

PROTESTANT REFORMED
THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCHES
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EDITORIAL NOTES

-- Prof. H. Hanko --

With this issue of our Journal we begin our eleventh volume, and with it, our eleventh year of publishing. God has blessed these efforts, and in the awareness of His blessing, we are grateful. Our mailing list has steadily grown and many of our readers have expressed their appreciation for what has been written over the years. We appreciate hearing from our readers, and hope many of you will continue to write.

* * * *

Three articles are to be found in this issue. Prof. Hoeksema continues his discussion of the all-important question of the simplicity of God's will. This subject has important implications in many areas of theology, but particularly in the defense of the Reformed faith over against all Arminian and Pelagian heresies. Prof. Decker begins a new series of articles on preaching. Genuine Biblical preaching is in serious decline today. We hope our readers will profit from Prof. Decker's treatment of this subject. Undersigned begins a series on the question of paedobaptism vs. believer's baptism with particular attention paid to David Kingdon's important book, "Children of Abraham".

* * * *

We wish to call attention to the insert which appears in your copy of the Journal. This insert contains all the Seminary publications. Although we have included such a list before, we have added to the list all the publications of the Reformed Free Publishing Association. All this material can be ordered by writing to the Seminary.

In this connection, we direct your attention to the two most recent publications which have just gone on the market. The first is the book, "When I Survey. . . ." This book is a Lenten anthology which contains a number of Scriptural meditations dealing with various aspects of the suffering and death and resurrection of our Lord. They are all written by the late Rev. Herman Hoeksema. They have all been published before in a number of volumes, but have been out of print for many years. The best of these volumes has been included in one beautifully printed volume. We urge our readers to purchase this book.

* * * *

The other recent publication is a Bible Manual authored by Gertrude Hoeksema. This is the first in a series of Bible manuals which will be published by the same author. (The second one should be off the presses very shortly.) It is primarily intended for teachers who teach Bible in the lower grades of school. But its use is greater than this. It can be invaluable to help ministers prepare for Catechetical instruction in the lower grades. It can be helpful to Sunday School teachers in their work. It will be a valuable addition to your home library and a wonderful aid in instruction of your children at home in the truths of the Scriptures. This present volume covers the Old Testament material from creation through the reign of King Saul. It has a number of projects in the back of the book. It can be purchased from the school for \$8.95.

THE REFORMED DOCTRINE OF INFANT BAPTISM

-- Prof. H. Hanko --

The subject of infant baptism vs. believer's baptism has always, though especially since the time of the Reformation, been a divisive issue in the Church. Both within Reformed and Presbyterian traditions the doctrine of infant baptism has without hesitation been confessed as Biblical. But there have always been large numbers of Baptists who have insisted that nowhere does Scripture teach the doctrine of infant baptism, but that rather repentance and conversion are the necessary prerequisites for the administration of this sacrament.

Those who have faithfully adhered to the truths of Calvinism have never been much of a problem with large numbers of Baptists, and have never considered most Baptists to be serious threats to the Reformed position. Generally speaking, this has been true because many (if not the majority) of Baptists have erred in other areas of theology as well. Baptists are, generally speaking, not only adherents of believer's baptism, but also hold to Arminian positions with respect to the doctrine of grace. And, while not always true, Baptists have also had erroneous ideas in the area of eschatology. Their Baptist position has often driven them to some form of pre-millennialism and dispensationalism. Generally speaking, this is still true today.

However, there has been a significant number of Baptists throughout the Post-Reformation history of the Church who have taken a different position on these questions. There have been those who, while clinging tenaciously to believer's baptism, have nevertheless been also fervent Calvinists, champions of the doctrines of sovereign grace, and even a-millennial in their views of eschatology. They have repudiated all forms of dispensationalism and have taken their own Baptist brothers to task for falling into these errors. Well-known are such men as Charles Haddon Spurgeon and John Gill -- powerful representatives of a Calvinistic Baptist position. The result has been the rise of large numbers of Churches both in this country and abroad (especially in England) which go under the name of "Reformed Baptists".

It is the presence on the ecclesiastical scene of such Reformed Baptists which has forced all defenders of paedobaptism to take a second look at their position and examine it in the light of Scripture. Within the last few years this has been increasingly done, and an extraordinary amount of material has once again been published on a question which is ages old.

Perhaps the best book available at present which defends a Reformed Baptist position is a small book by David Kingdon, entitled, "Children of Abraham."¹ This book is, as far as I have been able to ascertain, the most articulate and best reasoned of all defenses of the Reformed Baptist position. It is, in fact, a book which requires an answer. Especially in the light of the fact that Reformed Baptists are gaining in influence,² it is well that this entire position be closely examined and the arguments in the defense of paedobaptism be once again set forth over against those who repudiate it and yet maintain the doctrines of grace.

This is especially important because of the fact that the defense of paedobaptism is not always what it ought to be. Many who have written extensively in this field have presented arguments which are less than convincing to a committed Baptist because they have failed to understand the Scriptural idea of the covenant of grace. This failure to understand the covenant in all its Scriptural beauty and significance is especially apparent in their failure to understand what can only be called, "the organic conception of the covenant." Failing to see that the covenant is always organic, they have left large loopholes in their arguments and have given Baptists abundant opportunity to criticize their position on various counts.

David Kingdon's book is a striking illustration of this. His attack on the paedobaptist position is oftentimes extremely effective and, indeed, unanswerable because he punches holes in the arguments at precisely those points where an understanding of the organic unity of the covenant would have solved innumerable problems.

It is the contention of this paper that a Reformed Baptist is really an impossibility. The Baptist who defends free will, man's initiative in the work of salvation, resistible grace, the altar call, the free and well-meaning offer of the gospel, etc. is the Baptist who is consistent. The Baptist who defends Dispensationalism, in whatever form it takes, is the Baptist who consistently maintains

¹. Published by University Tutorial Press Ltd. in Foxton England for Carey Publications Ltd., 5 Fairford Close, Haywards Heath, Sussex RH 16 3EF.

². Many Reformed people who have become disillusioned with the apostasy in their own denominations are turning to the Reformed Baptists, attracted, no doubt, by the strong emphasis in these circles on the doctrines of sovereign grace.

his position. The Baptist, on the other hand, who maintains the doctrines of grace and repudiates dispensationalism is inconsistent in his theology. I do not deny that he may, in his theology, be a Calvinist. I do not deny that he may truly repudiate Dispensationalism. But he is guilty of a happy inconsistency for all that.

Furthermore, he really has no historical right to call himself by the name "Reformed". I am not interested at this point in questions of mere semantics. And if a Baptist who maintains Calvinism wants to call himself "Reformed" he has the right to do this. But he must remember that the name is an anomaly nonetheless. The semantic question arises from the fact that the term "Reformed" is sometimes interpreted as meaning little more than adherence to the truths of the Calvin Reformation. That is, the term often means little more than belief in the five points of Calvinism. But historically this is really not accurate. Historically the term "Reformed" has meant to designate that theology which, while adhering to the truths of Calvinism, developed also the whole federal idea in theology and the organic idea in the covenant. And this has been particularly characteristic of the development of the Reformed faith in the Netherlands.

While the semantic issue is unimportant, the point that needs to be made in this connection is extremely important. In the first place, from this viewpoint, while it is possible to be a Calvinist without being Reformed, it is impossible to be Reformed without being a Calvinist. Reformed means something more than Calvinistic. In the second place, the whole federal idea within theology, and especially within the doctrine of the covenant, has been an important and significant development within Reformed theology. True, it has appeared also in Presbyterian traditions as is evident even from the Westminster Confession of Faith. But it has not been fully developed in these traditions, and it has not especially been applied to the whole idea of the covenant and baptism as a sign of the covenant. Thirdly, it is increasingly evident that there can be no real defense of infant baptism without a proper understanding of the federal idea of the covenant especially as this sets forth an organic conception of the covenant.

This latter remark deserves a bit more treatment. Whether a Baptist is Calvinistic in his commitment to the doctrines of grace or not, he shares one thought with the Arminian: both hold to an individualistic conception of

salvation in particular, and of God's dealings with men in general. This is a fundamental question. It is not an exaggeration to say that this difference between Reformed thinking and Arminian thinking is, in its own way, as profound a difference as, say, the difference between free will and the slavery of the will in the natural man. Even a Calvinistic Baptist is individualistic in his thinking and his theology. And it is for this reason that the name Reformed Baptist is an anomaly; it is for this reason that a Baptist is only inconsistently a Calvinist.

* * * *

We must, however, turn to Kingdon's book and elicit from it his main argument. His argument is, in the nature of the case, two-pronged. This is because he is developing a position which defends believer's baptism and is pointing out what in his opinion are the errors of the paedobaptist position. We shall try to present his argument as clearly as possible.

In order to avoid the charge of dispensationalism, Kingdon affirms strongly the unity of the Old and New Dispensations, and, consequently, the unity of the covenant. He writes:

Holy Scripture shows that there is but one covenant of grace throughout all ages. From the unity of the covenant certain conclusions follow:

(a) There is one Church of God, purchased with the blood of Christ, which embraces the people of God in all ages and in all places.

(b) There is one way of salvation, namely, repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the mediator of the eternal covenant.

(c) There is one destiny of the saints, Mount Zion, the Heavenly City, the new Jerusalem.

(p. 20)

Again:

Nevertheless the basic contention (of Reformed paedobaptists) is correct -- the covenant of grace in one in all ages. In my view Baptists will never seriously disturb Reformed Paedobaptists

until they see this. The divisive, atomistic approach of so much contemporary Baptist apologetic is about as effective at this point as a shot-gun against a Sherman tank. (p. 21)

Again:

Fundamental to (the approach of the proponents of covenant theology) is a rightful conviction of the unity of the covenant of grace throughout both dispensations. Without question Scripture does exhibit this unity. The substance of the covenant is declared in both Testaments to be the blessing God graciously bestowed upon his people, as contained in the promise "I will be your God." (p. 38)

Further, Kingdon does not deny the fact that circumcision has a spiritual significance. It has, in his opinion, a national significance too; and this national significance is indeed of great importance. But the spiritual significance is there.

So, circumcision as a rite refers to the necessity of the circumcision of the heart, and therefore it cannot be said to have an exclusively natural reference. (p. 26)

Because of this, Kingdon admits to a certain analogy between circumcision and baptism.

Circumcision then must not be viewed as belonging only to the national, legal and theocratic stage of Israel's history, in contrast to baptism which pertains to the new covenant, which is not in the letter but of the Spirit (II Cor. 3:6). Circumcision was enjoined on Abraham and his family before ever Israel became a nation. It was not a legal ordinance, but the sign in Abraham's flesh of God's gracious covenant with him and with his seed. Now if we accept this, as the evidence

surely compels us to do, then we cannot interpret circumcision as a sign only of Israel's national separation to God. It was this of course, but its significance as a sign is not exhausted by describing it as a merely national sign. Whilst it was taken up into the Mosaic covenant it preceded it as the covenant sign by many generations, and thus it cannot be interpreted exclusively as a national sign.

It is my considered opinion that Baptists must recognize the analogy between circumcision and baptism. . . . (pp. 27,28)

This sounds like a major concession on the part of Kingdon which in effect destroys his position in favor of believer's baptism. But such is not the case. He goes on to argue that the covenant with Abraham had an Old Testament fulfillment and a New Testament fulfillment. And because this is true, circumcision had a national significance and a spiritual significance. Thus it embraced both earthly and heavenly blessings.

