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MEDITATION

I Have Refrained My Feet

I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

Ps. 119:101.

Blessed Word of God!

That, and the believer's delight in it, expresses in brief the main theme of this particular section of the psalm.

There is a good deal of similarity, and an intimate relation between this section and the preceding one.

Both extol the Word of God because of its perfection: "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad."

Yet, there is also a rather clear distinction.

In the preceding passage the psalmist considered that Word of God as it is revealed to us, as such, rather objectively, as it is settled in the heavens, as it is faithful and enduring unto all generations, as all things are ordained by it, and continue to be and to operate as God's servants according to it, and as, in its saving sense and by its saving power, it quickened the poet.

But in the present section that same perfection of the Word of God is the object of the poet's praise and adoration, this time with the emphasis on the attitude of the psalmist towards it, and his love of that Word of Jehovah. "Oh how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." That is his theme. He tasted the goodness and perfection and salutary effect of that law. It was the means through which God called him unto wisdom and knowledge, so that he is wiser than all his enemies, and has more understanding than all his teachers; and because he keeps that law, he has more understanding even than the ancients. Since God has taught him, His words have become exceeding sweet to his taste, sweeter than honey to his mouth.

Therefore he hates every false way, every way that is not in accord with the Word of God.

He realizes, by experience, the preciousness of God's law.

He would, therefore, keep it, continue to live in its sphere.

And in order to continue therein, and to experience the goodness of that Word of Jehovah, he walked carefully.

Circumspectly he watched his steps.

From every evil way he refrained his feet.

That he might keep God's Word which was blessed to him above all things.

Precious Word of the Lord!

Glorious testimony!

I have refrained my feet from every evil way!

Yet, the very form of this testimony is characteristic of the believer in this present world, and beset by constant temptation; of the believer, moreover, as he has, indeed, a small beginning of the new obedience, and a sincere delight in the precepts of his God, but in whose members are the motions of sin actively engaged to lead him astray from the way of righteousness.

For the positive meaning of the words of the psalmist, is, no doubt, that he has walked in the way of Jehovah's commandments, in obedience to the law of the Lord which he loved. Yet, he does not express it that way. On the contrary, he suggests that the keeping of God's way has been a constant struggle, a battle in which it was required that he be continually on the alert, lest he be seduced into paths of sin and corruption; a battle, moreover, in which he felt a constant urge within him to surrender to the enemy, so that he had to put a restraint on his own members lest they would lead him astray. . . .

I have refrained my feet from every evil way!

I have a delight in the law of God according to the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me

into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members!

That was the experience of the poet.

And as he thus walked in the midst of the world, desirous to walk in the way of the Lord, he found that it was a constant struggle to keep from error and backsliding. Walking in the way of the Word of God, he found that a thousand other roads zigzagged in every direction across his path, confusing his mind as to the right direction, tempting him to depart from the way of truth and righteousness. And, what is more, he experienced that the law of sin which was in his members so affected him that his feet were inclined to slip into those deviating paths, attracted by the seductive smoothness and ease with which one might appear to walk therein, and the pleasures of sin to which they promised to direct him.

He had kept the way of God's commandments, but only through a hard and constant struggle!

And another way there is not for the believer in this world.

He must needs live in constant antithesis to himself, that is to his flesh, as well as to the world, if he would be faithful even unto the end.

He cannot serve God and Mammon, but neither can he simply serve God without having anything to do with Mammon. He must love the One and hate the other!

As he directs his feet in the way of righteousness in this world, ways of evil cross his path at every step. From every direction "the world" shouts at him that he walks in the wrong direction, beckons him to change his way and to follow after the vain philosophy of man, after the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. It exhibits to him the benefits and pleasures that are to be found and enjoyed in the ways of sin. It offers him glory and honor, the praise of men, power and might, a position of influence, wealth and luxury, the pleasures and treasures of sin for a season, if only he will depart from the way of uprightness and yield to the service of sin. Or it threatens him with its fury and wrath. It makes the gate very narrow and the path very strait that leads to life. It fills him with reproach and shame, deprives him of a name and position in the world, makes his place impossible, kills him all the day long. . . .

Every evil way is presented in its most attractive appearance, while the way of God's precepts is steep and rugged and well-nigh impassable!

And from within operates the flesh, inducing his feet to depart from the way of God's precepts, and to slip into the ways of iniquity.

The motions of sin in his members operate to darken his understanding so that he cannot clearly discern the way of light and truth, and distinguish it sharply from the ways of darkness and the lie, and inducing him to approve of the latter and to follow after the

false and vain philosophy of the world. They affect his desires so that he is attracted by the pleasures and treasures of corruption, and he would strive to obtain his will, that he may prefer the service of Mammon, and to enjoy them. They struggle to affect and control and yield his members once more to the service of unrighteousness. They are the foe within the gates, allying himself with the enemy from without.

And yet, there is another law in his inward man.

The law of grace!

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus!

And according to that other law, he hates every false way, and has a delight in the law of God.

And that other law, that new principle of life controls his heart, and has dominion. No, there are no two *principles* within him, the law of sin and death, and the law of the Spirit of life. He is no dual personality, both good and evil. He does not live in two radically different spheres, that of light and that of darkness. He is a new creature. He is free. He is delivered from the law of sin and death. The law of sin may operate in his members: it does not dominate his heart. . . .

Old things are passed away!

No longer is he a slave of sin, chained with a thousand shackles from within, acknowledging corruption as his master and lord.

And so, though he is surrounded by powers of darkness that would lead him astray, he keeps the way of God's precepts.

Though often he may appear to suffer defeat, he has the victory!

He restrains his feet!

Wonderful testimony!

Blessed consciousness!

For blessed is the man that is able to say: I have refrained my feet from every evil way!

Blessed is he, who every day, as another stretch of the way is finished, and another stage of the spiritual battle is over, and he lays down his weary head to rest, may testify: I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith!

I have refrained my feet!

For, let us note that this is the position of the psalmist as he expresses it in this confession. He does not look forward to the future, as he did in the ninety-third verse of this same psalm; he looks back upon the way travelled. He does not make a vow that he will keep the precepts of the Lord, or express confidence that he will continue in the way of Jehovah, as he did there; he declares what thus far he had done: he had fought the battle and won.

And that is blessedness indeed!

Blessedness, mark you well, not because he is glory-

ing in his own accomplishments, and expects others to glory with him in the work of man. Such is the boast of the world, and it is vain and wretched precisely because God is not in it. Not so the poet. It is not of his own power and goodness and faithfulness that he speaks. He is extolling the Word of God. That Word of God he loves. It is sweet to his taste. In it he has his delight. To know that Word, to appropriate it, to trust in it, to keep it, is his delight. And he understands clearly that this is all of grace. It is not of himself that he loves the law of Jehovah. The very inclination of his flesh, the motions of sin that are in his members, the fact that his feet are always inclined to slip into the ways of evil, remind him constantly of the truth that by nature he is only an enemy of God, dead in trespasses and sin, standing in enmity against God and against His precepts, ignorant and foolish, and loving the darkness rather than the light. But the Word of Jehovah quickened him. . . .

And that he now loves the law of the Lord is all of grace!

Of grace it is, too, that he refrained his feet from every evil way! That he is conscious of this, is evident also from the following verse: "I have not departed from thy judgments: *for thou hast taught me!*"

Not his own work, but God's work in and through him; not his own goodness, but God's grace; not his own faithfulness, but God's unchangeable Word he extols.

It is to him a manifestation of grace, of the marvelous power and efficacy of the Word of God, the same Word that quickened him, that he refrained his feet from every evil way!

And note the all-comprehensiveness of the statement: from *every* evil way.

O, the poet does not intend to speak with the boast of the perfectionist. The meaning of his declaration is not that day by day, and week after week, and year after year, he had lived without ever committing sin, and that he had never felt the need of God's forgiving mercy. He does not mean that he never stumbled in the way. For "who shall understand his errors?" That frequently he did what he would not was the experience of the poet as it was of Paul, and as it is of every child of God in this world.

But he had fought the battle!

And he had not slipped into any evil way *so as to live in it*. When he stumbled he rose again. When he departed he returned. When evil tempted him he hated it. When he sinned he confessed and found mercy and forgiveness. Always he had refrained his feet from walking in any evil way.

Every evil way he had hated.

The statement allows for no exceptions. Nor could it. For it is not possible that we refrain our feet from

some sins, while we walk in others. Nor does the love of God and of His law make such a distinction. If that love is in our hearts, we hate sin radically, hate it because it is sin, and the result will be that we refrain our feet from *every* evil way. And although believers, even the very holiest of them, have but a small beginning of the new obedience, this beginning is a *principle*, and by it they are so governed that it is their delight to walk, not only according to some, but according to all God's commandments!

And in the way of His commandments there is joy and peace, fellowship with God. . . .

In that way there are pleasures for evermore!

Walking in that way, we taste that the Lord is good!

Blessed assurance!

Glorious fruit!

That I might keep thy word!

To refrain our feet from every evil way is the indispensable requisite unto the keeping of the Word of God, and the latter is the blessed fruit that is attainable only in the way of the former.

Thus I would understand the declaration of the psalmist.

He does not, in this second part of the verse, merely declare positively what he had already declared negatively in the first part, as if he meant to say: I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might obey thy commandments. Rather does he conceive of the whole Word of God in all its riches and power of salvation and promise of life and blessing, and not simply from its aspect of Jehovah's commandment to him. For that reason, he employs the widest term, and speaks simply of the Word of God. That Word he loves. It is the Word of salvation, of forgiveness, of redemption, of fellowship with the living God, of grace and mercy and eternal life.

That Word he would keep, continue to hear, to believe, to appropriate.

In the sphere of that Word of life and salvation, he would fain continue to live; upon its blessed hope he would continue to lay hold.

And this strong desire motivated him in the battle against sin.

For clearly he realized that in the way of sin that blessed Word of salvation and glory and fellowship with God would forsake him.

In the way of sanctification we lay hold on the Word of life!

