

WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Department of Systematic Theology and Apologetics

ST 223 Doctrine of Christ

Second Semester, 1980-1981

THE COURSE

Following upon a previous study of the creation and fall of man and the doctrine of sin, ST 223, Doctrine of Christ, takes up the doctrine of redemption, or soteriology, focussing upon the person and work of Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant. The course begins with a consideration of the various ways of construing the plan of salvation that have emerged in the history of doctrine, followed by a discussion of the order of the divine decrees in Calvinism. At this point the Reformed doctrines of election and reprobation are taken up.

The outworking of the plan of redemption is covenantal in structure, and so consideration is given both to the intertrinitarian counsel of salvation and the covenant of grace with emphasis on the unity of the covenant in distinction from the dispensationalist position.

Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant. First, the person of Christ is studied (his incarnation, theanthropic constitution, and sinlessness), followed by his work in terms of the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king. Christology is concluded with reflection on the successive states of humiliation and exaltation in the experience of the Mediator. The groundwork is thus laid for an understanding of the application of redemption by the Holy Spirit in the next course of the theological curriculum.

Prerequisites for enrollment in this course are OT 012 and NT 013 or the equivalent. Students who have not attained this level of competence in the original languages of Scripture are not permitted to register.

ASSIGNMENTS

The following books or parts thereof are assigned for careful reading and study: *779 pp.*

Hodge, Charles. SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, Vol. II. 1871; rpt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972. Pp. 354-638 (Part III, Chapters II-XIII).

784
Bavinck, Herman. OUR REASONABLE FAITH, trans. Henry Zylstra. 1956; rpt. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977. Pp. 260-385 (Chapters XIV-XVIII).

125
1. Warfield, Benjamin B. THE PLAN OF SALVATION, new rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1935. *142*

Murray, John. THE COVENANT OF GRACE. London: Tyndale, 1954. 32

Calvin, John. INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. Book III, Chapters 21-24. 420-86

Ibid. Book II, Chapters 9-11. 423-63

Murray, John. REDEMPTION ACCOMPLISHED AND APPLIED. 1955; rpt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975. Pp. 9-78 (Part I).

The readings in Hodge and Bavinck are comprehensive in character and are best completed if the particular chapters are read in conjunction with the corresponding lecture materials. The remaining assignments are listed in the recommended order for their completion. Warfield should be read at the outset.

The translation of Calvin's INSTITUTES by Ford Lewis Battles is recommended but other translations, especially Beveridge, are also acceptable.

In addition to the reading assignments, students are required to familiarize themselves with the following sections of the Westminster standards: Confession of Faith, Chapters VII, VIII; Larger Catechism, Q. and A. 30-56; and Shorter Catechism, Q. and A. 20-28. DO!!

LECTURES

The class sessions will be conducted in the main with lectures by the instructor. Students should feel free, however, to raise questions during the course of the lectures. At the discretion of the instructor, questions peripheral to the topic at hand or questions of limited value for the class as a whole may be postponed for consideration in private consultation.

Students may confer with the instructor in Montgomery Library, second floor, study No. 2, preferably during the hours posted, and where possible, after arranging for an appointment beforehand.

Since the classroom work is an integral part of the course, students should assume responsibility to be consistent in attendance.

EXAMINATIONS

The final grade for the course will be based on two written tests, a mid-term and a final examination. The mid-term will be given approximately halfway through the course during a class hour, and will cover the lecture material to the date of the test together with related readings to be specified. The precise date of the mid-term will be announced at least two weeks in advance. The final examination will be a two-hour, comprehensive test, covering all the lecture material and assigned reading in the course.

On both tests students are permitted the use of the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, without consultation of cross references, marginal notes, concordances, or other helps.

Students whose native language is other than English may use up to an additional half hour to complete the final examination.

For the good order of the conduct of the course, students are expected to take the examination on the day and hour when they are scheduled. In order to facilitate this, students who are gainfully employed should seek to make the necessary arrangements with their employers well in advance of the examination dates. The final examination schedule usually appears midway through the semester. Ordinarily special arrangements for taking examinations will be made only for reasons of ill health.

Unexcused absence from the final examination will result in a failure in the course. In any case of failure, arrangements can be made for taking the final examination a second time.

The final examination counts for approximately two-thirds of the course grade except that the final examination must be sustained in order to pass the course.

COURSE OUTLINE

- I. The Plan of Salvation *Winfield 13-104*
 - A* *Intro of Plan*
 - B* A. Basic Conceptions in the History of Theology
 - C* B. The Order of the Divine Decrees
 - D* C. Election and Reprobation
- II. Covenant *Wedge 354-77* *Barwick 260-79*
 - A. The Intertrinitarian Counsel of Salvation
 - B. The Covenant of Grace
- III. The Person of Christ *Wedge 378-454* *Barwick 280-329*
- IV. The Offices of Christ *Barwick 310-56* *Wedge 382-29*
 - A. The Mediatorial Work of Christ *Wedge 405-61*
 - B. The Prophetic Office *Wedge 442-64*
 - C. The Priestly Office *Wedge 464-79*
 1. Atonement *Wedge 480-891*
 2. Intercession *Wedge 542-58*
 - D. The Kingly Office *Wedge 596-609*
- V. The States of Christ *Wedge 610-75* *Barwick 357-85*
 - A. Humiliation
 - B. Exaltation

BIBLIOGRAPHY

In addition to the books assigned for reading the following will be found useful in connection with this course:

A. Plan of Salvation, Election, and Reprobation

Barth, Karl. CHURCH DOGMATICS. Vol. II, Part 2, THE DOCTRINE OF GOD, trans. G. W. Bromiley, et. al. Pp. 3-506.

Berkouwer, G. C. DIVINE ELECTION, trans. Hugo Bekker. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960.

Boettner, Loraine. THE REFORMED DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION. 1932; rpt. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1969.

Custance, Arthur C. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GRACE. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979.

Daane, James. THE FREEDOM OF GOD. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973.

Klooster, Fred H. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BARTH'S THEOLOGY. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961.

Murray, John, "The Plan of Salvation," in COLLECTED WRITINGS OF JOHN MURRAY, Vol. II (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977), pp. 123-131.

Shepherd, Norman, "Election as Gospel," THE WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL, XXXVI, 3 (Spring, 1974), 305-333.

Thornwell, James Henley, "Election and Reprobation," in THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF JAMES HENLEY THORNWELL, Vol. II (1875; rpt. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974), pp. 105-201.

Van Til, Cornelius, "Equal Ultimacy." Mimeographed. (Privately bound in KANT AND OTHER STUDIES IN THEOLOGY, Westminster Theological Seminary Library, Oversize, BX, 9225, .V371, K35)

----- THE THEOLOGY OF JAMES DAANE. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1959.

Warfield, Benjamin B., "Predestination," in BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1952), pp. 270-333.

B. Covenant

Ellis, Oswald T., "The Covenant of Works," in BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), pp. 96-102.

- The Covenantal Covenant with Adam*
 Diemer, N. HET SCHEPPINGSVERBOND MET ADAM. Kampen: Kok, n.d.
- Fisher, Edward. THE MARROW OF MODERN DIVINITY. Philadelphia: Pres. Bd. of Pub., n.d.
- ~~Fuller~~, Daniel P. GOSPEL AND LAW: CONTRAST OR CONTINUUM? Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.
- Hendriksen, W. THE COVENANT OF GRACE. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1932.
- Isbell, R. Sherman. THE ORIGIN OF THE COVENANT OF WORKS. Th.M. Thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary.
- Janse, A. *Life in the Covenant* *Van goed* LEVEN IN HET VERBOND, 2nd ed. Groningen: De Vuurbaak, 1975.
- Kline, Meredith G. BY OATH CONSIGNED. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968.
- ~~Murray~~, John, "Covenant Theology," in THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHRISTIANITY, Vol. III, pp. 199-216.
- ~~Kolston~~, Holmes. JOHN CALVIN VERSUS THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION. Richmond: John Knox, 1972.
- The Kingdom of God & Covenant in Older Protestantism*
 Schrenk, Gottlob. GOTTESREICH UND BUND IM ÄLTEREN PROTESTANTISMUS. Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1923.
- Thornwell, James Henley, "Moral Government," and "The Covenant of Works," in THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF JAMES HENLEY THORNWELL, Vol. I (1875; rpt. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974), pp. 252-300.
- ~~Yos~~, Geerhardus, "The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology," in REDEMPTIVE HISTORY AND BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION, ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980), pp. 234-267.
- Witsius, Herman. THE ECONOMY OF THE COVENANTS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN, 2 vols., trans. William Crookshank. London: T. Tegg and Son, 1887.

COURSE OUTLINE

General introduction.

I. The Plan of Salvation. pp. 2-57

A. The Idea of a Plan of Salvation.

1. There is a plan of salvation. (1)
 - a. There is salvation
 - b. Salvation is the work of God
 - c. There is a complexity to that work of salvation
2. That plan of salvation is an eternal plan of salvation. (2)
 - a. God and His plan are supra-temporal
 - b. Order of the Divine Decrees
 - c. Is it presumptuous to talk of an order of the Divine Decrees?
3. Biblical Allusions to the Plan of Salvation. (4)
 - a. II Timothy 1:9-10
 - b. Ephesians 3:8-11
 - c. Ephesians 1:10
 - d. The distinction between biblical and theological concerns
4. Terminology.
 - a. Plan of Salvation/Order of the Divine Decrees
 - b. Order of the Divine Decrees/Ordo Salutis

B. Basic Conceptions of the Plan of Salvation in the History of Theology.

1. Autosoterism--Theosoterism: Who is the author of salvation? (4)
 - a. Pelagianism vs. Augustinianism
 - b. Semi-Pelagianism
 - c. Semi-Semi-Pelagianism (cp. Roman Catholicism)
 - d. Pelagianizing tendencies, elements and syncretism
2. Sacerdotalism--Evangelicalism: How does God save? (2)
 - a. Mediate through instrumentalities; or, Immediately directly on the Heart?
 - b. The main point of Sacerdotalism: God wills the salvation of all men by an antecedent and conditional will.
 - c. Three problems:
 - 1) There is a loss of personal contact between God and the sinner because of the intervention of the Church.
 - 2) A rich stream of Mysticism arises in reaction to ritualism
 - 3) The operations of grace are now subjected to the control of man.
3. Universalism--Particularism (11)
 - a. The distinguishing features of Universalism.
 - 1) Thesis: that in the saving operations of God, He works equally on behalf of all men and in all men.
 - 2) Three types of Universalism, (acc. to Warfield).
 - a) Remonstrant-Arminianism (Classical): corresponds to semi-Pelagianism.
 - b) Wesleyan-Arminianism: corresponds to semi-semi-Pelagianism.
 - c) Lutheranism
 - b. The pattern in Evangelical Lutheranism
 - 1) God in His general benevolence wills and intends the salvation of all men.
 - 2) To effect this, God sends His Son to make satisfaction for the sins of all men.

- 3) God purposes to give all men the means of salvation.
- 4) God predestinates all to salvation whom He sees will repent and believe.
- 5) Resisting or not resisting is the key to why all are not saved by the means working ex opere operato
- 6) The Spirit works per verbum, through the Word.
- c. Remonstrant-Arminianism (17th-century, Netherlands).
Cf. Hodge II:327ff for summary.
- d. Wesleyan-Arminianism.
- e. Another Dimension.
God's covenantal ways and His covenant people.
- (4. Particularism → shift to next major topic -- "C".)

C. Calvinism and the Order of the Divine Decrees.

- 1. The distinguishing features of Particularism. (15)
 - a. In contrast to Universalism: GOD is the One who makes men to differ.
 - b. When God operates to save a person He saves!
 - c. This operation is in accordance with God's decree.
 - d. The difference among Particularists is whether the decree of Election is before or after the decree to permit the Fall. E.g., Supra- or Infralapsarianism.
- 2. Supralapsarianism and Infralapsarianism. (15)
 - a. The differences between them:
 - 1) Supra- order: Election, decree to Create, decree to Permit the Fall, decree to Send Christ to make atonement for the Elect, decree to Send the Spirit to apply the things of Christ to the Elect.
 - 2) Infra- order: decree to Create, decree to Permit the Fall, decree to Elect, decree to Send Christ, decree to Send the Spirit.
 - b. The similarities between them:
 - 1) Both are willing to say that, in God, strictly speaking, there is no order or succession of decrees. God has a single decree or purpose.
 - 2) For both, election as a decree precedes the Fall as a fact of History. Thus, all are Supralapsarians.
- 3. Supralapsarianism. (16)
 - a. Controlling Idea: God is all glorious in His being and attributes. Among these attributes are: Mercy and Justice. God determines to reveal the glory of His mercy in the salvation of the Elect. He determines to reveal the glory of His justice in the condemnation of the Reprobate.
Justice=retributive justice, punishing those deserving of punishment.
 - b. A Fundamental Objection: Men are contemplated as worthy of condemnation and death even before the decree to permit the Fall! Thus it is without reference to demerit. Makes Reprobation wholly arbitrary.
 - 1) This is not the characteristic representation of Supra- by Supralapsarians. Cf. Beza's chart -- "God's decree of reprobation: to reject those to be damned by their own fault.
 - 2) For the Supra-, Predestination and Reprobation comprehend the Creation and the Fall. A House w/Rooms.
 - 3) For the Infra-, there is a House (Creation), to which are added various additions.

- c. Discrimination apart from Merit or Demerit.
 - 1) A variation on the order of decrees in Supra-; Election, Creation, Fall, Reprobation, send Christ, send the Spirit.
 - 2) But, election becomes "unto favor" and subsequently "unto salvation" on the background of the Fall.
 - 3) Correlatively, there is a non-election which becomes Reprobation.
 - 4) Therefore, discrimination finds its ground not in differences which exist in men, but in the good pleasure of God.

4. Infralapsarianism. (15)

- a. The Controlling Idea: the purpose of God's works ad extra is the revelation of His glory. But this final purpose is not transformed into a principle from which deductions can be made.
 - 1) The supralapsarian appeals to Ps.115:3; Prov.16:4; Isa.10:15; 45:9; Jere.18:6; Matt.20:15; Rom.9:7, 19-21.
 - 2) The infralapsarian agrees with texts but also wants to follow the Scriptural language used concerning Election.
 - 3) The Supra- has Teleology in the foreground. The Infra- has History in the foreground.
- b. The Scriptural Pattern.
 - 1) Ephesians 1:4 election is in Christ. "Christ" is a messianic, soteric name. Therefore election is directly related to salvation from sin.
 - 2) Romans 8:29 predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ. Conformity to the image is redemptive. Redemption presupposes sin and evil. Thus predestination is from sin unto conformity to Christ.
 - 3) Ephesians 1:5 predestined unto adoption as sons. Ditto
- c. Confessional Pattern.
 - 1) Cp. Hodge II:317ff on WCF III:5-7. Also cf. WSC, Q. & A. 19-20
 - 2) Canons of Dordt, First Head of Doctrine, sections six and ten.

5. Significance of the Difference between Supralapsarianism and Infralapsarianism. (11)

- a. Supralapsarianism has the teleological aspect in view. It emphasizes the unity of the Decree. It can or may lead to a kind of fatalism.
- b. Infralapsarianism has the causal (Bavinck) aspect in view. The decrees manifest the unity and also the diversity of God's working, the seriousness of historical sequence.
- c. The Creation and the Fall are not merely steps to achieve a purpose. Creation has meaning and purpose in itself. The Fall is retrogression not progress.
- d. Man had a purpose and task prior to the Fall. Life had purpose.

6. Amyrauldianism. (10)

- a. Controlling Idea:
 - 1) Order of the decrees--Creation, Fall, Send Christ to make full atonement for all, Election, Send Spirit to apply salvation. Also termed Post-Redemptionism, Hypothetical Universalism.

- 2) Particularistic as to Election and the Application of Redemption, but not as to the Atonement.
- b. Criticism.
 - 1) How can one differentiate between an absolute and a hypothetical intention?
 - 2) The main problem is the universalizing of the atonement.
- D. The Doctrine of Election.
 1. Methodological Considerations
 - a. Election related to the doctrine of God.
 - 1) Some do deal with the doctrine of election when they deal with the doctrine of God. Cf. Bavinck, Berkhof, WCF II and III, before going on to IV, V.
 - 2) Advantages:
 - a) Decrees are prior to history.
 - b) Points out the determinate and unchangeable character of God's purpose.
 - 3) Disadvantage: may lead to a fatalistic misunderstanding.
 - Thus, the other way to do it is...
 - b. Election related to the Plan of Salvation.
 - 1) Advantage: reveals that...
 - a) salvation does not arise from man, and
 - b) salvation has its origin with God and His eternal purpose.
 - c) congenial to Infralapsarianism
 - 2) Reflects the pattern of Scripture itself, the concern with salvation, not the decrees; as such, in an abstract or academic sense.
 2. Confessional Affirmations.
 - a. God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, sec.I.
 - b. The contingency of secondary causes is not destroyed but rather established.
 - c. The decree is not based on the foresight of history, sec.II.
 - d. Some men and angels are predestinated unto life and others are predestinated unto death, sec.III.
 - e. There is a fixed number of Elect and Reprobate, sec.IV.
 - f. Election unto Life is Eternal, sec.V.
 - g. The means by which election is realized, sec.VI.
 - h. Those whom God does not elect are ordained to wrath' and condemnation, sec.VII.
 - i. The doctrine of election is to be handled with care, sec.VIII.
 - j. God has chosen a people for His possession, Heidelberg Catechism, Q. and A. 54.
 3. Election is of a People.
 - a. The Scriptural Representation.
 - Deut.7:6; I Peter 2:9.
 - b. That election is realized in history
 - c. It is an Eternal Election.
 - It is grounded in: 1) the love of God, Jer.31:3; Deut. 7:8; I Jn.4:8,16; 2) God's oath-keeping, Neh.9:7.
 4. Election is of Persons.
 - a. The distinction between Theocratic and Soteric Election.
 - 1) Theocratic: an election unto privilege and standing. It is mutable. Not unto salvation.
 - 2) Soteric: an election unto salvation. Immutable.

- 3) The liabilities of this distinction.
 - a) WHY is election, by definition, mutable in the case of a nation; and immutable in the case of persons???
 - b) The distinction between O.T. and N.T. can't be conceived of as dealing with Israel corporately and dealing with believers individualistically.
 - c) Must grant that Theocratic Election is soteric, and, that Soteric Election is theocratic.
- b. The Scriptural Representation.
 Deut.7; Rom.8:29-30; Eph.1:4-5; Gal.1:15; II John; Luke 10:20; Phil.4:3; Rev.3:5; Acts 2:41; 13:48; Titus 2:14; Gal.3:29; Acts 15:14.
- c. An Eternal Election.
 Cp. II Peter 1:10 with Eph.1:14.
5. Ephesians 1:3-14 (cp. J. Murray Collected Writings II:125-31) (24)
 - a. In terms of this passage, spiritual blessing is present blessing. Cf. 1:3; 2:6; Col.3:1,3.
 - b. Those spiritual blessings are blessings which flow from Election. Cf. 1:4.
 - c. Predestination flows from the love of God. Cf. 1:4-5.
 - d. Election is in Christ ($\epsilon\chi\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$). Cf. 1:3,6,7,10,13.
6. Romans 8:29-30. (14)
 - a. The Arminian understanding: Foreknowledge in the sense of foresight of faith.
 - 1) Verb $\pi\rho\omicron\phi\epsilon\gamma\eta$ -- "to know beforehand, in advance."
 - 2) Compare Acts 26:5; II Peter 3:17 for confirmation.
 - 3) Even if granted it must be a distinctive foreknowledge, due to the predestination and omniscience of God.
 - 4) Common answer is that it is foresight of faith and perseverance therein.
 - b. Even if it is foresight of faith it is inadequate, not without its problems.
 - 1) Where does faith come from, what is its origin?
 - 2) Faith is the gift of God--John 3:3-8; 6:44,45,66; Eph.2:8; Phil.1:29.
 - 3) Thus foresight of faith presupposes in itself an electing purpose, a discriminating purpose.
 - c. Foreknowledge as the equivalent of Forelove.
 - 1) $\Gamma\iota\upsilon\omega\sigma\kappa\omega$ -- points beyond a bare cognition.
 - 2) $\epsilon\gamma\omega\iota\sigma\kappa\omega$ -- cf. Ps.1:6; Jer.1:5; Hosea 13:5; Amos 3:2.
 - 3) The ideas of love, foreknowledge and election are closely tied together and brought to the fore. Cp. Matt.7:23; I John 3:1.
 - 4) Foreknow virtually equals election. Cf. Rom.11:2,5.
 - 5) Therefore Rom.8:29 means: God foreknows those whom He sets His love upon from eternity.
 - 6) Compare with Eph.1:4,5 "predestined in love." Also Deut.7:3.
 - d. Predestination conditions Calling and Faith.
 - 1) God is the one who predestines, calls, justifies and glorifies.
 - 2) Foreknowledge is first.
 - 3) To insert prevision of faith makes God passive. Thus destroying the pervasive emphasis on the divine monergism.

- 4) Faith is the appropriate response to calling, and follows it.
- 5) Calling is of God. Vs.23 the purpose of God.
- 6) Vs.29 defines this purpose in terms of Foreknowledge and Predestination.

7. The Preaching of Election. (118)

Texts: pre-eminent are Eph.1 and Rom.8. Also, Matt.11:25-27; John 6:38-40; 10:29; 15:16; 17:6; Acts 13:48; Rom.9; Gal.1:15-16; I Thess.1:2-4; II Thess.2:13-14; I Peter 1:2.

Election is so emphasized so as to remind us that Salvation does not originate with man but with God. He works and applies it all, from Beginning to end.

a. Errors:

- 1) Sinners use it as an excuse for indifference.
- 2) Preachers are reluctant to importune sinners to repent and believe.
- 3) Or, they present Election as an objective doctrine.
- 4) Preaching, to be Reformed, must arise out of, be molded and structured by, the doctrine of Election.

b. Conclusions to be drawn:

- 1) Not to be looking for marks to show you are elect.
- 2) Election is of Grace, not of Works.
- 3) Therefore forsake self and cling to God, who, in His kindness, has a people for His own possession.
- 4) J. Deane is wrong, the Reformed doctrine of Election is not Fatalism.
- 5) Election is Good News. Cf. Romans 11:33-36.

E. The Doctrine of Reprobation. (40-52)

1. Preterition and Pre-Damnation. (40)

a. Introductory comments on the renewal of the discussion of Reprobation.

In 1965 a gravamen (official objection) was lodged against Reprobation as formulated in the Canons of the Synod of Dordt, with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (CKV). The conclusion was that the doctrine was no longer officially binding upon members and ministers. H

More recently, Rev. H. Doer raised a similar objection with the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). The Synod of 1980 turned it down and re-affirmed Dordt. The substance of the objection was that the texts cited in the Canons do not warrant the doctrine formulated there.

The point that will be used as a foil is whether Reprobation is "without any regard to desert."

b. An Infralapsarian Conception of Reprobation--from Francis Turretin.

- 1) There is a negative and a positive act of Reprobation. The negative act is Preterition: God wills not to pity some sinners. The positive act is Pre-Damnation: God determines to judge and punish them on account of their sin.
- 2) Reprobation is an absolute act, it presupposes unbelief.
- 3) As a correlate, unbelief is a consequence of Reprobation.
- 4) In Pre-Damnation God acts justly because He con-

denies no one but the sinner who is worthy of condemnation.

- 5) Even in connection with Preterition, there is a sense in which God is acting as Judge. Sin is not the compelling cause of judgement but the Just cause.

c. A Supralapsarian Conception of Reprobation--from Theodore Beza.

- 1) Beza distinguishes between the Ordinance of Reprobation and Reprobation itself.
The Ordinance is comprehensive: contains sin and the condemnation of the sinner. Reprobation itself is grounded in man and his sin.
- 2) The fault of sin lies in man.
- 3) It follows that the punishment of the Reprobate is just.

d. Westminster Confession of Faith III:7.

2. Ethnic Reprobation. (46)

a. Ethnic Reprobation as Preterition.

- 1) Reprobation is the logical correlate of Election.
 - a) G.Vos's denial of the logic.
 - b) True, but all might be chosen and none rejected.
- 2) Scripture presents us with the fact all are not chosen, some are passed by.
 - a) Israel is the Elect Nation, in distinction from the other nations which are passed by. Cf. Dt. 10:14-15.
 - b) The election of Israel is a deliberate, gratuitous choice. AND thereprobation is a deliberate act. Cf. Dt. 4:19.

b. Ethnic Reprobation as Pre-Damnation.

- 1) In the punishment of sin there is an exercise of sovereign, divine discrimination.
- 2) God not only discriminates according to His will, but He also hardens whom He wills.

3. Personal Reprobation. (50)

a. Personal Reprobation as Preterition.

Cf. Matt. 25:46; Isa. 41:9; Lk. 2:34; Rom. 11:7; John 17:9; Acts 13:47; Rev. 20:15; Matt. 11:26-27.

Why does God discriminate among men? Why divide men into Elect and Reprobate? Why not show your justice in the Cross of Christ only and your mercy in the salvation of all?

We must, as Job, learn to live by faith and every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

b. Personal Reprobation as Pre-Damnation.

Cf. John 5:27; Matt. 25:31-46; Mark 4:12; Deut. 29:4; John 12:37-40; I Thess. 5:9; I Peter 2:8-9; II Peter 2:3; Jude 4.

4. The Preaching of Reprobation. (51)

a. The Election of God is Imutable.

- 1) With respect to Israel, cp. Rom. 9-11. The cf. I Cor. 10:1-11 and Rom. 11:7-10 (Deut. 29:4).
- 2) With respect to Persons, cp. Rom. 8:29-30.
- 3) But we do not know who is who! How can this work?
 - a) We are not fatalists.
 - b) We live in covenant with the Lord God.
 - c) We must judge according to the profession and walk of the person, and that only.

- d) We exhort the Elect to remain steadfast and immoveable. And we exhort the Reprobate to repent and believe.
- e) When there is a change in the status of the Elect or the Reprobate it is we who must revise our estimate. It is not that God's decree has changed.
- b. Now, what must be said of Reprobation, (changing the things that must be changed).
On the basis of external evidence we can conclude that a person is reprobate. A Reprobate is a person who denies the Lord Jesus Christ. He lives a life of rebellion, indifference and immorality.
But some warn against addressing any man as Reprobate.
 - 1) Because just as the decree of Election is immutable, just so also, the decree of Reprobation is immutable.
 - 2) We have no insight into that decree. Therefore we dare not address any one as Reprobate lest we cut off hope prematurely.
 But the same kind of reasoning would also apply to saying any one is Elect.
Our purpose in preaching to those whom we have evidence for thinking they are Reprobate is not that by this we hope to get God to change His decree. But we preach because we know that the only hope of any unbeliever is Jesus Christ and His grace alone.

II. The Covenant. pg. 59-63

A. The Inter-Trinitarian Counsel of Salvation. (pg. 64)

- 1. Discussion of the Terminology and Definition of the of the Covenant. (pg. 65)
 - a. Some combine the topic of the Covenant of Redemption with that of the Covenant of Grace, designating it the Covenant of Grace.
 - 1) The covenant is then viewed as made with Christ, and through Him with the Elect. Christ is the Head of the Covenant.
 - 2) Conception is stated explicitly in WLC.#31.
 - 3) Scripture confirmation in Rom.5:12-21; Gal.3:16.
 - b. Other theologians (Hodge, et.al.) distinguish between the Covenant of Redemption and the Covenant of Grace.
 - 1) Covenant of Redemption refers to a covenant between the Father and the Son specifically. A mutual agreement in the full sense, a συνθήκη.
 - 2) F & S each promise to undertake certain redemptive accomplishments.
 - 3) No specific passage comprehends all this under a Covenant, but the elements are there.
 - a) at least two contracting parties
 - b) promises made,
 - c) conditions to be fulfilled
 - 4) Thus a distinction is made between the Covenant of Redemption between F & S and the Covenant of Grace between God and His people.
 - c.ounding out of Terminology
 - 1) Latin for Covenant of Grace--Fœdus Gratiae
 - 2) Latin for Covenant of Redemption--Pactum Salutis

- 3) Difference between Foedus and Pactum
 - a) Foedus accents faith (fides) character of the relation
 - b) Pactum is from pacisior, to bargain or come to an agreement.
- 4) Neither are translations of Greek terms but do maintain the distinction between Συμβάσις + Διὰ Θεῶν
- d. Excursus on use of "Counsel" instead of "Covenant."
 - 1) Use of "Counsel of Peace" (Pactum Pacis) in classical Reformed Theology.
 - a) Drawn from Zech 6:13
 - b) But cp. NIV "there will be a harmony between the two."
 - c) Vulgate has "consilium pacis."
 - d) Context reveals it is not relevant to this theological issue.
 - 2) Better to use "Counsel", as "Covenant" is loaded theologically.
 - 3) Inter-Trinitarian Counsel of Salvation.

Definition--an arrangement among the persons of the Trinity which lies behind the accomplishment and application of redemption in time. It is also, an inter-Trinitarian arrangement which includes obligation and bestowment of promise.
2. Biblical Warrant for the Inter-Trinitarian Counsel of Salvation (Covenant of Redemption). (64)
 - a. Series of passage related to the role of the Son. Ps. 40:7-8 (cp Heb. 10:7); Jn 4:34; 6:38-39; 17:45, 24; Heb 11:2; Phil 2:6-9 (also Eph 1:20-22; 5:25-27).
 - b. Series of passages related to the role of the Father Jn 17:18-19 Rom 8:3 Gal 4:4
 - c. Series of passages related to the role of the Holy Spirit Jn 15:26; 16:7; Acts 1:4; 2:16,17,23
- B. Creation and Covenant (65-77)
 1. Man created in covenant with God. (65)
 - a. The Confessional Affirmation

WSC #12
WCF VII:1
 - b. Reasons for speaking of God's relations with man as a Covenant
 - 1) Hosea 6:7
 - 2) Gen 2:4ff

Use of Yahweh in Gen 2 in distinction from Gen. one use of Elohim. Due to Moses as author and Yahweh being the Covenant God's name. Also cp. usage in Gen 3:1ff. Satan doesn't use Yahweh. Esp. cp. vs. 8
 - 3) Adam is created in the image of God.

The relationship between husband and wife is a covenant relationship (cf Mal. 2:14). A relationship with similarities and differences (subordination). And thus the relation between God and man could be seen as a covenant.
 - 4) The N.T. account of Re-Creation

Re-creation is done with man in covenantal relation to God.
2. The Nature of the Creation Covenant (66)
 - a. Covenant describes the relationship between God and man.
 - 1) It is a relation of union and communion, Old Covenant cf. Lev. 26:11-12
New Covenant cf. Jer. 31:31-32

Paul of II Cor 6:16

John of Rev. 1:11ff and 21:3

What is true of the New Creation was also true of the First Creation.

- 2) Analogous or Similar Relationships used to describe that union and communion with God.

a) That of Husband and wife Jer 3:14; 31:32

Jer. 3:6-10; Hosea 1:2; Eph 5

b) That of a Father and son.

Adam is son of God (Lk 3:38)

Israel as son of God Hosea 11:1; Dt. 1:31; 8:5

Isa 5:1. Cp. Rom 9:4

Ez 16 combines marriage and sonship/daughter-ship. In the N.T. cf. II Cor 6:16; I Jn 3:1

- 3) Mutually Binding Ties

At least two: Love and Faithfulness.

Preliminary definition of Covenant: "a bond of love and faithfulness between God and His people."

a) Love—first and foremost

God is love, I Jn 4:8,16

God loves us, cf Deut 7:8-9 Mal 1:2; Rom 5:8

Jn 3:16 We love God, cf Deut 6:5-6; I Jn 4:19

b) Faithfulness — expression of love

Ps 37:3-6; Deut 7:9 Rom 3:3

- b. It is a Relationship with a Command.

Covenant relation is not static but full of life and action. Adam placed in Garden to labor and work (not toil). The Cultural Mandate.

Man is to do the will of God as conscious response to God not by instinct.

Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is a constant reminder that man must live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

- c. The Covenant relation has a Promise

The Tree of Life. Symbolized the promise of life we now have thru Christ. But why was life promised to Adam? He was made a living creature, in union and communion with God.

But man could be tempted and sin because he was neither an animal living by instinct or a robot pre-programmed. God is seeking a man who is thoroughly and uncompromisingly committed to the will of God.

- d. This covenant relationship of union and communion has two sides to it: Command and Promise.

Obligation/Responsibility and Grace.

There is a warning as man is called upon to respond in love and faithfulness to God's grace in command and promise. But it is not a Labor Contract. It is a Love Relation. We serve as sons, not for wages. cf. Lk 17:10 Mal 3:17.

C. Election and Covenant (77-84)

1. Man breaks covenant with God--the fall into sin. (77)

a. The first sin by which Adam becomes a covenant-breaker.

1) That sin was an act of unbelief: believed Satan, not God

2) That sin was an act of lovelessness: cp Jn 16:15

3) That sin was an act of separation.

If faith and love break down so do union and communion with God. Death ensued upon the breaking of the covenant.

- b. The first sin of the first man has implications for all men everywhere.

Rom 5:12

We, in Adam, were originally in covenant with God. Adam broke the covenant and so did we. We all became covenant-breakers. But redemption also takes place along covenantal lines.

- c. God's original plan is not to be frustrated by the sin of man.

Redemption is begun. A series of historical covenants are established. All of which climax in the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Redemption is the restoration of the covenant relation, of covenant life on this earth.

2. Creation of Covenant Life-God's Election of Israel. (79)

Deut. 7:7

- a. God chooses a people for His own treasured possession.

- b. This election is founded in God's love. Deut 7:7

- c. The foundation of Election is God's faithfulness.

God remembered His promise to Abraham cf. Deut 7:7; Ps. 105:42.

3. God's election of Israel becomes for Man the foundation for Covenant Life. (81)

How the election of Israel is experienced by Israel.

- a. Election grounds command.

Deut 7:6-8

1) The Lord is your God

2) God keeps covenant with those who love Him and keep His commandment.

3) There is Exhortation and there is Warning.

Deut 7:10 cf Heb 3:18-19 Unbelief and disobedience. Ps. 103:17-18

- b. Election guarantees the Promise.

Deut 7:1-10 Land of Promise, cf. Deut 8:1ff

Deut 5:2-3

4. God's election of the Nations--the Covenant extended to the Gentiles. (84)

- a. Gentiles are incorporated into the Covenant Community. Zech. 8:23; Ps 87:4

- b. The Problem for Israel.

- c. The relevance of Israel for the Nation

1) There is a Continuity--Rom 4; 11; I Cor 10.

2) There is Discontinuity also = II Cor 3:11;

Col 2:14; Heb 8:13.

D. From Death to Life: Old and New Covenants (86-96)

1. The failure of Israel (can only be appreciated on the background of . . .) (86)

- a. The Goodness of God to Israel.

Liberated them from Egypt (Deut 1:29-31; 3:22; 4:32-34).

Taught them how to live: Ten Commandments

Cf. Lev 19:1-5; Deut 4:7-8.

- b. The thankless rebellion of Israel--Israel the Prodigal Son. Golden Calf. Refusal to enter the Promised Land. Demand of a king like other nations,

- c. The patience of God exhausted.
Ps. 86:5; Isa. 54:4; II Chr. 36:14-16.
- d. A Final Appeal.
Cf. Ps. 103:9; Hos. 11:8.
God sends John the Baptist. Last and finally, He sends His very own Son, Jesus Christ. But they kill Him also. And so in 70 AD they are destroyed.

2. The Reason for Israel's Failure. (87)

- a. The Impotence of Israel.
Cp. Deut. 9:4-6; Ezek. 18:31 "get a new heart."
But cf. Deut. 29:2-4 God did not give them a new heart.
- b. The Impotence of the Old Covenant.
Wherein does that impotence consist?
 - 1) It could not take away the guilt of sin.
Heb. 10:1-4.
The Law was inherently good but impotent; because the blood of bulls and goats can not take away sin.
 - 2) It could not impart Life.
Deut. 6:25
The Law showed Israel how to live but it was powerless to cause Israel to live (cf. Gal. 3:21).
Cp. II Cor. 3:6-9 the Spirit not the letter imparts life.

3. The Gospel of Jesus Christ. (90)

- a. The Basic problem resolved.
Israel was God's treasured possession, but they deserved destruction. How could God do that and still keep His promise to them, to the fathers?
The Law was powerless.
But in Jesus Christ the dilemma is resolved. He deals with sin definitively, once and for all. Through Christ the promises to the fathers are fulfilled, Cf II Cor. 1:20.
Why is Jesus the Word of Life in contrast to "the words to live by" which you have in the Law of the OT?
 - 1) The Law was powerless to take away the guilt of sin.
But Jesus can and does do that. Cf. Acts 13:38-39.
 - 2) The Law was powerless to impart New Life.
But Jesus can and does make alive. Cf. John 10:10; 5:26; 14:6. Also cp. I Peter 2:24; Rom. 6; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:7ff; Rom. 8:3-4 (very significant in lecture).
- b. Jesus establishes a New Covenant.
Cf. Jer. 31:31-34; cp. Heb. 8:8-12; 10:15-18.
 - 1) I will put My law in their hearts (Sanctification).
 - 2) I will remember their sins no more (Justification).
 The Old Covenant is abolished, done away with in Jesus Christ. It has fade away.
- c. The New Covenant has Two Sides.
 - 1) Command, cf. Rom. 12:2; John 13:34.
Also Warning, cf. Gal. 5:7-9.
 - 2) Blessing, cf. Heb. 8:6.
- d. But the New Covenant, like the Old Covenant, also establishes Union and Communion with God.
But in a definitive way, because of the mediatorial accomplishment of Jesus Christ. And the gift of the Spirit to the beneficiaries of His work.

E. The Covenantal Task for Today. (96-103)

In order to appreciate the dimensions of that task, it is necessary for us to look, first of all, at the ...

1. The Basic Divisions in the Human Race. (96)

Covenant-breakers and Covenant-keepers.

- a. The distinction between the Righteous and the Wicked.
Ps.1; 37:16-17.
 - b. Who are the Wicked, what is their identity?
 - 1) The Heathen Nations in distinction from Israel.
Cf. Eph 2:26 "atheists"
 - 2) But also within Israel.
Jer.5:26; Ps.50:16-20.
 - c. Who are the Righteous?
Cf. Ps.18, 26, 119:1-3. They are not perfect. But they do confess their sins and seek mercy from the Lord.
 - d. This distinction is Valid today.
2. The Evangelistic Task of the Covenant People of God. (99)
- a. What is the Nature of that Evangelistic Task?
It is a work of restoration, renewal and re-creation. It is the transformation of Covenant-breakers into Covenant-keepers. As creation was the work of God alone (cf Gen.1 Job 38-42) so also the work of re-creation is the work of God alone (cf. Eph.2:10).
God spoke and creation was. God speaks now, pre-eminently through His Son (Heb.1:1-2). And now through His ambassadors (cp. II Cor.6:1; I Cor.3:9).

Israel had no evangelistic/missionary task. She had no good news. But now there is Good News--Jesus Christ. Matt.28:19-20 is our mandate.
Ps.147:2-3 is transformed into Matt.16:18.
 - b. Who are the Subjects of that Evangelism?
Broadly they are Covenant-breakers.
 - 1) Our address to Israel (first and pre-eminent).
Cf. Acts 3:22-26. "Home Missions."
But cf. Acts 28, esp. vs. 28.
 - 2) Gentiles.
Eph.2:11ff; Acts 17:30f. "Foreign Missions."
 - 3) The Children of the Covenant.
The covenant with Abraham was with him and his children. Both received the sign and seal of the righteousness of faith (cf. Rom.4:11). The same can be said with Moses and the Israelites in entering the Promised Land (cp. I Cor.10:1-11).
And in the New Covenant, cf. Acts 2:38-39.

How should such children be viewed?
 - a) Some say--Presumed to be Unregenerate.
 - b) Some say--Presumed to be Regenerate.
 - c) Neither is right!
We live by promises not presumptions. The promise is to us and to our children. They are heirs of the promises. God has told us that. Therefore they are to receive the sign and seal of that promise--e.g., baptism.
But the promises are to be received by faith. Thus the covenant people are to be taught to persevere in faith. All the covenant people are to be taught that.
 - 4) The Covenantally Disloyal.
Cp. Acts 3:25; I Cor.10:1-12. We preach to them to repent and return to the Lord before the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.
3. The Cultural Task of the Covenant People. (100)
4. The Hope of Success. (101)
Matt.16:18; 28:18-20; I Cor.15:25; "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will .

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ST 223 Doctrine of Christ
Prof. Norman Shepherd
Spring of 1981

Course Assignments:

Hodge, C. Systematic Theology, Vol. II: 354-638.
Bavinck, H. Our Reasonable Faith, pp.260-385.
Warfield, B.B. The Plan of Salvation, 142 pp.
Murray, J. The Covenant of Grace, 32 pp.
Calvin, J. Institutes of the Christian Religion, Bk.III.21-24;
Bk.II.9-11.
Murray, J. Redemption Accomplished and Applied, pp.9-78.
Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch's VII & VIII.
Westminster Larger Catechism, Q. and A. 30-56.
Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. and A. 20-28.

Course Lectures

2-5-81

General introduction to the subject matter of the course.
Soteriology is the main matter of this aspect of the theological curriculum. First there was Prolegomena, then the Doctrine of God. There we studied Creation and Providence--the work of God. Next the Doctrine of Man--what he has done.
But we don't just study this only in order to find out some interesting information about ancient history. The purpose of Scripture and this study is summed up in John 20:31 "But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."
The Bible is redemptive revelation. It is given that we might be saved from sin and its consequences. It is Redemptive Revelation. Now, to be sure, if we turn away from Jesus Christ that same Book pronounces a curse upon us and condemns us. We are condemned by the words of John and the words of Jesus. Cp. Heb.2:3.
But, the Bible is written not in order to condemn us (unless you think in a certain Supralapsarian way). But Jesus Christ came in order that we might be saved. His word is given in order that we might be saved from sin and its consequences. And so the study of Soteriology brings us at last to the heart of the biblical message, the message of Redemption.

Hodge in his program has three elements under Soteriology:

- 1) God's purpose and plan in relation to the salvation of man.
- 2) The person and work of the Redeemer.
- 3) The application of that work by the Holy Spirit to the actual salvation of God's people.

We could perhaps add a fourth element-- Eschatology, the consummation of the work of Redemption. Integral to the whole concept of Soteriology. Also, from a certain perspective, the whole of Soteriology can be seen as eschatology. Soteriology, as it centers upon Jesus Christ in the fulness of His redemptive work, is the fulfillment of all that has gone before, and is therefore eschatological in character.

But, Soteriology as Hodge conceives of it, is reserved for the first three elements of the plan of salvation, the person of Christ, and the application of that work. Eschatology is taken up in the fourth part of that work.

Now, Soteriology narrowly conceived, may be distinguished in terms of its constitutive elements. These are: 1) The Accomplishment of Redemption, and 2) The Application of Redemption. The accomplishment of redemption is the main concern of this course.

Both have to do with the work of God in the course of time through Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit. Through Jesus pre-eminently in the accomplishment of redemption. But these are prefaced by a discussion of the Plan of Salvation. Salvation is not haphazard, it is not a chance occurrence. Therefore we speak of a plan of salvation. And this plan is conceived of in the mind of God and is purposed by Him. And therefore we are concerned not simply with the plan but with that plan thought of as the Decrees of God, including the decrees of Election and Reprobation.

Start with the plan of salvation, the decrees of God; especially in the areas of Predestination and Reprobation. The Plan is worked out in time in terms of God's covenantal relation to His people. Therefore the doctrine of the Covenant is taken up at this point (cp. Hodge), after the plan of salvation. This is done in order to exhibit the unity in the outworking of God's plan and purpose. And that consideration of the Covenant provides a convenient transition to a consideration of the Person and Work of Christ. There understood to be the Mediator and Guarantor of the New Covenant or of God's covenant grace.

I. The Plan of Salvation.

A. The Idea of a Plan of Salvation.

1. There is a plan of salvation.

a. There is salvation.

Men are under condemnation and wrath because of sin. And if we are to escape this condemnation and wrath we must be saved. The Bible tells us men have been saved, they are being saved, and they will be saved. And so we begin with the basic fact-- the reality of salvation.

b. Salvation is the work of God.

God who is our Savior, cf., Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4. He is the Author of our Salvation in Jesus Christ (cf. Heb. 5:9).

Now, abstractly speaking, it is possible to say that man is the author of his own salvation. This idea ordinarily requires that the whole concept of salvation be radically altered. But although abstractly possible, as a matter of fact no Christian Church professes such a position. Such a Church could hardly be termed Christian. The term "Christian" refers us to Christ our Savior. Such an idea is "auto-soteric" or "naturalism" (cp. chart in Warfield The Plan of Salvation, p.30). No Church is naturalistic by profession. All introduce an element of supernaturalism. Some are very debased on this element. Thus Pelagianism and Romanism are naturalistic in contrast with the supernaturalistic religions. (more later)

c. There is a complexity to that work of salvation.

There are a diversity of elements that enter into that salvation. And that diversity of elements corresponds to the diversity of the need created by sin. That diversity shows and demonstrates the ~~great~~ greatness of our redemption.

Most basically we have to distinguish between the guilt of our sin and the pollution of sin. Sin as it has its consequences in terms of our judicial/legal standing before God. And sin as it is disruptive of

our personal experience and existence. God's salvation deals with sin in all its aspects. And that is to say salvation is as comprehensive as is the need for which it is the divine remedy. But also note that salvation in Scripture is wrought out in time, over a period of time. Salvation has its origin in eternity--with the plan and purpose of God. It has its consummation in eternity--glorified together with Christ at His coming (and the eternal state beginning). Also introduces an element of diversity and complexity. And beyond that the Lord God uses means to accomplish salvation. He sends His Son to give His life a ransom for many. He sends His Spirit to take of the things of Christ and apply them to us. God, by the Spirit, imparts life to us. Also the Spirit in applying Christ to us uses the means of grace: the Word and the Sacraments.

Put that all together. Since God is the author of salvation and comprises a variety of elements. It is proper to think in terms of a plan of salvation. The Bible does not lead us to think in terms of a chance configuration of elements and events. It leads us to think in terms of a pattern. Might also introduce the term "System" at this point. Salvation is wrought out in terms of an orderly plan, and hence we have a "plan of salvation."

Compare I Cor. 14:40. Primary reference is to the public or communal aspect of worship. Reason given for it is given in vs. 33. Therefore order in the conduct of worship is simply to be a reflection of the orderliness of God Himself. He is a God of peace. Thus if the principle of orderliness is applicable to worship how much more so is it applicable to the accomplishment and application of redemption. And therefore salvation is to be thought of as wrought out according to a plan.

2. That plan of salvation is an Eternal Plan of Salvation.

If salvation is wrought out according to a plan. Then salvation and that plan are distinguishable from one another: the Plan and its Execution. Compare e.g., an Architect with a plan which a Contractor executes by building it.

But since the plan is God's plan and He is above time, so also the plan is above time. Building on the Creator/creature distinction. His plan is therefore a *supratemporal plan*.

a. God and His plan are supratemporal or eternal.

God's eternal plan or purpose is what we are dealing with now--His Decrees.

WSC. #7--"What are the decrees of God?"

Ans.--"The decrees of God are, His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

The decrees of God are comprehensive and therefore include the whole sphere or plan of salvation.

Now, since the plan of salvation reveals order in God's dealings, the topic is sometimes dealt with

under the rubric of...

b. the Order of the Divine Decrees.

"Plan of Salvation" and "Order of the Divine Decrees" are used interchangeably.

Now since the decrees of God are comprehensive, the Order of the Divine Decrees includes more than the accomplishment and application of redemption. Also included in the Order of the Divine Decrees are the decrees with respect to Creation and with respect to the Fall of Man.

Warfield p.11-- this topic, the plan of salvation, includes "the entire course of the Divine dealings with man, which ends in his salvation."

The term "the Plan of Salvation" has the advantage of focussing in on the basic thrust of Scripture, which is salvation from sin and its consequences.

c. Is it presumptuous to talk of an "Order" of the Divine Decrees??

The plan, decrees, are prior to their execution. And that priority is an eternal priority. How can we, as mere men, mere creatures of time and space, presume to speak of the Order of the Divine Decrees?

Also, Order presupposes sequence. How can we speak of sequence in the eternal God?

May I suggest, it is not as though we propose to mount up directly, as Calvin says, into "the blinding light of the decrees of God." Or peer into the essence of God, some sort of beatific vision.

