In an earlier¹ article, we discussed various views of what precisely is meant by this expression. We discussed at some length the answers which are given by liberal and higher critics of Scripture and found that their views invariably deny the possibility of knowing anything about the historical Jesus, the Christ of history. But the contention of modern critical scholars is that this is not really very important, for what is alone important is the "confrontation" between God and man in the "kerygma." And this confrontation is not dependent in any way upon our knowledge of the historical events of the life of Christ, particularly as recorded on the pages of Scripture.

It is plain, as we pointed out, that this conception involves a particular view of Scripture--one which denies Scripture's infallible inspiration and reduces Scripture to some kind of interesting historical document.

We also discussed the fact that this view, to a greater or lesser extent, has infiltrated the Reformed Churches and conservative circles so that the whole doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is a doctrine which has received much discussion in the last decade or two.

The conservative students of Scripture who have, in the main, accepted the truth of infallible inspiration, have given many and varied answers to the higher critics in the defense of the historicity of Christ and the accuracy of the gospel narratives. But, we pointed out, these conservative scholars have attempted to defend the truth of the historicity of Christ on rational grounds. That is, they have attempted to defend

1) Cf. the Journal, Vol. III, No. 2.

the truth of Scripture and the accuracy of the Scriptural narratives of the life of Christ, but they have built their arguments on a rationalistic basis and with rationalistic proof. They have, in other words, adopted the same method as the critics themselves.

This is a less than satisfactory defense of the truth of the historical nature of the Scriptural records of the life of Christ. For rationalism cannot be an adequate defense of the truth of the Word of God. In our last article we gave reasons for this and concluded with an analysis of the weakness of this position. We pointed out that this still leaves the believer in an intolerable position in which he is forced to conclude that, after all, nothing can really be known about Christ.

The argument is this. If our acceptance of the historicity of Christ is founded upon rationalistic proof, then it follows that the truth of history recorded for us especially in the gospel narratives must be ascertained by some kind of empirical historical investigation. Then we approach the Scriptures as we would any kind of historical document and ascertain its historical worth by critical investigation, by an evaluation of the document as it is one among many documents. And only after we have satisfied ourselves that what is recorded here is accurate, in much the same way in which we would determine that the writings of Xenophon in his "Anabasis" are historically accurate, can we accept the gospel records as giving to us a correct view of what happened in Palestine some 1,970 years ago. Then the Bible is basically no different from any other book.

But such a critical analysis of the gospel narratives is wrong. For one thing, these narratives may conceivably, if found accurate, give us information of a historical nature about Christ. But such information, if based on historical research alone, cannot give us the truth of what transpired in Christ's life. It cannot tell us that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us so that in beholding His glory, we beheld

the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. (Cf. John 1:14). This is a truth not open to historical investigation. We can perhaps learn that Jesus Christ actually died on the cross. But that Christ died as atonement for the sins of His people is beyond the reach of such critical analysis as even conservative scholars engage in. We can perhaps learn that Christ arose from the dead. But what precisely was involved in that resurrection and what God accomplished through that mighty event is not available to us by empirical methods.

We are aware of the fact, of course, that conservative scholars who do not deny these central truths, while approaching the gospel records as only historical documents, nevertheless insist that they accept the truths of Scripture such as the virgin birth, the atonement of Christ, the resurrection and ascension of the Lord. But when they do this, they deny their own basic assumption. They depart from their own commitment to an historical approach to the gospel records. And they involve themselves in a contradiction which gives liberalism a field day. It is an inconsistency against which liberals rail. It is a dilemma into which conservatives put themselves and from which there is no escape. It opens the door to higher critical methods and makes room for the possibility of the destruction of Scripture.

Thus, secondly, conservatives really do not have an answer to the all-important question of how it is possible to know the Christ Who is now ascended into glory. If indeed we know Christ, as is maintained, only on historical grounds, on an acceptance of the gospel records as being historically accurate because they have met the test of empirical investigation, it ought to be plain that it is impossible to know the Christ Who has gone on to glory. Surely Christ in heaven can never be the object of empirical investigation and historical research. The conservatives cannot give any kind of intelligent interpretation to the words of Luke in Acts 1:1: "The

former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach. . . ." What Jesus continued to do and to teach after his ascension is unknown. He essentially because Christ's ascension took Him out of history. The continuity between the Gospels and the book of Acts (and all the rest of the New Testament) is destroyed. This is very serious. If, nonetheless, the attempt is made to defend the whole of the New Testament as reliable, this must be done on grounds different from the grounds on which the gospel narratives are accepted. But then the argument is lost.

And so, in the third place, those who take this position have lost the argument because they have not made their arguments in the context of an infallibly inspired Scripture.² They do not accept the Scriptures as the Word of God to be received by faith. They do not receive these Scriptures on the grounds that the books give the testimony of their authority in themselves and that the Holy Spirit testifies of their authority in the hearts of God's people.³ The Scriptures are received because the reception of them is rationally defensible. But the simple fact is that this is not true--not outside the context of faith.

In order to understand this whole point, it is necessary to understand what history really is, what the miraculous really is as it takes place in history, and what the history of revelation is. With these words we concluded our last article. We are able to understand what the expression "The Christ of History" really means in the context of our answer to these questions.

We are now ready to turn to a continuation of that discussion. If it seems that our discussion starts out rather far distant from the subject at hand, it is to be hoped that the

2) Cf. our last article where we pointed out that Leon Morris in his valuable book "Studies in the Fourth Gospel" nowhere makes mention of this truth.

3) The Belgic Confession, V.

readers will be patient not only, but that this patience will be, in the end, rewarded when the connection is seen.

* * * * *

What is history?

To understand, in so far as it relates to our subject, what history is, we must make two assertions.

The first is that history is the temporal realization of the eternal counsel of God. We shall not enter into this in any detail. The reader is advised, if he wishes to pursue this subject, to consult any Reformed Dogmatics. What needs to be said here can be briefly stated. God determines eternally in His counsel the whole of history. The sovereign determination of God is not however, simply one of a decreeing of the important events of history and the general trends of history. It is a sovereign determination of all that takes place in history down to the seemingly irrelevant and meandering path of an ant through the blades of grass in our back yard. And it is important to remember that this sovereign determination of history embraces not only the history of this earth, or even this universe, but also the history of heaven.

In the second place, this determination of God is not an aimless and disconnected determination of countless millions of historical events which are disjointed and unrelated and which come to pass without rhyme or reason. God's eternal plan for history is a plan; a carefully worked out plan; a unified plan. And it is well at this point to assert further that this one plan embraces the history of this universe and the history of heaven. Not two separate plans are formulated eternally by God, but one plan--for all the creation.

