

PROTESTANT REFORMED
THEOLOGICAL
JOURNAL

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THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL
of the
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The Simplicity Of God's Will

and the

"Free Offer"

(2)

--Homer C. Hoeksema--

In the previous issue of this Journal we quoted, in translation, a rather long section from Herman Hoeksema's polemic against Prof. W. Heyns's "two-wills doctrine." In the present installment we continue that quotation, offering a translation of Chapter III of The Gospel--The Most Recent Attack Against The Truth Of Sovereign Grace. This chapter is pertinent to our study because it continues, now from an exegetical point of view, the presentation of the views of both Heyns and Hoeksema with respect to the subject we are discussing. As the reader will see, this chapter deals with only two passages of Scripture. Both of them are pertinent in the debate concerning the "free offer." However, the special element in this pertinence lies in the fact that both passages speak of the will of God. Here follows the translation.

* * * * *

Chapter III

All

It has become abundantly clear from Holy Scripture that the Lord our God is One, and not two or more, as Heyns wants us to believe. He is an only Lord, one in being and nature, in will and decrees. He is also God alone, and there is no one beside Him. He does whatsoever He pleases, and there is no one who can give Him counsel or exercise influence upon His decrees, as indeed takes place according to Heyns' assertion. And He is the unchangeable, with Whom there is no shadow of turning.

The oneness of God's willing lies in God Himself. For God eternally wills Himself. He has made all things for His own sake, also the wicked for the day of evil. He wills Himself because He is the highest and the only Good. Therefore He wills Himself also in the creature. And that, too, not only in the will of His decree, but also in the will of His command. There is no conflict here, neither is there any dualism. There are no two wills here. But there is here the antithetical revelation of the same will of God

which eternally wills Himself. In the will of the decree God wills Himself, both in elect and reprobate. And in the will of command God also wills Himself, and that both in righteous and wicked. And in that one will He is the Unchangeable and Independent One. There is indeed no one who resists His will -- neither the will of the decree, nor the will of His command. For as far as the former is concerned, God executes His counsel; and His counsel shall stand forever, the thoughts of His heart are from generation to generation, and He does all His good pleasure. And as far as the will of His command is concerned, God also maintains that eternally. For the creature who also wills that will, according to which God wills and loves Himself, is in that willing of the will of God forever blessed. God causes him to partake of His favor and blesses him, and in that favor of God he is blessed. Hence, God reveals in him, and causes him to taste and acknowledge that God alone is good. And the creature who does not will that will of God, who lives in the lie, is in that not-willing of God's will forever wretched. For the wicked, saith my God, hath no peace. God, therefore, maintains also His will of command forever in them. Never are they blessed. They are in time and eternity miserable. For the wrath of God abideth on them. And in that wretchedness of the wicked it is revealed by God that He alone is good, that he who forsakes God can expect only sorrow upon sorrow. Also hell is there, in the deepest sense of the word, only for God's sake. Hell must forever acknowledge that God is good. And it shall also do this forever. For every lying tongue shall be forever stopped. Thus God is one in His willing of Himself. And thus God also maintains in time and eternity His one will. Therefore, too, the favor of God is only upon those who fear Him. Of a common grace there is no possibility.

Thus Heyns ought to see things. Thus the Reformed Churches ought again to confess things. We must again view all things theologically. If we do not want to do that, there is no place among us for the Reformed truth, no future. This is what Heyns should have taught us in school. Then, when we left school, we would have had a firm line. Now we had nothing. Instead of teaching theology, Heyns really inculcated in us that God is two. That two-wills doctrine forms the heart of his entire view. It recurs everywhere in his Gereformeerde Geloofsleer. Everywhere it is exactly that two-wills doctrine which makes it impossible to develop a sound theological conception. I blame it to no little extent on Heyns that in the Christian Reformed Churches the Reformed truth is in such a sad estate.

And what proof does Heyns have now in Scripture for that doctrine of two wills in God? It is perhaps best for practical reasons that we take up this question first. On our part we shall demonstrate that God indeed reveals Himself in Scripture as a God Who does not will the salvation of the reprobate. And for us this would naturally mean the same as to say that there is in God no will which indeed wills their salvation. We would say that this would have to mean the same for even the very simplest person. God does not will the salvation of the reprobate; and, there is in God no will which wills the salvation of the reprobate -- these two have precisely the same meaning. But with Heyns that is nevertheless not so. He asserts that the latter is a conclusion from the former, and that, too, an unallowable conclusion. When Scripture says that God does not will the salvation of the reprobate, then we may not draw the conclusion from this that He does not also will the salvation of the reprobate. To put it more simply: that God does not will the salvation of the reprobate does not mean that He does not will the salvation of the reprobate. The reader will say, of course, that this is nonsense. And that is precisely what it is. But Heyns answers that he who reasons thus, who calls this nonsense, trusts in his reason, and that reason is, after all, affected by sin. Heyns asserts that Scripture also teaches that God indeed wills the salvation of the reprobate, although it teaches that He does not will it. And when Scripture speaks, then reason must keep silence. To the latter, of course, we readily agree. And therefore it is perhaps best first to inquire what proof Heyns adduces for his two-wills doctrine.

And then it is noteworthy that Heyns really has for this basic element of his view only two texts, namely, I Timothy 2:4 and II Peter 3:9. To prevent all misunderstanding, the reader must keep in mind that we are now speaking only about the two-wills doctrine of Heyns, about the assertion of Heyns that Scripture also teaches that God indeed wills the salvation of the reprobate. We are not now discussing the general offer of grace. The texts which Heyns adduces for this part of his view we hope to discuss later and separately. I am not saying here, therefore, that Heyns does not point to more texts in his writings. He indeed does that. And we also hope to treat those passages. But for the assertion that there is in God a will to save all men Heyns has two texts, and only two. None of the other texts speaks of a will in God, still less of a will to save also the reprobate. For the time being, therefore, we may let those passages rest, in order to discuss

them in their proper connection. At present we are discussing only I Timothy 2:4 and II Peter 3:9.

In I Timothy 2:4 we read the familiar words: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

First we give the floor to Heyns concerning this text:

"And then we have yet two passages in which God's Word directly and with the very words declares that God wills that all men be saved. The first is: I Timothy 2:4: 'Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.'

"In this text 'all men' can also be translated by 'all kinds of men,' and it is plain that if one believes that the fact of predestination can allow no will of God that all men be saved, one will take the stand that here we must read not 'all men' but 'all kinds of men.' The marginal notes on the Staten Vertaling (Dutch Authorized Version) say here: 'this word all is also here (italics mine) used for all kinds, as appears from the preceding second verse.' Leaving aside what the marginal notes in a manner that is neither Dortian nor Calvinistic conclude from the word will, for neither of those two wanted anything of such a judging of God's revealed will according to the standard of His hidden will -- leaving that aside then, the words 'here also,' as well as the fact that in the text itself, as in other translations, the Greek word is rendered not by all kinds, but by all, make us think that the translators used 'all' as including at the same time 'all kinds.' There is nothing against that. But there would indeed be something against it if they had used 'all kinds' in order to exclude 'all.' There would be against it this, that such a translation would make the expression of the apostle into something that did not need to be said, a superfluous declaration. God wills that all kinds of men be saved would be an expression of which no one would have any need and in which there is no element of support for personal faith. Moreover, that expression could not be a ground for the admonition to pray, believingly to pray for kings and all that are in authority. The question is whether one can do that as long as they are unbelieving Jews or heathen; whether there can be with God a favorable attitude toward such kings and those in authority, on the ground of which one may trust that his prayer will be heard? To that question there is in a will of God that all kinds of men be saved in relation to the definite kings and men in authority for whom one prays, no answer; for a believing prayer for them there is no ground therein. But there is indeed an affirmative answer to

that question and a ground of faith for such a prayer in the expression: God wills that all men be saved.

"Calvin explains more positively than the marginal notes that 'all kinds' is meant here, but he adduces no other ground for this than that of vs. 8; and of a use of 'all kinds' in order thereby to escape and to set aside 'all' as in conflict with the hidden will of God there is no mention by him. That he has no objection to the words, God wills that all men be saved, he shows when in his commentary he says: 'It is certain that all to whom the gospel is offered are invited to the hope of eternal life.' And further, he points out that we may not judge the revealed will according to the hidden will, and that a revealed will of God that all men be saved does not take away an in itself divine ordaining of what shall happen to every man."

Thus far Heyns concerning this text.