It is evident on examination of Genesis 17 that the covenant with Abraham had both dispensational and trans-dispensational elements. (p. 29) Dispensationally the promise of numerous descendants has been fulfilled in the Jewish nation and in the numerous descendants of Abraham through Ishmael and his other sons by concubines. Trans-dispensationally, that is, in the dispensation of the Spirit . . . the promise has been fulfilled in the multitudes of believers who are the seed of Abraham.

Likewise, in the Old Testament dispensation the promise of the land to Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17:8) was fulfilled in the gift of Canaan, but in the New Testament age of the Spirit, it is fulfilled in the believers' inheritance in Christ which, unlike the land, is "incorruptible, and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are

kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:4,5). We note again the double reference to the dispensation of preparation and the dispensation of fulfillment. (p. 30)

And now we come to what is really the crux of the matter. Because of the fact that the covenant with Abraham has both an Old Testament and a New Testament significance, and because of the fact that circumcision has both a national and a spiritual meaning, Kingdon asserts that the covenant and circumcision as a sign of it have also a two-fold administration. Only the spiritual significance of the covenant and only the spiritual meaning of circumcision apply in the New Testament. The Old Testament was the age of preparation. In it only the national and earthly elements of the covenant were in force (although there were certain spiritual elements of significance in force also then).³ The New Testament is the age of fulfillment. Then the spiritual elements came to the fore while the natural and national elements faded away -- fulfilled in Christ.

With the age of fulfillment, various elements of the old covenant fell away. In fact, all the elements which pertain to national Israel fell away including God's dealings with only one nation, an earthly land of Canaan, the sign of circumcision as incorporation into the nation, etc. But along with all these elements, the idea of salvation for Israelites and their natural seed also fell away. If, Kingdon asks, Paedobaptists are prepared to drop the "land" out of the the promise, why do they hesitate to drop the infant seed when the two are so closely related? Did not God promise the land to Abraham in connection with the promise of a seed? (p. 39ff.)⁴

This is not to say that Kingdon takes the position that the promise of the covenant is still not to Abraham and his seed. The New Testament is clear on this point. But here Kingdon asks the question: What does the New Testament

³. We cannot go into this aspect of the argument here. Kingdon correctly speaks of a certain development in the history of the promise during the Old Testament. And, in connection with a discussion of the concept "remnant", he points out that there was, towards the end of the history of the nation of Israel, a transition to a more spiritual emphasis. See pp. 74ff.

⁴. It is rather arbitrary on Kingdon's part to drop this element of "their seed" from the covenant. Kingdon never really gives any reason for doing this. His argument is only that because some elements are dropped, this element is also to be dropped. But Why? Kingdon never explains this. We shall return to this point later.

have to say about the seed of Abraham in this Dispensation? The answer is first of all that that seed is Christ. (Galatians 3:16) And, after Christ, that seed is all who have the faith of Abraham. (Galatians 3:26-29) Thus that seed of Abraham is composed of those who are true believers. Only they are the seed, none else. And thus repentance and faith are requirements for incorporation into the covenant. And only those who repent of sin and manifest faith towards God in Christ can receive the sign of that covenant, the sacrament of baptism.

There are, of course, many other arguments raised by Kingdon both against the Paedobaptist position and for believer's baptism. But these arguments are all more or less related to this central one. Here we have the gist of the case which Kingdon makes out for believer's baptism, and here we have the way in which he defends the traditional Baptist position while avoiding the dangers of Dispensationalism so often an integral part of Baptist apologetic. (See pp. 50ff. for details)

* * * *

This is a rather imposing argument, and, as I said at the beginning of this essay, the best defense of a "Reformed Baptist" position. To this central argument we now turn our attention. Hopefully there will be opportunity at some future date to consider some of the other arguments and to answer some of the lesser points which Kingdon makes. But the case for a "Reformed Baptist" position stands or falls on the basis of the argument defined above.

In providing a Scriptural answer to this argument of Kingdon, it is essential in the first place to demonstrate that Kingdon does not succeed in escaping the pitfall of Dispensationalism. This, of course, needs to be proved from his book. But before this point is demonstrated, it is well to remind our readers that this is a crucial question. The error of Dispensationalism is not only the error of separating the Old and New Testaments so that God's dealings with Israel have no principle connection with and are in no way a part of God's dealings with the Church in the New Dispensation; but the error of Dispensationalism is also the error of denying the unity of Scripture. Dispensationalists separate Israel and the Church, the nation of Israel and the Gentiles, the dispensation of types and shadows and the dispensation of the reality; but they also separate the two testaments of Scripture so that there is no essential relation between them. The Scriptures are really two books. And the unity of Scripture is denied. The principle of Scripture interprets Scripture

cannot be applied so that it cuts across the line separating the two testaments. And so the organic unity of Scripture is lost in Baptist apologetic.

Now Kingdon is aware of this danger and professes in his book to want no part of it. He expressly repudiates every form of Dispensationalism and admonishes his fellow Baptists not to fall into this error. (See quote above from Kingdon's book, p. 9) But the question remains: is Kingdon successful in escaping a form of Dispensationalism? Does he heed his own admonition to his fellow Baptists and does he maintain an essential unity between the two dispensations? The answer to this is emphatically NO!

What is the proof for this?

In the first place, Kingdon repeatedly chides Paedobaptists for wrenching the unity of the two testaments to the point of perverting their differences. He writes:

Fundamental to the approach (of covenantal theologians) is a rightful conviction of the unity of the covenant of grace throughout both dispensations. Without question Scripture does exhibit this unity. . . . However, it is my conviction that the unity of the covenant has been wrenched to the point of distortion. In particular the relationship between promise and fulfillment is wrongly interpreted. . . . (p. 38)

In reply to a Paedobaptist, he writes:

Here we see a typical example of the method of covenantal theologians of the Paedobaptist type, an example which illustrates the point that they are dwelling in the sphere of the theocracy of Israel rather than in the realm of the redeemed community, the Church. (p. 39)

. . . Reformed Paedobaptist theologians are guilty of reading the New Testament into the Old. Paedobaptist apologetic is very difficult to control, and for this reason, it switches from the New to the Old and from the Old back to the New without proper attention to the historical unfolding of redemptive grace. (pp. 41,42)

This is, obviously, not in itself proof of the charge that Kingdon has become Dispensational despite his disavowal. Conceivably, his charge may be

true. Nevertheless, anyone who knows anything about Reformed theology knows very well that historically this mistake has never been made by theologians of either the Reformed or Presbyterian tradition. Even the Confessions of both traditions very carefully distinguish between the two Testaments. And Reformed theologians have been faithful to their creeds. The fact therefore, that Kingdon brings this charge makes one immediately suspicious that, after all, Kingdon does not want a unity of dispensations. And further reading substantiates this point.

When, through the course of the book, Kingdon here and there points out the differences between the two dispensations, one at last finds so many differences that there seem to be almost no similarities any more. E.g. on p. 43 Kingdon speaks of the blessings of the Old Testament as being "the temporal blessings of the covenant." And such expressions are not rare.

But it is especially on pp. 75 and 76, in connection with his discussion of the idea of remnant that these differences are fully described. He writes:

The Old Testament teaching about the faithful remnant comes, of course, to its most pointed expression in the promise of the new covenant. The new covenant (Jer. 31:32) is expressly distinguished from the old Sinaitic covenant in that it is to be written, not on tablets of stone, but upon the fleshly tables of the heart. The new covenant people were to be distinguished from the old in this respect: they shall all know the Lord (vs. 34), "from the least of them unto the greatest of them."

Again, it is surely obvious that the promise of the new covenant brings about a change in the basis on which the godly can be members of the covenant people. After making every allowance for the spiritual import of circumcision it still remains true that membership of natural Israel was conditional upon natural birth, whereas membership of the new covenant people is dependent upon spiritual re-birth.

Both the concept of the remnant and the promise of the new covenant mark the transference of religion

from a nationalistic to an ecclesiastical basis. So long as religion remained upon a nationalistic basis a child was related to the covenant people through birth into an Israelite family and by no other means. With the shift from a nationalistic to an ecclesiastical basis, a shift which begins to take place in the Old Testament but which is only completed in the New, the place of the child within the people of God undergoes a change.

The Old Testament nowhere states that a child cannot belong to the remnant. What it does imply, however, is that membership of the new covenant people cannot be on the basis of merely natural birth, but only on the basis of spiritual re-birth. Thus the election of the new covenant people within the national election of Israel, of the true Israel within Israel, brings about a change in the relation of children to the people of God.

If we would properly interpret the Old Testament teaching concerning children we must see the development of the history of the Old Testament in its proper perspective. Firstly, we must not select the Mosaic period of revelation as if the last word about the church membership of children was said at that time. . . . One cannot simply draw a straight line from the Mosaic period to the New Testament. . . .

Now from this rather lengthy quote, as well as from other passages which teach the same thing, it is apparent that Kingdon draws sharp distinctions between the two dispensations, so sharp that "one cannot simply draw a straight line from the Mosaic period to the New Testament." The covenant which God established with Israel was a covenant which was purely nationalistic embracing natural Israel. It was a covenant with a promise of an earthly land, an earthly dwelling place, earthly and temporal blessings. It was a covenant which was nationalistic in distinction from ecclesiastical. It was a covenant with a different basis. It was a covenant with different qualifications from membership. It was a covenant with a different

sign. There is not, so far as I can see, much left which indicates any identity of the two or any relationship between the two dispensations. Every aspect of the covenant is different. Every description of the covenant is different. And crucial to it all is, of course, the fact that infants were included in the old covenant, but are no longer included in the new.

Now while Kingdon does not carry out these differences and develop them as his dispensational Baptist brethren have done, he nevertheless has so succeeded in dividing them that one is at a loss to find the one principle of unity.

This sharp difference between the two dispensations which Kingdon makes is indicative of his failure to understand the true nature of the Old Dispensation.

And this brings us to the next point which needs to be emphasized. Kingdon fails to understand the true nature of the Old Testament economy. And to this we must now turn.

We hold to the fact, as Kingdon claims to do but actually fails to do, that there is throughout all history one covenant which God establishes with His people in Christ; that there is but one people with whom that covenant is established throughout all ages; that there is but one promise of the covenant whether to the Church in the Old Dispensation or in the New; that there is but one basis for the covenant, one means of entering that covenant, one "qualification" for covenant membership.

We do not deny by this that this one covenant was administered under different dispensations. We do not blur the differences between the two dispensations, nor do we read the new into the old, or make the old identical with the new. This is far from the case. Nevertheless, the difference lies not in the essential idea either of the covenant, of the covenant people, or of the promise of the covenant. The difference rather lies in the administration of the covenant. God administered His covenant differently in the Old Dispensation from the manner of administration in the New Dispensation. And this difference of administration centers in the coming of Christ.

What Kingdon fails to understand in his book is that the whole Old Testament administration of the covenant was in types and shadows. Before God fulfilled all the riches of His covenant promises in Christ He gave to His people many centuries of instruction concerning the nature of that covenant and concerning all its glorious realities. Revelation is progressive. It develops

from the first promise given to our parents in Paradise to its fulfillment in Christ. But this development (and this must never be forgotten) is always organic. It is not the development of the building of the wall of a city in which each brick is laid in place without any organic connection with all the other bricks in the wall. Its development is like that of a beautiful rose which begins as a small plant, develops its foliage, then its bud, and finally produces a full-blossoming flower as the petals unfold.⁵

The result was, if we may be permitted an illustration, that God gave to the Church in the Old Dispensation a beautiful picture book. There were many pictures in this book, and they were very beautiful pictures. Especially believing Israel looked often at the book and were amazed at the wonderful pictures. There was, e.g., the picture of the flood. There were the pictures of the land of Canaan, of the nation of Israel itself, of the tabernacle and temple, of the altar of burnt offering and its sacrifices. There were the pictures of manna from heaven, water from the rock, passage through the Red Sea, the whole Aaronitic priesthood. These pictures were the kingdoms of David and Solomon, and all the ceremonies of the law.