In the third place, the one unifying principle of this plan is Jesus Christ. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending. All history centers in Him. All history has meaning only through Him and because of Him. All that God determined to do is because God first of all determined Christ. This is clearly taught in many beautiful passages of Scripture.

We refer particularly to Proverbs 8, especially vss. 22-31, Colossians 1:15-17, Hebrews 1:1-3.

This is important. The meaning is quite clearly that history is revelation. God, through history, is revealing Himself. Yet the unifying principle of all revelation is Jesus Christ; for it is in Jesus Christ that all the fulness of God is made known.

The second important truth which we must consider in this connection is the truth that actual history takes place in time is the work of God by which He carries out His one plan and counsel. This is traditionally known as the truth of providence. All that takes place in history happens, not only according to the plan of God, but also because God Himself carries out His own plan and actually works the events of history. All happens by God's direction. All takes place under His sovereign control. All is accomplished because God is realizing the eternal purpose of His will.⁴ The Heidelberg Catechism states it this way in Lord's Day X: "What dost thou mean by the providence of God? The almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were by his hand, he upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by his fatherly hand."

It is important to insist on this truth, especially as we now turn our attention to the subject of miracles. So often discussions concerning the nature of miracles involve a basic denial of the truth of providence. While the intention is not to fall into the error of Deism, an error which denies God's sovereign work in history, this is nevertheless what actually

4) There are various problems implied in this truth which are not so easily solved. We shall not enter into them here, for this would carry us too far afield. Suffice it to say that it is rather characteristic of most of the present-day Church that this truth is denied, especially as it relates to the acts of men. But this inevitably leads to some form of Arminianism, the bane of the Church and the vitiation of the gospel.

happens.

How does this happen?

Even those who hold to the reality of miracles usually define miracles as being extraordinary events which are explainable in terms of divine intervention. There have been various ways in which this has been interpreted.⁵ Some have distinguished between events due to ordinary operations of God, or second causes; and events due to the direct action of God's will without the intervention of subordinate causes. Others have explained miracles as being extraordinary phenomena which cannot be explained from the course of nature as known to us. Others point to the fact that by such divine intervention a new power, hitherto unknown, is put into the creation. Emphasis is placed upon the supernatural power of God as the explanation of miracles. But all agree that the aspect of extraordinary divine intervention lies at the heart of a miracle. It is the last part of this expression which is particularly puzzling. The meaning which is implied in this assertion is that the "ordinary" course of nature is explainable in terms of natural law, while miracles are violations of this natural law, or temporary suspensions of it, which have meaning only because God intervenes in the creation. This has Deistic implications, for implicit in this interpretation is the idea that God Himself does not control the affairs of the creation when they operate according to the ways in which we are accustomed to seeing them operate. Natural law is in control of all things. God operates only when we have the miraculous.

There are some who see the difficulty of this position and attempt to save the situation from implicit Deism by defining miracles in terms of that which is impossible for us to

5) Cf. Reformed Dogmatics, Rev. H. Hoeksema; Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1966; pp. 236ff.

understand. Here again however, the underlying assumption is that that which is "ordinary" in the creation is understandable; because of the fact that it is the object of scientific investigation and can be explained in terms of the known givens of natural science.

But this too is, on the face of it, false. While it is certainly true that we are able to understand many things about the operation of the creation when we make it an object of scientific investigation, it remains a fact that the most elementary facts of the creation are beyond our comprehension. We can explain, in part, the process of photosynthesis, for example, by which a tree manufactures its own food; but the principle of life in a tree which makes the whole process possible and which is necessary for a stalwart oak to develop from a small acorn is something which is beyond the explanation of science. We can learn a lot concerning the conception and development of the foetus in its mother's womb, but we have no explanation for the fact that the child is born as more than mere material substance; that it possesses a soul; that it is a distinct personality. And the words of the Psalmist in Ps. 139 remain true today after centuries of scientific investigation: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (vs. 14)

The fact is that the essential idea of a miracle is not to be found in some kind of "divine intervention". It is merely an unexplainable work of God. If we accept the truth of Scripture that all things are directly controlled by the hand of God, then it is surely true that a miracle differs in this respect not at all from all God's works. Whether God guides the course of a planet in the sky or causes the walls of Jericho to fall down does not make any essential difference in the work from God's point of view. Both are equally God's work. Both are divinely wrought. Both are what God does.

Nor is a miracle any more difficult of explanation than any of God's works. All the works of God are equally beyond human comprehension. It is just as easy (or difficult) to understand how Elisha could raise a dead son of the woman from

Shunem (II Kings 4) as it is to understand the daily wonder of childbirth. Both are equally beyond our reach if we talk of comprehending them.

It is true, of course, that usually God works in His creation in the same way. This is the only reason why this creation is an orderly creation and why it is possible to live in it. God brings the sun up from the eastern horizon each morning at a predictable time and causes it to set again in the distant west at the time fixed in the ordinance of creation. God does this. But God is working, as usually He does, in an orderly manner. If the ordinance of God were different, the creation would be an impossible habitation for man. If bread sometimes nourished and sometimes poisoned, we could not eat it and would have no means of nourishing our bodies. But we have the guarantee of God that bread will be used by Him to nourish us and give us strength for life in the world.

Yet it is precisely because God usually works in an ordinary way that makes a miracle possible. There are times when God chooses to work in a way different from His ordinary way. While usually God moves the sun and moon according to a fixed schedule in the heavens, in the days of Joshua's battle with the five kings of the south country God chose to work differently. While usually when a man ends the days of his sojourn in death, this is the end of his existence in this creation, God sometimes brings a man back again to live yet a while longer in the world. While usually one must secure his daily bread through the work of his hands and his own financial resources, God can and has in the past sent bread from heaven and supplied men's needs through means other than their labors.

The question is: Why does God sometimes choose to work differently from His ordinary way of working? And especially the question is "Why did God do this in the years in which the Scriptures were being written, culminating in the work of Christ and the apostles?"

The answer to this question is that God sometimes works

differently in order to attract attention to the work itself. And it is necessary that attention be attracted to the work itself because God works in unusual ways as types and signs. The unusual work of God is given as a sign to those who will see.