We have to respect the Creator/creature distinction. And concretely, that means we must live and can only live in the light of the revelation of God. And that revelation focusses our attention on what God has done and is doing for us in the course of time. Our history is continuous with the history written in the Scriptures. Life in the covenant is continuous with the covenant that God established with Jesus Christ on this earth. And that revelation which tells us of God's working even in the world today, also teaches us to trace back what God does in time to His eternal purpose.

And so it is in terms of the historical unfolding of redemption and of what the Scriptures say, that we presume to speak of a plan of salvation and the Order of the Divine Decrees. Therefore for theology to take up this topic is not presumptuous pride but the obedience of faith.

3. Biblical Allusions to a Plan of Salvation.

We have been arguing from general Scriptural principles. Now, more explicit allusions will be taken up. Cf. Hodge on Eph. 1:10; 3:9.

a. II Timothy 1:9,10.

Here Paul speaks of the salvation of God, and the fact of God's calling us with a holy calling. This calling is not God's reaction simply to what we have done. But it is a calling which flows from the purpose of God. It is according to His own gracious plan. And that plan comprehends not only an experience of sal-

vation, now, in terms of our calling. But also the giving of the Savior 2000 years ago, it is also a part of the plan. Further purpose extends before the beginning of time into eternity, the counsels of.

It is a purpose or plan which unfolds in two stages. First, the revelation of Christ in the fulness of time. And second in our calling on the basis of the redemptive work of Christ.

And, the main point; we are where we are, not because of what we have done, but because of what God has done in Christ. And He had planned to do this. The Bible often speaks of God's purpose. As often as the Bible speaks of God's "purpose" we have a reference or allusion to the plan of salvation.

b. Ephesians 3:8-11.

Note the use of *oikonomia* (vs.10). NIV has "administration" of the mystery"; RSV "the plan of the mystery". This "plan" is surely a plan of salvation, because Paul is preaching Jesus Christ and His salvation to the Gentiles. It is a plan kept hidden in ages past, but is now made known, unfolded by God in time. Vs.11 the "plan" is spoken of as His purpose. Also cf. use in II Tim.1:9,10. A pre-temporal plan, a plan accomplished in Christ.

c. Ephesians 1:10.

"economy of the fulness of time"

Some problem with terms and verse. Would appear to be a reference to a plan of redemption unfolded in the fulness of time. Cf. vs.9 mystery of His will and of His good pleasure. Cf. vs.11 speaks of predestination according to His purpose. Further, God works all things according to the counsel of His will.

Main point--redemption is a phase of God's all-encompassing plan.

d. The distinction between Biblical and Theological concerns.

As you look over those texts and review them, and then you compare the thrusts of the texts with the topics taken up by Hodge and Warfield, under the Plan of Salvation and the Order of the Divine Decrees, you may perceive a difference, a difference of interest. In Hodge and Warfield the discussion centers largely on the question of God's work in salvation; and on the relationship of man's contribution with respect to what God does. Now, how do you perceive the relationship between those questions? As Warfield unfolds his discussion, you have, on the one hand, Auto-soterism, man saving himself (virtually). On the other hand, you have Calvinism or Particularism, the most consistent representation of the truth that God alone is the Savior. And between those, various degrees of Synergism, or Co-operation between God and Man. These are the Basic Problematics of Warfield.

Now, these questions are all important, deserving of Scripture's notice and answer. II Tim.1:9,10 is a passage from which we can draw data in order to answer that sort of question.

But in both of the Ephesian passages the orientation is somewhat different. It is more historical. The contrast, that Paul brings to our attention, is one that lies on the historical plane between what is true before the coming of Christ and what is true in view of the advent of Christ. The Mystery, the plan which was hidden in ages past, but is now revealed. This aspect is also in II Tim. The point of the above--as you study this area, and contemplate the plan of salvation, you will be aware of the fact that, in Reformed Theology, the discussion is cast largely in terms of the issues that have arisen in the History of Doctrine. E.g., the question of Synergism. That is why I have given the title to B in the Outline that I did. But if the orientation of the topic were more to the text of Scripture, the texts alluded to, then the whole discussion would have to be recast and oriented more in terms of the History of Redemption. And your **conception of the Plan of Salvation** would not be oriented to a certain problematic that arose in the history of doctrine. But it would be oriented to the historical unfolding as we have it in Scripture.

4. Terminology.

The two expressions--"Plan of Salvation," "Order of the Divine Decrees." We will reserve the term "Order of the Divine Decrees" for a consideration of that order as it is exhibited within Particularism or Calvinism. We will use "Plan of Salvation" to discuss the basic patterns which have emerged in the history of doctrine.

One further distinction to be aware of. Some confuse Order of the Divine Decrees with Ordo Salutis/Order of Salvation. The Decrees have a comprehensive picture in view: Creation, Fall into Sin, Election, Decree to send Christ to redeem the Elect, decree to send the Holy Spirit to sanctify, etc. The Ordo Salutis is very narrow. It has in view the work of the Holy Spirit in the application of the redemption of Christ to particular persons. Consists of the topics: Calling, Regeneration, Justification, etc.

2-6-81

B. Basic Conceptions of the Plan of Salvation in the History of Theology.

(Will be following Warfield's discussion. Ch.1 outlines the conceptions and sets them over against one another. The subsequent chapters do each one: Auto-soterism, Sacerdotalism, Universalism, and Particularism/Calvinism.)

1. Auto-soterism--Theo-soterism.

Self-salvation vs. God-salvation, God saves. Autosoterism holds that God has left man to save himself without any supernatural help on His part. Warfield calls it Naturalism vs. Supernaturalism, where God intervenes for man's salvation.

An example in Scripture of Autosoterism is Gen.11:4. This can be seen, at least as an example, of human self-sufficiency. It is coupled with a refusal to fulfill the Cultural Mandate: replenish and fill the earth and subdue it.

Autosoterism is the prevailing view outside of the Chris-

tian Faith. By definition, outside of the Christian Faith, there is no dependence on God for salvation. The conception of salvation is different, even radically from that of the Scriptures. Whatever man may perceive in his experience as his need, that need can be fully met and supplied by the resources within man. Which resources he can lay hold upon by his own strength and power. Autosoterism is not found or professed within confessional Christianity. Some approach is made to defining man's need in Scriptural terms: talk of sin (usually). Some justice is done to the fact that God is the Savior from sin. Therefore there is no pure autosoteric conception in professing Christianity. But there are approaches to it. Thus, Pelagians and Romanists are to be classified as such, according to Warfield.

Pelagianism--the closest approach in the history of the Church; fifth-century. There was not enough grasp on the truth of Scripture for it to survive. According to Warfield, Pelagianism in its purity affirms that all the power exerted in saving man is native to man himself. Human nature is created good, is endowed by God with power to live an upright life. If man chooses to do so he has the power to live before God upright. This power was not destroyed by the Fall of Adam, nor by the presence of evil in the world. A supernatural element is introduced in that God has given us His law and provided us with the example of Jesus. And both the Word of God and the example of Jesus Christ encourage us in the right direction. Man has it within his power to do that. Strictly speaking, you could not speak of a redemption in the biblical sense.

Augustine and Augustinianism prevailed, but, the purest form of Augustinianism did not prevail unfortunately. Semi-Pelagianism arose soon thereafter. It established the necessity for divine grace. This is its point of difference from pure Pelagianism. Apart from the grace of God man is not able to do good. Nevertheless, the free-will is able to cooperate with the grace of God. Also the Human Will is crippled by sin. But it has a certain freedom ascribed to it. With the assistance of divine grace, which is infused, man is able to will and do that which is good. Grace is infused when there is an inclination of the will to do good. God assists the human will to do that which is good. Grace is necessary. But man, not God, makes the beginning, the point of initiation.

Has the necessity of grace, but the key is cooperation of free-will. Semi-Pelagianism did not become the official position of the Church. The Council of Orange (529 A.D.) condemned Semi-Pelagianism.

But, this does not make the Roman Catholic Church Augustinian! What prevailed was what Warfield called "semi-semi-Pelagianism". Semi-Pelagianism argued for the necessity of grace. Semi-Semi-Pelagianism goes beyond and argued for the necessity of prevenient grace (prae--before, venire--to come). The initial step is taken by God not man. Free-will is weakened: can't believe or

love God. But the grace of God works in us the impulse to call upon God. And that faith which is inspired by God, sometimes called prebaptismal grace, that faith consents to the teaching of the Church and in consenting impels us to baptism. At baptism you receive an infusion of grace that renews the will. After Baptism we are assisted to perform the works which are meritorious in the sight of God and therefore instrumentally deserve the reward of eternal life. Compare the Council of Trent for a setting forth of this position.

Have established the necessity of grace with semi-Pelagianism, and the necessity of prevenient grace with semi-semi-Pelagianism. But we are not quite up to the doctrine of Irresistible Grace. Because basic to the Roman Catholic position is the notion of the reigning will of man. The element of autonomy is needed to have a true and genuine man, and expanded on in the concept of merit. Doctrine of salvation is by grace. But R.C. does not believe in salvation by grace alone. R.C., strictly speaking, is not Pelagian or semi-Pelagian. But, there is always a pelagianizing or autosoteric element in it. As Harnack notes-- the key to Trent is the notion of merit. It is always present however much weakened.

But, pelagianizing tendencies are also present in Protestantism. It entered Lutheranism through Melancthon. It had and has consciously rejected synergism. Any crass form of cooperation is excluded (e.g., that of Trent). Within Lutheranism, man has the power to resist the grace of God. Not synergism but the human will enters into the process of salvation. It is in a negative way, in terms of the idea of resistance to the grace of God. The Calvinistic Reformation sees it in Remonstrant Arminianism and later in Wesleyan Arminianism (both are Calvinistic aberrations).

Warfield concludes his discussion of Autosoterism with some comments on Modernism. In Modernism, abandoning of substitutionary atonement of Christ and the bodily Resurrection (though form may be kept, not substance), means the death of Christ does not really destroy sin, nor does the power of the Resurrection really impart life. Thus Modernism is really autosoteric in character.

Not all positions which are found in Warfield can be classified as Autosoteric, as such. Roman Catholicism and Arminianism are found under other headings. The point is: anything short of Calvinism introduces into the plan of salvation an element of autosoterism, to a greater or lesser extent. Autosoterism at its core is destructive of the Gospel and Christianity. Its consistent application will exclude the principle of grace. And also, the principle of grace will exclude the autosoteric element when consistently applied.

2. Sacerdotalism--Evangelicalism.

Sacerdos=priest (Latin). Salvation is ministered through the priest as a functionary of the Church.

If the issue between Autosoterism and Theosoterism was "Who is the Author of salvation?" Then this is the issue of "How does God save?"

The question is: whether God saves by a direct operation of His grace, by dealing directly upon each person He saves by acting on their mind and heart. Or, does He deal with persons through means or instrumentalities; specifically, through means He has deposited His saving grace and power for further distribution and application.

Does God deal immediately with man? Or, " " " mediately " " , through instrumentalities?

There are other points of division also. Sacerdotalism takes the view that God deals mediately with man. Therefore God has appointed a certain institution which is the sole depository of His saving grace and power. God does not save by a direct operation of His grace. It becomes the hallmark of Sacer, that the Church is the Institute of Salvation.

More specifically, the Sacraments are the means through which the saving power and grace of God are deposited in the Church and become operative in man. The Church has at its disposal a treasury of grace, which is dispensed through the sacramental system, to which men apply. For example, without baptism one can not be saved. You need its infusion of grace in order to be purified of sin. We are forgiven in being baptized.

Roman Catholicism maintains the basic principle--"outside the Church there is no salvation," due to the indispensibility of the sacraments (Latin phrase: extra ecclesiam nulla salus). Protestants can also say this, though it is modified slightly. Cf., WCF XXV:2 "no ordinary possibility of salvation".

The idea is not that the Church is the Institute of Salvation. But the Church is the Fellowship of Believers together with their children. That is to say, the fellowship of those who identify with Jesus Christ by faith. In so doing we are also identified with the Body of Christ, which is His Church. The Church founded by Christ is a visible Church. Not two Churches, visible and invisible. It has invisible aspects. Membership in the visible Church is not an optional benefit, but a solemn obligation. The Church is not a means to salvation, but it is the company of the saved, outside of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation (cp. I Jn.1:3).

In R.C. the Church becomes identified as the hierarchy, rather than the people, in terms of the principle ubi episcopus ibi ecclesia--"where the Bishop is there is the Church." For Protestants the Church is ~~the~~ people of God.

The main points of Sacerdotalism:

God wills the salvation of all men by an antecedent and conditional will. Which means: God desires the salvation of all men and has made an adequate provision for their salvation in the Church, in its sacramental system. Now in accordance with the antecedent and conditional will, God sends Christ to make satisfaction for all men. Once Christ has made satisfaction, God commits the grace and power of salvation to the Church. And thus, by a consequent and absolute will, God wills the salvation of all those whom He sees will make use of the

appointed means.

This basic conception is also found in Eastern Orthodoxy and High Anglicanism (Anglo-Catholicism). But also in Lutheranism one sees some elements. Confessional Lutheranism teaches that the grace of salvation is conveyed to man in the means of grace and otherwise not.

Now there is a large difference between Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism. The accent is not on the Church as the depository of grace, but the accent is on the indispensibility of the means. But also the Word is pre-eminent. In the case of Infants, baptism always regenerates. The grace ministered can't be resisted. Sacredotalism comes out in the idea that the Word and the Sacraments are interposed between the sinner and God.

Sacredotalism is also seen in the Reformed.

Note in this connection the Theology of Mercersburg; J.W. Nevin and High Church Calvinism. Basic idea: the Church is the perpetuation of the life of Christ on earth. Saved through participation in the organic life of the Church.

Three problems with Sacredotalism (1 & 2 are conflated; also cf. Warfield, pp. 46-47):

- 1) There is a loss of personal contact between God and the sinner, because of the intervention of the Church. "God is experienced as a force, rather than as a person." In R.C., "the Church is the 'storehouse' of salvation... something... stored for use as it may be needed." cf. mechanical use of the rosary, mass. This is compensated for by a rich stream of mysticism. Also, compare the Charismatic movement influence.
- 2) The operations of grace are now subjected to the control of men. The Spirit is subordinated to the Church, or the Church takes the place of the Spirit.

Over against this, the Reformed always stressed the subordination of the means of grace to the working of the Spirit.

Error survives and has longevity usually as a parasite on the truth. But autosoteric elements which survive survive as a parasite on the truth that God's grace, although it is sovereign, as the Calvinist insists, is not applied irrespective of our response. Not on account of our response but not irrespective either. Not because of belief. God saves believers.

Some might say "irrespective" means a "Triumph of Grace" (cf. K. Barth), but this is not the biblical conception. Sacerdotalism survives by virtue of its appreciation of the Church as the Body of Christ. And by its appreciation of the importance of the means of grace.

Warfield, on p. 80, is just a little condescending with respect to the means of grace. It is true that the means are not necessary in the sense that one cannot be saved without their use. But the Holy Spirit is pleased to work with the means of grace. And in their use the Church lays hold of the power of the Spirit.

Calvinism has not gone the way of Anabaptism or Quaker-

ism, or other spiritualist movements and dispensing with the means of grace. And in that way to stress the immediacy and directness of the working of God, God does so, but it is done cum Verbo, with the Word (and Sacraments). The Sacraments are not interposed between God and His people, but neither are they disposed with.

2-10-81

3. Universalism--Particularism.

a. Distinguishing features of Universalism.

Warfield distinguishes Sacerdotalism from Evangelicalism and points out that the distinguishing feature of Evangelicalism is that God saves men by dealing directly with each individual whom He saves. That is not to deny God's use of means. The Church and the Church's ministry are recognized as the means by which God works His saving will in the world. But the difference from Sacerdotalism lies in the fact that God's saving grace and power are not deposited, as such, in the Church. So that the Church takes the place of a direct encounter with God. The instrumentalities do not work ex opere operato. Therefore the instruments, the means of grace, do not exclude the direct operation of God in the heart.

But now, there are also differences among Evangelicals. God saves by a direct operation of His grace, and yet, it is also true that not all men are saved. The explanation of the difference among the destinies of men is the source of disagreement among Evangelicals.

How are the differences to be accounted for? Thus we have the distinction within Evangelicals between Universalists and Particularists.

1) Universalism.

The distinguishing feature is the thesis that, in His saving operations, God works equally on behalf of all men and in all men. As such, compare the doctrine of the Atonement. The atonement of Christ is an atonement on behalf of all men. It is universal in scope. Therefore we would have to conclude, of itself, the atonement does not actually save anyone. But, the atonement makes the salvation of all men possible. It puts them into a saveable state. It does not secure the salvation of any man. The atonement has reference equally to all men. So then, on that view, it is not God who makes men to differ, who discriminates among men in His saving operations. But the discrimination arises from a different quarter.

The difficulty it is seeking to cope with is readily seen. God saves all men directly, by a direct operation (as opposed to Sacer.). Yet, not all men are saved. It would appear that the conclusion is unavoidable: that God is responsible for the fact that all are not saved. If He is responsible for this, then in that sense, He is the cause of sin. It is a negative kind of cause of sin because He does not act when He could have acted. And so, by equalizing and universalizing God's saving ac-

tions, by making them equal with reference to all men, responsibility for damnation is transferred from God to man. God is clearly not responsible for the fact that some men are not saved. And so now the problem is, that Universalism is stressed at the expense of what is truly Evangelical. Namely that God alone, His work alone saves. When the saving operations are universalized, then it is men's actions that become decisive. A place is given to what man does. There is diversity (not all men are saved), but the causal factor is found to lie, ultimately, with man. A difference among men is why some men are saved and others are not. Note the entrance of the autosoteric element. We now see the resurgence of the old Pelagian-Augustinian controversy.

2) Warfield has three types of Universalism:

- a) Remonstrant-Arminianism (Classical)--corresponds to semi-Pelagianism.
- b) Wesleyan-Arminianism--corresponds to semi-semi-Pelagianism.
Both manage to ascribe a measure of autonomy to man. To that extent they are examples of Synergism.
- c) Lutheranism--avoids synergism by making the discriminating factor to be non-resistance.

For Rem-Arm the determining factor is co-operation. For Wes-Arm " " " " " " improvement. Also, Sacer. is universalistic, in the sense that the sacraments are available to all who can avail themselves of these. Beyond that, prevenient grace is universally operative. When the Church ministers that grace it may be resisted.

b. The Pattern in Evangelical Lutheranism.

God from His general benevolence wills and intends the salvation of all men. And in order to effect this, God sends His Son to make satisfaction for the sins of all men, all their sins. And then God purposes to give to all men the means of salvation. And there are singled out three points in redemptive history when the universal spread of the Word of God was actually realized: in the time of Adam, Noah, and the time of Paul. And then God predestinates all those to salvation whom He foresees will repent and believe.

Why does one believe and the other not?

For the Classic Lutheran-- one resists the grace of God and the other does not. And that position is co-ordinate with another factor, which is of utmost importance for Lutheranism. And that is the doctrine, that the Word and Sacraments have inherent in them a supernatural, saving power. And that power uniformly issues in salvation when no obstacles are interposed. The characteristic slogan-- the Holy Spirit works per verbum, through the Word. (In the Reformed it is-- cum verbo, with the Word. The link between the Word and the Sacrament is somewhat loosened up in the Reformed conception.)

One who has been baptized as an infant will be saved if no resistance is offered later in life to the grace wrought in baptism.

c. Remonstrant-Arminianism.

Began in the seventeenth-century, in the Netherlands. See Hodge II:327ff for a summary. Some of the leading theologians were Episcopius, Limborch, and Curcellaeus.

Basic idea-- all men have fallen in Adam and are inclined to sin. That state is not sinful, because only voluntary acts are sinful. And so, inherited depravity does not deprive the man, who is fallen, of all ability to do good. The ability to do and to will the good is indispensable to human nature as such. Now, man has retained therefore a natural ability by means of which he is able to cooperate with God in his own salvation. That natural ability is not, of itself, sufficient for salvation (and there is the point of contact with semi-Pelagianism: the necessity of grace.). Man has natural ability but he needs the assistance of grace. And God has supplied the deficiency. God has given to all men sufficient grace, and those who cooperate with that grace, are saved. And then God foresees who will cooperate and then predestinates them to salvation.

d. Wesleyan-Arminianism.

All men fell in Adam and are therefore under the guilt of the first sin. By nature all men are in a state of total depravity. And are thus totally unable to do anything to promote the cause of their own salvation. Nevertheless, through Christ, all men are delivered from the guilt of Adam's first sin. All men are endowed with a principle of life which is implanted in the soul. And that means that all are endowed with sufficient grace/ability. And therefore, although there is a doctrine of Total Depravity de facto, there is no one who is totally depraved.

That ability is a graciously restored ability, not a natural ability as with the Remonstrant position. Sufficient grace and ability are universal and therefore all who improve that grace are saved. The diversity among men is explained by the response to sufficient grace. Salvation is contingent then, upon the improvement of sufficient grace. What determines the improvement is an autonomous decision on the part of man. Not due to any sovereign operation or endowment from God. But it is the decision which finds its root in the autonomy of man himself. Therefore you have the stress on DECISION in Arminian evangelism. An autosoterisic principle intrudes.

e. Another Dimension.

At the beginning of Warfield, chapter 4, he distinguishes Sacer. from Evang. And he says concerning Evang.--"the characteristic feature of this piety is a profound consciousness of intimate personal communion with God the Savior, on whom the soul rests with immediate love and trust. Obviously this piety is individualistic to the core, and depends for its support on an intense conviction that God the Lord deals with each sinful soul directly and for itself." (p. 49)

Warfield is right, especially for his day, that it is an "individualistic" sentiment that informs Evangelical piety. And then he finds it to be an odd contrast that so many Evangelicals see God's saving activity not individualistically but universally. But this gets the two alternatives before us in terms of which Warfield continues his presentation-- either Individualism or Universalism.

What is striking here is the absence of any reference to God's covenant people, and the absence of any reference to the implication of that Covenant way of dealing for our understanding of the plan of salvation. In fact, as near as can be told, he wrote no articles on the above. Also, he did not take an active part in the life of the Church.

In that way of conceiving of things, that alternation of Universalism/Individualism, Warfield may be representative of a considerable part of twentieth-century Presbyterianism. And there is a certain sense in which Evang. has tended to be individualistic. And over against that, we can see a reaction in our day, in terms of an accent on "Body Life" and small groups. Of course, it is perfectly true that God deals with men individualistically. God deals with them personally (cf. Zacchaeus). But it is still striking that at the very point where the Lord deals with Zacchaeus, a person, He appends: "for he too is a son of Abraham" (cf. Lk. 19:9).

There are, even from a Reformed viewpoint, some aspects of the saving operations of God that are general in scope: the universal offer of the gospel on the background of God's common grace.

But even granting all that, we have also to take account of the fact that, in the plan of salvation, God deals not simply with individuals, but He deals with families, tribes, other ethnic manifestations; He deals with nations (note the terms of the Great Commission). We remember that Jesus died for and He cleanses and He redeems His Church.

And therefore, we as particular persons are to see ourselves as part of that Church. And the mission goal of that Church is of course the conversion of the world. (And that is a dimension which will be focussed on later.)

But in his concluding remarks you see that, to a certain degree, Warfield does reclaim himself. In that he finally reaches the point where he says: "redemption has in view an organism, the human race. It has in view a saved world." Here he echoes A. Kuyper in the Principles of Sacred Theology,--"We must not think of the world as lost, while a number of individuals are saved. But we must think of the world as saved, although there are a number of individuals who are lost."

Therefore he concludes that the fewness of those who are saved is not the Hallmark of Calvinism. In the Postmillennial conception, Election is the foundation for the whole conception of a converted world. Universalism is not with respect to saving operations

which do not save. But, from his particularistic point of view, Warfield perceives the universal dimensions of the work that is being wrought out by God according to His saving purpose.

[(4. Particularism-- shift to the next major topic: C.)]

C. Calvinism and the Order of the Divine Decrees.

1. The distinguishing features of Particularism.

Particularism is distinguished from Universalism which maintains the thesis that the saving operation of God works equally on behalf of all men. Particularists maintain that it is God who makes men to differ. He does not work in all men equally or indiscriminately. God saves men by a direct operation upon the heart and soul of a man, in conjunction with the means of grace. But the point is that these operations actually save the person. They are exerted only on those who are ultimately saved. These operations are in accordance with God's decree or eternal purpose. Specifically, they are the outworking of His eternal election. And so all particularists agree on the sovereignty of election. That is to say, God does not elect those who choose to be saved. But He saves those whom He elects to salvation. But not all particularists are agreed amongst one another. Some differences as to at what point the decree of Election enters into the Order of the Divine Decrees. Now here, each work of God is thought of as discrete and therefore each work as representative of a separate decree. E.g., Creation, Fall, Election, Death of Christ, Sending of Holy Spirit.

But now the question is--in what order are the decrees to be perceived?

F. Turretin has a profound remark at the beginning of his section on this question. He writes--"Christian piety could easily do without this question." "But the question is forced upon us by men who try to break in to the secrets of God. They rashly investigate His plans when they are not to be sought out. And think up detailed outlines of His decrees, as if God were to be measured by some human standard."

And so, here we go!

The question of the Order of the Divine Decrees has given rise to four conceptions. A certain mentality or approach is engendered by each conception and by the overall work done in investigation. These conceptions are:

SUPRALAPSARIANISM } most of our time will be spent here
 INFRALAPSARIANISM }
 AMYRAULDIANISM--will spend some time here
 PAJONISM--read Warfield

2. Supralapsarianism and Infralapsarianism.

Cf. the textbooks for the main discussions. On Infralapsarianism read Hodge II:316-21; Turretin in Reformed Dogmatics, edited by Beardslee, pp.443-59. On Supralapsarianism read Hoeksema pp.161-65; Barth II:2 on Election. For one pronouncing a plague on both these houses read Bavinck The Doctrine of God pp.382-94 and Berkhof. And also Berkouwer Divine Election.

2-12-81

a. The differences between Supra and Infra(lapsarianism).

- a. The differences between Supra and Infra(lapsarianism).
Supra=before, lapsus=the fall, literally, before the Fall.

The point is--the decree of election is thought of as coming prior to the decree to permit the Fall. "Permit the Fall", is the language used historically. Retains the idea that man is fully responsible. The Supralapsarian order is: 1) Election, 2) Decree to Create, 3) Decree to Permit the Fall, 4) Decree to send Christ, to make atonement for the Elect (limited atonement), 5) Decree to Send the Spirit to apply the things of Christ to the Elect.

It would be possible to reverse the order of 1 & 2, so that Election is thought of as election of a created man, and still have a Supralapsarian order. The key is Election must precede the Decree to permit the Fall. Election then is conceived of as electio ex massa humanitatis. The man who is elected is homo labilis--fallable man who can fall.

Over against this is the Infralapsarian position. It differs in that Election is subsequent to the Fall. 1) Decree to Create, 2) Decree to Permit the Fall, 3) Election, 4) Decree to Send Christ...., 5) Decree to Send the Spirit.... There the election is ex massa perditionis. Man who is chosen is homo lapsus.

- b. The similarities between the two positions.

- 1) Both are willing to say that, in God, there is, strictly speaking, no order or succession of Decrees. God has a single purpose or decree. But, from our point of view, since that single decree is manifold/complex, contains a number of elements: elements which are related to one another, sometimes in a relation of dependence and subordination. There is, from our perspective, an order, and we are required then, in terms of our capacities, to think in terms of an order.
- 2) For both, election as a Decree precedes the Fall as a fact of history. Thus all are Supralapsarians. The point here is not the order of the decrees, but the difference between, decree on the one hand, and execution of the decree, on the other hand. The point is--God's determination to elect does not follow upon the fact of the Fall as a fact in history. All the decrees are before history.

3. Supralapsarianism.

- a. The Controlling Idea.

The starting point is in God who is all-glorious, and who is glorious in all His attributes. Now, among these attributes are those of Mercy and Justice. And God determines to reveal that glory, and that would include a revelation of His glorious mercy and justice. And so, God determines to reveal the glory of His mercy in the salvation of the Elect. And the glory of His justice is revealed in the condemnation of the Reprobate.

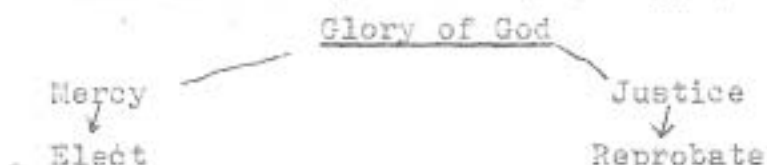
The word "justice" is used in a common way for older theology. It is "retributive justice"--the punishing

of those who deserve to be punished.
The WCP picks up on this language without supporting this position. Cp. III:5 and III:7.

Infra and Supra would say God's election and reprobation indeed reveal His grace and justice. But the point is that Supra makes the revelation the controlling purpose or reason for all that God further decrees and brings to pass. Therefore in that conception Creation and the Fall are decreed as means to achieve an end. The end is the revelation of God's mercy and justice, for the purpose of the revelation of His glory, the exhibition of His excellence.

H. Hoeksema modifies this controlling idea. In Reformed Dogmatics, p.165, he begins with the idea that God determines to reveal His own eternal glory. This glory is perceived of pre-eminently in terms of the Eternal Covenant (Pactum Salutis), the covenant between Father and Son. That Eternal Covenant which is intra-Trinitarian. God determines to reveal that in Christ. And so, in the second place, Christ is given, incarnated, in order that all the fulness of God might dwell in Him, that there may be a revelation of this life. Third, for the sake of that Christ, and for the sake of the revelation of that fulness, the Church is decreed, together with all the Elect. Fourth, for the purpose of realizing the Church of Christ, and therefore for realizing the glory of Christ, which in turn realizes the glory of the covenant life of God, the reprobate are determined as vessels of wrath.

Hoeksema's purpose is to seek to avoid a strict parallelism between Election and Reprobation.
In the Classic sense you have: (cf. Heppe, "Beza's chart")



Hoeksema begins with the:

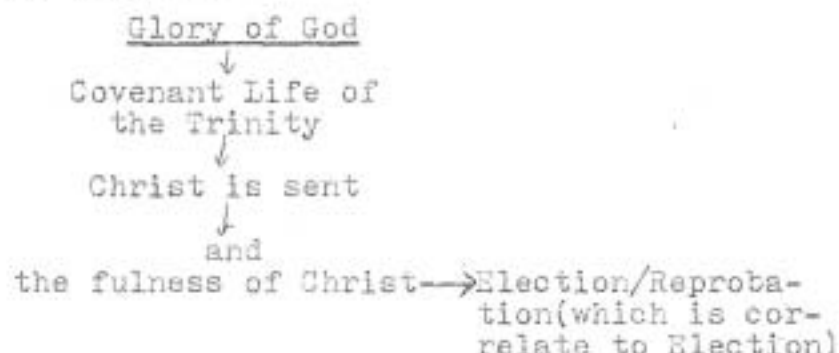


Illustration of the Wheat and the Chaff.

Reprobation serves the purpose of Election as chaff serves the purpose of the ripening of the wheat. Chaff is necessary but not pre-eminent, like the wheat. Therefore Election and Reprobation are not strictly parallel.

Main point--don't want to let Reprobation appear as arbitrary.

On the prior scheme, when reprobation is simply in order to reveal the justice of God, reprobation comes across as arbitrary. Because there are other ways of revealing the justice of God. E.g., the justice of God is revealed in the cross of Christ.

b. Fundamental objection.

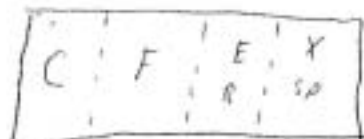
Since election and reprobation are conceived of as prior to the Decree to Permit the Fall, men are reprobated, are condemned, before they are contemplated as worthy of condemnation and death. Reprobation is arbitrary, not simply in the sense that it is arbitrary to think of a whole idea of Reprobation as necessary for the justice of God, in the sense that some men are chosen without reference to their demerit. And Creation and Fall are conceived of only as means devised to execute the decrees. The Fall is a decree which is introduced in order to provide a legal basis or justification for doing what God has decreed to do anyway. Cp. ex post facto principle.

The objection of C. Hodge (II:318-19) turns largely on the above objection. It is not compatible with the attributes of divine mercy and divine justice that innocent men should be foreordained to eternal misery and death before they have apostacized from God, or before contemplated as created.

Some observations on this objection.

Supra does place election and reprobation before the decree to permit the Fall. But nevertheless, it does not characteristically represent Reprobation as without all reference to demerit. Cf., Beza's chart: he has God's Decree of Reprobation--"to reject those to be damned by their own fault." Thus Beza does not conceive of Reprobation without reference to demerit. To put it another way. The Supra conception is a conception in which Predestination and Reprobation comprehend the Creation and the Fall (cf. scheme):

The House is conceived of as a whole, with the various elements in it. The whole house is conceived of in terms of the purpose, which is the revaluation of the glory of God and the manifestation of His attributes.



In the Infra conception you do have first of all a House. But it is conceived of, not in terms of its completed structure, its teleology, its total purpose. But it is a house first of all created, and then some rooms are added. It is an expanding house.



The objection may be valid in the case of an extremely rigid or consistent sort of Supra. But concretely it misses the mark of historical Supra concerns.

c. Discrimination apart from Merit or Demerit.

It may be granted that Reprobation inclusive of damnation must presuppose sin and hell-deservedness. Then one could place the decree of Reprobation subsequent to the decree with reference to the Fall. The decree of Election could still be thought of as prior to the Fall. And therefore the view would still be Supra. Reprobation is then only thought of as on the background of sin. And, since Election is prior to the Fall you are still Supra.

Or, that Election then, could be thought of as **correlative** to a non-election. But only after the Fall would that non-election be thought of as Reprobation unto damnation; and clearly so on account of sin.

If looked at that way, then there would be another all-important correlate to that view. If non-election prior to the decree to permit the Fall cannot be thought of as unto damnation, then, election cannot be thought of as unto salvation. There is no sin, ~~and~~ ill-desert, or penalty to be saved from. Election would then become election unto some favor, presumably in terms of Preservation.

And so, the decree of Election would be thought of as in two stages: 1) election unto favor; and subsequently, 2) election unto salvation, on the background of the Fall.

Supra may well conceive of a decree of discrimination prior to the decree to permit the Fall. It is God's prerogative to decree unmerited favor for some, to the exclusion of others. And, to do so without reference to sin, evil, or hell-deservedness.

It is beside the point to argue, that the discrimination therefore would be unfounded or without ground.

But it is also true on the Infra position. On NO Particularist scheme is Election or Reprobation founded on differences existing in themselves.

Discrimination finds its ground in the good pleasure of God.

4. Infralapsarianism.

a. Controlling Idea.

Sees the purpose of God's opera ad extra as the revelation of His glory. The difference is that the final purpose is not transformed into a principle from which deductions are made of what can and cannot take place.

But Supra is not simply a matter of deductions from a principle, texts are appealed to: Ps.115:3; Prov. 16:4; Isa.10:15;45:9; Jer.18:6; Matt.20:15; Rom.9:7, 19-21 these declare God's absolute sovereignty especially with reference to sin.

But these are no less integral to the Infra view. ~~Infra~~ Infra also finds God's decretive plan and purpose behind all things. Sin and evil are included in the decrees; also the final end of the wicked.

But, in addition to taking account of God's sovereignty, plan and purpose, the Infra also wishes to do full justice to, to take account of the texts which establish a pattern for speaking about election.

In Scripture men are viewed as under wrath and condemnation because of the sin of Adam and because of their own sin (Original and Actual Sin). But among these are some represented as elected unto salvation from sin and its consequences. Others are represented as non-elect or passed by. And therefore as consigned to condemnation because of their sin.

So the pattern of historical unfolding of God's works provides our understanding of the Order of the Divine Decrees. Or, the decrees are executed in the order which they are made. The decrees are a reflection of how the decrees are soon to be worked out in history.

But the Supra holds that what is last in the execution of the decrees is first in the decrees themselves. For the Supra what is in the foreground is Teleology. And for the Infra what is in the foreground is History. And therefore Supra characteristically begins with Election and concludes what is or is not the case in the light of that doctrine. Infra begins with history and understands that history to be an unfolding of the decree.

2-13-81

b. The Scriptural Pattern.

1) Ephesians 1:4.

Speaks of election and that in Christ. Thus election is not to be thought of as apart from Christ. The Neo-orthodox hit this strongly. But it is standard Reformed thought. But it is conceived very differently.

Christ is the Messianic name of the Savior, the Anointed One. The name points to the redemptive work of Christ. The eternal Son of God is referred to as Christ, in view of the redemptive work He would accomplish.

And so, when men are chosen, they are thought of as in need of the redemption purchased by Christ, redemption from sin and evil. Therefore our election in Christ suggests to us that our election is specifically an election unto salvation from sin through the one Redeemer whom God has sent, the Christ.

2) Romans 8:29.

The goal of predestination is in view. It is impossible to exclude from that goal that which is specifically redemptive in character--conformity to the image of Christ. The design of predestination is redemptive in character. Therefore one ~~has~~ has to conclude that predestination presupposes sin and evil. And therefore the predestinating purpose of God presupposes the decree to permit the Fall.

3) Ephesians 1:5.

Should be understood as similar to preceding passage. It is predestination unto adoption and adoption is a redemptive blessing. Not just a general expression for unmerited favor. That adoption has a context in the redemptive-revelation, and so we are led to think of predestination as unto redemption. And, if predestination is unto redemption it

presupposes the need for redemption. And so the decree to elect unto redemption can best be understood on the background of the Decree to Permit the Fall.

The texts do not say simply, that the effect of election takes place after Creation and the Fall. But rather, that election itself has reference to men contemplated as sinners, in need of redemption.

If the texts are understood as a two-stage election (election unto favor/election unto salvation), then, ~~these~~ these would have to refer to the second stage of election. But if this is the case, are there any texts which refer to a discrimination in terms of favor apart from determination to save?

In this way Scripture represents that election and predestination is in an Infralapsarian way.

c. Confessional Pattern.

Reformed Confessions tend to move in the sphere of Infra rather than Supra.

1) Westminster Standards. (cp. Hodge II:317ff)

It is true that WCP III:5 speaks of man as predestinated unto life; and III:7 speaks of the rest of men that are passed by. This could be understood as contemplating men simply as created but not necessarily as fallen. "Mankind" not "sinners". And other elements in III:5-7 could be seen as Infra, but not necessarily.

Hodge observes that the Confession was framed so that the Supra party was not excluded. But he argues that WSC 19 & 20 are more explicitly Infra. The "some" of Q.20 are said to be "under the wrath and curse of" Q.19.

This is plausible, but not convincing altogether. Q's 19 & 20 can be seen as reflecting simply the historical sequence of the Fall and the establishment of the Covenant of Grace with the Elect. Q.19 reflects on the misery of the estate to which man fell, as do the previous questions. It is also true in Q.20 that the Elect are elected unto "everlasting life". This could be seen in otherwise than a redemptive context.

When the doctrine of the Covenant of Works is set up in its traditional form, it is said that "life" is promised to man. The Tree of Life symbolizes the promise held out to man in his state of integrity. The life held out is said to be different from life by virtue of creation, in terms of a "confirmation in that life". It is the transition from a state of possible to sin to a state of not possible to sin. And so, everlasting life can be thought of as a benefit, a promise of favor, which is promised to some even apart from the fall into sin. And so a discrimination unto life can be conceived of apart from the idea of being fallen. The Supra could choose to read the Catechism in that way. But Hodge should be appreciated.

The Confession and Catechism are deliberately ambiguous.

2) Canons of the Synod of Dordt.

These have a much different background: the Remonstrants Controversy.

Supra is not adopted. The phrases duriores (harder phrases) are resisted. This may have been due to the influence of the German Theologians. Supra is neither affirmed nor condemned.

In the First Head of doctrine, section 6, the Infra basis for the Canons is laid out. "God graciously softens the hearts of the Elect according to His decree". The implication is they are hard. God leaves the non-Elect to their just judgement. This presupposes their guilt. And further, it is a "righteous discrimination among men equally involved in sin." This is explicit Infra.

In the First Head, section 10, election is "out of the common mass of sinners." Even H. Hoeksema grants that the "Canons present very decidedly the Infra viewpoint."

5. Significance of the Differences between Supralapsarianism and Infralapsarianism.
Is Turretin right?

ALL agree the order is not in God, but is in our perception of the Decrees. But once the question is agitated it can affect one's ministry.

Supra has in view the Teleological aspect of the doctrines of Election and Reprobation. It emphasizes the unity of the divine decree. Everything flows in an orderly way from the ultimate discriminating purpose of God. Unity, Discrimination from the Beginning. Everything flows from that Decree. And the purpose of it all--to realize/reveal the glory of God.

The result of that conception can be to generate a kind of fatalistic attitude toward the ministry of the Church. There are the Elect and there are the Reprobate. But we don't know who they are. The Elect will be inevitably saved, and the Reprobate cannot be saved. It is possible to negativize the proclamation of the Gospel, rob it of its spontaneity and urgency; of its decisive historical significance.

Infra has in view the historical character of the redemptive process. Or as Bavinck says, the "causal aspect" of the decrees of Election and Reprobation. The decrees manifest the unity of God's purpose, to be sure. But they also express the diversity of God's working and doing. Now Infra is not Arminian, but Hoeksema says it tends that way. The reason is just because it gives attention to historical sequence. And yet, overall, it seems that the Infra more closely reflects the pattern of Scriptural language.

Which does indeed bring before us, very forcefully, the reality, genuineness, and seriousness of historical sequence; the interdependence of the events in the sequence of history; sometimes called--"cause and effect."

Infra does not abandon the idea of a single purpose or a plan which is a unified whole. Nor does it say there

is "novelty" for God.

Yet further distinctions are recognized by Infra. It recognizes that the Creation and Fall into Sin are not merely steps to achieve a purpose. It recognizes that the Fall into Sin is just that-- a FALL, a real fall. And it is a fall into SIN. And sin is the very negation of all that God is. It is not just a step in a process to a goal. It is not a step up but a step down. Beyond that, Creation has meaning and purpose apart from the Fall into Sin and apart from the redemption from sin. To be sure it is only a created man who can fall into sin and be redeemed. But again, that Creation is not merely a stage, a backdrop in order to realize the purpose of the Decree. Creation is not just a stage on which we are enabled to engage in an evangelistic program. The Fall does not represent progress toward a goal-- it is retrogression, disturbance. The Fall is not an ultimately "good" thing because it enables God to realize the revelation of His virtues. Creation itself has a purpose. It is there itself to glorify God. And it would serve a purpose even apart from the fall into sin. Man had a task prior to the Fall and it was significant.

And so Infra lends itself to concern, not only to the Life to Come (which is of paramount concern), but also to concern with this Life Now. It is the present world that God created to be the theater for the revelation of His glory. And that revelation was marred by the fall into sin. But God has, from eternity, determined to realize the original purpose with the Creation, to be glorified in it, and to be glorified in man. And so He has sent Christ to be the Redeemer.

6. Amyrauldianism.

Arose in France at the School of Samur in the seventeenth century. It arose after Dordt, and may be viewed as an attempt to soften the particularism of the Canons. Begun by Moses Amyrault.

There is a book by Brian Armstrong on the Amyrauldian controversy which is reviewed by J. Frame in the West. Theo. Jnl. in May of 1972.

a. Controlling Idea.

For Amyrault, the order of the divine decrees was: 1) Decree to Create, 2) Decree to permit the Fall, 3) Decree to send Christ to make atonement for all, 4) Election, 5) Decree to send the Holy Spirit to apply salvation.

This differs from Infra and Supra. Election follows upon the Decree to send Christ to redeem. Thus, it is also called Post-Redemptionism.

It is particularistic in that Election is sovereign and unconditional, not grounded in anything in man. Thus Amyrauldianism is not Arminian. It is Calvinistic. But the difference is that the particularism is not brought to bear on all the saving operations of God. The atonement is universal and unlimited. It is characteristic of Amyrauldians to say: the atonement is sufficient for all, but efficient for the Elect. And there is a sense in which Five-Pointers can say this too. Cf. the Canons of Dordt II, art. 3-

"the death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice, and satisfaction for sin, and is of infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world."

The point is-- if there were more people included in the intent, then Christ would not have had to suffer more. Or, it is another reference to the universal offer of the gospel.

But the phrase is best suited to describe the unlimited atonement which is applied only to the Elect. Also called Hypothetical Universalism. The Atonement has an absolute intention for the Elect, but a conditional intention for the non-Elect. Christ died for all men--if they believe.

For Amyrauldianism the decree of Election comes to efficacious effect at the point of application of redemption. It does not come to effect with respect to the objective accomplishment of that redemption.

b. Criticism.

Warfield--"how can one distinguish between an absolute intention and a hypothetical intention?"

And, if so, have we not already introduced some sort of distinction, some sort of discrimination with respect to the atonement itself? It isn't for all in the same sense. What kind of meaning does "Christ died for all people hypothetically" have?

The main problem is the universalized extent of the atonement. If held consistently it would lead to a non-Calvinistic, evangelical order of the Decrees; because the discrimination among men would originate on man. All sins have been atoned for. Therefore only the sin of unbelief is the ground of condemnation. But, on the other hand, the abandonment of an unlimited atonement would lead to a particularism. And so Amyrauldianism tends to be an inconsistent Calvinism, and is inherently unstable.

Amyrauldianism can only be refuted adequately by means of an argument for the Limited Atonement (but delayed to later). But note the Scriptural view of the Efficacy of the Atonement, which requires the maintenance of particularity.

We criticize the Amyrauldian by saying--the atonement is designed to atone for sin. But, as a matter of fact, it does not. Therefore it doesn't do what it was designed to do.

The Amyrauldian responds--the purpose of the Atonement was to establish an arrangement by which those who believe would be saved, and those who do not believe would not be saved.

- { 1. We often approach the question of the extent of the atonement from the angle of quantity.
- { 2. But rather, let us approach it from the History of Redemption. The movement from Israel only to the Gentiles.

Theology Proper, from one point of view, it is also possible to reserve the discussion of Election, as such, to Soteriology (as Hodge and Barth do). Of course, Barth places his doctrine at that point to accent the grace of election in Christ; all men are reprobate in Christ; men are men by virtue of their being in Christ. But they are also all elect in Him. There is no hidden decree. Everything is fully revealed in Christ to us. No discrimination among men.

Hodge is congenial to the theological position of the WCF (as also are Bavinck and Berkhof). That comes out in his speaking of a "plan of salvation." That plan is simply an aspect of the comprehensive decree of God behind all things. But Hodge only gives this about 15 pages in Vol. I.

And yet, it is a Plan of Salvation. And the focus of Election is on the inception of salvation with God's purpose.

The point is--to show that salvation does not arise from man. The point is to exclude any suggestion of autosoterism. Salvation has its origin with God in His eternal purpose. This is its great advantage. It is also a method more congenial to Infralapsarianism, which Hodge likes. After the Creation and the Fall into Sin, the question is--"How is man to be saved?"

The first point is--His salvation arises out of the eternal purpose of God. We are committed to following the pattern of Hodge for our discussion. Bavinck and Berkhof do well, but the pattern is better as a reflection of the pattern of Scripture itself. It brings to better expression the configuration which is given to us in Scripture.

What is meant is--the Bible does not reflect on the decrees of God, ~~nor~~ does it reflect on Election and Reprobation in, what might be called, an abstract way, in an academic, theoretical way. In the way in which the theologians reflect on it when they begin with the doctrine of God and then proceed to deal with His Decrees.

The Bible presents us with the history of God's covenantal relationship to man. It begins with that. It begins with man created in the image of God. It begins with the Creation, "in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth." Then it tells the story of Man's Fall into Sin. And then proceeds with the long story of the Restoration and Reconstruction of the Human Race in the Mediator-Redeemer, Jesus Christ. So the Bible presents us with the history of God's covenant relationship to man. And that covenant, saving relationship, which is set out in terms of a covenant relation, is then and repeatedly (not "then" in a chronological relationship sense) traced back to God's election, and is seen to be grounded in God's election.

How did we get to be where we are? Well, that surely flows from God's sovereign, electing purpose. So, from that perspective, an argument could be made for beginning our discussion of Soteriology with the topic,

(cp. Berkhof) "Man in the Covenant of Grace." And then proceed to consider Election. And then go on to the Plan of Salvation in order to develop the polemic interest that comes to expression at that point. Thus reversing the order of topics taken up to this point. But we won't.

2. Confessional Affirmations.

The WCF III summarizes for us the Biblical teaching.

Objective is to get before us the doctrine as a whole and then look more closely at the Biblical teaching giving rise to it.