Yet, when believing Israel looked at the pictures, they knew that they were only pictures and not the reality. And that was why the law was a school-master to bring Israel to Christ (Gal. 3:24). That was why, though Abraham, Isaac and Jacob walked as strangers in the land of promise, "they did not receive the promises, but saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them." That is why "they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly." Hebrews 11:13-16.

Kingdon fails to deal with this typical character of the Old Dispensation. He fails to see that the land of Canaan was but a type and picture of heaven. He fails to see that Israel itself was a picture of the Church of every age. How else is it possible that the Church in the New Dispensation can also be called Israel? The nation itself was a picture of the whole Church of God. Of course, centrally, all the types and shadows of the Old Dispensation and all the pictures which Israel looked upon pointed ahead to Christ. This was true without exception. And this is true because Christ was the fulfillment of it all. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past

⁵ We cannot go into this whole matter in these essays. We refer the interested reader to Prof. H.C. Hoeksema's Old Testament History notes, published by the Seminary, where these ideas are fully developed.

unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." (Heb. 1:1,2) Or, as our Heidelberg Catechism speaks of it: "Whence knowest thou (thy only Mediator)? From the holy gospel, which God himself first revealed in Paradise; and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and represented by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly, has fulfilled it by his only begotten Son." (Q. and A. 19)

Thus, the essence of the covenant and of the promise of the covenant remained the same. There was only a difference of administration. And this difference of administration was due to the fact that God revealed the truths of His covenant only gradually. Bit by bit did God make known to His people throughout the Old Dispensation the blessings which He would impart to His people. He did not immediately send Christ through Whom the covenant would be fully realized. He did not immediately give to His people all the blessings which He had prepared for them in Christ. But before He sent Christ, He instructed the Church in all the truths of the covenant by way of the "picture book" of the Dispensation of types and shadows. Paul writes of this difference in his epistle to the Galatians.

"But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all children by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And

because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." (Gal. 3:23-29, 4:1-7)

It is clear from the passage that Paul compares the church of the Old Dispensation with that of the New under the figure of a child who grows to manhood. The Church of the Old Dispensation is like a small child who needs instruction. He is indeed the heir of all the possessions of his father. But he cannot have this inheritance yet for he is but a child and will not know what to do with it. And so he is under a schoolmaster. Though he is lord of all, he really differs nothing from a servant. He is under the law, must be kept under authority, has others who tell him what to do, and cannot so much as move without the permission of those put over him. But, gradually, through instruction, he is prepared for the time when he shall receive the inheritance. And when he is come of age the inheritance is freely given to him. And so it is with the Church. Throughout the whole Old Dispensation the Church was under the instruction of the schoolmaster of the law. Though the Church was the heir, it differed not from a servant, but was under tutors and governors. But God continued to give this Church His instruction. And when the Church came of age, then the fulness of time was come and God sent forth His Son. Then the Church became, in the fullest sense of the word, sons and heirs of God through Christ.

But this Church is one. It is one child who grows to manhood. It is one person who develops through instruction to spiritual maturity. And because this is true, the covenant which God establishes and the promise of the covenant to make the son an heir remains the same.

Thus the covenant remains unchanged in its essence. It remains unchanged in its blessings. It remains unchanged in its basis. It remains unchanged in all its characteristics. Only its administration was changed in keeping with the spiritual development of the Church.

We must examine this a bit more closely, for this lies at the very heart of Kingdon's argument. We must see how the covenant and all that pertains to it remain the same. If we see this, then we will also be able to see that, because God promised to establish His covenant with "Abraham and his seed" in the Old Dispensation, that one central promise of the covenant also remains the same in the New Dispensation.

But we will have to pursue this argument further in the next issue of the Journal the Lord willing.

The Simplicity of God's Will

and the

"Free Offer"

-- Homer C. Hoeksema --

In this installment of our study, we complete, first of all, the quotation (in translation) of the extensive and worthwhile presentation of Dr. H. Barinck concerning the will of God. This material is translated from his Gereformeerde Dogmatiek, II, 227 ff.

209. The creation, however, presents still more and still other difficulties for the doctrine of the will of God. As God and the world are distinguished, and therefore the will of God for us is divided in *propensio in se* and in *creaturas*, so also is there in the world among the creatures again manifold distinction. And that distinction rests upon a different relation in which God with His Being, His knowing, and willing, places Himself to the creatures. God does not will everything in the same manner, in the same sense, with the same energy of His Being; then indeed there would be no variety possible among the creatures, then everything would be monotonously uniform. But while He wills all creatures *propter se ut media*, He wills this one more than that, according to the measure that they are more directly and suitably *media* to His glorification. God is a Father for all His creatures, but He is that in a particular sense for His children. His affection toward all that which He created stands below that toward the church, and the latter below that toward Christ, the Son of His good pleasure. There is a *providentia generalis*, *specialis*, and *specialissima* to be distinguished. And so also we again make in the will of God which is directed toward the creatures as much distinction as there are creatures. For the *voluntas Dei libera* is just as rich as that entire world. This is therefore not to be thought of as an indifferent power, as a blind power, but as rich, full, living, divine *ἐνεργεια*, the fountain of all that rich life which the creation presents for our consideration. But now there is in that world one thing which produces special difficulty for the doctrine of the will of God, and that is the evil, both as *malum culpae* and as *malum poenae*, in the ethical and in the physical sense. The evil may stand never so much under God's direction, it can nevertheless not be the object of His will in the same sense and in the same manner as the good. With a view to those entirely

different and diametrically opposite objects we must again make distinction in the will of God itself. Scripture is our example in this. There is a great difference between the will of God which prescribes for us what we must do, Matthew 7:21, 12:50, John 4:34, 7:17, Romans 12:2, and the will of God which says what He does and shall do, Psalm 115:3, Daniel 4:17,25, 32,35, Romans 9:18,19, Ephesians 1:5,9,11, Revelation 4:11. The prayer that God's will may be done, Matthew 6:10, has an entirely different sense than the childlike, trusting: Thy will be done, Matthew 26:42, Acts 21:14. And so we repeatedly see that will of God appearing in history in a twofold sense. God commands Abraham to offer up his son, and nevertheless does not let it happen, Genesis 22. He wills that Pharaoh shall let Israel go and nevertheless hardens his heart, so that he does not do this, Exodus 4:21. He lets it be told to Hezekiah that he shall die, and nevertheless adds 15 years to his life, Isaiah 38:1,5. He forbids to condemn the innocent, and nevertheless Jesus is delivered over according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, Acts 2:23, 3:18, 4:28. God does not will sin, He is far from wickedness, He forbids it and punishes it stringently, and nevertheless it exists and stands under His direction, Exodus 4:21, Joshua 11:20, I Samuel 2:25, II Samuel 16:10, Acts 2:23, 4:28, Romans 1:24,26, II Thessalonians 2:11, et cetera. He wills the salvation of all, Ezekiel 18:23,32; 33:11, I Timothy 2:4, II Peter 3:9, and nevertheless is merciful to whom He will, and hardens whom He will, Romans 9:18.

Very soon there arose in theology the distinction between this twofold will of God. Tertullian speaks already of a hidden, higher and of a lower or lesser will. Augustine points out that God many times accomplishes His good will through the evil will of men. Later this twofold will received the names of voluntas εὐδοκίας, beneplaciti, arcana, discernens, decretiva and voluntas εὐαρεστίας, signi, revelata, praeciens. The name voluntas signi is derived from this, that this will to us significat quid Deo gratum sit et nostri sit officii and becomes known by us from the five signa: praeceptio, prohibitio, consilium, permissio, operatio. Worked out in detail by scholasticism, it was generally adopted by Romish theology, and in Reformed theology treated with special partiality. Alongside of this there appeared still other distinctions in the will of God; especially that into voluntas antecedens and consequens, which already appears in Tertullian and Damascene; and that

into voluntas absoluta and conditionata, efficax and inefficax, which is found already in Augustine. Also these distinctions can be understood in a good sense, namely, in this sense, that God antecedenter and conditionate wills many things, for example the salvation of all men, which He nevertheless consequenter and absoluta does not will and therefore does not allow to happen. Zanchius then also says that all these distinctions come down to the same thing; and Hyperius, Walaeus, Voetius, and others, are of the same judgment. But although Luther in his book De servo arbitrio had made very sharp distinction between the Deus absconditus and revelatus, the Lutherans rejected this distinction into voluntas beneplaciti and signi, at least in the Reformed sense. The Arminians followed that example. And the Romish theologians still kept the distinction indeed in name, but explained it thus, that the will of God was always voluntas beneplaciti, divided into voluntas antecedens and consequens and that the voluntas signi was nothing but a partial revelation of that will. Thus it happened that, on the one hand the Romish, etc., really kept only the distinction into voluntas antecedens and consequens (absoluta and conditionata), and the Reformed only kept that into voluntas beneplaciti and signi (decernens and praecipiens, arcana and revelata), with rejection of the distinction into voluntas antecedens and consequens. The difference comes down to this, that the Romish, Lutherans, Remonstrants, etc., proceed from the voluntas signi; this is the real will, consisting in this, that God does not will but only will permit sin, that He wills the salvation of all, offers grace to all, etc.; and when man then has decided, God adapts Himself to this, He defines what He wills, the salvation of whoever believes, the perdition of whoever does not believe. The voluntas consequens follows upon the decision of man, and is not the real, essential will of God, but the action of God occasioned by the conduct of man. Over against this the Reformed proceeded from the voluntas beneplaciti and held this to be the real, essential will of God; that will always goes through, always reaches its purpose, and is eternal and unchangeable; the voluntas signi, on the other hand, is the prescription of God, in law and gospel, that is valid as the rule for our conduct.

Now it is the current teaching of Scripture, both in the Old and the New Testament, that the will of God is eternal, unchangeable, independent, efficacious. Not occasionally is this expressed, for example, Psalm 33:11, 115:3, Daniel 4:25,35, Isaiah 46:10, Matthew 11:26, Romans 9:18, Ephesians 1:4,

Revelation 4:11, etc., but the entire Scripture testifies of this; all the virtues of God demand this; the entire history of the church and of the world presents proof of this. And in harmony with this Christian theology taught, especially since Augustine, that the will of God is simple, eternal, unchangeable, seeing that it is one with His being. The voluntas antecedens is really no will in God, magis potest dici velleitas quam absoluta voluntas. The voluntas signi is called only in a metaphorical sense in God voluntas, sicut cum aliquis praecipit aliquid, signum est quod velit illud fieri. The real will in God is the voluntas beneplaciti, and this is one with God's being, is unchangeable, and is always accomplished. Pelagianism wrongly forsook this line, and elevated a powerless desire, an unfulfilled wish in God to the status of will. By doing this it derogated the entire being and all the virtues of God. For if the velleitas is the real and essential will of God, then He is robbed of His omnipotence, wisdom, goodness, immutability, independence, etc.; the entire government of the world is then withdrawn from His providence; and irreconcilable dualism is created between God's intention and the result of world history; the outcome is then for God an eternal disappointment; the world plan did not succeed, and Satan triumphs in the end. Now Pelagianism indeed asserts that it acts thus in the interest of God's holiness, and that it maintains this holiness better than do Paul and Augustine, than Thomas and Calvin, because in their view God becomes the author of sin. But this is no more than appearance; on the view of Pelagius sin remains just as inexplicable as it does on that of Augustine; yea, in the latter God's holiness attains its rightful position much better. For it is more in harmony with Scripture and all of the Christian faith to accept that God has in a certain sense willed sin for wise, although for us unknown reasons, than that He, not willing it in any respect, nevertheless tolerates and permits. The latter after all exactly fall short of His holiness and omnipotence.