First of all, we pass judgment on his exegesis. He wants to explain "all men" as every man, head for head and soul for soul. It may be termed amusing when Heyns points out that, as far as he is concerned, all men, in the sense of everyone head for head, may indeed include all kinds of men, and that the marginal commentators must have meant this when they wrote that this word is also used here for all kinds. Now that will indeed be true. All men, no one excluded, will indeed include all kinds of men. There is no question about that. But would the marginal commentators actually have been so naive as to want to teach us that all men includes all kinds of men? Considered by itself, this is already highly unlikely. I must admit that when I read the reasoning of Heyns about the marginal notes, I felt suspicion arising in my heart that the professor was meddling a little with the marginal notes. This led me to check up on those marginal comments concerning vs. 4. And I must say, to my regret for Heyns, that my suspicion was confirmed. The marginal comments do not at all explain all men as Heyns wants to present it: all, everyone head for head, including all kinds, but they absolutely exclude the very idea of such an explanation. Heyns could also have seen that. He does not do justice to the marginal comments. He allows them to say something that they do not say at all. Now this is perhaps to be understood, for the entire marginal comment condemns Heyns, not only in his explanation of this text, but also his entire viewpoint. Nevertheless it is not to be justified on this account. Heyns should remain honorable in his reasoning. Let me give him that advice. Not only is this required for the sake of the truth;

but Heyns should also keep in mind that his neighbor will come to investigate him, and that his entire argumentation begins to appear weak when one does not correctly reproduce the thought of another.

Nor must Heyns say that the reasoning of the marginal comments is neither Dortian nor Calvinistic. Pray, professor, do you think then that readers who still do a little thinking and who know a little will not rub their eyes in amazement when they read such a judgment by you, will not read again, and then go to their Statenbijbel to read the title page?

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and

ACCORDING TO THE DECISION OF THE NATIONAL SYNOD

HELD AT DORDRECHT

in the years 1618 and 1619

(Translator's note: The reader will probably have gathered that the Statenbijbel is approximately the equivalent of our King James Version, that the Synod of Dordrecht was responsible for this Authorized Version, and that in this Bible there were marginal notes explaining the text. And Hoeksema makes the point that this Bible and its marginal notes were surely Dordrechtian, or Dortian -- having been authorized by the Synod of Dordrecht and prepared by some of the very men who participated in the Synod of Dordrecht.)

But it is understandable. Either Heyns is Dortian, or the marginal comment on I Timothy 2:4 is Dortian. They are not both Dortian. That is indeed a simple matter. But you could just as well say: the Synod of Dordrecht is Dortian, or Heyns is; they are not both Dortian. Well now, says Heyns, I am Dortian, not the marginal comments. Is the reader inquisitive to see for himself the marginal comment in question? Here it follows in its entirety:

"This word all is taken also here (not used, as Heyns quotes. The meaning is: we explain (take) here, as well as in other places) for all kinds as appears from the preceding second verse, for which this verse furnishes a

reason; as also from the word wills, for if God wills that all men be saved, then they shall also all be saved, seeing that God does all that He wills, Psalm 115:3; Romans 9:19; Ephesians 1:11. And the same is also proved from that which the apostle here adds, that God wills that they all come unto the knowledge of the truth, seeing that Scripture testifies that this is a privilege of God's people. See Psalm 147:19,20; Matthew 11:25; John 6:45; Ephesians 2:12, etc. That anyone would want to say that such is God's will if men also will it, that is to make salvation depend partly on God's will, partly on man's will, which is in conflict with what the apostle teaches, Romans 9:16,23; 10:20; and 11:35,36, and consistently elsewhere."

Truly, it is to be understood that Heyns was disappointed when he read this marginal comment. But the reader will certainly agree that there is no possibility of sucking from this marginal comment the explanation that the word really means: all men head for head, including all kinds. It just exactly excludes entirely every idea of all men without exception.

For the rest, whether the Dordt Statenbijbel is Dortian, or whether Heyns is, we gladly leave to the judgment of our readers.

But note further that Heyns condemns as rationalistic the manner of reasoning which he finds in the marginal comment on this verse and which consists simply in this, that it compares Scripture with Scripture. He is compelled to do this: for those marginal comments reason exactly as we do. He must do this: for this one marginal comment proves abundantly that our Reformed fathers wanted nothing of the two-wills doctrine of Heyns. Heyns' entire series of articles here really is laid in ruins with one blow, as concerns the questions whether Heyns also stands in the historic line of Reformed thinking. He is exactly so far from it as the north pole is separated from the south pole. On our part, we subscribe to the explanation of the marginal comments completely. Not as though this would decide the matter, for they also could err in their explanation. But this indeed proves that we, and not Heyns, are Dortian on this point.

Further, let us pay attention to the manner in which Heyns, in order to prove that all men must be taken in the sense of everyone head for head, exegetes. He has two arguments: 1. If the intention of the text would be all kinds of men, then the apostle would say something that did not have to be said, something that is superfluous. 2. Then the text would not be a ground for praying for kings and all that are in authority.

I call attention, first of all, to the rationalistic method of Heyns. He, the man who consistently accuses his opponents of rationalism, simply reasons freely, even has the courage to say that the apostle would say something entirely superfluous if he did not mean what Heyns thinks that he means. And what is there to these arguments? Nothing, literally nothing.

Imagine for a moment that there was in the congregation an incorrect view prevalent concerning the matter about which the apostle writes in the context; suppose, further, that in connection with that incorrect view there was also a wrong practice prevailing, namely, the practice that they prayed only for themselves, for their own congregation, for their own members, not understanding that God wills to save "all men"; can Heyns then not at all conceive of it that Paul would write to the congregation: I will that ye pray not only for yourselves, but for "all men," understood, of course, in the organic sense, just as Scripture would usually have that understood? And, thus understood, and especially taking into consideration also that the congregation apparently excluded from their prayer the great of the earth, kings and all that are in authority, would it then be so entirely superfluous that the apostle intended "all men" exactly in that organic sense, and did not at all think that the congregation ought to pray for every man, neither that the congregation must understand that God wills to save all men, every one head for head, but employs "all men" also here in the sense of all kinds?

And as far as the second argument is concerned, namely, that if we take the word in this sense, there is then no basis left for the prayer to which the apostle exhorts in the first and second verses, the professor himself will certainly discern that this argument does not hold whatsoever. Really it is true exactly of the professor's conception of the text. According to him, the prayer of the congregation must rest upon the assurance that God wills to save every man. If this be true, then the congregation can and may also pray for the salvation of every man. The prayer may certainly extend as far as the promise upon which that prayer is based. But the congregation knows beforehand that this prayer shall not be heard and that God will not save all men, head for head. And why will God not do this? Because He does not will it. The prayer of the congregation rested on a false basis. Even Prof. Heyns would not dare to pray that God will save every man. And why not? Because Prof. Heyns knows very well that God does not will it. But understand the text now in its connection as speaking of

all kinds of men, from all peoples and tribes and ranks and positions. And then the matter is completely clear. The apostle says: I will that ye pray for all kinds of men, for you must indeed understand that God wills to save all kinds of men. Then the latter becomes exactly a firm ground for the prayer to which he exhorts us, but then only.

Hence, there is nothing left of the argument of Heyns.

But even this is not sufficient. We must have exposition of the text. The arguments of Heyns are no exposition, but a rationalistic reasoning about the text. And the enervation of these arguments does not bring us a step closer to the correct explanation of the text itself.

It is plain to everyone that in the explanation the very heart of the matter is the real meaning of the little word all, or of the term all men.

If we take that term entirely apart from the context, then it means nothing less than the sum of all the individual members of the human race. Such is the unlimited meaning of the word. This is the meaning which Heyns wants.

The question is, however: does Scripture use this term here and elsewhere in this unlimited significance? And then the answer is very definitely: no, unless the context clearly indicates that this and nothing else must be the meaning. All, or also all men in Holy Writ almost never means the sum of all human individuals!

Let me cite a few examples.

II Corinthians 5:14b,15: "Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." Here the all are not all men without distinction, but those who also have died in Christ, that is, therefore, the church.

Romans 8:31: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,...." Here all is limited by us.

Romans 5:18: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." The text itself teaches here very plainly that this latter all men has in view only those who are in Christ: for justification becomes theirs, even as, and as certainly as, guilt comes into condemnation upon the whole race.

John 12:32: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." This drawing of the Savior is certainly efficacious. All,

therefore, is here limited to those whom the Savior will draw.

Romans 1:5: "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name." It is plain that all nations here must be understood in the organic sense. Paul could not mean that he had received the apostleship in order to bring all nations, head for head and soul for soul, who then lived or who would still live, to obedience of the faith.