But a sign, by its very nature, points to something beyond itself. And the signs, which are miracles, point to the work of God whereby He comes to redeem this sin-cursed world and His elect people through Jesus Christ. The one miracle of all the ages is Christ Himself. The whole of Christ and the work which He does is the one miracle of God. That is, Christ Who was born of a virgin in Bethlehem, Who lived among us and preached the gospel of the kingdom, Who died on the cross as atonement for sin, Who rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven, Who is exalted at God's right hand where He is given universal authority over all things in heaven and on earth and in hell, Who will come again at the end of the age--this Christ is the one miracle of God. All the other miracles which take place are no more than signs of this miracle. The other miracles, so numerous in the history of revelation, are all so many signs which God has given to point us to the one central work of Christ. Only when we see Christ and His work which He performed and only when this work is more clearly appropriated by us do we understand the miracle as God's work in the midst of this creation.⁶

And all this brings us to the history of revelation.

There is, in the history of this world a history of revelation which belongs to what we have been speaking about above. Concurrently with the history of all things runs this thread of the history in which God was revealing Himself through Christ. It is the history which is accompanied by all these signs and

6) Cf. the former reference to Hoeksema's Reformed Dogmat for a discussion of this point.

wonders which God performed; and, indeed, these signs and wonder are part of that history. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that the history of revelation is a history which is itself the history of signs and wonders. It is marked each step of the way by miracles. These miracles consist of many different things. They consist of the miracles of events which took place in the history of Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. They consist of the miracles which surrounded the history of the nation of Israel. They consist of the miracles of the appearances of God Himself, of the Angel of Jehovah, of angels come to announce to the people of God particular events or to explain these events. They consist of the miracles of prophetic utterances which were given through dreams, visions, or by direct revelation. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the fact that God spoke in sundry times and in divers manners in time past to the fathers. (1:1)

Yet all these ways in which God spoke, revealing Himself as the God Who reaches down into this world to accomplish redemption, culminated in Christ Himself. For, "God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Hebrews 1:1, 2. Our Heidelberg catechism expresses the same truth in Lord's Day VI: "Whence knowest thou this (that our only Mediator is the Lord Jesus Christ)? From the holy gospel, which God himself first revealed in Paradise; and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and represented by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly, has fulfilled it by his only begotten Son."

This is revelation. This is the revelation of God which is finally fulfilled in Jesus Christ Himself Who is all the fulness of the revelation of God. God's speech is centrally and principally in Jesus Christ. That is, God's speech concerning redemption and reconcilliation, concerning His eternal

purpose to accomplish salvation, is His speech through Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh.

It would appear as if this implied a kind of disjunction between what we commonly call "secular history" and "sacred history", as if there are two distinct kinds of histories: two currents in history, disconnected and unrelated. But this is not the case. After all, the first miracle is the miracle of creation itself. And already in that first creation God was laying the foundation for His plan to accomplish His eternal purpose through Jesus Christ. The result is that all history which takes place from the beginning to the end of time is the work of God which forms the background to the work of salvation. Or, to change the figure, it is the stage upon which is enacted the divine drama of redemption by grace. The history of all things must serve the central point of history as it is accomplished in Jesus Christ.

This is the point which we were making when we spoke of the fact that history, as the unfolding of God's counsel, has its central significance in Christ. And it is this truth which is stated so forthrightly in so many passages in Scripture. In Hebrews 1:2 we read that "God hath in these last times spoken by his son. . . by whom also he made the world ." In Colossians 1:15-19 the same truth is set forth: "Who (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." John speaks the same truth: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him: and without him was not anything made that was made." And again in Proverbs 8, to which we referred before, we read: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there

were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there" (Vss. 22-31.)⁷

The same is true of Christ as He now is in glory. His rule is extended over all. He is Lord of lords and King of kings. His rule, in the name of the Father, is universal in the strictest sense of the word. And, as that rule extends to all creation with all its history, it is to accomplish the sovereign purpose of God in redemption.

To accept the truth that God works through Christ in all history is to accept the miraculous as well. The two stand or fall together.⁸

Nor must we have the idea that there are two separate histories as far as the history of heaven and the history of the earth are concerned. It is true that in a certain sense of the word the history of heaven is separate from the history of this earth. God created the heavens and the earth as two distinct creations and put a barrier between them. He created angels as inhabitants of the heavenly creation and men as inhabitants of the earthly creation. And in both heaven and earth the sovereign decree of predestination is accomplished. But all the angels were created at one time and election and

7) Cf. my article in Vol. I No. 1 of the Journal for a discussion of the assertion that this passage refers to Christ.

8) "It is, no doubt, for this reason that much of the denial of Scripture, so prevalent in ecclesiastical circles, is rooted in an evolutionary concept of creation and history. Many make bold to say, as, e.g., Bultmann and Kuitert, that present knowledge of the creation through science forces us to make substantial alterations in our views of the miraculous and of the inspiration of Scripture.

reprobation were finished with the fall of Satan and his legions. But election and reprobation are only accomplished on earth when the last man is born.

But it was God's purpose, as we noticed in the texts quoted above, to unite the earthly and the heavenly in the new, redeemed creation. This was evident already in the Old Testament when the saints who died in the hope of the promise of Christ went to glory. But this was principally accomplished when Christ died on the cross and rose again from the dead. Both events had implications for the accomplishment of God's purpose. Both had significance for earth and heaven. The heavenly kingdom of righteousness and everlasting peace was established by the atonement which Christ made for sin when He died. Thus the cross was planted in this creation on Calvary's hill and Christ died at a given hour on a given day as a part of this world's history. It is as if heaven and earth merge in their history in the cross. The same is true of the resurrection. It was an event in both heaven and earth. It was indeed part of this world's history. Christ arose in the history of this present creation. His bodily resurrection is indeed part of history. He arose from Joseph's garden at a given time of a given day as an historical event. But, contrary to what is so often maintained, He did not rise to come back to this earth. Christ did not emerge from the grave and come out of the door through which His dead body had been carried by the tender hands of Joseph and Nicodemus. He, because of the power of His cross, broke a new door open from the grave for all those for whom He died--a door which opens into heaven. If one had been present inside the tomb at the moment of the resurrection of Christ, he would not have seen a stirring of the grave clothes and the gradual rise of Christ. In fact, he would have seen nothing at all other than the fact that one moment Christ's body was present, and the next moment it was gone. Christ broke through the barrier, so to speak, between heaven and earth and went from the grave into glory. It is in

this way that the believer passes through death into eternal life. Thus the grave of Christ opened into heaven. He rose into glory. He went on into the heavenly creation where He is exalted at God's right hand. The resurrection, as it were, straddled heaven and earth and brought the history of heaven and earth together into one. This shall finally be accomplished at the end of time when Christ comes back again.

This has implications also for the exaltation of Christ. Christ's rule is over all the heavenly and earthly creation. But He rules over all in order that the one purpose of God may be accomplished. His rule brings heaven and earth together in preparation for the final realization of all God's counsel. For then there shall be a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness shall dwell. But together they shall be one creation forever.