- a. God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, sec.1.
Comprehensive background for understanding Election.
- b. The contingency of secondary causes is not thereby destroyed, but is rather established, sec.1.
The point--History and its meaning are not destroyed, but rather, that meaning and significance of history is guaranteed and established. Seeing the doctrine of the Decrees as "Decretalism", or Greek determinism, or fatalism. Therefore J. Daane is cut off at the beginning.
- c. The decree is not based on foresight of history, sec.2.
Does not mean that God foresees something as happening and therefore decrees that it will take place.
- d. Some men and some angels are predestinated unto life and others are predestinated unto death, sec.3.
Election and Reprobation refer not simply to men, but also, to angels. There is discrimination among men. And that over against the view of Barth that all men are both Elect and Reprobate.
- e. There is a fixed number of Elect and Reprobate, sec.4.
This is referred to in theological discussions as the numerus clausus, the "closed fixed number of Elect and Reprobate."
That "cannot" is not an abstract "cannot", but it "does not" according to the will of God. It is God's purpose that that number is Elect and that number is Reprobate. It is also said to be "unchangeable". Notice also, that insertion of the word "particularly". There is suggested to us that particular persons are Elect and particular persons are Reprobate. Not simply that the number is established, that there is a definite number. So that, someone who is Elect may become Reprobate and that would imply someone Reprobate become Elect. So as the number remains the same but the content changes. It is not just the number or total that is certain but the make-up is too.
- f. Election unto Life is Eternal, sec.5.
It is prior to history and is not based on anything that transpires in History. This is simply now, a particular application of the point made earlier in the Confession, that God's decree as a whole is not based on the foresight of history. Now the point is, ~~this~~ this decree being eternal(prior to history), is not based on anything that transpires in history. Elec-

tion in particular is not based on the foresight of faith, works, or anything else. It is not a response in the course of time to what transpires in history. It is, on the contrary, election in Christ. That it, it is election unto salvation, through the Mediator, God's Son.

- g. The means by which Election is realized are also foreordained, sec.6.

The decree of election is not only made, but it is executed. And so, when one thinks of Election, it is not simply of the End or Final Destiny of certain men and angels as certain. But also the Means that lead to that End that are fixed and certain. The execution of the decree is no less an unfolding of the decree. And again, that would have to be understood in terms of what was said in the first section. That God's election does not undermine the significance of history, but guarantees history. Thus, we know we will come to this end because the means are also guaranteed.

- h. Those whom God does not elect are ordained to wrath and condemnation, sec.7.

The Doctrine of Reprobation is now unfolded in terms of Preterition and Condemnation (more later).

- i. The doctrine of Election is to be handled with care, sec.8.

Prof. Hendry says--"Over against the way in which the Confession states itself, the Apostle Paul is very bold in setting out the doctrine of Election. And with enthusiasm and boldness he talks about it. But the Confession says we are going to handle this very gingerly and carefully."

The Confession is not saying that we don't handle the doctrine at all, but, with care. Lest the doctrine degenerate into fatalism.

Fatalism leads to irresponsibility, it leads to lack of spontaneity. It leads to disillusionment, hopelessness and despair. At least some conclude so. But the doctrine functions differently in Scripture.

It functions in Scripture to show that salvation does not take its origin in man. If we look to man and to his decisions, that would indeed lead to hopelessness and despair (at least if man's capabilities are assessed according to Scripture). Over against that, the Scripture unfolds the grace of God, God's electing purpose and plan. Election shows us that the Lord, who is our Judge, is also our Hope. And therefore it urges us to take our refuge in Him. This is Paul's point in Romans 9-11.

Paul is carrying out his polemic against the works of the Law. And over against the works of the Law, the promise is realized in God's calling and election. And God's election is not contrasted with Free-will, in some abstract sense. But it is contrasted with the works of the Law. And there we are appraised again, of the fact that salvation is wholly of grace. It even begins with God's electing purpose.

And that is what we have to say to those who are out-

side of the people of God. We are, by that doctrine, pointing them to the only source of redemption, in the Lord God Himself. For those inside the Faith, the doctrine is a source of joy and encouragement, of comfort and assurance. And surely there we may be very bold in preaching the doctrine. Because the doctrine assures us that God will not prove false to His electing purpose. NO ONE can pluck them out of HIS Hand. God will save according to His unchangeable purpose.

Cf., II Timothy 2:19.

And so, election ministers to assurance without undercutting a profound sense of covenant responsibility.

j. God has chosen a people for His own possession.

This doesn't come out in the WCF, but it does appear in the Heidelberg Catechism, Q.54--

Q. What do you believe concerning "the Holy Catholic Church"?

A. I believe that, from the beginning to the end of the world, and from among the whole human race, the Son of God, by His Spirit and His Word, gathers, protects, and preserves for Himself, in the unity of the true faith, a congregation chosen for eternal life. Moreover, I believe that I am and forever*
 * will remain a living member of it.
 Termed a "congregation" or "principality" or "Church." The Dutch and German has an ecclesiastical ring to it.

Hodge, Warfield, and WCF focus on the efficacy of God's saving operation upon the individual or particular persons. This stance is taken over against Arminianism and the universalizing of God's saving operations, which are then made effectual by a decision on the part of the believer. But, Hodge, Warfield, and WCF accent the efficacy of God's saving operation flowing from the determinate purpose of God.

The Heid. Cat. draws our attention in the first place, to the People of God, the Church, the chosen Congregation. And then I see myself. Not simply as an elect individual in the presence of God, and then I look around and notice other elect individuals. But I see first of all, the People God has for His own possession. And then I see myself as a member of that chosen people, of the Body of Christ, a member of the Community of the Church.

And now, as we look at the Scripture background for the doctrine, we begin dealing with the Biblical materials.

That Doctrine of Election is brought before us pre-eminently in the O.T., in terms of the concept of the Election of a People; in particular, the Election of Israel.

3. Election is of a People.

a. The Scriptural Representation.

Deut. 7:6; I Peter 2:9.

One of the leading themes of the O.T. is the election of Israel. And, most significant in that connection is Deut. 7:6 "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you

to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth." Also cf. 14:2; etc.

The corresponding text in the N.T. is I Peter 2:9 "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light". The language echoes O.T. language. And the covenant language used of Israel is now applied to the people who are redeemed by Jesus Christ. Which is why Reformed people think of the Church of Jesus Christ as the Israel of the New Covenant. And we think of Israel under the Old Covenant as the Church of the Old Covenant.

God has elected Israel, a **people** for His own possession. And, in N.T. terms, God has elected a Church. More broadly, He has elected a people for His own possession.

b. That Election is realized in History.

We can, in terms of Deut. 7:6 and other passages, immediately raise the question, "whether it is possible or legitimate to speak in this connection, of an eternal decree of Election?"

Bavinck on p. 339 says, "Scripture, as such, does not give us an abstract description of these decrees, but presents them to us in their historical realization." And further, "The same is true also with reference to election and reprobation. The O.T. does not describe these as eternal decrees but on every page it presents to us election and reprobation as facts of history."

How to explore further this point.

We are reminded that the **concern** of the Bible is not to establish a doctrine of fatalism or determinism. But we learn very concretely, that God works out His own purposes in history. And He does that while frustrating the purposes and plans of Satan. And so, the doctrine of the Decrees and Election and Reprobation prove to be immensely practical to the people of God. Because they assure us of God's ultimate triumph. Various Psalms illustrate the way the doctrines of Election and Reprobation are subjectively apprehended. Cf., 2; 31:13-15; 33:10-12; 139:16.

These reflect the comfort and assurance that is ministered to the godly people who walk in covenantal loyalty to God.

In Deut. 7 Israel's election is represented to us, quite clearly, as an historical phenomenon. Notice the way in which that election is described in Deut. 7. Election is election of Israel in Egypt, in order to bring Israel out of Egypt. "The Lord didn't choose you because you were more in number than others" (7:7). The Israel which is chosen is small in number. It exists among the other nations. This is the Israel that is chosen. Also, in vs. 8, the election is in fulfillment of an oath which has been sworn to the forefathers, committed to and promised them. And now, He has remembered His oath. And in remembering that

oath He now chooses Israel.
That is what Savinck has in mind in the two quotes given above.

c. An Eternal Election.

It is mistaken to see the election of Israel simply and solely as an action of God in time. Even on the background of the strong language in Deut. 7. Because in Deut. 7:8 the first ground of election is the love of God.

The love of God is an attribute of God. It is an attribute which defines the being and existence of God. God is Love (I John 4:8,10). And that Love of God is manifested in time in the election of Israel.

But God's love, by definition, originates in eternity (cp. Jer. 31:3 on this). It is a love stretching way back, even to eternity. It is really a love that exceeds time, that has its origin in the eternity that characterizes God Himself.

The second ground of election is God's oath-keeping. We are reminded of the promise which was made to Abraham. Abraham emerges in history as the father of the faithful. And as such, the movement has very small beginnings when Abraham is called out of Ur of the Chaldees. And the origin of Abraham and the covenant people is really the story of creation out of nothing. It is comparable to the creation of the Heavens and the Earth in Genesis 1. And Creation carries us back to eternity, to the will and purpose of God, who spoke and it was done (cf. Neh. 9:7).

The point is not that these passages use the language of a decree from eternity--they don't! Deuteronomy in particular does not.

But they do speak of Israel's election in a way that carries us beyond a simple action of God in time. There is reference to a longstanding, even an eternal, love for Israel. Which is linked with His will and purpose for Israel. And therefore we are unavoidably led to contemplate, what the later theologians call, the eternal decree of election.

But this decree is introduced to us concretely, in terms of what the later theologians call, the execution of that decree.

Must note the way Scripture speaks of election. Must appreciate the significance of how it is done and what is meant.

2-19-81

4. Election is of Persons.

The Church of the N.T. includes both Israelites and Gentiles in the one new Body, the people of God. But that people of God has as its correlate the election of particular persons.

But, first we will deal with...

a. The distinction between Theocratic and Soteric Election.

There are a number of theologians who prefer to work with a distinction between Theocratic Election and Soteric Election. Rather than the distinction between Election of a People and Election of Persons.

What you have in mind in the first distinction is, first of all, the election of Israel under the Old Covenant. And then this is contrasted with Soteric Election, which is the election of particular persons under the New Covenant. Theocratic has especially in view the O.T. materials, Soteric the N.T. materials.

That Theoc.El. is understood to be an election to Privilege and Standing, a position as nation under God, the theocratic nation. But it is not understood specifically as an election to salvation. It is understood to be mutable. That is to say, Israel is the chosen nation, is Elect. But It, at a given point, is rejected, cast off by God. Seen in Exile period, language of rejection is used. In addition note Isa.14:1 where God chooses Israel again.

It is contrasted with Sot.El. which is immutable. Once Elect can't be rejected and elected again. Obviously it is a valid distinction. The Bible uses the election of Israel as a major theme. But it also has its residue in the N.T. as well, cf. Romans 11.

Then, in distinction from that, you have the election of particular persons unto salvation. Historically, in Reformed Theology, the bulk of the discussion is at this point. This distinction between Theoc. and Sot. El., also has the advantage in that it offers a ready, easily accessible, method of coping with texts speaking of God's electing Israel, rejecting Israel, and then electing Israel again. Therefore it doesn't disturb the unchangeability of Sot. El. The reason for texts on rejection of the Elect and the election of the Rejection is because it is talking about Theoc. El., not Sot. El.

And yet, the distinction has certain liabilities. Some areas in which it does not do justice to the full range of Biblical data. A couple of these areas are:

- 1) Why is the concept of "election of persons" virtually immutable by definition; whereas, the "election of a nation" by definition not immutable? Why is each built in like that? So, the question is--whether the word "election" carries with it the notion of immutability. So that you can say: Elect=Saved. If it does carry immutability, why does it not also apply to the election of Israel as a nation? And if so, how do you cope with the data concerning the election and rejection of Israel.

But if it doesn't carry with it the notion of immutability, then the immutability of Sot. El., that immutability would have to be established on other grounds, other data would be needed (more later).

- 2) The distinction between the O.T. and the N.T. cannot be conceived of as a distinction between dealing with Israel corporately, on the one hand;

and dealing with believers individualistically in the N.T.

This is not the difference. Under the Old Covenant surely the nation is in view, there is a corporate aspect to the way in which God deals with His people. But they are also persons that are in view. Note that the Law of God is surely given to the Nation ("What nation has received "Deut. 4:8). And yet, HOW does a nation keep the Law of God? It keeps them as particular persons keep them. The Ten Commandments are directed to the behavior of particular persons. And in that way the nation keeps the Law of God.

We have the same phenomenon in the N.T. We are so familiar with this that we don't think about it or its implications. The Great Commission comes to us as a commission to disciple, baptize and ~~teach~~ teach the nations, the ~~ethne~~ ethne. It doesn't mean we are to disciple individuals of nations. But, it means we are to disciple Nations, units. (Also may need to discuss the nature of "nation," as it may not correspond to our twentieth-century conception.)

But now, How is the conversion of the nations realized? Some will preach on the Capitol's steps. But we usually see it as through the conversion of individual persons. And thus the nation is converted to Christ.

Then, in Romans 9 you have the election of Jacob and the rejection of Esau. Berkouwer and Ridderbos accept the ethnic implications of this in the light of redemptive history, in the light of the prophecy in Malachi, as such.

But it is not that. What is in view is peoples, ethnic groupings. And yet, while we want to grant it as far as it reflects Scripture, still the relevance of election and reprobation for particular persons can hardly be excluded. Jacob and Esau are particular persons. And as such the prophecy has meaning (cf. Murray's Commentary, sees relevance in passage, unexcludable).

Also, under the New Covenant, where to be sure, there is a reference to the election of particular persons. Even here, God has a people for His own possession. Not simply a number of persons next to each other. But God has a people, a Church which He is sanctifying and purifying.

Point--can't simply operate with a simple distinction between Israel corporate and believer's individual. They overlap.

- 3) Must grant that Theoc. El. is Soteric. And conversely, the election of particular persons, in Christ, in the N.T., results in material blessings, physical welfare. Blessings which are thought of as characteristically O.T. in character have also their N.T. counterparts. They are not thoroughly spiritualized, transposed into a different realm.

Considering the first aspect(Theoc. is Sot. El.), Deut.7 is theoc. el. Yet, it is true, that it also is consistently referred to in discussions of Election, as a proof-text for Sot. El. Cf. the Reformed writers.

Also note, Israel is elected in Deut.7 to be a holy people unto the Lord; a separation unto the Lord.

It is inconceivable to me(Shepherd) that that "holiness", separation, would fall short of deliverance from sin and its consequences. Isn't that God's purpose in having a people for His own possession, a people that is delivered from sin and its consequences. Deut.7 is consistently used as a model for soteric election. Decisive is the fact that at the heart of covenant blessing and privilege, both under the O.T. and under the N.T., is the same union and communion with God. Cf., Jer. 31:33 on the purpose and goal of God's election. This language is picked up in Hebrews of the Church of the New Covenant in 8:10; 10:16-17. The appeal to Jeremiah shows that the election of Israel to be the covenant people of God can't be construed simply in theocratic terms, in distinction from soteric blessing and privilege.

Note what Warfield says in Biblical and Theological Studies, p.289 "The choice of Israel cannot be confined to the choice of a people to be a nation, with certain earthly blessings and privilege, and to fulfil a certain role in the coming of the Messiah." "The concern in the O.T. is with the Kingdom of God and the way men are introduced into that Kingdom."

Compare the Kingdom teaching of Jesus. On both being correlated compare Matt.6:33. Also, see the Great Commission as the means of realizing what is man's primary responsibility, in terms of the Cultural Mandate.

The point is not the contrast between that small piece of real estate in the Near East as over against spiritual blessings. But that small piece of real estate as over against the whole heavens and the whole earth, the New Inheritance in which righteousness dwells and the people of God. The people of God are the rightful possessors of the earth, cp. Ps.24:1. This is all our inheritance. Thus the distinction between Theoc. El. and Sot. El. is not used, but the distinction is between the Election of a People and the Election of Persons.

b. The Scriptural Representation.

In the O.T. and the N.T. we have to think in terms of elect persons. In Deut.7 Israel is elect, responsible for keeping the Law of God. Nobody can say, "Well look, Israel has to keep the Law, but I don't have to keep the Law." The nation then is obedient in terms of the obedience of individual persons. So also, no Jew could say, "The nation is elect, but

not this or that person; or, I am not elect." The nation is elect and therefore I am elect. Cp. the Heid. Cat. Q.54, that is its why. The covenant status in which the individual Israelite obviously finds himself, to which a particular Israelite could say "I am ~~not~~ in covenant with God", is solely by the grace of God. We are to listen and obey and God will fulfil. The N.T. is particularly clear in speaking of the election of particular persons. Romans 8:29, 30 sets out the way of redemption for particular persons. Eph.1:4,5 God chose us, and predestinated us unto adoption as sons(pl.). Gal. 1:15 personally set apart and called by God. In II John an Elect Lady is addressed. The names of the elect are written in the Book of Life, Lk.10:20; Phil.4:3; Rev.3:5. Also, the N.T. concerns itself, even with the number of persons who are saved, Acts 2:41; 13:48. But at the same time, these persons belong to the Body of Christ. They are thought of as more than particular persons. Cf. Titus 2:14; Gal.3:28; Acts 15:14.

c. An Eternal Election.

As with nation, so also with particular persons, the election is often represented to us in terms of its historical realization. That is why, for example, a election, at different points, seems to coincide with Calling. Which is a historical phenomenon. God calls and we are converted. II Peter 1:10 makes calling and election the same. The two seem to coincide as a historical phenomenon. This doesn't startle us because of the way the O.T. speaks of election. Yet, the N.T. is also clear on election being from eternity, cf. Eph.1:4.

5. Ephesians 1:3-14.

Four observations(cp. Murray Collected Writings, II:125-31, on this passage and the next.).

a. In terms of this passage spiritual blessing is present blessing.

Vs.3 the reference is not to a future state but a present state of blessing. 1:20 reference to physical resurrection and to the Ascension. Christ is viewed as seated at the right hand of the Father. Cf. 2:6 God has raised us up together with Christ--present blessing; and seated us with Him. Therefore we are beneficiaries now of spiritual blessings. Col.3:1,3.

In Eph.1 have examples of spiritual, heavenly blessings: holiness, blamelessness(vs.4), adoption(vs.5), redemption, forgiveness of trespasses, riches of gr. grace(vs.7). The sequence is interesting. Begins with holiness(sanctification)-- adoption(adoption)-- forgiveness(justification). Vs.11 an inheritance. Vss.13,14 sealing of the Spirit as deposit guaranteeing the Inheritance.

- b. Those spiritual blessings are blessings which flow from Election.

1:4 all this blessing is in accordance with our election in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world. Election is prior to the bestowment of blessing. Election provides the pattern in terms of which blessing is bestowed. It is election in Christ before the foundation of the world. Thus it is not blessing which gives rise to election, but it is election which gives rise to blessing.

More specifically, it is election that is unto holiness. It is not said that holiness is unto election, as the Universalist and Sacerdotalist maintain. It is characteristic of those views to say men are elect because they are foreseen to be holy. And not only that but to persevere in that holiness. Paul says the reverse.

- c. Predestination flows from the Love of God.

Vs.4 speaks of God's choosing us--election.

Vs.5 " " " predestination.

Election and Predestination are not to be conceived of as two distinct elements, but they are one and the same phenomenon.

It is not three different goals in these verses, but one and the same goal viewed from three aspects.

The verse division in the Greek text is better than in the English text. The *ἐν ἀγαπῇ* is best understood as belonging to the *προβλεπόμενος* of vs.5. "In love He predestinated us..." (NIV).

The point is that predestination flows from the love of God, that is the sole explanation of predestination. The love is a distinguishing love because it is a love which issues in Predestination.

But a further explanation of the love is given. It is according to the good pleasure and will of God (vs.5; and vs.11 also).

Eph.1:3-14 is so clear, and the main point so reinforced, that it could serve as the whole proof of Election. Election is rooted in the sovereign will of God, not something foreseen in men.

- d. Election is in Christ.

An additional argument for Unconditional Election may be deduced from the pervasive use of the formula *ἐν Χριστῷ*, or in Christ. Cp. vss. 3, 6, 7, 10, 13.

Now all of that blessing in Christ goes back to the fact that we have been chosen in Christ. And that union with Christ was constituted before the foundation of the world.

The argument is--if union with Christ is the foundation for the bestowment of blessing, including holiness; and election is in Christ. Then, holiness is not the basis on which we are elected. The blessing flows from our union with Christ. We are elected in Christ. And therefore in Him we are elected unto blessing and privilege. Election is not on the basis of holiness or anything that manifests holiness: such as, faith or perseverance in faith.

On the Universalist understanding, election must

not be simply on the basis of faith. But must also go beyond and take account of foreseen perseverance. Faith together with all its concomitants must be seen. But election in Christ does not mean that election is derived from holiness, but election is unto holiness. Again, election does not mean the election of one already contemplated as in Christ. And therefore as a beneficiary of blessing, of Christ. NOT THIS. But election in Christ is election together with Christ. As opposed to election outside of Christ. It is election in Christ in order to become the beneficiary of His grace.

When you compare this with Deut.7 you realize that reference to the love of God with reference to the election of a People, brings us into the same sphere in which Paul operates in Eph.1-- an eternal election unto salvation.

2-20-81

6. Romans 8:29-30 (cp. Coll.Writ., II as in "5" above).

a. The Arminian understanding: Foreknowledge in the sense of foresight of faith.

A text for the Universalist to prove that predestination is conditioned upon foresight: of faith and perseverance. Or more broadly, and more inclusively, that it is predestination based on the foresight of all the conditions of salvation, according to the Universalist understanding of these.

The significant verb is in vs. 29, γνωσκει --to know beforehand, in advance. Cp. II Peter 3:17; Acts 26:5.

Therefore the usage provides warrant for seeing the same in Rom. 8:29. The reference could then be to God's eternal foreknowledge, His knowledge of all that would come to pass. And, such knowledge must be predicated of God, God is omniscient, He knows all that will come to pass. And so exegetes maintain the above as the right interpretation.

Now, even if followed, we would have to grant further that it would of necessity be a distinctive type of foreknowledge. Because in this passage, those who are foreknown, are identified with those who are predestinated unto eternal life. And so there must be some kind of distinctiveness attaching to the word "foreknow". The word can't mean simply "pre-cognition," for in that sense God knows each and every man. But the text says, as a matter of fact, that those "whom" God foreknows, He predestinates. And if we assume that God does not predestinate each man, head for head, unto eternal life. Then we are left with the question--"What is distinctive about that foreknowledge?" In what sense are they or how are they foreknown and predestined?

The most commonly given answer is that the foreknowledge is foresight of faith or believing. God knows who will believe and who will persevere therein. And so predestination is conditioned upon the foresight of faith. And if that is the pattern for our understanding of the passage, then the text would totally undercut Unconditional Election. But, there are other ways of seeing this text.

- b. Even if it is foresight of faith, we still don't have an adequate explanation for the electing purpose of God. Foresight of faith is not without its problems.

It is not wrong to say God foresees who will believe. HE DOES! But the question arises--"Where does that faith come from? What is its origin?"

Faith surely has to be understood as the gift of God. It does not arise from the native capacities of the flesh. Cp. Jn. 3:3-8; 6:44, 45, 66; Eph. 2:8; Phil. 1:29. So we must see faith as a gift of God, wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. So faith comes as a gift of God. But surely then, we would have to understand God as determining those upon whom He will bestow the gift of faith. Therefore foresight of faith presupposes in itself an electing purpose of God, in some sense. And that electing purpose would have to be a distinguishing purpose.

Thus even on the view of the foresight of faith, the priority of predestination is still relevant. Leads to Predestination--Foreknowledge--Predestination.

- c. Foreknowledge as the equivalent of Foreloved.

Even on the Arminian view of foreknow as foresight, that idea of faith as being seen: persevering in faith; has to be supplied arbitrarily. It has to be read into the text on the basis of other passages. It is an element which is supplied then to provide room for the distinctiveness of foresight. But then again, it is not really faith that is foreknown, but they are SINNERS that are foreknown.

And so, we are better off if we can find the distinguishing character of Foreknow within the context of the verb itself. Can do so readily through the verb *Γινώσκω*.

The verb points beyond a notion of bare cognition in that sense. Note the background in the O.T.--*יָדָע*. Cf. Ps. 1:6 "the way of the righteous" that is said to be known, a way in which God delights, approves; God loves that way. As the NIV puts it--"The Lord watches over the way of the righteous..." Note the care, approval, delight, love that is brought forward. In Jer. 1:5 he is known in a special way, he is the special object of God's affection and love, he is ordained to be a prophet.

The order is the same in the realm of soteriology. The Lord knows, sets apart, ordains, brings to pass. Hosea 13:5 special regard, loved them. NIV--"I cared for you." Amos 3:2 God has loved Israel as His own. And that is why He chastises them as a loving, devoted Father when they go astray. NIV--"You only have I chosen..."

Have an exact parallel in Deut. 7:8.

The ideas of love, election, foreknowledge are closely tied to one another and brought to the fore. We also have a similar usage in Matt. 7:23 I have not approved of you. In I John 3:1 there is no bond of love.

So, if we take our cue from these, then knowledge becomes the virtual equivalent of love. There is a distinguishing love which gives rise to election. Rom.11:2 foreknow is virtually the equivalent of election. Cp.11:5 the foreknown people are a remnant chosen by grace.

Thus in 8:29 foreknow should be understood as containing within itself the discriminating factor. Foreknown are those whom He set His love upon from eternity. If so, then we have an exact parallel in Eph. 1:4,5 in love having predestinated us. The source of predestination is the love of God. Which has its background in Deut.7:8.

So there is a consistent picture that emerges. The *evangelism* of Eph.1:4,5 makes explicit what is implicit in the *prophecies* of Rom.8:29.

d. Another consideration: Predestination conditions Calling and Faith.

In 8:29-30 it is GOD who predestines, calls, justifies, glorifies. And in harmony with the divine monergism, God is first of all said to foreknow, in the sense of setting His love upon the Elect. And so the divine, sovereign working remains in the forefront all along the line.

If we inserted the idea of prevision of faith, that makes God passive to begin with. And that would tend to destroy the consistent emphasis on the divine initiative. God would then be seen as determining to do what He sees will take place anyway. But the pervasive sense in the text is that God sovereignly works out His salvation and He does that in accordance with His sovereign, determinate purpose.

Verse 30 Why?

The called are justified because faith is the appropriate ^{response} to that calling and follows upon it. But then, what determines calling? Well, cp. vs.28 the purpose of God. The purpose of God is defined in Vs.29 in terms of Foreknowledge and Predestination.

7. The Preaching of Election.

The whole case for the doctrine of Election could be suspended on Ephesians 1 and Romans 8. But numerous other texts also teach this, either expressly or by implication-- Matt.11:25-27; John 6:38-40; 10:29; 15:16; 17:6; Acts 13:48; Rom.9; Gal.1:15,16; I Thess.1:2-4; II Thess.2:13,14; I Peter 1:2. Now when you take account of passages like these you see that the teaching on election pervades the N.T. And no less the O.T. also. Surely Israel is supremely conscious of being in a unique relationship with God by virtue of God's electing purpose with respect to her.

Now the question--Why the emphasis on Election? Why is the gospel suffused with teaching on the doctrine of election? Answer--We are thereby reminded again and again, that salvation does not originate with man, but it originates with God.. And it is wrought out and applied according to His sovereign, gracious purpose, in all its phases; from beginning to end, Salvation is of the LORD.

It begins with Predestination and ends with Glorification. That is the profoundest refutation of Autosoterism and all autosoteric elements and tendencies.

Now, what is the conclusion that we are to draw from that. Well, some say--"Therefore we must sit back and wait to be saved. We have an excuse for not repenting and for not coming to Christ. He hasn't chosen me. Or at least He hasn't told me, given me a warrant."

Some preachers are therefore reluctant to call men to faith with vigor, urgency. Because to do so would be to imply that salvation is less than a sovereign grace of God in all its parts. And so the gospel call is deprived of its spontaneity. It is brought into conflict with what we want to say about the sovereignty of God flowing from the doctrine of Election.

Now in that event, Election may be preached. But it is preached as an objective doctrine. THIS IS THE TRUTH.

But it often serves to breed anxiety through this. The doctrine preached objectively that way, does not serve to mold the character of the ministry itself.

Reformed Preaching is not Reformed because it is preaching which has no gospel call. For if it simply sets forth Election as an objective truth.

Preaching is Reformed only as it arises out of and is molded by and structured by the doctrine of Election (this is somewhat strong, but...). It tells us that, since salvation at every point is of the Lord. Therefore preaching at every point must direct men to the grace of God in Jesus Christ. We are elect in Him. And therefore Jesus and the sole sufficiency of His grace is what has to be proclaimed.

Men must be urged fervently to seek their redemption in Jesus Christ, to depend exclusively on Him. But not only to depend exclusively on Him, but just because we depend upon Him, to listen and do what He says.

And listening to Jesus, SDW, listening is obedient.

We are warned that apart from, outside of that grace, the grace of God the Father wrought in Jesus Christ, and applied by the Holy Spirit; outside of that grace we are lost. And therefore men who come to Jesus Christ in faith, must be taught to give the gratitude to God and to Him alone.

In Rom.11:5 there is a remnant according to grace.

What conclusions do we draw from this?

It is not--I wonder where they are? Therefore look to yourselves to see possibly if you have the marks that would show you to be a member of that elect number--NO!!! If by grace there is a remnant chosen by grace. If therefore by grace, it is not by works. That is, it is not a matter of doing, it is nothing that arises out of the flesh or the power of the flesh. But there is a remnant according to God's kindness. And therefore we ought to forsake ourselves and cling to this God, who in His kindness has a people for His own possession.

There is no reason why J. Daane, in The Freedom of God, should, with scorn, speak of a gap between the preaching of Reformed pulpits and the preaching of the Doctrine

of Election. And this is so, because there is no way to preach Fatalism. And there isn't. But the Reformed and Biblical doctrine is not what Daane thinks it is. Daane goes for Barth's view. The Biblical view of Election is Good News. In spite of sin, God has a people and is saving us. Cf. Romans 11:33-36. Paul is rejoicing in the wisdom of God's love. The reflecting on God's election should issue in doxology.

E. Reprobation.

1. Preterition and Pre-damnation(or Damnation).

a. Introductory comments on the Renewal of the Discussion of Reprobation.

Reprobation has always been a significant doctrine in Reformed teaching since the time of Calvin. But it has not always been well-received. Churches that have the historical right to bear the title of Reformed. I am thinking in particular of the German Reformed Church in the U.S. (which existed till 1934, when it joined with the Evangelical Church to form the Evangelical & Reformed Church). They did not accept the doctrine of Reprobation. Though a remnant, the Durka Classis (SCUS), does. Thus there is no difference between it and the Dutch and Scottish Reformed Churches. In 1965 an official objection (a gravamen) against the doctrine of Reprobation was lodged with the Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (this was the Church begun by A. Kuypers, in distinction from the official Netherlands Reformed Church). This led to a decision by Synod, several years ago, that the doctrine of Reprobation, as taught in the Canons of Dordt, is no longer officially binding on ministers or members of the Church. Though the Canons were not revised to conform to the new opinion. More recently, a similar objection was raised in the Christian Reformed Church (U.S.) by the Rev. H. Boer. The C.R.C. Synod of 1980 turned down the objection and re-affirmed the position of the Canons of Dordt.

The main point of the gravamen is that the texts cited in the Canons of Dordt do not warrant the doctrine as formulated there. (We will not enter into this) But we do want to pick up on one observation made towards the end of the gravamen, and use it as a foil for the first part of the discussion. In order to accent for us an important distinction that has been made in Reformed Theology.

Dr. Boer writes--"I do not read in Scripture that the sovereign grace that elected me to be a child of God, without regard to merit on my part, has, as its logical and necessary opposite, a sovereign wrath that damns men to an existence of everlasting death, without any regard to demerit on their part."

The concern here is not with whether and to what extent Reformed Theology thinks of Reprobation as simply the logical and necessary opposite of Election (more later). But the main concern is with the description of Reprobation itself, as "a sovereign wrath that damns men to an existence of everlasting death, without any regard to demerit."

That is Boer's perception of the doctrine and also many other people have the same perception. It brings to expression a difficulty which many people feel when they encounter this doctrine and begin to reflect on it. Does God, without any regard to demerit, simply create men and condemn them to eternal death without any regard to their being worthy of such condemnation?

b. An Infralapsarian Conception of Reprobation.

F. Turretin defines Reprobation as--"the eternal, immutable, and absolutely free purpose of God, by which He has decreed that He will have no mercy on some people, who are exactly as deeply involved in corruption and guilt as the rest, but, leaving them in sin, will condemn them on account of sin, for the revelation of His glorious justice, freedom, and power." (p. 401 *Boer's (ed.) Reformed Dogmatics*)

Five Observations:

- 1) Turretin distinguishes between a negative and a positive act of Reprobation.
 The negative act is preterition. That is, God wills not to pity certain sinners. It is an act of the divine will. He wills to leave them in their sin and misery. He simply passes them by in His election unto salvation. As an example of Turretin's view, cf. Matt. 13:11.
 The positive act is pre-damnation. It is God's determination to judge and to punish sinners on account of their sin. Turretin offers Jude 4 as an example of his point.
- 2) Turretin views Reprobation as an absolute act of God. "Reprobation presupposes unbelief". But the Reprobation of a sinner is not grounded in his unbelief nor in the disobedience entailed in unbelief. Foreseen unbelief is not the cause of Reprobation, nor the cause of God's discrimination among men. It is God's good pleasure alone that makes the difference between the Elect and the Reprobate.
 And so, Reprobation is absolute, it is not based anymore on foresight of unbelief than is Election based on foresight of faith. That is what Van Til means when he uses the expression: the "equal ultimacy" of Election and Reprobation. They are absolute acts of God.
- 3) As a correlate of 2), Turretin holds that unbelief is a consequence of Reprobation.
 There is God's determination and then unbelief as a consequence. But that does not mean (and here Reformed people speak with one voice) that God bestows the gift of unbelief as He bestows the gift of faith. Van Til has stressed the "equal ultimacy", and writers in the Netherlands have pointed to the conclusions of the Synod of Dordt and they have stressed the non eodem modo, "not in the same way". God does not bestow or infuse unbelief into men. Unbelief is presupposed in the decree of Reprobation.

But now, if that unbelief is presupposed, how can the decree of Reprobation be the cause of unbelief (or unbelief the consequence of Reprobation)? What Turretin says is that unbelief is the consequence of Reprobation in both a negative and a positive sense. (Remember, this is Scholastic theology, and quite beautiful, so we will have to push our way through such distinctions.)

Negatively--God has not determined to give the gift of faith to some. In that sense, therefore, unbelief is a consequence of Reprobation.

Positively--unbelief is a consequence of Reprobation, in that God has determined to make those who would rebel against the gospel even more blind. Compare the Bible's speaking of God's hardening of sinners. That blinding and hardening are judicially warranted. And they are inflicted on account of the rebellion. Unbelief receives as its consequence a hardening.

- 4) In pre-damnation God acts justly because He condemns no one but the sinner who is worthy of condemnation. So then, pre-damnation is an act of justice. Justice in which God acts as a Judge to condemn men on account of their sin--retributive justice.

It differs from Preterition in that in preterition God appears as Lord rather than as Judge. In preterition God appears as Lord sovereignly discriminating among men. And in Pre-damnation He appears as Judge, justly condemning men on account of their sin. As Lord, God discriminates among men, all of whom are worthy of condemnation. But nevertheless, in connection with Pre-damnation, He appears as Judge condemning men to eternal death because of their sin.

- 5) Even in connection with Preterition, there is a sense in which God is acting as Judge. In Turretin's representation, he does hold that the sin of the reprobate is the just foundation for both his preterition and his just punishment.

You may perceive a shift between this and the usual Reformed view. The prevailing view in Reformed Theology, stated by Calvin first of all, was that sin is not the cause of Preterition, of our being passed by. Because if sin were the cause of our being passed by, then all men would have to be passed by, because all men are sinners.

Turretin adheres to that view--"absoluteness of Preterition". We noted the sovereignty with which God discriminates. If He hadn't discriminated because of sin--well He couldn't discriminate because of sin because all are equally involved in sin, and therefore all would be equally reprobated, if sin were the cause of Preterition. So Turretin agrees, but he goes a step further, and argues that sin is the just foundation for preterition. In the sense that the Reprobate have no reason to complain about the justice of God. Turretin says "If they will examine themselves, they will find

in their sin, the most just basis of rejection and of punishment." The word "rejection" is the translation of the Latin word "praeteritio", preterition.

The point can be stated another way. Sin and unbelief do not compel God to pass men by and to leave them in their just condemnation--that's the absoluteness. Sin, unbelief, disobedience do not compel God to pass men by. Nevertheless, they do warrant God's passing them by. Sin is a just cause, ground for Preterition. But it is not a compelling cause or ground.

Note also that R.L.Dabney follows Turretin. He argues against those who "needlessly burden down the doctrine of Reprobation with an unwarranted severity." He argues that "Sinners are passed by because they deserve to be passed by." The fact that in spite of ill-desert, God is pleased to elect some to salvation, does not alter the grounds upon which the others are abandoned.

The basic argument everywhere--it is sin and sin alone which excludes from God's favor. Sin provides the just foundation and warrant for Preterition. But God is not, by their sin, compelled to pass them by. He does elect some to favor.

If you go back to H. Boer's point, he doesn't take account of any of the discussions with which the books are full. It is just as clear as crystal that no one could ever say, that Reformed Theology as a whole, formulates its doctrine of Reprobation to say that God condemns men to an everlasting death without any reference to the demerit of sin. The demerit of sin is very much in the foreground with reference to Damnation. But also it is in the foreground with reference to Preterition (as Turretin, Dabney, et al state). From an Infralapsarian viewpoint the gravamen is false. If the Infralapsarian takes account what about the Supralapsarian conception?

c. A Supralapsarian Conception of Reprobation.

In Infralapsarianism view, the decrees to Create and Permit the Fall precede Election and Reprobation. And in that way the space is created to take account of sin in connection with Reprobation. But, is that the case with Supralapsarianism? Or, is the view that God determines to condemn men without regard to demerit, more specifically a peculiarity of the Supralapsarian Calvinist.

To answer that we use Theodore Beza. Beza is often accused of being the one who led Calvinism down the primrose path of Decretalism. For Beza, the glory of God is in the foreground--all that God determines to do and does is for the revelation of His glory. He is glorified in the revelation of His Mercy by the salvation of the Elect, and He is glorified in the revelation of His Justice by the damnation of the Reprobate. Now with that, Beza defines Predestination (notice Predestination is defined not Reprobation) as--"God's everlasting and unchangeable ordi-

nance, going in order before all the causes of salvation and damnation, whereby God hath determined to be glorified; in some by saving them of His own mere grace in Christ, and in othersome by damning them through His rightful justice in Adam and in themselves."... "Predestination that which by order is the first cause of their damnation."

That is about as close as you come in Reformed Theology to the kind of statement found in Boer's gravenmen. That is, that Reprobation is without regard to demerit. And yet, not even Beza thinks of Reprobation as without reference to demerit.

Three Observations:

- 1) Beza distinguishes between the ordinance of Reprobation and Reprobation itself.

The Ordinance is comprehensive and includes both sin and the condemnation of the sinner. There is no other source than the just and incomprehensible will of God.

Reprobation itself is grounded in man and his sin. "Men perish because they are sinners and the will of man is the first efficient cause of corruption and unbelief."

Between the Ordinance and the execution of it, sin "slippeth in," enters in, so that in terms of the Ordinance, man falls into sin of necessity, but in fact he sins willfully. Sin is not on account of the Ordinance, but neither is it beside or without the Ordinance. Men do not sin because God makes them sin. But neither do they sin outside of the Ordinance of God.

The point is--How can that be, that sin is included in God's decree, and yet God is not the author of it? And yet, that is the Scriptural representation.

- 2) The fault of sin lies in Man.

"The whole fault of the damnation of the Reprobate lies in themselves." The damnation of the Reprobate is according to the will of God, but not because of the will of God.

- 3) It follows that the punishment of the Reprobate is just.

It is not simply the will of God, but the just will of God, that lies behind Predestination, and as the first cause of Pre-damnation. The Reprobate are not simply appointed to damnation, but they are ordained to a just damnation. God is not glorified simply in their condemnation, but in their just condemnation. It is God's glorious justice that is revealed in the execution of the Decree.

What is the conclusion that is to be drawn from this? Supralapsarianism does not hold the view that God has damned some men without regard to demerit on their part.

Not even K. Hoeksema does this. According to Supra, God destines certain men to Damnation. But also, the

Decree holds with respect to the vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction in the way of sin. Not trying to obscure the differences between Infra and Supra. Supra defines Predestination so as to include sin and condemnation and salvation. So that the condemnation, reprobation is not without reference to the demerit of sin. Infra differs in that sin is presupposed in them, and then Reprobation is God's decree on the background of the prior decree to Permit the Fall into Sin. Also, Sin, as well as, Reprobation, are included in God's comprehensive decree.

They do not differ as though Infra does take account of sin and Supra does not take account of sin. In Reformed Theology, both Infra and Supra, have always taken account of sin and demerit in the doctrine of Reprobation.

The Discrimination is Absolute.

2-26-81

d. Westminster Confession of Faith III:7.

"The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the counsel of His own will, whereby He extends or withholds mercy as He pleases, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by; and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice."

The Confession has both Preterition and Damnation in its definition.

But it would appear from the language (of the Received Text) that both elements of Preterition and Pre-damnation are qualified by the expression "for their sin." ("to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin,...") And if the Confession is read in that way then the Confession would be Infra. But also, it would be Arminian, and find Reprobation in all its dimensions as grounded in foreseen demerit. God saw sin, passed them by, ordained them to wrath and dishonor.

But if you don't go that path, which is stretching things a bit, you remember the argument that: if some are passed by because of their sin then why aren't all passed by, because we're all sinners? And noted how Turretin and Dabney said, passing by is a just passing by, because it presupposed sin, but it was not required, there are others whom God does not pass by. Also we are aided in our understanding of the WCF by taking account of other texts as we ordinarily see it printed in the Critical Edition of Carruthers (cf. CFC edition, Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland edition). After "pass by" he has a ';', not a ','. With the ';' you are given a different perspective on the language. The Confession brings out the absoluteness of Preterition. And then the Confession goes on to say: "and to ordain them. . . ." The qualification "for their sin" explains the wrath and damnation. That is, the pre-damnation, that aspect of Reprobation which refers specifically to the wrath of God, is indeed an aspect--it takes account of sin.

But Preterition is not explained in terms of sin, but is an absolute determination on the part of God.

That will is incomprehensible--the Lord God extends His mercy as He wills. The condemnation, on the other hand, takes account of the demerit of sin, and there we have a revelation of His glorious justice.

The WCF can be seen in an Infra or Supra light. But in either case, the distinction has to be made between Preterition and Pre-damnation. The former is a manifestation of God's discriminatory will and power. Pre-damnation is accounted for judicially in terms of sin.

Since we now have established in the Reformed doctrine of Predestination that basic distinction between Preterition and Pre-damnation, two things must also be said. One, the equal ultimacy of Election and Reprobation; both are a manifestation of the sovereign good pleasure of God. And yet, Two, it is not that God damns men, creates them for damnation apart from any demerit of sin; but the doctrine of Reprobation, in the fulness of its conception, does indeed take account of the demerit of sin.

And now for the Biblical Warrant for the Doctrine.....

2. Ethnic Reprobation.

a. Ethnic Reprobation as Preterition.

At an earlier point, in the discussion of Election, we spoke of the Election of Israel. Closely related to that, is the non-election, passing by (preterition) of the Nations. Now at this point we can give consideration to a standard Reformed argument, to enter into the Biblical materials, for the doctrine of Reprobation.

The Argument is--Reprobation is simply the logical correlate of Election. Berkhof (p.117) says, "The doctrine of Reprobation naturally follows from the logic of the situation. The decree of Election inevitably implies the decree of Reprobation."

The argument has been criticized as leaving us with nothing more than a logical inference. The argument is that such a method of defense is not Scriptural, but rationalistic and deductivistic, and leads us down a path that the Scriptures do not direct us to.

But inferences are indeed logical deductions. But they are not, by definition, erroneous. Although we do have reservations on proceeding in a rational, deductivistic manner; yet, we do not want to place a kind of premium on what is illogical.

The question is--Whether there is Scriptural warrant for drawing the kind of inference which Berkhof draws, is there Scriptural warrant for us to do so?

3: Vos has an essay entitled "The Biblical Importance of the Doctrine of Preterition" (in Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation edited by R.B. Gaffin, Jr.), in which he argues that predestination in distinction from Election does not imply Reprobation. Predestination means simply "appointment to the goal of eternal salvation." And Predestination can be

logically conceived without the correlate of preterition. . . . it is different with the idea of election. This idea is of such a nature that it cannot even be completed in thought without positing at the same time the idea of Preterition." (pp. 413, 414.) The thought is, that Election in distinction from Predetermination, carries with it the idea of a choice out of a series of possibilities. That that is the idea of Election. And Election has the idea that all the possibilities are rejected except those that are elected.

Now Vos is right in saying that the idea of Election required for its completion in thought the idea of Preterition. But also, in fact, in a given case, all of the possibilities might be chosen, or elected; and none rejected. So that, even though the idea of Election requires Reprobation (the idea of rejection as its logical correlate), in fact, all might be chosen and none rejected.

Thus the Reformed argument, as Berkhof presents it, derives its force, not abstractly from the force of logic as such. That is, the force of his statement is not that, "if there is an election, there has to be a reprobation." But the force is derived concretely, by reference to the way the Bible speaks about Election.

The Bible presents us with the fact that not all who are eligible for election are, in fact, elected.

How does the Bible present that to us?

In the O.T., Israel is the Elect Nation. But Israel is the Elect Nation in distinction from the other nations that are not elected as Israel is. Cf. Deut. 7:6 (1st out of); 10:15; 14:2; Lev. 20:24, 26. And the confessional, lyrical response of the Church to this revelation of grace is found in Ps. 147:19-20.

Israel's election then entails a singling out and a separation from among the nations that are passed by, that are not elected as Israel is, to be the Lord's own. But there is more to it than that. The Bible makes clear, that this election of Israel, is an election of Israel, when the other nations could have been elected but were not, cf. Ex. 19:5, 6.

The point is--all of the earth belongs to the Lord, it is His to do with as He wills. And, out of all the nations on the earth, YOU (Israel) are going to be My treasured possession. God has clearly willed to choose Israel and to pass by the other nations, cf. Deut. 10:14, 15.

The point is--God has control over the whole situation. And we are clearly given to understand that the Lord could have chosen others, but He did not. The Election is not forced upon God. The election of some and not others, is not an election that betrays the absence of other options for God. The Election of Israel is the deliberate, gracious choice of Israel. And at the same time it entails the rejection of the other nations. So that, the rejection of the others is not simply a negative act. It is not simply that there is a reprobation or rejection by de-

fault. That is, it is not as if God chooses Israel, and only Israel; and then, perforce others have to be passed by. The Reprobation is a deliberate act. Reprobation as Preterition is a positive act, and not simply a negative act by default. It is not simply the logic of the situation: if there is an election, then there has to be a reprobation. Both are deliberate, cf. Deut. 4:19.

So, the Reformed argument Therefore is not simply the logical deduction that Election implies Reprobation. But the argument is derived from Scripture, which shows God electing Israel out of the Nations. And the Nations are passed by. Others are non-Elect, or Reprobate; but Israel is Elect. And so the logic of the argument is concretely imbedded in the revelation of Scripture. So we can say, that the Election of Israel does have, as its correlate, the non-election of the Nations. And because that passing by is correlative to election it has to be conceived of as eternal as Election.

And so, in the sphere of Ethnic Reprobation then, what we clearly have is the doctrine of Preterition. But we don't have that simply, we also have...

b. Ethnic Reprobation as Pre-damnation.

The Scriptures represent God, not simply as passing by or not electing nations; but they also describe God as punishing the nations, cf. Deut. 9:4, 5.

The difference between Israel and the nations is clear.. The other nations are driven out of the land in order that Israel may possess it. And they are driven out by way of punishment for wickedness. It is on account of wickedness of these nations that the Lord is going to drive them out before Israel. The Scripture makes clear that the nations are guilty of sin, that they are worthy of being punished. Cf. Deut. 12:31; 18:12; Rom. 1:18ff.

And so the passing by and condemnation of the nations surely presupposes sin, so that, that condemnation, as such, is just.