To this must be added that Scripture, although theologically placing on the foreground the voluntas beneplaciti, nevertheless at the same time in the voluntas signi maintains how and in what manner He does not will sin. In the signa of prohibition, admonition, warning, chastisement, punishment, etc., He condescends to us and says what He wants of us. Because man is a rational,

moral being, God deals with him not as with a stock and block, but speaks and deals with him in harmony with his nature. As a father forbids a child the use of a sharp knife, and nevertheless himself handles it without damage, so God forbids to his rational moral creatures sin, which He Himself nevertheless can use and actually uses to the glorification of His Name. The voluntas beneplaciti and the voluntas signi therefore also do not conflict with one another, as the ordinary objection has it. For, first of all, the voluntas signi is really not the will of God, but only His commandment and prescription that is valid as a rule for our conduct. In the voluntas signi He does not say what He shall do; it is no law for His dealings; it does not prescribe what God must do; but He says therein what we must do; it is a rule for our conduct, Deuteronomy 29:29. It is therefore only in a metaphorical sense called voluntas Dei. Indeed, the objection is raised against this that the voluntas signi nevertheless is called thus because it is a signum voluntatis in Deo, and thus must be in agreement with His voluntas beneplaciti. In the second place, let it therefore be noted that this is also indeed so; the voluntas signi is an indication of that which God wills that we shall do. The voluntas beneplaciti and the voluntas signi do not stand directly over against one another, so that God according to the former indeed wills sin and according to the latter does not will sin, according to the former does not will salvation of all and according to the latter does indeed will it, etc. Also according to the voluntas beneplaciti God nevertheless has no pleasure in sin, it is no object of His pleasure, He does not vex out of a delight in vexing. And vice versa, He wills as little according to the voluntas signi as according to the voluntas beneplaciti that all men, head for head, shall be saved; that can, with a view to history, be seriously taught by no one; actually the all in I Timothy 2:4 is limited by everyone to a greater or smaller circle. Both stand so little over against each other that the voluntas signi is precisely the way in which the voluntas beneplaciti is accomplished. In the way of admonitions and warnings, prohibitions and threatenings, conditions and demands, God executes His counsel. And the voluntas beneplaciti maintains only that man, transgressing God's commandment, becomes for not a single moment independent of God, but in that same moment serves the counsel of God and becomes an instrument, be it then also unwilling, of His glory. Not the voluntas signi only, but also the voluntas beneplaciti is holy and wise and good, and shall precisely in the way of the law and of righteousness

become revealed as such in the end. Therefore, finally, the differentiation of both is also to be maintained. It is the problem of right and fact, of idea and history, of the ethical and the actual, of what ought to happen and of what actually happens, which here confronts us. He who denies the voluntas signi derogates the holiness of God, the majesty of the moral law, the seriousness of sin. On the other hand, he who denies the voluntas beneplaciti comes in conflict with the omnipotence, the wisdom, the independence, the sovereignty of God. On both positions one runs the risk either of closing his eyes for reality with a superficial optimism and calling all that which is actual reasonable, or with a one-sided pessimism to curse his existence and to despair of the world and of his portion. Theism, however, does not seek a solution in getting rid of one of the terms of the problem, but recognizes and maintains them both; it sees the lines of the rational and the actual cutting across one another in history every moment; it leads both back to the sovereignty of God and has of it the high idea that also through the unreasonable and sinful it shall bring its holy and wise counsel to execution unto the glory of God's Name. In this His divine sovereignty scintillates after all, that He glorifies His wisdom in man's foolishness, His power in their weakness, His righteousness and grace in their sin.

210. The sovereignty of God reveals itself finally in His omnipotence, which, however, after what we have already said, needs less extensive treatment. In Scripture never and nowhere is a boundary set for the power of God. Already in the names El, Elohim, El Shaddai, Adonai the idea of God's power is on the foreground. Further He is called אֵל גָּדוֹל וְנוֹרָא , before whose face no one can stand, Deuteronomy 7:21 ff., אֱלֹהֵי הַגָּדוֹל , Isaiah 1:24, אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל , whose name is Jehovah Sabaoth, Jeremiah 32:18, אֱלֹהֵי אֱמִיץ , Job 9:4, אֱלֹהֵי הַגָּבִיר , Job 36:5, אֱלֹהֵי הַגָּבִיר , Psalm 24:8, אֱלֹהֵי הַגָּבִיר , Matthew 11:25, Revelation 1:8, 22:5, that is, the Lord, the Proprietor, the Ruler, Who possesses authority and supremacy; the King, Who reigns over all things forever, Exodus 15:18, Psalm 29:10, 93-99, II Kings 19:15, Jeremiah 10:7, 10 etc., but especially is King over Israel and as such rules it, protects and leads unto salvation, Numbers 23:21, Deuteronomy 33:5, Judges 8:23, I Samuel 8:7, Psalm 10:16, 24:7, 48:3, 74:12, Isaiah 23:22, 41:21, 43:15, etc., and thus also in the New Testament the μέγας βασιλεὺς, Matthew 5:33, I Timothy 1:17, the βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευσόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων, I Timothy 6:15, Cf.

Revelation 19:16; παντοκρατωρ, II Corinthians 6:18, Revelation 1:8, 4:8, 11:17; μονος δυναστης, I Timothy 6:15; Who possesses both the εξουσια, αρχη, potestas, the right, the authority, and the dignity, Matthew 28:18, Romans 9:21, and the δυναμις, κρατος, potentia, the fitness and the might to act, Matthew 6:13, Romans 1:20. But further the omnipotence of God appears from all His works. Creation, preservation, the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, nature with its ordinances, the history of Israel with its wonders preach loudly and clearly the omnipotence of God. Psalmists and prophets refer to these great deeds repeatedly and adduce them for the humbling of the proud, the comfort of the believer. He is strong in might, Isaiah 40:26, creates earth and heaven, Genesis 1, Isaiah 42:5, 44:24, 45:12,18, 48:13, 51:13, Zechariah 12:1, maintains their ordinances, Jeremiah 5:22, 10:10, 14:22, 27:5, 31:35, forms wind and rain, light and darkness, good and evil, Amos 3:6, 4:13, 5:8, Isaiah 45:5-7, 54:16. He makes dumb and causes to speak, kills and makes alive, saves and causes to perish, Exodus 4:11, Deuteronomy 32:39, I Samuel 2:6, II Kings 5:7, Exodus 15, Deuteronomy 26:8, 29:2, 32:12, I Samuel 14:6, Hosea 13:14, Matthew 10:28, Luke 12:20. He has absolute power over all things, so that nothing can resist Him, Psalm 8, 18, 19, 24, 29, 33, 104, etc., Job 5:9-27, 9:4 ff., 12:14-21, 34:12-15, 36:37. Nothing is too wonderful for Him, all things are possible for Him, Genesis 18:14, Zechariah 8:6, Jeremiah 32:27, Matthew 19:26, Luke 1:37, 18:27; He can raise children of Abraham out of stones, Matthew 3:9. He does all His good pleasure, Psalm 115:3, Isaiah 14:24,27, 46:10, 55:10, and no one can summon Him to account, Jeremiah 49:19, 50:44. And above all His δυναμις appears in the works of salvation, in the raising up of Christ, Romans 1:4, Ephesians 1:20, in the working and strengthening of faith, Romans 16:15, Ephesians 1:19, in the imparting of grace above what we ask and think, Ephesians 2:20, II Corinthians 9:8, II Peter 1:3, in the resurrection at the last day, John 5:25 ff., etc. And this power of God is finally also the source of all might and authority, of all power and strength in the creatures. From Him is the dominion of man, Genesis 1:26, Psalm 8, the authority of the government, Proverbs 8:15, Romans 13:1-16, the power of His people, Deuteronomy 8:17,18, Psalm 68:36, Isaiah 40:26 ff., the strength of the horse, Job 39:22, the power of the thunder, Psalm 29:4, 68:34, etc. In one word, His is the strength, Psalm 62:12, and to Him belong the power and the strength, Psalm 96:7, Revelation 4:11, 5:12, 7:12, 19:1.

Entirely in harmony with their doctrine concerning the will and the freedom of God, the nominalists describe the omnipotence of God thus, that by it God can not only do what He wills, but also can do everything. Distinguishing between the *potentia absoluta* and the *ordinata*, they judged that God according to the one could also sin, err, suffer, die, become a stone or an animal, could change bread into the body of Christ, could do contradictory things, could make undone what had happened, could make the false true and the true false, etc. According to His *potentia absoluta* God is therefore purely arbitrary pure potential without any content, which is nothing and which can become everything. Principally this is the standpoint of all who maintain the primacy of the will, and therefore this view has reappeared repeatedly. It occurs not only in Christendom but also among other religions, especially Islam. On the other side stand those who say that God can only do what He wills and that He also cannot do that which He does not will. The possible is coextensive with the actual. What does not become reality is also not possible. God has fully exhausted His power in the world. This was already the opinion of Plato and Plotinus, and further of certain church fathers, but was especially taught in the Middle Ages by Abelard, *Deus non potest facere aliquid praeter ea quae facit*. And thus later the Cartesian theologians Burmannus, Braun, Wittichius, judged, and further Spinoza, Schleirmacher, Strausz, Schweizer, Nietzsche, and others.

Scripture condemns the one as well as the other viewpoint. On the one hand, it says expressly that God cannot do many things; He cannot lie, cannot repent, cannot change, cannot be tempted, Numbers 23:19, I Samuel 15:29, Hebrews 6:18, James 1:13,17, ἀρνησασθαι γὰρ ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται, II Timothy 2:13; for His will is one with His being, and the *potentia absoluta*, which disconnects the power of God from His other virtues is nothing else than a vain and impermissible abstraction. On the other hand, Scripture declares just as decisively that the possible extends much farther than the actual, Genesis 18:14, Jeremiah 32:27, Zechariah 8:6, Matthew 3:9, 19:26, Luke 1:37, 18:27. And to this Christian theology held. Augustine says on the one hand that God's will and power are not distinct from His being. *Homo aliud est quod est, aliud quod potest.... Deus autem cui non est aliud substantia ut sit, et alia potestas ut possit, sed consubstantialis illi est quicquid ejus est et quicquid est, quia Deus est, non alio modo est et alio modo potest; sed esse et posse simul habet, quia velle et facere simul habet*. Indeed God's omnipotence consists therein, that He can

do what He wills, certe non ob aliud vocatur omnipotens, nisi quoniam quidquid vult potest. But God cannot will everything. He cannot deny Himself. Quia non vult non potest, quia et velle non potest. Non enim potest justitia velle facere quod injustum est, aut sapientia velle quod stultum est, aut veritas velle quod falsum est. Unde admonemur Deum omnipotentem non hoc solum, quod ait apostolus: negare se ipsum non potest, sed multa non posse.... Deus omnipotens non potest mori, non potest mutari, non potest falli, non potest fieri, non potest vinci. But then Augustine argues further that this is no lack in power, but precisely true, absolute omnipotence. It would be exactly impotence, if He could err, sin, etc. Especially does Augustine clarify this in relation to the proposition which is often brought against the omnipotence of God that God cannot make undone what is done. This expression can, after all, have a twofold sense. In the first place, one can mean by it that God makes void the fact that has happened; but this is no sense, for a fact that has happened is no more and cannot and need not be made void. But, secondly, one can mean by this that God should make undone in the human consciousness the fact that has happened, so that this consciousness now thinks that it has not happened. But also this has no sense, for God, Who is the truth, would then have to make untrue what is true. Other theologians have spoken in a similar sense concerning God's omnipotence and have only repeated what Augustine said.

