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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial Comments-----	3
Prof. H. Hanko	
The Genealogy of Jesus According to the Flesh-----	5
Rev. D. J. Engelsma	
Book Review: Dr. G. C. Berkouwer's <i>De Heilige Schrift, II</i> ---	17
Prof. H.C. Hoeksema	

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Students of Scripture have often given attention to the problem of harmonizing the genealogies of Christ given in Matthew in Luke. Many solutions to the problem have been proposed, none of them altogether satisfactory.

Included in this issue of the Journal is a tentative solution proposed by Rev. D. J. Engelsma, pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church at Loveland, Colorado. This paper was originally presented at a ministerial conference held in South Holland, Illinois on March 4 of this year. As might be expected, the paper occasioned considerable discussion. The discussion dealt with various points. Some of these were:

1) Does the solution presented in the paper (that Matthew presents the genealogy of Joseph and Luke the genealogy of Mary) do justice to the prophecies which speak of Jesus as the son of David Who was to establish the throne of David forever? (II Samuel 7: 12-17, and similar passages)

2) Does the assertion of the paper that Matthew 1: 2-16 is not the genealogy of Mary and therefore not the record of the actual origin of Jesus do exegetical justice to the genealogy and to the strong assertions of Matthew in vs. 17?

3) What is the significance of the fact that Matthew, in vs. 17 of Chapter 1, himself includes Christ in these genealogies if this genealogy is not actually of Mary and Jesus?

As a contribution of worth to the problem we present this

paper to our reading audience in the hope that it will serve as a springboard to further discussion of the problem.

The promised review of Dr. G. C. Berkouwer's *De Heilige Schrift, II* also appears in this issue. All the tensions in the church today concerning the "new theology" and the "new hermeneutics" revolve about the doctrine of Holy Scripture. One's outlook with respect to the latter will determine his attitude toward the former. In this review, as in that of Volume I, Prof. Hoeksema continues to find basic fault with Dr. Berkouwer's presentation; but he also makes a few suggestions of a positive nature with respect to this important doctrine.

--Prof. H. Hanko

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS ACCORDING TO THE FLESH
Rev. David Engelsma

In view of the promise of the Old Testament that the Messiah would be a descendant of David, it is puzzling that the New Testament repeatedly represents Joseph as being descended from David, while apparently making no such claim for Mary. In Matthew 1:20, the angel addresses Joseph as "son of David"; Luke 2:4 says of Joseph that "he was of the house and lineage of David," and therefore had to register for the taxation in Bethlehem; the phrase, "of the house of David," in the account of the Annunciation (Luke 1:27), also refers to Joseph. Concerning the ancestry of Mary, seemingly there is silence.

Calvin's theory that Scripture "deems it enough to show that Joseph was descended from the seed of David, since it is certain that Mary was of the same family,"¹ fails because it is not certain that a descendant of David was obligated to marry a member of the Davidic line.

Others admit that it is uncertain, and even unlikely, that Mary was descended from David, but assert that this is not necessary for the fulfilment of the Old Testament promise. They claim that Jesus "descended" from David only legally, through Joseph, the husband of His mother. Joseph did actually descend from David, and by a legal reckoning transmitted this honor to Mary's son, when he married Mary. Karl Barth adopts this explanation of Jesus' Davidic sonship. Jesus is the "Son of David" only by legal adoption into David's line through Joseph. Barth approvingly quotes Adolf Schlatter's analysis of Matthew 1:18-25, "The Grafting of Jesus into the Tribe of David," and adds: "Romans 1:3 need not exclude the thought of another than the purely physical descent from David."² There are elements of truth in this view. Scripture indicates that Joseph became Jesus' parent legally. Luke 2:27 states that "the parents brought in the child Jesus"; Luke 2:41 states that "his parents went to Jerusalem." According to the best reading, Luke 2:33 says, "And his father

¹Calvin, Institutes, II, XIII, 3.

²Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. I, 2, p. 175.

and mother," not, "And Joseph and his mother." Mary herself refers to Joseph, when speaking to her Son, as "thy father" (Luke 2:48).³ And Luke 3:23, which declares that Jesus was "supposed" to be the son of Joseph, may well refer to a legal reckoning, as well as to popular supposition. Also, the stress of the New Testament on Joseph's being of David's house would seem to indicate that, in God's sight, the legal relationship of Jesus and Joseph resulted in Jesus' sharing in Joseph's position of honor, to some degree.

✓ Nevertheless, this explanation of Jesus' Davidic sonship does not satisfy either the Old Testament promise or the New Testament testimony concerning Jesus' ancestry. The Old Testament promise of II Samuel 7:12 ff. demands that the Messiah be David's "seed...which shall proceed out of thy bowels..." Psalm 132:11 takes up this promise, and predicts that the Messiah-King will be "Of the fruit of thy (David's) body." The Messiah must literally, and not only legally, descend from David. This is exactly what the New Testament says of Jesus. In Acts 2:30, Peter applies to Jesus the prophecy that the Messiah would come "of the fruit of his (David's) loins, according to the flesh." Romans 1:3, "Jesus Christ...which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh," cannot be interpreted in any other way than as describing Jesus as a literal descendant of David, through Mary. Literally, David is "his father" (Luke 1:32), so that the prophets could name Him, "David" (cf. Ezekiel 34:23). Mary, therefore, must be a descendant of David, and must have the royal blood of David coursing through her veins.

Does the New Testament show this royal ancestry of Mary? To put the question differently and better: Does the New Testament show the royal ancestry of Jesus through Mary? To answer the question, it is necessary to take up the two genealogies that concern the "generation" of Jesus, and their difficulties.

✓ The genealogies of Matthew 1:2ff. and Luke 3:23ff. confront the reader with two outstanding difficulties. The first is that

³ Jesus guards against any misinterpretation of Joseph's strictly legal parenthood by immediately claiming God as "my Father" (vs.49).

both, apparently, are genealogies of Joseph, not of Mary. The second is that the genealogies are different, radically different, in the line between David and Joseph. The French priest, Jean Meslier (1678-1733), whose confession of unbelief was published posthumously, stressed both of these difficulties. He "found many difficulties in Holy Writ. Why was the genealogy of Christ in the Gospel of St. Matthew so different from that in Luke, if both were authored by God? Why did both of these genealogies end with Joseph, who was soon to be excused from begetting Jesus?"⁴

To the unbelieving critic of Scripture, the difference between these genealogies poses no problem. He gleefully pounces on this difference as further evidence of the fallibility of the Bible. Renan scores "the inexactitude and the contradictions of the genealogies...The two genealogies are altogether discordant and conform little to the lists of the Old Testament." He dismisses both as "fictitious genealogies which his (Jesus') partisans imagined, in order to prove his royal descent."⁵ To the believer, however, who receives Scripture as the Word of God, the difference between the genealogies presents the problem: How are the genealogies to be harmonized? This problem exists, as long as they are regarded as the genealogies of the same person, whether of Joseph or of Mary. The majority of interpreters regard both genealogies as those of Joseph. Barth states flatly: "It is a fact that both the genealogies Matthew 1:2-16 and Luke 3:23-38 end not with Mary but with Joseph...We will certainly do well to renounce the attempts of early Church commentators to convert the genealogies of Joseph into those of Mary."⁶ It is the unique view of Herman Hoeksema, on the other hand, that both genealogies are, in fact, the genealogies of Mary. Of Matthew's genealogy, he says, "(It is) the genealogy, not of Joseph, but of Mary." However, "also in Luke we meet with the genealogy of Mary although legally it is that of Joseph."⁷

⁴Will and Ariel Durant, The Age of Voltaire, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1965, p. 612.