But now the question arises whether it is necessary to say more than simply that the condemnation of the Lord is just. Isn't it the case (and this is the case that is argued against the doctrine of Reprobation), that God's actions in history, in driving them out before Israel, in punishing them, fully intelligible, in terms of what transpires in history? Is there anything more in view, in such passages, than simply the reaction of a holy God in time to sin and rebellion? That is, purely in terms of historical transactions? The fact is that God judges sin. But is it necessary to go beyond that and speak in terms of an eternal decree to that effect?

We must speak of a Decree in this respect. Two observations:

1) In the punishment of sin there is an exercise of sovereign, divine discrimination.

And here is the point where the doctrine of nonde-

nation for sin is closely related to the doctrine of Preterition. According to Deut. 9:4,5 Israel does not come to possess the land because of her righteousness. Israel is inherently unrighteous (cf. the rebellion in the Wilderness). One can never think of an inheritance of the Land of Promise by virtue of works performance or merit. It is God's gift to an inherently unrighteous nation. And that is why the Mosaic Law can never be construed as a program of meritorious achievement. It was never intended that way.

But then, the other nations are driven out precisely because of their unrighteousness. So that, in terms of intrinsic worthiness there is no difference between Israel and the other Nations. The Nations are excluded because of their sin. Israel is included in spite of her sin. And that is sovereign discrimination with respect to the punishment of sin. Israel is not punished as are the other nations, although equally guilty and unworthy.

The same discrimination is seen within Israel herself. Cf. Jer. 24. The point here--the punishment of sin, revealed in those latter verses, is not to be explained exclusively in terms of demerit, or in historical terms. Because not all demerit is punished. There is a discrimination that is rooted in the will of God. And that brings us into the sphere of God's eternal plane and purpose. There can be no objection to taking the further step in seeing that will of God as the eternal will of God. The Bible speaks frequently of God's rejection of men, tribes, and nations. And, to be sure, such rejection is judicially grounded in sin. But it is a purposeful and willful act of rejection on God's part. God is not compelled and therefore the rejection does not find sufficient explanation in historical demerit.

- 2) God not only discriminates according to His will, but He also hardens whom He wills. Cf. Rom. 9:17,18; Cp. also, Isa. 63:17; 64:7; Ezek. 20:25 (startling, cp. with Deut. 32); Deut. 29:4.

The significance of this kind of language in Scripture cannot be undone, as opponents try, by pointing to the judgement character of these divine actions. To be sure, that hardening is by way of judgement. You reject and disobey God's laws! C.K., God will give laws that are not good, laws you can not live by. There is an element of judgement in these, perfectly true. But the point here is that God wills to harden when He could have willed to do otherwise. Cf. Isa. 32:3,4; Deut. 30:5,6.

Again, we are confronted by the fact of the will and purpose of God, which carries us beyond the consideration simply of the demerit of sin. Again, the will and purpose of God is an eternal will and purpose. It is not the eternity of the decree that is a stumbling block to people. But it is the sovereign discrimination that is entailed.

God hardens, He punishes because of sin. And yet damnation can not be isolated from Preterition. And we are inevitably driven into the sphere of the divine will, the sovereign, discriminating purpose of God. And so, there emerges from this discussion of Ethnic Reprobation, the historic doctrine of Reprobation.

There is the election of a Nation, and the election is not universal. There are some nations that are passed by according to the will of God. And those nations that are passed by are punished because of their sin according to the will of God. And so you have Reprobation in its two aspects of Preterition and Damnation.

And because what transpires in history does so according to the will of God, the dogmaticians have rightly spoken of an eternal decree of Election and Reprobation.

3) Personal Reprobation.

a. Personal Reprobation as Preterition.

We are confronted in the Scriptures with the simple fact that there are persons who are not saved. There are those who will go away into eternal punishment, cf. Matt. 25:46. Can we say of such persons, that they have not been elected unto salvation? Can we say of them that they have been passed by? But compare Isa. 41:9 alternatives: chosen or rejected.

Now the Bible does not lead us in the direction of an election that is universal in scope. That is conceivable in thought. Look at Matt. 22:14 here there is an obvious discrepancy between the smaller number of the Elect and the larger number of those who are invited to take hold of Jesus Christ. There are many more called than are, in fact, elect and saved. Cf. Luke 2:34 Simeon's prophecy. Also, Rom. 11:7. Repeatedly this kind of discrepancy is introduced in Scripture, between the total number of persons and the total number of the Elect. Compare John 17:9; Acts 13:48; Rev. 20:15; Matt. 11:26-27.

Why does God discriminate among men? God could have saved all men. But He hasn't, because He willed differently.

2-27-81

Theologians have attempted to wrestle with that question. And, it is perfectly true that we can say that all of God's works, according to His decree, redound to His glory. And yet, as you think about it, it is not entirely clear WHY the manifestation of the glory of God would require the election of some and the rejection of others. We can observe that if the election of some reveals the glory of His mercy; are we not compelled to say then, that the rejection of others to an extent diminishes the glory of His mercy?

Or we could argue the other way. If the rejection of some reveals the glory of His justice, then does not the rejection of some and not the rejection of all, in some way, compromise His justice?

Or, we can put the question this way. Why must the justice and mercy of God limit one another in the

revelation of His boundless glory? The boundless glory of Him who is infinite in each of His attributes. Or, we could ask the question this way: could not the justice of God have been revealed in the punishment of Jesus Christ on behalf of all men? And could not the mercy of God have been revealed in the salvation of all men? These are questions that are pressed upon us.

And yet, Scripture brings before us that truth, that there are some sinners who perish everlastingly. And there are other sinners who are redeemed according to God's sovereign good pleasure and will through Jesus Christ. In the final analysis, we simply do not know why God has chosen to save some and to pass by others. We do not know why. We do not know why He has chosen to save these particular persons and to pass by other particular persons. When those whom He has chosen to save are no more worthy of salvation than are any others. And we are simply reminded of the fact that the Lord's counsels are incomprehensible and His ways are past finding out. Compare Job and his losses. He was confronted with the problem of why these things should transpire. And as the book unfolds Job never does gain an insight into what is happening in the counsels of eternity. Job never does learn anything about the Lord's encounter with Satan and Satan's temptation of the Lord. And the resolution of his problem is not given with some kind of mystical insight into God's secret will, into God's decree. Resolution comes with the realization that the Lord God is GOD and Job is His servant. And as a servant and image-bearer of God, Job must learn to live by faith, by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And when he is willing to give himself in faith, over to God who judges justly, then Job is vindicated and his estate and family restored to him.

And in that, we see very clearly God's will and purpose. And yet, at the same time that history is meaningful, and the decisions men make are significant. And indeed, it is just God's will and purpose behind history, His decree in terms of which all things come to pass, that is the foundation for the meaningfulness of history. And in that context, we who are image-bearers of God and are in covenant with God must live by faith. And the faith of the Scriptures makes perfectly clear to us, especially in the doctrines of Election and Reprobation, that our salvation depends so thoroughly and so exclusively upon God's sovereign good pleasure, His grace, His electing purpose, that there is no other response on our part appropriate, than to humble ourselves before the Lord God and plead His mercy.

And the Scripture does assure us that the Lord receives those who come unto Him and plead His mercy. And so we see then, in the first place, with respect to the way in which the Scriptures speak about Reprobation, and in particular about Personal Reprobation, that we do have that language of discrimination by the Lord God among men. The reason for it is closed to us.

And in it we must rejoice and live by faith. And that is exactly what is appropriate for the image-bearer of God who does not desire to be God. But to live in covenant-partnership and fellowship with the Lord God.

b. Personal Reprobation as Pre-damnation.

We learn from the Scriptures, that God has determined not only to pass by some sinners, but He has also determined to condemn them on account of their sin. And that is to say again (and let me make that perfectly clear), that the condemnation, no condemnation, is not without reference to sin's demerit (standard Reformed teaching). Those who do perish eternally in hell. And if they perish eternally in hell, they do so because they are consigned to that punishment by the Lord God Himself. Jesus, the Son of God, is given authority to execute judgement (John 5:27; cp. Mt. 25:31-46 an awesome judgement scene).

Now you see, you must bear in mind again, that Jesus is not compelled to send some to eternal condemnation. There are many that are equally worthy of condemnation, who do not die eternally. And they do not die eternally because the Lord God has chosen them for redemption through Jesus Christ. The Rest He punishes because He wills to do so. And that too is according to His eternal purposes. Cf. Mark 4:12 (cp. Isa. 6:9,10), which gives explicit confirmation of Reprobation from purpose of the Parables. Also, Deut. 29:4; Jn. 12:37-40 (Isa. 53:1; 6:10).

Scripture also speaks of a hardening which is wrought by God, cf. Joshua 11:20. Not simply that hearts are hardened, but it is done so with a view to the destruction of the Canaanites. Cp. this also with Rom. 9:18. That hardening is judicially warranted, it is by way of punishment. But it is nevertheless a hardening which God Himself brings about. Cp. also, I Th. 5:9; I Peter 2:8,9; II Peter 2:3; Jude 4.

Now, let me stress that, it is not my purpose to deny, but rather to affirm, that this condemnation is just, it is judicially warranted. They are sinners who refuse to listen who are hardened. That condemnation is judicially warranted. And that factor looms large in the biblical history. And therefore we can't suppress it or minimize it. All of that must be affirmed. But, that truth does not overturn the equally patent truth that sin and condemnation do not fall outside of the plan and purpose of God. It is God who hardens certain sinners. Moreover, He willed to do that when He could have done otherwise. All of Heaven and Earth is HIS to do with as He wills.

4. The Preaching of Reprobation.

a. The Election of God is immutable.

You see that with reference to the election of Israel spelled out in Romans 9-11. Now Paul says that there were many in Israel who fell by the wayside in unbelief (cp. G.T. and I Cor. 10:1-11). And in those who perished was manifested God's decree of Reprobation. There God's purpose with reference to Reprobation was manifested, cp. Rom. 11:7-10 (Deut. 29:4 says it in the

opposite manner).

And you see, on those who perish under those circumstances that is the last word that is spoken with respect to them. That is a judgement which is never revised in the history of Revelation. That is the last word that is spoken and that is God's reprobating purpose coming to expression. And yet, Paul says "God's election stands firm" (Rom. 11:2). Well, how can that be?

Well, the point is that, not all who are descended from Israel are Israel (9:6). And the true Israelites are the election according to grace (11:5). And in that remnant, God's election of the nation is seen as immutable. The immutability of that election (God has Israel as His own possession, according to His electing purposes), that is visible in the remnant, the 7000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal. And Paul goes on to show that, in time, that remnant would become a fullness. And the fullness of Israel would be saved in union with the elect of the Gentiles, as the Church of Jesus Christ. That one Body that is made of the two, now that the middle wall of partition has been broken down. And the one new man emerges in Christ Jesus. So we have the immutability of God's purpose with respect to the Nation.

The immutability with respect to Persons is seen in a passage like Romans 8:29-30. That is the catena aaria, the golden chain, the unbreakable chain. Those whom He calls--He predestines--He justifies--He glorifies. And it is in a passage like that that the immutability of God's electing purpose is perfectly visible. Now you see, having affirmed that truth, as we must. We must also go on to say that man does not have direct access to the decree of God. We cannot look directly into the mind of God in order to know whom God has elected and whom He has reprobated--NONE CAN!

Nobody can stand up and say, "I have a revelation of the mind and will of God on this subject. And I know who is who." Nobody can say that, we don't have that kind of access. We can only make a judgement with respect to a person, another or ourselves, on the basis of what is observable. If a man makes profession of faith in Jesus Christ and walks in the ways of the Lord, surely we regard that man as a saved man. Well, where did that salvation come from? Well it never arises out of the power of the flesh. Salvation is of the Lord. And so, when a man makes profession of faith in Jesus Christ and there is nothing contradictory in his life of that profession, then we have to say: "Here is the revelation of God's electing grace." How else can we view such a person but as Elect? There is no other way to view him. The man is professing Jesus Christ and walking in the ways of the Lord. We are going to say he is reprobate! And if we look at him as saved, we have to confess that that salvation arises out of God's electing purpose.

But in doing that, we therefore cannot draw the conclusion, that therefore this man whom we regard as

elect, is now beyond mortal danger. That is the way the Israelites viewed themselves--as the Elect of God. "Well, we're the sons of Abraham, and we've never been in bondage to any man. We are it! Beyond all danger, beyond all problems. Of course we're saved, we're the Elect."

Well, that isn't the way the Bible operates with the doctrine of Election. And it is not the way we as pastors are to operate either. You don't say: "Now look, these people have made profession of faith. And they have joined the Church and are walking in the ways of the Lord. They are the Elect. Therefore, we don't have to ~~pay~~ any attention to them. Because it is inevitable that they are going to march right into heaven" We do not do so, not only because we don't know the decree of God or pretend to know it. But also, because we are not fatalists.

The Reformed doctrine of Election and Reprobation is not Fatalism. We live in covenant with God. And, in that covenant relationship with God we are supremely conscious of the fact that Satan goes about seeking whom he may devour. And that's why it is the Bible tells us again and again, that believers are threatened by persecutions and temptations to forsake Jesus Christ. And those threatenings and temptations bear very directly on the lives of the people to whom you minister, those whom you regard as the elect of God.

And so you see, the Lord God calls us to preach precisely to the elect. That is to say, those who profess faith, who are walking in the ways of the Lord, whom we must therefore view as elect. The Lord tells us to preach to them, remind them that they are where they are by God's grace. We are to exhort them to thankful obedience. And we are, at the same time, to WARN them against the temptations and encourage them to rest in faith, in God's unchangeable purpose. And that is why the election serves as a foundation on which we can build. If we are the beneficiaries of God's electing grace, then, therefore we have every reason to press on to the goal of our calling.

And, as you read the epistles of Paul and the epistle to the Hebrews, from that perspective, you see how that dynamic functions. Now the Apostle Paul was supremely aware of being where he was by virtue of God's election. "Here I was, the chief of sinners, Now look at me, preaching Jesus Christ. How is that possible? Because of God's electing grace." But just because of that, he exhorts fellow believers to persevere, in view of the fact that God will, in the end, vindicate those who are His own.

The end of Hebrews 10 is very instructive along that line (cf. vss. 25ff)

Now granting all that, there are times when we are disappointed, because there are some people, whom we judge to be elect, on the basis of their profession of faith and walk with the Lord. And yet, what we observe, the sad truth is, is that they fall away and they apostasize from the faith. You see, there is such a thing as apostasy. The Bible speaks about it. And

read about these people, for example, in Matt.13, in the Parable of the Seeds. The seed falls on different kinds of soil. On the Rocky Soil, they spring up very quickly, but don't last. They wither because they have no root. On the Hard Ground they never take root. On the next type, they are choked out. But that which falls on the Good Soil GROWS. We have different kinds of soil, different expressions that we observe. Compare also Heb.6.

Now when you observe that happening, one whom you have viewed as a child of God on the basis of his profession. Here you are dealing with him as a pastor. He has professed faith in the Lord, walked in His ways, taught Sunday School. And all of a sudden, he throws it all over. Has God's election failed? NO! God's election has not changed. But what we are required to do is to revise our understanding of what that electing purpose is. It is our understanding of God's electing purpose that has to be revised. And when there is no longer a profession of faith, and no walk with the Lord, then of course, we can't regard that person as any longer elect. There is no reason or warrant to.

Now you see, that shouldn't cause us any difficulty. Because, we never pretended in the beginning to have any insight into God's secret decree. And when we speak of people as the elect of God, it is not because we are pretending to have insight into that decree. But we speak of them as elect in order to honor the Lord; recognizing and confessing that salvation does not arise out of the flesh. But it is the gift of God according to His sovereign purpose. That is the way the doctrine of Election functions in the context of Holy Scripture. And that is the way it has to function in our ministry.

Not as a threat, but as a revelation of the grace and compassion of God.

4. Now you see, all of that by way of preface, to what must be said with respect to Reprobation, mutatis .. mutandis (changing the things which must be changed).

You see, again the point is, that we do not have direct access to the decree of God. And yet, on the basis of external evidence we can conclude that a person is reprobate.

What is the evidence? Well, here is a man who denies the Lord Jesus Christ. He even calls Him accursed. He lives a life of rebellion, indifference and immorality. So, on the basis of the evidence, we say-- Reprobate. Now, I grant you, that is not the way we ordinarily use the word. The reason for that I hope to make plain in a moment. But if you will bear with me.

You see, just as when we minister to the Elect, we do not assume they are beyond danger, and therefore neglect them. But we warn them and encourage them precisely as the elect of God. So also, when we minister to those who give evidence of no interest in and who show all the signs of being reprobate, we don't minister to them as though they are beyond all hope.

Consider for example, the experience of Israel, the Elect Nation. And though the Lord God warned Israel, many Israelites perished. God's election stands firm. But many perished, they failed to give heed. On the contrary, the nations were bypassed in the election of Israel. And yet, in the fullness of time, what do we find in the N.T? We find the nations are called by Jesus Christ into fellowship. And therefore the passing by of the nations, under the Old Covenant, does not mean that we therefore give up with respect to the nations. NO, in the fullness of time God has a purpose for them. And that purpose is revealed as the mystery of God is unfolded. And you see already an intimation of that in Ps.87(vs.4).

How possible? God's electing purpose. And it is right here that a passage from Bavinck is relevant. From The Doctrine of God, p.399--"No one has a right to interpret the decree of Reprobation as an iron decree, determining the final destiny of the lost, who are then viewed as inexorably shut up to this eternal state of perdition, no matter what penitent efforts they may put forth."

We have to recognize that Reformed theologians and pastors have always warned against addressing any man as Reprobate. The reason for that is perfectly clear:

- 1) Because it is recognized that just as the decree of Election is unchangeable, so also the decree of Reprobation is unchangeable, immutable.
- 2) We have no insight into that decree. We don't know who the Reprobate are. And therefore we dare not address any man as reprobate. Lest we prematurely cut off hope.

Now, I'm not arguing with that line of reasoning. It is perfectly sound. But it is not sound, in the sense that, it assumes that we can only address a man as reprobate if we have access to the secret decree of God. And since we don't have such access, we cannot address any man as Reprobate.

Well you see, the same thing would have to apply to the doctrine of Election. We don't have any access to the decree of Election either. And therefore we ought not to address any man as Elect. And then you see what is the utter uselessness of the doctrines in the Church.

But they aren't useless. Because when we say of a man, He is Elect; and of another, He is Reprobate. We are not doing so on the basis of insight into the decree of God, but reflecting the visible evidence. We address the ungodly as the Reprobate, by virtue of the fact that they deny Christ and do not practice His truth. And the purpose therein is not to deny the ungodly hope. But it is precisely to warn him how utterly desperate his condition is. The ungodly are not simply "possibly" going to enter into eternal condemnation. They are under the eternal wrath and condemnation of God. A destiny which can be averted only by the sovereign grace of God.

And you see therefore, we preach to unbelievers, we preach to those precisely whom we, on the basis of

evidence, would judge to be Reprobate. We preach to them not because we think God's decree can be changed. But, because we know that the only hope of any unbeliever is Jesus Christ and His grace alone. And therefore it is precisely with the Reprobate that we plead to turn, and to repent, and to enjoy the forgiveness of God. Precisely as we exhort the Elect to remain steadfast and unmoveable.

Now you see, we don't argue this way--"Well, so-and-so is Elect, no doubt he is going to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore we do not need to exhort him to be steadfast and immovable." That contradicts you see the obvious thrust of the Apostle Paul. So what I am suggesting to you, is, that word "Reprobate", (again recognizing that is not the way it is ordinarily used by Reformed speakers), that it can be used on the basis of the evidence. And then we see that that concept of Election and Reprobation can begin to function in a positive way in the congregation. Not as a Threat but as an expression of Gospel.

3-3-81

When we speak of people as Elect we do not do so because we pretend to have insight into the decree of God. We do so because of what we observe--a person's profession and walk with the Lord. The other side of the coin can really be, although there isn't a common way of using the idea of Reprobation, but it seems to be perfectly legitimate, and there seems to be some Biblical warrant for it; the word ἀποκρίσις cf. II Cor. 13:5. That is, that the reprobate, we can address some men as reprobate. Not because we have an insight into the decree and therefore we give up hope on them. But because of their observable behaviour and denial of the Lord. That they evidence themselves to be under the wrath and condemnation of God. But, just as we exhort the Elect to remain steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the love and service of the Lord, with a view to their final redemption. So we also exhort the Reprobate to come to the Lord. And when the Elect, those whom we thought of as Elect, fail to be steadfast and immovable, we don't say God's decree has changed. But our perception of what that decree is must change in view of the evidence which is different. And so also, on the other side, when we see those who show every sign of being under the eternal wrath and condemnation of God, when they turn in faith and come. Again, it is not that God's reprobating decree has changed but our perception of what that decree is has changed, in view of the evidence that has changed in front of us. So that we can see that the doctrines of Election and Reprobation then, are not given to us in Scripture in order to tell us that our preaching and exhortation, the warnings are meaningless. That is, that it is meaningless, just a trivial exercise. NO!--the doctrines are given to us in order that we might understand, on the one hand, that our salvation is rooted in the love of God from eternity, that we are utterly dependent on God's sovereign will and purpose. And, on the other hand, as we come under wrath and condemnation, that is not just a

guess on our part, that "possibly" unbelievers will be condemned. No! we are given to understand that the wrath and condemnation is an eternal wrath and condemnation. It is unavoidable outside the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

Now, just as we exhort men to remain steadfast. And as we exhort unbelievers to come to Christ. Just through that preaching the Spirit is powerful in accordance with God's eternal decree. Through Gospel proclamation to all men those whom we view as Elect and those whom we view as Reprobate. Through the Gospel proclamation, God's eternal purpose is realized. We may say to the eternally Elect (i.e., to the Elect from the point of view of God), that Gospel is a savor of Life. And to those who are eternally Reprobate, it is a savor of Death. And that line of Demarcation, which is known, in the ultimate sense to God alone, through the proclamation of the Gospel, becomes ever more apparent to us as well. To the point that, at the Consummation, when all things are made known (although we don't overcome the Incomprehensibility of God), nevertheless our judgement will correspond exactly to God's judgement. Or, we will behold the Final Judgement, and in that Final Judgement, it will become perfectly clear that those who enter into eternal life, are those whom God has chosen to that end from before the foundation of the world. And those who enter into eternal condemnation, are those whom God has not elected unto eternal salvation, but whom He has left to their justly deserved condemnation. Those who perish will be those whom God has reprobated from eternity.

This Doctrine of Reprobation is not a closet doctrine, any more than the Doctrine of Election is a closet doctrine. But, we have to be sensitive to the way in which it functions in the Scripture itself., to appreciate what the doctrine does for us.

II. The Covenant.

A. The Inter-Trinitarian Counsel of Salvation.

The discussion of Covenant begins the second major division of this study. The Plan of Salvation is unfolded in history in terms of the Covenant of Grace. And as is hoped to be pointed out, it is the covenant between God and His people that provides the structure of redemptive revelation given in the Bible. And the Bible is the Book of the Covenant. Our consideration of the Covenant of Grace must be preceded however by a consideration of another topic, which has been frequently styled the Covenant of Redemption. Compare Hodge, he gives this as the designation of this particular area. But we are not calling it that, we are calling it the Inter-Trinitarian Counsel of Salvation. The reason will become apparent as we proceed with the discussion.

1. Discussion of Terminology and Definition.

(It is hard to separate definition from terminology)
This particular area of discussion is complicated by the fact that there is no general agreement among Reformed theologians as to how the doctrine should be formulated. We will try. But also because it has practical implications. Not only for understanding the Scriptures, but also for the conduct of the Ministry in the final analysis.

a. There are some who combine this topic (Covenant of Redemption) with the next one (the Covenant of Grace). Both are dealt with as a single topic, most often with the designation Covenant of Grace. Now, when that happens, the covenant of grace is viewed as a covenant which is made with Christ, and through Him with all the Elect. It is consonant with that to think of Christ pre-eminently as the Head of the Covenant of Grace.

This conception is stated explicitly in WLC #31--
"With whom was the covenant of grace made?"

"The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in Him with all the elect as His seed."

Now the focus in this conception is on the parallelism between Christ and Adam. Or, between Adam the first Adam, and Christ the second Adam. Both are viewed as covenant heads. Adam is the head of the first covenant, Christ is the head of the second covenant. And then, further spelled out, the Covenant of Works was made with Adam and through him with His posterity. Running parallel is the covenant of grace made with Christ and through Him with His posterity, which are the Elect. This conception is based pre-eminently on Rom. 5:12-21--As in Adam all men sinned and fell in Him. So in the passage, running parallel to that, the Elect are justified and saved in Christ. The conception is also based on Gal. 3:16--can see from that passage the thought would be derived the covenant is made with Him to whom the promises are given. And that seed is One, namely Jesus Christ. And so, through Him the promise is made to the Elect. The covenant promises are made to Christ

and in Him to the covenant people. .

The advantages of that view lie both in the simplicity and the comprehensiveness of it. We are, in that view, enabled to speak of a single covenant of grace. But nevertheless, that covenant of grace is comprehensive. Because it is a covenant which embraces two all-important elements:

- 1) It embraces the economical relations of the persons of the Trinity to one another. Specifically, the relations of the Father to the Son. The Son is committed to a task which He is to undertake. And the Son receives a promise of the Father.
- 2) But it also embraces the redemptive relationship which the Lord God sustains to mankind. It is a covenant made with Christ and in Him, made with all the Elect.

A single covenant, but comprehensive in its scope. And that is the conception given in the WLC very explicitly.

Now an interesting feature of the Westminster Standards is that this particular representation of the subject is not explicitly found in either the Confession of Faith or the Shorter Catechism.

In WCF VII "Of God's Covenant with Man", Jesus Christ is set forth, not explicitly as the Head of the covenant, but as the Mediator of the covenant. As the chapter unfolds, a distinction is made between a first covenant and a second covenant, cf. sec.2 and then sec.3. Sec.2 says the first covenant was a covenant of works, and that the covenant was made with man. "The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience."

Sec.3 speaks of the second covenant as a covenant of grace. "...the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein he freely offers life and salvation by Jesus Christ..."

But, as you read through that section you can not help but notice that, nothing specific is said concerning with whom the covenant of grace is made. The WLC is quite specific while the WCF is not--"...the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offers unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ..."

But it does say three things bearing on the "to whom" question.

- 1) Life and salvation by Jesus Christ are offered to sinners.
- 2) That faith is required of them, the sinners.
- 3) Faith is promised by the Holy Spirit to the Elect.

The WSC.#20 also does not say specifically with whom the covenant of grace is made.

"Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?"

"God having, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer."

There is not that explicit statement, as in the WLC, concerning with whom that covenant was made. You simply have the statement that the Lord "did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery,...into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer."

Now therefore, we would have to conclude that the Confession and the Shorter Catechism do not conflict with the Larger Catechism; nor are they as specific as the Larger Cat. And so there is a certain ambiguity in the position of the Westminster Standards. But this is an ambiguity only in the light of the prior and later discussions of the topic. The reason will become apparent in just a moment.

In the Conf. and the Sh.Cat., the Covenant of Works is clearly made with MAN. But the Covenant of Grace cannot be simply said to be simply with man, as such. One could say it is a covenant made with elect sinners. But in any case, the focus with respect to the Covenant of Grace, is on that covenant as an efficacious dispensation of salvation and life to man.

b. Other theologians(Hodge, et al.) distinguish between the Covenant of Redemption and the Covenant of Grace.

When this is done, the Covenant of Redemption refers to a covenant between the Father and the Son. A covenant which has reference to the salvation of man, but specifically between the Father and the Son.

And, in view of the fact that the Father and the Son are of the same substance, equal in power and glory, they are both God; then that Covenant is conceived of as a mutual agreement, in the full sense of the word. It is an agreement, a concord reached between two equals. And therefore, that covenant is sometimes represented as a $\Sigma\upsilon\nu\theta\acute{\eta}\kappa\eta$; $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu$ --with, accents the mutuality of covenant parties and equality.

And that is contrasted with the other word $\Delta\iota\alpha\theta\acute{\eta}\kappa\eta$. In which the prefix $\delta\acute{\iota}$ implies or is atleast congenial with, the implication of the divine imposition of the arrangement and the divine "disponement" of grace.

And then, in contrast, you have the $\Sigma\upsilon\nu\theta\acute{\eta}\kappa\eta$, a covenant in the pure conception of what a covenant is--a covenant between the Father and the Son. And then, in the Covenant of Redemption the Son agrees to undertake certain redemptive accomplishments. That is, His undertaking to accomplish certain things for the redemption of the Elect. And the Father undertakes to fulfill certain promises. This doctrine is based on a number of passages, will look at some in a moment.

But it is commonly recognized that none of the passages appealed to describe the relation of Command and Promise expressly as a Covenant. The word is not used to describe that relationship.

However, the argument is that the ELEMENTS of a Covenant are present. These elements are:

- 1) Atleast two contracting parties.
- 2) Promises made.
- 3) Conditions to be fulfilled.

And so, the Son undertakes to meet the conditions,

and the Father promises certain things upon the fulfillment of the conditions. And thus the contracting parties are the Father and the Son. Thus, because the elements are there we have the warrant to speak of the arrangement as a Covenant. And a similar agreement is used with respect to the relationship between God and Adam. Looking at the early chapters of Genesis no word "covenant" appears, yet we regularly speak of a covenant between God and Adam.

So then, a distinction is made between the Covenant of Redemption between the Father and the Son, and the Covenant of Grace between God and His people. And, in the Covenant of Grace, Christ appears as the Mediator, the Surety or Guarantor. And when that distinction is made, then it is clear that the Covenant of Grace is based on the Covenant of Redemption. The Covenant of Grace (in terms of which God covenants with us to give us certain blessings) is founded upon the Covenant of Redemption, in which Jesus Christ merits certain benefits, which are then applied to believers, in terms of the Covenant of Grace.

- c. Now, for the sake of completeness, so as to get the terminology out before us. The Latin for the Covenant of Grace is Foedus Gratiae. This is distinguished from the Covenant of Redemption usually called Pactum Salutis. Foedus is derived from fides, and therefore accents the faith character of the relationship. Pactum comes from pacisior--to bargain or come to an agreement. And thus, you see why the agreement between the Father and the Son is referred to as a Pactum. It leads to the image of the Father and the Son sitting down to bargain with one another. And thus all kinds of caricatures arise. While Pactum and Foedus are not translations of Greek terms, they do maintain the distinction between $\Sigma\upsilon\nu\theta\acute{\eta}\kappa\eta$ and $\Delta\iota\alpha\theta\acute{\eta}\kappa\eta$.

- d. Again, the word "covenant" is not used in Scripture for this arrangement. And therefore, some others prefer different terminology from Covenant of Redemption. In classical Reformed Theology, you will find the designation--"Counsel of Peace" (Pactum Pacis). The term "Counsel of Peace" comes from Zechariah 6:13 in the KJV. The NIV has "there will be harmony between the two". It is a translation of the Hebrew phrase:

$\pi\lambda\alpha\gamma \rightarrow \pi\lambda\alpha\gamma - \gamma\epsilon\lambda$ | $\pi\lambda\alpha\gamma \text{ } \omega\psi \text{ } \gamma\iota \text{ } \beta\eta \text{ } \eta\eta \text{ } \eta\psi \text{ } \eta\psi \text{ } \eta\psi$

The Latin of the Vulgate has "consilium pacis" (rather than pactum pacis). Consilium is better for "counsel". Pactum has the idea of "covenant," "covenant of peace". But, if you look at Zechariah 6:13 the relationship there is not the relationship between the Father and the Son. But between Joshua viewed as King and Joshua viewed as Priest. And that is to say, the two-fold aspect of the Mediatorial person (Joshua--Yeshua--Saviour). And "the counsel of peace" will be between them both. Joshua is the Priest-King, the type of the Mes-

siah. Thus it is a verse which has nothing to do with the theological topic.

But inspite of this, we can take the term "counsel". We will have a word which is not as loaded "theologically" as the word "covenant". "Covenant" occurs often and is capable of a fairly precise definition. And so, we use "Counsel".

And when you realize that "counsel" has to do with our salvation, then you can contemplate a "counsel of salvation". And further, when you perceive in the third place, that that "counsel of salvation" includes not only the Father and the Son, but also the Spirit. Then, you can speak of an "Inter-Trinitarian Counsel of Salvation", which brings us back to the designation we started with.

And when we say: "Inter-Trinitarian Counsel of Salvation" we mean-- there is an arrangement, an economy, an οἰκονομία, among the persons of the Trinity. And that arrangement lies behind the accomplishment and application of redemption in time. Or, the Plan of Salvation is framed in terms of the commitments undertaken by the persons of the Trinity. The accomplishment and application of redemption is all the work of one God, and is rooted in, is founded upon, the undertakings of accomplishment and promises to reward, that are made among the persons of the Trinity. Certain aspects are referred to each member of the Trinity. And so we have an inter-Trinitarian arrangement, which includes obligation and bestowment of promise.

Remember, when we dealt with the Doctrine of God, we took up the distinction between the Ontological and the Economical Trinity. The Ontological Trinity refers to the distinction among the persons, as Father, Son and Spirit. But, the Economic Trinity referred to the distinction among the persons by virtue of the distinctive undertakings of the persons with reference to Creation, Providence, and Redemption.

Now, when you read Hodge or any other writer on this subject, at this point when you come to the Covenant of Redemption or Inter-Trinitarian Counsel of Salvation, you come across the same set of proof-texts that you appealed to at that point (that of the Economic Trinity). But those proof-texts are now dealt with in terms of the Doctrine of the Covenant. They are dealt with in the Doctrine of God in order to take account and give some accounting of the language of subordination in Scripture (a subordination which is Economic or Functional not Ontological).

But now, this topic affords to us a convenient link between the discussion of salvation as planned by God and salvation as accomplished and applied in time. And the link is afforded by the Counsel of Salvation. In terms of which there is this undertaking, which is not of the essence of God (in the sense of without it God would not be God). And nevertheless, it is an undertaking which belongs to God, God Himself, and is therefore apart from time. And so, that is the place and meaning of the Covenant of Redemption.

And that is the doctrine when you distinguish it from the Covenant of Grace. Then you can see the Covenant of Grace, or the accomplishment and application of redemption, is grounded in the Covenant of Redemption. But when you combine/conjoin the two, then you talk simply of the Covenant of Grace. A covenant which was made with Christ, and in Him with the Elect. In terms of which Christ does undertake and accomplish certain things. And the benefits flow from Him to the Elect.

2. Biblical Warrant for the Inter-Trinitarian Counsel of Salvation (Covenant of Redemption).

Three-fold division of materials:

a. Series of passages related to the role of the Son.

Ps.40:7-8(cp.Heb.10:7) the arrangement lying behind the accomplishment of redemption is the will of the Father.

John 4:34, 36:38-39. The Son comes clearly in the pursuance of the will of the Father.

Now, in the Inter-Trinitarian Counsel of Salvation when it is set up in terms of a Covenant, then that task of the Son is ordinarily spoken of in terms of a "condition" or the "conditions" of the Covenant. And, associated with those conditions is a "promise" which is attached to the fulfillment of the "condition". And the "promise" enters into the Inter-Trinitarian Counsel of Salvation as well.

Cf. John 17:4-5; 17:24; Heb.12:2; Phil.2:6-9(also, Eph.1:20-22; 5:25-27).

b. Series of passages related to the role of the Father.

John 17:18-19; Rom.8:3; Gal.4:4

The sending is in accordance with the arrangement between the Father and the Son. Election is the work of the Father, but He elects in Christ. And that implies an arrangement among the persons of the Trinity.

c. Series of passages related to the role of the Holy Spirit.

The work of redemption being an inter-Trinitarian work, has also to take account of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is promised by the Son and sent by the Father. And that coming is contingent upon the Son's completing His work and ascending to the Father, cf. John 15:26; 16:7.

The Spirit is also said to be the Promise of the Father, cf. Acts 1:4; 2:16,17,23(understood).

And all that is understood to presuppose an arrangement, a mutual commitment, that is said to be a covenant--a Covenant of Redemption. Not simply to the effect that certain things are going to take place, in that sense, not simply a decree concerning these things. But there is a prior mutual commitment to the outworking of redemption.

In conclusion, a quote from C.Hodge--"This is a subject which, from its nature, is entirely beyond our comprehension."

On the History of the Doctrine cf. "The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology" by G.Vos.

- B. Creation and Covenant. (will spend more time here than
1. A good place to begin is (usual because he did not teach
with man created in (Doctrine of Man, which covers this,
covenant with God.

a. The Confessional Affirmation.

WSC.#12--"What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?"

"When God created man, He entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death."

The Catechism clearly affirms that God entered into a covenant with Adam. And the WCF speaks of this more extensively in VII:1--"The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto Him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of Him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which He has been pleased to express by way of covenant."

Therefore the doctrinal standards speak very clearly, very pointedly of a covenant made with Adam.

The covenant in the WSC is called a Covenant of Life. Elsewhere, and certainly in theology, the Covenant of Life is spoken of as a "Covenant of Works", or simply as "the Covenant." Sometimes it is called the "Covenant of Nature"(Ursinus).

And it has become so engrained in us, so natural to us, to speak of a covenant with Adam. And yet, it is interesting that the Scripture itself, does not use that word "covenant" to describe that relationship between God and Adam in the early chapters of Genesis.

- b. Reasons for speaking of God's relations with Man as a Covenant(especially in view of the fact that Scripture itself does not do so).

Prof.J.Murray also did not, preferred the term "Adamic Administration."

Shepherd is not as reluctant. There are several biblical reasons for this. They are:

1) Hosea 6:7

Compare the context. Denouncing Israel for their sin and unrepentant heart. Israel has done the required things, but has sidestepped some of the basic demands of the Law. Vs.6--"For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings."

You are reminded of the way in which Jesus denounced the Pharisees in His ministry, Mt.23.

Vs.7--"like Adam they have broken the covenant"(NIV). And so, if translated in that way, God is certainly in covenant with Israel. And if we translate "like Adam they have broken the covenant", then that verse would suggest that God had also been in covenant with Adam. And, just as Adam had broken the covenant, so also has Israel. A clear proof-text

Those using the KJV note--"but they like men have transgressed the covenant." If you translate it "like men" then there is no reference to a covenant with Adam; but simply to a covenant with men in general.

A third option is a local reference, a place. But this is considered so remote and insignificant, that most commentators do not accept it.

The NASB and the NIV are right in their translation of the verse. But some disagree. But, in addition to Hosea 6:7 there are other reasons to think of an arrangement with Adam as a Covenant.

2) Genesis 2:4ff.

In these verses there is consistent use of the name of God יהוה (along with אֱלֹהִים also), the covenant name of God.

There is a difference between the way Gen.1 speaks of God and way Gen.2 speaks of God. In the former God is spoken of constantly as אֱלֹהִים . And in the latter He is spoken of as יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים . WHY is there a difference?

Critical scholars say-- a sign of two authors/sources, at least, at work. One uses the former name, the other uses the second name. Someone else combined them. Etc., etc., etc.

Over against this, there is another and better reason. And we can get at it if we perceive that, according to Scriptural teaching, Moses is the author of Genesis and the Pentateuch.

Beginning with that biblical given, we then ask-- when did Moses write Genesis? The answer seems to be he wrote it during the Wilderness wanderings, when he had "leisure". But also, he wrote after God had established covenant with His people at Sinai. We can not begin to imagine how significant it was for the life of Israel, what happened at Mount Sinai, when God entered into covenant with His people. When He gave His words on Sinai and established His people as a Nation, just prior to bringing them into the Promised Land. Then the point is, certainly in any case, he would have written after having the experience at the Burning Bush, years before. In Ex.3 God reveals His special name to Israel, the name by which He is to be known as Israel's God. He is יהוה , Jehovah. He is the Lord God, the Covenant God of Israel. And He is to be known by this special name, God's covenant name--the LORD.

Gen.1 tells us the story of Creation in broad terms, the foundation upon which the drama of redemption is to be played out. In Gen.2 there is a focussing in upon the creation of man. And there account is given of the special relationship into which God enters with man. The Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And that special relationship comes into the foreground here. But it is at that point that Moses introduces into his account the Covenant Name.

And that is to say, the God who establishes covenant with Israel; the God whom we worship, whom we serve in terms of the revelation given to us at Sinai, our Covenant God, the God who brought us out of Egypt and who is bringing us into the Promised Land. This is the same God who was God at the very beginning. And, who was also in covenant with Adam. He was the Covenant God of Adam. And therefore, the appropriation of the use of the covenant name at that point in Gen.2, in distinction from Gen.1.

The thought is further confirmed as you come over to Gen.3:1 where you have the beginning of the Temptation account. It is the Covenant God who is after all the Creator. The the Serpent approaches Eve, and at that point the covenant name drops out of the text. And that is perfectly appropriate. Satan has no business speaking of God in terms of His covenant name. He is alienated from God, the Lord. The fact that Eve now entertains Satan and carries on this conversation, and even contemplates what he is saying is already a breach with the Covenant God. And therefore she does not speak of God as the Lord God, the covenant name is not used.

But then, when the conversation is finished and the evil deed done, . . . Vs.8, then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the cool of the day. And they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the Garden. But the Lord God called.... Three times the Covenant name of God appears.

But now, He comes as the Lord who will inflict judgement upon His rebellious children. But they have broken the Covenant. And that is reinforced by the way in which we are confronted with the fact that they are hiding now from the Covenant Lord, the One with whom they are to have fellowship. And the Curse which falls upon them is a covenant curse.

The use of the covenant name in Gen.1-3, being written from the perspective of the establishment of the Covenant at Sinai. It is not that someone sits down in a neutral context, and decides in an antiseptic manner (like some historian writing a history). Moses is writing on the background of God's establishment of His covenant with Israel at Sinai, His people. And Moses is giving an account of that. And he traces the origin of that right back to the beginning, to the Creation. And he is involving Adam in the fact that our Covenant God; the God whom we worship in distinction from the other nations; is nevertheless, the Covenant Lord right from the beginning.

- 3) Notice, Adam is created in the image of God. Gen.1 & 2 makes this very clear. But we are also, in Gen.2, given the account of the origin of woman in distinction from man. And she comes into

the picture because Adam had no partner as the beasts did. And so the Lord makes woman for the man. But not identical, there are differences--pronounced differences. But, they are nevertheless similar, so that man can enter into a distinctive relationship with the woman. Which he can't enter into with any other creatures.

And then, looking at Mal.2:14 one notes the prophets denouncing the Israelites for their breaking faith with the wife of their youth. The marriage covenant is a covenant relationship between similar persons. Not necessarily equals, for the woman is subordinated to man in the marriage relationship. But, the background for this lies in the fact that God Himself, having surveyed all He made, as Adam did, in effect, discovered no one in creation with whom He could have fellowship and communion. And so, He makes man like Himself. He breathes into Him the Spirit of God. Man is made a living creature and the Lord enters into a special relationship with this man. And the fact that the marriage relationship can be viewed as a covenant, would it seem, provide a warrant for speaking of the relationship between God and Adam in a comparable way: as a covenant relationship.

4) The N.T. account of Re-Creation.

As you survey the N.T. account of Re-Creation, and in particular the re-creation of man, it is abundantly clear, that the re-creation of man is a re-creation of him in covenant relation with God. In the N.T. you see a pattern which is patterned after the original creation. And that being the case, it is natural to see that original relationship as a covenant relationship.

2. The Nature of the Creation Covenant.

a. Covenant describes the relationship between God & Man.

1) It is a relation of union and communion.

In describing the covenant with Adam I am going to be making use of later portions of the Scriptures. It is permissible to do that for exactly the same reason that Moses used the covenant name ("anachronistically") in Gen.1 & 2. That is to say, Moses looks at Creation from the point of view of a nation in covenant with God. So also, we must occupy the same ground as Moses, but we go beyond that and also occupy the ground of the New Covenant. And it is from our perspective of the New Covenant that we seek to understand what is integral to the very idea of a Covenant. And therefore, what is integral to that idea from the very beginning.

We do not have a great deal of information given to us in Gen.1 & 2. But it is understandable why we do not. Because you see, there is not a neutral interest in that unit of history, all by itself. But that unit of history is significant for us as the background for understanding where we are now. And with a few strokes the picture is

painted, in order to move on beyond that to the interest in our present relationship to God, which is a covenant relationship.

But, if it is a covenant relationship in the beginning, then we can understand it by looking back from what we know about a covenant relation. So in this we are really presenting a basic conception of what it means to be in covenant with God.

And first of all, it is a relation of Union and Communion. What is at the heart of the covenant relation is nowhere better summarized than in Leviticus 26:12--"I will also walk among you and be your God and you shall be My people." Vs. 11--"Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject (abhor) you."

That is the Tent of Meeting. He dwells with His people and they with Him. He walks among them and He is the God of His people. That is the apex of covenant blessing and privilege, to be God's people. And He is our God, He walks in our midst (as well note the language of Revelation). Jeremiah uses the same words to speak of the New Covenant (Lev. 26:12 the Old Covenant); 31:33 I will be there God and they will be My people.

And Paul, testifies that the promise, that God would be our God and we would be His people, is being fulfilled in our day, cf. II Cor. 6:16 "I will dwell among them and walk among them; and I will be their God and they shall be My people." See how the language of Lev. and Jer. is picked up by Paul to describe what is happening also in terms of his ministry to the Gentiles.

John describes the consummation of all things with the same language. In Rev. you have Jesus walking in the midst of the Churches, the Lord walking among His people (1:11ff). In Rev. 21:3 "And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them'". . . .

And the point is--what is true of that New Creation is also true of the First Creation. You are aware that Revelation picks up some of the imagery of the First Creation: Paradise, Eden; where Adam and Eve enjoyed union and communion with God and God with them. Just as God's people in the End of the Age will dwell with their Lord and He with them.

So that is basic then to what is a covenant relationship with God.

- 2) In the Bible there are several analogies, or similar relationships, used to describe that Union and Communion with God.

- A) It is compared to the union and communion of a Husband and Wife.

Jer. 31:32 "although I was a Husband to them." Also, 3:14 "I am your Husband (NASB "Master")". Also are aware of the fact of how the Prophets denounced the apostasy of Israel as adultery,

Jer.3:6-10; Hosea 1:2. In the N.T. the relationship between God and His people is the relation between Jesus and His people. And that is the relationship of a Groom and His Bride (cf. Eph.5).

b) It is compared to the relation of a Father to a Son.

In Luke 3:23ff the genealogy is traced back to Adam who is called the son of God. The concept of Sonship would certainly exceed that of biological procreation. It speaks of a spiritual relationship which Adam sustained to God, as the image-bearer of God. And you notice in Gen.5:1ff the ideas of image and sonship are combined. To speak of Adam as the son of God certainly reminds us of the fact that he is the image of God. But as image of God he is also as son of God. And as a son he sustains a distinctive relationship to God, a covenant relationship.

And so, throughout the O.T., the Israelites, who are in covenant with God are spoken of as the son of God, cp. Hosea 11:1 "When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My Son." And the same image is used by Moses in Deut.1:31; 8:5(cf. also Isa.1). Cp. Rom.9:4. Ezek.16 combines the images of marriage and sonship(daughtership) to describe God's special relationship with Israel.

In the N.T., sons and daughters of God, cf. II Cor.6:16; I John 3:1.

So, the point is, those family relationships which are major models for understanding the covenant relation, help us to understand the nature of our covenant relation to God. They help us to understand the nature of the ties that bind us to God.

What are the ties? They are the same ties that bind every family together. Husbands and wives, parents and children; they are the ties of love and faithfulness.

3) Mutually Binding Ties.

They are at least two: Love and Faithfulness.

That is why I would define the covenant, in a preliminary way at least, as a "bond of love and faithfulness between God and His people."

What are the ties that bind:

a) LOVE--binds husbands and wives together.

It binds children to parents and vice versa. That is why one tells the other: "I love you."

That covenant union and communion, between God and His people, is a relation of love first and foremost.

What is the first and great commandment? Well, how could it be otherwise! What is God? GOD is LOVE!!!, cf. I John 4:8,16.

And not only is He love, but He repeatedly declares His love for His people; just as a good

husband declares his love to his wife. So also, God tells Israel that He loves them Cf., Deut. 7:8-9 NIV has "covenant of love"

Also, Mal. 1:2; Rom. 5:8; John 3:16.

Now, if that is God's relationship to His people, if that is what binds Him to His people in a covenant relation. It is only natural that the response to that love should be our love for God. I John 4:19; Deut. 6:5-6. What is true for Israel is true for the Church. Jesus speaks of the New, first and great commandment in these terms.

b) FAITHFULNESS.

Love seeks to express itself, first in words, but also, to do something about it. Words without deeds are meaningless, empty words.

I John 4:16 we know and rely on the love God has for us. And therefore we are faithful to Him. And you see, mutual faithfulness is absolutely essential to stable family life.