Romans 1:7: "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." Also here all does not mean all inhabitants of Rome.

Ephesians 3:8,9: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery...." Also here the meaning of the apostle cannot be that he was called to enlighten every Gentile.

II Timothy 1:15: "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me." Everyone understands how limited this all is.

Titus 2:11: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." If this would be understood in the sense of everyone head for head, then the work of the preaching of the gospel would have been finished at that time, and everyone would have heard it. But the context shows very plainly that the apostle means all kinds of men from all ranks and positions.

Enough about this. It is, therefore, established that the explanation which Heyns wants to give to all men in I Timothy 2:4 is almost never the meaning of the term in Scripture.

And in I Timothy 2:4 this explanation is impossible!

Heyns himself does not dare to say this! He limits the term all men also! For according to the explanation of Heyns the term must mean: every man in the world. The congregation must pray for every man. For God wills that everyone be saved. That is then the meaning of the text too. Now that cannot be, for the simple reason that the gospel was not proclaimed and could not be proclaimed to every man in the world. By far the greatest portion of men living at that time died without ever having heard of Paul or of the gospel. Heyns himself, therefore, will have to limit his explanation by the addition: who hear the gospel. But where would Heyns find any ground in the text for such a limitation? Nowhere. He draws that out of his own reason.

Still more. Heyns does not dare to maintain his explanation, even as he wants to limit the term all, as soon as he arrives at vs. 6: "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." If Heyns would nevertheless want this, then he openly teaches general atonement. Nevertheless, strict exegesis demands that if Heyns wants to cling to his explanation of vs. 4, he must attach the same meaning to all in vs. 6.

Heyns himself will now undoubtedly see that his explanation is untenable. I am convinced that he himself will also acknowledge this. He will never again advocate his own explanation of this text.

Hence, there is but one possibility left, namely, that we give all men its content from the context. And that context is in vss. 1 and 2 of the same chapter. Paul desires that supplications and prayers shall be made for all men, that is, for all kinds of men, namely, also for kings, and for all that are in authority. Notice that the text does not say: for the king, but: for kings, in the plural, for that class of men who are kings or who are in authority; the text, therefore, is exactly not concerned with land and people and one's own flag or king. And then he gives the ground for this exhortation in vs. 4: for God wills that all, all kinds of men, men from every rank and position, hence also kings and those in authority, shall be saved. Thus everything in the text is clear, and Scripture is explained in its context.

In his explanation of all men Heyns has all of Scripture against him; he has the context against him, he has the text against him, he has the marginal comments against him, Calvin against him, Kuyper against him, and everyone who wants to think in a Reformed way against him.

And what is left now of the scornful and contemptuous remark with which Heyns characterizes his opponents: "it is evident that if one believes that the fact of predestination cannot allow for a will of God that all men be saved, he will take the position that here we must read not 'all men' but 'all kinds of men'?"

And this comes from Heyns, who makes not so much as an attempt to reason from Scripture, who thinks he can explain a text with a couple of poor arguments, and who, if that suits him, flippantly casts aside the pure, Scriptural reasoning of the marginal comments as being neither Dortian nor Calvinistic!

If, therefore, the two-wills doctrine of Heyns must rest on I Timothy 2:4, then his case is hopeless.

And what about II Peter 3:9?

Prof. Heyns has the following to say about this text:

"II Peter 3:9: 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'

"In this text words are used which are not capable of any twofold translation or explanation: 'not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' Calvin says the following in explanation of this text: 'So wonderful is His love towards mankind, that He would have them all to be saved, and is of His ownself prepared to bestow salvation on the lost. But the order is to be noticed, that God is ready to receive all to repentance, so that none may perish; for in these words the way and manner of obtaining salvation is pointed out. Every one of us, therefore, who is desirous of salvation, must learn to enter in by this way. But it may be asked, If God wishes none to perish, why is it that so many do perish? To this my answer is, that no mention is here made of the hidden purpose of God, according to which the reprobate are doomed to their own ruin, but only of His will as made known to us in the gospel. For God there stretches forth His hand without a difference to all, but lays hold only of those, to lead them to Himself, whom He has chosen before the foundation of the world.'"

The reader will immediately note that also here Heyns makes no attempt whatsoever to explain the text. He simply comes with a single strong assertion that the words in the text are capable of no two-fold explanation without pointing to a single ground for such an assertion; and then he follows with an explanation from Calvin. That is indeed rather scant.

As far as the explanation of Calvin is concerned, it is true that in this instance Heyns finds support in him. I am not in agreement with this explanation of Calvin. However, let me add to this immediately:

1. That Prof. Heyns must not look for any support from Calvin for his two-wills doctrine. Calvin casts this far from him. Only note what he writes in Calvin's Calvinism: "For as to that distinction commonly held in the schools concerning the twofold will of God, such distinction is by no means admitted by us." (p. 118)

2. That at a later date Calvin himself did not maintain the explanation of II Peter 3:9 which is quoted by Heyns. In Calvin's Calvinism, p. 276, we read the following explanation by him:

"There is, perhaps, a stronger colour in some of the words of Peter, which might have better suited your purposes, where he says that God is 'not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance' (II Peter 3:9). And if there be anything in the first member of the passage

that seems difficult of comprehension at first sight, it is made perfectly plain by the explanation which follows. For, in as far as God 'willeth that all should come unto repentance,' in so far He willeth that no one should perish; but, in order that they may thus be received of God, they must 'come.' But the Scripture everywhere affirms, that in order that they may 'come,' they must be prevented of God," etc.

The marginal comments Heyns simply does not quote with respect to this text. And this need not surprise us. For they read as follows:

"namely, of us, who are powerfully called and still shall be. For since God can do and also does all that He wills, therefore this cannot be understood of all and every man, seeing that Scripture and experience both testify that all men are not saved, but many go lost." This is given in explanation of "any should perish."

And concerning "all" the following is said: "Namely the elect, of whom he here speaks."

The marginal commentary, therefore, nevertheless gives an explanation of which the words of the text are not capable, according to Heyns.

However, we also wish to furnish an explanation of this text.

We maintain, in spite of the strong assertion of Heyns that his explanation -- or rather, opinion of the text -- is the only possible one, that it is not only highly unlikely, but also altogether impossible. The text cannot mean that God does not will that any human being go lost, but that all men should be saved and come to repentance.

Here again the issue is the meaning of the little word all.

That the explanation of Heyns is highly unlikely follows from what we pointed out earlier, namely, that the little word all or the term all men in Holy Scripture almost never means all human beings. That already makes it unlikely that this word would indeed have this meaning here. This unlikelihood is made even greater by the text itself. For we read: "God is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." And since us here refers to the church, it is, to put it mildly, highly likely that all points back to us, so that we must read: not willing that any of us, of the church, should perish, but that all, that is to say, the church, should come to repentance.

But this likelihood becomes absolute certainty when we consider that the explanation which Heyns considers to be the only possible one is just exactly completely impossible.

Impossible already, because God does not even have the gospel preached to all the children of men. He did not bring the gospel to all the children of men before Peter wrote this (and these also certainly belong to all human beings); nor did he bring the gospel to all human beings who lived at the time of Peter; nor does he bring the gospel to all the children of men who lived after Peter, who live now, or who shall still live in the future. It lies on the very surface, therefore, that the meaning of the text cannot be all men, head for head and soul for soul. Hence, also here Heyns will have to limit his own explanation. However, he will have to do that arbitrarily. He will add some such thing as: who live under the gospel. But Heyns has no right to do this. Such a distinction he does not get from Scripture but from his own preconceived view, and it is therefore purely rationalistic.

But Heyns' view is also impossible because the text forbids the explanation of Heyns.

Notice that in the last part of the text a motive is adduced for God's longsuffering.

The church lived and walked in the hope of glory. They were strangers and sojourners in the midst of the world, for they were begotten again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. They walked in sanctification of life.

Walking as strangers, however, they had to endure much persecution and reproach from the world. In the fire of tribulation they were purified.

In the midst of that suffering for Christ's sake, however, they looked forward to the final redemption, which they thought would come quickly, more quickly than it actually came, when Christ would come again in glory on the clouds of heaven. But that final redemption tarried. The Lord left them in suffering in the midst of the world.

Besides all this, the mockers began to mock them. They also had to hear, "Where is the God Whom you expect? All things continue as they were from the beginning; where is the hope of His coming?" In that situation, now, some began to consider it slackness that the Savior still did not come to deliver them. How could God tolerate it any longer?