⁵Ernest Renan, The Life of Jesus, Carleton, New York, 1863, pp. 218ff.

⁶Karl Barth, op. cit., p. 175.

⁷Herman Hoeksema, The Death of the Son of God, pp. 180ff.

Whether one regards both as the genealogies of Joseph, or of Mary, he must reconcile them, if he holds to the inerrancy of Scripture. The attempt usually takes the form of an appeal to the practice of Levirate marriage to justify viewing one genealogy as the actual line of Joseph (or Mary), and the other genealogy as the legal line of Joseph (or Mary). This was the explanation already of the church historian, Eusebius. Eusebius adopted the explanation of the church father, Julius Africanus (c. A.D. 160-240) "on the harmony of the gospel genealogies."⁸ Both genealogies are of Joseph. ~~Matthew gives Joseph's actual descent~~; Luke gives Joseph's legal ancestry, according to Levirate marriages. Africanus illustrates his hypothesis in the case of the two different fathers of Joseph. Luke says that Heli was the father of Joseph; Matthew says he was Jacob. In fact (so Africanus and Eusebius), Heli and Jacob were brothers. Jacob married Heli's childless widow, and by her begot Joseph. Thus, "according to nature Joseph was...(Jacob's) son...but according to law he was Heli's son." To the objection that Heli and Jacob do not have the same father, as they should have if they are brothers, Africanus replies that they were only half-brothers. Matthan and Melchi (sic) married the same woman successively, so that Melchi begot Heli by the mother of Matthan's son, Jacob. Africanus would account for all the other differences back to David in the same way.

We appreciate Africanus' closing remark that "In any case the gospel record is true." His reconciling of the genealogies, however, does not satisfy. Nor is it enough to object to his "harmony" on the ground that his mistake in making Melchi the father of Heli, instead of Matthat, renders his entire explanation suspect, if indeed it does not nullify it. The objection is rather the one which Africanus tried to ward off beforehand: His theory is "dogmatic assertion or mere guesswork."

There are two considerations concerning Scripture that lead us to an understanding of the genealogies. The first is that the Scriptures are inerrant, also in the genealogies. Sharp,

⁸For this and the following explanation, see Eusebius, The History of the Church, I, 7.

sustained difference between the two genealogies, therefore, points out that they are genealogies of two different persons.

2. The second consideration is that Scripture is given to the Church to be understood by all the believers. If the genealogies are both of the same person, whether of Joseph or of Mary, the harmonizing of them and the meaning of them are forever beyond the grasp of the believer. All that he can say is that he believes them to be harmonious and to have significance. How they harmonize and what their significance is, he does not know. One can assert, of course, in general, that the differences are all resolved by Levirate marriages. This was the assertion of Eusebius, and of Africanus before him. But no one can prove this assertion. In order to prove this correlation of the two genealogies one would have to show from other passages of Scripture, or perhaps from the archives of profane history, that at almost every step of the way from David to Joseph (or Mary) there were Levirate marriages involving the persons named in the genealogies. There is no such evidence elsewhere in Scripture. Nor are there extant, extra-Biblical registers which substantiate the assertion that the genealogies are to be harmonized in this way. Already in the time of Africanus, such extra-Biblical evidence was lacking, so that, lamely, he had to append to his "harmony": "This may or may not be the truth of the matter; but in my opinion and that of every fair-minded person no one else could give a clearer exposition, and we must content ourselves with it even if unconfirmed..."⁹ The understanding of Scripture, including the genealogies, is not for archeologists who uncover and pour over ancient Jewish registers, but for believers who diligently search the Scriptures. The unprovable theory, therefore, that almost the entire descent of Joseph (or Mary) from David was confused by Levirate, or second, marriages is unattractive.

The genealogies of Matthew and Luke are different genealogies. Luke 3: 23, ff. gives the genealogy of Mary, or better the genealogy of Jesus through His mother Mary. That this is the

⁹ Eusebius, op. cit.

case is obscured in our English translation. The King James Version reads: "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli" (Luke 3:23). The correct reading is: "...Jesus... being the son (as was supposed, of Joseph) of Heli." The difference is subtle, but important. It is not Joseph who is the son of Heli, but Jesus. Luke may be paraphrased as follows:

"Jesus is the son, according to legal reckoning, or popular supposition, of Joseph. But in fact He is not Joseph's son. In fact, He is the son of Heli." Mary's name is omitted in keeping with the Jewish practice of ignoring women in the registers.¹⁰

The ancestry of Jesus begins with Mary's father, Heli. This is in keeping with Luke's interest, in early chapters, with Mary, and with Luke's purpose here to trace the ancestry of Jesus. To trace the ancestry of Jesus, Luke must give the genealogy of Mary, not of Joseph.

Matthew 1:2ff. is the genealogy of Joseph. The passage itself shuts us up to this view. Throughout the passage, Matthew uses the word, "begat," to express literal, physical procreation of a child by a father. Sound Scriptural interpretation forbids pouring any other meaning into the word when it occurs in vs. 16: "Jacob begat Joseph." Hoeksema's view that Matthew gives the actual lineage of Mary, and his related view that Mary was the sole survivor of the royal line of David, are not correct. He bases the latter opinion on Mary's question to the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" Hoeksema interprets Mary's question as meaning that Mary had previously determined that the royal line of David no longer had a male member but ended in her, a virgin. She objected to the angel that she did not know of any man to whom she might be married in order to produce David's great Son.¹¹ Several considerations rule out this interpretation. First, it is directly contradicted by the genealogy of Matthew 1. Matthew says that there was an existing

¹⁰Matthew's inclusion of some women in the genealogy between Abraham and David is a deliberate break with this practice, partly to show the lowly origins of Jesus Christ.

¹¹Hoeksema, op. cit., pp. 181,182.

male member of the royal line, Joseph, and that by the providence of God Mary was espoused to him. Secondly, this explanation raises the question, why Mary, knowing the coming of the Messiah to depend upon her and knowing that Joseph was not eligible to produce the Messiah with her, went ahead to engage herself to ineligible Joseph with a view to marriage. Was she not consciously precluding the last possibility of the birth of David's Son? Thirdly, this explanation ascribes far too much awareness to Mary. That Mary, as a believer, hoped for the fulfilment of God's promise cannot be doubted. But that she had beforehand determined that she would have to be the mother of the Messiah flies in the face of the record of the Annunciation. She does not expectantly and calmly await the announcement that she will mother the Messiah. Rather, Mary was "troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of saluation this should be" (Luke 1:29). Nothing could be further from her thoughts than that the Messiah will be born from her. Mary's reference to knowing a man as she asks about the possibility of the angel's announcement stems from her perception that the angel is announcing an imminent conception, which will involve her alone. Mary uses the word know as it is commonly used in Scripture, to refer to marital intimacy. Her question arises from the premonition of the astounding truth of a virgin birth.