Teach us, O Lord, to refrain our feet, that we may keep Thy Word!

And rejoice in Thy salvation!

H. H.

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EDITORIALS

The Text of a Complaint

How superficially they quote Calvin, who try to make him say, as do the complainants, that God sincerely seeks and wills the salvation of all men; or that Scripture teaches the contradiction that, on the one hand God wills that all men shall be saved, and on the other hand wills the salvation of the elect; is evident to all that are acquainted with the works of the reformer.

Fact is, and the fact is striking indeed, that the very same passages from Holy Writ to which the complainants appeal in support of their position that God sincerely seeks the salvation of all men, were quoted against Calvin by the opponents of his doctrine of predestination and particular grace, as they were quoted against Augustine before him.

But Calvin does not admit that these passages teach a certain general grace, nor that they contradict, or even apparently contradict the current teaching of the Bible that God saves and wills to save only the elect. On the contrary, he always seeks to explain them in the light of the doctrine of predestination, and to show that they are in harmony with this doctrine.

Defending the doctrine of sovereign reprobation, Calvin explains some of these texts which the opponents of this doctrine are wont to quote to disprove it. Writes he, Inst. III, 24, 15 (we translate from the Latin):

"But since a few passages of Scripture are wont to be adduced, in which God seems to deny that it is caused by his ordinance that the wicked perish, except in so far that, ignoring his loud calling, they willingly procure death unto themselves, let us by explaining these texts briefly demonstrate that they do not stand in opposition to the sentiments expressed above (i.e. concerning reprobation, H.H.). The place in Ezekiel is adduced, where it is said that God does not desire (will, nolit) the death of the wicked, but rather that he should turn and live. If one will extend this to the whole human race, what may be the reason why he does not stir up to repentance many whose minds are more flexible to obedience than of those who harden themselves more and more against his repeated invitations? According to Christ's own testimony, the preaching of the gospel and the miracles would have produced more fruit with the Ninevites and Sodomites than in Judea. How come, then, if God wills all to be saved, that he does not open the door of repentance to those wretched ones that would be more ready to receive his grace? From this we see that this place

is violently distorted, if the will of God of which the prophet speaks is presented as opposed to his eternal counsel by which he distinguished the elect from the reprobate. Now, if one asks, what is the true meaning of the prophet, the answer is that he only would give to those that repent the hope of forgiveness. And this is the brief content, that it must not be doubted that God is ready to forgive as soon as the sinner is converted. Hence, he does not wish his death in as far as he does want his repentance. Experience, however, teaches, that he so wills the repentance of those whom he calls to him, that he does not touch the hearts of all. Nevertheless, it must not be said that he deals falsely, for even though the external voice only renders inexcusable those that hear it, it is nevertheless truly considered a testimony of the grace of God, whereby men are reconciled to him. Let us, therefore, hold to the true sense of the prophet, that God does not desire the death of the sinner: that the godly may trust that as soon as they have been touched with conversion, pardon is prepared for them with God, and that the wicked may understand that they double their iniquity because they do not respond to so great a clemency and readiness of God. Penitence therefore always meets with the mercy of God: but who they are upon whom penitence is bestowed is clearly set forth by all the prophets and apostles, and even by Ezekiel himself."

Now, the complainants are bound to accuse Calvin of rationalism here. If they will but be consistent, and treat Calvin as they do Dr. Clark, they will accuse the reformer of explaining Ezek. 18:23 "in favor of reprobation." For it is precisely his avowed purpose in the above paragraph so to explain this passage that it does not contradict the truth concerning the decree of reprobation. According to Calvin, it does not contradict or stand opposed to reprobation at all (*nihil. . . adversari*). And it is very evident that his explanation of the text means briefly, that God does not will the death of the elect, since he does not desire the death of the sinner in the same sense as he does will his conversion, and since he bestows conversion only on the elect.

Two things should be evident: 1. Calvin has no sympathy with the basic position of the complainants: that there are contradictions in Scripture which no one should attempt to explain; and 2. he does explain those passages of Scripture that appear to speak of a willingness on the part of God to save all men in such a way as to bring them in harmony with his eternal counsel of predestination.

If the complainants had shown the same regard for Dr. Clark as they like to show to Calvin, they would never have written their complaint.

Anyone that is acquainted with Calvin's Institutes knows that the passage we quoted is no isolated example of the reformer's method. In III, 24, 16 he

applies the same method of exegesis to I Tim. 2:4. We must note, says he, that the apostle in this passage combines two things: that God wills all men to be saved, and that he would have them all come to knowledge of the truth. But, he asks, if you insist that it be firmly decreed in God's counsel that all shall receive the doctrine of salvation, how can Moses address the children of Israel as follows: "For what nation is there so glorious that God approaches to it as to thee?" (*Quae gens est tam inclyta, ut ad eam appropinquet Deus sicut ad te?*) "How has it come to pass," thus he continues, "that God has deprived many peoples of the light of the gospel, which others enjoy?" It is evident, then, that God does not want all men to come to the knowledge of the truth, and that it follows that he does not will all men to be saved. And then he continues to explain the text as having reference to different ranks and classes of men.

Pure rationalism, the complainants would call this, if it were not Calvin that wrote it.

Even the text from II Pet. 3:9, on which the complainants quote Calvin from another source, is explained in a similar way in the Institutes (III, 24, 17). He admits that the opponents seem to have more reason on their side when they quote this text to prove that God wills all men to be saved. But he nevertheless "unties this knot at once" by calling attention to the second part of the text stating that God wills that all men should come to repentance. For, he argues, by this will of God to receive unto repentance none other can be understood than that which is taught everywhere in Scripture (*quia voluntas recipiendi ad poenitentiam non alia intelligi potest nisi quae passim traditur*). And then he argues that conversion is in the hand of God, and it is proper to ask him whether he will convert all men. But since it is evident that he does not will to convert all men, it is equally evident that he does not will that all men be saved, and that the text in II Pet. 3:9 only teaches that God wills that those be saved whom he brings to repentance.

Rationalism?

That it is will have to be the judgment of the complainants.

But all sound, Reformed theologians and exegetes have always insisted that Scripture must be explained in its own light, and that difficult passages must be explained in harmony with the current teaching of the Bible.

The position of the complainants is decidedly not Calvinistic. They are trying to oust Calvin, just as their Christian Reformed brethren did in 1924.

And why did they select one passage from Calvin in which he explains II Pet. 3:9 in a way that might seem to favor their position somewhat? Why did they not also quote from the Institutes? Or from Calvin's Calvinism?

Or why did they not quote what Dr. A. Kuyper Sr. has to say on the same text? Surely, him too they honor as a Calvinist. And they cannot have been ignorant of the explanation he offers of the same passage in Peter. In his "Dat de genade particulier is," he argues that the text in II Pet. 3:9 cannot possibly mean that God desires the salvation of all men, for the simple reason that in that case it would also teach that Christ would never come and that the salvation for which the people of God long would be postponed indefinitely. Hence, he concludes, the text must mean that God is longsuffering over His people, not willing that any of them should be lost, but that all should come to repentance. But why, if it was the purpose of the complainants to give a fair picture of the opinion of Reformed theologians, did they not also quote what Dr. Kuyper has to say on this passage from Second Peter?

To say the least, they now leave the impression of having done very superficial work, unworthy of theologians.

And this, too, requires an explanation: why do they always quote texts, and show a special preference for them, which opponents of the doctrine of the truth of sovereign grace have always used in the same way and for the same purpose as they, the complainants, do?

Ex ungue leonem!

H. H.

The Separation In The Netherlands

From a very reliable source in the old country we learned a little about the deposition of Dr. Schilder and others, and the split that occurred in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

A brother wrote me that the Synod of the "Gereformeerde Kerken" in the old country adopted the Kuyperian view of "presupposed regeneration," that is, the theory that infants are baptized on the ground of the presupposition that they are already regenerated; that Dr. Schilder and others disagreed, came into trouble with the Synod, not only because of this question, but also because of certain questions concerning church polity; that he and others were deposed; and that many churches "have liberated themselves from the yoke of Synod."

These are still scant details. But the writer promised that he would send me all the available literature on the matter as soon as possible. And we hope to keep our readers informed.

The information appears to be quite sufficient, however, to warrant the conclusion that *The Banner's* "I told you so" was quite mistaken, and that the conclusion of Dr. Schilder has nothing to do, directly at least, with his alleged deviating views on the matter of common grace.

We hope that as soon as this becomes quite plain the editor of "*The Banner*" will frankly admit this.

H. H.

The Triple Knowledge

An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

Part Two.

Of Man's Redemption

Lord's Day XVI.

3.

Dead to Sin (cont.)

This question, however, the apostle most emphatically answers in the negative.

He does so, first of all, by an indignant "God forbid!"

The apostle is horrified at the very thought that such a conclusion should be drawn from his doctrine of justification by faith. Not only so, but in this well-known, emphatic exclamation, he also expresses what must rise spontaneously from the heart of every justified believer when the possibility is suggested to him to continue in sin, in order that grace may abound. Such a possibility is far from his mind. It is directly contrary to his very experience of the grace of justification. For he that is freely justified by grace through faith is not at all inclined to abide and continue in sin. The very opposite is true. He principally hates and abhors sin, and fights it, that he may walk according to the precepts of the living God. Hence, he is at once ready to take the exclamation of the apostle on his own lips: God forbid that I should assume so profane an attitude as to have any desire to continue in sin.

But the apostle does not consider this mere exclamation of emphatic denial sufficient. The opponent, who by his question would calumniate the truth of justification without works, must have an answer. And, therefore, the apostle continues to explain that he that is justified by faith is also dead to sin, and that, therefore, it is for ever impossible that he should abide and continue

in sin. "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

But how is the believer dead to sin? This the apostle expounds in the verses that follow: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:3-9.