Lovelessness expresses itself in infidelity.

And infidelity is an expression of lovelessness. When love cools then adultery enters in. The mutual loyalty is destroyed. But where that mutual loyalty flows out of love, then there is great strength and great stability.

So also in the household of faith. If the covenant people are to be faithful to one another, so much more the relationship between God and man. And so repeatedly, the people of God are urged to trust in the Lord: to love Him, to trust Him. And out of that love and trust flows willing obedience to His law for our lives.

Ps. 37:3-6 the rule for the kingdom of God.

That is faith which manifests itself in faithfulness. Trust in the Lord, do what He tells you to do. "Trust and obey, for there's no other way; To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."

The people of God are not to entrust themselves to the idols, but they are to entrust themselves to the true and living God. And, in that covenant relationship, the faithfulness of God's people is simply the reflection of God's own faithfulness to His people. Cp. Deut. 7:9 "Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;". . . .

The love and faithfulness of God to His covenant is reflected in the love and faithfulness of His people to God. That is the heart of a covenant relationship of union and communion. A bond of love and faithfulness between God and His people.

Also cf. Romans 3:3 even our faithlessness can not nullify the faithfulness of God. God remains faithful to His covenant even when we have proved unfaithful. Cp. Ps. 100:5 and its ring of Confidence. Note the covenant words: goodness and love of God

Summary--there are these ties of mutual love and faithfulness which bind the covenant partners to one another. And, what I am saying to you, is that what was true of God's relationship to Israel, what is true of God's relationship to the Church, has always been true. God and our first parents, Adam and Eve, were bound together in a covenant of love and loyalty. That is why I speak of a Covenant as a bond of love and faithfulness between God and His people.

b. It is a relationship with a Command.

A snapshot will not do, you need a motion picture. That relationship is not a static relationship, but a relationship which is full of life and action. And God's wife, as it were, God's Son is active, Because God has given them a work to do. A marriage relationship is more than a honeymoon. Life in covenant with God is more than the initial honeymoon. God placed man in the Garden to work, to take care of it. Labor is not a curse. The ~~toil~~ associated with it is a curse, but the labor is not. And God made man to rule over the world for God's glory. He is to fill, populate the earth, and to bring it into subjection. We call all of this the Cultural Mandate.

Now there are also beasts and fish and birds in the world that God made. And these beasts, fish and birds they also do God's will, His bidding. God also gave them a task to do and they fulfil it. But, man is also different from the beasts and birds in that he is the image-bearer of God. And as image-bearer of God, the work that man does is not to be done by instinct, as is the case with the beasts and fish and birds who fulfil the will of God by instinct. They have the law of God written in their animal hearts. And they do the Law of God by instinct.

But man is to do the will of God as conscious response to the word of God. There is to be a conscious and willing demonstration of love and loyalty of love and faithfulness to God. And that is why God planted the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden. And gave a command to man not to eat of that Tree. And there is no other reason given why man cannot eat of the Tree except that God had spoken. And in that daily confrontation with that Tree, man is reminded, in a most vivid way, that his life in the world, and in the discharge of his responsibilities, he is not only at that point, but at every point, consciously and willingly responding to the Word of God, bringing to expression his love and loyalty to God. That Tree of the Knowledge of Good

and Evil is a constant reminder to him that in all his works he is responding to the love and faithfulness of God, by demonstrating his love and faithfulness to the spoken word of God. God declares Himself to man and man declares himself to God in conscious response. Also the Tree served to make man covenantally aware or conscious. The Tree was a constant reminder of the authority of God. That man is responding at this point and at every point to God's word. And as the Tree serves to bring this aspect of covenant relationship to man's self-consciousness man uses to find his fulfillment and joy in being what God made him to be. And in that way reflecting the glory of God. By his covenantal faithfulness he reflects the covenantal faithfulness of God. He therefore glorifies God as a mirror reflects the image of its original. That is why WSC #1 begins by saying, What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. In one and the same act we enjoy God and glorify Him by reflecting His glory.

And that is the second point: The covenant relation is a relation with a command. And that is epitomized in the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

- c. The Covenant relation is a relation with a Promise. In addition to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil there was a second special Tree, the Tree of Life.

Now Scripture does not tell us a great deal about that Tree and therefore we have to be careful. But just as Moses wrote from the perspective of the covenant at Sinai, so we also can read this account, not only from the perspective of Sinai, but also from the perspective of the New Covenant. And that is legitimized by the fact that the New Covenant itself, particularly in Revelation, makes mention of that Tree and adumbrates its significance for us.

The New Covenant holds out to us the promise of Life through Jesus Christ--"I come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." And it is not unreasonable therefore to think that this Tree of Life symbolized the promise of Life we have now through Jesus Christ, or which life comes to us now through Jesus Christ. That it was a promise of life even to Adam. That is to say, through a course of willing subjection to the will of God, through a course of willing obedience, Adam would enter into that life promised to him. Just as we enter, or just as Jesus enters into life through the obedience to the Father (but of course for Him it is by way of Death and Resurrection).

And, just as Adam's posterity would enter into life through Adam, so we enter into eternal life through the obedience of Jesus Christ.

But then you have to go on and ask yourself--Why it would be that life would be promised to Adam? Didn't Adam already have life? After all, God made him to be a living creature. Adam had what was essential

to life, he already had union and communion with God. That is, what is at the heart of living. Moreover, the Lord had provided what was necessary for physical life, he provided food in abundance. And the Lord gave man authority to use that supply of food. What more could Adam ask for than he had already received as a free gift from God?

We can say at least this--that Adam was made like God but in one respect he was unlike God. Scripture tells us that God cannot sin, cannot be tempted to evil. But man could be tempted, he could fall into sin he could rebel. Now God made him that way for a purpose. And the purpose was that God might secure from Adam and therefore from the race of men, whole-hearted, conscious, willing obedience to Himself. What God was looking for was obedience as a conscious expression of covenantal love and loyalty. Obedience as a spontaneous expression of faith and trust of God. Which would emerge in the face of alternative possibilities and temptations.

Again you see, the animals do the will of God, and they do it invariably. The animals cannot sin (really!). They glorify God as His creatures. But you see, the cannot sin of man is not to be like the cannot sin of the animals. The sinlessness which God is seeking from man is to be a willing and uncompromising commitment to do God's will. It is to be a commitment of love and loyalty and not the inevitability of instinct. And you see, it is only in that way, when man's love and loyalty to God is a conscious and willing commitment, and not the inevitability of instinct, that he truly becomes the image of God.

Man is designed to be a covenant partner of God. And we can see that ideal realized in Jesus Christ, who cannot sin. But when we say that Jesus cannot sin, we are not saying it in the way that we would say a robot cannot sin. Robots do not sin. But Jesus is not a robot. Jesus is the Son of God who cannot sin. WHY? Because He is so thoroughly and uncompromisingly committed to doing the will of God, the Father. "I have come to do Your will." And, He is genuinely confronted with the temptations of Satan. And you can't simply say--"Well, that temptation didn't mean anything. Because, after all, Jesus is the Son of God, He can't sin." NO! He was confronted with a genuine temptation. But He cannot sin, so determined is He to do the will of God. And that's the kind of love and loyalty which God is eliciting from man. And by facing temptation and withstanding temptation man will be confirmed in righteousness.

And that righteousness in which he will be confirmed is the righteousness with which he was created. And being confirmed in righteousness, he would as well be confirmed in life. And that's what we call eternal life. Life from which he could not fall into death. In Scholastic terms, he would pass from the state of posse peccare to non posse peccare. Just as he had righteousness from the beginning, Adam also had life from the beginning. But he would be confirmed in righteousness and life in the face of temptation.

And that righteousness would be the righteousness of conscious, willing, spontaneous service to God--love for God. Thus we have God giving a command, a mandate to man. Man is to respond consciously to the love of God. And, in addition to that he has also a promise. A promise of life into which he is to be led through the service of God.

- *. We have seen that this covenant relationship between God and Adam is a relationship of the most intimate kind, a relationship of union and communion. Like that of a husband and wife, a Father and a son.
- d. And this covenant relationship of union and communion has two sides to it, as all covenants have two sides. (The formula for Baptism in the CRC goes back to the formula of the Synod of Dordt, brings it out so clearly) Command and Promise, Obligation/Responsibility and Grace.

Man is to respond to God with love and faithfulness, to do His command. And in that way he will inherit the promise of Eternal Life

But, there is also the Warning (not brought out thus far). The warning--"If you are disobedient, if you do not obey Me, if you do not respond. Then you will die. In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die. You will not receive the promise of life, but you will die in your sins."

Now, at this point, we must observe very carefully the relationship between the Command and the Promise, because it is possible, very easy to make a mistake that would, in my judgement, distort our understanding of the Covenant right from the beginning. And create insuperable problematics with which you would struggle till the end of your life. A problematics in terms of which it would be difficult properly to understand either the Old Covenant or the New Covenant, or the way of Redemption.

The fourth point is, the Covenant with Adam is not to be understood as though it were a Labor Contract between an Employer and an Employee. What you have to keep in the foreground of your thinking is that we are talking about a Love relation and not a Labor relation. Note the contemporary scene of Labor and Employer negotiations. Labor seeks for maximum wages, minimum work. Employers seek for minimum wages and maximum work. This leads to bargaining and then either a strike or a contract.

Now, it would be very easy for us to interpret the Covenant that way. And many have done so and seen it in that manner. Beginning again, with a very abstract notion of justice, derived from Aristotle ("to each his due"), so much work for so much wages. And, building up from that neutral principle you conceive of the Covenant in those terms, as a labor contract negotiated by God with man. For so much work so much wages. The Command is the job to be done. The Promise is the wages to be received. If man defaults on the contract in the minutest way, he doesn't get paid. Instead he gets punished.

Now I want to suggest to you that the Bible doesn't lead

us, at any point, to understand God's covenant as a Labor Contract. There are no negotiations. God sovereignly creates man in covenant with Himself. And in that relation which God has sovereignly created and established, God makes a promise of eternal life. As God freely gave life to Adam on the first day (He did that didn't He?), by creating man living creature, God freely bestowed life upon man. So also, God would freely bestow and give eternal life on the Last Day. Man had simply to receive that promise. It is a promise of Life. The promises are simply to be received, believed in hope. Man is to trust God, to hope in His promise and to love Him, with heart and soul and mind and strength. And therefore, right from the very beginning of human history you have the triad (upon which Paul focusses so much attention): Faith, Hope, and Love (not only in I Cor. 13, but elsewhere).

Man had simply to trust in God, to believe His word and therefore to act accordingly. Man was right from the very beginning to live by every word that proceeded from the mouth of God. Not only with respect to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, but in every aspect of his existence he is to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. All of his activity is to be by way of conscious response to the word of God. And you see in that relationship there is no talk of meritorious achievement, there are no wages to be earned. There is the sheer gift of grace which man is to receive by faith. A faith which leads him into the service of Almighty God.

But Adam could also forfeit that promise--through unbelief. And unbelief always forfeits a promise. Promises have to be received by faith. And when they are not believed, they are forfeited. And just as faith works itself out in obedience, it manifests itself, brings itself into expression in obedience. So also unbelief works itself out in disobedience. Satan tempted Adam with higher stakes than God seemed to promise: "to be like God." Adam believed Satan. It was an act of faith. Rather than God. And he lost everything: for himself and his posterity. Sin is an attack upon the integrity of God and His word. And God acts by destroying the sinner and the sin. And that is death.

Now again, the covenant is a Love Relation and not a Labor Relation. And the same holds true with respect to the analogies with which the Bible uses to describe the Covenant relation. The relation between a Husband and a Wife is not a Labor contract, it is a Love Relation. The Promise flows from love for the partner. She does not work to earn wages from her husband. She works to express her love and her trust in her husband. And she doesn't count up, day by day, "I do so much and therefore you have to do so much in return." And he doesn't say, "Well, I'll love you if you do such and such." NO, you give ~~her~~ everything you have to your wife because you love her. And she also does the same. There is no element of merit or wages entering the picture.

The modern feminist movement, because it wants to make the marriage covenant into a Labor Contract, is precisely the expression of ungodliness. And it reflects a distorted understanding of God's covenant. The same holds true with respect to the relationship with children. Children are expected to give loving obedience. They do not earn their keep. But, they can forfeit the benefits by leaving or abandoning the home. Or by threatening the integrity of the home.

Cf. Luke 17:10; Mal. 3:17.

We serve as Sons, not for wages. God promises gifts to those who trust Him and love Him and serve Him. The fundamental point--Adam indeed is obligated to love and to serve the Lord God. He is the beneficiary of God's grace. But what determines the nature of that relationship is not a Labor Contract. But that Love Relationship which characterizes the relationship of a Husband and a Wife, of a Father and a Son.

3-17-81

C. Election and Covenant.

1. Man breaks covenant with God--the fall into sin.

a. The first sin by which Adam becomes a covenant-breaker.

The first sin of Adam was the eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, contrary to God's prohibition. Note three things about that sin:

- 1) That sin was an act of unbelief. Adam sinned at the suggestion of Satan. And Jesus calls Satan a Liar and the Father of Lies(cf. John 8:44), no truth in him. And yet, Adam believed Satan, he believed the Lie. And thereby made God out to be a liar. So that sin was an act of unbelief with respect to God. From the beginning man was to live by every word that proceeded from the mouth of God. He was in other words to live by faith, cf. Deut. 8:3. Instead he chose to die by the word that proceeded out of the mouth of Satan. He rejected the Word of God.
- 2) That sin was an act of lovelessness. The rule of the Kingdom is given by Jesus in John 16:15 "if you love Me you will obey what I command." And that has always been true. Love for God comes to expression in the form of obedience. If we love God and if we love Jesus, then we will do what He tells us to do. And the absence of love manifests itself in disobedience. Or, disobedience exemplifies lovelessness. And Adam's first sin is clearly an act of lovelessness.
- 3) That sin was an act of separation. If faith and love break down, so do union and communion break down. And when union and communion have broken down the covenant relation is broken down. The Covenant is broken. So it was in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. Man was created "living being"(Gen. 2:7). He was created to live for God and with God. To live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. And in choosing to eat man chose death. God had warned man about that.

"When you eat of this tree, you will surely die" (Gen. 2:17).

And man ate, and so death ensued. And death is the end of communion and union with God. Just as death is the end of the marriage relationship. We noted the analogy between the Marriage covenant and the Creation covenant. And as death of one of the partners brings an end to the marriage covenant, so also death ends (as it were) that union and communion, that covenant relation. Sin alienates man from the source of life. And death takes the form of expulsion from the Garden: the place where God lives with His people and they with Him in union and communion. Light and Darkness can have no fellowship with one another. Union and communion with God are broken down. The covenant between God and man has been broken.

- b. The first sin of the first man has implications for all men everywhere (not developed because developed in Doc. of Man course).

Romans 5:12 is relevant. The point is mentioned because it is where we enter the picture. ~~Adam acted not only~~ for Himself but he acted for all who were descended from him. And when he sinned all sinned. All descended from him are born in sin. We can see that in that Adam was expelled from the Garden. And being expelled from the Garden where else could his children be born except outside of the Garden and alienated from fellowship with God. Now this means, not only that Adam is a covenant-breaker, but all men are by nature covenant-breakers.

And therefore the covenant is relevant to all men. And not simply to the Jewish nation. We are all, by virtue of our connection with Adam, in him, covenant-breakers. We are, apart from the grace of God in Jesus Christ, covenant-breakers.

But, it is important to keep that in mind. Because, it is just because we were once in covenant with God in Adam that our redemption takes the form that it does. Namely the form of covenant restoration or rebuilding.

Or you could put it another way. The fact that our ~~re~~ redemption is covenantally ~~str~~ structured is a reminder to us of the fact that man was originally in covenant with God. The restoration of covenant relation with God is the form of our redemption.

Or to put it another way. Redemption does not destroy the original creation. It ~~does~~ not ignore or bypass the original creation. But rather, redemption renews and restores that creation. But it does more--it transcends the original in terms of a New Covenant.

- c. God's original plan is not to be frustrated by the sin of Man.

The first sin of man should have meant, all things being equal, the end. Death is the end of man in union and communion with God. That would have been the end of the Cultural Mandate. The earth would no longer be a dwelling place for man in fellowship with God. Yet, God does not allow His original plan and purpose to be frustrated. And because He is covenantally loyal even when man is covenantally disloyal.

And again, you have another evidence of man's original

covenant relationship with God. Because the fact that there is such a thing as "Redemption" bespeaks the covenantal loyalty of God. It is as fundamental as John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that those believing on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

He loved His handiwork, He loved what He created and was not going to allow it to be misused or its purpose frustrated. God is faithful to His creation. And His love and faithfulness come to expression in the plan of Redemption. Also cf., Rom. 3:3.

And, God's purpose in the Creation was not simply eternal life. Not simply, eternal life with God in the hereafter. ~~Exit Q&A xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ You see, God didn't make man in eternity with eternal life. He made him on this earth, He created this earth to be the dwelling place of man. And that purpose of God is covenantal fellowship with God here and now, and the fulfillment and discharge of the Cultural Mandate. And that purpose is going to be realized. And so the story of redemption is therefore the story of the restoration of the covenant relation. The restoration of covenant life on this earth.

And that is why Redemption takes the form of Israel's restoration to the Land. Israel is given a piece of land on which to live and to prosper as the people of God in this world. And it is the meek who will inherit the earth. All of the earth is the Lord's and He has given it to man. And it is the earth which is ultimately in view in the covenant purpose of God.

And that covenant purpose and restoration is by means of a series of historical covenants--with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Israel, David. And the whole process climaxes in the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Now we want to look at how that covenant life gets started once again.

2. Creation of Covenant Life--God's Election of Israel.

In effect now, what we are coming to is God's great urban renewal project. And that project centers around the New Jerusalem, the city whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10). And of that city God is the architect. And like all good architects God has a plan. And that plan is His electing purpose, His predestination. And according to that plan, God created new covenant life. And I use "create" advisedly.

As God created man for covenant in the beginning, according to His plan: "God spoke and it was done; so also, God now re-creates man for covenant fellowship, according to His redemptive plan. Cf. Mal. 2:10 "did not one God create us?" And that in the context of speaking about Israel's covenant relationship with God. 2:10 "Why do we deal treacherously each against his brother so as to profane the covenant of our fathers?"

You see, you don't say--"Well that's creation, that's the original creation and therefore what you have is a reference to the universal Fatherhood of God." No, that creation is the creation of Israel. And the fatherhood of God is the fatherhood of God with Israel. The establishment of Israel is a creative work of God, a re-creative work of God.

Cp. Ps.100:5 "making" refers to the recreating of a people for God's possession.

The original plan began on a very small scale with Adam and Eve. The renewal/recreation also begins on a small scale. And I can not begin to detail that development for you. It begins with particular persons, here and there. Individuals are mentioned in the earlier chapters of Genesis. But very soon the focus shifts to God's election of Israel to be His covenant people.

Again cf. Deut.7:6-11. Moses is addressing Israel about to cross the Promised Land. And Moses reminds Israel of Israel's privileged status as God's covenant people. And he does that in order to reinforce the covenant-consciousness of Israel. Israel must understand that they are the covenant people of God. Moses seeks to develop a covenant-consciousness in the people of God.

And that is exactly what the minister of the New Covenant must do. He must seek to cultivate a consciousness among the people of God of their status as the covenant people of God.

a. God chooses a people for His own treasured possession.

We have seen that in Adam all men are covenant-breakers. The work of restoration does not begin with the election of all men. But proceeds very slowly with the election of particular individuals. The election of a single nation--Israel. Which God chooses to be His people out of all the peoples on the face of the earth. They are separated from the other nations, separated unto the Lord. And that is why they are called a people "holy to the Lord their God." They are not chosen because they are holy; but to be holy(cf. Deut.7:6 also Eph.1:4 the same dynamic is at work).

Holiness therefore is not an attainment but a gift. Israel is created holy as Adam in the beginning was created. And having been created holy, Israel is then taught how to be what she was chosen and created to be. And so, the Lord having delivered Israel out of Egypt, proceeds to give Israel His law in order to teach Israel to be what God has made her, or created her, to be. Just as God, having created Adam holy and without sin, taught Adam how to be holy to Him, by living out of every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

God chose Israel to be His treasured possession. You see, that is the language of covenant. And that is not the way Employers speak to Employees. God speaks to Israel the way a Husband speaks to His wife, the way a Father speaks to His children--YOU are My treasured possession.

b. This Election is founded in God's love.

Cf. Deut.7:7

God does not derive but confers power and honor upon man. And so He chose Israel in spite of its insignificance. Why? Because the Lord loves Israel(cf. Deut.4:37). Well, why does a man choose a wife, and why does he choose this particular woman? He loves her. When love is the basis of the choice then no deeper ground is inquired after. Indeed, true love is unfathomable. There is no more ultimate explanation. But you see, that ultimate, unfathomable foundation is at the same time the most solid foundation for marriage to be built on--LOVE.

God chose Israel because He loved her. And you see again that covenant characteristic of God, that tie that binds. That covenant tie that binds coming to expression in the choice of Israel.

8. The Foundation of Election is God's faithfulness.

Deut. 7 He kept the oath that He swore.

You see, long before this God made a promise to Abraham to make of him a great and mighty nation, to give him Canaan as an everlasting possession. Now Deut. 7:7 says that God remembered that promise. God remembered that oath-bound promise. And that is why He chose Israel, to bring Israel out of the land of Egypt and to establish her in the Promised Land. Also compare Ps. 105:42 the holy promise to Abraham remembered. And then, that is why He brought His people out of Egypt with rejoicing. God is the Lord, the Lord of the Covenant. He keeps His promises, His word can be trusted because He is faithful.

And so, you see those twin ties again: love and faithfulness, coming to expression in Deut. 7.

Why does God proceed to redeem? Because He is loving and He is faithful. He is faithful to His creation, and in particular to His people whom He has chosen for His own possession. And so we see that God does not break covenant with man, but He begins to rebuild what man has torn down.

It is the covenant that is rebuilt. God creates a people with whom He can have love and communion. He is bound to that people by love and faithfulness--these are the covenant ties.

And God does that according to His electing purposes. Well how could it be otherwise? If man has broken covenant, then the restoration is up to God. And God acts sovereignly to restore covenant according to His own plan and purpose. So God restores the covenant, He re-creates man--that's from the point of view of God. Now from the point of view of Man, we turn to man to see how covenant is restored for him. How God's election becomes for him the foundation of covenant living.

3. God's election of Israel becomes for Man the foundation for Covenant Life.

(This point was spoken to earlier and so will not be dwelt upon at length.)

But, you are aware of the fact that it is important to understand how God's election of Israel is to be experienced by Israel. Compare the illustration of the New Suit; you buy it because you like it. You take it home and hang it in the closet. You take it out occasionally, but it doesn't fit quite right. But you do admire it.

Well, that is what happens to the doctrine of Election. It doesn't fit, it is a bit uncomfortable to wear. Well, what I am suggesting to you is that election can be experienced in such a way that it leads to resignation, indifference and irresponsibility.

But that was not the way in which Israel experienced her election. Israel experienced her election as the foundation for LIFE in covenant with God, as a comfortably fitting suit of clothes. As something that can be used everyday (cf. Dt. 7).

a. Election grounds command.

Deut.7:6-8 God chose Israel to be His people, His own possession. What is the conclusion that is to be drawn from this fact.

- 1) The Lord is your God. Your God is the God of the covenant. Yahveh is LOVE. He is loving, He has kept His covenant of Love. He is faithful, He has kept that covenant and will keep it, to a thousand generations. God has chosen you and you will be His people.
- 2) We also learn, that God keeps covenant with those who love Him and keep His commandments. Just because God has chosen you and entered into covenant with you, you are to be His covenant people. You are to love Him as He has loved you. And you are to be faithful to Him as He has been faithful to you.

That is to say, the love of God and the faithfulness of God with respect to this covenant relationship, is not a love and faithfulness that obliterates the covenant. But they are expressions of it. So that in His love and faithfulness He begets and creates a covenant partner who spontaneously responds to Him with body, soul, mind and strength.

So the Lord keeps covenant with those who love Him and keep His commands.

- 3) Not only is there the exhortation to keep covenant, but there is also the Warning.

Deut.7:10 There is also that warning that comes with the covenant. So that keeping covenant is a very serious business. Failure to keep it can lead to destruction. Israel knew that very well. Israel knew that a lot better than we know it. Because they had seen a whole generation die in the Wilderness.

We are talking about Deut.7 a generation that was taken out of the land of Egypt by God's mighty hand and outstretched arm. They had witnessed the passage through the Red Sea, they had seen God's mighty miracles: but the Lord God destroyed them in the Wilderness. They did not enter the Land of Promise.

WHY? Heb.3:18,19 makes that very clear, in their ἀπιστία & ἀπειθεία. Because they had broken covenant with God. They died in their rebellion just as Adam did when He broke covenant with God.

So you see, the doctrine of Election and the knowledge of Election does not lead to resignation, to listlessness, irresponsibility, to "whatever will be will be," there's nothing to be done about it." Quite the contrary. Election leads to active participation in covenant life. It grounds the response of love and faithfulness to God. "I have chosen you to be My people." That is what the Lord God says to us in His sovereign creating grace--"YOU are My PEOPLE. Therefore, walk before Me as My people. If you do not, then I will destroy you." (Cf., Ps.103:17-18)

But now you see, again the question comes up--"Don't then those warnings and those exhortations mean that the covenant relation is, after all, a Labor relation?, a relation between Employer and Employees? If we perform at a certain level then God will give us what we have earned, by our meritorious achievement. Aren't we back to a Labor relation after all???

NO, not at all!!! Because, God's election not only grounds the command, but it also guarantees the Promise.

b. Election guarantees the Promise.

Deut.7:9 & 10 follow after verses 6-8. God has chosen you, He is fulfilling the promise. That comes first. Therefore you are to walk before Him as His people. God's people never earn anything by walking before God as His people. They only receive His covenant love and faithfulness. And they only receive union and communion as a free gift. That is what God has made them and created them to be-- His people, His treasured possession. And they enjoy that gift in the way of covenant love and faithfulness. They enjoy the free gift. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

We must never forget that the Land to which God is bringing His people is a Land of Promise. It is not a Land of Promise until they get there and then it becomes a land of Merit. It is ever and always a Land of Promise. Cf., Deut.8:1ff. . . .

When Israel is still east of Jordan, Moses calls that land the Land that the Lord has given you (Deut.8:10) Israel has only to walk in and take over. There is no question of merit or achievement here. It is a free gift.

But, Israel must walk in. You see, Israel at Kadesh-barnea, 40 years earlier, had refused to walk in. And they forfeited the promise through unbelief. God had said, "Just walk in and take over." "But aren't there enemies there, giants, what not?" Of course there are. But God says, "I will fight the battle for you." He says that explicitly in Deut.1:30 the Lord promises to fight the battles for Israel.

So, God asks His people to follow His every command. Not in order to merit the right to enter the Promised Land. NO, that obedience is simply the way in which the Lord leads His people into the possession of a free gift. The Land is promised and promises can only be received by faith. And that is the reason Paul says in Gal.3:18 "if the inheritance depends on the Law, then it no longer depends on a promise." But God in His grace gave it to Abraham through a promise." It is a promise, a land of promise. And therefore has nothing to do with merit or achievement.

But how does the Lord God lead His people into the possession of it? He says, "Follow Me" in the person of Moses. And so Israel is to go behind Moses obediently. Simply walk in and possess the Land. Not doing what the Canaanites or the Egyptians do. But listening to the statutes, the wisdom of God, and walking in the Lord's ways. And the Lord will give them that Land.

Now, of the whole Wilderness generation, only those who believed entered the Promised Land--Joshua and Caleb believed God. And because they believed God they were ready to move at God's command. But the rest did not believe. They disobeyed, they broke covenant and they did not enter the Land.

Now God's election is the foundation for covenant faith and loyalty. But God's election is also the foundation of guaranteed promise. You see, the very same Israel that God brought out of Egypt entered the Promised Land. Because God's election guaranteed the results. But the

But the faithless ones in Israel did not enter the Promised Land, but died in the Wilderness. Notice how Moses addresses the people who are about to enter the Promised Land, in Deut. 5:2-3 . . .

Now, that is startling. Because the people whom Moses was speaking to was that generation that grew up in the Wilderness. And the adult generation was dead. But Moses says it was not with our Fathers but it was with us, who are alive today, that the Lord then and there made covenant. And there we see that although many in Israel failed, many individuals were lost because they did not keep covenant, God's election did not fail! Israel chosen out of Egypt enters the Promised Land. Not because they earned the right to do so--far from it! The only thing they earned was the right to be destroyed in the Wilderness. But they entered the Promised Land because God keeps covenant. But the way in which they entered the Promised Land was precisely in the way of the Covenant.

And you see, God's sovereignty never destroys the reality of that covenant relation. And you can not play the two off of one another. God keeps covenant, He is faithful, He is true, He is loyal. But it is no less true--He keeps covenant with those who keep covenant with Him. There are no wages for good works well done at any point. There are only the gifts which flow from God's fatherly hand, His mercy. But the

But the Bible does speak about wages and you see that in the history of Israel. The wages of sin is death. That is what we have earned. But the gift of God is eternal life (Rom. 6:23), ultimately in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But that gift was always and ever a gift in God's gracious dealings with His people. Again, we see that redemption does not overthrow the Covenant. Nor does it bypass the Covenant. Redemption is by way of covenant restoration and renewal.

God's election does not destroy the reality of that covenant relation but is the foundation for it. God establishes covenant with Israel according to His electing purposes. And just because Israel is the covenant people they are to respond with the same love and faithfulness which God has demonstrated to them. In that, when they were dead in trespasses and sins God created them anew to be His people.

4. God's election of the Nations, the covenant extended to the Gentiles.

So far, we have been talking about Israel and her election, her covenant standing. But the question is--where do we fit into the picture? What is the relevance of all that to us? And the point is--although covenant restoration begins with Israel it does not end there. Before their election Israel was a covenant-breaker, just like the rest of mankind. There was nothing that distinguished the Israelites from the rest of the Nations. But they are chosen to be God's people. It is God's choice that makes the distinction, the difference. But, in the fulness of time, that election will extend to the other nations as well. Indeed, to all the nations of the earth. The restoration will be as comprehensive as the condemnation. Because God is faithful to His creation. The promise to Abraham was that "in him all the families of the earth will be blessed." And so it will be,

a. Gentiles are incorporated into the Covenant Community.

We have seen already that Israel was separated from the other nations. Paul reflects on that in Eph.2:12 As you read through the O.T. you see how Israel broke down the wall of separation between the covenant people and the non-covenant people. Israel chose in rebellion to live like the nations, worshipping their gods, following their practices. And so God punished Israel by sending them into Exile, to live with the nations. "If that is what you want then that is what you will get." And so the Ten Tribes were lost, they were completely absorbed by the Gentiles. And the Two Tribes spend 70 years in Babylon. But there was a small remnant which honored the wall of separation. And then symbolically Nehemiah leads in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

But, with the coming of Christ Jesus the walls of Jerusalem are once again breached. But now, this time, not in order to send the Jews away, But in order to admit the Gentiles. Zechariah 8:23 prophesies "in those days " Ps.87:4 speaks of this. The nations of the world are counted as those who are born in Zion. We have a "new birth" certificate as well. And the place of birth is ~~Jerusalem~~ But then cast in N.T. terms, in terms of Rev.20. And that means that Gentiles are numbered among the Elect. That is why Paul addresses them as "elect" in Eph.1. You see, that is what we have to hear when you hear Eph.1; Paul addressing the Gentiles as Elect. That is the marvel of Eph.1, that even the Gentiles are now to be addressed as Elect of God. I Peter 2:6 the elect are scattered among the nations. How can that be? God's own treasured possession found among the Gentiles.

Well, that leads to...

b. The Problem for Israel.

You see, we can not underestimate the problem this caused for Israel, even for the believing remnant. How could Gentiles be the Elect when God had separated Israel from the other nations to be His own possession? Well the answer to that problem lies in the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ. God did not intend for Israel to align itself with the nations. That is what we call apostasy. Nor did God intend that the nations become a part of Israel. That is salvation by the works of the Law. And it is not God's intention to make the Gentiles first Jews, and then Christians.

NO! God's purpose according to the language of the Apostle Paul, is to create one New Man in Christ. Notice that word "create". As God created Adam in the beginning and then created Israel. Now in Jesus Christ comes the definitive New Creation, one New Man in Christ. Both Jew and Gentile reconciled to God by the Cross of Jesus Christ, becomes one New Body in Him. Cf., Gal.5:6 "What avails? Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision. But a new creation in Jesus Christ."

There is a New Covenant. In Jesus Christ all the promises, ringing through history, are Yea and Amen in Christ (II Cor.1:20). There is a new covenant people created according to the electing purpose of God. And that pattern has already been set out in God's election and creation of Israel

This New Body is a continuation of the Old, yet it is a New Body in Jesus Christ.

And so that is the third point...

c. The relevance of Israel for the Nations.

1) There is a continuity.

Israel is the Church of the Old Covenant. But the Church is the Israel of the New Covenant. Abraham is our father in the faith (Romans 4). And therefore we have much to learn from the O.T. because that is our roots. And we who are Gentiles are grafted into that root (Romans 11).

And from that root we can learn what it means to be in union and communion with God. What faith and love mean. And we can learn by Israel's example (cf. I Cor. 10:1ff). That is why Paul appeals to Israel as an example, that we won't be as foolish as our father's were in the Wilderness and they perished.

2) There is discontinuity also.

It is true that, although we are one with Israel, it is also true that the Old is fading away, in order to give place to what is lasting (cf. II Cor. 3:11. Also Col. 2:14; Heb. 8:13). The Old gives way to the New. Why, why does it give way???

3-19-81

D. From Death to Life: Old and New Covenants.

1. The failure of Israel. (can only be appreciated on the background of...)

a. The Goodness of God to Israel.

The Lord liberated His people from Egypt under the leadership of Moses (cf. Deut. 1:29-31; 3:22; 4:32-34). But God not only liberated His people from Egypt, but He also taught them how to live. He gave them laws at Sinai: the Ten Commandments. These laws are Israel's life (cf. Deut. 32:46-47). Those words are not idle words, but those words of that law--they are your life. Not to earn or merit life. No, that life is a gift, God's creative gift. God does not establish a Labor contract, there is not a works principle here. But the words which God gives, the words of His law, they are words to live by. They are light in the midst of pagan darkness. And that is so clear in Lev. 18:1-5. This is also used in the N.T. That is not a works principle: if you do this you will earn or merit such and such. The context points out that you are not to be like the Egyptians or the Canaanites. The people from which I am taking you nor the people whose land I am taking you to. But you are to be My people, My distinctive possession. And how are you that? You are that by keeping the commandments which I am giving you, they are your life. That is how you will survive in that land to which I am bringing you. YOU are to be MY people. The man who obeys My laws will live in them. But if you behave like the Egyptians you will die, or like the Canaanites you will die.

Deut. 4:7-8 the whole thing is saturated with grace. What nation has been so blessed with the righteous commandments, the wisdom of God? The goodness of God shines through the Pentateuch. God's free goodness, the unmerited favor of God, His grace to Israel.

b. The disobedience and rebellion of Israel--Israel's sin.

b. The thankless rebellion of Israel--Israel the prodigal Son.

The Lord gave Israel a place to live. Also work to do, a job to do, just as He had done with Adam. But Israel, like Adam, also rebelled(cf. Hosea 6:7). The rebellion began even before Israel got to the Promised Land. For instance, the Golden Calf and God's wrath for it. But the capstone came with the refusal of Israel to go into the Promised Land at the command of the Lord(cf. Deut. 9:23-24). They neither trusted nor obeyed God(cp. the ~~4th & 5th~~ of Heb.3:18-19)

Now as the history moves on we see Israel repented from time to time, but then Israel wanted to go back to its own ways. In the time of the Judges we see repeatedly that men did what was right in their own eyes. They paid no attention to the righteous commandments of God. Later on we see how they rejected the Lord, the King, from being king over them. And they wanted a king that they could see, a king seated upon a throne in Jerusalem, (just like the Pre-Millennialists). But that was a rejection of the Lord as King. And even when they got such a king it did not help(cf. Hosea 11:1-2).

c. The Patience of God exhausted.

The patience of a father is a marvellous thing. And our Father in heaven is very, very patient(cf. Ps.86:5). The patience of God in His covenant love and faithfulness to His people. The ministry of the Prophets is a lasting testimony to the patience of God. Time and again He sends His prophets to Israel. And so compare Isa.5 Israel is compared to a well-cultivated vineyard. In vs.4 "what more could have been done for My vineyard than I have done." No garden has ever been so well cared for then by the Lord God. Which garden He planted, which took root (Ps.80). But when the Lord looked for good grapes it produced bad ones. And with that the Lord God's patience was exhausted.

And yes, that can happen. And we have to take account of that even today. And the Lord God determined to destroy His vineyard. Israel had only to receive God's free gift. But Israel blew it and blew it, but good. And so the Lord, with His patience exhausted at last, banished the Elect Nation from the Land of Promise(cf. II Chr.36:14-16). There was no remedy.

d. A Final Appeal.

The most amazing, the most incomprehensible is that on the background of the fact that the Lord God says there is no remedy, the Lord makes one final appeal(cf. Ps.103:9; Hosea 11:8 is particularly significant).

And after 70 years the Lord brings a remnant back from Captivity and settles them in the Promised Land. Have then the Lord's people learned their lesson at last? You would think so. But you would have thought the same after the Desert wanderings. With that generation dead in the Wilderness, you would think Israel would realize where her future lay. But she did not. And again she rebels (cf. Mal.1:2,6). Well it was not forthcoming and again the Lord threatens wrath. Cf. the last verse of Malachi, the last word of God--"And he will restore" the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."

But once again a final appeal. The Lord sends John the Baptist to this rebellious nation to preach repentance before the great and terrible day of the Lord. And John came preaching, pleading once again for Israel to remember the Covenant, to turn back to the Lord. And then in one last and final... Finally He sends His only-begotten Son to preach repentance to Israel, to plead with Israel to turn back from its wickedness, to the Living and True God. But instead of listening to the prophet of God par excellence, Israel turns around and puts Him to death. They trample the Son of God under foot and treat as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them. They insulted the Spirit of grace (Heb.10:29). And that is the sin that clinches it. With that it is all over. In 70 AD the Temple and the Holy City are destroyed. And that is the end of the Old Covenant. It had begun so gloriously but ended so disastrously.

And you have to ask the question--WHY? Was God not able to prevent that debauche? Was God not able, after all, to have Israel for His own possession? Your thought is what Moses said to God when He was ready to destroy them before--"Lord, you have to forgive them. Because if you don't the nations will say you were able to take Your people out of Egypt but You weren't able to hold on to them. You weren't able to command their allegiance." And you see, is the mockery of the nations right after all? That the Lord was able to take them out of Egypt and even to bring them back from the Exile. But He wasn't able to command their allegiance! And, is the Lord going to be mocked then by the Gentiles?

Well, Satan lost when he tested Job. He said to the Lord, "Lord, you do not have the heart allegiance of Job. He only trusts You because You're good to him. But You withdraw those gifts and he'll flunk." And the Lord says, "I do have the heart allegiance of Job." And that was demonstrated.

But now, has the Lord lost in this test of His power to command the allegiance of His people?

2. Reason for Israel's Failure.

Why is Israel a failure? Why doesn't she yield that heart allegiance? There are two reasons:

a. The Impotence of Israel.

Deut.9:4-6 makes clear that Israel did not enter the Land because of her righteousness. They had demonstrated themselves, in the Wilderness, to be a stiff-necked people, that continually provoked the Lord. And yet, in spite of that, the Lord fulfilled His promise to give them the Land. And in fulfilling that promise He taught His people how to be a righteous people. Cf. Deut.10:16. ... Also, Ezekiel 18:31 indicates the preaching of the Prophets--"Get a new heart"

But you see, that was what Israel repeatedly refused to do. She refused to circumcise the heart, refused to get a new heart or a new spirit. In spite of the summons of the Prophets, Israel refused to repent and live. She refused to respond. She would not respond because she could not respond. Cf. Jer.13:23 " . . . The very thing Israel

had to do, get a new heart, was the very thing Israel could not do. That new heart had to come as a gift from the Lord. But the Lord in His sovereign power withheld that gift from Israel. Remember Deut. 29:2-4. That is what Israel needed, but the Lord did not give that. That is why Israel failed in the Wilderness. And that is why Israel failed when the Prophets called for repentance. Isa. 6:9-10. Isaiah's ministry is a ministry which calls for repentance. But the effect of that ministry is to harden. Blindness and deafness are sent as judgement upon blind and deaf people. The Lord not only withholds His gift but He sends the opposite by way of judgement. Compare here the Doctrine of Reprobation. And that judgement which rested upon Israel rested upon Israel right up to the end. Cf. Romans 11:8 ". . ." In other words, Israel failed because Israel was dead in trespasses and sins and could not make life for herself. She was utterly dependent upon God for the gift of life. And that is admirably pictured for us in the Exodus. Israel could not extricate herself from Egypt. And Israel got out of Egypt by God's mighty, miraculous handling of that situation. But fundamentally, as far as the heart was concerned, Israel needed a new heart. But Israel could not make herself a new heart. Israel failed because there was no life in Israel. Not the spiritual life. And that's the impotence of Israel. There was no life.

b. The Impotence of the Old Covenant.

God had given to Israel the Covenant, its Laws, its promises--sheer grace. Would not that Law serve then to arouse Israel from its death stupor? Would Israel not rejoice in its promises and delight in its precepts? But instead Israel was stone deaf. Israel was dead in trespasses and sins. And you could pound laws into Israel, but they went no further than the ear drum. They did not penetrate to the heart of that stiff-necked people. The laws bounced off Israel. Now there were many in Israel who were deceived into thinking that the laws were all that was needed. Compare the life of Paul in Phil. 3. No one had made better use of the legal system. He was blameless according to the precepts of the Law (at least as he understood them). But when he came to faith in Jesus Christ, he counted all of that achievement as rubbish.

Wherein does that impotence of the Old Covenant consist?

- 1) The impotence of the O.C. resides in the fact that it could not take away the guilt of sin. The Law was only a shadow of the good things that were to come. Cf. Heb. 10:1-4. perfectly clear.

And you see, the book of Hebrews contrasts the legal system with what we have in Jesus Christ. And the contrast is not between a works/merit principle and a grace principle. But it is between the impotence of what was inherently good as contrasted with the power of what is definitive in Jesus Christ. And the impotence lies in the fact that the blood of bulls and goats can not take away sin.

Now, the Lord had prescribed the service of sacrifice for that purpose. And those sacrifices we understand as of value only because of the reality that is foreshadowed in them.

But the Mosaic system in and of itself, even if observed perfectly, without the slightest infraction of any rule, could not save. Because it could not remove sin. You could offer sacrifices right to the minutest letter, obey it perfectly. And you still would die. Because the blood of bulls and goats can't take away sin.

2) The Law was powerless because it could not impart life.

Israel was dead in trespasses and sins and the Law could not impart life. Deut.6:25 But Israel did not obey that Law and therefore Israel had no righteousness. It was not because of their righteousness that Israel entered and possessed the Promised Land.

You see the point is that the Law called for obedience. It asked for obedience. And in that obedience Israel was to live. But instead of obedience Israel produces ~~opposition~~ sin and death. To put it succinctly--~~the Law~~ showed Israel how to live, but the Law was powerless to cause Israel to live. That is exactly what the Apostle says in Gal.3:21

And because it could not impart life to ~~dead~~ Israel, Israel was never able to live by it. She constantly failed. In other words, "those words to live by," were for all practical purposes "useless." Instead the Law pronounced a curse upon Israel just because of her failure(cf. Gal.3:10). Paul says that the ministry of the Old Covenant law was glorious(II Cor.3:9). Of course it was glorious, what other nation had been so blessed as Israel had been blessed? Absolutely glorious! What nation has laws like Israel's? To which nation did God ever promise--"do this and you will live."

You see, that is pure grace. To what other nation had God ever said--"do this and you will live?" To no other nation. That is God's grace to Israel. God created Israel, brought Israel into existence and said, "Do this and you will live." But instead of that Paul says that Law became a ministry of condemnation. It became a ministry of condemnation because Israel did not do what the Lord had said. And so Paul says in II Cor.3:6 the letter kills but it does not impart life. It is the Spirit who imparts life, not the Law of Moses. And that Spirit is the Spirit of Christ.

Here we come to the next point...

3. The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

a. The basic problem is resolved.

Consider the problem that you have at the end of the Old Testament. You have to think in historical terms now. God had created Israel to be His own treasured possession, according to His electing purpose. He had established Israel as His people. Moreover, He had guaranteed that Israel would be His people. "You will be My people"--He had promised that. And yet because of their rebellion, the people of Israel angered the Lord. And He determined to destroy them. But now you see the dilemma. How could God have this people for His own possession? and, at the same time destroy them? Because that is what they deserved.

That is the dilemma at the end of the O. T.

And you see, the Law was powerless to resolve that dilemma. Because Israel had had the Law for years and years. But nothing good had come of it. Instead Israel proved itself worthy of condemnation. And yet the Lord has guaranteed to have Israel for His own possession. That's the Dilemma! Now how is that problem solved?

That problem is resolved in Jesus Christ. Jesus comes and deals in a definitive way, once and for all, with the problem of sin. Sin is the cause of alienation between God and His people. And through Jesus Christ the promises made to the fathers will be fulfilled. They will be realized precisely in terms of the Covenant. Because all of the promises, as Paul said, are yea and amen in Jesus Christ. Not in Moses--but in Jesus Christ.

You can look at it this way. Under the Old Covenant God gave His people words to live by. On a some what higher plane than Dear Abby. It is not just good advice. But they are not idle words: they are your life! God's people have words to live by. And they have to have words to live by. Otherwise they are like sheep wandering in the dark. They need light. But the Lord has not simply given words to live by. But, in the fulness of time, He gives the Word of Life (cf. I John 1:1). And that Word of Life you see, is all important. And because we have the Word of Life, we do not walk in darkness: but in the Light. (cf. I Jn. 1:5). Now we have to spell that out.

Why is Jesus the Word of Life, in contrast to the "words to live by" which you have in the Law of the O. T.? First of all, we noted:

- 1) The Law was powerless to take away the guilt of sin. But in Jesus we have forgiveness. Jesus can and does do what the Law could not do. The blood of bulls and goats was absolutely useless with respect to guilt. But Jesus can and does forgive sin. He does so because He has taken the penalty of sin on Himself and has exhausted it on the Cross. There was not a single animal, bull or goat, that ever arose from the dead. But Jesus arose from the dead because He exhausted the penalty of sin on the Cross. And because the penalty was exhausted Death could not hold Him. And, having exhausted the penalty of sin He now extends forgiveness to all who come to Him for mercy. There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. There is condemnation for those who are under the Law

It comes out with remarkable clarity in Acts 13:38-39. "Therefore, let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses." And that justification focusses in there on forgiveness. The blood of bulls and goats does not

forgive. It cannot take away the guilt of sin. But Jesus can and does. And that's good news, that is really good news, GOSPEL. Now you notice in those verses. It is very important for you to pick this up. That the author there is not saying that the Mosaic Law fails because you are misusing it. It is not a question of the misuse of the Law. But it is precisely the Law in its proper use, properly, ~~made use of~~, that the Law will not cancel sin. Observe that the Law to the Letter and it will not take away sin. Through Him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from. Not by the misuse of the Mosaic Law, but by the use of the Mosaic Law. That is the startling thing about it. So Jesus gives us freedom from ~~the~~ guilt of sin. Which we could not have under the Law.

- 2) The Law was powerless to impart New Life. But Jesus can and does make alive. Cf. Jn.10:10; 5:26; 14:6. Jesus is lifegiving. Now how is that true?

Well, that is made clear in I Peter 2:24 "and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."

Not simply the penalty of sin, but so as we could live for righteousness.

Romans 6 we have died with Christ and are risen with Him from the dead. He is lifegiving, He imparts life. Gal.2:20 He is my life. Phil.3:7ff, Paul ~~calls the~~ whole Mosaic, legal system, or at least his accomplishments in terms of it--"rubbish," "That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection" You see, it's the power of the resurrection of Christ.

Rom.8:3-4 "For what the Law could not do, weak as ~~as~~ it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." Paul says that God has done what the Law could not do. The Law was impotent in the face of the sinfulness of the flesh. The Law could do nothing about that. But God did something about it in sending His Son, "Who condemned sin in the flesh in order that the just requirements of the Law might be fulfilled in us," who do not cling to a legal system and therefore work in the power of the flesh. But who walk after the Spirit.