And now the apostle teaches in the words of the text which we are considering that they may not thus explain the tarrying of the Lord. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness. Not slackness, but longsuffering is the motive. He is longsuffering over His people, over us.

And what now is longsuffering? It is the attitude of the love of God upon His people according to which He with a divine desire longs to deliver them out of their suffering in the world and to make them partakers of everlasting glory, but does not realize that deliverance and glory until His Church shall be complete and the time for their glorification shall be ripe. Even as a husbandman is longsuffering over the harvest, waiting for the early and the latter rains, although he eagerly desires to bring in the fruits, so God is longsuffering over His people, still exposing them to the suffering of this present time, until the church shall be complete. As a doctor would perform an operation without anesthetic upon his child, and would proceed with the operation in spite of the anguished cries of the child and his pleas not to hurt him anymore, in order that the child may be healed, so God is longsuffering over His people, and although they cry to Him day and night, and although He will speedily do them justice, nevertheless He leads them in their suffering to the very end.

And what is the end? When can that final glorification, the complete deliverance of the Church take place? When all have come to repentance. For God does not will that any should perish. The Church is, according to His counsel, one beautiful whole, in which each of the elect occupies his own place and must serve for the manifestation of the beauty of the whole, of the fulness of Christ, of the glory of God. If only one of them would be missing, the whole would be marred. Therefore God does not will that any should perish, but that they all come to repentance. Therefore He is longsuffering over His church, over us.

But therefore Christ shall also not come until all shall have come to repentance, until the last of the elect shall have entered in. For this is plainly the meaning of the text, that Christ shall not come sooner. It is plainly the intent, that God's longsuffering waits until all shall have come to repentance.

Now explain this all in the sense of all men, head for head and soul for soul. And what is the result? This, that Christ shall never come, for the simple reason that all never come to repentance. Hence, the explanation which Heyns considers to be the only possible explanation is just exactly the only impossible one.

But read the text as it clearly ought to be read, and everything is plain. For then you read: the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us, His people, not willing

that any of us, of His people, should perish, but that they all should come to repentance; and then the promise shall enter upon its fulfillment.

I trust that Heyns will concede that we have taken from his hands the stick with which he so sharply intended to strike us, namely, the accusation that we jump about with Scripture in a rationalistic way, and that he has had a few well deserved taps with his own stick. And at the same time I hope that he will discern that there is absolutely no ground in Holy Scripture for his two-wills doctrine. Our God is an only Lord!

The Place of Women In The Church, III

--Prof. Robert D. Decker--

In the previous two articles on this subject we have concentrated our attention on especially two passages: I Timothy 2 which expressly forbids women to occupy office in the church, and I Corinthians 11 which teaches that the man is the head of the woman. In this final installment we wish to state some conclusions which may be drawn from the Biblical givens as to the place of women in God's church. The Bible's teaching on this subject may be summed in the form of four propositions:

1. Scripture assumes that men shall occupy the offices of the church.
2. Scripture teaches the "headship" of the man and the subjection of the woman.
3. Scripture expressly forbids women to occupy the offices.
4. Scripture calls women to their proper place and task which task is childbearing with all that this implies.

We shall consider each of these propositions somewhat in detail.

That Scripture assumes that men shall occupy office in the church is obvious from the relationship of Jesus with several women. (Paul Jewett in his book, Man as Male and Female, argues that Jesus' relationship with women indicates their equality with men. In fact it proves the very opposite!) Jesus took time to minister to the needs of women. For example, He cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene. The Savior ministered the gospel to the woman at Jacob's well (a Samaritan at that!), He raised the son of the widow of Nain and freed the daughter of the widow of Sidon from a devil.

Several women were very close to Jesus and enjoyed a warm, personal friendship with the Master. These took delight in caring for Him. The most prominent of these were Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus. Strikingly enough our Lord made His first resurrection appearance to a woman, Mary Magdalene. Certainly Christ had time for these women and He took a sympathetic interest in their needs. He revealed Himself as Savior to them. Jesus also respected them. He never "lorded it" over them or took a condescending attitude towards them. The Lord never regarded them of less worth than men or inferior. He had time for them and for their needs. Yet the Savior never called one of these women to the office of Apostle. Why not? The answer very simply is that God forbids women from serving in office in His church.

The same is true of the women of the early New Testament church. There were several women among the original one hundred and twenty in the upper room upon whom the Holy Spirit was poured. We read often of women in the Acts record. It happened more than once that the great Apostle Paul preached to women. And, several women served both the Apostles and the people of God. There was Dorcas or Tabitha who is remembered as much for her being raised from the dead by the Apostle Peter as for her being: "full of good works and almsdeeds." Paul, the Apostle, remembered the "unfeigned faith" of Timothy which dwelt first in his grandmother, Lois, and his mother Eunice. It was at the knees of these godly women that Timothy first learned the Scriptures. Lydia was the first convert at Philippi and Priscilla was of great help to the Apostle Paul in his work.

Certainly, in the light of all this, one cannot accuse the apostles of mistreating or ignoring the women Christians or of allowing them no place in the church. They honored the women of God and spoke very highly of them just as Jesus had done. They valued their service and commended and encouraged them. Consider in this connection that the Apostle Paul mentions with favor the following, and even sends personal greetings to some of them: Phoebe, Prisca, Mary, Tryphena, and Tryphosa, Persis, Julia, the sister of Nereus, Apphia, Lois and Eunice. (Cf. Romans 16; Philippians 4: II Timothy 1; Philimon) The same apostle employs women in the service of the gospel (Romans 16:1-3; Philippians 4:30; specifically the older widows (I Timothy 5:9,10), deacons' assistants (I Timothy 3:11), women who are able to support others (I Timothy 5:16). In this connection one should read what the book of Acts has to say with reference to Lydia (16:14,40), Dorcas (9:36), Mary, the mother of John (12:2), and the daughters of Philip (21:8,9). Paul emphasized that "in Christ" there is neither male nor female (Galatians 3:28). In relation to Him and to the gifts of the Spirit there is equality between male and female. Paul praised the joys of Christian motherhood and wifehood and recommended marriage even for widows (I Corinthians 7:39; I Timothy 5:14; I Timothy 2:15; 4:3). Anyone who maintains that the Apostle Paul held women in low esteem ought to read the following passages. If they are correctly and honestly interpreted, one will be forced to admit that in many ways no man is ever able to bestow upon a woman the full honor which according to Paul's teaching should be bestowed upon her:

"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband:" (I Corinthians 7:14)

"The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife."

(I Corinthian 7:4)

"...but the woman is the glory of the man." (I Corinthians 11:7)

"Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord."

(I Corinthians 11:11)

"Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself...Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

(Ephesians 5:25-33)

In such high esteem did the apostle regard the godly woman. Yet the Apostle Paul never ordained a woman as pastor, elder, or deacon in the church. They assisted the apostles, they helped the poor and cared for the sick, they kept their homes and instructed their children in the fear of God, but the women did not preach or rule or minister the mercies of Christ in God's church.

Finally, that Scripture assumes that men shall occupy office is evident from those passages like I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 which speak of the qualifications of office bearers. These passages speak of men, not women, as elders and deacons in the church. Among the qualifications are: "they must be the husband of one wife" (note, the text does not say "the wife of one husband") and they must know how to rule well their own houses before they can rule in the church. There simply was no question in the minds of the Apostles and early Christians as to the Lord's will that men should preach, rule, and minister the mercies of Jesus Christ.

Some might object and ask: was not Phoebe a deaconess according to Romans 16:1? In answer we point out that if she was, she is the only woman to occupy that office in the New Testament. In the light of the rest of the Biblical evidence that is very unlikely. Still more, that term translated, "servant" in the King James and used in reference to Phoebe, while it is the word used for "deacon" in the New Testament, it occurs a host of times in other connections. For example it is used to refer to servants (both male and female) who wait on tables; it refers in some instances to servants of kings; it is used in general to refer to servants who must be obedient to their masters; or it sometimes means servants of God who occupy positions in government. One simply cannot, therefore, conclude on the basis of the term

itself that Phoebe was a deaconess of the church. In the light of the rest of the New Testament she could not have been. She was rather a godly woman who served her fellow saints in the church and as such she is remembered by the Apostle.

Quite clearly, therefore, the Scriptures assume that men shall occupy the offices in the church.