Thus there is continuity in the work of Christ--in the work which He performed while here on earth and which He performs after His exaltation in heaven. It is all the work of Christ and there is fundamentally no difference in the nature of this work. The work of Christ on earth is part of the history of this world, but no less is this true of the work of Christ in heaven. It is true that Christ is now away from us in glory; but this makes no essential difference. The rule of Christ over all is a rule penetrating this world. Jesus Himself promised: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20.) The salvation of the elect Church for which Christ died is the work of Christ by the Word which He preaches through His Church and by the Spirit which He pours out upon the Church. Always all things tend towards and serve the purpose of Christ's coming. It is indeed, only because Christ rules in all history that there is the possibility of signs of Christ's coming. For these signs are worked by Christ Himself to announce that He shall return at the end of the age.

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All of this is closely related to the doctrine of Scriptur

Scripture is the record of revelation--of the revelation of God in Christ. We shall not discuss the whole doctrine of Scripture in this essay since Prof. Hoeksema is discussing this truth in a series of articles appearing in this Journ a. It is sufficient to say here that the inspiration of Scripture is also a miracle. God caused the Scriptures to be recorded infallibly so that they might be the inspired and inerrant record of all that God revealed concerning Himself.

It is in the very nature of the case that this truth of inspiration is not a truth which is discovered by rational argument or by any form of scientific research. This would be entirely out of keeping with the whole nature of revelation and of the work of God; and it would, in any case, be impossible. The truth of inspiration is gained from the Scriptures themselves. They testify to their own infallibility. They testify to their own inerrant character. The answer to all criticism of Scripture is found in the words of II Timothy 3:16: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Thus the truth of inspiration can be appropriated only by faith. It cannot be appropriated by any rationalistic argument. Faith alone, faith in the Scriptures themselves is the power to appropriate the truth of inspiration.

And thus it is faith alone which appropriates all that Scripture contains. In fact, to accept Scripture as the Word of God, infallibly inspired, is to accept the truths which Scripture contains. Faith does not reckon with Scripture as an historical document the worth and value of which must be determined by empirical historical investigation and by involved rationalistic argumentation. Faith receives the Scriptures on God's Word--God's Word contained in these Scriptures. Faith receives the Scriptures as God's record of His own revelation in Jesus Christ. Faith bows before God's Word. Faith makes little children of believers. It makes little children of believers who bow in humble submission to the authority of the Scriptures as the authority of God Himself and who do not exalt

themselves above the Scriptures as Judges of God's Word. Faith receives the Scriptures as giving the knowledge of what God does in the realization of His eternal purpose.

A rationalistic investigation of the Scriptures as a historical document leads inevitably to a rationalistic investigation of the events which Scripture records. Is it any wonder, then, that, on the one hand, sooner or later the truth of Scripture's infallibility is brought into question? And is it any wonder, then, on the other hand, that the events of which Scripture speaks are called into question and finally denied? These things are not open to historical investigation and scientific proof. They are truths received by faith.

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All this brings us back to the question with which we began the first article in the last issue of the Journal. That question was: Are those, even within Reformed circles, who speak of "kerygma" and of the Scriptures as "kerygma" correct? These maintain that Scripture is not a book containing propositional revelation. These maintain that there is really no objective doctrine in the Scriptures; and indeed, the purpose of the Scriptures is not to give to the Church a body of truth recorded on pages by an inspiration which is infallible. Rather the purpose of the Scriptures is to bring about an encounter between man and God which will, hopefully, result in a favorable reaction by man.

No doubt those who assume this position⁷ do so, on the one hand, to get away from the truth of infallible inspiration; and, on the other hand, to burden those who hold to infallible inspiration with the onus of denying the kerygmatic character of Scripture or the importance of preaching in the Church. Or at best, they rule the doctrine of infallible inspiration out of order on the grounds that it is essentially irrelevant. But

7) For examples of this, cf. our last Journal article.

their purpose is to come from under the authority of Scripture in the name of the gospel and to shove into the unwilling hands of those who maintain Scripture's authority a denial of the gospel itself.

But this attempt is a failure. The defense of the Scriptures as the infallible record of God's revelation is important just for the sake of the gospel. There is no gospel without the Scriptures as God's infallibly inspired record. The gospel is the preaching of the Word of God. The gospel, as the power of God unto salvation, is a gospel which has power to save only because it is the preaching of the Scriptures. And only because Scripture is the record of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, the infallible record, inspired and given by God, can the Scriptures be the source and fountain of all preaching. To define Scripture as being some kind of instrument to bring about some ill-defined confrontation between God and man is to do grave injustice to God's Word. It is the record of God's revelation in Christ. It reveals to us through its record of what God does as the revelation of Himself the God Who saves His people. And it is the knowledge of God and of His truth revealed in Christ which works salvation not only, but which is salvation. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3)

Those of us who maintain this precious truth of infallible inspiration do so not in order to hang on to a book which contains a body of infallibly recorded history and infallibly inspired propositions. It is not in order to "worship" a book. We do so because the very gospel itself is at stake in this question. There is no gospel, no kerygma, except it be the gospel of Jesus Christ the revelation of God. Christ works from heaven in the accomplishment of His purpose unto salvation through the gospel only because His own revelation is found in the record of the Scriptures. The one who bows before those Scriptures and receives them in humble child-like faith bows before Christ and before God. In the defense of the gospel and in the name of that power which saves the elect, the truth

of the Scriptures as infallibly inspired must be defended.

To take away from the Scriptures their inerrant character is to take away the possibility of a gospel to preach. To hold to this truth is to hold to the everlasting gospel of Christ which accomplishes all God's purpose.

AS TO THE DOCTRINE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE (3)

--Prof. H. C. Hoeksema--

By way of review, we recall the fact that this series of articles was occasioned by our study of Dr. G.C. Berkouwer's De Heilige Schrift, II, at the conclusion of which we proposed a few propositions which we promised to develop in future essays.¹ These propositions were the following:

1) The phenomenon of Holy Scripture is to be explained as lying wholly within the sphere of the wonder of grace, both as to its content and as to the manner in which it came into being.²

2) The self-testimony of Scripture is exclusively that it is the Word of God written.³

3) Scripture is never presented in the Bible as a human production, either with respect to its content or with respect to the manner in which it came into being.

4) The organs of Holy Scripture were by no means time-bound in their writing, but it can be shown from Scripture that they frequently wrote of things which were entirely beyond the limited horizons of their own times, both into the distant past and into the distant future.

5) The key to the understanding of organic inspiration, as excluding any so-called human factor, or element, is the principle of God's absolute sovereignty as it completely embraces the human writers, the holy organs of inspiration. Any dualism introduced into the concept of inspiration is more mechanical than organic.