For it is the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead, who also imparts life to us. Who is for us life-giving Spirit. Because in Jesus Christ sin is condemned, we live. And we live according to the pattern of the righteousness of God. Jesus gives the New Heart that Ezekiel demands of Israel. Jesus circumcises the Heart as Moses had demanded. Jesus is circumcised on the Cross and

that is our circumcision.

The Prophets pleaded with deaf Israel to hear. But Jesus comes and He makes the deaf to hear. That is why He performs that miracle. Israel was blind, they could not see. Jesus comes and He opens the eyes of the blind. Jesus makes men to live. We were dead in sins but Jesus causes us to die to sin. We come alive as new men. We come alive as the same men. We are the same persons who were dead in trespasses and sins. But we are not the same persons, that is the Old Man.. Now I am a New Man.

You see, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ there is identity. It is this mortal which puts on immortality. But it is a New Man transformed according to the image of Christ. And that process of Death and Resurrection is already given to us in the O. T. You see, rebellious Israel, in the Desert, could not enter the Promised Land. God must destroy that rebellious people. Because light and darkness cannot dwell with one another. And yet Israel must enter because that is God's guaranteed promise. And you see that is the dilemma that we signaled at the end of the O. T. The people must be destroyed for their sin. And yet, God's guaranteed promise must be realized. HOW is that accomplished?

Well, Israel does die to sin. The rebellious generation perishes in the Wilderness. The wrath of God is poured out. Therefore it is a New Israel that enters the Promised Land, a Resurrected Israel. Israel has died to sin and is resurrected to life to enter into the Promised Land, as New Israel.

Yet, it is the same Israel. And that you see, is the significance of the way Moses spoke to Israel. Moses says to Israel--"it was not with our fathers that God made this covenant at Sinai, but with us." And you see, there he is preserving the identity of Israel. It is "Israel" to whom God made the promise that is entering the Promised Land. But an Israel transformed through Death and Resurrection.

Similarly in the Exile. The disobedient die in the Wilderness, the wilderness of Babylon, 70 yrs. And in that 70 years the generation that had been exiled perishes. And now a new generation re-enters the Promised Land. The same Israel but transformed. Dead to sin, alive to righteousness; Death and Resurrection. But that Death and Resurrection ultimately and definitively occurs only in Jesus Christ on our behalf.

The Law teaches us to die to sin and to live unto righteousness--that is what the Law teaches us. But only in Jesus Christ is that lesson driven home to the heart. Only in Jesus Christ is that lesson really learned, does it really happen. And that is why Jesus and His Death and Resurrection, His Mediatorial accomplishment is all important. Without it we are utterly lost.

b. Jesus establishes a New Covenant.

What Jesus comes to do is to establish a New Covenant. Cf. Jer. 31:31-34 the prophet says the time is coming when the Lord will make a New Covenant. Not like the Old One with Israel. Because they broke that one. But the New One cannot be broken. Well of course the Old One was broken. Because it dealt with a people who were dead in trespasses and sins. And it had no inherent power to do anything about it. And of course that covenant was broken. But the New Covenant will be a different covenant. It will be established on better principles.

And that prophecy of Jeremiah is said to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ. And that prophecy is quoted in Hebrews 8 and 10. Heb. 10:15-18 is particularly significant. "And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord; I will put My laws in their heart, and upon their mind I will write them,' He then says, 'And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.'"

Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin."

You notice the two elements of that prophecy that are now singled out: 1) I will put My law in their hearts; 2) I will remember their sins no more.

These were two things that the Old Covenant could not do. The Old Covenant could not remove guilt. The Old Covenant could not give life. But the New Covenant will do precisely that.

In terms of the New Covenant, that Law will be written on the heart. That is life. That Law is written on the heart and I will remember their sins no more. And that is why the priest will not have to go daily into the sanctuary. Those two things, that the Old Covenant could not so, are now done in the New Covenant in Jesus Christ. Forgiveness and Renewal. Or, as we use the technical terms in theology: Justification and Sanctification.

Because Jesus establishes a New Covenant the Old Covenant is abolished. It fades away (cf., II Cor. 3). Jesus abolished in His flesh the Law with its commandments and regulations. That means that the Mosaic system, as such, that Old Covenant, is done away with.

The system had said: "Do this and you will live." But it was a system without Jesus Christ in the flesh. It spoke about Jesus, but Jesus had not yet come. And that is the problem with the Mosaic system, with the Law, why it was weak--it did not have Jesus in the flesh.

You see, Jesus in the flesh, the historical accomplishment of Jesus Christ is all important. That is why we insist on the historicity of Jesus, of His Death and Resurrection. It is not just a question of we want to be sure that the Bible is infallible and does not make any mistakes about what it says. That is all involved to be sure. But it is more than that. We need the historical Christ, His Death and Resurrection, or we do not have Redemption. We are still under the Law. Jesus has given a New Covenant in His blood. And that New Covenant is a covenant that works. It is a New Covenant that does its job.

Now the changeover from the Old to the New Covenant that doesn't come easily. There were many who could not break away from the Old system, and they perished in unbelief. But, and you can see that, how hard it is to make the transition. The Apostle Paul could not break away from the Old system. He was just so thoroughly happy in it, bound up to it. And what it took to break Paul out of that Old system was nothing less than an appearance of Jesus Christ Himself from Heaven. But there were others who broke away. And they were constantly tempted to go back to that comfortable Old system. But it was a useless system and that is the problem Paul wrestles with in Galatians. And you see it in Acts. Paul pleading: "Don't go back to that old system, it is powerless. Don't you see it's powerless, it never did anything for its adherents. No our hope is in Jesus and in Him alone." And if you want to go back to that system, you will die. That Old system is done away with. It won't work. If you go back to it you will die/perish. Now, if you have a method of farming which you have tried year after year and it fails. Why would you use it again? That is what Paul is saying--It didn't work! Now why would you go back to it? JESUS, that is what you need. For you see, that Old system appeals to the power of the flesh. But we need a New Covenant in Jesus. A new Creation not of the flesh but of the Spirit. A New Man. And that New Covenant is a covenant. And you see again, that New Covenant in the blood of Jesus is not an abandonment of the covenant. But it is finally the realization, definitively, of God's covenant relationship with His people.

3-20-81

c. The New Covenant has Two sides.

Like all covenants.

1) Command.

This is seen throughout the Epistles of Paul, and the Gospels as well. But just let me remind you of the sort of thing I have in mind here.

Romans 12.2 . . . ; John, 13:34

And not only are there the commandments, but there are the warnings. Cf. Gal. 6:7-8 There are numerous warnings of this kind in the N. T., coupled with the Commands.

But not only is there the the Command and the Warning side of the Covenant, the Obligation side. But there is also...

2) Blessing.

The New Covenant comes with its Promises.

Heb. 8:6 better promises than we had under the Old Covenant. And we have already seen that the promise of forgiveness and renewal, which is realized now in the New Covenant and guaranteed to us in Jesus Christ. We have not simply the promise of Life, but of Life that can not be taken away. "No man can pluck them away from out of My hand." That Old Covenant may be broken but the New Covenant will not be broken. The blood of Jesus Christ takes away the guilt of sin once and for all. There is no more need for the blood

of bulls and goats or any other sacrifices. And the Law is written not only in books, not only in tables of stone, but also on our hearts. And that will guarantee its fulfillment.

And Jesus is for us our Sanctification. He is our Justification. But He is also our Sanctification, a sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord(cf. Heb.12:14).

So, there is these two sides to the New Covenant. There is Command and Promise, Obligation and Benefit.

d. But the New Covenant, like the Old, also establishes Union and Communion with God.

But now, in a definitive way. Because that union and communion with God is through Jesus Christ and His Mediatorial accomplishment. And flowing from that mediatorial accomplishment of Christ we are the beneficiaries of the gift of the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit indwells us and binds us to God and binds God to us. And that is the heart of our union and communion with God. We are the Temple of the Spirit.

And, as the Temple of the Spirit we are the beneficiaries of the working of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit. It is the Spirit who gives the gift of faith. So that we trust in Christ and not in the Law. Or in the power of the flesh. And not only that, but Romans 5:5 tells us, "and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

There you have the twin benefits again, the ties that bind. The Spirit binds us but He binds us begetting faith in us. And out of that faith flows faithfulness, the sanctifying of the Spirit. And that faithfulness is an expression of love for God. Faith and Love. And that is simply the reflection of the fact that God Himself has proved faithful to His covenant. How faithful has God proved to His covenant? Well, He has proved faithful in Jesus Christ. For in Jesus Christ all the promises are yea and amen(cf., II Cor. 1:20). Not only that, but God has proved loving. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." God's love, His covenant faithfulness, His covenant love are made concrete to us in the gift of the Son, Jesus Christ. There we see God's covenant faithfulness and love.

Now with all that then. We understand ourselves then, to be beneficiaries of the New Covenant. We participate in the New Covenant. What does that mean for us concretely?

E. The Covenantal Task for Today.

In order to appreciate the dimensions of that task, it is necessary for us to look, first of all, at the...

1. Basic Divisions in the Human Race.

Covenant-breakers and Covenant-keepers. We have to recognize that basic division,

There are many things that distinguish people from one another. Such as, sex, race, national origin, functions in society. But the most basic division running through the whole human race, is the distinction between those who are alive and those who are dead. Note a cemetery and those walking outside it as a picture of the division that I am referring to. The difference between those who are dead in trespasses and sins and those who are alive in Christ Jesus. The difference between believers and unbelievers. The resurrected and the unresurrected. But characterized pre-eminently in the division between Covenant-Keepers and Covenant-Breakers.

Now that distinction is set forth in Scripture very frequently as the . . .

a. Distinction between the Righteous and the Wicked.

And you see that distinction running all through the Bible. But in the Psalms in particular, you see that distinction constantly inculcated in the minds of God's people. Those Psalms they are the songs of the Covenant. They are the expression of the way in which people, who lived in and out of the Covenant, experienced their Covenant Religion. They are the songs of the Covenant. They are written by covenant people for covenant people. And they instruct us in our understanding of the Covenant relation. Cf. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:19 and II Tim. 3:16-17. We are instructed by inspired Scripture to think covenantally.

And it is not happenstance that, in that branch of the Protestant Reformation where the doctrine of the Covenant took hold, and was magnified and appreciated; it is precisely there that Psalm-singing took hold. And it is the Calvinistic Reformation that is characterized as a Psalm-singing Reformation. Because out of a covenantal understanding of the Faith, appropriate expression is given in the way in which the Psalms give expression, subjectively, to the appropriation of God's grace.

Now in the Psalms the distinction is made between the Righteous and the Wicked. Ps. 1 is the portal through which we make our entrance into the Book of Psalms. And right there the distinction is very evident, the distinction between the Righteous and the Wicked. There are many comparable examples throughout. But also cf. Ps. 37:16-17 as exemplary.

Well, if that is the basic distinction, then you have to ask--

b. Who are the Wicked, what is their Identity?

And as we examine the Scriptures to find out who the wicked are, we would certainly have to say, that, they include, first of all, the Heathen Nations in distinction from Israel.

God had separated Israel, He had sanctified His people. He was their God and they were His people. God was, to be sure, God over all the nations. It is not as if they had escaped His control. But He is not the LORD of the Nations. He is not the Covenant God of the Nations. They are not in covenant with Him. And Paul says in Eph. 2:12 that they are ἀθεοί. They are the ungodly. They walk in their own ways and not in the ways of the Lord. They sit in darkness. They do not have the Law of God. So that line of distinction is between Israel and the Nations.

But the sad thing, the very sad thing that emerges from the O. T., is that line of distinction was not only between

Israel and the Nations. But it was also right through the middle of Israel itself. Cf. Jer. 5:26 "For wicked men are found among My people, they watch like fowlers lying in wait; they set a trap, they catch men."

These are God's own people, with whom He has made covenant. And they have broken covenant. They claim to be God's people, they claim a relation to His covenant. But by their actions they deny His lordship. Cf. Ps. 50:16-20 they talk about the covenant but are ungodly men. They are covenant-breakers within Israel.

c. Who are the Righteous?

These people are also described in full and in many places, and in particular in the Psalms. Cf. 18; 26; 119:1-3. Not that they are free from sin. David was such a man. But he was capable of gross sins. And so David confesses before God in Ps. 143:2 "and do not enter into judgement with Thy servant, for in Thy sight no man living is righteous." But you see, their righteousness appears just in the fact that they do confess their sins and they do seek the mercy of the Lord. Therein lies an aspect of their righteousness. They bring the required sacrifices and they make amends. They repent of their sins. They are restored and they go on walking in the ways of the Lord. They enjoy union and communion with the Father in heaven.

Compare the examples of Noah, Job, Zacharius and Elizabeth as exemplary of O. T. piety. They weren't supermen. They were ordinary people. They walked in the ways of the Lord. They are the Righteous. Not that they are without sin. But they confess it, repent of it, and seek the face of the Lord.

d. This Distinction is Valid Today.

There are covenant-keepers and there are covenant-breakers. Obviously we have to say that those covenant-breakers are found among the peoples of the world who have no access to revealed truth. That is, the revealed truth of the Gospel, or the name of Jesus Christ.

But it is also a distinction that runs through those who are affiliated with the Covenant. And it is often obvious who those covenant-breakers are. You read about them in the papers. They embezzle, commit adultery, prideful, boasters, etc., etc.

But even in orthodox Churches you find them. And the Session has to deal with that from time to time.

But in Churches there are also Covenant-Keepers. There are many people in our Churches who are not without sin, but they confess their sins. They have learned to pray the Lord's Prayer--"and forgive our sins as we forgive others." They pray that sincerely. And the Lord hears that prayer and He forgives their sin for the sake of Jesus. They sing Ps. 44:1? "All this has come upon us, but we have not for gotten Thee, and we have not dealt falsely with Thy Covenant." They can actually say that. They are covenant-keepers, the Lord's treasured possession. And Paul addresses them as "saints." And he would also say "to the saints at Westminster Theological Seminary,"

They are people who delight in the Law of the Lord. Cf. Ps. 1:2, now in the context in which that psalm was written, that delight was in the first five books of Moses, at least that.

Because in that Law they read about the mighty things God has done to save His people from their oppression. And the light God gives in the midst of pagan darkness. These people who say Ps.1 under the New Covenant, they have not only the Law of Moses and the record of the mighty acts of God under the Old Covenant. But they also have the Torah of the Gospel. They have the first four books of the New Testament. And there in that Law of the Lord, they read of the mighty things God has done to save His people from their sins in Jesus Christ. They read there how Jesus taught His people to live for God in the midst of pagan darkness. They read the Sermon on the Mount. And they experience that as the gospel of the Kingdom. So this distinction obtains today.

Now the covenant people have always had a task to do. In the Garden there was the Cultural Mandate to replenish the earth and to subdue it. And so we have to ask--What is the task of the covenant people for today? Well, certainly it includes the Cultural Mandate (more later). But in view of the fact that that Cultural Mandate functions now in a situation not the same as it did in the beginning, where the whole race was attuned to doing the will of God. And there was no distinction between the Righteous and the Wicked (because there were no wicked). The situation is different now. There is a distinction between the Righteous and the Wicked. So there has come in between the Cultural Mandate and Man another mandate. And that is the Evangelistic Mandate. The task of God's people to overcome that distinction between the Righteous and the Wicked by converting covenant-breakers into covenant-keepers.

2. The Evangelistic Task of the Covenant People of God.

A. What is the Nature of that Evangelistic Task?

It is the work of restoration and renewal. It is the work of re-creation. Covenant-breakers have to be transformed into covenant-keepers.

But creation is the work of God alone, cf., Gen.1; Job 38-42. God did not consult with man but He created sovereignly according to His own will. So it is also in the Re-creation. God re-creates according to His sovereign purpose. And thus we speak of Election and Predestination. He creates by His own power and we speak of Regeneration.

Eph.2:10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." And those are the two words you find in Gen.1. "Workmanship" cp. עֲשָׂה, "creation" cp. בְּרָא. We are the New Creation, we are God's New Creation.

Remember that I said a day or two ago, that Israel was God's creation. "It is He that has made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture." That was the creation of Israel and now the creation of the New Covenant.

In Gen.1 God spoke and He created. The recreation is brought to pass in the same way. God speaks from heaven and a New Creation comes into existence. God called from heaven and Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees. He went out not knowing where he was going. But he was being re-created by the Word of God.

God also speaks to men today. And He speaks a creative

word today. But He does so pre-eminently through the instrumentality of His Son. Cf. Heb.1:1-2. And the Son has appointed ambassadors to speak in His name. So that God's word of creation is spoken now through men who are appointed to that, being gifted by God. And these men are spoken of as covenant-partners with God in the work of re-creation. Cf. II Cor.6:1 "And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain."

God accomplishes His work through means. To us has been committed the task of Evangelism. He has made us to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ. But just as God is the Creator, and God alone. Even recognizing the place we have in the work of evangelism. The glory of the New Creation must go to God alone. That comes out in a remarkable way in I Cor.3:9 "For we are God's fellow-workers; you are God's field, God's building." We can sow the seed but it is God who gives the increase.

Now under the Old Covenant there was no Evangelistic Mandate, no missionary enterprise. Now there were aliens who came in, to be sure. They were to be treated well. Israel was to remember that she was once an alien in the land of Egypt. But God did not promise to do for the Nations what He did for Israel.

Well, why was there no missionary enterprise in the Old Covenant? Well, fundamentally because Israel had no good news to give to the Nations. There was no life-giving word to be spoken prior to the coming of Jesus Christ. But now that Jesus Christ has come, that Life and Immortality have been brought to light. Now we have Good News to give to the Nations. And therefore the Good News goes out to the Nations in terms of the missionary enterprise of the Church. Now there is a word to bring back to the Nations, the Word, Jesus Christ.

Why load up the Nations with the Law of Moses when it did not do Israel any good? Fundamentally, in terms of what Jesus brings, in the light of what Jesus brings, we do not do that. We don't make the Nations first of all Jews in order to make them Christians. They come directly to Jesus Christ. In Him Life and Immortality have been brought to light.

I would say that, in light of the Evangelistic Task that, we as believers in Jesus Christ are One-Worlders. We believe in One World. But under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. And we are also firm believers in the United Nations. But the headquarters is not in New York City, but it is in Jerusalem. In the New Jerusalem is the HQ of the United Nations.

And we are to disciple. Not simply by preaching with a view to repentance and faith. But also with a view to baptizing the Nations. Disciple the Nations and baptize them (cf., Matt.28:19). And baptism is the mark of discipleship. It marks out the people of God in this world, just as circumcision did under the Old Covenant. Baptism is a sign and seal of union with Christ. In Romans 6 it is the sign and seal of deliverance from death in sin to newness of Life. Why did the Jews who were circumcised and lived faithfully within the covenant, why did they have to be baptized? Because the transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. They had specifically to identify themselves and

to be identified with Jesus Christ and not simply with bulls and goats. Baptism then marks the transition from death to life, as it did for Israel(cf. I Cor.10:1-2). After Israel is baptized in the Red Sea there begins a period of instruction. The Lord gives His Law on Mt. Sinai. So also, Jesus commands us not only to baptize, but to 'teach the Nations all things whatsoever I have taught you. And you see the sequence: you are identified with Christ, and then you are trained to be what you are in Christ. So that Evangelism then, as conceived of in the New Covenant, just as in the Old Covenant, is not a once and for all matter of making a single decision at a particular time. But Evangelism is to be set in Christ's perpetual Catechism Class. You never graduate from that Class. And the goal is the creation of the Church, the people of God. In which, God is openly acknowledge and His Lordship is respected.

Ps.147:2-3 "The Lord builds up Jerusalem; He gathers the outcasts of Israel. He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds." Transposed into N. T. categories, you hear Jesus saying--"I will build My Church"(Matt.16:18). And the psalm simply anticipates that. Or, we can say, Jesus word builds on that O. T. theme.

So, a Missionary Mandate has been given. And that Mandate obviously centers on the proclamation of Jesus Christ as the Savior(cf. Lk.24:47; Mt.28:19f). The Good News is not for one Nation, but for all the Nations. Because Jesus is the atoning sacrifice, He is the propitiation. Not only for our sins but for the sins of the whole world. Now that is not a denial of the definitiveness of the Atonement, as we shall see. But it is a recognition of what is true in the New Age, as compared with what has gone before. Our sacrifices are not for us only but they are for the sins of the world.

b. Who are the Subjects of that Evangelism?

Broadly they are covenant-breakers.

First and pre-eminently, evangelism is a matter of.

1) Our Address to Israel.

"To the Jew first, and also to the Greek." And you see, that is what is happening on the pages of the N. T. When Jesus came into the world He came to His own(cf., John 1:11). And Peter reflects on this in Acts 3:24-26. In verse 22 he refers to the prophecy of Moses. "And God raised Him up again, putting Him at the head of His church, since it was impossible for Him to be held by death. For David says of Him, 'I saw the Lord always before me; He did not let me be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue exulted; moreover my heart did not fail me, for I was always in the midst of the people; for I was not shaken.' These were the words of the Lord, which He said to His servant David, 'I will raise up David's successor, and I will set Him on His throne.' For Peter says, 'The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to him you shall give heed in everything He says to you. And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. And likewise

, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days." They were the sons of the covenant even in the midst of their apostasy. Peter addresses the Jews who had put Jesus to death. He calls them "God-killers." And he says to them, "You are the sons of the covenant, the heirs of the covenant, and," most remarkable, "God raised up His servant and sent Him to you first, to bless you in turning everyone of you from your wickedness." So that is where the missionary enterprise begins And this prophecy is fulfilled and Jesus is sent to the sons of the covenant, to turn them from their apostasy.

Now among the people there had been those, like Zacharius, Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, who were the faithful sons of the covenant. They had to come to Jesus because the blood of bulls and goats doesn't cleanse them from sins anymore than it does anyone else. They had to come in repentance to receive forgiveness of sins. And we see that happening already with the preaching of John the Baptist. Having been circumcised they must now submit to baptism as a sign of the New Covenant. For them, the faithful ones of the covenant, the transition is easy and natural. Because they believe Moses, they believe Jesus. Cf. John 5:46ff. Jesus is the fulfillment of their hopes and dreams(cf. Simeon's and Anna's speeches in Luke). But for other people the transition was radical and painful. And yet they come. Take a fellow like Matthew. He had played along with the Gentile overlords as a tax-collector. He had been an oppressor of the people of God, even though he was one of them. He would be called a "wicked man" in the Psalms. And yet, when Jesus called, he came. Think of how painful it was for Paul, to come. And he had to sell all of those pearls that he had amassed under the Old Covenant, for the sake of Jesus the pearl of great price. He did it only at the prompting of the vision of Jesus Himself. But for the vast majority of Jews the transition proved too hard. They did not like what they heard. Jesus preached like Isaiah had preached. They do not see, they do not hear, they do not understand. Matt.13 refers to the prophecy of Isaiah(6:9f). Our Lord denounces these covenant-breakers as hypocrites(cf. Matt.23). They pay lip-service to the covenant(cf. Ps.50). But they clean the outside of the cup. But that is all they do. They neglect the weightier matters of the Law. Instead of repenting they put the Son of God to death. They trample under foot the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified. And yet God is longsuffering and patient. Just as God sent His prophets to rebellious Israel, Jesus sends His disciples, His apostles to preach: first of all to the Jews, to the sons of the covenant. He sends His apostles to rebellious Israel First of all, Paul goes first to the Jews and then to the Greek. He begins his ministry in the synagogue. Peter also does the same. They each try to get a hearing with Israel. But then in Acts 28:24 "And some were persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe. And now see what Paul says in vss.26-28 "Go to this people and say . . . Isa. 6:9-10 "Let it be known to you therefore, that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they

will also listen." The eyes, the ears, the heart are closed--just like in Isaiah. Israel refused right up to the last to listen. But now Paul says, "We are going to the Gentiles. And the Gentiles will listen." And that is exactly what is happening in the history of the Church.

3-31-81

Thus the basic division in the human race is a division which is brought clearly before us in the pages of the O.T. But which also obtains to day. And that is the division between the righteous and the Wicked, believers and unbelievers, regenerate and unregenerate. Or, as I would prefer to put it--the distinction between Covenant-Keepers and Covenant-breakers.

That led us directly into a consideration of the Evangelistic Task of the Covenant People. An evangelistic task which devolves upon us now. Which was not the case prior to the Fall. But which devolves upon us now by virtue of the fact that covenant-breakers must be transformed into covenant-keepers. And so we considered the nature of the Evangelistic Task. Which was just that the transformation of covenant-breakers be into covenant-keepers, with all of the benefits that flow to them that keep covenant with God, according to God's promises.

b. The People to be Evangelized.

- 1) Jews-- Israel is God's ancient covenant people. They despised the privilege and the inheritance. They did not yield to the authority of the Lord God, and put His Son to death. But even so they are first in evangelistic outreach. But compare Acts 28.
- 2) Gentiles--ἔθνη. The nations of the world, the non-Jews. And that is to say, the peoples who were not from ancient times the covenant people of God. It goes to the peoples whom the Scriptures describe as aliens from the covenants of promise, who are without God, ἀθεοί (Eph. 2:12). The non-Christian nations and peoples of the world. And to them the gospel is preached. And it is relevant to them because the Bible does tell us, right from the beginning, that they stand under the wrath of God and His condemnation, as the children of Adam (Rom. 5). And in Jesus Christ there is now brought to them forgiveness and life through the Redeemer. Who is a propitiation, not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world. And there the comment is not on the extent of the Atonement, as we think of that theologically. But the background of that is of the unfolding of the program of redemption. Jesus is a Redeemer, not only for the ancient covenant people of God, who have now rejected Him by and large. But He is a Redeemer even for the hither to non-covenanted nations. And so these nations are now called upon to repent of sin. Just as Israel in its apostacy had been called upon to repent of sin. And to trust in Jesus and to flee from the wrath to come. Cf. Acts 17:30f. To flee from the wrath which is soon to come upon disobedient peoples.

Now this is what is in the biblical sense "foreign missions." Foreign Missions is not something which

is defined geographically. The Foreign Mission field is not a field where you have to have a passport to get there. It is mission to the non-covenanted peoples and nations of the world, the non-Jewish nations. And therefore we see in the Scripture the beginning of the Foreign Missionary Movement. And certainly in Acts, and then throughout Church History you see this. Now, you and I are beneficiaries of the Foreign Missions Movement. That is, most of us (some in the class may have Jewish parentage). We are not the natural branches but we are wild olive branches, that are now grafted into the root (cf. Rom. 11). And that root is God's covenant with Abraham, and the promise to bless the nations in his seed. As far as blessing is concerned there is therefore now no difference between the natural and the wild branches. No difference now. Both the natural and the wild that have been grafted in enjoy exactly the same privilege and blessing. That is the sense of Gal. 3:28 "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." We participate together in the same blessing through Jesus Christ. We have become one in Jesus. The middle wall of partition has been broken down. That Law of Moses was a wall of partition. The Gentiles did not have such a Law! The Jews had it, that was their privilege. That was a privilege to have the oracles of God. A great and inestimable privilege. But now that is not a distinctive privilege, but it is a privilege of all the people of God. The converse must also be born in mind. And that is to say, both the natural branches that are cut off and the wild branches that are never grafted in, there is also no distinction between them any more. There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile with reference to curse either. The branches that are severed from the root, whether they be natural or to be ingrafted, severed from the root they wither and die. They come under the condemnation of God.

So we have then, first of all, the Israel mission. Then, the Gentile Mission or the Foreign Mission.

3) The Children of the Covenant.

This is the evangelism of the Covenant Community. The covenant with Abraham was a covenant with him and his children. It entailed God's promise to be our God and the God of our children. And so, both Abraham and his seed received the promise of an inheritance. And both Abraham and his seed received the same identical sign and seal of the righteousness of faith (Rom. 4:11).

And both Moses and the other adults, together with their children, as a matter of fact, did inherit the Promised Land. They passed through the Red Sea and they entered up into the Promised Land.

Now the New Covenant is no less a covenant than is the historical covenants that preceded it. And that New Covenant is not a novelty that drops full-blown out of the sky. But it is patterned after and is a fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. And it is in the New Covenant, as in the Old Covenant, the promise is extended to believers and

to their seed. Cf. Acts 2:39

Now how then do we view our children as we view them as a child to be evangelized? What do we think of them?

a) Some say(note: I do not have Baptists in view at this point in the discussion)-- they are to be presumed to be unregenerate, as non-Christians. The fact that they are in the Covenant only means that they hear more Bible stories than do other children. Because their parents read the Bible at the table and maybe have family worship. But they are no nearer the Kingdom of God really than anybody else who is outside of the Kingdom. So we must presuppose them to be unregenerate. And therefore they have to be evangelized and brought to conversion just like anyone ~~other~~ heathen idolater. That is one way to look at them.

b) Others say-- they are to be presumed regenerate, already converted, as Christians. Until such a time as the opposite appears to be the case. When they grow up and throw over the traces, then we will see that our presumption was misplaced. But meanwhile we can simply presume that they are regenerate.

But...

c) Neither is right. Either as to a biblical position or by what should be called Reformed. God does not ask us to view our children, as objects of evangelism, in terms of presumptions. He does not ask us to live by presumptions. Either to presume that they are unconverted or to presume that they are converted. He teaches us what He has always taught us from the very beginning. And that is to live by promise, not by presumption. And what He tells us is, that the promise is to us and to our children. We see our children therefore as the heirs of the promise. They are in covenant with God and they receive the sign of covenant membership. Under the Old Cov. that was circumcision, under the New Cov. it is baptism. It is a sign and seal of covenant membership and therefore a sign and seal of God's promise to His people. He has promised to be our God and the God of our children. He has promised us thus, therefore eternal life.

Now we simply have to believe God's promises. That is not a burden that is a privilege, to believe what God has promised us. The heathen who are outside of the Covenant, who have nothing to do with the Covenant, they have no such promises, neither they nor their children.

The practical implication is not therefore when you have Sunday School or Daily Vac. Bible School, that therefore you take the children of the Covenant and set them on the one side and the others on the other side as pariahs. You might do so for pedagogical reasons. They may not have heard all the Bible stories that the children of the Covenant have heard. But instead read Deut. 10:18-19 "He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt."

That has a great deal to say you see, about our attitude

tude towards the aliens of the commonwealth of Israel, who come in to profit from ~~the~~ teaching that we are able to give them. We are to love them and to remember that we too were aliens and strangers in the land of Egypt. And therefore we are to love the strangers and seek to incorporate them into the people of God.

But as I said a moment ago, the promises are to be received ~~in~~ faith. And therefore we are to teach men and women, converted adults, to persevere in the faith. So also we are to train our children, as the sons and the daughters of God, to trust in Jesus for forgiveness and eternal life. We are to train them so that they ~~un~~derstand perfectly well, that by nature in Adam they are covenant-breakers and therefore liable to the wrath and condemnation of God. But in Jesus Christ they have received the promise of eternal life. And therefore we train them to trust in Jesus and to walk in the ways of our Lord; in accordance with the Great Commission--disciple them, baptize them, teach them to observe ~~all~~ things that Jesus has commanded. Cf., also Heb.10:36 "For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised." We in the New Cov. have a promise and we are to teach and train our children just as we teach and train adults to persevere and to endure, with a view to the inheritance of that promise.

And this is the way in which ~~what God has~~ promised is received. We teach and train our children to pray, "Our Father who is in heaven . . .", because He is their Father in heaven. And we teach them to pray, "And forgive us our sins . . .". For we know that they struggle with sins and they need the forgiveness of God. And therefore they must go to God for forgiveness.

We also warn our children as they grow up. Just as we warn adults: if you live according to the sinful nature you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live (cf. Rom. 8:13). The congregation of the people of God are warned. The foundation for that warning/exhortation is, of course, the gift, the promise that we have in Jesus Christ. For such living by the Spirit is not forthcoming out of the flesh but it is the gift of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ.

So then, the children are full-fledged members of the Church of Jesus Christ. And as such, they are to be treated and respected as such. And you will understand that they are to be respected, if you remind yourself that the privilege of martyrdom is not reserved for adults only. The privilege of martyrdom is theirs also.

4) The Covenantally Disloyal.

The ~~בְּנֵי הַבְּרִית~~, the sons of the covenant, the heirs who are disloyal. That expression, very interesting, I think I mentioned it before, now I will say more about it.

Acts 3:25 Christ-killers and yet you are the sons of the ~~prophets~~ and the covenant.

Well, there are many people who are walking around who are sons of the covenant. And the sad truth is that not all the sons of the covenant heed the exhortations and the warnings of the Covenant.

outline
positively
corrected

There are many who apostacize and rebel. They forsake the paths of the fathers. We see that repeatedly in the history of the Old Covenant. And we who live under the New Covenant are to read that history and are to be warned by that history. The warning is to be taken very seriously. Cf. I Cor. 10:1-12 Paul appeals to the history of Israel going through the Wilderness. Now these things are written for us. And so in the New Church of Jesus Christ, if all things are done in good and proper order, we sing Ps. 78:1-8. Now that is what we do. We teach our children the songs of the O. T. And we take Catherine Vos Bible Story Book or Marian Radius The Tent of God and we go through that chapter by chapter. And when we get finished we start all over again. And we inculcate those stories, the stories of God's dealings with His people.

And we teach our children to appreciate the fact that God was kind and generous and good and gracious to His people. But when they rebelled against His goodness and His kindness, God punished them. And we learn from that that God will punish us also if we are unfaithful. And so the children are taught to think covenantally.

And they think covenantally when that history, that Bible history, is rehearsed again and again. So that when they get to seminary and have to take the Bible Exam of 150 questions, they get 145-- at least! Because those stories are part and parcel of their lives, their existence. As stories and not as fiction obviously. But as historical accounts.

And the training in that way, in the knowledge of the Scriptures, is just covenantal loyalty. And there is no substitute for it. And if you do not get it in your youth, it is hard to make up for it later on. Yet it happens that, in the U.S.A. and in other places as well, we see Apostacy. We see rebellion. We see parents who do not train their children, and teach their children the stories of the Bible. And we see children grow up who might as well grow up in the midst of a non-covenanted nation.

You see, I look at our nation as a Christian nation. Most of our people have received the sign of the covenant. But it is a Christian Nation which is in a state of rebellion and apostacy. Analogous to what we see in Israel. And the judgement of the Lord weighs all the more heavily upon us because we have wasted our privilege. And we have just seen it in the last day or two* in what happens to us, with the judgement of the Lord upon us. For our failure to be what the people of God are supposed to be. Well in that situation we have a missionary task to perform. A mission to the rebellious and the apostate among the people of God. It is analogous to the mission of the prophets in ancient Israel. That is why we can read and gain so much from the Prophets. The Prphets were prophecyng the word of God to the people of God. And we need prophets in our day in the U.S.A. Who will prophecy the word of God to a rebellious and apostate people?

*referring to an attempt on the life of Pres. Reagan

Cf. Mal. 4:6 "And He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."

We preach like John the Baptist to prepare the covenanted but disloyal people for the coming of the Day of the Lord. And He will come with His winnowing fork in His hand, and He will judge. And He will not spare the sons of the covenant who are living in ignorance and rebellion against the Lord of the Covenant.

Now that is what the Bible means by "Home Missions". Home Mission is not pre-eminently a geographical matter. But it is mission to the covenantally disloyal in our midst. And we have a very serious obligation. And I think by and large our Churches are perceiving that. And a great deal of effort is being put into the work of "Home Missions", and rightly so.

There are many theories of missions and many ways of seeing it. But, may I suggest to you, at least a biblical way of looking at the mission field is in terms of the unfolding of the History of Redemption. To the Jew first and also to the Greek. The promise is to you and to your children. But if you disobey then I will punish you. And so we have an obligation to minister to the covenantally disloyal as well.

4-2-81

3. The Cultural Task of the Covenant People.

The covenant people of God have an Evangelistic Task. And everyone in the kingdom shares in that task, to a greater or lesser extent, or in some way or other. But not all share in that Evangelistic Task in the same way. As we are told, not all are prophets, apostles, teachers, elders or deacons, etc. And there are many and varied gifts. And, as the gifts are recognized, so the brethren exercise those gifts with recognition. And some become office-bearers, but not all. But in addition to those kinds of gifts, there are other kinds of gifts that are given to the people of God.

Some are gifted to be lawyers, doctors, cabinet-makers, farmers, businessmen, etc. And that is to say, not all men are called. Not all believers. not even all enthusiastic believers are called to work, as we say, to specifically Christian work. But there are many callings in the Kingdom of God. But there are other callings which are not specifically Church work. Callings not specifically to be office-bearers. These other callings are no less an expression of the covenantlife of the people of God. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof"(Ps. 24:1). Also cf. Ps 115:16.

The original task given to man was the task to rule over the earth for the glory of God. To subdue it for God's glory. To explore that earth, you could say the cosmos (our power to explore has surely expanded), it is our task to understand the work of God's creation. To explore it, to understand it and use its resources for the benefit of man.. God has given the earth to us. But in using this for our benefit we are also using them for the glory of God. Or, to put it more broadly: the Evangelistic Task makes

covenant-keepers out of covenant-breakers. But covenant keeping does not bypass the original purpose for which man was created. It is not as if though having created us, having fallen into sin, we are now restored simply to a heavenly inheritance, which completely bypasses the original creation. Redemption does not bypass creation. We are restored to covenant fellowship in order to be the covenant people of God on this earth. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven." That is our prayer, our steadfast prayer. And it ought to be our zeal to see that prayer realized. And as we want to see it realized we can pray that prayer sincerely.

So then, the basic Reformed vision that all of life is "religious." Not just our involvement in worship, in cultic expression of our communion with God through prayer and praise, and submission to the reading and speaking of God's word. Not just evangelism in the narrow sense, of making the gospel known to those who are outside of fellowship with God. Not just the Diaconate, works of mercy. They are, to be sure, to be done in obedience to the word of God. They are religious works. But all of life is religious. And all of life is to be lived in communion with God. In conscious communion and union with God.

And you can appreciate that, the dimensions of that, when you perceive how different God's treatment of His covenant people was from those people round about. It was characteristic of the religions round about the covenant people to have numerous altars and places of worship. And the people of God were misled on that point. And thought they were doing God a favor when they did something similar. Or, certainly even their rebellion, the temptation to set up groves or to set up centers of worship in many different places. But the Lord had but one place of worship. And as we see the story developing, that was in Jerusalem. Which the people of God who were near visited often but those who were further away several times a year.

Does that mean then that they were less religious because they didn't involve themselves in the formalities of the Temple worship? NO, I think that we are given thereby to understand just how thoroughly religious everyday life was for the ancient people of God. They did not have to make weekly treks to Jerusalem in order to be religious. But every bit of life was religious. And it was all lived in conscious cultivation of communion with God.

All of life is under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Cf., A. Kuyper's address on "Sphere Sovereignty." He says, "There is not a square inch on the whole terrain of our human life; over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not say--It is Mine!"

Now that has implications, certainly then, for the way in which we understand our calling in the world. And the way in which the people of God, to whom we minister, understand their calling. But it also has a bearing upon the way in which we understand our calling in the Home. And again, the way in which we understand our relationship to our covenant children in particular. Our children just because they are the children of the covenant. And because they are to live every moment in conscious covenant relationship to God. And are to understand and to use all the resources which God has deposited in His creation for His

glory. Our children obviously have to have a Christian Education. Not only in Sunday School, but in Monday School and in Tuesday School, etc. Wherever they are to be found they are to receive a Christian Education under the Lordship and conscious devotion to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

It seems to me that if we are serious about the extension of the Kingdom, not only through space, horizontally, but also in time, throughout the generations. Then we must not forget that time dimension. We are not the first generation to live on this earth and we are not the last either to live on this earth. If we are serious about the extension of the Kingdom through time then that is going to be a major factor in the cultivation of our own ministries. Our encouragement of the people of God in their commitment to have Christian Education. You know that such education is effective for the spread of the Kingdom of God. If it were not effective it would not encounter the opposition that it is encountering.

The work that they (covenant children) do in this world has to be done consciously in obedience to Jesus Christ. Remember the situation in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. There man had a cultural task. But a cultural task in the midst of which was the command not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. A strange command in and of itself. But a command which served to bring to man's consciousness that all of his life was to be lived in conscious response to the Word of God. Every aspect of living is to be lived in conscious response to the word of God. And that is what has to be cultivated in Christian Education. That we are responding to the word of God. And Jesus says, "These are Mine." And we have to train them to be God's children.

And if we hand the covenant youth over to the idols of the Age to be educated the Church is simply committing spiritual suicide. You don't ask the foxes to guard the chicken coop. It is not that we are training covenant people to be a super-race. Not expecting them to add columns of numbers faster than non-covenant children. Although we ought to teach them Math, Reading, etc, so that they are literate. They are not expected to perform heroic feats. It is not heroics in that sense that we are looking for. But they are to be trained as simply and as naturally to walk in the covenant as God's people for God's glory. Cf. Micah 6:8 "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

And the home and the school cooperate with that work of training, Christian training. And that training which is as broad as the Sunday School and the Day School, contribute both to the Cultural and the Evangelistic Tasks of the Church. We are zealous to see people added to the Church from the outside. I do not want to minimize or undercut that zeal one bit. And I rejoice in it. And I think Reformed Churches in our day, have appreciated that thrust. More so now than has been the case in times past. And we need to appreciate and rejoice in that. It is all right and proper.

But we have also to maintain and preserve the covenant youth for the people of God. We have to teach them to live in communion with God. To marry within the covenant. And

to raise their children consciously in covenant obedience with God. And then as we do it, that basic division(covenant-keepers and covenant-breakers) will become progressively more manifest in the world. The antithesis will be sharpened up. But at the same time the Lord God will be glorified by His people.

4. The Hope of Success.

We have seen something of the covenant task of God's people. What the covenant people have to do. And now it is natural for us to ask--"If that is the job we have to do is there any hope that the job can be done?"

Here we have once again to think of the distinctive character of God's covenant. God's covenant has TWO SIDES: Obligation--we are brought into covenant relation with God to discharge a certain obligation. And we have seen the two-sided character of that obligation since the Fall: Evangelistic and Cultural Endeavour. The other side is PROMISE or BLESSING--God promises eternal life. Do we have any hope of eternal life? We most certainly do! Because God has promised it. And we have but to receive that promise in faith.

But God also calls upon us, as His redeemed people, to walk in His ways. Just as He took Israel out of Egypt, redeemed Israel by His sovereign grace. Israel had but to receive that redemption in faith. Simply walk through the Red Sea on dry land, straight up into the Promised Land. So also, we who have received redemption are now taught to walk in His ways. But He has also promised to crown that evangelistic and cultural work with success.

We have but to receive that promise in faith and act accordingly. And that means praying for the blessing which God has promised to give. As well as discharging the duties which He has, in His grace and compassion, given to us to do.

Jesus Christ has promised--"I will build My Church."

But, it is true. It is an echo of Ps.147:3 "The Lord builds up Jerusalem," Transposed into the N. T. Jesus doesn't say, "I will tear down My Church, or destroy or undermine My Church." And we have but to believe that promise and to rest upon it and to act accordingly. And as we believe that promise, and as we pray in accordance with that promise. Then we are able to call upon men, to call them to faith and repentance in the full expectation that they will believe. That they will believe and repent. "The Gentiles will listen", says the Apostle Paul. And not only will they listen, but Paul also indicates in Rom.11 that the listening of the Gentiles will provoke God's ancient people to jealousy. Christ has promised to reign until all His enemies have been subdued(cf. I Cor.15:25). We have but to believe that Christ will reign until all His enemies have been subdued. Even the enemy powers that control so much of our lives: social, economic, political power; which have such a devastating influence in our lives. These powers, in so much that they are opposed to the Kingdom of God, they will be subdued by Jesus Christ. For He has promised to reign until His enemies are subdued.

And therefore we go to work everyday with the confidence that our labor, even the labor of this day, is not in vain

in the Lord. And each and every member of the Kingdom of God must see his place in that building project as indispensable to the realization of the goal. There is not a single member of the Kingdom whose work can be dismissed, whose work is not necessary. And that is part of the cultivation of the mentality of the covenant. That each one sees his contribution as indispensable to the realization of the goal that is set before us.

"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." We make that our prayer. Now prayers are effectual if they are prayed in faith. Do we believe that God will bring^{it} to pass, as we have prayed so frequently? As you think of that prayer heaped up throughout thousands of years before the Throne of Grace. Will God answer that prayer in the dimensions in which we offer it to Him. Now I do not mean to say that Satan is not a powerful and relentless foe. He is. And we have to be aware of the cosmic dimensions of the struggle in which we are engaged. It is not a struggle between flesh and blood. It is a struggle among principalities and powers. And we are participants in the cosmic dimensions of that struggle. A struggle between Christ and Satan for Lordship in this world. And we should not underestimate the power and the influence of the enemy. He can even perform signs and wonders and miracles, and he can lead many astray--even the Elect if that were possible. And yet may I suggest to you that we should not be dazzled by the power of Satan. That we begin to suffer a kind of spiritual paralysis. It sets in when we are dazzled and so overwhelmed by Satan's power that we are seemingly unable to respond to it. We should not stare ourselves blind by looking at Satan and his accomplishments. Because, after all, we do not believe in Satan. We believe in Jesus. That is very basic.

But the Bible tells us to look to Jesus the author and the perfecter of our faith. Jesus has commissioned us, not simply to preach the gospel, which He certainly has. But the Great Commission is not discharged until men are actually disciplined. The Great Commission is not simply to preach the gospel to all men, but to disciple the Nations; baptizing them and teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded.

And again the question is--Will the Church discharge the Great Commission? Well, we certainly have to pray and work for that end--the disciplining of the Nations. And we can do that with a sense of confidence because what is at stake is not simply our ability. Or more profoundly, not our ability at all. But what is at stake is Christ's own authority: "All authority is given unto Me in heaven and earth, therefore go and disciple." It is the authority of Christ which is at stake. His power and therefore His honor is at stake. As in the Old Covenant, remember when Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt. And they rebelled and the Lord God was about to destroy them in the Wilderness. Moses pleaded with the Lord God. And he said, "Lord, if you punish Your people now, then the heathen will say--'You were able to bring them out of Egypt, but You were unable to take them up into the Promised Land. You were not able to do what You said You would do. It is Your honor that is now at stake in the way in which You respond to what Your people have done.'"

Well, it is the Lord's honor that is now at stake in the task which He has given to the Church to do. And if the Lord's honor is at stake, then, can we expect anything less than that the job will be done?

After the fall into sin the burning question is--Can God have a people for His own possession, who will spontaneously do as He commands, will be His covenant people? And the answer is--YES!!!, He can do that by His sovereign power, He will sovereignly bring it about that He has a covenant people who spontaneously respond to Him.

And you see, He will bring it about. But it will be very costly. It will cost nothing less than the death of His only beloved Son. But He will bring it about. And you see we have that confidence as we approach the task. We are often hesitant and doubting, because we think it is our task, that we must do it.

But, although we can not absolve ourselves from responsibility(I hope that is clear from what I have said?). Yet at the same time, as we think covenantally. We think not only in terms of command, so that covenant response is simply WORKS in some legalistic sense. But as we think covenantally, then we understand that the obligation never devolves upon us apart from sovereign promise that God will bring it to pass, that which He has commanded us to do. And therefore Paul says, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

So, in the discharge of the covenant task, we have not only the Obligation, but we have also given to us the other side of the covenant, the Promise of the Covenant, and the hope of Success.

III. The Person of Christ.

Introductory remarks by way of orientation.

We began our course with a consideration of the Plan of Salvation. And there we learned that man's redemption is wrought out and applied according to God's eternal plan and purpose. Man the sinner is totally unable to help Himself. And so redemption, if it is to be enjoyed at all, must be enjoyed as wholly the gift of God.

Secondly, God's plan of salvation is wrought out and applied in history as covenant grace. And covenant redemptive grace presupposes man's creation in covenant with God, and his fall into sin. Which can be defined as covenant-breaking.

Redemption then, on that background, entails not the bypassing of that covenant, union and communion, but the restoration of covenant union and communion with God. Which is nothing less than life from the dead!!! It contemplates also the consummation of privilege and blessing in the life to come. Eternal life which is promised to us who are in covenant with God.

Now thirdly, as to the way in which God accomplishes and applies His redemption in Jesus Christ. As we said a moment ago, man can do nothing to secure the annulment of judicial condemnation (that is a technical way of saying "forgiveness"). But over against that, Jesus forgives sin because He has borne the penalty of sin. But next to that, we also observed, that man can do nothing to restore life to himself. But Jesus imparts life. Because He not only died for our sins, but He is also risen from the dead. And with this the Elect come to share in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ.