Joseph descended from David in the line of Solomon and the succeeding kings of Judah, the so-called royal line. ~~Mary and Jesus~~ also descended from David, but in the line of another son of David, Nathan. Nathan was a son of David by Bathsheba according to I Chron. 3:5 (cf. also II Sam. 5:14). Zech. 12:12 indicates that the family of Nathan still existed after the captivity. It is this line that is traced in Luke 3, as vs. 31 proves.

It might seem that the failure of Jesus, on this view of the genealogies, to arise out of the royal line represents the failure of God's promise. However, examination of the Old Testament prophecies regarding the coming of the Messiah reveals that God did not promise that David's great Son would descend from the royal line. God's promise, even to kings after David, was that

the Messiah would be David's Son, a descendant of David. That Jesus descends from David through Nathan, instead of Solomon, does not in the least contravene the prophesied royalty. Jesus is, literally, a son of David, and thus also a son of Judah and of Abraham. This is sufficient to satisfy prophecy. In addition, Old Testament prophecy prohibits the coming of Christ from the "royal line." It does this in Jeremiah 22:30. The prophecy here concerns king "Coniah" (vs. 28), who is elsewhere called Jeconiah (I Cron. 3:16) and, more familiarly, Jehoiachin (II Kings 24:6ff. and II Chron. 36:8ff.). About him, "Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah." God declares His judgment upon this evil king. The judgment is not that Jehoiachin will have no children, for vs. 28 as well as I Chronicles 3:17 and Matthew 1:12, indicate that he did have "seed." The word translated "childless" is the word that literally means "naked." God strips Johoiachin in this way, that none of his descendants will be "sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah." The fulfilment of this judgment is that, upon Jehoiachin's dethronement by Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, not his son, succeeds him (II Kings 24:17). And after the capture of Zedekiah, the throne of Judah is vacant for some 400 years. In this way is also realized the similar declaration of God to Jehoiachin's father, Jehoiakim, in Jeremiah 36:30. But the judgment of the Lord is that no descendant of Jehoiachin shall rule "any more." According to Matthew 1:11ff., the royal line, preserved through the captivity and continuing to the time of Jesus, runs through Jehoiachin, there called Jechonias. Because of God's judgment upon him, no member of this royal line, including Joseph, may produce the Messiah-King. And Matthew is explicit: The royal line, and specifically Joseph, does not produce Jesus the Christ.

If Matthew 1:2-17 does not give the genealogy of Jesus, why does Matthew record it, and why does he record it immediately after the words, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham"? The inclusion of this genea-

logy has a two-fold significance. First, there passes over to 1.
Jesus through the legal relationship which He sustains to Joseph
the honor which belonged to Joseph as a member of the "royal
line" of David. Here, we must remember that Scripture does make
something of the fact that our Lord's mother was married to a
descendant of David. Even though the line royal became corrupt,
there did belong to that line a certain true glory, just as
there were good kings in it. What was honorable in that line is
legally transmitted to Jesus through Joseph's marriage to Jesus'
mother. All the lines, in the fulness of time, converge on Jesus
Christ. Secondly, the significance of this genealogy in con- 2.
nection with the birth of Jesus is exactly to focus our attention
on the fact that the origin of Jesus Christ was not from the ?
so-called royal line of David. How else can one correlate Mat-
thew's listing the genealogy of Joseph and his immediate insis-
tence that Joseph had nothing to do with the conception of the
Lord? The opening words of Matthew, "The book of the generation
of Jesus Christ...", do not refer to the genealogy of vss. 2-17.
That is, vss. 2-17 are not "the book of the generation of Jesus
Christ." It can be debated whether the opening words refer to
the entire book of Matthew or to vss. 18-25. But as Zahn writes, ✓
"Reference of the title to 1:2-17 is to be rejected as impossible
linguistically."¹² ✓ Matthew uses the word "genesis," which means ✓
"origin" or "generation," not the word genealogy. This "genesis"
is given, not in vss. 2-17, but in vss. 18ff. In vs. 18, after
the insertion of the genealogy of Joseph, Matthew picks up the
subject of that opening "genesis" once more, now to give that
"origin" or "generation," namely, the conception by the Spirit
and the birth from a virgin. It is important to note that ac-
cording to the best reading of vs. 18, Matthew does not write, ✓
"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise," but: "Now the
generation (Gk.: genesis) of Jesus Christ was on this wise." ✓
The same word occurs in vs. 18 that is used in vs. 1. Our ver-
sion renders the opening particle, of vs. 18 (Gk.: de) correctly, ✓
when it translates it, "Now." Vs. 18, by the opening particle,

¹²T. Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, Kregel, Grand Rapids, 1953, Vol. 2, pp. 531ff.

"Now," picks up the original, but temporarily by-passed, subject of Jesus' "generation." In relation to the immediately preceding genealogy of Joseph, the "de" of vs. 18 almost has the meaning, "However."¹³

Such an understanding of the genealogy of Jesus "according to the flesh" sheds new light also on Old Testament history. A few of the weightier implications for the history of the old covenant may be briefly referred to.

First of all, God fulfilled His promise to David that his Son would be the messiah-King. God fulfilled it differently than man might have expected, but this is generally true of our God, Whose ways are always in the sea. That the Messiah comes, not from the prominent line of Solomon, but from the obscure line of Nathan, is yet a literal fulfilment of the Divine promise.

Secondly, the 400 years following the Babylonian captivity, during which Judah had no king, must be reckoned with more seriously than often is the case. These 400 years represent far more than an interregnum, the hiatus between Zedekiah and Jesus. They represent the rejection by God of the so-called royal line of David, which had degenerated until it culminated in the depraved Jehoiachin. They are the visible testimony to the dreadful judgment of the Lord upon "Coniah": "Write ye this man naked..." The tabernacle of David is in ruins. And although the Lord, faithful in His grace, will build up the house of David, from another than the so-called royal line, the vacancy of Judah's throne for 400 years, like the devastated temple of Solomon and the lost ark of the covenant, speak loudly of the utter faithlessness of Judah (of man) in every respect, and of her hopeless condition under God's judgment.¹⁴

¹³Cf. Winer, New Testament Grammar, in loc.: "(de introduces an explanation which is at the same time a correction" so that "the adversative force of the particle is still perceptible."

¹⁴I have since discovered that Abraham Kuyper did thus analyze Judah's lack of a king for 400 years, although he did not work out this analysis in detail. Kuyper says that the aspect of David's kingship which was "naar de wereld." "onder Zedekia vernietigd werd." From this, he also makes the application that the kingship of Christ is "afgescheiden van allen aardischen glans, pracht en majesteit." (Dictaten Dogmatiek, Vol. III, pp. 188, 189).