We need not enter into a detailed exposition of this passage. Two points, however, are evident. First of all, that the old man of believers is crucified. And, secondly, that this crucifixion of the old man is the direct result of the death of Christ. Believers are ingrafted into Christ. And thus they are partakers of His death. They are crucified, dead, and buried with Him. And thus the passage does, indeed, support the teaching of the Catechism, that from the Sacrifice and death on the cross we receive this further benefit that "our old man is crucified, dead, and buried with him."

Now, this must mean, first of all, that the death of Christ is the crucifixion of the old man; and, secondly, that when the power of the death of Christ is applied unto the elect, the old man also dies in them.

Let us try to understand this a little more fully.

What is "the old man" that is crucified, dead, and buried with Christ? It is man in his corrupt and sinful nature, in the human nature as we are all partakers of it in Adam. In this nature man lives unto sin. He is not free from sin, but bound in and to sin. Sin has dominion over him. Sin is the queen that is enthroned in his heart, that issues her precepts, to whom he is enslaved, willingly enslaved to be sure, but enslaved nevertheless; and whom he does obey, whose will he honors, whose direction he follows, whose wages he receives. For the human nature in Adam is wholly corrupt. The understanding is darkened, the will is perverted, the heart is obdurate, the desires and inclinations are impure, it is motivated by enmity against God throughout.

But more must be said in order to understand how the crucifixion and death of Christ are the death of the old man. We must remember that this corruption,

this being enslaved to sin of the old man, is *death*. And as such it is punishment of sin. The "old man" is guilty, and guilt is liability to punishment, and the punishment of sin is death. And to this death also belongs the corruption of the human nature. The "old man" is man as he has no right to life, no right to be delivered from the bondage of sin and death. He is legally, that is, according to the very sentence of the Judge of heaven and earth, a slave of sin. He is under "the law of sin and death." In this sense, it may be said that sin is legally his lord, that it is the power that is legally enthroned in his heart, and that it cannot and may not be dethroned, until the guilt of sin is blotted out.

Such is "the old man."

If we bear this in mind, we will be able to understand that and how the death of Christ is the crucifixion, death, and burial of "the old man" for all the elect. For the death of Christ is the satisfaction for sin, the complete and final blotting out of the guilt of sin for all the elect, for the whole Church of all ages, and the establishment of a basis of eternal righteousness. Hence, the very basis of sin's dominion in the human nature of the elect was removed by the death of Christ. Legally sin has no more dominion over them. On the basis of righteousness, of the righteousness of Christ, the throne of sin in the human nature cannot stand, it must fall. When Christ died, therefore, all the elect were freed from sin, as the apostle writes: "he that is dead is freed from sin." Rom. 6:7.

This is the meaning of Scripture in Rom. 8:3: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Notice that it is *sin*, not the sinner, that is here said to be condemned. Notice, too, that this condemnation of sin in the flesh could not be accomplished by the law, on account of the weakness of the flesh. And, finally, observe that this condemnation of sin in the flesh was accomplished by God, through the sending of His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and that, too, for sin, that is, for its destruction. In what respect, then, was sin condemned? It was juridically deprived of its dominion in the flesh, deprived of its right to rule in human nature. This the law could not do. Seeing that it can only condemn the sinner to the slavery of sin, it rather sustains sin in its claim of dominion over the sinful nature of guilty man. But when God through His Son had blotted out the iniquity of His people, sin was condemned. It could no longer reign in human nature.

Thus, then, the "old man" of all God's own is crucified, dead, and buried for ever through the death of the Son of God.

And it is by Christ's own power that this freedom

from the dominion of sin through the sacrifice of the Cross is applied to the individual elect in this world.

For Christ is raised, and death has no more dominion over Him. And He is exalted at the right hand of God, clothed with all power in heaven and on earth. And having received the promise of the Spirit, He poured out that Spirit into the Church, and through Him dwells in His own, and makes them partakers of all His benefits. He gives them the justifying faith, and by that faith they become partakers of His death and resurrection. They receive the forgiveness of sins, and the everlasting and perfect righteousness He obtained for them by His perfect obedience even unto death. And in this righteousness they possess their legal liberation from the dominion of sin over them, and they are conscious of this freedom. And being legally freed from sin's dominion, they are also actually delivered from the power of corruption, raised with Christ, and inducted into the glorious liberty of the children of God, through the power of grace and by the calling of the gospel. And thus it is "by his power" that "our old man is crucified, dead, and buried with him; that so the corrupt inclinations of the flesh may no more reign in us; that so we may offer ourselves unto him a sacrifice of thanksgiving."

In the light of all this, we can understand the intimate and inseparable connection between justification by faith and a walk in newness of life.

It is clear now why, in answer to the question, whether those that are freely justified had not better continue in sin, Paul so emphatically exclaimed: "God forbid." For exactly in being justified the believer is freed from the dominion of sin, that he may live unto God.

An indulgence granted by mere man, though he be the pope, may induce the sinner to live wantonly in sin; the mighty power of the death of Christ has the very opposite effect. By it, sin is condemned, dethroned, its power destroyed, and the believer is become dead to sin. The corrupt inclinations of the flesh no more reign in him. He may now serve the living God, and offer himself a living sacrifice unto Him.

But it may not be superfluous to ask the question: how does this freedom from the dominion of sin reveal itself in the present life of the believer in this world? What does it mean, then, to be dead to sin, and no longer to live in it?

In answer to this question we may state, negatively, that to be dead to sin does not mean that sin is dead in us. Bitter disappointment must needs be the result, if we imagine that when we are ingrafted into Christ, crucified and raised with Him, the death of sin follows, is the sure fruit. For sin is not dead in the believer as long as he is in this life. It does not die, until he dies. Till then it is very much alive. The motions of sin are in our members. In fact, in oppo-

sition to the new beginning of life in the believer, they are often more active, assert themselves more emphatically and insistently, as the believer grows in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus. He has but a small beginning of the new obedience, and a small beginning it remains even in the very holiest of God's children. And the believer must understand this, that he may watch and pray, lest he fall into temptation. Paradoxical though it may sound, though the old man is dead and buried with Christ, yet, throughout his whole life in this world, until the very moment of his death, he must constantly fight to put off the old man, and to put on the new man in Christ Jesus.

And yet, though sin is not dead, he is dead to sin. The old man is very really dead and buried. That old man was characterized by his being legally and ethically enslaved to sin, and the believer is a free man: death has no longer dominion over him. The old man was known by his inner harmony with sin. Sin was his proper sphere. He lived in sin. He loved iniquity. He found his delight in the service of unrighteousness. He hated the light, and loved the darkness. Though he often was filled with sorrow of the world, and dreaded the wages of sin, he was a stranger to the sorrow after God, and never knew repentance. After forgiveness and righteousness he did not yearn. The kingdom of God he could not see. In the world he found his delight, and the things that are above he did not seek, neither did he perceive them.

That old man is dead!

He that is in Christ Jesus is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Yes, the motions of sin are still in his members, but he hates them. He still sins, but he is sorry for his sin, and the cry for forgiveness is on his lips daily. He does not live in sin, abide in sin, finds his proper sphere in sin anymore. Where formerly he agreed with sin, there is now in his inmost heart a deep, a radical disagreement between sin and him. Whereas formerly he found his delight in sin, he now abhors it, eschews it, opposes it, and takes God's side in the judgment of his own iniquities. And he has an inner delight in the precepts of his God. He hears His Word, he tastes that the Lord is good, he seeks His fellowship, and He is a companion of all them that fear Him. And he seeks the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. It is true that he often finds himself doing what he would not, but fact is that he does not will it. He frequently must confess that he does that which he hates; it is true, however, that he hates it. And he longs in hope for the day when he shall be delivered from the body of this death, and be like unto his Lord in perfection, that he may offer himself for ever unto God a sacrifice of thanksgiving!

Such is the manifestation in this life of the fact that the old man is crucified, dead, and buried with Christ.

And it is all the fruit of the death of the Son of God!

4.

The Descension Into Hell.

The final article of the *Apostolicum* that speaks of Christ in His humiliation concerns His descension into hell. And this article our Catechism explains in the forty-fourth question and answer: "Why is there added, 'he descended into hell?' That in my greatest temptations I may be assured, and wholly comfort myself in this, that my Lord Jesus Christ, by his inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agonies, in which he was plunged during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross, hath delivered me from the anguish and torments of hell."

We may note here that the Catechism only indirectly and by implication explains the article as it occurs in the Confession, laying all the emphasis on the spiritual benefit believers derive from this part of the work of Christ: assurance of salvation and full comfort even in their greatest temptations. Nevertheless, the implication is that the article about the descension into hell as it occurs in the Apostle's Creed signifies that on the cross Christ suffered "inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agonies." This is Calvin's explanation of the article, and this interpretation was generally adopted by the Reformed Churches.

The article itself is not found in the older copies of the Apostles' Creed, though the matter itself was believed by the Church, and the expression occurs in some isolated confessions. In our Apostolic Confession it was not introduced until the beginning of the sixth century. Our readers may have noticed that in the worship of many American churches, when this creed is recited, the words "he descended into hell" are omitted. And, let it be remarked that if they are explained as referring to the agonies and hellish sufferings of Christ during His whole life, and especially on the cross, there is little reason why they should not be omitted. It must be evident that, after all that the Catechism has explained concerning the sufferings and death of Christ in this and in the preceding Lord's Day, there is little or nothing to add. In the answer to question thirty-seven, the Heidelberg already explained the sufferings of Christ as meaning "that he, all the time that he lived on earth, but especially at the end of his life, sustained in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind." But what else is this bearing of the wrath of God than the suffering

of pain and terror and hellish agonies? In answer to the question concerning the special significance of the death of the cross, the Catechism explained that through the cross God laid the curse upon Him, and that He took it upon Himself, for the death of the cross was accursed of God. But is not the curse of God the suffering of hellish terrors? If, therefore, we adopt the explanation of the Catechism, the omission of this article from the recital of the *Apostolicum* in public worship is not a serious one, the more so because, as we have said, in the older copies of this creed the article does not occur.

The article has been explained in more than one way.