Our second proposition is that Scripture teaches the headship of the man and the subjection of the woman. We find this teaching especially in I Corinthians 11:3-16. We treated this passage in detail in the previous issue of the Journal. Hence, at this point we shall summarize and review a bit what was written before. Note two matters in general about the passage. In the first place, the subject here is not what many seem to think: the propriety or impropriety of women wearing or not wearing hats to church. In fact, to be consistent, those who argue that this passage teaches that women ought to worship with covered heads, would have to insist that those coverings be long veils hanging down over the face. But this really is not the subject. The subject is the great principle of the headship of the man over the woman in God's church. With respect to the woman this means she must be subject to her head, the man. And this subjection of the woman must be evident also in her appearance, especially in the public meetings for worship. In the second place, we must bear in mind that the Apostle speaks here of matters which have to do with the public worship of the church. This is plain from the reference to "praying and prophesying" in verses four and five. This is also evident from the rest of the chapter which deals with the proper observance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Finally, this is evident from the larger context of chapters twelve through fourteen which deal with the subject of the worship of the church from the point of view of the gifts and offices of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Specifically, therefore, the subject has to do with the place and proper appearance of the women of the church.

Hence, in verse three the Apostle lays down the principle, that principle which is determinative of the practice which the rest of the passage enjoins. That principle is stated in the form of three assertions: 1) The head of every man is Christ, 2) The head of the woman is the man, and 3) The head of Christ is God. There can be no mistake as to the meaning here. The head is that upon which the body is dependent and to which it is subordinate. In this sense Christ is said to be the head of the body which is His church. This is true from two points of view. Organically Christ is the head of the

church as the life of the church. Through faith the church lives out of Jesus Christ and receives all her life out of Him. In the judicial or legal sense Christ is the head of His church as her Lord. Christ is the authority of the church and that church is subject to the rule of Jesus Christ.

This latter is the meaning of this passage. That Christ is the head of every man means that He is the supreme and absolute ruler of every man. Every man, therefore, must be subject to Christ. But, the apostle continues, the head of the woman is the man. The meaning is obvious, is it not? If Christ be the head of every man in the sense that He is the ruler of the man and every man must be subject to Him is it not perfectly plain that the headship of the man over the woman must mean that she is to be subject to the man? A woman, therefore, who becomes pastor, elder, or deacon assumes a responsibility and usurps an authority which simply do not belong to her according to the clear teaching of the Word of God. By so doing the woman occupies a place God never intended for her and of necessity she refuses to serve in the beautiful place God has ordained for her.

That this is the meaning of the text is plain from the last statement of verse three: "the head of Christ is God." This does not contradict the equality of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. The Second Person of the Trinity is not subject to the First. Rather the text speaks of the triune God as the head of Christ, the Son of God incarnate. Christ as the Mediator is always subject to His heavenly Father. Thus the principle taught in this passage is that the head of the woman is the man, the head of the man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God. And, the relationship is such that in being subject to the man, her head, the woman is subject to Christ Who is subject to God Himself.

This relationship is further explained in verses seven through twelve. Verse seven teaches that: "the man is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man." Man as the image bearer of God reflects something of the glory of God. In this context the idea is that God's kingly majesty as the head of all things in Christ is reflected in the man. In other words the man is the image and glory of God exactly in his place as the head of the woman. The woman, who was herself created in God's image (Genesis 1) reflects that image of God exactly in her place as the glory of the man.

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

where we read: "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." The Apostle thus appeals to creation itself. Even creation teaches the headship of the man. Adam was created first and from his rib God created the woman. And the point is that Adam by himself was incomplete, he lacked something. And what he lacked was a help meet for him. (cf. Genesis 2:18-25) For Adam's sake God made the woman. And God made the woman as the complement of the man. By God's own design she is made perfectly fit for Adam. Literally the woman is out of the man for, as Adam exclaims: "...bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man."

But there must be no misunderstanding of the implications of this relationship, for verses eleven and twelve teach: "Nevertheless neither is the man with^{out} the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman." Note that "nevertheless". The principle of the headship of the man remains for: "neither is the woman apart from the man" for "the woman is out of the man." The woman must be subject to the man and cannot even exist apart from him. But this headship of the man in no sense destroys the interdependence of the man and the woman in God's church. Why not? Listen to the text: "Nor is the man without the woman in the Lord" and, "the man is through the woman." Every man after the first man, Adam, is born of a woman. Without the woman, therefore, there can be no man! He simply cannot exist. And all this is of God for: "all things are of God." Let no man imagine that he can stand apart from the woman. It remains forever true that the woman was created out of the man and for the sake of the man. She must be subject to her head, the man. But it is equally true that the man is "through the woman." He cannot be the head of the woman and thus the image and glory of God except through the woman. Hence, "in the Lord" there is the perfect unity of the man and the woman. The woman needs the man, but the man also needs the woman. Neither stands independently of the other. In the Lord they are together and they are one and they need each other. Let no man think, therefore, that he can exercise harsh tyranny over the woman because he is her head. Let no one think the woman has no meaningful place in life or in the church. Let no man in sinful pride regard the woman as inferior or of less worth in God's sight. The fact remains, neither the man nor the woman is without the other "in the Lord."

This, therefore, is the principle taught in this passage. The man is the head of the woman. The woman must, therefore, be subject to the man. The man is appointed to rule the woman. Thus in their proper relationship together they reflect the image and glory of God. This simply means that the woman may not rule over the man in God's church. This principle never changes. It is the unalterable truth concerning the relationship between man and woman in God's church. Neither is this something conditioned by the culture of the time in which it was written. It simply cannot be that in New Testament times the headship of the man applied but in our day man and woman are equal partners. The woman is ever to be subject to her head in the church of Jesus Christ. Never may she rule over the man. She may not occupy the office of the ministry of the Word or the eldership or that of the deacon. All these necessarily imply headship and rule.

This same principle is taught with respect to the holy bond of marriage in Ephesians five. There the Apostle Paul teaches that the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. The husband must love his wife even as Christ loves the church. And the wife must be in subjection to her own husband just as the church is subject to Christ, and that too, in everything. Just as the church must obey Jesus Christ her head so the wife must obey her husband. And that means she must be subject to him in the church too.

Our third proposition is that Scripture expressly forbids women to occupy the offices of Christ. We have shown this from especially two passages. The first of these is I Corinthians 14:34,35 which reads: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." This text is so utterly simple it hardly needs explanation. The woman must keep silence in the churches. This simply means she is not allowed to speak. That speaking must be understood in the sense of speaking an edifying word, or in other words, preaching and teaching in the church. This the woman is not permitted to do. It is not at all unlikely that among the many abuses in the Corinthian church the woman was being allowed to participate in the leading of divine worship. This, the Apostle writes, is not to be permitted. Indeed it is a shame for women to speak in the churches.

The second passage is I Timothy 2:11,12 which reads: "Let the woman

learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." We must bear in mind that the Apostle is speaking in these verses of the official worship of the church of Jesus Christ. The church, its offices, its worship, the various qualifications for office, the duties of ministers, elders, and deacons; all these are the subject of this First Letter to Timothy. Hence the Apostle is not speaking of the woman's place in the home, in society, or in some other sphere; but, of her calling in the church. Therefore, "I suffer not a woman to teach," means the woman is forbidden to occupy the pulpit of the sanctuary or the lecturn of the catechism room. A woman may not be ordained into the office of the ministry of the Word. Nor may she usurp authority over the man. This term translated, "usurp authority" literally means, "to act on one's own authority, to be autocratic." Again the Scripture means in the church. The woman may not occupy the ruling office of Christ in the church, that of the elder. And, a woman who does is a usurper. She acts on her own authority, not on God's.

Rather the woman must learn; she must learn the truth and grow in the knowledge of God by means of the preaching of the Word. And, she must learn in silence which means literally in quietness. The woman must tend to her own affairs in her own God-given place. She must not meddle in the affairs which God has assigned to the men of the church. Moreover she must learn in silence with all subjection. That subjection is obedience to the Word and will of God.