By Reformed theologians the distinction into potentia Dei absoluta and ordinata was definitely only recognized to a certain point. The nominalists had misused this in order to assert that God according to the former could do everything, also what was in conflict with His nature, and by this had argued also especially in favor of the doctrine of transubstantiation. Calvin opposed this and he rejected such a commentum potentiae absolutae as profane. The Romish therefore accused Calvin that he limited the omnipotence of God and thus denied it. But Calvin did not therefore deny that God could do more than He actually did, but he opposed only such a potentia absoluta, which would not be bound to His being and virtues and thus could do all kinds of contradictory things. Thus conceived, in the sense of Augustine and Thomas, the distinction referred to was also generally accepted by Reformed theologians. And thus understood, this distinction is also to be approved. Pantheism says indeed that God and the world are correlata, and that God has no proper being and life, no proper consciousness and will, in distinction from the world. But thus it hopelessly confuses

everything, and also brings endless confusion in thinking. God and the world, eternity and time, infinity and finiteness, being and becoming, the possible and the actual, the necessary and the accidental, etc. are not words of the same content and of the same meaning. The world is of that nature that our thinking cannot deprive it of the character of contingency. The idea of its non-existence implies not the least logical contradiction. There can be motives why God has called the world into being; the cosmos can in its entirety and in all of its parts be the embodiment of divine thoughts; but it is impossible logically to explain the world's coming into existence without the will of an almighty God. And therefore there remains next to the actual an area of the possible. God is not exhausted in the world, the eternal is not emptied in time, infinity is not identical with the sum of all the finite, omniscience is not co-extensive with the thought content embodied in the creatures. And thus omnipotence is still infinitely highly exalted above the unbounded power which comes to revelation in the world.

Now it cannot be denied that Dr. Bavinck in this lengthy quotation not only furnishes a rather thorough review of Christian thought concerning the subject of the will of God, but also draws some rather clear lines and makes some sharp and very necessary distinctions when he arrives at the point of his own exposition of this subject. Moreover, when he does so, it is also plain that he stands in the tradition of soundly Reformed thinking, thinking which is sharply differentiated from that of Pelagians and Arminians, whom he characterizes as standing in the tradition of nominalism. We call attention especially to the following:

1) Dr. Bavinck strongly emphasizes the sovereignty of the will of God and wants by all means to hold to it.

2) Over against all nominalistic tendencies, Dr. Bavinck is averse to all arbitrariness in the will of God. Yet he wants to insist on the freedom of God's will. He certainly does not want to present the will of God as being under any compulsion.

3) While Bavinck very strongly maintains the freedom of the will of God, yet wants nothing of nominalistic arbitrariness, he does not maintain the freedom of the divine will at the expense of, or in separation from, the other divine perfections. In other words, Bavinck also in this respect maintains the

truth of God's simplicity. There is perfect harmony, for example, between the will of God and the wisdom of God.

4) Especially worthwhile are the distinctions which Dr. Bavinck draws in Section 209 between the will of God's good pleasure, or His decretive will, (voluntas beneplaciti) and the will of God's command, or His preceptive will, (voluntas signi). In this connection we ought to notice, first of all, that Dr. Bavinck surely wants to distinguish these two concepts very clearly, and not to confuse them. In the second place, he maintains here the simplicity of the will of God. This is plain from such statements as: "The voluntas beneplaciti and the voluntas signi therefore also do not conflict with one another, as the ordinary objection has it." Again: "The voluntas beneplaciti and the voluntas signi do not stand directly over against one another, so that God according to the former indeed wills sin and according to the latter does not will sin, according to the former does not will the salvation of all and according to the latter does indeed will it, etc." And again: "Both stand so little over against each other that the voluntas signi is precisely the way in which the voluntas beneplaciti is accomplished." In the third place, we ought to note Bavinck's clear explanation of what is called the voluntas signi, and, in connection with this, his statement that it "is really not the will of God, but only His commandment and prescription that is valid as a rule for our conduct. In the voluntas signi He does not say what He shall do;... but He says therein what we must do.... It is therefore only in a metaphorical sense called voluntas Dei." The views of men like Murray and Heyns, previously referred to in this discussion, cannot be fitted into Bavinck's scheme. In the fourth place -- because our interest is especially in this aspect of the simplicity of the will of God -- we should note this statement of Bavinck: "And vice versa, He wills as little according to the voluntas signi as according to the voluntas beneplaciti that all men, head for head, shall be saved...." Very plainly, therefore, specifically with regard to the issue of the "offer of the gospel" Dr. Bavinck maintains the simplicity of the will of God.

5) An analysis of what Bavinck here presents will show that he finds the focal point of the perfect harmony of the will of God in His holiness. This comes to the fore especially in connection with Bavinck's discussion of the relation between the will of God and sin.

PREACHING, THE CHIEF TASK OF THE CHURCH

-- Prof. Robert D. Decker --

It is well known and universally admitted that preaching has fallen upon rather bad times. The question is being asked: "Is there any need for preaching?" Or, the question is asked: "Is preaching as a means of reaching people for Christ becoming outmoded?" These questions are only a part of a larger question in our times. Today we witness the fact that the institute of the church itself is being questioned. The church, it is said, in its "traditional form" is not needed any longer. Some even go so far as to say that the church in its present form is a hindrance to religion. That there should be criticism raised against preaching and against the church at the same time is not at all surprising. The two, preaching and the church, are inseparably related. There can be no preaching apart from the church and there can be no church apart from the preaching. It is the church which is commissioned by Christ to preach the gospel. By the same token Christ is pleased to use the means of the preaching of the gospel to gather and maintain His church in the world. Hence it is perfectly obvious that if one attacks preaching he must of necessity attack the church as well. That attack upon the church strikes at the very essence of the church. The church, we are told, must be a kind of "healing community" in the midst of the world. The task of the church is defined in terms of fostering peace and justice in the world. The members of the church are urged to get out from behind the stained glass windows and work for the improvement of mankind. No longer is the church considered to be the Body of Jesus Christ, the elect out of every nation. No longer is the church's task, chief task, considered to be the preaching of the gospel in all the world.

Thus it is rather openly alleged (not only in so-called liberal churches, but within churches of the Reformed tradition) that preaching is passe. Preaching, they say, is one means of communicating the gospel but not the only means. Others, many in fact, claim that preaching is not even the best means of communicating the gospel, there are other, more effective methods than preaching. Hence we witness a gradual but deliberate de-emphasis upon the sermon in the worship service of the church. Preaching no longer occupies the central or chief place in the liturgy of many churches. Panel or group discussions, dramatic productions of portions of Scripture, choir and congregational singing,

children's services and youth services, all these and many other liturgical innovations are assuming the place which formerly belonged to the preaching of the Word. This emphasis is even evident in the architecture of the churches of today (Protestant churches). Whereas formerly the pulpit stood in the center at the front of the sanctuary now it is pushed off to the side and the center is occupied by something resembling an altar. At the same time those of us who insist that good, sound, Biblical preaching is the chief task of the church and those of us who engage in that task are becoming an ever smaller minority. This departure from the preaching of the Word is evident too in the seminaries. Even there preaching is de-emphasized. Students enroll in the seminaries who have no intention of ever entering the preaching ministry. Instead they train to become institutional chaplains, pastoral psychologists, or professional theologians. The pastoral or preaching ministry is offered as one option among several for the student to choose.

Well may we ask what is the cause of the present reaction against preaching? After all everyone knows that preaching has always occupied the central place in the worship and life of the church. If the gospel narratives teach us anything at all about the ministry of our Lord they teach us that Jesus considered preaching to be His chief task. He came "preaching the Kingdom of Heaven." Even His miracles were subordinate to the Lord's preaching. Twice He sent out His disciples to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. After His resurrection Christ commissioned the disciples (and in them, the church) to go into all the world baptizing and teaching. What is the Book of Acts if it be not the record of the Apostles and Evangelists going into all the world preaching the gospel in obedience to the charge of the exalted Lord Christ? The Epistles as well teach in unmistakable terms the primacy of preaching in the worship, life, and mission of the church. Subsequent to the Apostolic era the history of God's church teaches the same lesson. Always the church regarded preaching as the chief means of grace. When the church was at her lowest point spiritually it is striking to note that preaching was at a very low ebb. It is also a fact that times of reformation were accompanied by a return to preaching. This was true of the sixteenth century Reformation. Men such as Martin Luther and John Calvin were great preachers and held preaching services several times per week. It was the power of preaching that brought and spread the Reformation and it was the power of preaching that sustained the churches of the

Reformation. Surely no one can deny that preaching has always occupied the central place in the life of God's church. Why then do we witness the decline in the place and power of preaching? Why is there today this questioning of the necessity of preaching at all?

Several answers have been offered to this question. There are those who find the reason for the decline in preaching in a new attitude toward worship itself. These argue that the people should have a greater part in the worship and so responsive readings have been introduced along with time for individual testimonies. This has taken away from the time formerly allotted to the sermon. At the same time there has been a shift in Reformed circles to a much more elaborate and formal liturgy. The minister often enters the sanctuary with the choir as a procession. There is a choral "call to worship" and choral responses to prayers, offerings, and Scripture readings. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the recently retired preacher of Westminster Chapel in London, claims: "It has been illuminating to observe these things; as preaching has declined, these other things have been emphasized; and it has all been done quite deliberately. It is part of this reaction against preaching; and people have felt that it is more dignified to pay this greater attention to ceremonial, and form, and ritual." (Preaching and Preachers, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, p. 16) Another view has it that the rise in "personal work" or "counselling" has, if not caused the decline of preaching, at least contributed significantly toward it. It is urged that due to the stresses and strains of modern life people do not need preaching but individual attention. There are a host of problems which cannot be dealt with from the pulpit but which must be dealt with privately. This, they say, is the only effective and efficient way to cope with these problems. Hence, preaching is de-emphasized and gives way to a "counselling" oriented ministry. Still others, notably Dr. Jay Adams in his little book, Pulpit Speech, find the cause for the decline of preaching in the great dearth of good, proper preaching in our time. In support of his position Adams points to some examples of excellent preachers and preaching which is gladly heard. Adams also sees the obvious fact of the decline in membership of the larger liberal churches and the increase in membership of the more conservative, preaching churches as proof of his contention.

What must we say to these things? Are these reasons correct? Do they really explain the decline of preaching? Certainly we must admit that there is something to be said for each of the above reasons. The new attitude toward

worship with its emphases on congregational participation and elaborate, formal liturgy has certainly contributed to the decline of preaching. The emphasis on counselling is likewise a contributing factor. And, who would care to deny that there is a dearth of good, proper preaching today? But we are convinced that these "reasons" are in reality more symptoms of the problem than causes for it. While each may indeed play a role none is really the reason for the decline of preaching. It is our conviction that the cause for the decline of preaching must be sought in the sphere of the general apostasy and denial of the truth which we have witnessed in recent years. The truths of creation, Adam as a real man, the fall into sin, the miracles, the virgin birth of Christ, limited or definite atonement, the expiatory sacrifice of Christ on the cross, reprobation; all these truths and more are denied among churches which stand historically within the Reformed tradition. Along with the denial of these, goes the denial of the truth of preaching as the chief means of grace and indispensable to salvation.