One explanation gives to it the meaning that Christ was in the state of the dead. The Greek word for "hell" is *Hades*, a word that is translated and that, too, usually correctly, in our English Bible by hell, but which may signify the same as grave, or the state of the dead before the resurrection. Hence, the explanation is linguistically possible: *he descended into the state of the dead*. The context in which the article occurs, however, would seem to be opposed to the idea that this was actually the meaning of the article historically; that is, according to the faith of the early Church. For it occurs at the end of the series: *suffered, was crucified, dead and buried*. The last of these terms already declares that Christ descended into the place of the dead, and to add another article virtually expressing the same thing, would appear to be a rather useless repetition.

The second explanation is that offered by our Heidelberg Catechism, that Christ suffered the agonies of hell in our stead. We have, of course, no objection whatever to the doctrinal contents of this explanation. And as part of our Catechism, we shall have to refer to it again. Nevertheless, in view of the position of this article in the *Apostolicum*, between the burial and the resurrection, it may be seriously doubted, whether this was the intention of the early Church.

H. H.

IN MEMORY

The Second Protestant Reformed Church Men's Society herewith expresses its sympathy to one of their fellow members, A. J. Kuiper, in the loss of his

FATHER

May the God of all grace comfort the bereaved in the assurance that Christ has gone before and prepared a place for us.

H. De Jong, Vice Pres.

G. Ten Elshof, Sec'y.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Micah's Spurious Sanctuary

The book of Judges divides into three parts: 1. Introduction; 2. the main body of the book; 3. the conclusion. The introduction includes the first two chapters, of which the first sets forth the condition of Israel after the death of Joshua as being that of inaction with respect to its divine calling. The task that remained to the tribes west of the Jordan was to prosecute the conquest by freeing their respective allotments from the remnants of the heathen tribes, and especially to cleanse the land of the altars and shrines of their pagan worship. But this was not done, we learn from this chapter. What is worse, with the exception of Judah, the tribes concluded a covenant with the heathen, according to the articles of which they were allowed to continue in the possession of many of their cities on the condition that they pay tribute and their pagan temples and altars were not broken down.

The second chapter gives us a bird's eye view of the history narrated in the body of the book,—a history of the apostacies of Israel and the deliverances sent by Jehovah through the agency of the judges, thus a history of sin, repeating itself over and over, and of divine grace, constantly devising new means of deliverances.

The conclusion of the book is formed of chapters 19-21. Arriving at these chapters we notice that the narrative takes a sudden turn indicative of a new design which is to show that in the period of the judges "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," in that "in those days there was no king in Israel." This statement occurs only in the conclusion of the book and occurs there over and over. Thus, the design of these concluding chapters is to trace the self-will of individuals, of the priests and of the people, their licentiousness and passion, and thus to show that, by reason of the inability of the government of the Judges to cope with this sinful individualism, the hereditary kingship had to be set up. As I wrote in a former article, the need of the kingship rose from the sinfulness of the people, from their inability to be one in a common faith in Jehovah their God. What was therefore needed is a visible and central authority to curb the licentiousness of the people, constrain it to obey God's voice and to abide in His law, thus a central authority to serve as a compelling unity for the whole nation. Without a king, the people of Israel were like a flock without a shepherd. They went astray. They turned every one to his own way. In the conclusion of his book, the writer calls attention to this over and over in this language, "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did what was right in his own eyes." But if the institution of judges

could not make the people one, neither could the hereditary kingship. The best of the kings that God chose to rule over His people were not equal to this task. For these kings were but sinful men, and the root of Israel's troubles was sin, which had to be atoned and removed, if God's people were to be truly one. Only sinless men, in whose heart is shed abroad the love of God, are truly one—one in the truth, one in Christ who is the truth. Thus, there was need of Him—Christ Jesus—who is "made unto us Wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Let us now have regard to the examples of this sinful individualism presented to us in the concluding chapters of our book. The first is that of the setting up of a private sanctuary by Micah, a man of Mount Ephraim, and of his engaging a wandering Levite to be his priest, chapter 17: 1-13. The narration of these sinful doings follows after the story of Samson's life and death.

There dwelt at that time in Mount Ephraim a woman who was rich. Her wealth amounted to at least eleven hundred shekels, at that time representing a considerable sum. How she had come into the possession of so much wealth cannot be determined. The view that she was a widow whose deceased husband had left her large sums is not unlikely, as no mention is made of the woman's husband. She had a son whose name was Micah. Micah took the money secretly. The text indicates that his purpose was to manufacture an image for a private sanctuary. When the woman discovered the theft, she was beside herself. Doubtless, she suspected her son, for, as the text again indicates, she had learned from her son his plans and, what is more, in her carnal rage she was careful to curse the unknown thief in her son's hearing, who, with his mother's dreadful imprecations in his ears, was afraid. Going to his mother, he said to her, "The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst and spaketh also also in mine ears, behold the silver is with me; I took it"—"took it," he meant to say, and his mother well understood, "to establish my private sanctuary, thus took it for an excellent purpose". As driven by a superstitious dread for the effect of a maternal curse, he merely meant to inform his angry mother that the curse concerned him as he had taken the silver, which he was now returning. His telling her this, would have surprised the woman, had she been ignorant of his plans. But she was not surprised. Instead she was jubilant. Her terrible maledictions had had the desired effect. It had frightened the miscreant into admitting to her his guilt. The loot was returned. She had recovered her treasure. The Lord might now bless the culprit. So, in her elation of heart, she exclaimed, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son." She resembled those people of whom James says (chap. 3:10), "Out of the same

mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing." She was a wicked woman, whose heart was not with the Lord but with her gold. That she was this kind of a person is plain from her subsequent words and doings. With her eleven hundred shekels once more in her possession, she said to her son, "I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image; now therefore I will restore it unto thee." But this son, still dreading the effects of the curse, was determined not to have the silver. So he, in turn, restored the money to his mother. The text indicates that she had expected this and that her generosity was therefore feigned. For she now took not the eleven hundred but a mere two hundred of the eleven hundred shekels of silver "and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image." Thus, in saying that she had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord, she had lied. It is unlikely that she had dedicated any of it unto the Lord, and that her blessing her son in turn was indicative of a carnal joy over the recovery of her money and thus not even a joy over the discovery that her son had taken the money for what she considered a good purpose and that his plans coincided with hers. She was not interested even in a spurious sanctuary. Her god was her money. But to make up to her son for having cursed him and to screen her avariciousness, she forced herself to dedicate at least a small portion of her treasure to his sanctuary. And her donation she had shaped into an image. That, she knew, was according to her son's liking.

The form of the image cannot be determined. Had it represented a calf, the writer would have taken occasion to say so. Neither is it likely that the image work was an imitation of the cherubim of the tabernacle. For the cherubim were not accessible for public inspection. Certain it is, that, whatever the shape of the image, it formed or soon came to form, a contrast with Jehovah through its being worshipped so that the sin that was here committed by this woman and her son and by as many as were to worship with them in their spurious sanctuary was that of changing, under the impulse of hatred of God, the glory of God into an image made like unto the creature, and this notwithstanding the pious assertion of the woman that she dedicated the silver unto Jehovah. According to Holy Writ, all image worship is the service of a false deity.

As the man Micah plainly intended to establish a perfect imitation of the true worship of Jehovah at Shiloh, he made also an ephod and a teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. Micah's ephod was, in all likelihood, a copy of the linnen coat which the Lord had designed only for the lawful priesthood. His teraphim was a pagan oracle

designed for divining purposes. He meant it to take the place in his spurious worship of the Urim and the Thummim which were intended for Israel's high-priests in order that by means of them they might be the organ of divine revelation for the people.

Micah's sin was great. He inaugurated in Ephraim not the worship of Jehovah by the aid of an image—this was never either possible or intended, the pious assertions of the image worshippers in Israel notwithstanding—but the worship of a devil-god in opposition to the worship of the one true God at Shiloh. True, Micah's image may not have represented a calf. It certainly did not represent any of the monstrous creations of the Baal-worshippers, for that would have defeated the purpose of the man; but it was an image, and the worship was the worship of an image nevertheless. And this worship—this sanctuary with its spurious oracle and priest—this man presumed to pass off as the worship, the sanctuary, the oracle and the priest of Jehovah. For his object was to draw away the people from Jehovah and His ministers in the tabernacle and to attract them to his idol. And to reach his object he vested his carnal and sensuous worship in the forms of the service of Jehovah. And his motive was pride and unbelief. And the impulse under which he acted was hatred of God. Micah was a dangerous man. His spiritual kin of this day and age are not the avowed enemies of the true religion, of the God of the Scriptures, but the heretic, whose heart is far from God but who poses as God's friend by paying Him lip-service and who smuggles his lies into the church by vesting them in the forms of the truth to ensnare, if this were possible, even the elect. But those ensnared are not the elect but the carnal seed. The true believers in Israel continued to serve at the tabernacle in Shiloh.

It seems that the growth in popularity of Micah's sanctuary was slower than he had anticipated so that he concluded that what was needed is a priest from the house of Levi. He first may have inquired among the Levites residing in Ephraim. If so, it speaks well for them that none of their number proved willing to attach himself to his idol-temple. But help came to him from another quarter. A young Levite, who was settled in Judah, tired of his home and took to traveling about in search of a new field of service. He set out on a way that took him over the mountains of Ephraim. As he journeyed, he came to the house of Micah, who learned from the young man, on questioning him, that he was unengaged and was looking for a place. Micah then made him an inviting offer. "Dwell with me," he said to him, "and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals." The young man consented and was taken in with great joy and "was unto Micah even as one of his sons.

Micah consecrated the young man, and he became his priest in his house. It mattered little to this Levite that the house in which he consented to serve was the temple of a devil-god and that the worshippers whom he should bless werē such as prostrated themselves before the shrine of an idol. The young man was now in good circumstances. He had strayed into a lucrative place and if to hold that place he must bless when he should curse, he would bless. His god being his belly, he was a pleaser of men. Loving the world and the things of the world, he renounced his calling, forsook the temple of Jehovah and was set over the temple of an idol. And Micah was glad. He now looked for blessings to Jehovah. "Now I know," he said, "that Jehovah will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." These words indicate the self-deception of the man. His soiled conscience buildel hopes on the name of an apostate Levite.