1) Cf. the Journal, Vol. II, No. 2.

2) This we discussed in some detail in Vol. III, No. 1.

3) This was discussed rather extensively and with reference to many passages of Scripture in Vol. III, Nos. 1 and 2.

In connection with our study of the self-testimony of Holy Scripture we came to the following conclusions at the close of our last installment:

1) It should be abundantly clear from all that has been written that the truth of the inspiration of Holy Scripture certainly does not rest upon a couple individual passages, but is the current thought of Scripture.

2) If we take all the various elements in the self-testimony of Scripture together, then we certainly do not say too much if we maintain that in overwhelming fashion that self-testimony is that Scripture is the Word of God written, as God Himself through the Wonder of Grace causes it to come to us in human language. We noted in this connection that careful attention to the Scriptures throughout will make it plain that this self-testimony pervades the entire Scriptures, and that it is expressed frequently in almost unnoticeable fashion, either directly or by implication, and sometimes at the most unexpected junctures.

W) We pointed out preliminarily--because this really gets us into the whole realm of a proper conception of organic inspiration--that this Wonder of Grace whereby we now possess the Scripture as God's Word includes much more than divine and graphic inspiration as such. It includes the entire wonder of history by which God has revealed Himself to His people. It includes the calling into being of all the historical circumstances in the life of God's people in the world, as well as more particularly in the life of the holy writers,--all of those circumstances which were necessary in order to call the organism of Holy Scripture into existence. For, we said, it must be remembered that Scripture is not merely a Word of God, but the Word of God. You can neither add to it nor take away from it without marring and rending and breaking it. Scripture is an organic whole which reveals to us the God of our complete salvation in Christ, and that, too, in harmony with the counsel of the Most High. He who would speak of organic inspiration must keep this

in mind. And he who once understands the idea of organic inspiration will cease to speak of a human factor. There is no human factor in the Wonder of Grace. Neither is there a human factor in that particular aspect of the Wonder of Grace according to which Scripture came into being.

It was not our intention at this juncture, however, to get into a discussion of the concept of organic inspiration, nor to discuss that bothersome question of a so-called human factor or element. That must wait until we have finished our discussion of the self-testimony of Scripture. And in connection with the latter, we must discuss now the two classic passages of Scripture which speak directly of inspiration and its manner.

The first of these is the well-known passage of II Timothy 3:16, which is rendered as follows in the KJV: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."⁴ Then there is the passage of II Peter 1: 19-21: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."⁵

4) In the Greek: πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμὸν, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ.

5) In the Greek: καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον, ᾧ καλῶς ποιεῖτε προσέχοντες ὡς λύχνῳ φαίνοντι ἐν αὐχμηρῇ τόπῳ, ἕως οὗ ἡμέρα διαυγασῇ καὶ φωσφόρος ἀνατελεῖ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν· τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες, ὅτι πᾶσα προφητεία γραφῆς ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως οὐ γίνεται· οὐ γὰρ θελήματι ἀνθρώπου ἠνέχθη προφητεία ποτέ, ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου φερόμενοι ἐλάλησαν ἀπὸ Θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι.

These two passages have in common that they both speak directly concerning the truth of the inspiration of Scripture. The text in II Timothy 3:16 is of interest because of the expression rendered in the KJV "given by inspiration of God," (θεοπνευστος). Beyond this one term this passage does not go. In II Peter 1:19-21, however, there are several detailed statements concerning "the prophetic word" which are of great help not only in understanding the truth as such that Scripture is the Word of God, but also in understanding the manner in which Scripture came into existence and in understanding the questions which have arisen concerning a so-called "human factor." To the important features of both these passages, therefore, in so far as they are related to our subject, we shall call attention in some detail.

The first question which confronts us with respect to II Timothy 3:16 is that of the force of the expression *πασα γραφη*. Does the KJV render this expression properly by "All scripture?" Or is it to be rendered by "every scripture?" The difference is rather obvious. In the former case, the viewpoint is that of Scripture as a unity, as one whole; in the latter case, the viewpoint is that of the individual scriptures. This question of interpretation hinges grammatically upon the fact that the article is missing in the Greek. And those who prefer the translation "every scripture" emphasize this lack of the article. Now certainly the truth of the unity of Scripture is not dependent upon this one point; nor is the truth of the inspiration of Scripture as a whole dependent upon this point. It is not possible to argue, in case the translation "every scripture" is admitted as correct, that this leaves room for the denial of the authority and infallible inspiration of parts of the Bible. And the reason is obvious in the context. In verse 15 the apostle has made reference to the fact that Timothy from childhood has known "the holy scriptures." The assumption, therefore, is that

there was in existence at that time, and known both to Timothy and to Paul, a collection or body of writings which was called "the holy scriptures." Even if the translation "every scripture" is adopted in vs. 16, therefore, it is plain that the reference in that expression is to the very same holy scriptures which Timothy has known from childhood. Every one of those holy scriptures, therefore, is said in vs. 16 to be "given by inspiration of God." However, there is also much to be said for the translation of the KJV, "all scripture." The fact that the article is lacking is certainly not decisive against this translation. There are numerous instances in Scripture in which we find the word *πας* used in the sense of "all" or "the whole of" even though the definite article does not accompany the noun involved. We make mention of the following instances, citing first the reference, then the Greek expression, and then the KJV translation:

Matt. 2: 3--*πασα Ιερουσολυμα*--all Jerusalem

Rom. 11: 26--*πας Ισραηλ*--all Israel

Acts 2: 36--*πας οικος Ισραηλ*--all the house of Israel

I Cor. 1: 5--*παση γνωσει*--all knowledge

II Cor. 12: 12--*παση υπομονη*--all patience

I Tim. 5: 2--*παση αγνεια*--all purity

Lu. 3: 6--*πασα σαρξ*--all flesh

Matt. 28: 18--*πασα εξουσια*--all power

The usage, therefore, is certainly one which actually occurs in Holy Writ not infrequently. Besides, in the second place, we may take note of the fact that although the terms *γραφη* or *γραφαι* most often are accompanied by the article when referring to the Scripture as a whole, nevertheless these terms are also used without the article and with the same meaning.

Romans 1: 2--*εν γραφαις αγιαις*

Romans 16: 26--*δια τε γραφων προφητικων*

I Peter 2: 6--*διotti περιεχει εν γραφη*

II Peter 1: 20, already quoted.

It is plain, therefore, that there is also ample evidence for maintaining the translation "all Scripture."