But we may be even more specific. Among the many denials of the truth is the denial of the inspiration and infallibility of the Holy Scriptures. We believe that when that fundamental truth is denied the truth of preaching must inevitably be denied as well. These two are inseparable. Preaching after all by definition is the authoritative proclamation of the Word of God. It is the exposition of the Scriptures and the application of them to the lives of God's people. This means that the content of preaching must be the Scriptures. Thus when one denies that the Holy Spirit inspired "holy men of God" to write the Word of God and when one therefore, denies the truth that the Scriptures are without error and do "fully contain the Word of God", one has stripped preaching of its content. There is nothing left to preach so why preach at all? Not only that, but when one denies the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture he of necessity denies its authority and that of preaching. Apart from Holy Scripture preaching has no authority, no right to instruct or comfort or admonish God's people. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones puts the matter a bit mildly but rather well nonetheless when he writes in Preaching and Preachers:

"... we are more concerned about certain attitudes in the Church herself which account for the decline in the place of preaching. I suggest that here are some of the main and the leading factors under this heading. I would not hesitate to put in the first position: the loss of belief in the authority of the Scriptures, and a diminution in belief of the Truth. I put this first because I am

sure it is the main factor. If you have no authority, you cannot speak well, you cannot preach. Great preaching always depends upon great themes. Great themes always produce great speaking in any realm, and this is particularly true, of course, in the realm of the Church. While men believed in the Scriptures as the authoritative Word of God and spoke on the basis of that authority you had great preaching. But once that went, and men began to speculate, and to theorize, and to put up hypotheses and so on, the eloquence and the greatness of the spoken word inevitably declined and began to wane. You cannot really deal with speculations and conjectures in the same way as preaching had formerly dealt with the great themes of the Scriptures. But as belief in the great doctrines of the Bible began to go out, and sermons were replaced by ethical addresses and homilies, and moral uplift and sociopolitical talk, it is not surprising that preaching declined. I suggest that that is the first and the greatest cause of this decline." (p. 13)

We believe, therefore, that the denial of the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures is the cause for the decline of preaching. When that truth was denied the truth of preaching was also rejected for it no longer had either content or authority.

We do well to examine anew the teaching of the New Testament concerning this truth of preaching. We wish to know what preaching is, what does it accomplish, what is its authority, and what is its place in the worship and life of the church? It is our prayer that our knowledge of preaching and appreciation for it may be increased so that with renewed zeal and greater dedication we may give ourselves to the task of preaching the riches of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we come to see something of the greatness and wonder of this gift of the ascended Christ to His church we shall have accomplished our goal.

There are several terms used in the New Testament for preaching. The first of these we find in Luke 9:59,60, a passage in which Jesus teaches that preaching takes precedence over absolutely everything, even over burying one's father. The text reads: "And he (Jesus) said unto another, Follow me, But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." The verb "preach" is diangelloo and it means to carry a message through, announce everywhere, through places, through assemblies of men, etc. This same verb is used in Romans 9:17: "...that my name might be declared through all the earth." This term would indicate that preaching is bearing a message first of all. This implies a sender of that message. And, in the second place, that message must be announced everywhere, universally.

The second term, euangelizoo, means to bring good news, announce glad tidings, proclaim glad tidings, or to instruct men concerning the things which pertain to salvation. This verb is used by the Savior in Luke 4:43 where He speaks of the necessity of his preaching in other cities (than the desert places near Capernaum) also. There are numerous references in the Book of Acts. It is the term used by the Apostle Paul in his beautiful confession: "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." (I Corinthians 9:16) We find it also in I Corinthians 15:1,2 where the Apostle speaks of his official labor among the Corinthians: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." Really the emphasis of this term falls upon the fact that preaching is the announcement or proclamation of glad news, good tidings. Again note the plain implication of authority. Preaching is an official announcement.

A third verb, katangelloo, means to announce, declare, promulgate, make known, proclaim publicly. It is translated "declaring", in I Corinthians 2:1,2 where the Apostle describes his work among the Corinthians as follows: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." The emphasis here would seem to be on public proclamation. The Gospel, the Word of God, must be declared publicly.

A fourth term is the verb keerusoo. This is the most common of the words used in the New Testament and for that reason alone the most important. Fundamentally it means to be a herald, to officiate as a herald, to proclaim after the manner of a herald. The herald bore a message. He was sent out to proclaim the official word of the king. Hence with this verb there is always a suggestion of formality, gravity, and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed! Thus with reference to the gospel this verb means to publish, proclaim openly and it refers to the public, authoritative proclamation of the Word of God and matters pertaining to it. It is used in connection with the preaching of John the Baptist: "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:1,2) This same verb is used with reference to Jesus' proclaiming the kingdom of heaven: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and

to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand...And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." (Matthew 4:17,23) Jesus, after His resurrection and just before His ascension, uses this word when He commissions the disciples: "...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15,16) We find it also in Romans 10:15, a passage we shall discuss, the Lord willing, in detail in a future issue: "And how shall they preach except they be sent?" The Apostle Paul uses the term when he writes: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (I Corinthians 1:23,24) The same Apostle uses the word again in his charge to his spiritual son, Timothy: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (II Timothy 4:1,2) Plainly the force of this term is that of an authoritative proclamation. The preacher is the herald, sent by Christ out into the world with the Word of God or the Gospel.

From these four key verbs used in Scripture with reference to preaching we gain a general idea of what preaching is. It may be said that preaching is proclamation. It is not mutual discussion or private conversation among a group of believers. Rather, preaching is public proclamation. Preaching declares publicly or heralds the Word of God. In the second place, preaching heralds the gospel or the Word of God. It proclaims a message and that message is not the word of man's wisdom but it is the Word of God. And that Word of God is glad tidings, good news. In the third place, preaching is authoritative. The one who preaches is sent by Christ, charged by Him to proclaim the message. Preaching, therefore, bears the authority of Jesus Christ. For that reason the true preaching of the Word must be obeyed. Finally, preaching always, and let that be emphasized, always evokes a response. True preaching is never without fruit. Precisely because of truth the Apostle Paul could write: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet

savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." (II Corinthians 2:15-17) When, therefore, we speak in Christ (preach) in sincerity, as of God and in the sight of God, we always triumph! We are pleasing to God both in them that perish and in them that are saved.

That we may determine just exactly what preaching is as the chief task of the church we purpose to examine several passages of the New Testament in a bit of detail. The first of these is I Corinthians 1:17-25 which reads:

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

The Apostle writes: "For Christ sent me not to be a baptizer but to preach the gospel..." That verb "sent" means: to send away, to send off, to order one to go to a place appointed, to commission one. Hence the term refers to an official sending. This is what Scripture means by the "calling" of one to an office in the church. That "sending" or calling includes two main elements. That one is sent by Christ means that he is appointed to that office by Christ. But that sending also includes qualification for that office. In other words, Christ always gives His Spirit to the one whom He appoints to office enabling that one to fulfill the duties of that office. In this sense Christ often spoke of Himself as being "sent of the Father." Christ was appointed by the Father and qualified by the Father to be our Mediator. That, therefore, to which the Apostle refers is his official sending, i.e., his being sent by Jesus Christ (cf. vs. 1) as an Apostle. His commission is not to be a baptizer but to preach the gospel. And note well, Christ is the Sender. Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel, Paul writes.

This, therefore, is how the Apostle conceived of his commission from Christ, the Sender. His chief task was to preach the gospel. Literally he was called to bring or announce the glad news, to proclaim the glad tidings, to instruct men concerning the things which pertain to salvation. This does not preclude his baptizing. Indeed not for according to this very chapter he baptized a few of the Corinthian Christians. But chiefly his mission was to proclaim the glad news. And, the point is that everything else, even baptizing as important and significant as that sacrament may be, must be subservient to the task of preaching. So overcome with this consciousness of his calling to preach was the Apostle that he went so far as to say: "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." (I Corinthians 9:16) Primarily, therefore, the Apostle Paul was sent to Corinth to preach! Whatever he did there in that congregation he had to preach. All of his activities had to be subservient to the chief task of preaching.

This certainly indicates the supreme importance of preaching, one could even say, the critical or crucial importance of preaching. If one understands that the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone, (Ephesians 2:20) he can readily understand as well that what Christ charged the Apostles to do He also charges His church. If we understand that along with the Apostles, evangelists, and prophets the ascended Christ also gave pastors and teachers to the church for the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ then we can also understand that the chief task of the church through its ordained ministers is the preaching of the gospel. THAT is THE work of the minister in God's church. Preaching is his business! For this and for this only Christ sent him, i.e., appointed him to the office of the ministry and qualified him for that office. This means that the minister must be wholly devoted to the work of preaching the gospel. In his capacity as a husband, as a father in his home, in his work, in his recreation and in all the many details of his life he must be devoted to his task as a preacher of the gospel. Nothing may ever stand in the way of his preaching the gospel! NOTHING! Jesus said that not even burying one's father or bidding one's relatives farewell could come before preaching the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:59-62) The chief task of the minister is to preach. He may have many duties which pertain to his office as minister of the Word in a congregation but the one duty which takes precedence is preaching. All of his duties: visiting the sick, comforting the sorrowing, caring for those who

have problems and troubles of one sort or another; as important as these duties may be they must be subservient to his task of preaching. Preaching is THE work of the church and its ministers. Why this is the case we shall point out presently. At this point we must understand that the calling, the official sending of commissioning of the Apostle (and, therefore, of the pastor today) is to proclaim the glad tidings of the gospel.

There are several implications of this truth which ought to be noted. The first is, and this is by far the most significant also for our study, preaching belongs to the official work of minister. Not everyone, therefore, may preach. Only one who is sent which is to say, called by Jesus Christ through His church may preach. But this also means that one who is sent in this way by Christ stands before God's people as the official representative of Christ. He comes in the name of and by the authority of Jesus Christ. He comes with the Word of Christ and that Word must be honored and obeyed. In the second place, preaching is proclamation. It is the official announcement and public declaration of the testimony of God. This means that informal discussion of a portion of the Word of God by a group of believers or a panel discussion or a dialogue may not be substituted for the preaching of the gospel. Nor may preaching be replaced by dramatic productions or by singing or by anything else. Preaching is absolutely necessary simply because it belongs to the official task of the church and its ministers. Christ sends the minister to preach the Word. To fail is to be disobedient to Christ Himself.

The Apostle continues in verse seventeen by describing how he preached or rather how Christ sent him to preach. Christ sent him to preach: "...not with (in) wisdom of words..." The negative purpose is: "...lest the cross of Christ would be made of none effect." Notice in general that this is part of the Apostle's commission. He is sent to preach the gospel in a specific way and that way is: "not with (in) wisdom of word." This is highly necessary for that wisdom of word or words as some manuscripts have it would make the cross of Christ of none effect. What this means is that the preacher must preach but he is called to preach not in wisdom of word. If he does in fact preach in wisdom of words he makes the cross of Christ of no effect.