G. M. O.

The Doctrine of the Early Church

(The Essential Divinity of Christ)

As was said, the essential divinity of Christ had to be asserted against the Monarchians and the Ebionists who saw in Christ only a second Moses and against the Gnostics who placed Christ in a class with the eons of their ideal world. Further, it was pointed out that at the beginning of the third century—circa 200—there were three Christologies contesting in Rome: 1) The Modalistic Monarchian also known as Patripassian and Cebellianism; 2) The Dynamic Monarchian; 3) The Logos Christology. It was the last-named that triumphed on the Council of Nicea 325. The Modalistic and Dynamic Monarchians had this in common: both asserted that God is only, but they stressed this to the exclusion of the tripersonality in the Godhead. Both refused to distinguish in the one and indivisible essence of God three hypostasis or persons. They could not see in the trinitarian conception ought else but an assertion of tritheism (three-godism). Thus their assertion that God is one and only is equivalent to the affirmation that He is numerically one not only in essence but also in *personality*. They were therefore given the name Monarchians, meaning "one principle". But there was also a difference between the two classes of Monarchians. The Dynamic Monarchians denied the essential divinity of Christ and His co-essentiality with the Father, but not so the Modalistic Monarchians.

The Dynamic Monarchians. The system of thought

of this class of Monarchians is known from the teachings of Paul of Samosata, their famous representative. As well as the orthodox, this false teacher in the church distinguished the eternal logos from the human Jesus born of the virgin. According to the Scriptures, the logos (John 1:1) is an independent personality in the Godhead and as such the only begotten of the Father, in substance one with the Father and the Spirit. But Paul of Samosata corrupted the Logos, the eternal Son of God, to an impersonal attribute of God, that is, to an impersonal power of the Father, and he taught that with this power the human Jesus was filled at the moment of His conception or birth, that thereby He was united in will to God, that by virtue thereof God raised Him from the dead, adopted Him to be His Son, and crowned Him with a kind of honorary divinity, in the sense that He will crown all His people with divinity. Jesus, according to this conception, is but a mere man; He is not in substance also divine. Were this true, said Paul, there would needs be two Gods, God the Father and God the Christ. He refused to perceive that Christ, according to His divine essence, is numerically one with the essence of the Father and that the person of Christ dwells in the Godhead as the only begotten of the Father and therefore as a distinct personality in the Godhead. Christ, according to this Paul, was a mere creature of the absolute God.

The question might be put why Paul of Samosata claimed for Christ even a delegated divinity. He recoiled from bluntly denying the essential divinity of Christ, the reason being that the belief that Christ is the divine son of God was general. But the people of God were still wrestling with the problem how, if Christ be divine, it can be maintained that God is only. This false teacher came with his solution. Christ, he said, is Son of God not essentially but only by adoption. This type of Monarchianism was called dynamic because it corrupted the eternal logos into an impersonal power of God. Dynamic Monarchianism was thoroughly rationalistic. It anticipated all the rationalistic opinions about Christ of this day and age. It was most misleading because, while it maintained the divine sonship of Christ, it denied His essential divinity. It taught that Christ is divine in the sense in which, according to rationalistic opinion, all good men are divine.

The first Dynamic Monarchian of note was Theodotus, a man of learning, who came to Rome about 190 and there taught his views. But he was excommunicated by the bishop of Rome. Still other attempts were made to present this theology at Rome but none of them met with success. It made greater headway in the East, where it was represented by the gifted bishop of Antioch, this Paul of Samosata whose views we have already considered. Between 264 and 269 these views

were tried and pronounced heretical by three synods, the last of which excommunicated Paul. But he would not give up his seat and had to be driven out by the emperor Aurelian.

The Modalistic Monarchianism. This form was more Christian by far. It had a much larger following than the other form. With the Dynamic Monarchians the Modalistic Monarchians asserted that God is only. With the Dynamic Monarchians they denied the tri-personality of God. But unlike the Dynamic Monarchians they asserted the essential divinity of the historical Christ. Also their problem was how, if Christ be divine, it can be maintained that there is one God and not two Gods, God the Father and God the Christ. Their solution was that God the Father and God the Christ are one and the same numerically. Noetus, the leader of the Modalistic Monarchians, taught that "Christ was the Father Himself, and that the Father Himself was born, suffered and died." Sabellius, the outstanding leader of the Modalistic Monarchians taught that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are numerically one, and as such a threefold *prosopon* or form of manifestation of the one God in His character of Creator as Father, in that of Redeemer as the Son, and now as the Holy Spirit. In this view Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one and the same person. Thus they are not three different personalities in the Godhead but rather three different modes of manifestation of the one God. Hence the followers of this view were given the name of Modalistic Monarchians. This teaching appealed to many Christians. This can be explained. In distinction from Dynamic Monarchianism, it asserted the essential divinity of Christ. And it emphasized, as well as did dynamic Monarchianism, the unity of God, though it denied His tri-personality in the presence of heathen polytheism. God's people felt that they had need of a Christ who was more than a mere creature, a Christ who is God, not in a secondary sense, but truly, actually, essentially. They understood that only such a Christ could save them.

As was said, the leader of these Modalistic Monarchians was Noetus of Smyrna. His views were transplanted to Rome by his disciples about 190. They even won the sympathy of the bishop of Rome, Zephyrinus. The outstanding leader of Modalistic Monarchianism was, as was said, Sabellius. About all that is known of him is that he was teaching at Rome about 215. There was no essential difference between his theology and that of Noetus. But what strikes us in his presentation—cited above—is the implied equality of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the use of the term *prosopon* and the application of this term to the tri-personality in the Godhead. It was this equality of the tri-personality in the Godhead that was to triumph over the subordination of the Son and the Spirit to the

Father that characterized the Logos Christology of most of the fathers of this period. But Sabellius' numerical identification of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit was condemned. And rightly so. For it is a view that conceptionally destroys God.

The Logos Christology. The idea of this Christology is this: Christ as the Logos is a distinct personality in the Godhead in which He dwells as the only begotten of the Father, co-essential, co-eternal, and co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This Christology was championed by the following church fathers of note of this period (ante-Nicene). Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origin, Ireneus, Tertullian, Hippolytus and others. But the modes of thought of these fathers were not of the same doctrinal soundness. The Logos Christology of most of them was encumbered by subordinationalism (the subjection of the Son and the Spirit to the Father).

In the Christology of Justin Martyr, Christ is the Logos, the only and absolute Son of God. Justin, however, subordinates the Son to the Father and affirms that the unity of the two persons is moral, as is the unity between two friends. Now the unity between Father and Son is moral indeed but it is this because Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in essence are one.

Origin identified the essence of the Father with that of the Son but he also speaks of a difference of substance and subordinates the Son to the Father. He calls the Son God in a secondary sense and the Father absolute God.

Clement of Alexandria makes the logos God but says nothing definite about His independent personality.

Ireneus came close to the Nicene dogma of the Logos. That he subordinated the Son to the Father must be explained from his want of careful distinction between the Son of God as the only begotten of the Father and the Son as the Christ. He was confused by expressions like, "My Father is greater than I", an expression that is to be applied only to the Son of God incarnate.

Hippolytus was another great advocate of the Logos Christology. He vigorously opposed the Monarchians of both schools by insisting on the recognition of persons in the Godhead with equal claim to divine worship. An able exposition of the Logos Christology came from the pen of Tertullian of Carthage. This work, entitled "against Praxeas", contains a definition of the Godhead in terms that anticipate the Nicene result of more than a century later. "All are one by a unity of substance," he writes; "while the mystery of the dispensation is still guarded which distributes the unity into a trinity, placing in their order the three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; three, however, not in substance but in form; not in power but in appearance, for they are of one substance and one essence and one power, inasmuch as He is one God from whom these

degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." He describes these distinctions in the Godhead as persons. He also distinguishes between the human and the divine in Christ. "We see His double state, not intermixed but conjoined in one person—Jesus, God and man." But he also calls the Father the whole divine substance and the Son a part of it.

The Logos Christology completely won its way in Western Christendom. This appears from a treatise on the "Trinity" written by the Roman presbyter Novatian, between 240 and 250. Reproducing and expanding Tertullian's view, he treats his exposition as the only authorized interpretation of the "apostle's creed". He teaches that between Father and Son a "communion of Substance" exists. This was the Latin equivalent of the latter Nicene "Homousian", meaning "of the same substance". Then there was the Roman bishop Dionysius (259-268), who, in his controversy with Sabellius, maintained the homousian, the eternal generation of the Son, and the distinction between the three persons. Thus the Western Church had reached conclusions harmonizable with the creed of Nicea more than sixty years before that council.

G. M. O.

Gebed Om Genade Voor Genade

(Psalm 85)

Het is niet gemakkelijk om een titel te kiezen voor dezen psalm. De hoofdzaak die hier gevonden wordt is zeer diep en rijk.

In het algemeen zouden we kunnen zeggen, dat hier een dichter aan het woord is die zeer rijk is in God. Hij kent God, zichzelf, Israel en het verleden. Hij is een wijze theoloog. Geen wonder: de Heilige Geest leerde hem.

Ik zou den psalm aldus willen verdeelen: van vers 1 tot 4 hebben we een beschrijving van de genade Gods over Zijn volk; van vers 5 tot 8 een gebed om genade over het zondige Israel van des dichter's dag, op grond van de genade die Hij Israel betoond had in het verleden; vers 9 en 10 beschrijft het geloof van den dichter: hij zal stillekens wachten op God's antwoord; vers 11 beschrijft het wonder der genade; en in de verzen 12-14 beluisteren we de beschrijving van het volk Gods zooals het wandelt en zich baden mag in de goude lichtstralen van de genade des Heeren.