The second question of importance concerning the passage in Timothy is whether θεοπνευστος must be considered as an attributive or a predicative modifier of παν γραφη. That is, must we read here, "All the God-inspired scripture is also profitable?" Or must we read, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable?" The implication is clear. If the modifier is attributive, then the apostle is suggesting a possible distinction between inspired and non-inspired scriptures. If the modifier, however, is predicative, then the apostle posits first that the Scriptures are given by inspiration, and then goes on to say that they are profitable for doctrine, etc. In the latter case the apostle does not teach incidentally, but purposely, the divinely inspired character and origin of Holy Scripture. The arguments against the attributive idea outweigh the arguments in favor of it. In the first place, the word γραφη is consistently used in the Bible for Holy Scripture; and it would be very strange indeed if the apostle were to suggest that there are non-inspired γραφαι as well as inspired ones. In the second place, the translation resulting from taking the modifier attributively gives a forced and unnatural sentence structure. For the word και follows immediately upon θεοπνευστος. One must translate, therefore, "All the divinely inspired scripture is also profitable...." But in this context there is no place for this "also", and it makes no sense. The unforced and natural translation is, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine...." In the third place, we may point out that a similar construction is found in I Timothy 4: 4: παν κτισμα θεου καλον, και ουδεν αποβλητον μετα ευχαριστιας λαμβανομενον. Our conclusion, therefore, is that the rendering of the KJV is correct in this point, and that the modifier is predicative.

The third and most important question confronting us in

II Timothy 3: 16 concerns the meaning of θεοπνευστος. In the first place, there is the question whether this term is to be understood actively or passively. There are those who insist that the term has an active meaning here. In that case the text does not say anything about the truth of the inspiration of Holy Scripture. It does not say anything concerning the origin of Scripture and concerning the manner in which it came into being. But it says something about the content of Holy Scripture. The text then means, "All scripture is God-breathing," or, "breathes of God." The text simply tells us, then, that the scriptures speak of God, that God is the contents of the scriptures. And the significance of this with a view to our subject is plain. In such a case, Scripture might indeed speak of God; but this does not mean that Scripture is the Word of God, that it is God's speech, God's Self-revelation, that it is of divine origin. The other possibility is that this verbal adjective must be understood in the passive sense, even as the KJV renders it. The term itself occurs only here in the N.T., and therefore the question cannot be settled on the basis of comparison with other N.T. instances of its use. We may call attention, however, to the following considerations:

- 1) While the term occurs only once in Scripture, words of the same form, verbal adjectives, are not infrequent.
- 2) It may be observed that such words do not indicate in themselves whether they have an active or a passive form. Besides, in some passages they undoubtedly do have an active meaning.
- 3) Over against this, however, stands the fact that the original meaning of words in this form was most likely passive and that also now words of this form in Holy Scripture ordinarily have a passive meaning.⁶ Many examples of this

6) Cf. A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research, p. 1097; Winer, New Testament Grammar, p. 96.

may be cited. There is absolutely no grammatical or linguistic reason, therefore, to attach to θεοπνευστος an active meaning. On the contrary, everything pleads for the passive rendering of our KJV. B.B. Warfield makes a detailed study of this question.⁷ On page 272 he writes:

We cannot think it speaking too strongly, therefore, to say that there is discoverable in none of these passages the slightest trace of an active sense of θεοπνευστος, by which it should express the idea, for example, of "breathing the divine spirit," or even such a quasi-active idea as that of "redolent of God." Everywhere the word appears as purely passive and expresses production by God. And if we proceed from these passages to those much more numerous ones, in which it is, as in II Tim. iii. 16, an epithet or predicate of Scripture, and where therefore its signification may have been affected by the way in which Christian antiquity understood that passage, the impression of the passive sense of the word grows, of course, ever stronger. Though these passages may not be placed in the first rank of material for the determination of the meaning of II Tim. iii. 16, by which they may have themselves been affected; it is manifestly improper to exclude them from consideration altogether. Even as part bearers of the exegetical tradition they are worthy of adduction: and it is scarcely conceivable that the term should have been entirely voided of its current sense, had it a different current sense, by the influence of a single employment of it by Paul --especially if we are to believe that its natural meaning as used by him differed from that assigned

7) The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1967, pp. 245-296.

it by subsequent writers. The patristic use of the term in connection with Scripture has therefore its own weight, as evidence to the natural employment of the term by Greek-speaking Christian writers.

And at the conclusion of the chapter, page 296, he writes:

The result of our investigation would seem thus, certainly, to discredit the new interpretation of θεόπνευστος offered by Ewald and Cremer. From all points of approach alike we appear to be conducted to the conclusion that it is primarily expressive of the origination of Scripture, not of its nature and much less of its effects. What is θεόπνευστος is "God-breathed," produced by the creative breath of the Almighty. And Scripture is called θεόπνευστος in order to designate it as "God-breathed," the product of Divine spiration, the creation of that Spirit who is in all spheres of the Divine activity the executive of the Godhead. The traditional translation of the word by the Latin inspiratus a Deo is no doubt also discredited, if we are to take it at the foot of the letter. It does not express a breathing into the Scriptures by God. But the ordinary conception attached to it, whether among the Fathers or the Dogmaticians, is in general vindicated. What it affirms is that the Scriptures owe their origin to an activity of God the Holy Ghost and are in the highest and truest sense His creation. It is on this foundation of Divine origin that all the high attributes of Scripture are built.

The preceding quotation from Warfield has already brought us to the second aspect of this term which we must consider, namely, that the words "given by inspiration of God" are by no means a literal rendering of the term θεόπνευστος. In this connection we quote, with approval, the following from Warfield, pages 132 and 133:

For the Greek word in this passage--θεόπνευστος.

theopneustos--very distinctly does not mean "inspired of God." This phrase is rather the rendering of the Latin, divinitus inspirata, restored from the Wyclif ("Al Scripture of God ynspyrid is...") and Rhemish ("All Scripture inspired of God is...") versions of the Vulgate. The Greek word does not even mean, as the Authorized Version translates it, "given by inspiration of God," although that rendering (inherited from Tindale: "All Scripture given by inspiration of God is..." and its successors; cf. Geneva: "The whole Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is...") has at least to say for itself that it is a somewhat clumsy, perhaps, but not misleading, paraphrase of the Greek term in the theological language of the day. The Greek term has, however, nothing to say of inspiring or of inspiration: it speaks only of a "spiring" or "spiration." What it says of Scripture is, not that it is "breathed into by God" or is the product of the Divine "inbreathing" into its human authors, but that it is breathed out by God, "God-breathed," the product of the creative breath of God. In a word, what is declared by this fundamental passage is simply that the Scriptures are a Divine product, without any indication of how God has operated in producing them. No term could have been chosen, however, which would have more emphatically asserted the Divine production of Scripture than that which is here employed. The "breath of God" is in Scripture just the symbol of His almighty power, the bearer of His creative word. "By the word of Jehovah, we read in the significant parallel of Ps. xxxiii. 6, "were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." And it is particularly where the operations of God are energetic that this

term (whether *ru^ah*, or *n^eshamah*) is employed to designate them--God's breath is the irresistible outflow of His power. When Paul declares, then, that "every scripture," or "all scripture" is the product of the Divine breath, "is God-breathed," he asserts with as much energy as he could employ that Scripture is the product of a specifically Divine operation.