For the ground of this admonition the Apostle appeals to the creation of the man and the woman. The creation narrative of Genesis two makes plain that Adam was first formed and then Eve. This means the woman was created for the man and not the man for the woman. The second ground for the admonition the Apostle finds in the fall of our first parents. Adam was not deceived but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. This must not be understood in the sense that Adam did not fall. Rather, the idea is that Adam was not deceived in the manner that Eve was. The woman was utterly deceived and she became the leader in the fall and the occasion for the man to fall. As a consequence God said: "thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee." (Genesis 3:16)

Finally, Scripture calls women to their proper place and task, namely: childbearing. This is the teaching of I Timothy two verse fifteen: "she shall be saved in childbearing." This needs all of the emphasis we can

give it in our times. Childbearing includes the actual conception and giving of birth to children and all the rearing of them. God gives the women of the church ample opportunity to teach and to rule. They must teach and rule their little ones in the fear of God's Name. What a glorious task that is! What a beautiful place God gives to the women of His church! Can there be anything more wonderful for a woman than to be used of God for the building of His church? What a heinous sin it is when women and men with them refuse that blessed task! Surely the judgment of the holy God rests upon them. Through childbearing the woman shall be saved. That means by the blood of Jesus and through faith, but in the way of childbearing. And only in that way of childbearing is the woman saved. Not is she saved in the way of preaching and teaching in the church but in the way of childbearing. Unto this end God blesses the women of the church with many gifts and virtues. God fits them physically and emotionally and in every other way for their blessed task. What about those women to whom God does not give this privilege? Let them be known for their being full of good works and alms-deeds as Dorcas of old. Let them visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. Let them visit the poor and assist them. Let them stand in the place of the covenant parents in the Christian Schools and teach the children of God's covenant. Let them labor with their God-given abilities for the cause of Jesus Christ. But let them not be preachers, elders, or deacons. That the Scriptures do not permit. A beautiful summary of the woman's place is found in Titus 2:3-5:

"The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed."

The conclusion is obvious, is it not? Surely there can be no doubt as to what the Scriptures teach concerning the place and calling of women. The passages we have cited all yield the same conclusions. The woman is subject to her head, the man. She must not usurp authority in the church, but she must learn in silence. It is not permitted unto her to speak. Either one believes the Scriptures at this point or he must reject the clear teaching of the Word of God.

But the fact remains that many have a problem with this teaching of the Word of God. Controversy rages in many a denomination over the "woman question". The question is why? Why all the "fuss" over whether or not it is proper for women to preach or rule in the church? For long centuries this had never been a problem. The church simply accepted the simple teaching of the Scriptures and limited the offices to qualified men. Now suddenly we have big problems with this position. Why? The answer is COMPROMISE. The church once more has accommodated itself to the world. This is the day of "women's liberation". Women are clamoring for equality and seeking their fulfillment not in rearing a family, keeping the home, serving their husbands; but, in the professions and jobs of the work-a-day world. The world says wives are not subject to their own husbands and need not obey them. The world says marriage is a fifty-fifty proposition. The world says man and woman are equal partners. And, much of the church has caved in to the pressures of the world and compromised. Now suddenly we need women preachers, elders, and deacons in the church.

But exactly at this point one encounters the problem! And this is the deeper issue involved in this whole question of the place of women in the church. The Bible, in plain language, language which even a little child can understand, forbids women from serving as office bearers in the church. Careful and believing exegesis will yield no other conclusion. One simply cannot find support for having women ordained in office in the Scriptures. What do they do then who advocate having women in the offices of the church? They deny that these Scriptures apply in our times and in our culture. They say that when Paul wrote: "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in subjection." (I Timothy 2), he was influenced by his rabbinical background and training. Or they say that this Word applied in the early New Testament era but not to our times. Hence another and much more serious concession is made, this time to the modern-liberal denial of the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures. It is couched in high-sounding theological jargon like: the Scriptures are time-bound or they are culturally conditioned. We must understand that the Bible speaks to its own time and it is our task to discover just how the Bible applies to our own times. Or we must get at the basic meanings of the words themselves by following the methodology of the New Hermeneutic. Thus, these change the very meaning of the Bible itself and they assume a fundamentally different attitude toward Scripture itself.

A clear example of this type of thinking and theologizing may be found in the recent book, Man As Male and Female, by Paul K. Jewett, professor of systematic theology at Fuller Seminary. Jewett argues for the equality of women with men on three grounds: "We have rejected the argument for female subordination as being incompatible with (a) the biblical narratives of Man's creation, (b) the revelation which is given us in the life of Jesus, and (c) Paul's fundamental statement of Christian liberty in the Epistle to the Galatians. (3:28, RDD)...Any view which subordinates the woman to the man is not analogous to but incongruous with this fundamental teaching of both the Old and the New Testaments...All of this is not difficult to understand. The difficulty is that Paul, who was an inspired Apostle, appears to teach such female subordination in certain passages in his epistles." (p. 134) What does Jewett do about this "difficulty"? Listen: "To resolve this difficulty, one must recognize the human as well as the divine quality of Scripture. As for the divinity of Scripture, when the theologian says that Paul was 'inspired' he does not mean that the apostle was a religious genius but rather that he was supernaturally guided by God's Spirit in what he taught... While the theologians have never agreed on a precise theory of inspiration, before the era of critical, historical study of the biblical documents they tended, understandably, to ignore the human side of Scripture and to think of divine inspiration in a way that ruled out the possibility of any human limitation whatever in the Bible. The Bible, for all practical purposes, was so immediately dictated by the Holy Spirit that the human writers were more secretaries than authors. Historical and critical studies of the biblical documents have compelled the church to abandon this simplistic view of the divinity of Scripture and to take into account the complexity at the human level of the historical process by which the documents were produced. Instead of the simple statement, which is essentially true, that the Bible is a divine book, we now perceive more clearly than in the past that the Bible is a divine/human book. As divine, it emits the light of revelation; as human, this light of revelation shines in and through the 'dark glass' (I Cor. 13:12) of the 'earthen vessels' (II Cor.4:7) who were authors of its content at the human level." (pp. 134,135)

It is not our purpose to engage in a polemic with Jewett concerning the whole question of the inspiration of the Scriptures. His view is not our view. Neither can the above view stand the test of the Scriptures themselves. The Bible is God-breathed and profitable for instruction, etc. (II Timothy 3:16)

And the Bible is that because: "...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."

(II Peter 1:20,21) With this view of the Scriptures Jewett can dismiss those passages which teach the subordination of women as inapplicable in our time. He admits that they teach that the woman must be subject to the man. Writes Jewett: "We now have before us a complete summary of the New Testament passages on which the doctrine of the woman's subordination is based. The woman is subject to the man because the man, as created first, is directly in the image and glory of God, whereas the woman, created after the man and for him, is the glory of the man. Because of her lesser endowment (presumably) she was deceived by the tempter when the man was not. Therefore she should never aspire to teach the man, but always learn from him in subjection and quiet humility. Specifically, this means that Christian women are not permitted to speak in church; in fact it would be shameful were they to do so. Therefore let them study a becoming silence." (p. 61) All this according to Jewett is taught in such passages as I Corinthians 11 and 14; I Timothy 2 and others.

How does Jewett dismiss these passages and their teaching? Listen once more: "Furthermore in reasoning this way, Paul is not only basing his argument exclusively on the second creation narrative, but is assuming the traditional rabbinic understanding of that narrative whereby the order of their creation is made to yield the primacy of the man over the woman. Is this rabbinic understanding of Genesis 2:18f. correct? We do not think that it is, for it is palpably inconsistent with the first creation narrative, with the life style of Jesus, and with the apostle's own clear affirmation that in Christ there is no male and female (Gal. 3:28)." (p. 119)

This is very serious. It is nothing less than a denial of the inspiration and infallibility of the Holy Scriptures. With such a view of the Bible one can make the Bible teach anything. No longer are the Scriptures trustworthy. This view we prefer to reject. We believe that the Bible means what it says. It is to be upheld and believed and obeyed in every age and culture. And, we simply believe this for the Spirit testifies in our hearts that these things are so!

These Holy Scriptures teach:

- 1) That the man is the head of the woman.
- 2) That the woman is not permitted, therefore, to teach, preach or rule in the church.

3) That the woman is saved in the way of childbearing.

May God grant in His mercy that the women of His church may be diligent and faithful in their beautiful place and calling. This is the way in which the church shall be in days to come richly blessed by means of the "daughters of Sarah" in her fellowship.

BOOK REVIEW

--Prof. H. Hanko--

PAUL: AN OUTLINE OF HIS THEOLOGY, by Herman Ridderbos; translated by John Richard de Witt; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975; \$12.95, 587 pp.

This massive work by Professor Ridderbos, professor of New Testament for many years in the Theological School of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands in Kampen, first appeared in the Dutch language under the title, *Paulus*. Already in the Dutch edition it created a considerable stir both in the Netherlands and in America. It will, no doubt, attract much more attention now that it has been translated into English. There is no doubt about it that it is an important work. Already several Reformed theologians in this country have paid homage to some of the views advanced by Professor Ridderbos, and we may expect that the book will continue to have an impact upon theology in this country and abroad. Whether the influence of this book is good or bad is quite another question.