Eerst zien we dan een beschrijving van de genade Gods over Zijn volk. Zij wordt beschreven in schoone

taal. "Gij zijt Uwen lande gunstig geweest, HEERE; de gevangenis Jakobs hebt Gij gewend." De woorden "Uwen lande" en "Jakobs" beteekenen hetzelfde. Beide wijzen ze heen naar Gods uitverkoren volk. De dichter spreekt van dit volk in het algemeen. Wat hij getuigt van het land en van Jakob is van toepassing op hen van eeuwigheid tot in der eeuwigheid. Dat zijn nu eenvoudigweg de feiten. God heeft gunst betoond aan het Land van God. Dat Land is de plaats waar Gods volk verkeert. Let wel, dat beteekent niet alleen Palestina. O neen. Het houdt ook het Paradijs in, het land Gosen, de stukjes aarde waar Gods volk mag verkeerden. Farao's huis, om Jozef's wil, enz., enz. Uiteindelijk is het de nieuwe aarde, waarin gerechtigheid wonen zal.

Gods gunst is Zijn glimlach van welbehagen: De Heere mag dat land van Zijn volk gaarne zien! Om den wille van Zijn volk, hetwelk eigenlijk hetzelfde beteekent als om Zich Zelfs wil.

Nader aangeduid, zien we in de volgende clause het wonder van Gods glimlachen: "de gevangenis Jakobs hebt Gij gewend!" Ja, ik zal er maar een uitroep teken achter plaatsen. Het is zóó wonderlijk, dat gij er van zingen zult uit den treure en tot in eeuwigheid.

De gevangenis Jakobs! Wat is dat?

Die gevangenis is de dood, geliefde lezer. Dat gevang omsluit ons vanwege de zonde en de schuld die wij bij God gemaakt hebben; en zij houdt in de lichamelijke, geestelijke en eeuwige dood. Het uiterste van die gevangenis is de hel en eeuwige verdoemenis. Die toestand en staat des eeuwigen doods wordt een gevangenis, omdat men in die toestand en staat niets positiefs kan doen. Daar kan men niet meer spreken, wandelen, huppelen van ziel- en lichaamsvreugd. Daar kan men slechts weenen, tandenknarsen en angstig roepen.

Voor Jakob is die gevangenis gewend.

Dat de dichter hier spreekt van Jakob, als hij een vertegenwoordiger van Gods uitverkoren volk wil vinden, ligt in het feit, dat van alle Bijbelheiligen Jakob vooraan staat in het worstelen met God. Hij had een angstig leven, van uit een zeker oogpunt. Verkoren om de eerste te zijn, wordt hij de tweede geboren. Naast zich vindt hij een hater Gods, Esau. De vader trekt den goddelooze voor. Straks moet hij vluchten voor het aangezicht van zijn broeder. Hij had de fluisterstem gehoord: als mij vader sterft, dan moet Jakob gedood! Bij Laban schijnt alles hem tegen te zijn. Veertien jaren moet hij arbeiden voor zijn vrouwen. Zijn heer is een zelfzuchtige die tienmalen zijn loon verandert. Hij ervaart veel smart van zijn kinderen. De vrouw die hij zielslief heeft wordt hem door God ontijdig ontnomen en als dan die liefde op Jozef viel, moet hij staren, staren op een bebloed kleed van vele kleuren. Straks zien we hem bij den Jabbok waar

hij met den Almachtige moet worstelen. Hij was angstig voor het aangezicht van Esau. Ja, Jakob in het bijzonder, had veel te worstelen gehad.

Doch zijn gevangenis werd gewend van oogenblik tot oogenblik. Het plan van den vleeschetenden en vleeschbeminrenden vader wordt door God verijdeld, al moet het dan door den weg van de zonde van Rebecca en Jakob. Esau veracht het eerstgeboorte recht en Jakob ontvangt de zegen Abrahams. En God ontmoet hem op den weg naar Laban. Bij zijn zelfzuchtige oom zorgt God voor hem van dag tot dag. En als Jakob in zijn ongeloof klaagt: alle deze dingen zijn tegen mij! dan zorgt God ervoor, dat hij zijn fout inziet: Jozef komt terug en mag een geheel volk in het leven behouden.

Ja, Jakob mag de vertegenwoordiger zijn van het geprange volk aller eeuwen.

De gevangenis is echter gewend.

Dat was een feit der geschiedenis, telkenmale herhaald.

Adam en Eva worden er uit geroepen door God Zelf: Hij wijst hen op de vellen van geslachte beesten en Eva hoort de moederbelofte. Henoch wordt van de aarde weggeraapt in levende lijve en Lamech's tranen zijn gedroogd. Noach rijst op de baren van den water-vloed, al hooger, al hooger tot God. Abraham wordt geroepen van uit een afgodisch land en Israel gaat zeker alleen wonen. Als straks de Egyptenaren gillen van smart en plagen woont Israel in 't lieflijke Gosen en is alles stil in hunne landpale. Na de smart van Saul's dagen ziet Israel den man naar Gods hart op den troon van het volk des Heeren. En zoo kunnen wij doorgaan om U te toonen, dat de gevangenis van Jakob gewend is.

Hoe kan dat?

Israel-Jakob is toch een zondig volk?

Ik mag den psalm niet vooruitloopen, doch ik mag zeggen met den dichter: dat ligt hierin: de Heere heeft de misdaad van Zijn volk weggenomen en al hun zonden bedekt.

Ziedaar het feit der genade! Men mag tandenknersen van spijt en haat in het kamp der valsche theologen: God neemt de misdaad van Zijn volk eenvoudig weg en Hij bedekt alle hunne zonden! Hallelujah!

De moreele theoloog weet beter: om in den hemel te komen moet men zich zelf inspannen en het verdien. God en Zijn volk weeten het beter: Gij naamt die gunstig weg! Het is een eenvoudig feit!

Er zijn er die het gezegd hebben in het gebed: Gij hebt onze zonden weggeworpen in een zee van eeuwige vergetelheid! Ik bemin zulk een gebed: want zóó is het! Zóó staat het hier ook. Weggenomen! Welnu, dan is die misdaad er niet meer. Vraagt het aan Henoch, hij zal het U bewijzen. God nam hem in den hemel op, waar niet dan volmaakte heiligheid en ge-

rechtigheid gevonden worden. De duivel mag tegenover Jozua staan met zijn vuile kleederen om hem te wederstaan. Het helpt niet. Satan wordt vervloekt. De Heere straffe u, O Satan. Deze Jozua, ten spijt van zijn vuile kleederen is als een brandhout uit het vuur gerukt.

Vraagt het aan de Engelen Gods! Zij zullen het U vertellen. Zij werden op zekeren dag uitgezonden naar Judea om een vuile bedelaar te halen. Zij droegen hem opwaartst tot in de hemelen toe. De misdaad is weg en de zonde is bedekt. Straks meer daarover.

Verder: de geschiedenis heeft bewezen, dat God Zijn verbolgenheid wegnam en Zich wendde van de hittigheid Zijns toorns.

Wat beteekent dit? Beteekent het, dat God eerst toornde op Zijn volk en daarna, hoe dan ook, veranderde tegen hen? Later schijnt Jesaja dat te leeren. Hij schreef: "Maar zij zijn wederspannig geworden, en zij hebben Zijne Heilige Geest smarten aangedaan: daarom is Hij hun in een vijand verkeerd. Hijzelf heeft tegen hen gestreden." Jes. 63:10. Is God veranderlijk?

Het antwoord is: O neen! God is de Onveranderlijke. Het schijnt alsof God verandert, doch het is niet meer dan schijn. De verandering grijpt plaats in ons, nooit in God. Dat wil niet zeggen, dat de verbolgenheid en de toorn Gods niet werkelijkheid zijn. Neen, want onze naam is waarlijk: van nature kinderen des toorns. Mozes getuigt er ook van als hij in psalm 90 zegt: Wij vergaan door Uwen toorn en door Uwe grimmigheid worden wij verschrikt.

Om dit te verklaren moeten wij twee dingen zeggen. Eerst, God bemint Zijn volk van eeuwigheid in den Heere Jezus Christus. Daar gaat niets van af. Hij bemint Jakob vóór de wereld geschapen was; Hij bemint hem in de historie als Jakob een zondaar wordt; en Hij zal hem tot in alle eeuwigheid beminnen. Daar gaat niets af. Paulus zou later zeggen: Hij heeft ons liefgehad ook toen wij nog zondaars waren.

Tweedens, wij zijn in de historie werkelijke zondaren en bedenken, spreken en doen werkelijke, concrete zonden. Dat ziet God en God haat de zonde. En de Heere kan niet met de zonde verkeer. Als wij goddelooze dingen bedenken, dan ervaren wij in onze harten de toorn Gods. Dan toorn God wezenlijk op ons. Wij kunnen die toorn Gods gevoelen in ons hart. Vraagt het aan Gods volk: zij zullen het U vertellen. Vraagt het aan David, Jesaja en Mozes. Hun getuigenis is in den Bijbel. Evenwel, die toorn is anders dan de toorn waarmede God op de verworpenen toorn. Het is de toorn Zijner liefde. Dat is het motief van Gods toorn over Zijn volk. Door middel van die toorn die wij ervaren worden wij van de wegen der goddeloosheid afgeleid. Leest maar het volgende vers: Breng ons weder, O God onzes heils! En doe te niet Uwe toornigheid over ons!