Turning now to the passage in II Peter 1: 19-21, for the purpose of this study we may point to the following elements:

1) In the first place, we may notice that it is beyond all doubt that this passage speaks of Holy Scripture and its origin, and not merely of the spoken Word of God. It is true, of course, that vs. 21 speaks of the fact that men spake from God. We would point out, however, that vs. 20 speaks literally of Scripture: οτι πασα προφητεια γραφης ιδιαις επι- λυσεως ου γινεται. And, in the second place, the apostle speaks in vs. 19 of the more sure word of prophecy which we have. That more sure word of prophecy we have in the Scriptures. It is the "prophecy of scripture." And concerning that prophecy which we have, vss. 20, 21 tell us that negatively, it is not of any private interpretation and did not come by the will of man; and, positively, that men spake from God as being moved by the Holy Spirit.

2) In the second place, we may notice that while this passage speaks of what the KJV calls "a more sure word of prophecy," this translation is not very accurate. Literally the text does not speak of a more sure word of prophecy, but of "the prophetic word." There is a question whether this expression refers to the whole of the Old Testament Scripture or whether it refers to those books or sections of the Old Testament which we classify specifically as prophetic. As far as our present subject is concerned, namely, the self-testimony of Scripture, this question is of no principal

importance. Under both interpretations the fact remains that this passage tells us something about the nature and the origin of Holy Scripture. This is the important fact here. Nevertheless, I would point out that there is good reason to hold that the apostle by this expression refers to the whole of the Old Testament scriptures from the point of view of their being essentially always prophetic--prophetic, that is, not in the sense that they are always specifically predictive, but in the sense that all of Scripture is the revelation of the Word of God, is of divine origin, and is essentially eschatological in nature. We have one more sure Word of prophecy. The seed of that prophecy we have in the protevangel of Genesis 3: 15. That Word of prophecy, the revelation of the wonder of grace--the wonder which shall finally be consummated in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ in the new heavens and the new earth--that Word of prophecy is progressively revealed and grows throughout the old dispensation. It is essentially fulfilled in the first advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is continued and elucidated in the speech and writings of the apostles. That Word of prophecy has one central theme: the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, His power to overcome sin and death, and His coming ultimately to deliver us and to usher in the new and everlasting kingdom of glory. It is that Word which is the light that shineth in a dark place. And so, while we may distinguish many and various prophecies of Scripture, yet there is but one Scripture and one more sure Word of prophecy.⁸

3) It is important to note that this passage makes two negative statements concerning the nature and origin of Scripture-prophecy. The first is: "no prophecy of the

8) We remind you in this connection of what we wrote in this Journal, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 25, ff., concerning the wonder of grace and concerning Holy Scripture being according to its content the announcement of this wonder-work of God to His people, and about the fact that Scripture also as far as its origin is concerned is to be explained from the wonder.

scripture is of any private interpretation." The apostle writes that we know this first. Every prophecy of Scripture does not become, does not happen, of private interpretation. And the second is: prophecy was not borne, was not brought about, of old time, formerly, by the will of man, by human will. By these two statements the text completely rules out any human factor, any human contribution, in the make-up and production of Holy Scripture.

That first statement is not to be understood as laying down a hermeneutical principle, a rule of exegesis. In that case, the text would mean that after a prophecy of Scripture has been given, it is still impossible to understand that prophecy and to interpret that Scripture privately, that is, without the guidance of the Spirit of God. Even after the prophecy has once been given, it cannot be left to mere man to interpret the Scriptures; but the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, Who has been poured out in the church, leads us into all the truth; and the Scriptures can be understood and interpreted only under His guidance. Now while this is true in itself and is also a very important principle for the interpretation of Scripture, this is not the meaning of the text here. For then the reason given in vs. 21 for what is here stated in vs. 20 makes no sense; it cannot serve as a reason for the statement that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. The apostle, however, is not speaking of the work of exegesis, the labor of the interpretation of the Scriptures, but of their origin. He is answering the question: whence is prophecy? What is the origin of the prophecy of Scripture? Who is the author of that more sure prophetic Word? And therefore, why is that prophetic Word sure? And the answer of the text is that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private elucidation or interpretation, but that in prophecy both the facts, or events, and the interpretation of those facts and events are from God. The prophecy of Scripture itself, with the interpretation of

events that is given in that prophecy, is not private. The prophets did not ponder and solve and explain the nature of things and the problem of the future of themselves. The prophecy of Scripture does not result from human investigation into things. It is not the product of its writers' own thinking. It does not present the cogitations of mere men. Such is the manner by which the philosophical writings of the heathen--of a Plato or an Aristotle--come into existence. But this is not the manner by which the prophecy of Scripture comes into the world. When the prophets speak of the promise and of the fulfillment of the promise and of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; and when the apostles speak of the incarnation and the cross and the resurrection, and when, as in this very chapter, they speak of the event of the transfiguration and interpret it as meaning that they were eyewitnesses of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; then all this is not a cunningly devised fable. It is not a matter of private elucidation. It does not arise out of the human mind. But it is of God. Both the events and facts and the prophetic interpretation of those events and facts is not private.

In the second place, there is the very emphatic statement that not by human will did prophecy of old time come about. It was not borne by human will. This is given in the text as a reason for the immediately preceding statement that all prophecy is not of private interpretation; it is the negative reason for this statement. And we may notice that the statement is emphatic. The expression οὐ...θεληματι ανθρωπου is thrust into the fore part of the sentence; and it is difficult to conceive of a statement which more decisively rules out man and his mind and heart and desires and decision and will as the origin, and thus as a factor (an element which serves to make up, to produce) Scripture-prophecy. It must be remembered, of course, that the question here is that of the origin of Holy Scripture, its source, its authorship, and thus its fundamental character. The question is: Is Scripture of God? Or, is it of man? Or, is it of God

and man together? And the answer of the text here is that Scripture-prophecy was not borne by the will of man. This does not mean, of course, that as far as the manner in which God gave Scripture is concerned, He does not use men--and use them, of course, as rational, moral, thinking, willing creatures. It would be foolish to try to deny this. To be sure, God used men to write Holy Scripture. And in using them He did not suppress their mind and their will and their personality; nor did He eliminate that mind and will and personality or act alongside of them. But He used men as men, in their capacity as men, to write His Word, the prophetic Word. And the result was that this Word was θεόπνευστος, the product of the breath of God, not of the will of man.