3.

In close connection with this, we might make more of the apostasy of Solomon and of the Divine judgment upon Solomon's apostasy than we do. The falling away of Solomon unto idols, and the ripping away from the Solomonic line of most of the kingdom, are, in principle, the sin that vitiated Judah under Manasseh, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, and the judgment of the rejection of the royal line.

God rejected the outwardly glorious royal line, and chose the humble line of Nathan. Upon this rejection of the royal line, Matthew's genealogy lays stress. "Not this," says Matthew. To be sure, this rejection, as historically realized, was judgment upon sin. The royal line, outwardly magnificent, hardened itself in iniquity. Nevertheless, this rejection of the high and choice of the lowly is the eternal wisdom of God. Not the noble and glorious does God decree, but the lowly and despised - a woman, the line of Nathan, and a shepherd-boy in little Bethlehem - so that the glory may be His own. The genealogy of Jesus, like all Scripture, is the gospel of grace.

Therefore, Mary sings: "My soul doth magnify the Lord...for he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden---He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree."

Lk 1:46-49
52

* * * * *

Not all the difficulties relating to the genealogies are cleared up. Two that remain are the appearance in both genealogies of at least two names that seem to refer to identical men, and the passages in the Old Testament which seem to promise that the Messiah will be a son of Solomon, as well as of David.

The first of these difficulties concerns the listing of Zorobabel and Salathiel in both genealogies (Luke 3:27 and Matthew 1:12). It is conceivable that they are different men with the same names. The fact that in both genealogies Salathiel is the father of Zorobabel and the fact that in both genealogies the two men appear at approximately the same time in history, the time of the Babylonian captivity, seem to indicate that they are identical. It may be that at the troubled time of the captivity, the houses of Solomon and Nathan were joined, but in this way,

that Salathiel and Zorobabel, who were actually in the line of Solomon, were only legally listed in the register of the house of Nathan.

The second difficulty consists of the passages which seem to promise that the Messiah will be a descendant of Solomon, that is, the actual culmination of the royal line. Among the main passages, and the most difficult, are II Samuel 7:12-16, I Chronicles 22:6-10, I Chronicles 28:5-7 and II Chronicles 7:12-22. An explanation of these passages consonant with the view of the genealogy of Jesus given above might have the following, broad outlines.

1. The original promise of II Sam. 7 has a two-fold reference, Solomon and Jesus. What is applicable to Solomon and what is applicable to Christ must be precisely determined.

2. Even though, in the end, the line of Solomon is rejected, there is for hundreds of years a gracious faithfulness on God's part, in allowing the literal descendants of Solomon to rule in Judah. This earthly succession, especially in contrast with the discontinuity in Israel, stands as a sign of the everlasting rule of David in Jesus Christ. In other words, the original promise to David is worked out in a type and a reality. The type is the centuries-long rule in Judah of the line of David which runs through Solomon; the reality is the Kingship of Christ, descended from David through Nathan. The type can fail without jeopardizing the reality. Must it not fail?

3. Solomon forfeited the privilege of bringing forth the great Son of David by his apostasy at the end of his life. II Chronicles 7:12-22, especially, implies that disobedience by Solomon will mean, not that the promise to David will fail, but that the promise to David will be fulfilled through another than Solomon. God's dealing with Solomon personally is similar to God's dealing with Jeroboam in I Kings 11:31ff.

BOOK REVIEW

Development or Deviation?

(A review of Dr. G. C. Berkouwer's *De Heilige Schrift, II*; J.H. Kok, Uitgeversmij, Kampen, The Netherlands; 463 pages; price, f 27,90)

In a review of Dr. Berkouwer's first volume under this title (cf. "Protestant Reformed Theological Journal," Vol. I, No. 2) I stated that I was increasingly of the opinion that both the theological method and the theology proper of this widely recognized and widely hailed theologian constitute one of the gravest threats to the Reformed faith that has appeared on the Reformed scene in recent years. At the conclusion of the same review, I wrote as follows:

But the underlying question with respect to all that he writes is: what is at the root, dogmatically speaking, of all the weaknesses in Berkouwer's presentation?

My answer is that Berkouwer, like many other Reformed theologians, proceeds from the basic recognition of a human-ness of Holy Scripture, a human element, a human factor. There is not a separate treatment in Volume One of this subject. But the mention of this human element runs as a thread throughout the book... But right here is the key error. I submit that the moment you grant the existence of such a human element in Holy Scripture, at that moment you have conceded the battle for the Word of God to the critics.

Berkouwer, of course, is not unique in this regard. I dare say that even some of his severe critics will speak uncritically of a human element, or factor, and even of so-called secondary authors. And not always do evil results come from such usage, due to the fact that these ideas are not always carried to their logical consequences. But here is the crux of the matter. As soon as you in any sense make Scripture an admixture, rather than solely the Word of God, you are in fundamental trouble. I submit, too, that the Bible never presents

itself as anything other than the Word of God, even when it recognizes that this revelation of God came to us through men and in the course of the history of men and of mankind.

With respect to these two judgments, this reviewer's position has not been changed, but rather confirmed, in the study of Dr. Berkouwer's second volume on Holy Scripture. Moreover, the fact that the fruits of Dr. Berkouwer's teachings are plainly manifest in the statements and writings of others in the Netherlands, and the fact that these others apparently strengthen themselves in their erroneous positions and are emboldened to attack the authority of the Scriptures and even appeal to the name of Berkouwer for support,--these facts confirm me in this position even more.

For this reason I not only deem it worthwhile to discuss this second volume, and in connection therewith some of the facets of the doctrine of Holy Scripture; but I also urge the readers of this review to obtain and study Berkouwer's work for themselves (If not in the Dutch original, then in the English translation which will undoubtedly appear in due time). Anyone who is interested in contemporary Reformed dogmatics should pay attention to what Dr. Berkouwer writes. I say this not because I believe that Dr. Berkouwer represents a positive and salutary development and enrichment of Reformed dogmatics, but because (as I stated in my earlier review, of Volume I) Dr. Berkouwer is a theologian to be reckoned with today. And certainly, a study of Berkouwer, if nothing else, will stimulate one's thinking. Perhaps, indeed, one of the chief benefits of the current controversy about the doctrine of Holy Scripture and related questions has been that it has compelled many to re-study and re-think and defend anew this important doctrine.

A Brief Survey of the Contents

This is by far the more substantive of Dr. Berkouwer's two volumes on Holy Scripture. And although I suggested that already in Volume I Dr. Berkouwer chose position and that this position would necessarily be reflected in the second volume, it is not un-

til Volume II, which is also far larger, that the author enters into the more significant questions concerning the doctrine of Holy Scripture. And therefore, not until we reach this second volume does Dr. Berkouwer's view of Holy Scripture become fully clear,--at least, in so far as Berkouwer ever becomes fully clear. It is in this volume that various subjects are treated which, to my mind, should have been treated initially in any study of the doctrine of Holy Scripture.