And we have spoken of all of that, to a certain extent. But now we have to go into somewhat greater detail. This particular course deals with the accomplishment of redemption. And then, Doctrine of the Holy Spirit deals with the application of redemption. So now our focus is on the accomplishment of redemption.

And that redemption which flows from the plan of God, is wrought out in terms of a covenant arrangement. That redemption is accomplished by a Mediator, a mediator between God and Man (cf. I Timothy 2:5). Jesus Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant (cf. Heb. 12:24; 9:15; 8:6). That is the connection between this topic and the previous topics. We move from the covenant to the presentation in Scripture of Jesus as ὁ Μεσίτης, the Mediator. The One through whom the blessings and the benefits of the covenant are wrought out and come to us. As Mediator of the New Covenant, Jesus is also the Surety, or Guarantor--Ὁ Ἐγγύς. Cf., Heb. 7:21-22. Because of the oath Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. And the superiority of the New Covenant arises from the superiority of the Mediator and the Guarantor of that Covenant.

As you read through Hebrews, and ask the question "Why is this covenant better than the Old? The answer is in terms of the Mediator Himself. The superiority of the Mediator, the Guarantor. The one in whom all the promises of the covenant are Yea and Amen. Our study therefore, now focusses in on the Mediator. And first of all, it focusses in on the Person of the Mediator (Topic III).

Now there is a major strand of thought in the professing Church, which finds the whole of redemption bound up in the Person of Christ. In this sense, that the Incarnation is our redemption. That is; in the Incarnation, God unites Himself to man in order thereby to unite man to God. And that union is conceived of pre-eminently in terms of the Incarnation. God condescends to the level of man, in order to raise man to the level of God.

All sorts of variations, refinements, and nuances on that theme.

In Roman Catholicism, for instance, the Sacramental System is designed to infuse supernatural grace into man, in order to raise man above the level of nature. Prior to the Fall you had the donum superadditum, the superadded gift of righteousness, which raised him above the level of nature. That gift is lost in the Fall. And now the Sacramental System is given to the Church. And through application to the Church you can receive infusion of supernatural grace. Which raises you up. And which, in effect, divinizes or deifies you. We become, in that sense, participants in the divine nature.

Now that idea, with all other variations that are associated with it, it is not confined to a Sacramentalist Church. Something of the same idea is found in Protestant Churches. Certainly in Protestantism of the nineteenth-century, and even within the sphere of the Reformed Faith. You had, for instance, J. W. Nevin who had something of this idea. In our own century, cf., the views of T. F. Torrance, and his brother James, to some extent.

But that conception of redemption is more metaphysical--man can be saved from his involvement in what is lower on the scale of being. And ultimately it is a conception which is rooted in Greek philosophy. It comes to expression in a variety of ways.

For instance, in a disdain for what is "merely human" in comparison to what is of the Lord. As an example, note the book of Mike Bushell Songs of Zion. While I am in agreement with the position of the book as a whole, there is one argument that constantly recurs. And that is to speak of hymns as "merely human compositions." That idea is simply contrary to the biblical thrust. There is nothing inherently wrong with being "merely human." God made us human beings. He did not make us evil. And the fact that a song is composed by a man does not make it inherently wrong. To be human is not somehow very low on the scale of being. That is contrary to the thrust of Psalm 8 itself: "God has crowned man with glory and honor."

Not Therefore we do not find our redemption in escaping from our humanity in order to become divine, in some sense or other. Rather the Reformed saw in the Incarnation, not our redemption, as such, but the preparation of the Mediator for His work. You see it so clearly in the Heidelberg Catechism, Qu.'s 12ff, a series of questions on the issue of, Why the God-man? Why do we need a Mediator who is both divine and human? And the point is that, we need such a Mediator, with a view to the work which He has to do. Because sin is not conceived of metaphysically, but it is conceived of ethically.

And therefore we talk now about the Person of Christ, His theanthropic constitution. With a view to an understanding of the work which He has been given to obtain for us. And the person and the work brings before us the Offices of Christ as Mediator. And so, in Part IV of the course the Work of the Mediator will be dealt with in terms of the Three-fold office. That is not an ecclesiological reference to ministers, elders, and deacons. But that of Prophet, Priest, and King. And we will be giving the bulk of our attention to the Priestly Work of Christ. As the one who bears the sins of His people. So we will be focussing in on the Atonement.

Finally; the work of the Mediator is wrought out in time, and therefore unfolds in a historical sequence. First of all, the humiliation of the Son of God, His Incarnation, His life under the burden of sin. Not that He Himself was sinful, but as the sin-bearer.

That culminates in death. That will be followed then by a consideration of His Exaltation in His Resurrection, Ascension, and Session at the right hand of the Father. And then from His place at the right hand of the Father, the Son sends forth His Spirit. Who will take of the things of Christ and apply them to us. And that leads us, in the next year, to the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and the whole doctrine of the application of the benefits of Christ, wrought out in His Death and Resurrection.

And our concern is now with the Second Person of the Trinity. But not the Second Person in relationship to the other Persons of the Trinity. That was our concern in the Doctrine of God course. Nor is our concern with His essential and eternal deity. All of that was dealt with in Theology Proper. But now we are looking at Christ as the Incarnate Son of God. And so we begin then with....

A. The Fact of the Incarnation.

1. Basic Observation-- the Incarnation presupposes the essential deity and eternal sonship of the Second Person of the Trinity.
The point is--the Incarnate One, the Theanthropic Person, did not begin with the Incarnation.
Gal. 4:4 "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law." The important phrase is "God sent forth His Son" (ἐξ ἀθέω τέκεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ). This is not the occasion to discuss the significance of the title "Son." But I suggest that it is the Ontological Sonship which is in view, here in Gal. 4:4. And it is this Son who is "Son." That is to say, the Second Person of the Trinity, who is prior to His incarnation, HE is sent forth. The Johanne terminology is familiar to us. For instance, John 1:1ff. The Word is God. The Word was with God. But the Word is God and it is this Word, the prior existence of which we do affirm.
This Word becomes flesh (cf. 1:14, also 1:2). This Son is with the Father and the Spirit. He is with the Father and the Spirit, Creator and Ruler over all. And it is this person, and none other, who becomes incarnate. So that Jesus did not begin to be with the Incarnation. That is very basic and is assumed in the circles in which we move.

2. The Eternal Son, in His specific identity as the Son of God, as God, began to be Man.

John 1:14 "and the Word became flesh"-- καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο .
As the Word He is God. He became flesh. And by flesh we do not mean simply body. But we mean by that everything that belongs to the human nature. The humanity of Christ is de facto defined by all that we see Him to be as man, in the pages of the Gospels.

So the "Word became flesh" means that God became man. Theologically stated--God the Son began to be what He eternally was not. From eternity He was not Incarnate. But He became incarnate. And that Incarnation is dateable, an historical event. It happened on a calendar day in past history. In fact we date our years, even in this day, in the midst of our secular society, we date our years from the birth of our Lord--"anno Domine."

But in any case He began to be the Son of God incarnate. Now when we say He began to be the Incarnate Christ, man, this does not mean that He ceased being God. He did not cease being God in order to become man. Or obviously, God was not transformed into man. Indeed, the Word became flesh. But that becoming was not by way of transformation. So that the Word

ceased to be the Word and began to be flesh. No, the Word became flesh by becoming something that it was not previously. The Word did not cease to be God. This is so clear in John 1:14. It cannot be emphasized enough. Also, cf., Romans 9:5 concerning the privileges of God's people, the Jews--". . . , from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." Jesus is from the Jews, according to the flesh. But at the same time "God over all" (). And He is then, and continues to be, God. He is God. But nevertheless there is the historical beginning of the Son of God as the incarnate Christ. God began to be Man.

3. The Uniqueness and Wonder of that Incarnation.

It can scarcely be grasped by any of us. Just that expression "God became man." God, all that is God, all that is essential to God as Creator and Ruler. God in all of the excellences of His perfections, became man. All that man is, all that is essential to His humanity, His creaturehood. The Creator takes upon Himself then the limitations of creaturehood without ceasing to be the Creator. And that is the inexhaustible and incomprehensible mystery of the Incarnation.

And you can see why it is problematic for the natural man. But what of course is greatly distressing is the denial of the Incarnation, now to be found in the professing Church. Note the Kasemann case. This is very serious business. But neither do we have the doctrine in our back pocket. Mr. Murray used to dwell on the stark contrast that is involved in the truth that God became man.

"The infinite becomes finite. The eternal enters time and becomes subject to its conditions. The immutable becomes mutable. The invisible becomes visible. The Creator becomes a creature. The sustainer of all becomes dependent. The almighty becomes weak and infirmed. The omnipresent becomes localized in time and place. The omniscient becomes limited in knowledge and apprehension"

And you see, those contrasts just bring before us the wonder of the Incarnation. And we could even extend it and say, "The immutable becomes mutable without ceasing to be immutable. The invisible becomes visible without ceasing to be invisible." And who can grasp that. And yet that is what is entailed in the wonder of the Incarnation.

4. Therefore the Incarnation of Jesus Christ entails Humiliation.

According to the Dictionary, "Humiliation" means--"a reduction to a lower position in one's own eyes, or others; a humbling." Cf., Phil. 2:8 "He humbled Himself"

--to humble or humiliate by assigning to a lower place or position; or by exposing to shame.

Now, what justifies us in using the word "humiliation." Well, in that series of contrasts mentioned above, there was no mention in that list of sin. Or of its consequences with reference to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. We spoke for example, of "the omniscient becoming limited in knowledge." Now the point therefore is--that even in a sinless world, Incarnation would have involved humiliation. Incarnation would have meant humiliation even under ideal conditions. Lutheran theologians do not always subscribe to that point because of their doctrine of the Communication of Attributes. In terms of which the attributes of deity are communicated to the humanity of Christ. And therefore becoming incarnate

does not necessarily, per se, entail humiliation, except in the context of sin.

But from a Reformed point of view, just because of the total discrepancy between God and His creatures, without in any way suggesting that being a creature involves you in evil, or sin. There is a discrepancy between God and His creation, a distinction between the two. The creation is dependent on the Creator. Such that, for God to become man, in the Incarnation, even apart from the context of sin, would have entailed humiliation. Cf., Gal.4:4 "born under the Law." Again you see, even in a sinless world, to be born under the Law would entail humiliation. Because what you have then, is the Law-giver coming under the provisions of the Law, which He gives. But obviously Gal.4:4 has more in view than that. It is a statement of the fact that that Law convicts men of their sin and misery. And therefore, for Gal.4:4 to say that Jesus was "born under the Law," is to appraise us of the fact, that His Incarnation is not in a neutral context. But it is incarnation in the context of sin. And so, that leads to the focus of His Humiliation.

There is Humiliation involved in becoming incarnate. That is, taking upon Himself the form of a man. But the focus, the depth of the Humiliation, comes clear when we see that the man, the human nature, which is taken upon Him, is a human nature which is, apart from Jesus Christ, a human nature involved in sin and transgression.

5. The Depth of Humiliation involved in the Incarnation, lies in that fact that it is Incarnation in the context of a sinful world.

4-7-81

It was into the world of sin and misery and death that the Savior came. In Scriptural imagery, Jesus came into the Wilderness where the sheep were lost, in order to find them and to restore them. Those sheep were separate from God, strangers outside of the city of God. Jesus in the depth of His humiliation went outside the camp to be crucified on the behalf of His sheep.

But even more than that, we want to note Romans 8:3 "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh." Jesus is incarnate not only in a sinful world, but is Himself in the likeness of sinful flesh. And it was at this point, that Professor Murray would say, "This is an expression which hovers on the brink of blasphemy."

That word "likeness" does not suggest to us the unreality of the flesh of Christ. It is not that He came in something "like" flesh. That is not the point. Because the confession that "Jesus is Lord" is the touchstone of orthodoxy (cf., I Cor.12:3). In Johannine terminology, the confession that Jesus came in the flesh is a confession of saving faith (cf., I John 4:2-3; II John 7). So that the reality of the flesh is beyond question. And to deny the reality of the flesh is the heresy of Docetism. The theory that Jesus had only the appearance of flesh or humanity, because it was impossible for Him to be truly man.

But when Paul says "in the likeness of sinful flesh," it is not the likeness of flesh that is in view. As though He were something less than fully human. The "likeness" referred to in Rom.8:3 has reference to the "sinfulness" of the flesh. In the likeness of sinful flesh. To say that Jesus was sinful would indeed be blasphemous. The word "likeness" is used

to avoid the suggestion that the flesh of Christ was sinful. He is in the likeness of sinful flesh. And nevertheless, Jesus came into the world, into flesh in the context of sin. And in the identity of flesh, which is in every other case sinful, He came in the likeness of sinful flesh. And more than that He was conceived and born of sinful flesh. Gal.4:4 says, "born of a woman"; Rom.1:3 the gospel concerning the Son of God, born of the seed of David according to the flesh." That seed was, in itself, sinful. That is to say, the line of David was in itself sinful. And the woman of whom Jesus was born, was inflicted with sin and depravity. She was not sinless. And so the focus in these verses is on the organic, genetic connection with the human race (more later: Virgin Birth and Mode of Incarnation).

We cannot suppress the connection that Jesus has with the human race. A race which is characterized by sin. And so we are saying that Jesus was born of a creature and partook of all the limitations of creaturehood. But more than that, He was born of human nature, afflicted with sin and misery. A sin and misery characteristic of fallen man. And so, sin and evil are the context and circumstance of His birth. And that fact serves to accentuate the humility which is involved in His conception and birth. He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. This ought to produce gratitude from us for His humiliation.

6. The Purpose of the Incarnation.

The humiliation involved in the Incarnation really points to the meaning of the Incarnation. The question that is raised at this point is the question that was raised by Anselm-- Why the God-Man? (Cur Deus Homo). And the Scripture helps us to see the answer to that question. Cf., Rom.8:3 ". . . and concerning sin . . ." So Incarnation is with reference to, and for the purpose of, Atonement. But precisely in terms of Rom.8:3 it is not atonement conceived, in a narrow sense, simply in terms of penalty bearing, with a view to forgiveness. But for sin He condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit (8:4). So that, Incarnation for the purpose of atonement must be conceived of rather broadly as having in view all that reconciliation to God involves. Including the condemnation of sin, as well as the bearing of the penalty of sin. Gal.4:4-5 "But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

In Rom.8:3 and Gal.4:4, the verses appealed to earlier, reflect on the humiliation--What is the purpose of that Humiliation? Both texts reflect on that and Gal.4:4-5 says Christ comes from the Father in order to redeem those who were under the Law. The purpose was to redeem those who were under the Mosaic System as a system. And it was under the distinctive provisions of that system that the Jews stood condemned. And God sent forth His Son, born under that system, in order that He might deliver His people from that system, in order that they might receive adoption. And we might say, everything that is entailed in their redemption.

Or, the blood of bulls and goats do not purge away sin. A different system was required. Namely a system centering on the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

Now, we have already said something about what is entailed in being made under the Law, as an act of humiliation. The Law-giver submits to the Law, God, who is the source of the Law, in a sense, cannot be subject to it, except by an act of humiliation. So Jesus submits now to the Law, to the tables of the Law written on stone. And the point is, that He was subject to it as that system promised life to obedience and curse upon disobedience. And the voluntary submission to the penalty of the Law, which is death--He was obedient unto death. And there we see the lowest point of His humiliation.

And then the purpose of His humiliation is most apparent--that He might redeem and sanctify a people for Himself. There are other passages that are relevant. Only two for now. Heb.2:14 "Since then the children in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil." And again you see, there is no room given to Docetism. But it is Incarnation with a view to the redemptive accomplishment. Heb.2:17 "Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." It was necessary (). Now 2:17 obviously has reference to the necessity of the atonement (more later).

But the point here is--that given the necessity of the atonement, there is also the necessity of the Incarnation. And therefore we may conclude, that the Incarnation is with a view to the Atonement. The discharging of the Mediatorial Office of Redeemer by Death and Resurrection. Now that is the consensus of Reformed thinking on that subject. That the Incarnation was with a view to the Atonement. It reflects the pervasive thrust of Scripture. And one need not deny that or challenge that pervasive thrust of redemption as the purpose of the Atonement. Even if one sees other purposes in it.

But as a matter of fact, there is no other view that claims the wide and pervasive biblical support as this one does. Appeal is sometimes made to passages of Scripture where some other end or purpose of the Atonement might be in view. Appeal might be made to I Cor.15:44-45. "It is sown an natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is a spiritual body also. So also, it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living soul.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit." Or, Ephesians 1:9-10 "He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth." 1:21-22 "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but in the age to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church," . . . Well, these verses do not suggest another purpose or end with the Incarnation, other than redemption. But really they are verses which reflect on the universal implications of the Incarnation. Precisely in the context of the redemptive work of Christ. All things do head up in Christ, who has redeemed the crown of creation, namely man, by His blood. And then you have Colossians 1:15-17 "And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation,

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."

And that passage surely reflects on the essential deity and therefore the Lordship of the one who became incarnate. But Incarnation, as such, is not an implication of those verses in Col. 1:15-17. They state truth which pertains irrespective of the Incarnation. But the Incarnation itself is with a view to the reconciliation of all things unto Himself by virtue of making peace through His blood (vss. 18-20). These verses do not deflect our thinking from that basic line--Incarnation with a view to Atonement/work of Christ. So the Incarnation itself is not the essence of our redemption. But it is with a view to our redemption.

Also, one or two additional thoughts.

2. The Incarnation is with a view to becoming the sin-bearer and has certain implications for Christ in the flesh.

He bore sin. And thus redeemed us. He bears the iniquity of His people in the flesh. Cf., Isa. 52:14 "Just as many were astonished at you. So his appearance was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." Have you thought about that? Appreciate the impossibility of reproducing in any art form reproduction what He bore or looked like. It is a depreciation. It is not beside the point either to reflect on the suffering of Christ in the flesh. We should not rush past. We have to recall that even the resurrected Christ bore the marks of His crucifixion. Thomas was able to see the nail prints in His hands and feet. Quite remarkable. That the resurrected Christ bore the marks of His crucifixion. That Christ is exalted in the body of His humiliation.

B. The Mode of the Incarnation.

We begin with a few observations about the...

1. Convergence of the Natural and the Supernatural in the Virgin Birth.

The mode of the Incarnation is called the Virgin Birth. The Virgin Birth is predicted in Isa. 9:14. And it is unambiguously fulfilled in Matt. 1:18, 20; Lk. 1:34-35. Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary.

Now the fact of the Virgin Birth is sometimes challenged on the ground of the infrequent reference to it in the Scriptures. These about exhaust the places where there is a reference to the Virgin Birth. But I would only suggest that the infrequency of the mention of the Virgin Birth is correlative to the clarity and pointedness with which the truth is stated. And therefore the Virgin Birth rightly is an article of faith. Though few in number these verses, are by no means obscure in their meaning. And so the Virgin Birth has entered into our Christianity. It is even an article among the Twelve Articles of the Apostolicum (Apostle's Creed).

Now in the Virgin Birth, it is the miraculous aspect of what happened that draws our attention. And that is quite understandable, right and proper. But at the same time we cannot suppress what is perfectly natural in connection with the Virgin Birth. And specifically, we have in mind the conception and growth of the fetus in the womb of the Virgin Mary. And not only that, but also the emergence of the infant Jesus from the womb of Mary.

I mention that because, after Nicea (325 A.D.), one encounters, as part of a growing attraction to Mary, and the cooperative role that she played in the redemptive process. One encounters the doctrine of the Virginitas in partu. That Mary was semper virgo. And therefore that Jesus was born utero clauso (closed womb). All of which are euphemisms to avoid saying what has to be said at this point. That is, that Mary was a virgin not only because she knew no man, But also that Jesus did not emerge from the womb through the birth canal. But in some other way.

That doctrine was rejected at the Reformation, by Lutheran and Reformed. It was observed that there was no Scriptural warrant for the Virginitas in partu. Or, as a matter of fact either for the Virginitas post partum. Jesus developed in the womb in a perfectly natural way and was born in a natural way, through the birth canal. There was no supernatural caesarean, no reference to it in Scripture. So there is in the birth of Jesus, which is a Virgin Birth, the convergence of what is natural and what is miraculous.

The Virgin Birth has its supernatural aspects, as we will observe in a moment, but it also has its perfectly natural complement or supplement. And it is essential to biblical piety that we do not suppress what is natural. Jesus is begotten by the Holy Ghost. But He is also of the Seed of David (Cf., Romans 1:3). And lineal descent from David is essential to His person, with a view to His office.

Now although we cannot suppress the natural, we also want to focus on the supernatural. And we can see the supernatural in three respects.

2. The Supernatural comes to expression in the Virgin Birth.

a. In the fact that Jesus was not conceived by a Human act of begetting.

Now the Apostle's Creed says that Jesus Christ "was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary". And that language is so familiar to us that we overlook the slight inaccuracy or imprecision of the translation. Strictly speaking, Jesus was not conceived by the Holy Ghost, He was conceived by the Virgin Mary. He was begotten or generated by the Holy Ghost. It is always the female who conceives, not the Spirit. So Jesus was both conceived by and born of the Virgin Mary. The Apostle's Creed's point was that Jesus was begotten by the Holy Ghost.

And so, Jesus was Virgin born. Mary was not impregnated in the usual way. It is the supernatural impregnation that constitutes the birth or Virgin Birth.

b. It is the Son of God that becomes Incarnate.

You see, the miracle of the Incarnation does not reside simply or solely in the fact that a human embryo or fetus was supernaturally begotten. If that phenomenon has occurred elsewhere or if it had occurred repeatedly in human history, we still would not have, what is designated by the theological term--Virgin Birth. Or, to put it another way--when you speak of the Virgin Birth, that Virgin Birth must not be reduced to the level of a biological oddity. In that sense, the Virgin Birth does not express what is at the heart of the Incarnation. The point is that it was the eternal Son of God who was conceived and begotten and born.

Now, to be sure, the supernatural begetting of Jesus is a

And it was natural or at least understandable, that in the History of the Church, very soon the idea would develop that the source of the propagation of sin, is the sexual act. And therefore the sexual act is itself a sinful thing. And from that you are led to the idea that, since Jesus was not born of Mary as the result of a sexual act. Therefore we can account for the fact that He was without sin. Well then, the idea is that the normal course of propagation is interrupted. And so, the inheritance of corruption is interrupted.

But that is not an adequate accounting of the sinlessness of Jesus. Because it discounts the natural connection that Jesus has with His mother. Or, what we spoke of as the "natural" in the convergence of the natural and supernatural in the Virgin Birth. And that connection to the mother is essential for the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, for the Incarnation. And by virtue of that connection, Jesus would be stained with sin, would He not? And NO, we cannot appeal simply to the virginity of the birth, to account for His sinlessness. John Murray was compelled to posit another supernatural act, in saying, that God simply preserved the fetus from the defilement of sin. It is rather simple but well taken. It is a preferable way of stating the point.

Now, let us suppose that Jesus had come by natural generation, by a birth that was not a virgin birth. God could have intervened to preserve Him from the stain of original sin. And if the Son of God could come from one natural parent (namely Mary), without the stain of original sin, then there is no reason, at least in the abstract, why He could not have come from two natural parents, without the stain of original sin. And as we said earlier, the Incarnation would be no less of a miracle, had He come from two natural parents.

And so, that compels us you see, to find the theological significance of the Virgin Birth elsewhere, than in the preservation from original sin. The point of the virginity of the birth of Jesus is not exhausted, or is not even to be accounted for, in terms of the preservation from original sin.

Jesus Christ is a son of Adam. And the genealogy of Lk.3 makes that clear. But He was not simply the son of Adam. But He was the Son of God. A Son of God different from the sense in which Adam was also the son of God (Lk.3:37). Jesus is the New Adam, the Second Adam. The Son of God in a distinctive way--the Last Adam. And as such, He represents a new beginning from God. And therein it seems to me, lies the theological significance of the Virgin Birth.

3. The Theological Significance of the Virgin Birth.

(Most has already been said, but I would like to expand on it a bit more.)

Why do we insist on the historicity of the Virgin Birth? On that miracle mentioned so infrequently in Scripture.

Well, it is not simply in order to maintain the infallibility and inerrancy of Holy Scripture. It is not simply that if we deny the Virgin Birth, then we are denying the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture. Now of course that is true. Why do we insist upon the historicity of the Virgin Birth? Well, it is not simply to account for the sinlessness of Jesus. We could have the sinlessness of Jesus with-

out the Virgin Birth.

The theological significance of the Virgin Birth resides in the supernatural intervention of God in human history for the salvation of His people. Salvation does not arise from the power of the flesh. It is not within the capacity of man to introduce his salvation into history.

Not in the sense that the Virgin Birth is a "sign" of that intervention. So that its value is chiefly noetic. So that once we see the fact, the basic fact that redemption is from above, we can then say farewell to the Virgin Birth as a biological oddity, or as an embarrassment to the Christian Faith. Not that it is simply a story with only noetic value.

But precisely in the historical fact, as such, God the Holy Spirit has intervened in the course of human history, in order to introduce salvation to His people. And looked at that way, the Virgin Birth, although mentioned infrequently in the NT, and prophecied in the OT at Isa.7:14; nevertheless, has a deep historical background.

The Virgin Birth has its background in the OT in the Theme of the Barren Woman. The legitimacy of that connection is given in Luke 1:46-55, the Magnificat. Because in that song Mary alludes to the song of Hannah. The barren woman who eventually bore Samuel. And compares her own experiences to that of Hannah (cf., I Samuel 1:1-2:11). She likens what God has done for her to what God did for Hannah.

Hannah's was not a miracle, a virgin birth. But it could be seen as an extraordinary providence. The covenant God had intervened in a dramatic way in history to perpetuate the covenant line. And that is the concern of Hannah. And it is answered with Samuel. And Mary sees in that an experience analogous to her own.

4-9-81

Behind the experience of Hannah lies the experience of Sarah. Now, humanly speaking, it was inconceivable that she would bear a son. And in spite of that she does bear a son. But before she bears Isaac, Hagar begets Ishmael, who is a child begotten and born in the power of the flesh. That is the way the Apostle Paul speaks of that effort of Abraham to achieve the realization of the promise. And the product is Ishmael. But Isaac, on the other hand, is the child of promise, a gift of God. Apart from the works of the flesh. Paul applies that to the effort to achieve salvation, which is really the realization of the promise, in terms of the works of the Law. The works of the Law are the works of the flesh, the effort of man in his own strength, to realize and achieve what God has promised to give as a sheer gift of His own sovereign grace.

Well then, the Lord God gives to Abraham a seed. And in that seed the nations of the earth are to be blessed. And, as you know, that seed is ultimately, Jesus Christ Himself. The power of God brings to birth Isaac, and ultimately the seed of Jesus Christ who is born by the power of the Holy Spirit. The sheer gift character of it is seen in Rom.4:19 "And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about one hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb?" . . . We are to see here, a euphemism almost, for impotence due to old age. And beyond that the barrenness coming after menopause. And yet, Sarah conceives and bears a son for Abraham. And again, that may not amount to a miracle comparable to the Virgin Birth. But from a biological point of view, it comes

pretty close to it. And there is at least an extraordinary providence that is brought to pass here. And again, what we see is God intervening in human history to fulfill His promise. A promise which otherwise cannot be realized. And that promise is the source of our redemption. Not the power of the flesh. That is the point of the contrast that Paul makes in Galatians in particular. That our redemption does not arise from the power of the flesh but is a matter of receiving a promise.

But also, Israel herself is, in her experience, compared to a barren woman. Cf., Isaiah 54 (which is strikingly on the background of Isa. 53 where the Atonement is in the foreground). Note vs. 1-3 "Shout for joy, O barren one, you have born no child. Break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed; For the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous than the sons of the married woman," says the Lord. "Enlarge the place of your tent; stretch out the curtains of your dwellings, spare not; lengthen your girds; and strengthen your pegs. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left. And your descendants will possess nations, and they will resettle the desolate cities." Israel the barren woman. And yet Israel will bear children. And will bear children far beyond the number that can be contained in the Promised Land. And so the house will have to be expanded, the tent stakes will have to be moved out further. And the whole earth will be filled with the children of the once barren woman. Israel, that land, will not be able to contain them because they will fill the whole earth (cp., vs. 3).

And when will that happen? Vs. 5 says, your Maker is your Husband. The Lord who created Israel will make Israel fruitful. And in a sense, the Lord God Himself will impregnate Israel. And Israel bears children to the glory of God. That prophecy is fulfilled with Pentecost. And the Lord God, in His Spirit, comes upon Israel, who until this point, had labored only to bring forth wind. But now, in the power of the Spirit, the barrenness of Israel is broken. And Israel gives birth to the Church by the power of the Spirit.

Now I suggest to you that that is the theological context of the Virgin Birth. Again, the point is--the salvation of Israel does not arise from any power inherent or intrinsic in Israel. In her power Israel had repeatedly failed. But now, in the power of the Spirit, Israel brings forth children. And that is the lesson that is taught in Genesis in the story of Abraham and Sarah. GOD gives salvation. And so, that which is born of Mary, by the power of the Spirit, shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. And His very name means "salvation." Salvation is from God. More than that, salvation is God Himself. God is our Savior. God with us, Immanuel.

And just as Jesus the Savior is born by the power of the Spirit, so are the sons whom God has given Him. The New Birth, regeneration, is not in the power of the flesh. It is not of bloods nor of the power of man (cf. Jn. 1:12-13). But by the power of the Spirit (cf., Jn. 3:1-8).

So I guess what I am suggesting to you is that the miracle of the Virgin Birth is not to be exhausted in its theological significance, in terms of the affirmation of the sinlessness of Christ. In fact, the Virgin Birth does not account for the sinlessness of Jesus Christ. But rather, the theo-

logical significance is found in the declaration that, the salvation which is in the Jews (cp. Jn. 4:22), is a salvation which is from the Lord (cf. 1k. 1:69". . ."). It is in the house of His servant David, born of Mary. But it is God who has raised up the horn of salvation for us, born of the Virgin Mary.

C. The Nature of the Incarnation.

1. When we say that God becomes man, the Word became flesh, that might be understood to imply a transformation or a transmutation of the divine into the human. And, as you know, there are people who hold the view that the Son divested Himself of certain divine attributes in order to become human. Or, that He exchanged divine attributes for human attributes. And that is the basic idea that lies behind various Kenotic theories of the Incarnation.

And the reference is to Philipians 2:7 and the verb *κεῖνω*. Modern translation is "He emptied Himself." And so you get the idea that the Lord divested Himself of divine prerogatives, privileges, in order to become human.

2. Now, as we approach that understanding, I would remind you of John 1:14. The "Word" which became flesh is the Word which is "God" (1:1). And the suggestion there is, that it is nothing less than God who became flesh. And the Incarnation is not set forth in this passage in terms of a subtraction of deity. Or, in terms of a transformation. In vs. 14 we do not have suggested to us that the Incarnate Christ divested Himself of glory. To be sure, He left the glory He had with the Father. But He was not without glory--"we beheld His glory, glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And therefore, in vs. 18 "No man has seen God ~~at~~ any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." And in that verse, the Son is identified as nothing less than God. The only begotten God (Son) has explained Him. And therefore His glory is not less than the glory of the *Λόγος*. It is the glory of God. And therefore when we have seen Him, we have seen the Father (cf., Jn. 10:29-38).

So that, in that passage, we are not led to think in terms of a divestiture of glory, or of deity. To be sure, the Savior comes in the flesh, He comes as the Messiah. And the inability to recognize Him for who He is, is not grounded in the fact that God not only revealed but simultaneously concealed. Which is typical neo-orthodox understanding of this language. But the inability to recognize Jesus is moral, ethical. It is the failure to repent at the coming of the Savior who came unto His own.

3. But the language of emptying, self-emptying, is found specifically in Phil. 2:6-7 "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men."

In vs. 6, "who, being in the form of God," *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ* = the existence form or specific character. Not that Jesus was less than God, or only the form of God. That is not the point. But it is to emphasize that His existence, His specific character, was that of deity. It is a matter of expression that emphasizes the fulness and the reality of His God head.

Note the present participle *ὄντα* -- "who, being in the form of God". Jesus is and continues to be the form of God. That condition, state, or existence, is not terminated by the action of the main verb. Not "having been the form of God" or "then

ceasing to be that". But "who, being the form of God," so that there is no suggestion of divestiture of the form of God when He takes upon Himself the form of a servant. Now, it is often thought that it is the equality with God ~~of which He divested Himself~~. But that is not given to us in the text. The point is--that being in the form of God He was equal with God. And equality is not a thing to be attained. But it is His intrinsically. He is GOD. And then the text goes on to say--ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν, "He emptied Himself" (ARV, RSV, NASV--which lends credence to a Kenotic Christology). But if it is translated that way, then the question is raised--What is it He emptied Himself? Answer--Of His deity, of attributes and prerogatives of deity, when He became man.

Well, before we adopt that particular perspective, we must take account of the use of the word κενών. Although it does mean literally "to empty," as a matter of fact, in the four other NT usages, it is not used in that literal way. But is used as "vain," "void," or "of no effect." Thus to insist on "emptied" would make it a unique usage in the NT. Why insist on a literal rendering here if not elsewhere? Why not adopt a meaning which is suitable to the context? The cognates are often also used in a non-literal sense. And those considerations would cause us to lean in the direction of adopting the meaning given in the AV--"He made Himself of no reputation." Or the NIV--"He made Himself nothing." That is to say, He did not make Himself the all absorbing and exclusive subject of thought, of attention, or of interest. He became absorbed in the thoughts and interests of others.

And you see, that is of a piece with the thrust of the context. For the main theme of the context is that we are to have the mind of Christ, we are to imitate the mind of Christ (cf. 2:5). What kind of mind was in Christ? It was the kind of mind that was dedicated to the task at hand. He made Himself of no reputation, but devoted Himself to the messianic work which was given to Him to do.

And so, that non-literal rendering of κενών, which is in harmony with the usage elsewhere in the NT, dovetails so precisely with the thrust of the passage. Beyond that, if we are to give a literal rendering to κενών, at this point, and insist on the translation "He emptied Himself," Then, the verb is a verb which cries out for a double accusative--"He emptied Himself of ____." But there is not. The second accusative, which is supplied, is arbitrary and unsupported. It would be better to adopt a meaning which is suited to the single accusative which we have--"He made Himself of no reputation."

And thus, beyond that, even more striking, as you go on through the passage, you notice that the action of the main verb, is an action which is defined not in terms of subtraction. But it is an action which is defined in terms of addition. Being in the form of God, He took to Himself a form, the form of a servant *μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν*. That is to say, He made Himself of no reputation, He humbled Himself. Not by divesting Himself of deity, or the prerogatives of deity. The Incarnation is not to be thought of in terms of subtraction. But "He humbled himself", by way of addition.

Or, as sometimes said--"being what He was, He took to Himself what He was not." And so, before He took to Himself a human nature, the Lord God, who was not incarnate, who did not have a human nature. But as a result of the Incarnation He did. So we have the Son of God making Himself of no reputation, humbling Himself, demonstrating a mind which we are to imitate. And taking to Himself the form of a servant.

Not something like a servant. He was a servant. So for these reasons, I suggest you stick to the AV or NIV. Rather than to a translation lending support to a Kenotic Theory.

D. The Hypostatic Union.

1. The Statement of the Doctrine.

The Incarnation, we could say, results in, or better, establishes the Hypostatic Union.

Hodge (II:380) has an admirable summary. Three points:

- a. Jesus was truly man. He had a perfect or complete human nature. And therefore everything that can be predicated of man as man (but not as fallen) can be predicated of Christ.
- b. Jesus was truly God. He had a perfect divine nature. And therefore everything that can be predicated of God as God can be predicated of Jesus Christ.
- c. He was one person. Not two persons but one. The same person who said "I thirst," also said, "Before Abraham was I am." One person who is truly God and truly man.

Hodge says--"This is the whole doctrine of the Incarnation as it lies in the Scriptures and in the faith of the Church."

That view, as summarized by Hodge, certainly embodies the doctrinal achievement of the early Church. Particularly I have in mind the Christological Controversies of the Third and Fourth Centuries. And I will not follow that controversy in detail here. The controversy reached a climax in the determinations of the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD). That definition became standard for Protestant Orthodoxy. But in Modern Theology it is a view which is regarded as far too static. And, so there is an attempt to redefine or go beyond Chalcedon, by an appeal to the historical dimension of revelation, an appeal to history. Seen in Pannenberg (very little in Barth).

Chalcedon asserted that the Lord Jesus Christ was truly God and truly Man. That is basic. He was consubstantial with the Father in His Godhead. He was also consubstantial with us in His manhood. And so, Jesus is *ὁμοούσιος* with the Father and *ὁμοούσιος* with mankind. And then there would have to be a slightly different shade of meaning attached to the *ὁμοούσιος* in each of those connections. But in any case, we have now that word *ὁμοούσιος*. And what is affirmed there is that there is, in Christ, a divine *ὁμοούσιος*, and a human *ὁμοούσιος*. Thus, there are two *οὐσίαι* in Jesus.

Now beyond that, this one Christ and Lord, is also acknowledged in two natures or from two natures, *ἐν δύο οὐσίαις*, *ἐκ δύο οὐσιῶν*. And there is some disagreement as to what the original might be there. Apparently both views were represented. And it does make a difference. Because you can understand that, if Jesus is spoken of as *ἐκ δύο* it could be seen as lending support, or interpreted as lending support, to those who saw Jesus as constituted of two natures resulting in a single nature of a third kind. But that was not Chalcedon's intent. There intent was to affirm that the one Christ, this one Lord, is in two natures, *ἐν δύο οὐσίαις*.

These two natures were united in one person or in one subsistence--*ἓν ἐν ὁρμυμένον* (person) *καὶ μίαν ὑπάρταίν* (substance). Whether you use *ὁρμυμένον* or *ὑπάρταίν* there is only one of them. And so then, in the one hypostasis there are united two natures. And that is where we get the phrase "hypostatic union."

Chalcedon was not the final word on this point. The Second

Council of Constantinople (553 AD) endorsed a further refinement. First--the idea of the ἀνθρωπολογία. The thought is the human nature of Christ had no personal center of its own. That is the negative ἄν. That is, the human nature had no ἰδιοτέλεια of its own. The human φύσις was without its own ἰδιότητα. Jesus was a divine person not a human person. Second--the idea of the ἐν ὑψιστοῦ. The human nature achieves its personalization only in the divine person, Ἄγιος. And so you have the correlative term ἐν ὑψιστοῦ. And I would suggest to you that these terms really are making the same point, but from slightly different points of view. Though one draws our attention to the fact that the human nature has no hypostasis of its own. And the other, the human nature has its hypostasis in the divine person.

So then, Jesus is a divine person, one divine person with a divine nature and a human nature. Notice, I did not say a "divine and human nature." It is not as if there is one nature which is both divine and human. But with divine and human natures.

Then, what we are saying, is that it was not merely a divine nature that was united with a human nature. But, in other words, it is not simply a union of two natures. But it is a divine person with a divine nature which is united with a human nature.

And so you get this expression, which Hodge traces back to ancient creeds (not known which one, though it is found in Latin by Polanus of the sixteenth-century). That Jesus is not ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος (alius et alius), but He is ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο (aliud et aliud). That is, Jesus is not one person and another person. But He is one substance and another substance. Or, He is one person with a human and a divine nature.

Chalcedon went one step further to describe the nature of that union, the union of the two natures. But it described it in negative terms. The four famous negatives on the nature of the union: Jesus is acknowledged in two natures as--

without confusion--- ἀσυγχύτως
without change----- ἀτρέπτως
without division---- ἀδιαιρέτως
without separation-- ἀχωρίστως

4-10-81

The Westminster Conf. of Faith VIII:2 (slight alteration). It is virtually the same but not exactly. The Confession says "... So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion."

Comparing Chalcedon and WCF, you have:

without separation---inseparably joined
without change-----without conversion
without division----without composition
without confusion----without confusion

When the two natures are said to be "inseparable" I think that means that the union of the two natures is permanent. There is no time when Jesus ceases to be incarnate. It may and doubtless does carry more than that. It is directed against the Nestorian error, which has been thought of as separating the two natures from one another.

"Without conversion/change" means in the union of the divine and the human, the divine nature did not become the human,

or that the human nature became a divine nature.

"Without division/composition" means the two natures were not added together in such a way as to produce a wholly new or third nature, a tertium quid.

"Without confusion" would point to the fact that there is no mixture of the two natures. Inseparable but without confusion.

Summary--there are two distinct natures, each with its own attributes and properties, truly God and truly man. So that there is a two-fold will. There is everything that characterizes God and everything that characterizes man. Yet nevertheless, there is one person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Can also summarize it this way. What the theologians were striving for was a union without confusion or mixture. And at the same time, distinction without separation.

As you look at the Christological controversy, you will see that they revolved around the effort to achieve the proper balance between or among these truths. That was true not only in the early history of the Church, in the Apostolic Age; but also in the later controversies at the time of the Reformation, particularly between the Lutheran and the Reformed. But these differences revolved really around these questions. The Reformed charging the Lutherans with a union that confused the two natures, The Lutheran charging the Reformed with a distinction that really separated the two natures. I think both wanted to say the same thing. But they passed one another, in terms of their distinctive concerns. Soteriological on the one hand, and Theological on the other hand. (More Later)

2. Biblical Warrant for the Hypostatic Union.

a. The evidence does not come to us in the form of a systematic statement.

It is not as though you can quote a proof-text and say that the language of this proof-text is the language of the doctrine. In an essay on the "Person of Christ," B.B. Warfield (Person and Work of Jesus Christ or Biblical Doctrines) begins by pointing out that the evidence for the historic doctrine of the person of Christ, lies on or rather "beneath" the pages of the NT. But it is evidence nevertheless. See assigned reading to see the evidence. Especially read Hodge II:380ff.

Three things can be derived from the evidence:

- 1) The Bible presents Jesus to us as one who is human, intensely human. Jesus speaks, acts, as one who is human. There is no trace of Docetism in Scripture. Jesus has physical needs--sleep, food, etc. He also has the emotional life of one who is human (cf. BB Warfield's essay on "The Emotional Life of our Lord"). Warfield (p.93) begins by saying, "It belongs to the truth of our Lord's humanity, that he was subject to all sinless human emotions." He goes on then to spin that out.

- 2) Jesus is also presented to us as one who is divine. There are divine names attributed to Him, which bespeak His divinity; names and titles. Son of God, Son of Man.

Son of man is sometimes interpreted as though it refers to the humanity of Christ. Compare on this point the Church's hymnology. But it does not do so. Cf., Dan.7 where it speaks of His divinity.

Also, the works which Jesus does. The claims which He

makes. The fact that He does not refuse the worship and adoration which belongs to God alone. He claims-- "before Abraham was, I am," a remarkable claim. So you have those lines of evidence.

- 3) In His personal identity Jesus is the Son of God. He is the divine person. You can approach it this way. You can ask--What is the self-consciousness of Jesus? Then the answer to that has to be in terms of His divinity. In His personal identity He is the Son of God. He identifies Himself as the Son of God in terms of His inter-divine relationship.

A striking example is given in Matthew 24:36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone." Now when Hodge refers to it, he does so in order to appeal to it to testify to the reality of the human nature of Christ. As you know, Hodge worked with the distinction between the Body and a Rational Soul. An anthropology that was common in his day. And under the heading "Rational Soul", Hodge makes reference to this verse. And this is the way that the verse is understood--interms not necessarily of a "rational soul" but in terms of the human nature of Christ. A little more has to be said about it, I think.

Because, as you read Matt. 24 you are very conscious of the fact that Jesus had said a number of things about the Consummation. Very amazing things. And things which you and I would not know apart from the fact that Jesus had already told us about them. So Jesus had already told a great deal about the day of Consummation. That men, as a whole, do not know. And it might seem that since He knows so much about what is going to happen, that surely He would also know the time of the Consummation of All things. That it would simply be in continuity with the information, the knowledge that He has, concerning the things to come. And the dissemination of the gospel, and the Tribulation, and all that.

And yet, in observing what Jesus is saying here, one realizes that He is speaking in His office as Prophet. He is Prophet, Priest, and King, and He is speaking in an official way. He is speaking as God's prophet. Therefore He is speaking as an organ of revelation. And like all of God's prophets, who are organs of revelation, there is an element of receptivity that cannot be suppressed. In other words, when the prophets of the OT spoke concerning things to come, they spoke because they were, as organs of revelation, receptive to what was given to them. And therefore they could speak it forth. When Jesus speaks in the office of a prophet, we must not immediately assume, that what He says and what He speaks, He speaks because of His divinity. He speaks in His office as a prophet. And therefore there is an element of receptivity, which characterizes all of God's prophets (cf A. Kuyper and his discussion of the prophetic work of Christ). Now, prophets knew a great deal. Certainly concerning God's judgement. And from time to time, they were permitted a vision of the future, so that they could predict things to come. But God's prophets were men. And they did not know or say everything. There were things

they did not know? One of them being the time of the advent of the Messiah. Nor the time of the establishment of the New Covenant. And so we have in Jesus, God's prophet of the New Covenant, also testifying of His ignorance concerning the day of His second advent, and the Consummation of All Things. And He speaks as a prophet and as He is God's prophet.

And tied up with that is His humanity. And yet you see, the striking thing is, that precisely in that verse, Jesus identifies Himself as the Son. And as the Son of the Father. So that precisely here, where He evidences His humanity, and speaks in terms of His offices, His self-consciousness is that of a divine person. "No one knows the hour . . . the angels, . . . the Son, . . . only the Father. And therefore He identifies Himself here in terms of His inter-Trinitarian relationship. Not to the exclusion of His Incarnation. But His identity, His personal identity, as that of the Son.

Now in saying these things I do not claim to have explained anything to you. I am describing not making transparent to the human intellect the mystery involved here.

But there are parallel phenomena that may, at least, help us to come to terms with this biblical way of speaking.

We could say, for example, let us suppose that we are residents in Jerusalem in Jesus' time. One of us could say to the other, "Did you know that Jesus is in Jerusalem. He is not in Capernaum." And we would perfectly well understand what that means. His local presence is in Jerusalem and not in Capernaum.

Even if believers acknowledging Jesus full divinity as incarnate, we would still not be denying His omnipresence if we said this. As deity He is therefore omnipresent, and therefore is everywhere. And yet, we can say, He is in Jerusalem and not in Capernaum.

What we mean is, that in virtue of His humanity, His messianic presence, He is locally present in one place, and not in another. And yet, we affirm that of the Son of God. Of the one whom we confess to be GOD. Without denying His deity.

It seems to me we have an analogous situation, when we say--Jesus, the Son of God, does not know the hour of the Consummation of All Things.

Or, to summarize--there are limitations which arise from His human consciousness and identity. These are these limitations. These limitations are imposed upon Him in terms of His messianic mission, as He is the Incarnate One. And yet, when we ask the question--Who is this person of whom these limitations are affirmed? The answer is--This person is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

His self-consciousness is a divine self-consciousness. And you see, that ought not to trouble us, in this sense. ~~We have to recognize these limitations, in order to avoid a deistic conception.~~ We cannot say therefore the Son of God must know certain things. And He must be able to be present everywhere at once. Or else He really is not truly God. Because we end up with a Savior whose Incarnation we might confess. And yet in fact we deny because He has none of the limitations that attach to the human nature. He is only seemingly a man.

And also, we want to avoid a conception which confuses the natures by attributing the attributes of the divine nature to the human nature. So that, when He speaks as a prophet, as a man, He must know all things. Because the human nature must be characterized by divine attributes.

Must avoid this kind of language. Not explaining but describing How Jesus is represented to us in the Bible. These are the considerations which caused the theologists to give this formulation--One person, a divine person. And two natures, a divine nature and a human nature. Jesus is not a human personality, He is a divine person, with a theanthropic constitution.

3. The Consequences of the Hypostatic Union.

Hodge II:392-97.

a. Jesus is and continues to be the Incarnate Son of God.

The theanthropic constitution is without end. Jesus underwent death as men do. Not the same way that we all do, but a death that we all die. He was resurrected in the body. We believe in the bodily resurrection. He ascended into heaven in the body. He intercedes for us in the body. And He will return as He was seen to go. That is, as the Incarnate Mediator. And so, we are led to understand that the human and the divine natures are an integral part of the person of the Redeemer, and integral to our understanding of His continuing mediatorial work. Or, to put it negatively, we do not have the evidence to warrant or indicate that the human nature, once assumed, is ever laid aside.

b. Jesus is subordinate to the Father in terms of His Messianic Commission.