To illustrate the significance of these two negative statements, let us apply them concretely. And let us do so by using the illustration of a prophecy of Scripture of which one might be inclined to say that the so-called human factor is very much on the foreground. Let us use the example of Psalm 2. In this psalm David speaks and writes; and he speaks as a king who with all his soul and mind and will and strength and with all his circumstances has been put in the holy line. He speaks personally. He speaks of his own convictions and of his own knowledge and of his own experience. He speaks of his kingdom and his throne and of the enemies of his kingdom. Also when he says, "I will declare the decree, The Lord hath said unto me, This day have I begotten thee; Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession,"--also then he speaks personally. At the same time, this is a prophecy of Scripture, as is very evident from the fact that in the New Testament this word is proclaimed as being fulfilled in the resurrection and exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now how did this prophecy of Scripture come about? That David writes here, and that he speaks very personally and from his own subjective experience (as is characteristic of the psalms generally) no one would be so foolish as to deny.

David's heart and David's mind and David's will and David's life's experiences and David's history and David's position as king over Israel on God's holy hill of Zion--these are all involved. And yet also this prophecy of Scripture is covered by these statements of II Peter 1. It is not of private interpretation. And it was not borne, not brought into existence, by the will of man.

We shall have more to say about this whole "problem" of the so-called human factor in our next installment. And we would point out that this is also intimately connected with the question whether the writers of Holy Scripture were "time-bound." But it is evident from this brief investigation that these two statements of II Peter 1: 20, 21 are because of what they exclude so emphatically very significant for the understanding of the doctrine of Holy Scripture, and in particular for a right understanding of the truth of organic inspiration. I would suggest that the charge which is sometimes brought in connection with a denial of a human factor in Holy Scripture, the charge of passivism and mechanicalism, would also have to be registered with all its force against these statements of the apostle Peter in his Second Epistle.

4) Finally, we must note the contrasting, positive statement of this passage: *αλλα υπο Πνευματος Αγιου φερομενοι ελαλησαν απο θεου ανθρωποι*. We may notice, in the first place, that the phrase *υπο Πνευματος Αγιου φερομενοι* is emphatic: it stands first in the clause. In the second place, we may point out that it makes little difference whether you render this statement, "men from God spake," or, "men spake from God," although it would appear that the latter is the more accurate rendering. In the third place, we would point out that the circumstantial participial phrase here explains how it came about that men spake from God. It explains how it is possible that the speech of men had its source, its origin, in God. And we may point out that as far as the viewpoint of this statement is concerned, men were passive: they were borne, carried--and thus, as the KJV has it, moved--

by God Himself, by the agency of the Holy Spirit. The initiation and the execution of their speech is wholly from God through the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ, and not at all of men. Inspiration means that the Holy Spirit so bears men and uses men, with all their heart and mind and will and all their circumstances, in the holy line, to write Holy Scripture.

We conclude this installment of our study by pointing out that it is only in connection with this self-testimony of Holy Scripture (which is, remember, objectively the testimony of Christ Himself through the Holy Spirit) that the testimony of the Spirit concerning Holy Scripture must be understood. We must not understand that testimony of the Spirit concerning Holy Scripture as a book as consisting in some kind of strange, additional, audible testimony which the Holy Spirit, in a mystical manner, but nevertheless with a very definite content, gives in the heart of the believer independently from the Word of Scripture itself. It is not so that that Scripture does not testify of itself that it is from God. It is not so that we cannot know from that Scripture itself that it has come into existence in a wholly special manner through the inspiration of the Spirit, and that now the Holy Spirit speaks to us in our hearts with a spiritually audible voice in a spiritually perceptible manner, so that we experience that the Spirit speaks to us, and that the content of this clearly perceptible witness of the Spirit is now, "These 66 books are inspired of God." This has never been the Reformed conception. The testimony of the Spirit is not added in a mechanical manner. But that testimony of the Spirit obtains its objective contents from the Scripture itself. It is not a testimony of the Spirit apart from Scripture, but in connection with and through Scripture, and that too, as that Scripture testifies of itself that it is not a human book with human presentations and human failings and infirmities and a divine content or kerugma, but is the very Word of God throughout. The element of certainty in my knowledge of

certainty in my knowledge of God's Word is nothing else than the testimony of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the personal bond between the Father and the Son. He is the bond between subject and object in all our knowledge. He is also the bond between Holy Scripture and our knowledge. And that bond does not come into existence through the fact that the Holy Spirit furnishes an independent testimony in our hearts. For the Spirit never speaks of Himself. The content of the testimony of the Spirit always lies in the eternal Word, the Logos, the Christ, the Word Who was made flesh and dwelt among us. And the same Spirit Who testifies in Scripture concerning the divine content of the Holy Scripture binds this divine content with unshakeable certainty upon the heart. Such is the testimony of the Holy Spirit. It does not have any content of itself, but derives its content from the Word. And it is that operation of the Spirit whereby we are convinced with unshakeable certainty of the objective reality of the things which we spiritually see and hear and know through the Holy Scriptures.

Such, briefly, is the Reformed view of the testimony of the Holy Spirit in connection with Holy Scripture. Our Reformed fathers have always bound the testimony of the Holy Spirit inseparably to the Word of God, even as they have always strongly maintained the Filioque. And this is the reason why we have taken pains in our study of the doctrine of Holy Scripture to demonstrate the self-testimony of Scripture, i.e., the objective testimony of the Spirit as it is found in the Word of God itself. It is not necessary, in this connection, to point out a text which states literally that the Spirit testifies with our spirit that the Bible is the Word of God. But it is indeed necessary that the whole of Holy Scripture testifies of itself that it is from God and that as Scripture it is given by inspiration. And if now in this connection we remember the Scriptural truth that the Holy Spirit never testifies of Himself, but always testifies in inseparable connection with the Word of Christ, so that the subjective

testimony of the Spirit in our hearts and the objective testimony of that same Spirit in the Holy Scriptures are but two aspects of one and the same testimony of the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ, then we can understand this testimony of the Spirit which is referred to in Article 5 of our Belgic Confession of Faith: "We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith; believing without any doubt, all things contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such, but more especially because the Holy Ghost witnesseth in our hearts, that they are from God, whereof they carry the evidence in themselves. For the very blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are fulfilling.

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