Als ge dan nog aanhoudt en vraagt: maar is er dan geen verandering in God dan zouden wij willen zeggen: neen, er is geen verandering, want God bemint ons ook in de dagen en uren, dat wij Zijn toorn ervaren. De verandering is in ons, niet in Hem. Ik zal een beeld gebruiken. Als wij stroomafwaarts glijden met ons bootje, dan staat dat gelijk aan het verkeeren met onzen God in stillen vrede. (Zie vers 14b. Een ander beeld, doch dezelfde zaak: als de Heere U omdraait en zet "op den weg Zijner voetstappen, dan is het goed, dan is het vrede.) Doch als wij verkeerd denken, spreken, handelen, dan staat dat gelijk aan het omzwenken van ons bootje op dien stroom. Dan wordt die zelfde liefelijke stroom, waarop ons bootje eerst zoo rustiglijk gleed, een macht die ons tegenstaat. Dan moet ge roeien en roeien en dan breekt het zweet U uit. Dan gaat alles verkeerd! De stroom veranderde niet. Gij veranderde. Doch als de Heere U en Uw bootje beetneemt en zet op den stroom van Zijn golven en bruisende wateren, zoodat Uw bootje weer stroomafwaarts glijdt—dan is het weer goed. Daar hoor ik U dan zachtken zingen: Ik zal nu ik weer mag ademen, na zooveel bangen tegenspoed. . . .

Dus God verandert niet als het U benauwd geworden is. Gij verandert en ik en al Gods kinderen die in de zonde dwalen, ver van huis. Zwoegende op dat pad der zonde, bidt dan Gods volk: Och, wierd ik derwaarts weer geleid! Of: Ik weet wat ik doen zal: ik zal opstaan en tot mijn vader gaan. Toen was het beter dan nu. God komt U tegen op den bruisenden stroom tot Uw nut.

Die dagen zijn dagen van smart.

Dat kunt ge merken in het volgende vers. En dat waren de toestanden in Israel toen dezen bidder bad. Hij klaagt: Zult Gij eeuwiglijk tegen ons toornen? Zult Gij Uwen toorn uitstrekken van geslacht tot geslacht? Zullen de ongeboren kinderkens ook nog betalen moeten voor de zonde van Uw volk? Men mag dit gebed vandaag wel bidden. Hoe staat het er bij met het volk Gods? De waarheid struikelt op de straten. En dan is het resultaat, dat Gods volk geen zekerheid des geloofs heeft. Als ze zich afvragen: ben ik op reis naar den hemel of naar de hel, dan weten velen het niet. Anderen zeggen: ik ga naar den hemel, doch zij maken zichzelf wat wijs. Of liever: zij gevoelen het anders in hun diepe hart, want God laat Zichzelf niet zonder getuigenis. Hoe kan het anders? Hoe zal men zeggen: Wij hebben 's Vaders Zoon aan boord en 't veilig strand voor 't oog, als men tegen den stroom op gaat in 't leven? Dan liegt men tegen zijn eigen hart en tegen God zelf.

In die toestand klaagt Gods volk: Ik kom om! God toornt tegen mij in 't harte. En de qualiteit van dien toorn is eeuwig. Ik lag gekneld in banden van den dood wijl de angst der hel mij allen troost deed missen. Ik was benauwd omringd van droefenissen!

Doch dan doet God Zijn volk bidden om genade. Dan roepen ze het uit: Heere, toorn toch niet tegen ons en tegen onze kinderen tot in der eeuwigheid. Keer Gij ons bootje om, dan zullen wij gekeerd zijn. Merkt ge het wel? God hoeft toch niet bekeerd te worden, doch wij moeten omgewend worden.

Positief vragen ze dan om leven.

Dan bemerken we in het volgende vers. Eigenlijk zijn de verzen zes en zeven aan elkaar gelijk, met dit verschil, dat het zesde vers negatief spreekt en het zevende vers positief. Zij vragen om leven en blijdschap in God. Gun leven aan mijn ziel, dan looft. . . .

Vers acht is geheel en al positief. Toon ons Uwe goedertierenheid, O HEERE! En geef ons Uw heil!

Men kon wel een boek schrijven over dit vers alleen.

Goedertierenheid is de hartstocht van God om Zijn volk goed te doen. Gedenkende aan mijn eerder genoemd beeld is het de wind die in de zeilen van ons levensbootje blaast. Dan gaat het mooi, stroomafwaarts.

Dan ervaren we het heil des Heeren. En dat heil is, dat wij weten, dat wij den Heere toebehooren. Dat wij Zijn erfdeel zijn. Dat wij Zijn aangezicht mogen aanschouwen in gunst tot ons gewend. Dat wij uiteindelijk veilig zullen aanlanden in den hemel om dan tot in alle eeuwigheid te mogen drinken uit de fonteynen van levend water.

Reist ge zóó in Uw bootje, dan is het goed.

Dan zingen wij in God verblijd.

Ik heb er van hooren zingen in het verre verleden: En 't veilig strand in 't oog!

G. V.

Dr. Kuyper's Conception of Christ's Human Nature As General

Should anyone ask you whether Christ assumed our human nature as an individual, a fellow man among men, or whether He merely assumed a general human nature, you would most likely express your assent with the former and reject that latter. The question comes down to this, did the Son of God have His own, individual human nature, or did He have a nature that is common to the human race? In answer to that you would no doubt say that He had His own human nature as a distinct individual among us.

You would bolster your position by showing that a general human nature for any particular person is inconceivable. We can speak of 'man' in the abstract when we refer to humanity in general, but as soon as

we think of a certain person we are bound to speak of that person as an individual with his own, concrete nature.

You could also point out that Christ was like unto us in all things, barring sin. He was not created, but born in the line of the generations of Adam. The Son of God did not prepare His human nature outside of the sphere of our race, but He prepared it from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary. He belonged to the white race in distinction from the black or yellow, by descent He was a Jew, born from the royal line of David, of the tribe of Judah and from the loins of Abraham, in the generations of Seth, from the family of Shem, as a son of Adam. He was, moreover, the promised Seed, a Brother among the brethren.

It must even be said that He was born on a certain day of a certain year on a certain spot to live a certain definite span of life here on earth. He was reared in the home of His parents where He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Luke 2:52. He had His own facial features, His own distinctive appearance, and characteristics that were peculiar to Him alone. He was known and readily recognized at all times as Jesus of Nazareth, who in outward appearance differed in nothing from the brethren of His own house. In fact, to be our Mediator He had to be one of us, even like unto us, as Hebrews teaches, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. . . . Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful highpriest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Heb. 2:14, 17.

All of which can only lead to the conclusion that Christ possessed His own, individual human nature while He dwelled among us in the flesh.

Which makes it the more surprising that Dr. A. Kuyper should teach the contrary, namely, that Christ possessed a general human nature; and that this view should be followed by later theologians, particularly Dr. Hepp, who arose in defence of this position a few years ago in his pamphlet against the views of Vollenhoven. See the Standard Bearer, vol. 18, pp. 415, 436.

Dr. Kuyper writes in his Dogmatics, De Christo, part 2, chap. 3, p. 7, "It is the Nestorian presentation that Christ was *a man*. . . . This you find nowhere in the Scriptures and cannot be deduced from them. The Scriptures do teach throughout that He was *man* and bore the human nature; but that He was an individual, that among the varieties of the seed of Adam there should also be a variety of Jesus, is absurd. In the sperma tou Adam (seed of Adam) were all the varieties of human life; of nations, generations and persons. If Christ were an individual, He would also

have been one of those varieties. But the Scriptures testify on the contrary that He was the deuterios Adam (second Adam); Christ was from Adam as Adam, that is, one who like Adam bore endless varieties in Himself, even the elect of God. Therefore every child of God knows that he is in Christ, has died and is risen with Christ; that he derives his life from Christ, even as the sinner derives his life from Adam. See I Cor. 15, the contrast between anthropos choikos (earthly man) and epouranios (heavenly)."

From the above citation it is evident that Dr. Kuyper distinguishes between 'a man' and 'man'. There are those who are distinct individuals, products and varieties of the one human nature of Adam, yet Christ is not one of those varieties, but simply belongs to the general category of man. Christ did not possess an individual, but rather a general human nature.

He speaks in a similar strain in E Voto, p. 370, where he states, "Over and above the millions of human persons who were born by the will of man and from the womb of the woman there is not one more human individual created, in this sense as if the Son of God had entered into the human individual to become God and man. No, this whole false presentation must absolutely be rejected with all its implication. The eternal Son of God is the person Who Himself took on a human nature, and, because He bore our nature, was a man among men. It is and remains one person, and that one person is and remains throughout the true and eternal God. It is not a human person who is clothed with divinity, but it is the glorious second person of the Godhead, who is clothed with all humanity, and now as Head of the new humanity appears among us."

Here the argument is that since Christ was not a human person it was impossible for Him to possess an individual human nature. If we would speak of Christ having an individual human nature we would thereby ascribe to Him a human person as well as a divine person. Dr. Kuyper confuses the concrete, human nature with a "personal" human nature, as if the Son of God could not assume His own human nature without assuming a human person.

We find this same error in E Voto, vol. 1, p. 323, where he maintains that Christ could not have fulfilled the law for us if He were a human individual, for then it would have been necessary for Him to fulfill the law for Himself. To which he adds, "Therefore our Reformed church has so insistently warned that Christ should not be regarded as a man next to other men, and it should never be said that the Son of God took on our human *person*, but rather our human *nature*. No, the only and natural Son of God assumed our human nature; not as that nature belongs to one individual, but as it belongs to our whole human race; with the result that He could not do otherwise than serve substitutionary in our stead. For all that He did

our human nature did in and through Him, and thus He could not fulfill the law for Himself, but it was fulfilled in Him and through Him for our human nature."

What is lost sight of is that Christ is the person of the Son of God appointed from all eternity by the Father to be the representative Head of His people. Juridically He stands in our stead, for God Himself brings the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins in our flesh upon the cross. He "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and *being found in fashion as a man*, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. 2:6-8. Being like us in all things except sin, He could bear our guilt and fulfill all righteousness for us. It is not necessary, nor is it Scriptural to maintain that Christ assumed a general human nature to bring the perfect sacrifice for sin. Hebrews 5:1.

Returning to Kuyper's Dogmatics, de Christo, chap. 3, pp. 7, 8, we find that he offers three proofs for his contention that Christ assumed a general human nature.

The first of these is that He is called in Scripture the second Adam. The argument is that even as the first Adam is the root from which the human race in all its varieties springs forth, so Christ, as the second Adam, is the Root which brings forth the elect of God. Adam's nature reproduced a variety of individuals, and so also Christ produced a host of believers who have their life from Him.