This second volume begins with a long chapter on the inspiration of Holy Scripture (*De Theopneustie der Heilige Schrift*). In this chapter Berkouwer begins his attempt at analysis of the meaning of *est* in the proposition *Sacra Scriptura est Verbum Dei*. And immediately taking his starting-point in the fact that Holy Scripture is the Word of God expressed in human language, he begins to concern himself with the so-called "human-ness" of Scripture. In this chapter various questions concerning mechanical inspiration and verbal inspiration and organic inspiration and concerning the element of instrumentality in connection with organic inspiration are discussed. But they are all discussed from the viewpoint of the problematics which Berkouwer creates and introduces into the discussion in connection with this human language of Scripture and in connection with the question how it is possible for Scripture to be the Word of God and at the same time the word of man. This question Berkouwer attempts to answer in the spirit of H. Bavinck, that Scripture is the Word of God because in it the Holy Spirit testifies of Christ. Nevertheless, even in his reference to the witness of the Spirit to Christ there is a strong emphasis upon the witness of men to Christ. Moreover, Berkouwer himself evinces a concern about a possible charge of dualism in connection with his position already in this chapter,--a concern which he seems to feel at several points throughout the book. And although he attempts a distinction between the words of Holy Scripture and the purpose of the words, and although he finds that purpose of the words in the witness concerning Christ, and though he attempts to emphasize that the Bible is a book in which Christ is central (certainly, an emphasis which no one would want to deny),

nevertheless the analysis given in this chapter is vague and inconclusive and leaves the impression, in spite of everything which is written, that the author's greater concern is to cling to this so-called human-ness of Scripture.

Having once involved himself in this problematics of the so-called human-ness of Scripture, Dr. Berkouwer opens a Pandora's box of problems. And it was but natural that he would find himself called upon to deal with these problems and to try to justify his position, explaining how Holy Scripture can be the Word of God and yet be so completely human. And so the author devotes a lengthy chapter to the subject *Theopneustie en Aansluiting*, in which he discusses the joining of the speech of God with that which is human as an essential dimension of the Word of God,--a real problem for anyone, indeed, who assumes a priori the so-called human dimension of Holy Scripture. In this chapter Berkouwer becomes involved in a discussion of the Biblical concept of the world and the universe, the question of how the human word, bound by time, culture, and circumstance, can be a vehicle of divine truth,--all the questions which are connected with the so-called time-involvedness (*tijdbetrokkenheid*) and time-boundness (*tijdgebondenheid*) of the Word of God. It is in this chapter that Berkouwer develops and leans heavily upon the *scopus*-concept (*scopus* referring to the guiding or governing principle of Scripture. In this chapter also Berkouwer essentially forsakes the position of inerrancy. And in this chapter again, in connection with the various questions faced, he makes what is, to me, a very unsatisfactory attempt to escape the charge of dualism.

The third chapter is entitled *De Dienstknechtsgestalte der Heilige Schrift* (Holy Scripture's Form of a Servant). It is closely connected with the preceding discussion of the instrumentality of man in the writing of Holy Scripture. In this chapter there is a discussion of the debate whether we may assume a parallel between the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ and the inscripturation of the Word of God, a parallel between the "form of a servant" of Jesus Christ and the "form of a servant" of Holy Scripture. And Berkouwer maintains an intimate connection

between that incarnation and inscripturation, as might be expected in the light of his emphasis upon the so-called human-ness of Holy Scripture. It strikes this reviewer, however, that the drawing of such a parallel is more speculative than exegetical.

Chapter 4 appears to be a chapter which is of the least significance in the whole of this book. It is entitled "Translation and Historicity." And although it discusses some of the problems of translation as it is called upon to bridge the gap between languages and between cultures, the chapter contributes little, in my opinion, to the main line of the book and does not pay a great deal of attention to the matter of historicity. Also in this chapter, however, the time-boundness of Scripture and the emphasis upon the message of Scripture in its central directedness, and therefore the implied distinction between that message and the vehicle of that message,--all these subjects continue to recur.

Following this, there are chapters on the so-called attributes of Holy Scripture: the trustworthiness, the clarity or perspicuity, and the sufficiency (*De Betrouwbaarheid, De Duidelijkheid, De Genoegzaamheid*) of Holy Scripture, three subjects which are closely related to one another, but also related to the whole question of inspiration and the question of the meaning of the *est* in the statement, *Sacra Scriptura est Verbum Dei*. The treatment of these subjects, however, is colored by the position which Berkouwer has already taken in the preceding chapters and in the first volume. The trustworthiness and the clarity and the sufficiency to which Berkouwer holds are, therefore, very limited and relative, limited especially by the fact that Berkouwer continually emphasizes the importance of the message of Holy Scripture, its witness to Christ, and limited by the fact that Berkouwer denies any formal, objective authority of Scripture. Thus it is that the author finds room for many views,--including those of such men as Kuitert and Koole and Baarda,--which today are being challenged as contrary to the trustworthiness and clarity and sufficiency of Holy Scripture and which, for example, present other than literal interpretations of Genesis 1-3.

Chapter 8 is on the subject, "Holy Scripture and Preaching." And while one can certainly appreciate Dr. Berkouwer's emphasis upon the importance of proclamation for faith and the accent upon the preaching of the Word, nevertheless when this point is reached, the reader gets the distinct impression that the Word which must be preached, the Word of the Holy Scriptures, has been so limited and humanized and shorn of its sufficiency and trustworthiness and clarity, as well as its authority, that it is hardly worth preaching.

The concluding chapter is on "Faith and Critique," in which the door is opened to (or, at least, not shut tightly against) the anomaly of a believing criticism of Holy Scripture. Again the problem is that Berkouwer throughout his two volumes has become involved in the problematics of the human-ness and the divine-ness of Holy Scripture. Strangely enough, one almost gets the impression in this last chapter that Berkouwer extricates himself from this problematics by an appeal to the mystical when he speaks in this chapter of "the way of the Spirit" and of "obedience," and when he concludes with the words of the sojourners to Emmaus in Luke 24: 32, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"

Evaluation and Critique

First of all, in general, all that was stated in my review of Volume I, both favorable and unfavorable, could be repeated with respect to this second volume. I will not repeat those remarks in full, however, but merely enumerate them.

1) This volume also is characterized by wide-ranging study of the history of dogma, and, like the first, it gives evidence of the author's erudition. I may add, however, that my general impression in reading the second volume is that Dr. Berkouwer pays more attention to recent and contemporary theology and theological writings than to writings of the more distant past, and also that he cites more liberal theologians than conservative and orthodox theologians.