There are many interesting and excellent features about the book, and anyone interested in recent developments in theology will have to read it. The commendable aspects of the book are easily enumerated. It treats in some detail higher critical hermeneutics and has some important information to offer in this field. It is a thorough treatment of all the main themes in the writings of the apostle Paul and summarizes what Paul's epistles have to say concerning many of the important articles of the Reformed faith. In some respects certain doctrines, emphasized in Paul's writings, are extensively treated and developed, and the book is a valuable aid in getting these doctrines clearly before one's mind. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the book, and also the most valuable, is the detailed exegesis of many passages in Paul's epistles. Oftentimes this exegesis contributes valuable insights in the meaning of the text. The book is a scholarly exegetical discussion, and shows Professor Ridderbos' profound exegetical skills. A detailed textual reference in the back of the book will aid the student of Scripture in finding those passages of Scripture which Ridderbos takes the time to explain.

E. g., I found the discussion on the following subjects of special interest: the discussion of Romans 5:12ff. which treats of the imputation of Adam's sin; the discussion of the forensic aspect of justification; the

discussion of the relation of the church to the magistrates; and the discussion of the expression "body of Christ" as used by Paul, etc.

All these things and many more make the book instructive and fascinating. The rather steep price of the book is worth the investment.

Nevertheless, the book has serious faults. There are, of course, a number of places where one would disagree with Ridderbos' exegesis and with his interpretation of Paul's writings. This is bound to happen. No one can write a book with which every one would agree in all its details. We are not interested in these things; nor do they subtract from the significance of the book. But there are several very important faults in the book which are worth our closer attention. Two of these faults are wrong interpretations of Paul's writings at key points; one is what I consider to be a serious mistake in methodology. The first two have to do with Paul's doctrine of the old and new man and Paul's doctrine of eternal election. The third has to do with the whole approach to Scripture which is implied in "a theology of Paul." To each of these we turn our attention.

Dr. Anthony Hoekema, in his book "The Christian Looks At Himself", takes the position that the Christian makes a serious mistake if he thinks of himself as a wretched sinner. He must, asserts Hoekema, have a more positive opinion of himself. Hoekema correctly points out that this question involves an interpretation of Romans 7:14-25 where Paul concludes a discussion of his own spiritual experience with the words: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Hoekema tells us that this passage must be interpreted as a description of Paul prior to his regeneration. It is obvious that Hoekema can maintain his thesis that a Christian must have a positive self-image only by interpreting Romans 7 in this way. In several articles in the Reformed Journal which formed the basis for Hoekema's book, he tells us that he gained this insight into Romans 7 from Ridderbos' book which we are now reviewing. Ridderbos writes:

Finally, as regards the much discussed difference of opinion -- which to the present day has not been brought to a solution that is in some degree generally accepted -- as to whether the discord delineated in Romans 7:14ff. is to be understood as pertaining to the remaining struggle against sin in the Christian life or whether Paul here intends to represent the importance of the ego outside

Christ and the power of his Spirit, we have elsewhere chosen with conviction for the latter view on the ground of a detailed analysis of the context and the text of Romans 7 and wish to maintain that with undiminished force. (p. 126, underscoring is ours.)

It lies outside of the scope of this review to examine in detail the arguments which Ridderbos advances in support of his position. I have done this at some length in several articles in the Theological Journal, and the material need not be reproduced here. (Cf. Theological Journal, Vol. V, 1; VI, 1; VII, 1.) There are however, a couple of remarks concerning this that ought to be made. In the first place, it is interesting that Jacobus Arminius was first suspicioned of heresy by his colleague Plancius in the congregation of the Reformed Church in Amsterdam when he took the same position as Ridderbos on this passage of Romans 7. The views of Arminius and his followers were later condemned by the Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-'19. Interestingly, neither Ridderbos nor Hoekema makes any reference to this historical fact. Theological integrity within the sphere of the Reformed faith would seem to require that they would do this.

2. In the second place, it is really impossible to maintain the view that Paul is speaking in Romans 7 of himself before his regeneration unless one does become an Arminian in this key point of his theology. Paul writes: "For the good that I would I do not." If this is true of the unregenerated Paul, then it follows that Paul could will the good before he was regenerated. This is exactly Arminianism. And into this Arminianism Ridderbos falls. On p. 128 he writes:

In our judgment too little account is taken in this way of what we have already observed above concerning the differentiated and shaded picture that the apostle gives of the bondage of sin and its corrupting operation in man. Romans 7 does not fall outside that, but brings it out in still fuller relief. The idea of and zeal for the good have not been quenched in the same way in all men, Jew and gentile, under the law and without the law. It is in harmony neither with the teaching of Jesus nor with that of Paul to deny zeal for the law or desire for the good to every man outside Christ, or to consider such impossible in him. (Underscoring ours)

By taking this position Ridderbos clearly agrees with the theology of Arminianism, and, to the extent that he does this, he puts himself outside of the camp of Reformed theology.

2. The second point that needs emphasis is Ridderbos' treatment of the doctrine of predestination.

There are one or two remarks about this which we ought to make before a more specific examination is made of Ridderbos' views. In the first place, it seems incredible that in a book written on the "theology of Paul" by a "Reformed" theologian, there are only about 15 pages at the most out of 560 dealing with what anyone knows to be the central doctrine of Paul's writings. This ^{is} more than passing strange. Even the relatively unimportant doctrine of the relation of the Christian to the magistrate receives almost 7 pages. In the second place, the discussion, especially when Ridderbos sets forth what he believes concerning predestination, is vague. It is not easy to know from what he writes exactly what his view is. This is strange when one is treating a doctrine which is so much the heart and core of the Reformed faith.

✓ To turn more specifically to this question, one thing is clear: Ridderbos rejects the doctrine of eternal and sovereign predestination. His view is quite similar to that of Berkouwer. In fact, I have heard that Berkouwer was surprised and pleased to discover that Ridderbos did agree so closely with him on this matter because, as Berkouwer claims, both arrived at their views independently. However this may be, neither one of these two theologians, leaders in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, want this doctrine.

Ridderbos first of all denies that Romans 9 teaches election and reprobation. He writes:

(In this passage) a "natural" birth does take place, but God once more intervenes by designating, not the elder, Esau, but the younger, Jacob, contrary to all custom and expectation, as the continuation of the holy line of the people of God.

In a footnote to this passage, Ridderbos adds:

That this is the point in question and not "election and reprobation" as the denotation of the eternal destiny of both is clearly apparent from the words of the divine statement: "the elder shall serve the younger." In vs. 13, too, Jacob and Esau are spoken of as two peoples, in harmony with Mal. 1:2ff.

It is clear from this that Ridderbos denies not only that Romans 9 speaks of sovereign predestination, but that he also interprets this as many before him have done, as referring to God's choice of the nation of Israel as a special nation with a special destiny. This, of course, not only implies a denial of reprobation, but implies an acceptance of the basic Arminian position on predestination. A few additional quotes will serve to bring this out.

God is free to have mercy on whom he will; on the other hand he is free to pass by others with this mercy and even to harden them in their sin. Paul is not guided here by an abstract concept of divine freedom, but by the freedom of God's grace as this has revealed itself in the history of Israel. The apostle observes a clear divine intention in it. . . . God is free to maintain the validity, not of human effort or strength, but of his grace only. He is also free, therefore, to make the resistance of others, in this case of Pharaoh, subservient to the sovereignty of his grace and the glory of his name revealed therein by hardening them in this resistance.

Although somewhat unclear, this is not so bad yet. But then he shows that he does not want to refer all this to an eternal decree when he writes:

If the potter is free to give the objects he makes of clay the destiny that seems best to him in the conduct of his work as a potter, would God then not be free, in order to show the power of his work and the riches of his glory on those whom he has destined to that end, not as yet to give up immediately to judgment those to whom his wrath goes forth (because of their sin) and who are therefore ripe for destruction, but first to demonstrate to them the power of his grace on his people?