Precisely what is meant by this "wisdom of word" is explained in chapter two of this Epistle, the first five verses, where the Apostle describes how he did his preaching among the Corinthians. There we read:

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Paul did not come to them with "distinguished eloquence" by the world's standards. Gerhard Delling states it nicely when he writes: "Paul did not proclaim God's act in Christ...after the manner of outstanding eloquence and wisdom." (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, G. Friedrich, editor, vol. VIII, p. 524) Thus the Apostle in his preaching stood in stark contrast to the teachers of wisdom in Corinth! The Apostle further explains in verses four and five: "And my word and my preaching was not with persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power in order that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." The wisdom, therefore, of which Paul is speaking is the wisdom of men or of the world according to chapter one. With that wisdom Paul did not preach. Not with the enticing words or persuasive speech of that wisdom of man did he preach. That would cause their faith to be grounded in the wisdom of men and not in God. Rather he was with them in weakness, fear, and much trembling. In this way the power of the Spirit was manifest in the Apostle and thus he was determined to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

This is what the Apostle means with the "not with wisdom of word" of chapter one verse seventeen. It is the worldly wisdom of man's word. It is the "wisdom of the wise" and the "understanding of the prudent" (vs. 19) and "the wisdom of this world." (vs. 20) The Apostle did not preach in the sphere of (en plus the dative in the original) the wisdom of word. His preaching remained outside of that sphere. In other words in his preaching the Apostle did not accomodate himself to the wisdom of men. Paul did not employ their persuasive eloquence. He could not for the gospel which Paul preached stands diametrically opposed to the wisdom of this world. It contradicts and it denies the wisdom of this world. Thus one can readily see that if the Apostle had spoken in the sphere of the wisdom of words he would have made the cross of no effect. That word, "of no effect," literally means to empty or make empty, to make void, i.e., deprive of force, render vain, useless, or of no effect. That

is strong language indeed! To preach in the sphere of the wisdom of word is to make the cross of Christ empty or void, vain and useless and in this sense of no effect. That kind of preaching strikes at the very heart of the gospel, the cross of Christ. If preaching is to do anything it must present the cross of Christ in all of its saving, dynamic, divine power. Preaching in the wisdom of word does not do this. It makes the cross void. No wonder, then, that Christ commissioned Paul to preach the gospel not in wisdom of word!

The Apostle goes on to write: "For the word (not preaching as the Authorized Version has it) of the cross is to them who are perishing, foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (translation mine, R.D.) With these words Scripture gives the ground or reason for the preceeding. Christ sent the Apostle to preach the gospel not in wisdom of word lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect because the word of the cross is to those who are perishing, foolishness, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God. That "word of the cross" is a descriptive genitive or genitive of content. The idea is that this is the word which speaks of the cross. The cross is the content of that word. This "word of the cross" stands in direct contrast to the "wisdom of word" of the preceding verse. That is the wisdom of this world and over against that wisdom is the word of the cross. We must also understand that that "word of the cross" which has as its sole content the cross, is to be distinguished from the preaching of the word. The Apostle does not say as the King James Version puts it, "the preaching of the cross." Preaching is the means by which the word of the cross is conveyed. Thus the word of the cross is really the content of the preaching. It is that which is proclaimed. The cross of course, stands for Christ and His expiatory sacrifice, the atonement which He made for the sake of the elect, His people; or "them who are being saved." This is the word which the Apostle was sent by Christ to preach. The Word of the cross. Nothing less and nothing more must be preached. The Apostle and every sent preacher for that matter, must preach the cross. That is the very heart of the Scriptures. Everything in the Scriptures has to do with the cross of Christ. Preaching the cross implies therefore that one preaches sin, guilt as a result of sin and the fall, and total depravity. It implies that one preaches the only way out, the sovereign grace of God revealed in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

That word of the cross which is conveyed by means of the preaching has a twofold effect. "To them who are perishing." i.e., consigned to eternal misery and therefore on the path to destruction, to these whom Scripture calls: un-

believers, the ungodly, or the reprobate the word of the cross is foolishness. The term used in the Greek is mooria, which means utter folly or even silliness. Thus they react to the word of the cross when it is preached to them. They consider that word to be nonsense and an insult to their intelligence. And, you understand, that is not because the word of the cross is actually foolishness. This is the effect which that word of the cross produces in "those who are perishing." Thus they react in unbelief and rebellion against the word of the cross and they want nothing to do with that "foolishness." But, "to those who are being saved," or "us," Paul, the Corinthian Christians and the children of God in every age it is the power of God, the dynamic power of God. That Word of the cross is power indeed! It is the power to forgive guilt-ridden sinners, to call from darkness into the light of God's fellowship, to give faith, to sanctify, to preserve and glorify the saints. That is all the power of God which is the word of the cross. It is that word of the cross which the Apostle was sent by Christ to preach. And, Christ commissions His Church today to preach that word and that word of the cross has the same twofold effect, in them that are perishing and in them who are being saved. It is God's almighty, sovereign power.

The Apostle continues in verse nineteen: "For it has been written, I shall destroy the wisdom of the wise and I shall bring to nothing (make void, of no effect, frustrate) the understanding of the learned ones." (translation mine, R.D.) The Apostle, having made the point that the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God, now substantiates that truth by quoting from the Old Testament Scriptures, Isaiah 29:14. In that passage God Himself says that He will destroy the wisdom of the wise and make of no effect the understanding of the learned. Thus it must be that the Word of the cross which Christ sent the Apostles (and which He sends the church today) to preach is foolishness to them that perish. These latter are the wise, the learned whose wisdom God destroys and whose understanding God makes of no effect.

Next with a series of rhetorical questions the Apostle reinforces his argument: "Where is the wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this world? Did not God make foolish the wisdom of the world?" The answer to these questions is obvious. Where is the wise? The answer is: he is not. Where is the Scribe? Again, he is not. Where is the Disputer of this world? He is not. There is a definite note of triumph here! Paul means to say that all these: the wise, the scribe, the disputer of this world have had absolutely

no effect. The conclusion is perfectly evident: "Did not God make foolish the wisdom of the world?" He surely did. The wisdom of this world has been made void and utterly useless by God.

In the succeeding verses (21-25) Paul explains just exactly how this came about, this total destruction of the wisdom of this world. Verse twenty-one reads: "For seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world through (its) wisdom did not know God, it has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (translation mine, R.D.) The "epeidee gar" with which the verse begins is causal. What we have here, therefore, is proof of the fact that God made foolish the wisdom of this world, destroyed the wisdom of the wise, frustrated the understanding of the learned. The text speaks of both the wisdom of God and His good pleasure. These two may be distinguished but they are nonetheless very closely related. In His unsearchable wisdom God has adapted all things in His counsel to the attainment of the highest purpose which is the glory of His Name. Thus all things: in heaven and on earth, good and bad, great and small, individually and collectively work together to attain God's purpose. And God's purpose is the manifestation of His glory in the saving of His elect in Christ Jesus.

In that wisdom of God the world by its wisdom knew not God. For all of its learning and knowledge the world by its wisdom cannot know God. How could it? Scripture describes the wisdom of this world in these terms: "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish." (James 3:15) The wisdom of the world does not come from above. i.e., it does not have its source in God. It comes from beneath, from the devil and sin. Thus it is characterized as: earthly, sensual, and devilish. It is not difficult to understand that this wisdom cannot know God. And that, the fact that the world by its wisdom cannot know God, is in the wisdom of God. Jesus spoke of this very truth when He thanked the Father for hiding the things of the kingdom from the wise and prudent and revealing them to babes. In this connection Christ said: "...even so Father for thus it seemed good in thy sight." (Matthew 11:25,26) In other words this is God's good pleasure! God sovereignly hides these things from the wise and prudent of this world and reveals them to the humble babes of His kingdom. The fact that the world does not know God by its wisdom serves in the wisdom of God the attainment of His eternal purpose in Christ.

On the other hand, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save

those who believe. It simply pleased God. This is His sovereign and free good pleasure. God determined to save those who believe. And those who believe are not saved because they believe. That is not the point of the text at all. God means to emphasize that the saved are believers. Those who believe in this context are the "saved" of verse eighteen of the "called" of verse twenty-four, in other words they are the elect of God. God saves them by means of the foolishness of preaching. By that means God saves believers. God doesn't save by disputation or all kinds of worldly wisdom or learning. He saves by the foolishness of preaching. To the world that is sheer foolishness. (cf. vs. 18) But by that foolishness God saves His people.

This is precisely why preaching is both mandatory and indispensable for the church. If the church ceases to preach it loses everything! The Church must preach! It must simply because God is pleased to save believers by means of the preaching. The life of the church as the organism of the Body of Christ is sustained by means of the preaching of the word. By means of the preaching God's people are called to the consciousness of faith, turned from sin to the living God, brought to the consciousness of their justification, sanctified, preserved in the world unto everlasting life and glory. If there be no preaching none of these blessings of salvation are possible. Therefore, too, there may be no substitution for preaching: no elaborate liturgy with all kinds of choral responses and responsive readings may take ^{its} place, no dramatic productions, no Bible discussions may replace either in part or in whole the preaching of the Word. Again, the church must preach simply because it pleases God to save His people by that "foolishness." We must not pretend to be wiser than God by substituting something else for preaching!

Two factors must be noted in this connection. By proclamation God saves "those who believe" or "the ones believing." The ones saved, therefore, are characterized by believing, by faith. The Word of the cross (vs. 18, the content of the preaching) conveyed by preaching appeals not to reason or the intellect or the emotions but to faith. This is not to say that faith is not reasonable. It is. But the point is that the word of the cross cannot be logically demonstrated. It is either believed or rejected. Note too, that we have a second term for preaching, keerugma, in this verse. This word means that which is promulgated by a herald, the message or proclamation by heralds of God or Christ. Preaching, therefore, is heralding the word of the cross. This certainly emphasizes the fact that it is official. The herald is commissioned

to proclaim the official announcement. Thus the preacher is ordained by Christ ("sent", vs. 17) and charged by Christ to proclaim the message which in this context is the word of the cross (vs. 18) or "Christ crucified" (vs. 23).

Continuing in verse twenty-two the Apostle explains what the world by its wisdom wants: "For the Jews ask for signs, and the Greeks seek wisdom." Hence, neither wanted the word of the cross or Christ crucified. The Jews often asked Jesus for signs. In Matthew 12:38, ff. the Scribes and Pharisees asked the Lord for a sign. Jesus' response was that: "an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; but there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas." (vss. 39,ff.) Their asking for a sign was plain evidence of their rejection of Jesus' preaching for in verse forty-one the Lord says that the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here! That they were not at all sincere in asking for signs is also evident from Matthew 16:1 where Scripture says that they tempted Jesus in desiring a sign from heaven. Jesus repeats His answer: "a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall be no sign given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas." (In this connection cf. also John 6) The Greeks on the other hand seek after wisdom. They wanted rational proof for everything and they "loved to hear some new thing." (Acts 17) But in all their seeking of wisdom they mocked at and rejected the gospel of Jesus and the resurrection!

But, writes Paul in verse twenty-three, in sharp contrast to the Jews who ask for signs and the Greeks who seek after wisdom, we preach Christ crucified. We preach, we do not show signs and we do not dispute or discuss with persuasive words of man's wisdom, we preach, i.e., we herald (keerussoo), cf. comments on this verb above in the introduction and in connection with verse twenty-one.)

And we preach, "Christ crucified!" Here is the content of the preaching, the essence of the gospel message and it is really the same as the "word of the cross" of verse eighteen. This is the gospel, Christ crucified. All preaching must be Christ crucified or it is not preaching at all. The name, Christ, is the official name of the Savior and signifies the fact that He is the Anointed of God. He is the eternal, only begotten Son of God Who is anointed to be our Prophet Who perfectly reveals the will of God to us. He is our Priest Who brought the perfect sacrifice of Himself for the sin of the elect and Who appears in the presence of God for us. And Christ is our King Who rules His people graciously by His Word and Spirit and Who rules over all things by His

sovereign power. And He is Christ crucified. That "crucified" is the perfect passive participle in the Greek and is literally translated, "having been crucified." The force of the perfect tense is that Christ once having been crucified stands before us always as the crucified One. This and only this, nothing more and nothing less, Christ having been crucified is the message heralded by the foolishness of preaching!