2) This volume also suffers from a certain amount of confusion and inconclusiveness because of the manner in which Dr. Berkouwer pro-

ceeds throughout the volume. He brings various other theologians into a kind of dialogue or round table discussion, sometimes using them to express his own thoughts, sometimes taking occasion to criticize them, sometimes to let them speak and express questionable ideas without criticizing very much or at all, sometimes to cull a single favorable idea from an otherwise wrong theological position. And although in this second volume there is, generally, more "Berkouwer" than in the first, nevertheless one is often left with the question: now just what is Dr. Berkouwer trying to say, and what does he think on this matter. This does not make for easy reading; and often one finds himself going over parts of a chapter for the second or third time in an attempt to distill "Berkouwer" out of the chapter. Often I wished, as I studied this volume, that Dr. Berkouwer would have expressed his own position in a few precise and succinct propositions. But the author has a rather neat manner of putting off problems, so that just at the point in each chapter when one is expecting some clear and conclusive statements on the subject at hand, he is informed that the present subject and its problems bring up the subject of the next chapter and its problems. And thus one is carried to the end of the volume, always in the hope that finally some clear conclusions will be reached, but without ever quite reaching those conclusions, at least not in the clear form in which one would desire to see them.

3) There is in Dr. Berkouwer's kerugma-faith correlativity a very limited view of faith,--so limited that it can hardly be said that the nature of faith and of believing stand in their proper perspective.

4) Also this work,--although the method and approach of Berkouwer have been widely hailed as being Biblical and kerugmatic, rather than scholastic and static,--is not characterized fundamentally by proceeding from Scripture and is rather barren of any extensive and basic exegetical studies such as, in my opinion, should characterize Reformed dogmatical studies. The approach is frequently dogmen-historical and almost eclectic. Personally, I often had the impression, too, that the author approached his subject rather empirically and speculatively, in order then to consult Scripture and use it supportively, fitting his exegesis into the mold of his

thinking. Frequently, too, I was left with the impression that the author concentrated on "exceptional" and problematical passages rather than on the "current thought" of Scripture.

All in all, this reviewer was frequently left with the rather un-satisfying feeling of having done a lot of studying without coming to many clear-cut conclusions. This also, of course, makes it rather difficult to criticize Dr. Berkouwer's views of Holy Scripture in a clear-cut manner. But perhaps this is already a fundamental criticism. In the mind of this reviewer dogmatics ought to be clear-cut, not vague and inconclusive. It ought not to be difficult to form a conception of precisely what a dogmatician is trying to say. Perhaps it is not the intention of the author to write anything conclusive and definitive. Perhaps it is only his intention to write rather tentative dogmatical studies and to contribute some thoughts to a general discussion. Meanwhile, of course, he does express ideas; and he certainly does reveal tendencies and kindles the dogmatical thinking of his readers. But, fortunately or unfortunately, as the case may be, he does not lead his readers' thinking to well-defined concepts nor compel the thoughts.

In the second place, one can, of course, go through this work of Berkouwer with a fine-toothed comb and point out many views and suggestions and statements with which one would either have to disagree violently or behind which one would have to place serious question-marks. Following this method and tracing the path which Dr. Berkouwer has followed in this book, one would almost be compelled to write a volume of equal size filled with counter-argument and counter-explanation, gainsaying and exposing the various errors and questionable positions taken by the author throughout the volume and furnishing Scriptural and confessional grounds for the counter-position, in order to show that Dr. Berkouwer indeed deviates from the tried and true position of the Reformed doctrine of Holy Scripture.

Thus one may point out various items which other reviewers have already noted, individual items of criticism:

1] Dr. Berkouwer never ceases to emphasize that the Bible has

no formal authority, but only an authority dependent upon its content, its message, its proclamation, its witness to Christ,--a content which, in turn,(although I think the author would probably deny this formulation) is subjectively determined by the believer. Now this anti-formalistic emphasis of Dr. Berkouwer certainly has its good aspect; but in the sense in which Dr. Berkouwer constantly presses it, one can only come to the conclusion that his position is contrary to the historic position of the Reformed faith with respect to the truth of infallibility and authority, and that following Dr. Berkouwer one will become hopelessly mired down in the quicksand of subjectivism,--a subjectivism from which, in my opinion, Dr. Berkouwer personally wants to escape and tries to escape at various points in this volume by way of reference to the witness of the Spirit and to the obedience of faith and of the believer to the witness and the guidance of the Spirit.

2] In the spirit of this kerugma-faith correlativity the author places severe strictures upon the idea of organic inspiration and upon the concept of instrumentality in connection with organic inspiration and upon the concept of verbal inspiration. In following this course, he is very strong in his emphasis upon the view that the writers of Holy Scripture spoke and wrote in a time-bound way, that is, within the limited horizons of their own times,--a position which this reviewer believes cannot possibly be maintained in the light of Scripture. Following this same course, he gets rid of the idea of Biblical inerrancy, maintaining that there are statements in Scripture which are not in conformity with reality, asserting, of course, that these statements as such have nothing to do with and do not affect the scope of revelation. He concedes, furthermore, that the gospel narratives may be characterized by inexactitude, errors, of information; and he is opposed to any attempts to harmonize the gospels, and, in fact, other parts of Scripture, even calling such attempts harmful. In the same manner he opens the door to the methods and the views of those who would deny the literal interpretation of Genesis 1-11 and who maintain that in these chapters we have no historical account, report, of events from creation to the time of Abraham.

3] It may be pointed out that the author evinces a great respect for the findings and the progress of modern science; and in a spirit which reminds one strongly of the attitude of the men of the "Enlightenment," he refers repeatedly to the breath-taking broadening of all horizons of knowledge in our times. In this connection, although Dr. Berkouwer does not say that a passage like Genesis 1-3 should be interpreted anew and non-literally because of the findings of science and historical research, but in pursuance thereof, nevertheless he does not by any means clearly distinguish here; nor does he make it plain that such new interpretation is not, in fact, taking place because of and in obedience to the findings and the teachings of science.

4] As might be expected, Dr. Berkouwer concedes the possibility and the necessity of criticism of Scripture, and finds that an alleged good use of the form-critical method is possible.

All these items stand in connection with the entire approach of the author to the question of inspiration and authority. I have not gone into detail on these matters; nor, as already mentioned, am I the first to find fault: others, both here and in the Netherlands, have already done so. I do not intend in this review to enter into a lengthy discussion and polemic on these matters. I only mention them in order to give some idea of the tendencies of this volume and to illustrate the extent to which Dr. Berkouwer criticizes and undermines the traditional Reformed view of Scripture's infallibility and authority, and to illustrate at the same time the seriousness of the threat to the Reformed position involved in this dogmatical study by Berkouwer. When one reads this volume, he can very well understand that Dr. H. M. Kuitert dedicates his "*Verstaat Gij Wat Gij Leest?*" to Dr. Berkouwer in the following words: "*Aan Gerrit Cornelis Berkouwer in dankbaarheid voor zijn onnavolgbaar boek, De Heilige Schrift, II.*"

All of the individual criticisms which may be made concerning Dr. Berkouwer's position throughout this book may be reduced to two key ideas. The first is that Dr. Berkouwer finds Scripture to have a thoroughly human character and human aspect, as well as a divine character. In my review of his first volume I pointed out that the author repeatedly writes of this alleged human-ness of