The purport of Paul's argument is not to show that all that God does in history has been fore-ordained from eternity and therefore, so far as his mercy as well as his hardening is concerned, has an irresistible and inevitable issue. Rather, it is his intention to point out in the omnipotence of God's activity the real intention of his purpose. (p. 345, underscoring ours)

. . . It is evident that one may not identify the omnipotence and sovereignty of God's grace thus upheld on the one

hand and of his reprobation and hardening on the other with irrevocable "eternal" decrees, in which God would once and forever have predestined the salvation or ruin of man. (p. 345)

In commenting on Ephesians 1:4, he writes:

Here again it is a matter, as always with election, not simply of a decree of God that only later comes to realization, but of the actual appropriation of the church to himself before the foundation of the world. (p. 347)

What prompts Paul to hark back again and again to the divine purpose is not an abstract predestinarianism or reference back to God's decrees as the final cause in the chain of events, but the designation of sovereign, divine grace as the sole motive of his work of redemption in history. (p. 350)

When -- as, for example, in the so-called catena aurea. (golden chain, HH) of Romans 8:29ff. -- Paul joins God's purpose, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification in one indissoluble bond, this is not an abstract pronouncement concerning the immutability of the number of those predestined to salvation, but a pastoral encouragement for the persecuted and embattled church, based on the fixed and unassailable character of the divine work of redemption. This fixed character does not rest on the fact that the church belongs to a certain "number," but that it belongs to Christ, from before the foundation of the world. (p. 350)

From these quotes it is obvious: 1) That Ridderbos maintains that Romans 9 speaks neither of sovereign election nor of sovereign predestination, but of a choice of a nation for a definite historical purpose; 2) that Ridderbos denies sovereign reprobation, and will speak of reprobation, if at all, only as conditional. This is Arminian theology. 3) That even election does not refer to an immutable decree of God which fixes eternally the number of the elect and who they are, but only emphasizes that salvation is by grace. How Ridderbos harmonizes salvation by grace with an Arminian conception of predestination is not explained in the book. 4) That even Romans 8:29ff. is not dealing with predestination

as such, but is only "pastoral encouragement." How there can be any "pastoral encouragement" for the people of God if their salvation is not rooted in the certainty of God's eternal and unchangeable decree, is a question which Ridderbos does not face.

By this flagrant denial of sovereign predestination Ridderbos has broken with the Reformed heritage of the truth, and without really coming with anything new, has reverted back to the old error of Arminius.

Finally, we must say something in this review concerning Ridderbos' methodology.

It is becoming increasingly popular today in the field of theology to abandon the time-honored method of "Systematic Theology" or Dogmatics which "systematizes" the truth of all Scripture, and to develop the truth of a particular part of the Word of God. George Eldon Ladd's "The Theology of the New Testament" is an example of this; so also is this book of Ridderbos. The question is whether it is proper and in keeping with Scripture itself to speak of a "theology" of only a part of Scripture. It is my contention that it is not.

This must be clearly understood. In a certain limited sense it is not wrong to discuss in a book what e.g., the New Testament teaches in distinction from the Old. Nor, I suppose, would it be wrong in itself to discuss in a book some of the chief doctrines which the epistles of Paul treat. But one must be very careful when one does this, for the dangers are very great. And it is quite a different matter to develop a "theology" of the New Testament, and a "theology" of Paul. There is an underlying assumption here which is wrong.

The underlying assumption is that Scripture is not an organic whole. Or, to state the matter positively, the underlying assumption is that Scripture can be chopped up into segments, each of which can be discussed independently from the rest of the Word of God. This assumption is wrong.

We ought to develop this a bit more.

The truth concerning the organic unity of Scripture, in brief, is this. Scripture taken as a whole is one book, though it contains many different parts. The principle of this organic unity of Scripture is the truth that Scripture is the infallible record of the revelation of God in Christ. Even as all the revelation of God is in Christ, so also is Christ Himself the one principle of the whole of Scripture. All Scripture speaks

only and everywhere of Christ.

It is true that Scripture is the record of a revelation that is progressive. Principally and seminally all the revelation of God in Christ was given already in those first words spoken to our fallen parents through God's Word to the serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed. . . ." Genesis 3:15. All revelation from that point on was the progressive development of that fundamental and principle truth until all revelation was fulfilled in Christ Himself Who came into our flesh, suffered and died for the sins of His people, and rose again and ascended into heaven from whence He shall come at the end of time to judge the living and the dead. Because Scripture is progressive, the Scriptures record that revelation in a progressive way. But this does not alter the fact that the one principle of unity in the whole of Scripture is Jesus Christ, the fulness of the revelation of God.

Furthermore, the organic unity of Scripture means that the whole truth of God always comes to expression in every single passage of Scripture. No individual text can be interpreted without taking into account the whole of the Bible. The whole Word of God comes to its own unique focus in every text. And the central truth is again, Christ, the revelation of God as the God of our salvation. One does serious injustice to a text when one interprets a given text only as it stands by itself. One does serious injustice to a text when one interprets a text only in the light of its immediate context. Even, one does serious injustice to a text when one interprets a text in the light of only part of Scripture. In Hermeneutics class in Seminary we stress the fact that every text must be interpreted in the light of its context, in the light of the book in which it was written, in the light of the Testament in which it appears, but also in the light of the whole of Scripture. This follows from Scripture's organic unity.

An approach to Scripture which speaks of a theology of the New Testament, or a theology of the apostle Paul denies this by its very methodology. And because this is denied, serious errors follow -- errors which are also evident in this book by Ridderbos.

What are these errors?

In ~~the first~~ place, there is an implicit denial of the truth of inspiration. How can this be? Consider the fact that there is, according to Ridderbos, a "theology of Paul." This means that there is also a theology of Peter, a theology of James, a theology of Matthew, a theology of Isaiah, etc.

But is this true? Where, in all this, is there room left for the most important of all? -- a theology of the Holy Spirit? Is not the Scripture God's infallible record of His own revelation? Is not the Scripture therefore God's "theology?" -- a theology which He reveals of Himself?

It is very striking that there is not one single reference in this entire book which I found which emphasizes that God is speaking in Paul's writings. We have repeatedly what Paul teaches, but there is never any reference to what God teaches. The doctrine of inspiration and the fact that Scripture is God's Word to us is, so far as I could determine, not so much as mentioned.

You may perhaps argue that this is all implied, that it is after all, a truth assumed. But this is not the case. There are several references in the book which clearly indicate that Ridderbos does not accept the doctrine of infallible inspiration as this has been traditionally accepted by the Church. I cannot go into detail on this, but a few instances will suffice. On p. 489 Ridderbos speaks of the fact that Paul had a mistaken notion concerning the nearness of Christ's coming: ". . . Romans 13:1ff. . . . points to the fact that the apostle did not expect Christ's coming to be in the distant future." Paul's erroneous conception of Christ's coming, therefore, has crept into the Scripture. On p. 521 Ridderbos asserts that we cannot identify the man of sin spoken of in Thessalonians because of the genre of apocalyptic writings which Paul uses here. On p. 533 Ridderbos writes: "In the manner of apocalypses it places these within the framework of the world picture of that day."

The point is that if one emphasizes to the exclusion of the authorship of the Holy Spirit that these letters are Paul's letters from which can be discovered Paul's theology, then one will also find that, because Paul was mistaken on certain points, there are errors in Scripture. In other words, the only way to defend the truth of inspiration as Scripture is to emphasize that God through the Holy Spirit of Christ is the Author of Scripture. A "theology of Paul" rests upon an assumption which denies this.

In the second place, there is very little in the whole book about our Reformed Confessions. Ridderbos might object and say: I was not writing about the Confessions; I was writing about Paul's epistles. And that, of course, is obvious. But it remains a fact that no Reformed man can write theology and not pay attention to the Confessions. This approach is un-Reformed. A Reformed man comes to Scripture with the confessions. He does

this, not because he gives to the Confessions an authority higher than Scripture, but because the Confessions are the fruit of the work of the Spirit of truth Who led the Church in the past to the knowledge of the truth of Scripture.

But Ridderbos' approach, by definition, precludes the possibility of using the Confessions. How can he use the Confessions? The Confessions, profoundly aware of the organic unity of Scripture, carefully develop each doctrine of the Christian faith as that doctrine is taught in the whole of Scripture. If Ridderbos wants to write a theology of a part of Scripture, it is obvious that he can make no use of the Confessions. But the Confessions are right; Ridderbos is wrong. Scripture may not be chopped up into small parts -- each with its own theology.

In the third place, this approach must necessarily lead to an incomplete development of Scriptural truth. When one reads Ridderbos, one continuously gets the feeling that there is only a partial treatment of key Scriptural doctrines. There is an incompleteness and there are always important questions unanswered. Ridderbos is talking about Paul's theology all the time, not the theology of the Holy Spirit. And Paul's theology is a partial and incomplete theology. Ridderbos' fear of going beyond anything which Paul says leads to this incomplete treatment of the truth. One keeps wondering if perhaps Paul's theology ~~does not~~ conflicts with the theology of Peter or James in certain important areas.

And so we must conclude by saying that Ridderbos' methodology is basically a denial of the true character of Scripture. Therefore, this book, while in many ways fascinating reading, does not stand in the tradition of, nor does it contain Reformed theology. It is, especially in the points discussed above, an innovation, a heretical innovation.