Christ having been crucified means that the eternal Son of God in our flesh suffered and died under the curse of God's wrath and thus brought atonement for all of God's elect. This implies the fall of the race into sin and the guilt and depravity of the race. It implies the Justice of God which must be satisfied. Nothing less than the sacrifice of the Son of God would suffice. Christ having been crucified implies sovereign grace and unconditional predestination. God blessed us and predestinated us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world and that is realized in the crucifixion of Christ. Christ crucified implies the end to all work righteousness. Salvation cannot be earned; its only possibility lies in Christ having been crucified in the heart of the Word of God and the content of preaching.

To the Jews who ask for signs Christ having been crucified is a stumbling block (vs. 23). That stumbling block is an impediment in one's way causing him to fall. Scripture speaks of the same thing in I Peter 2:8. In that passage Christ is called the chief cornerstone which God lays in Sion. But to the disobedient He is a Stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. The same term is used in both passages, skandalon. Only Peter adds: "whereunto they were also appointed." God appointed them to stumble over Christ in unbelief and disobedience. Thus they stand in stark contrast with those who believe and to whom Christ is precious and who are the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, and the holy nation that they should show forth the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. (vs. 9) Thus also we must understand our text. To the Jews, i.e., the unbelieving Jews who ask for signs, Christ having been crucified is a stumbling block. And this is precisely God's intention that they should stumble over Christ crucified into destruction. This is one effect of Christ having been crucified. He causes unbelief to stumble. They are offended at Christ; He doesn't fit into their Messianic expectations. They want a Christ but not the Christ having been crucified. Unto this they were appointed. Preaching Christ having been crucified produces this effect! The Apostle continues: "and to the Greeks foolishness." To the unbelieving Greeks who seek after wisdom Christ having been crucified is foolishness, sheer folly, silliness. They in all their wisdom are offended at Christ crucified and reject Him as foolishness.

In verse twenty-four we have the contrast, the positive effect of the preaching of Christ having been crucified. But, in distinction from the Jews who ask for signs and the Greeks who seek after wisdom and to whom Christ is the stumbling block and foolishness, to the called both Jews and Greeks He is Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God! "The ones called" are the same as "those who believe" of verse twenty-one and the "saved" of verse eighteen. These are the ones predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:3, ff.), the chosen generation of God's people (I Peter 2:9). These are the "His people" whom Jesus saved from their sins (Matthew 1:21). They are the "sheep" for whom the Good Shepherd laid down His life (John 10). They are the regenerated ones by the Holy Spirit, called out of darkness into the light of God's fellowship. To them God has given faith uniting them to Christ in Whom are all the blessings of salvation. They are justified, forgiven, adopted, and given the right to everlasting life and glory. They are the sanctified, preserved, presently to be glorified saints. The called they are, both Jews and Greeks, the called out of every nation.

To them Christ having been crucified is Christ the power and the wisdom of God. Christ crucified is the power of God, the power that forgives sin, transforms from darkness into light, saves from death and hell and translates into glory. That is power! Dynamic, saving power of grace! Christ having been crucified, that is not earthly power, but heavenly, divine, wonderworking power! And Christ having been crucified is the highest manifestation of the wisdom of God. God's purpose is the glory of His name through the saving of His people in Christ. And God in His wisdom determined the way of the cross, "Christ having been crucified," as the highest and best way to reach that purpose. Thus Christ having been crucified is the power and the wisdom of God!

Now then Paul was sent to preach "the word of the cross" or "Christ having been crucified." The preaching of Christ having been crucified has a double effect: it is a stumbling block to the unbelieving Jews who ask for signs and foolishness to the Greeks who seek after wisdom, but to the called, both Jew and Greek it is Christ the power and the wisdom of God! Thus by preaching God destroys the wisdom of this world and makes it of no effect and by preaching God saves His people. Can there be any doubt but that preaching, therefore, must be the chief task of the Church? How can there be salvation without it? Why is this true? Simply because it pleases God by the foolishness of preaching

to save them that believe! That is God's wisdom and that is His power.

We shall continue this discussion of preaching from the point of view of several other passages in succeeding issues of the Journal, the Lord willing.

BOOK REVIEW

GLORIOUS IS THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT, By Robert K. Churchill; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1976; 74 pp., \$2.50 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

The purpose of this addition to the growing literature on the baptism of the Spirit is stated in the Preface:

I have attempted, in this work, to present the larger and I believe more Scriptural view (of the baptism of the Holy Spirit). In so doing I have had to enter areas in which, to my knowledge, very little has been written. From the viewpoint of the whole counsel of God, I have tried to answer such questions as: What is the baptism, and what is the anointing of the Spirit? What is the scope of Pentecost? How is the baptism of the Spirit related to Christ? How are the three Persons of the Godhead related to the Spirit's baptism? What is the unpardonable sin? and What was the Spirit of God sent to accomplish?

The book is primarily intended to refute modern neo-Pentecostalism; but it does this by way of an emphasis on the positive fruits of the Spirit. In connection with this emphasis, a large number of different subjects are briefly treated. Among these many subjects is also a treatment of the whole idea of baptism and the Biblical arguments for infant baptism.

The weakness of the book is its lack of organization. The many different subjects are not treated in any unified way so that one theme is consistently developed. Nevertheless, this book is recommended to our readers because it provides insight into some questions, related to the general subject of baptism of the Spirit, but not often treated.

BOOK REVIEW

THE JOURNAL OF PASTORAL PRACTICE (A Professional Periodical for Ministers), Jay E. Adams, Editor-in-chief; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company; 143 pp., \$3.50 (Kivar binding) (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

This is a new venture in the field of publishing, and it is probably good to give our readers some general information concerning this venture before we review the book. Some of this necessary information can be gleaned from an introductory editorial written by Jay Adams:

The Journal of Pastoral Practice is a new venture in the history of American Christianity. Unthinkable as it may seem, the oldest institutionalized profession in the United States -- the ministry -- has no professional journal! It is our purpose to remedy this situation.

. . . . In the Journal of Pastoral Practice, while adhering to scholarly standards, authors will be encouraged to make every effort to be intensely practical. They also will be urged to write in everyday English, leaving the esoteric jargon of their disciplines for other endeavors. Each editor has been chosen not only because of his expertise in the fields that he covers, but also because of his concern for practicality.

The Institute of Pastoral Studies, a part of the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation, has launched this effort because we want to serve you in a way that will reflect the concerns that you must face in the pastorate as you seek to shepherd God's flock. Therefore, we shall welcome reactions, suggestions and all ideas that you may care to share concerning improvements or subjects that might be considered.

It is our present intention to publish the Journal at least twice during 1977. Later we plan to expand it to a quarterly or possibly a bi-monthly. Each volume will be sold separately with back copies available. It is hoped to distribute the Journal in Christian bookstores everywhere. If a bookstore near you does not carry the Journal, it may be purchased through Christian Study Services, 1790 E. Willow Grove Ave., Laverock, Pennsylvania 19118, or from the publisher.

The Journal is divided into different sections, each with its own editor. Paul Settle edits "Christian Education"; Howard A. Eyrich edits "Counseling"; D. Clair Davis edits "Evangelism"; Bob Den Dulk edits "Management and Finances"; Bob Smith edits "Medicine and Health"; Milton Fisher edits "Missions"; Wesley Walters edits "Para Christianity"; James M. Baird edits "Pastoral Word"; and Jay Adams edits "Preaching". There is also a section of book reviews.

It is a bit early to evaluate this new venture. Time will tell whether this new Journal will be worth its rather steep price. The present (and first) issue has too many brief articles in it which are of almost no help and significance. There are however, some fairly good articles also. There is a rather good chapter on decision-making. The section on medicine and health, especially the chapter on Illness and a Life View, is good. The section on Para-christianity has a good section on the latest techniques of mormon proselytizing. Jay Adams has a section on preaching in which he emphasizes the importance of purpose in preaching.

A Journal of this kind could be extremely valuable, and we hope that this Journal becomes that as it develops. It would be wise, I think, for all our readers who are pastors especially to subscribe to the Journal at least for a year so that future issues can be evaluated. This should be done before the venture is written off, or before any particular suggestions are made to improve it.

BOOK REVIEW

SOLI DEO GLORIA, Essays in Reformed Theology (Festschrift for John H. Gerstner), edited by R.C. Sproul; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1976; 210 pp., \$6.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

Usually I have found Festschriften to be rather boring and insignificant books. This one is an exception to that rule. John H. Gerstner, Jr., in whose honor this book was prepared, is professor of Church History in the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. His colleagues and friends have prepared a worthwhile and excellent book which, on the whole, fulfills the promise of the subtitle: Essays in Reformed Theology.

It is impossible to give a thorough review of a book with such a diversity of contents. The best we can do is give the reader some brief idea of the chapters and hope that this will be sufficient stimulation to prompt our readers to buy the book and peruse its contents.

Cornelius Van Til, in a chapter entitled: Calvin the Controversialist, develops the idea that Calvin set forth, over against all Roman Catholicism, the Scriptures as the basis for Christian thought. J.I. Packer has an excellent chapter on the doctrine of justification as held by the Reformers. P.E. Hughes's chapter on God's sovereignty is weak on the question of God's control of sin. Three of the five points of Calvinism are treated. The chapter on total depravity is rather philosophical, but sound. John Murray writes strongly on irresistible grace. The editor, R.C. Sproul, has a good chapter on double predestination in which he passingly criticizes Berkouwer for denying reprobation. J.W. Montgomery has an interesting evaluation of the Lutheran theologian Chemnitz and his critique of the Council of Trent. In a chapter on inspiration, Roger Nicoll pleads for the use of the deductive and inductive method within the framework of Scripture to prove its infallibility. There are worthwhile chapters on Psalm 12 and the power of the lie, on Charles Hodge's life and theology which demonstrates that the Princeton theologians did not ignore piety in their pursuit of theological purity, the idea of the covenant in Jonathan Edwards, the Puritan idea of the Sabbath, the authority of preaching, and a rather fascinating criticism of the spiritual bankruptcy of modern society.

Though some chapters are better and more significant than others, all are worth reading. We recommend the book.

BOOK REVIEW

WHAT ABOUT CONTINUING REVELATIONS AND MIRACLES IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TODAY?

A Study of the Doctrine of the Sufficiency of Scripture, by Robert L. Reymond; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1977; 64 pp/. \$1.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

This criticism of various aspects of Neo-Pentacostalism (particularly tongues-speaking and miracles) is not an easy book to read. For one thing it has a very complicated sentence structure in much of it; for another thing, it is filled with much transliterated Greek. While, therefore, it is not of particular help to many who are unacquainted with the original languages of Scripture, it can be read with some profit by ministers of the gospel.

Both the strength and the weakness of the book are in the exegesis. The author gives much attention to the exegesis of the pertinent passages of Scripture -- especially those connected with the matter of tongues-speaking. This makes it worthwhile. But his over-reaction to tongues-speaking often leads him into faulty exegesis. To cite but one illustration: the author concludes that the promise of the Spirit of truth made by Jesus on the eve of His death was a promise limited to the apostles. It was, of course, made directly to them; but it cannot be denied that the promise was made to the Church of the New Dispensation.

The author interprets I Corinthians 14 as referring to languages which were spoken in that day although they were not known by the ones who spoke them. In an interesting way he also interprets I Corinthians 13 to prove that tongues-speaking has ceased.

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