Holy Scripture. This is equally true of the second volume. Not only is it true that the author repeatedly refers to this alleged human-ness of Holy Scripture; but this human character of the Bible, in Berkouwer's view, constitutes a fundamental and intrinsic characteristic of the Scriptures. Time and again, this is the one key element which gives rise to all the problematics which Dr. Berkouwer constructs and involves himself in and attempts to solve. This is supposed to be a volume devoted to the explanation of the proposition *Sacra Scriptura est Verbum Dei*. In reality this proposition is not explained, but changed. It is changed so that the proposition becomes instead the dual one: *Sacra Scriptura est Verbum Dei et verbum hominis*. This is the pervading trend of the entire book. One could almost say that the book is devoted to the maintenance of the proposition that Scripture is human. It is this key idea which gives rise to all the problems which Dr. Berkouwer first creates and then attempts to solve. True, the author does not want to find a divine factor and a human factor; he does not want a divine element and a human element, in the sense in which this has frequently been taught, in the sense in which one could say, "This part is divine and this part is human," so that if you subtract the human part, then the divine part remains. As I understand him, he wants a Scripture which is human throughout and divine throughout, with the human and the divine completely interwoven and belonging to the very character of Scripture. But it is this very fact that makes the position of Dr. Berkouwer all the more difficult and dangerous. For while, according to Berkouwer, it is impossible to subtract the human from the divine and to separate the two, it is nevertheless necessary to determine what is the scope, what is the Spirit's witness to Christ, what is the kerugma, the message, the Word of God in and through, but nevertheless in distinction from, the human word(s). It is not difficult to point out many instances throughout the book of this insistence upon the human-ness of Scripture, and to point how it colors and determines the author's entire approach to the various subjects treated in this book. But in a passage like the following, found on page 329, this is literally Dr. Berkouwer's position.

There we read: "*Meer en meer wordt het in de worsteling der kerk duidelijk, dat de belijdenis der perspicuitas niet betekent een rustig waarnemen en constateren van een 'eigenschap' der Heilige Schrift, gelijk we aan andere 'dingen' allerlei eigenschappen toe-kennen, maar een belijden der kerk, dat alleen betekenis heeft door het perspicere in de kracht van de Geest, die zich in het Woord in historische gestalte--verbum divinum et verbum humanum--een weg, de weg baant door de wereld en door de harten als de grote Getuige.*" Note in particular the expression, "the Word in historical form--divine word and human word." This, I insist, is not an interpretation of the proposition *Sacra Scriptura est Verbum Dei*. It is a new and different proposition. Berkouwer finds Scripture to be of a dual character: divine and human. And, faced by this dual character of Scripture, he faces the necessity of deriving the Word of God, *Verbum Dei*, out of those Scriptures. He has no objective standard left, no criterion according to which he is able to distinguish the Word of God from the word of man. For, in the first place, he has already denied all *a priori* authority of Scripture; and, in the second place, he has denied the solely divine character of the Scriptures. Hence, he must needs become lost in subjectivism, the subjectivism of his kerugma-faith correlativity. This, as I see it, is the second key idea in Berkouwer's theory of Scripture, an idea by means of which he seeks to rescue the Word of God out of that book of dual character, the Holy Scriptures. And, of course, subjectivism gives rise to complete arbitrariness. And while Dr. Berkouwer himself may be saved from this arbitrariness largely, on a personal basis, so that he retains the Word of God,--something which, to my mind, appears from the several exclamations occurring in both of these volumes which leave a mystic impression,--nevertheless it appears to this reviewer that this arbitrariness is coming to increasing expression in the statements and the writings of others in the Netherlands who hold to Dr. Berkouwer's position. And ultimately it is this arbitrariness which must needs lead to complete departure from the truth of Holy Scripture. Already it has made room in the Reformed community for evolutionism,--under

the guise, mind you, of holding to the Word of God in the book of Genesis. Already there are deviations with respect to the gospels and the synoptic question. Once the objective standard of the Scriptures as the Word of God is forsaken, there is no end to this subjectivistic mutilation of the Scriptures and this arbitrary promulgation of all kinds of false doctrine and deviating views under the guise of faith in Holy Scripture. Any retention of the Word of God, or remnants thereof, can take place only in spite of this subjectivism. The inevitable consequence of a consistent subjectivism with respect to Scripture is complete agnosticism.

These views of Dr. Berkouwer, however, and particularly this emphasis upon the alleged human-ness of Scripture did not rise suddenly and isolatedly within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. It is well-known to anyone who is at all acquainted with the history of these churches, in the first place, that there have been tensions present, especially among the theologians in those churches, about the doctrine of Scripture for a long time. These tensions date back, in general, to the time of the rise of "*de jongeren*" movement in the Netherlands. And from 1920 forward the Dutch churches occupied themselves officially and at a synodical level with this subject of the doctrine of Holy Scripture for more than a decade, without, however, coming to any agreement as to the revision and expansion of the confessions on this subject. During this period there was Assen-1926 and the Geelkerken Case, a case in which the immediate issues were settled, but in which the underlying issues involving the doctrine of Scripture were never really settled in the Dutch churches, witness the fact that only recently those same churches officially un-did what was done at Assen. Toward the end of that period of tensions and clamor for the expansion and revision of the confessions, there was the case of Dr. J. G. Ubbink, who set forth his views on Scripture at length in his book, *De Nieuwe Belijdenis Aangaande Schrift en Kerk*, but who was deposed on the basis of the Formula of Subscription, with the result that his views and the underlying issues with respect to the doctrine of Holy Scripture were never analysed and treated by the churches, something which at that date might have led to

greater clarity and precision and a strengthening of the churches in a Reformed position. It strikes this reviewer that apart from some differences in approach and formulation, there is little, if any basic difference between the views of Dr. Ubbink in 1931 and the views of Dr. Berkouwer today with respect to the doctrine of Holy Scripture. Certainly, they are alike in their emphasis on the idea that Scripture is a human book. But also when one considers Dr. Berkouwer's development of this idea of the human-ness of Holy Scripture in comparison with Dr. Ubbink's development of that same idea, the similarity is striking. Dr. Ubbink also denied any testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning divine inspiration and authority of Scripture as a book,--something which reminds one strongly of Berkouwer's views concerning the authority of Scripture. Dr. Ubbink wanted to make distinction between the Word of God and the Holy Scripture. To the Word of God he would ascribe a dominating significance, and to the Holy Scripture a ministering significance. He would distinguish between the divine and the human "moment" in Scripture. He would speak of the Word of God as one, mighty, spiritual Reality, the holy gospel, rather than of the words of God. He insisted that the Scripture is not this Word of God in so far as it is human words, human, defective presentations, human, partial knowledge from times with a still more limited and inexact knowledge than our times. And in distinction from that Scripture, he would speak of the Word of God itself as being hidden therein, but as being something entirely other, as being perfect in beauty, as being eternally inextinguishable light in which is no darkness, divine Light of divine Light, all-penetrating light, an infinite divine Reality, which created and still creates worlds, a shining divine "Pearl of great price" in the dark shell of the human Scripture of finite and dim human knowledge and presentation on the bottom of the deep sea of our human world, where hardly any light penetrates any longer. This human Scripture, according to Ubbink, is only the dark earth in which the incorruptible gold-treasure of God's Word is hidden. And yet Dr. Ubbink also taught that Scripture was both human throughout and divine throughout. All this reminds of Dr. Berkouwer's con-