The assumption is that Adam had a general human nature, from which follows that the second Adam, Christ, must also have had a general human nature. Apart from the fact that you cannot possibly conceive of an abstract nature in a concrete human being, it is not true. Not even Adam could be just a general human being, but was very definitely an individual, a man. Even though he is the first father of the whole human race, he is very really one of us. He and Eve made up two separate entities, two individual people, and their children were again separate individuals, like their parents, born in the image and likeness of Adam and reproducing his nature. Therefore the argument that Christ must have had a general nature because Adam did, falls away.

The second proof raised for the general human nature of Christ is that He repeatedly calls Himself "Son of man". Dr. Bavinck writes, "By His common name *huios tou anthroopou*, Son of man, He distinguishes Himself from all other men. Each person is a man-child (*huios anthroopoon* or *anthroopou*), but not every one is *tou anthroopou*, that is, 'son of humanity'. Son of humanity designates the basic characteristic of the human nature. This name does not refer

to the leaves or branches of the tree, but to the very root."

Again it is assuming too much to translate Jesus name *huios tou anthroopou*, (Son of man) as if it meant 'son of humanity'. Jesus surely never intended to use that name to make plain to us that He had assumed a general human nature, nor does Scripture ever draw that conclusion from the name. That name on the lips of our Lord has a far richer significance. It designates Him as one who is born of man, flesh of our flesh; yet at the same time it is His title of honor which He bears through His entire humiliation. For the Son of man goes to His kingdom. It is true that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified in order to arise again on the third day; but even while this is being accomplished He assures His enemies, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." It is a false assumption to maintain that the name Son of man proves that Jesus bore a general human nature.

The final proof that Dr. Kuyper offers is that, even as Adam is the head of our race in the organic sense, so Christ is the Head of the Body of believers. He states, "The expressions, becoming one plant with Him, being one body with Him, Gal. 2:20, etc., are not figurative, but real, and they obtain their rights of existence, according to Romans 5, from our relation to Adam. The "being in the loins of Adam" signifies nothing less than our organic relation to Adam. Applying these expressions to Christ they mean that Christ is the organic Head of His church and thus also her root. Thus we can safely say that Christ assumed the human nature, that He became man; we can call Him "Son of man", but never "a man". The totality of mankind was not increased by one through Him."

He argues that even as the human race is born out of Adam, so the believers draw their life from Christ; they become one with Him as members of His body. We would almost receive the impression that Christ shares His human nature with us when He goes to glory. While the fact is that Christ shares His resurrection life with us. He does not give us another nature, but He renews our old nature. He does not make us into other creatures, but He makes us new creatures as members of His body, His church and His bride. The first Adam was a living soul, but the second Adam is a quickening spirit; the first Adam was of the earth earthy, the last Adam is the Lord from heaven.

Christ realizes His purpose in becoming our organic Head through the resurrection from the dead. It is exactly for this purpose that the Son of God came into the likeness of our sinful flesh and became like us in *all* things except sin, including our individual human nature. He is flesh of our flesh, blood of our blood,

born of the virgin Mary, of the seed of Adam, in the covenant line as the Seed of the promise, a brother among the brethren. He stands in the very center of the line of election, THE promised Seed and THE Heir of salvation.

Our only conclusion can be that the Son of God did not assume a general but an individual human nature at His incarnation.

C. H.

The Significance of John the Baptist

Apart from Christ Jesus he has no significance whatever. In fact he becomes a mere deceiver. This is true of all the prophets but especially true of John, since, as Christ had said, he is "more than a prophet."

When John was eight days old his father addresses him and says: "And thou, child, shalt be called a prophet of the Highest". There were indeed many prophets of the Most High, but yet John is more than a prophet, for, as we read in Luke 1:76: "For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways." John must go before, must lead, must take up the van in order to get everything in readiness for the coming of the Lord. All the prophets indeed had that work also, but John in a very special sense of the word. Do we not read in Scripture: "The Law and the Prophets were until John, since that time the Kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it." Hence John stands at the end of that long series of Old Testament revelation called "the law and the prophets." With his appearance there cometh a great change, for we read "SINCE THAT TIME the Kingdom of God is preached." Again in John 1:17 we read: "For the Law which was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Which does not mean that in the Old Testament there was neither grace nor truth, but yet a text such as this serves to show how tremendous was the change, how great the transition when the Church went from the Old into the New.

And now John stands at the end of the old and before the open door of the new. Of them born of women there is none greater than John, yet, the least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he. John stood at the end of the Old and before the open door of the New. He stood where the Grace and Truth of God in Christ would break out in a beauty and a glory never seen before. The Law, until this time

written OUTSIDE of man on tables of stone, would now be written in their hearts.

John thus went before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.

Long ago it had been said, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His Temple" (Mal. 3:1). Yet not so suddenly but that there will be time for John to appear. And John must cry out, "At hand is the Kingdom of God. . . .repent". When John does finally come out of the deserts and makes his appearance in the south country, he preaches: "repent, . . . the ax is laid unto the foot of the tree, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire (Matt. 3:10). And again, "Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance."

And John also thunders judgments against the hypocrites. Said he to them, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Judgment was coming, but also mercy; deliverance, but also wrath; the day of deliverance, but also the day of vengeance. John is Noah, the preacher of righteousness. He is Elijah, the announcer of judgment.

For the Kingdom is at hand.

But John also baptized. In fact we read, "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about Judea and were baptized of him" So John's work was likewise crowned with great success. If the Law was a schoolmaster unto Christ, John stood at the door to see to it that there were no truants. Not everyone in Judea and Jerusalem repented, of course, but there must have been a mighty influx. Many pressed at the door, waiting for entrance. Many came, impatiently they stood waiting and watching for the Old to wax old and perish and for the New to come in. Some even took the kingdom by violence. Surely John's work was crowned with success.

With these things before us we might attempt to show the significance of the Baptist as follows:

First of all it was his work to make announcement. "The Voice of one crying in the wilderness". He cries in the wilderness. It is the continuation of the voice of Elijah. Elijah withdrew from Bethel, to Jericho, to Jordan, and then disappeared. Now that voice of the ascended prophet is heard again, but in John. Here, in this vicinity also Moses died and his voice was heard no more. But from out of that wilderness there comes again, also his voice. Though dead he still speaketh. John's voice is the voice of all the prophets, only John is also more than a prophet. He is also the Herald and Messenger. For Christ is not coming. Christ HAS come. At present the Lamb of God, toward Whom everything points, is in Nazareth, but He is on His way to the deserts of Judah. There the Old and the New will meet, will greet one another to

the accompaniment of the voice of the prophets. John sees Him coming in the distance. The Kingdom of God is at hand, says he.

Crying as John did he was calling to prepare the way of the Lord before Him. Sacrifices had been the order of the day until now, but there were different orders now. Men could sacrifice and yet the hearts mean nothing of it. Repent is the order of the day. These were dark days. During the four hundred years between the Old and the New there had been an awful falling away also. The scribes and the Pharisees boasted that they were per se children of the Kingdom and in need of nothing. Besides that, did they not keep the altars smoking with sacrifices? They needed nothing. They would like an eloquent prophet who could praise them for their integrity, or, still more, they would like a fearless general to lead them out of the Roman bondage, but for the rest they were self-satisfied. Now comes John crying out REPENT! There is no entrance into the Kingdom of heaven than alone via repentance. Inwards service, true humility. All could keep the altars smoking with offerings, but now the offering must be inward, internal. . . . humility, faith, trust in Christ, etc. The King is coming. Woe to any impenitent. He shall not look at smoking altars, but at the heart.

"The wrath to come". . . . run, hide, fall upon your knees for the great day of the Lord is come. The law was until John. . . . now is the Kingdom. The Law was given by Moses. . . . grace and TRUTH (the eternal reality, the fulfillment) is come by Christ Jesus. Repent! Impressed by these sentences the Scribes pretended they would also be baptized. Had they not until this time enjoyed the types and covered themselves with the rituals of His service? Could they not take this ritual with it? But no, says the Voice: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Repent!

John preached what the church preaches throughout. Entrance into the Kingdom only in the way of repentance. In the Old Testament the blood on the door posts covered them all and they all went through the Red Sea and were all baptized into Moses. But now that is changed. TRUTH has come in Christ Jesus. Repent says the Voice. He cries of forgiveness also. "Who shall abide the day of His coming" cried Malachi four hundred years before this. The Voice answers: the penitent, whose sins are forgiven them in Christ Jesus.

But John also baptizes. He baptizes upon the strength of the coming of Jesus. He baptizes, looking to Jesus in Whose blood all sin shall once and forever be washed away. "Behold, the Lamb of God". And they were baptized, confessing their sins. And

they received the seal of sins washed away once and forever. Sealing them unto Christ, making ready a people for the Lord.

None of the disciples understood Christ. Neither did John. For later he sends messengers to Jesus asking Him whether He was the One to come or if there would come still another. No, John did not understand all things, neither did he understand his own significance.

But he understood enough to cry out: "He must increase but I must decrease". And that was enough. That was John the Baptist.

And that after all is every child of God today.

M. G.

IN MEMORY

The Mary-Martha Ladies' Society of the Manhattan Protestant Reformed Church wishes hereby to express its sympathy to our fellow member, Mrs. Dick Heys, in the loss of her

BROTHER

May the heavenly Father comfort the bereaved ones by His Spirit, strengthening their hope in His eternal House of many mansions.

The Mary-Martha Ladies' Society,
Mrs. H. I. Visser, Sec'y.
Manhattan, Montana.

IN MEMORY

The Ladies' Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church hereby extends their sincere sympathy to one of their fellow members, Mrs. Chris Schut, nee Nettie Kuiper, in the death of her

FATHER

May God sustain and comfort her and the other relatives with His blessed truth, that blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.

Mrs. J. Van Overloop, Sec'y.
Bernard Kok, Pres.

Hudsonville, Mich.