stant emphasis upon a similar human-ness of Holy Scripture and upon the kerugma, the message, the witness to Christ, the directedness, and the scope of Holy Scripture. And Dr. Ubbink's idea of an immediate, spiritual, intuitive knowledge whereby we are able to know infallibly the infallible Word of God which comes to us through the human and defective Scripture reminds one strongly of Dr. Berkouwer's kerugma-faith correlativity, which is continually paired with his emphasis upon the human-in-distinction-from-the-divine in Holy Scripture in order to rescue the divine out of the human. Again, when Dr. Ubbink teaches also a certain testimony of the Holy Spirit, but denies that there is a testimony of the Spirit which assures us of the truth and perfection of the 66 books of the Bible, teaching instead that the Self-revelation of God, borne by human words, becomes for us a divine witness through the fact that the Holy Spirit takes over the testimony of Scripture and makes it His own and thus carries it to our hearts as an immediate and personal divine witness from Person to person, one is reminded of similar distinctions in Berkouwer. In all this I am not suggesting that Dr. Berkouwer borrowed from Ubbink; I am only asserting that there is basic similarity, and that the problems, as well as the solutions, which Dr. Berkouwer suggests are not new in the Reformed Churches. There may be differences in formulation. There may be differences, to a degree, in approach. There may be a more careful manner of expression on the part of Berkouwer. It may be true that Dr. Berkouwer leaves the impression of developing his views within the confines of the confessions (while Dr. Ubbink openly proposed revision and expansion of the confessions and made himself guilty of violating the Formula of Subscription very directly). Basically, however, I see no significant difference. I see Dr. Berkouwer as standing in the line of an entire school of thought which for a long time strove to emphasize this alleged human character of Holy Scripture and to develop and spell out its consequences, thereby compromising the proposition that Holy Scripture is the Word of God.

Moreover, I would point out that this theological tendency in the Reformed Churches did not develop in a vacuum and in isolation

from the rest of theological development. I have in mind especially the fact that all of this emphasis upon the presence of an intrinsic human element in Holy Scripture came about under the influence of contemporary German theology. One has only to compare some of the positions and statements of Dr. Berkouwer and others with respect to the time-boundness of Scripture and with respect to the world-image of the writers of Holy Scripture with some of the statements of representative German theologians. Consider the following from Emil Brunner's "The Word and the World:"

Now, after the earthquake is over, we stand before the ruined city, and gather what is left. Reconstruction seems excluded. We cannot go back. The Biblical world-view, cosmological and historical, has gone for good. We know that the world was not created a few thousand years ago, but that we have to reckon with billions of years, and even so do not reach the end. We know that the history of our earth, although counting its millions of years, is one of recent events in world-history. It is well-grounded hypothesis that a more or less continuous pedigree traces the origins of humanity far back into the animal sphere; we know that there never was a paradise on earth with Adam and Eve and the serpent; we know that most of the Old Testament pre-history is mythology, not history, and that there is no unbroken chain of witnesses from Adam and Noah to Christ. But more, the picture of the New Testament history too has undergone profound changes; we have come to see the important difference between the Synoptic, the Pauline and the Johannine tradition. We have learnt that from the standpoint of history, the Fourth Gospel, as compared with the Synoptics, is much inferior, and even the Synoptic tradition is very unreliable. In a word, everything seems to be destroyed by science. How shall we be able to speak of Bible authority, of the Bible as God's Word, after our critical reason has torn it to pieces in such fashion and made it like the rest of history?

And then, after Brunner has cut the Scriptures to ribbons, but has nevertheless maintained that "either Christian faith is Biblical faith or it is nothing," he attempts after all to save God's Word in this destroyed Bible in the following language:

What then has been destroyed? We answer: nothing of importance. Nothing except what had to be destroyed for the sake of faith, namely, the divine authority of what was really human. Nothing except (to use once more Luther's picture) the false idea that the crib, in which Christ is laid, is Christ Himself and therefore has a claim to the same authority for faith. This identifica-

tion of human witness and divine revelation is destroyed for good...

If we hold fast to this truth that the Word of God is given to us only in human, questionable form, it is a matter of course that Biblical criticism and Bible-faith or Bible authority not only are reconcilable but necessarily go together.

I ask again: what basic, what principal difference is there between the position of this German theologian (and others like him) and the position of Berkouwer and his disciples in the Dutch churches. The only differences I can see are differences of degree, not of principle. Today this position, which was once held by a minority in the Dutch churches, which at one time the Dutch churches were able to expel (even though the idea of a certain human-ness in Scripture was common also among those who did the expelling),--today this position appears to have gained a dominant position and to be held, to one degree or another, by those occupying positions of leadership and instruction in the churches.

It is hardly within the scope of a book review to develop at length and in detail any counter-position over against that of the book under consideration. Suffice it to say that it is the opinion of this reviewer that the answer to the alternative posed in the title of this review is: deviation, deviation from the line of Scripture and the creeds. But I would qualify this answer by adding that Dr. Berkouwer's deviation is the consequence and the outgrowth of an opinion often expressed before him by those who through the power of tradition nevertheless held to an infallible and authoritative Scripture, the opinion, namely, that there is some kind of human element in Scripture, both in its content and in the manner in which it came into being. Those who hold the latter view can only inconsistently criticize Dr. Berkouwer.

In conclusion, permit me to present a few propositions which I hope, the Lord willing, to develop in a future essay or essays:

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

2] The self-testimony of Scripture is exclusively that it is the Word of God written. This is Scripture's testimony not only in a few isolated texts which speak of inspiration; but it is the

current teaching of Scripture. This is true of the very words of Scripture, and it is true to the extent that Scripture and God are even identified in the Bible.

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. He who would consistently insist upon a human-ness of Scripture must be prepared to accept dire consequences of this position, consequences not only of defectiveness and inaccuracy and unintentional error, but also consequences of imperfection due to the sinfulness of that which is human. This proposition must be understood to extend not only to the individual differences of language, style, mode of thought, times, circumstances, etc., of the organs of inspiration, but to the very earthly language itself.

4] The organs of Holy Scripture were by no means time-bound in their writing. 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. In fact, it can be shown from Scripture that the holy writers did not by any means always understand the things of which they spoke and that what they spoke (wrote) not infrequently went far above their own consciousness.

5] The key to the understanding of organic inspiration, as excluding any so-called human factor or element, and as excluding also any idea of *aansluiting* (adaptation, joining to the human) on the part of the Holy Spirit, is the principle of God's absolute sovereignty (applied to His counsel and the realization of His counsel) 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.

Hopefully, I will attempt an elucidation of these and related propositions in a later issue of this journal.

--Homer C. Hoeksema

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