There is an ontological equality with the Father, but an economic subordination. That subordination is, of course, already evident in the messianic commitment of the Son of God prior to the Incarnation. We spoke about the Inter-Trinitarian Council of Redemption. But, as a result of the Incarnation, Jesus enters into a new relationship, we might say, with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He can do nothing of Himself, He comes to do the will of the Father. But He is also dependent upon the Holy Spirit--for His advent into the world, He is begotten by the Spirit, in the womb of the Virgin Mary. He is equipped for His messianic work by the Holy Spirit. And He is sustained, offers Himself up, and is raised by the Holy Spirit. And the fact that He took the form of a servant draws our attention to that subordination.

c. The Man Jesus is to be Worshipped.

Again, it is not the humanity, as such, that is worshipped. If He were simply man it would be blasphemy to worship Him, But the Incarnate Christ, the Mediator, is to be worshipped; the divine person, who has His personality in His dual nature of divine and human.

d. All that Jesus did and continues to do. He does as the God-man.

Jesus hungers and thirsts. He is weary and tempted. He does not know the hour of the Consummation. Nevertheless, these things are not predicated of the human nature, but of the theanthropic person. The God-man hungered and thirsted. And by the same token, what He does in virtue of His divine natures cannot be abstracted from the human nature.

This brings us to...

e. The Reformed Doctrine of the Communio Idiomatum.

Or the "communion of attributes."

This is the doctrine that what can be affirmed/predicated of either nature, can be predicated of the person. Illustration:

- 1) The person is the subject when what is true of him is true of him by virtue of His divine nature.
"Before Abraham was, I am"--Jesus had glory before the world was. That is the divine person speaking. And what is affirmed of Him here, or what He affirms of Himself, is affirmed of Him by virtue of His divine nature.
- 2) The person is the subject when what is true of Him is true in virtue of His human nature.
Jesus thirsts and weeps. Now that divine person speaks thus, identifies Himself in that way, in virtue of His ~~human nature~~.
And also,
- 3) The person is subject when what is predicated of Him belongs to the whole person.
He is Redeemer, Lord, Head of the Church, Prophet, Priest, and King. All of these are affirmed of the whole person, of the person in His theanthropic constitution, in terms of His mission, His office. And it is the person who is the subject of these predicates.

There is a communion of attributes--divine and human attributes in this person.

This has to be distinguished from...

f. The Lutheran Doctrine of the Communio Naturam.

Or, the "communion of natures."

This doctrine is the doctrine that, in the personal union, there is a communion of natures. Such that, there is not mere contiguity (cf., the illustration used by the Formula of Concord--it is not as if there are two boards pasted together), but a most profound and intimate interpenetration of the two natures. As the soul penetrates the body, or as the heat penetrates the iron. And yet the heat is different from the iron.

That interpenetration is conceived of, or as wrought, without a mixture, without a change in the two natures. But nevertheless, there is a communion of natures such that there is an interpenetration. And that interpenetration is the Greek word περιχώρησις .

The Lutherans speak not only of a communio naturam, but this leads to...

g. The Lutheran Doctrine of the Communicatio Idiomatum.

A "communication of attributes."

This has to be distinguished from the Reformed doctrine of the Communio Idiomatum.

The Communicatio Idiomatum of Lutheranism teaches that there is a communication of the properties of each nature to the other nature. The divine has human attributes and the human has divine attributes. And in practice it is that latter element that dominates the doctrine--that the human nature has divine attributes.

Now the major application of that doctrine of the communicatio idiomatum is with reference to the Lord's Supper.

Can perceive that the human nature of Christ appears in the omnipresence of God. And that leads to the doctrine of the Ubiquity of the Human Nature of Christ. That is, the

human nature of Christ, participating in the divine attributes of omnipresence, is everywhere present. And so, the Incarnate Christ is present in, with, and under the elements of the Lord's Supper. Or, the Doctrine of Consubstantiation.

h. The Reformed and Lutheran Debate at this Point.

The Reformed argued that that Lutheran doctrine represented a confusion of the divine and the human natures. In VanTillian terms, it represented a breakdown of the Creator-creature distinction. And therefore the Lutheran error was primarily a Theological Error, that was destructive for the Christian Faith.

And ever against that Theological Error, the Reformed view comes to expression (among other places), in the Heidelberg Catechism, Qu.'s 47-48.

Q. Then, is not Christ with us unto the end of the world, as He has promised us?

A. Christ is true man and true God. As a man He is no longer on earth, but in His divinity, majesty, grace, and Spirit, He is never absent from us.

Q. But are not the two natures in Christ separated from each other in this way, if the humanity is not wherever the divinity is?

A. Not at all: for since divinity is incomprehensible and everywhere present, it must follow that the divinity is indeed beyond the bounds of the humanity which it has assumed, and is nonetheless in that humanity as well, and remains personally united to it.

The questions form the substance of the traditional Lutheran objection to Reformed Christology. They say there is then no real union, because the two natures can be separated from one another. And if there is no real union, then there is no Incarnation. And, as Mueller (Christian Dogmatics, p.277) says, "All who deny the communication of attributes must deny also the personal union. Or, the paramount mystery that the Word was made flesh." And if there is no union, no Incarnation, then a-fortiori there can be no redemption. And that is to say, the Reformed are charged with a Soteriological Error.

And therein you see the characteristic confessional concerns of the Lutherans and the Reformed. The Reformed are concerned pre-eminently with the glory of God, and redemption/salvation serves the purpose of the glory of God. The Lutherans approach Christian doctrine (speaking broadly, generally) from the perspective of soteriology. The guilty man who needs the assurance of forgiveness.

So the Reformed said we must say two things:

- 1) They are indeed inseparable;
- 2) And yet the divinity is beyond the bounds of the manhood.

In Latin that is extra carnem; the deity is extra-outside of the flesh. This doctrine has also come to be known as the extra-Calvinisticum.

If you step back from the controversy you can see that the Lutherans accused the Reformed of Nestorianism--of denying the Incarnation, the true union of the two natures. And therefore the loss of salvation. The Reformed accused the Lutherans of Eutychianism--the confusion of the two natures, through the communication of attributes. And therefore of denying the Creator-creature distinction. And

therefore of losing the Christian religion. And yet, both affirm the four negatives of Chalcedon.

4-14-81

E. The Sinlessness of Jesus.

This is well-attested in Scripture, cf., Heb. 7:26; I Peter 1:19; 2:22 (Isa. 53:9).

We are aware of the universality of depravity. And not only the universality of it but the totality of it, cf., Rom. 5:12. That sin has its consequences, cf., II Chron. 6:36; Rom. 3:23. And because of that and because of the entrance of sin into the race, at the very beginning of its history, sin is so invariably intertwined with our human condition, that we might conclude that a genuine Incarnation requires the sinfulness of our Lord. Some argue that way. That a sinless Savior has not identified Himself with mankind fully. And therefore He is not adequate to the office.

Now it is true that Jesus has borne our sins, and that our sins are laid upon Him. And in that sense, He has indeed identified Himself fully with our condition. He is not only made in the likeness of sinful flesh and for our sin. But our sins are laid upon Him. We speak of the imputation of our sins to the Savior, Jesus Christ. But He Himself is without sin. Sinfulness does not belong to the definition of what it is to be human. Adam was created and existed on this earth without sin. And his very name is ADAM, adam, the Man. His name is man. Man is characteristically then, from the point of view of his creation, man without sin. And therefore the sinfulness of Jesus is not an implication of His Incarnation. Nor is it a consequence of the Hypostatic Union.

On the contrary, His assumption of a human nature results in a theanthropic man who is blameless, without sin.

Now certainly, Jesus as God is without sin. God cannot be tempted by evil (James 1:13). God is not sinful. And therefore it is quite easy for us to understand that Jesus, as God, is not a sinner. But we must also keep in mind that Jesus, as man, was without sin as well.

And that is all the more striking when we bear in mind that, as man, Jesus was certainly tempted to do evil. And that is evident with His opening encounter with Satan in the early chapters of the Gospels. And we may not appeal to the deity of this theanthropic person in order to discount the genuineness and the seriousness of the Temptation. We may not say--"Jesus was, after all God. And God cannot be tempted. And therefore the whole Temptation account, as we have it, at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, is nothing more than a charade." We may not, in that way, deprive it of its exemplary value for us. Hodge speaks to this point in a very striking and strong way. Vol. II, p. 457--"As a true man he must have been capable of sinning." And you can see the point that Hodge is making there, in rather strong language. In His temptation there are two alternatives that are set before Jesus Christ. The call of God to do what is right. And the appeal of Satan to do what is wrong. And Jesus felt the full force of that inducement to disobey. It was not sinful for Him to be tempted. It is not sinful for us to be tempted. But the sin enters in in the acquiescence to the temptation. Whether that acquiescence be physical, or an action, or even mental. The acquiescence, the yielding, the inclination to act. That is where the sin enters in Jesus did not sin in the face of that temptation.

And therefore the sinlessness of Jesus Christ is evident in His immoveable and resolute determination to do the Father's will.

As Hodge says--"As a true man He must have been capable of sinning." But what we find concretely in Jesus, the theanthropic person, is His immoveable and resolute determination to do the Father's will, in the face of what was the contradiction of that will. That was the contradiction of all that He was, both as to His human nature and as to His divine nature. In terms of the Apostolic epistles--"He persevered in doing what was right."

So then, the sinlessness of Jesus Christ is not to be traced to His divine nature alone. As though the divine nature sustained the human nature, that would have otherwise, have fallen. In terms of some such general principle--"To err is human." And just by virtue of the fact that He was a man, He would have fallen into sin. Except for the fact that He was sustained in His sinlessness by His divine nature. This is not the picture that we are given in the Gospels. And therefore we have to say, that with respect to the human nature, there was the resolute determination to do the will of the Father, to accomplish the messianic task for which He was constituted as the Incarnate Christ.

One further word--

In resisting the temptation, Jesus did not lean upon His deity. So that, what He did cannot be exemplary for us. Because we cannot lean on deity. That is, we are not constituted "theanthropic persons." We are not God-man. We are simply men. And sometimes you will hear the Temptation expounded in such a way that it is completely deprived of its exemplary significance.

I am not saying that the whole significance of the Temptation resides in the example that it sets forth. But it certainly is an aspect of it. But we rob it of that aspect if we find Jesus making use of resources which are not at our disposal. The point is that, Jesus did not make use of resources in resisting the Temptation that are not at our disposal. He appeals to the Word of God, the promises of God. He appeals to them in prayer and in the power of the Spirit. And so His actions become exemplary for us.

We have a High Priest who is without sin, a Mediator who is without sin. And it is this Mediator whose work we are now considering in Part IV.

(The "cannot sin" is an ethical "cannot sin." Not a metaphysical one. Shepherd is not explaining the issue, he is describing the evidence. Compare the illustration of Jesus in Jerusalem and not in Capernaum.)

IV. The Offices of Jesus Christ.

A. The Mediatorial Work of Christ.

Hodge II:455-61.

The work of Christ is the work of a Mediator. And therefore we are going to make some general observations about the Mediatorial work of Christ, as such. And then afterwards, we will go on to exhibit that work in terms of the three offices: Prophet, Priest, and King (as summarized in WSC #23).

1. The Biblical Identification of Jesus Christ as the Mediator.

There is a verb for "mediate" in the NT. It occurs only once. It is μεσιτεύω (cf., Heb. 6:17). "In the same way God, desiring even more to show the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed (guaranteed) with an oath." The word is not used in the technical sense of redemptive mediation. But the idea is that the oath is given in confirmation of the promise. And so the writer says, that "God interposed or mediated or came between with an oath." Here for the purpose of guaranteeing or making certain the oath. And so you have the meaning "act as a surety" (as in NIV). You might compare Heb. 7:21-22 "For they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, 'The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, Thou art a priest forever'; so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant." The Priesthood of Christ is confirmed by an oath. And therefore Christ becomes the Guarantee (NIV - "Surety") of a better covenant. And so you have the confessional formulation (VIII:3) -- "Jesus Christ executes the office of a Mediator and a Surety." Both ideas are closely bound together. The Mediator of the New Covenant is also the Guarantee of the New Covenant. Both ideas are related by reference with Heb. 6:17.

The noun for "Mediator" is μεσίτης (six occurrences). Cf., Gal. 3:19-20 (Moses is implied as mediator); Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24 (mediator in terms of the New Covenant, not just between God and man); I Tim. 2:5.

To say that Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant is just to say that He is the mediator of the sovereign grace of God. It is through the Mediator Christ Jesus that the estrangement between the two parties is overcome.

One chief passage is I Timothy 2:5 "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."... There are just a couple of things that you want to note about that passage.

- a. Vs. 3 it is God who is identified as the Savior -- "God is our Savior." Cp., Titus 1:3-4; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6.
- b. There is one God. What is in view is the singularity of God. There is not a multiplicity of gods. The God who is Savior is the one and only God.
- c. There is one Mediator between God and man. And that Mediator is God. For two reasons:
 - 1) The Savior is God, vs. 3.
 - 2) And there is only one God. The Mediator is God Himself.
- d. Paul does not identify the Mediator with the Son of God, as Jesus. Which would be true enough in itself. And that has already been implied in what is said. But the point which Paul makes is that the divine mediator is man, a man, Christ Jesus.

So, in I Tim. 2:5 Jesus is identified as the one and only mediator. And the mediatorial work is clearly identified as redemptive. And the Savior desires all men to be saved (cf., 2:4, 6).

2. The Mediator brings Alienated Parties Together.

The work of a Mediator is to take a position between two parties, and to bring these two parties together. Compare our contemporary Labor scene.

But in the relationship between God and man there is no third party, who is neither God nor man, who reconciles them. But the Mediator is the Son of God, the brightness of the glory of the Father. The express image of His person. So the Son of God is indeed God. And at the same time He is the man Christ Jesus (cf., I Tim. 2:5).

The Mediator is both God and man. And this person brings together God and man. (I will say later how He does that.) But He brings them together, not as a third party distinct from the other two; but as one who identifies Himself both as God and ~~man~~ man.

The one place where the Greek word *μεσιτης* is used in the LXX is in Job 9:33 "There is no umpire between us, who may lay his hand upon us both." Job is looking for a "Daysman" (KJV) between himself and God. That is to say, an umpire (people know this). The NIV has a circumlocution--"someone to arbitrate." But it is a very good translation of the idea. But the umpire which Job is looking for does not exist. And that is not the sort of mediator that is provided. That is, a mediator who stands above both God and man to arbitrate between them. And at a later point, Job seems to attain to a view that is, at least, formally correct, in Job 16:19 "my witness is in heaven, my advocate is on high." And then, ultimately it is Jesus who pleads Job's case before the Lord, and Job is vindicated.

3. Mediation has to do with the Salvation of Man.

Hodge II:458, a concise summary of what is meant by the mediatorial work of Christ. The mediatorial work "includes all He did and is still doing for the salvation of man."

Two points:

- a. The mediation is indeed directed to the salvation of man. Mentioned because the idea is sometimes put forward that there are two aspects to the mediatorial work of Christ. The one being cosmic, the other being redemptive.

1) Some speak of a "Cosmic Mediation."

The idea that Christ is a kind of intermediary between God and the world, as such. And appeal is made to a passage such as I Cor. 8:6 ~~and~~ for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him."

And it is especially the way in which Jesus Christ is referred to then, as the one "through whom ~~all things~~ things came and through whom we live," that Jesus is spoken of as a Mediator between God and the World. Or, between God and Men in some Cosmic sense, some non-redemptive sense.

Reference is made also to Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2-3; Jn. 1:3-4.

2) These passages, taken together, affirm the Pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

Because they reflect on His role in Creation. And His role in Creation as the one through whom all things came. And thus it certainly points in the direction of the pre-existence of Christ. And the pervasive thought is that through Jesus Christ the world was made. And I think we need to stress that, we need to be aware

4. Jesus Christ is Mediator, both in His Divine Nature His and in His Human Nature.

This point is emphasized over against the idea that Christ is Mediator as to His human nature exclusively. Or abstractly, as to His divine nature exclusively.

In the History of Theology there have been those who have said, that Christ was Mediator only as to His human nature. And that, as to His divine nature He was equal with God. And I think the point to be remembered is that, in the Scripture, the mediatorial work, in the wideness of its conception, is represented as the work of ~~the~~ God-man, as the work of the Θεοῦ υἱός. And it is the work of the divine person who has both a human nature and a divine nature. It is this person, Jesus Christ, in the uniqueness of His constitution as the God-man, who appears as our Mediator.

And you see that in I Tim. 2:5. One God, one Mediator, who is God Himself; the mediator is the man Christ Jesus. And then there is brought into view before us both the divinity and the humanity of Christ. And it is this person who is the mediator between God and man.

And so, that passage makes it impossible to narrow down the mediatorial work to one or ~~another~~ of the natures. Or, to put it another way--we do not have a human savior, but we have a divine Savior. The person who, in the uniqueness of His constitution, is our Redeemer. And our Mediator suffered and died. He could do that by virtue of His human nature, to be sure. But He not only suffered and died for us, but He also rose again, He ascended into heaven, and exercises His royal dominion as the divine Savior. He does this as the Incarnate Son of God.

5. The Mediatorship of Jesus Christ is from Eternity.

Jesus did not cease to be a mediator with His death or His resurrection. And just as He did not cease to be a mediator in His death or His resurrection, so also, He did not begin to be a mediator in His Incarnation.

The idea that Jesus began to be a mediator with His Incarnation, is of a piece with the idea that He is mediator with respect to His human nature only. ~~And~~ He is mediator only in so far as He is man, then of course, it would make sense to think of His mediatorial work as beginning with His Incarnation.

But more broadly, we have to take account of the fact that Jesus was appointed Mediator in the Inter-Trinitarian Counsel of ~~Salvation~~. And that Counsel is eternal (cf., earlier notes). Or, we can say specifically, we are elected from before the foundation of the world, from eternity. But that election is in Christ, our Mediator. And so Jesus is contemplated as Mediator from before the foundation of the world. And the Plan of Salvation (and it is salvation that is planned) begins to take effect right after the Fall into sin.

Adam does not hear God pronounce the curse upon sin until he has heard the Lord God declare His saving purpose in the proto-evangelium (Gen. 3:15). That pronouncement of the Gospel already implies the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ. And if you think about it a bit further, you can also appreciate the fact, that the saints of the OT are not without a mediator. Now the work of that mediator is, to be sure, set before them in a distinctive way--through the Sacrificial System. Which is done away with once the mediator is come in the flesh. But they are not without a Mediator. And the

And because of that impetus given by Calvin it has become customary for Reformed theologians to exhibit the work of Christ in terms of the three offices. Calvin writes in II. 15.1 "These too, are spoken of in the Papacy, but frigidly, and with no great benefit. The full meaning comprehended under each title, not being understood." And so, Calvin proceeds to revitalize the doctrine.

Now in setting forth the work of Christ in terms of the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, we should not think of that as a kind of arbitrary, scholastic schematizing of the biblical material. It is not as though the Reformers were incapable of that kind of schematizing. I gave you an example of that in Calvin's view of Justification, using a series of causes, in a causal structure. For purposes of understanding, to be sure. But the framework, the structure, is ~~not a structure derived from the text of revelation, or, from the history of revelation~~, but a philosophical framework. So the Reformers were capable of that sort of thing. But when we come to the three-fold division, I do not think we have something which is analogous to that. The division of the work of Christ in terms of the three-fold office, and the further elaboration of that work in terms of the historical sequence of Humiliation and Exaltation, those divisions and distinctions are not an artificial pattern. But they arise out of reflection on the Word of God. And so I think Hodge is quite right when he says (II:461), "This is not therefore a convenient classification of the contents of His mission and work. But it enters into the very nature and must be retained in our theology, if we would take the truth as it is revealed in the Word of God."

You can see that when you think about the Prophet who fulfills the prophecy of Deut. 18:18. And therefore we have to understand the work of Christ as the work of a Prophet. He is the Priest of whom the Psalmist says, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek" (110:4). And surely He comes as the King. The one who shall sit forever upon the throne of His father, David, in fulfillment of the promise given to David, God's covenant with David. Psalm 89 reflects on that. And surely Jesus comes in fulfillment of that promise.

A word about the order in which we take up these topics. We usually take them up in that order--Prophet, Priest, and King, without thinking about the order much. Not that there is anything at stake theologically at this point. But it is interesting that Calvin discusses first of all the Prophetic office, and then the Kingly office, and then the Priestly office. But the order that has become customary for us is Prophet, Priest, and King. And that commends itself, I think, because it reflects the historical unfolding of the work of Christ. Who appears on the scene first of all, as a Prophet, in the line of the OT prophets. He came after John the Baptist, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, calling Israel to repentance. And He perseveres with that message, that prophetic message. And as you read the Gospels you are overwhelmed with the fact that, indeed, the way Jesus appears to Israel, is as a prophet. Calling an apostate people to repentance. We talked about the "object of Evangelism" at an earlier point. And surely the object of evangelism for Jesus Christ was a disloyal covenant people. That is the focal point of His earthly ministry, that prophetic ministry to Israel. To

call her to repentance. Not only to call her to repentance, but also to make known that forgiveness was being bestowed by Him. The Kingdom of God is at hand and that Kingdom will be a judgement. But it will also bring salvation. Jesus claims to be able to forgive sin. And not only does He forgive sin, but He also renews men. And you see that in His ministry of miracles. How He is able to renew men. And you get that double emphasis that you find in Heb. 8 and 12, on forgiveness and renewal. And that is what Jesus is preaching in His own name. That is how He appears as a Prophet. But the Prophet is rejected by Israel. As Israel had rejected the ministry of the prophets in general. So especially does Israel with the ministry of Christ. And Jesus is put to death by sinful and wicked hands.

But that death of Jesus is a sacrifice, the Atonement. And so, that prophetic work is followed by the Priestly work, the Sacerdotal office. Jesus makes atonement. Coupled with the atonement is the resurrection from the dead. And that is the ground laid for these benefits laid He had announced in His public ministry. Now these benefits have been purchased, accomplished, wrought, And now the Priest who has purchased these benefits, now bestows the benefits.

And that He does as King. He ascends to heaven and rules over all by His Word and His Spirit. So there is a kind of historical sequence that you have to be sensitive to. But again it is not to be insisted on in some rigid way. As though there were no overlapping at all.

Obviously Jesus came announcing the Kingdom in His earthly ministry. And virtually, in effect, lays claim to be that King. He appears in Israel as the one in whom the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King in the theocracy are summarized and embodied.

I am not insisting on a rigid distinction. But showing that the sequence in which we take up these offices does have some basis in the unfolding of redemptive-history.

4-17-81

B. The Prophetic Office.

You will in your reading soon come to the realization that in Hodge's three volumes Systematic Theology, he devotes only two pages to the subject of the Prophetic Work of Christ. The reason for this is not clear to me. Perhaps in comparison to the Priestly work of Christ the Prophetic work can lay claim to only a small amount of the total space that is available to Hodge. But it is also true that the more Liberal stream in the theological flood, has capitalized on this particular subject. And I think out of reaction to this, the Reformed writers have tended to suppress the Prophetic office. A. Kuyper did not write a systematic theology, as such. But his students published the notes in his courses, in a five volume Dictaten Dogmatiek.

In these notes we have the observation by Kuyper that, "A Reformed man always has something against hearing of the Christ-example. While the Arminian is continually occupied with the subject. The Reformed man says, 'Just try to imitate Jesus and you feel it can't be done.' The Arminian always insists on imitation and insists that it can be done." Well, I think you would have to say, that the Prophetic work of Christ includes more than just an example. But it does have it as an aspect. Also, when Kuyper says "Arminian," he has more in mind the Remonstrant-Arminian. And they have become the radical Liberals of today.

And so we can understand, in continuity with that, that there might be some reluctance among Reformed people to stress, too much, the Prophetic work of Christ. After all, that Prophetic

work centered around a vigorous call to repentance and to renewal. And I think that, in view of the way in which we have stressed the doctrine of ~~Justification~~ by Faith Alone. It is difficult for us to accomodate what is obviously a main thrust of the ministry of Christ.

1. The Presupposition of the Prophetic Office.

The presupposition is, as such, that man is not able, of himself, to discover the mind and will of God unto salvation. In Acts 14:17 it is said, "and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." Now in this, Paul, indeed is talking to Gentiles who were indeed, outside of the pale of redemptive-revelation. But we notice two things:

- a. The people are not without a witness. That is, they are not without a revelation of God.
- b. The witness received was calculated to demonstrate the favorable disposition of God. God did good. And the Apostles ~~specifies the respects~~ in which God did good. And that is to say, that not all revelation, which is accessible to the heathen, points in the direction of condemnation.

It is true, according to Romans 1, that the wrath of God is manifested against all unrighteousness. And therefore there is a revelation to the heathen of the wrath of God. But not all of the revelation speaks of the condemnation. There is revelation which could serve to arouse a hope for, or which anticipates, the saving provisions to be revealed in the course of providence of God. And again, it is not illegitimate to appeal to that evidence of God's kindness and goodness, to undeserving sinners, in the course of the proclamation of the Gospel. And specifically in the appeal to repent and come to Jesus for salvation.

But that revelation of which we are speaking now, does fall short of actually revealing that salvation is available. It falls short of revealing the provisions that have been made for our salvation. And so that revelation, both in nature or in ourselves, falls short of showing the means and the terms of salvation, which God in fact has supplied. And so, man is not able of himself to discover the mind and will of God unto salvation.

The will of God with respect to salvation is learned from special revelation. And that special revelation is correlative with the historical accomplishment of redemption. In fact, the accomplishment of redemption is meaningless, unless we also insist that God has made known what He is doing for the salvation of His people. God has not only made provision for salvation, but He has also revealed that salvation in words, in social revelation. And there we come close to the prophetic work of Christ, and its presupposition.

2. Jesus defines His own work, not only in Royal and Priestly Terms, but also in Prophetic and Didactic Terms.

It is true of course, that God can and has conveyed His mind and will to men, without the aid of any created intermediary. It is basic to the biblical doctrine of revelation that God spoke directly to our first parents in the Garden. And we can think of that as the normal situation--that intimate fellowship and union and communion which God has with His covenant partner. In the course of which He spoke directly to our first parents. And also throughout the history of revelation we have instances of God speaking directly from heaven.

But it is also true that God ordinarily uses means or a medium of revelation. So that, there is a certain indirectness about it, which is correlative with the fact that our union and communion with God has been broken by sin. And so now, the approach to man is indirect, through created intermediaries, with a view to the restoration of the full union and communion with God, when we would dwell with God and He with us. And there will be that direct communication that characterized man in the beginning.

So God makes use of media of revelation. And it is apparent in the Scriptures that God has made use of the instrumentality of men in particular (not males in distinction from females; women were also organs of revelation). But He has made use of human beings. And these human organs of revelation are most often designated as Prophets. And the function of the prophet is to speak to men on behalf of God. And Jesus Christ is manifested in the NT as the prophet of God par excellence. He is the Prophet of God by pre-eminence. J. Murray points out that it is a false antithesis to say, as one sometimes hears it said, "that Christ did not come to teach or preach the gospel. But to do something in order that there might be a gospel to preach." That sounds pious, but it is destructive of the ministry of Christ. You can't set His teaching and preaching over against His redemptive accomplishment. This ministry of Christ, ~~in words~~ is of a piece with the office which He ~~dis~~charges as the Mediator and the Redeemer. So Jesus describes the purpose of His coming, not simply in Priestly terms, as the one who offers His life a ransom for sinners. But He also describes it in ~~didactic~~ or prophetic terminology. And just as there is no redemptive act without redemptive word, so also, in the ministry of Christ, there is not the accomplishment of redemption without the announcement of salvation. And Jesus not only does something for us, but He announces what He does to us.

Now we can see the biblical evidence for that rather clearly. Jesus ministry was, from the beginning, a teaching ministry. We read in the Gospels that Jesus began His ministry in precisely the same terms that John the Baptist had begun his. In preaching repentance and the proximity of the Kingdom. Cf., Lk. 4:15ff (whole pericope too). The prophecy is fulfilled in His preaching and teaching the good news. ~~John 18:37~~ He defines His mission as "to bear witness to the truth." This is not exhaustive of it, but it is part. Also cf., 1:18; 17:8,14. We see Jesus functioning as a teacher of the Law in Matt. 5-7; 22:40; Jn. 13:34. Jesus is also a teacher of the gospel, cf., Mt. 17:16-21. Jesus teaches ultimately with a view to bringing the Gentiles under the Lordship of God. And He will not cease or be discouraged, until He has brought justice to victory. Lk. 4:17-21, also preaching the gospel. ~~Lk. 4:17-21, also preaching the gospel.~~ And so we find the estimate of His ministry which is given by the two men on the road to Emmaus as doubtless correct, "a prophet mighty in deed and word." The two are correlative to one another and do not exclude one another. They are of a piece in His ministry as Prophet.

So then, Jesus clearly defines His ~~work in~~ prophetic and didactic terms.

3. Jesus is qualified for the Work of a Prophet.

To this point of speaking of Jesus activity as a teacher and a prophet, we have been stressing what A. Kuyper calls, "the

productive side" of His prophetic office--His teaching, His holding forth, His ministry.

But there is also a "receptive side" to that prophetic office. And that, by the way, is something you ought to keep in mind as you aim for the work of the ministry. There is also a receptive side to that ministry. Be serious on both the productive and receptive sides.

The OT prophets had nothing to say except what they had received from God. They were not sources of revelation, but they were organs of revelation. They ministered what they had received. And that is to say, they did not penetrate to deeper knowledge by the strength of their own intellect, or some mystical-meditative process. They were not simply experts in religious affairs, but they were prophets of the Lord.

Well, if you think of Jesus as ministering the prophetic office, then we would have to say that there is the same receptive aspect also to His ministry. And we cannot discount that by reference to His deity. And therefore to His intuitive knowledge of all things. The Scripture does not discount the receptive side to His ministry as a Prophet. G.C. Berkouwer speaks in this regard of Jesus as "the dependent one." And I suppose the outstanding passage in this regard is probably Jn. 7:16-17. Jesus teaching is not His own but of the one who sent Him. One can have experiential confidence as to the origin of His doctrine (cf., Jn. 3:34).

Now, Jesus does say things that are new. But He does not say things as an innovator, independently of what has gone before. But rather He expounds and fulfils the Law of God. But He does not lay down new legislation. It is in line with that, that the NT can speak in a way that is a little bit paradoxical in the beginning. But not really if you think about it. "A new commandment I give unto you", and yet a commandment which we had from the beginning! That is to say, Jesus is no exception to the unity of biblical ethics. He does not offer a different ethical system from the ethical system that we have in the history of revelation. And that is why His resurrection is for the empowering of us to do the righteous things of the Law (cf., Rom. 8:3) Also, Jn. 14:10; 17:14). As the one who receives the word which He preaches, Jesus shows the continuity of His own ministry with that of the prophets who had gone before. He preaches as they did. The prophets were sent to Israel to bring them back to God, to the God of the Fathers, to plead with Israel before the great and terrible day of the Lord, to repent and to adhere to the Lord.

Jesus in continuity with that ministry comes into the world and He picks up on the ministry of John the Baptist. He goes about through Israel and Judah, through that area which God had promised and given to His people. He came into His own but His own did not receive Him. It is very important for you to see that continuity of Jesus public ministry with the ministry of the OT prophets. In order to place the revelation of the Gospels in their proper context. But He is not simply one more in a line of prophets. Unlike them, He did not receive the word which He preached from outside Himself. In this sense, that, although He is receptive, and that is an aspect of His prophetic office, as with the other prophets; yet He is unique, in that the word He receives is the word of one with whom He is in the most intimate kind of union. And Therefore there is also a characteristic difference between

the prophets and the ministry of the Prophet. The characteristic mode of expression of OT prophets was "Thus says the Lord." But that is not the form of expression which is on Jesus lips. Rather, we have, "Truly, truly I say unto you." And Jesus speaks to them with all the sovereign authority of the Lord God Himself. That is to say, the Son of God speaks on His own authority as God. He speaks not as the scribes and Pharisees, but as one with authority. And here you have another illustration of what we have been talking of recently, in connection with the doctrine of the Trinity (in Doctrine of God course), and that is the unity and diversity. The sense of unity which Christ has with the Father, and yet the distinction is also there. The message which He has received from the Father, Jesus proclaims in His own name. And that the prophets could not do. Jesus is unique in His prophetic office.

Matt. 11:25-27 is a succinct statement. Father and Son reveal in distinction from one another. And yet the offices are so closely related that there is an obvious unity of the two. As the eternal Son of God, the Logos, Jesus is pre-eminently qualified to be the revealer of God. And so He is described as the light of the world. For in Him is light and no darkness at all. He not only teaches the truth but He is the truth. The Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Col. 2:3 "in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." That truth surely underlies and is foundational for His prophetic ministry. The Spirit is given to Him without measure (cf., Jn. 3:34). So, beyond question He is qualified to be God's prophet. He has received His message, which He speaks, nevertheless, on His own authority.

But we can go just a step further to appreciate the pre-eminence of Christ as a prophet. And that leads us to...

4. Jesus speaks as a Messenger, not only from God and about God, but Jesus is God speaking.

And in this we find pre-eminently the fulfillment of Dt. 18:15. Heb. 1:1 and 2 are relevant. The prophetic office is gathered up in the Son. And His work as a prophet is characterized by finality. By a finality which does not characterize the ministry of the other prophets. But this prophet in whom the prophetic office is concentrated, is also identified in Heb. 1:3 as the radiance of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. God manifest in the flesh. He not only speaks the word of God but He is that word of God. And just as He is the truth He speaks the Truth. And so we speak of the Hypostatic Word.

And so, when you have defined the office of a prophet in general, in terms which are applicable to all the prophets. You have not yet spoken distinctively of the prophetic office of Christ Jesus. The uniqueness of the prophetic ministry resides just in that fact that it is GOD Himself who comes as a prophet. And so there is a finality to His ministry, and an authority which attaches to it, which is distinctive, indeed which is unique.

Now, in contemporary theology, it is hard to turn up a theological textbook which does not operate with the distinction between "word as speech" and "word as person." And that distinction is pressed to the point of a dilemma. Emil Brunner, in Vol I writes, "With the Incarnation of the Word, the meaning of the formula--"The Word of God"-- has been drastically altered. The spoken word is now no longer the revela-

tion itself. Or, to put it more exactly, it is no longer directly revelation, but only indirectly."

Well, I think we have to appreciate the distinction between the Incarnate Word and the spoken word, or written word. But the point is that these two do not stand in antithetical relationship to one another. Jesus is indeed the definitive revelation of God. He is the Word of God. But just as the revelation of God, the Word of God, He comes into the world in the discharge of an office. And that is a prophetic office. And the words that He speaks are ~~the~~ words of God. And just in terms then, of the prophetic ministry, it is impossible to set the words of God over against the Word of God. That is what makes an appreciation of the prophetic work of Christ so significant for us. And it is also important that we see that prophetic ministry as lying behind His commission of the Apostles, to preach, to teach, in His name. And following them, those of us who discharge the ministerial office, do so in reflection of the prophetic ministry of our Savior Himself. And the words that we speak are not simply "intellectual discourse" on religious subjects. But they are with a view to the revelation of Him who came to bear witness of Himself.

5. Jesus serves as an Example.

Very important along with teaching and preaching. Jesus made known the will of the Father by His exemplary character. And there is no need for us to suppress that aspect of His ministry. We do not advance the work of the Spirit by suppressing the word of the Spirit.

John 13:14-15 is the account of Jesus washing the disciples feet. He says, "I have given you an example." As the Lord and teacher has done to His servants, to His disciples, so the disciples ought to do to one another. Because Jesus has provided an example to be imitated. An example of humility and service.

Also, consider Phil. 2:5 where the verb *ἐκένωω* is used. "Have the same disposition of mind as is found in Jesus Christ." "Have this attitude" Now we think of that as a great Christological passage, and so it is. It tells us a great deal about the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ. But we can not overlook the main point of that passage, the main thrust. Which is to set before us an example which we are to imitate. That verse (5) leads us to an understanding of the *ἐκένωω* as, not so much a self-emptying, but as a making Himself of no reputation. That verb describes something which we can imitate. And we do not imitate Him by some kind of self-emptying. But we do imitate Him by imitation of the humility which comes to expression in the condescension of our Savior in His Incarnation. The disposition of Christ is illustrated by way of reference to the Incarnation, with humiliation involved in that act. And the imitation of Christ is therefore set before us, not simply in external deeds, that we are to do as He did (e.g., foot washing). But that imitation of Christ is also to extend to the attitudes of mind. "We are to have this mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus." I John 2:6 "the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He did." Cf., also 1:6-7; 2:11 for further light on the above.

We will be tempted to walk in the darkness because the children of the devil are wise in their own way. And their wisdom will affect us. And we will, from time to time, even in the conduct of ministry, walk in the darkness. And we will

excuse that as for the sake of the Kingdom. But the cause of the Kingdom is not advanced by means of the tools which Satan puts at the hands of his army. The children of light are to walk in the light irrespective of the cost involved in that walk. And ultimately, it is only as the children of God walk in the light that the Kingdom of God is going to be advanced (cf. Eph. 2:10).

But we are to manifest the pattern of life which the Lord God is creating in us. And only in that way will the Kingdom of God be advanced. Now that is not to say that anyone can put himself forward as having achieved the goal. We have not! So our accomplishments are always in humility. With the recognition that not only do we fall short of the goal, but also that what we have, we received as a gift. Nevertheless it ought to be apparent in the world that the children of light are walking in the light, and they are not walking in the darkness.

The command at the end of Matt. 5 is also relevant for the exemplary character of Jesus Christ, indeed of the Father. ~~Therefore~~ you are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect (5:48). And the perfection of the Father provides the pattern. And it is altogether in keeping with that emphasis, that Jesus is also set before us as an example. And it could hardly be otherwise. How could it be otherwise? Than that Jesus is an example. And His example is a revelation of the mind and will of God. And therefore in His life, not only in what He says, but in what He does. Not only externally, but internally, He functions as a prophet of the will of God for us.

6. Jesus is Prophet both Before and After His Advent.

This follows from the fact of Christ's mediatorship extending from the time of the Fall onward. Hodge makes the point quite strongly, when he says, "that Christ executes the office of a prophet in revealing the will of God for our salvation, both before and after His advent, and both in His state of Humiliation and in His state of Exaltation."

You see, everything I have said up to this point, has reference to the public ministry of Jesus Christ--His presence in the Promised Land, to reveal the mind and will of God for our salvation. The example which He sets was an example which He set in the course of His public ministry. But it would be wrong to confine the prophetic office of Jesus simply to His public ministry. Just as it would be wrong to confine His mediatorial work only to what He accomplished subsequent to His Incarnation. Hodge speaks therefore of the Christophanies which we have in the OT. These anticipations that we have of the Incarnation, in the form of revelation, to the Patriarchs, and to the Prophets. And by His Spirit, Jesus inspired the prophets to record the revelation of the truth of the will of God.

He is also said to be the source of the illumination of the minds of the people to bring them to a saving knowledge of the truth. You can see that in I Peter 1:11 (starting at vs. 10). "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow." ~~The Spirit of Christ was in them. The Holy Spirit~~ is represented as the

revealer of the Humiliation and Exaltation, the sufferings and subsequent glories, of Christ. But it is the Spirit of Christ. So there is an analogy between the way the Spirit is operative today, and the way He is operative under the Old Covenant. The Spirit comes from Christ to lead us into all truth, to bring to mind the things that Jesus began to teach in His public ministry. So also under the New Covenant, it is the Spirit who comes with a word from Christ and about Christ. And Christ now continues to teach in the Church by His word and His Spirit. And the point that is being made here, is that the prophetic work of Christ is being carried out both before and after His advent.

The other point that Hodge makes is that Christ carries on His prophetic work "not only in humiliation but also in exaltation." This is not a seriously disputed point. It is certainly true that Christ taught during the period of His public ministry. But Christ continues to teach through the Holy Spirit. Cf., John 15:26; 16:12-15.

And I might just wind up by saying that that prophetic ministry of Christ partakes of the same character as His prophetic ministry on the earth. You recall how Paul told the Athenians in Acts 17 that the days of their ignorance are now passed. God is now calling all men everywhere to repentance. And so it is that the prophetic ministry of Christ, now carried on through His ambassadors, is like His ministry in the days of His flesh. A ministry which calls the Gentiles, the nations of the world to repentance, before the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

You can think of Israel in covenant with God, And that covenant people of God proved unfaithful. And so there is a ministry of repentance which goes out to Israel, in view of the judgement to come. And now that whole sequence, you see, is writ large. In the sense, that Adam was in covenant with God and in him all the race was in covenant with God. But we have proved unfaithful. And now the ministry of Christ goes out to the whole world, calling men to repentance. With a view to the fact that the Day of Judgement is to come.

Note the pedagogical purpose which God's history with Israel served. Serving the broader purpose. For from the beginning, God's purposes embrace not simply Israel, but the whole world. And so Jesus carries on a prophetic ministry. Our ministry of word is a fulfillment of a further working out of that prophetic ministry of Christ. And it is just for that reason you see that we cannot suppress the significance of the prophetic ministry of Christ.

If our conception of salvation were sacramental then we might bypass the prophetic office for the sake of the Priestly office. And concentrate on it. Which is further carried out in the Church through the priestly office of the Roman Catholic ministry. Where the sacrifice is a repetition of the offering of Jesus, of Himself once for all on the Cross. The application of redemption is through the Sacramental System.

But Protestants do not conceive of it that way. But they conceive of it as applied directly by the Spirit, through the means of the Word. And that is why the prophetic ministry can't be suppressed. Not to say then that we suppress the priestly to the prophetic. But that we see the three offices as parallel to one another in the fulness of the mediatorial work of Christ.

B. The Priestly Office.

There was a remark made at the beginning of the last hour, dealing with the Prophetic Work of Christ. To the effect that, man is unable, of himself, to discover the mind and will of God unto salvation. And that that is the presupposition of the Prophetic Work of Christ. Who comes to make known to us what we otherwise would not know. That Prophetic Work extends beyond, before the time of His Incarnation. And is carried on now through the Holy Spirit.

Well a similar presupposition underlies the Priestly Office. And that is that man cannot, in and of himself, approach unto God. Or, he cannot stand in His presence. And just as Jesus Christ represented God to us in the Prophetic Office, speaking the word of God to us. So also, we can say that in His Priestly Work, Jesus Christ represents us, represents men in the presence of God. And enables us to mount up into the holy hill where God dwells.

There are two functions pre-eminently associated with the Office of the Priesthood: 1) The offering up of Sacrifice for sin before God. 2) His intercession before God on our behalf (often ectypal but integral).

And so, Reformed Theology has represented the Priestly Work of Jesus in this two-fold way. And the Latin terms are: satisfactio --satisfaction, and intercessio--intercession.

The Priesthood of Christ is the function by which Christ appears before God, first, to offer Himself as the sacrifice of reconciliation for our sins. And second, as the Intercessor through whom we obtain the help of God and the gift of the Holy Spirit. And then, Satisfaction is a term, which is often used, but we frequently use it instead of the term "Atonement." And then, we ordinarily use the term "intercession." "Satisfaction" for the sacrificial aspect of Christ's work. Then is often called the Atonement. And that is what it is called in our outline. We will be considering the Atonement at length. But we will also be considering the Intercessory Work of Christ Jesus.

That word "atonement" is an interesting word. It is a thoroughly English word. ~~is sometimes~~ one gets the feeling there is not an English word in the lot. That they are all Latin derivatives, almost transliterations of Latin terms. Hodge himself prefers the term "satisfaction." He argues for its use in II:469ff., "It is important to adhere to old words if we would adhere to old doctrines."

You can remember the meaning of atonement by dividing it up into At--one--ment. Well, that is not simply a mnemonic device. It is a good representation of the etymology of the word. Originally the term, in the English language, referred to what is now covered by our term "reconciliation." And therefore, literally "at-one-ment." Hostile parties are made "at one" with one another. Except that, as the word came down to us, a single word, those three letters o-n-e, are pronounced as they are in the word "alone." So you have the English word "atonement." Which is the linguistic equivalent of "reconciliation."

II Cor. 5:18-19 speaks of the ministry as a "ministry of reconciliation." And of the word of the gospel as the "word of reconciliation." But it is interesting that in the Old English versions, the word used is "atonement" and not "reconciliation." There the original significance of the term "atonement" comes out. And we have a survival of that usage even in the King James Version at Romans 5:11. Where it speaks of Christ as the one by whom we have received the atonement. And you should not think of

that as a faulty translation of the Greek $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{\iota}\gamma\eta$. Which we would then translate as "reconciliation." But you have to recognize in the KJV English, $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{\iota}\gamma\eta$ was probably translated by "atonement."

But the newer versions have "reconciliation" at that point.

As we will be developing the doctrine following the pattern set by Murray, Reconciliation is conceived of as a part of the atoning work of Christ, but not exhaustive of that work. So that our term "atonement", or as we use it "atoning work," carries more significance than that of "reconciliation."

The other term "satisfaction" is certainly a term sanctioned by long usage and will be seen often. In some cases it may suggest however a kind of neutral concept of justice, in and of itself, which must be satisfied. Think of that blind goddess "Justice" outside of the Courthouse. But we do not mean justice in that way. We are talking about justice in the biblical sense of that word. And as long as you preserve that sense, you can use the term "satisfaction" to designate what we include under the term "atonement."

Murray also introduces the term "expiation," and speaks of the satisfaction of Christ, or the expiation which is accomplished by Him, as an aspect of the Atonement, along with reconciliation, propitiation, and redemption.

1. Atonement.

a. Source of the Atonement.

It might appear more logical to begin with the Nature of the Atonement, and we could do that. But instead we are going to anticipate the answer to be given at that point. And deal first with the source of the Atonement. With the hope and the expectation that dealing with this topic will help shed some light for us on the nature of the Atonement.

Now concerning the Source of the Atonement, there are a number of observations to be made:

1) The Atonement must be traced to the Free and Sovereign Love of God.

I suppose at this point, the Scholastic theologians would talk about the "cause" of the atonement, the different "causes" of the atonement. And I am not concerned here to press the biblical data into that kind of framework. But simply to recognize that the Bible traces the atonement to its fountainhead in the love of God. John 3:16 is very clear. It is a summary of the work of Christ, of the Atonement. But God gave His Son because He loved the world. And you can not go back beyond that point, on the basis of Scripture, when we have said, "the atonement has its origin in the love of God."

It is important to keep that in mind. Because it is wrong to think of the Atonement as eliciting or calling forth the love of God. It is not as though God's wrath is manifested, then Christ's atonement. And God's wrath is then transformed into love. The work of Christ does not turn the wrath of God into love. Rather it is the love of God which sends Jesus Christ to be an atonement. And so the wrath of God is propitiated. Now I stress that because that is a very popular misconception that you must deal with in instructing the congregation on the nature and notion of the Atonement.

2) It is a Distinguishing Love.

Eph.1:4-5 "just as He chose us in Him from before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will."

Adoption as sons has to be traced back to the predestination of the Father. And that predestination flows from the love of God. And unless we are prepared to say that all are predestined. We must say that the love which gives rise to that predestination is a distinguishing love, or a love which distinguishes. Romans 8:29 is to the same effect. It is a parallel construction in terms of the foreknowledge and the predestination of God. And, as we tried to say earlier, if we think of that foreknowledge simply in terms of cognition, we are led to a kind of universalism. Because the object of God's knowledge is to be all things and all persons. But instead of doing that we associate the idea of Foreknowledge with that of love. It is foreknowledge with the particularity of love. It is the love of God which is in Jesus Christ, our Lord, which binds us invincibly to God Himself (cf. Rom. 8:38-39).

We cannot think of anything separating us from the love of God. Because that love is a distinguishing love. There are many things that separate unbelievers from the love of God. But God's love is invincible with respect to His own. I John 4:9 "By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him." And that surely is a distinguishing love, that is in view. Cf., also Rom. 5:8; 8:35.

Well, love predestines, sends the Son, causes His life to be given, and love preserves us eternally. And unless a universal salvation is posited it is not possible to escape the uniqueness of the love of God with respect to the Elect. And that is a distinguishing love. Now I think I have tried to stress that all before. And I want to make it very clear again, at this point. It is a distinguishing love which gives rise to an efficacious atonement. And that, of course, is the kind of atonement we are interested in (more later).

The fact that that love however is distinguishing does not exclude a general love of God to mankind, as such. And that is also a factor which should not be suppressed. Cf., Matt. 5:44-45; Lk. 6:27-28; Acts 14:16-17.

Even the ungodly have joy. And the joy that they have is the gift of the Father in heaven. But you notice those first two passages exhort us to love those that are our enemies. And we are to do good to them despite the fact that we receive evil from them. Basic Christian principle.

But you notice, and this is the point here, in doing this, in responding this way to our enemies, we are to be imitators of the Father. And that suggests to us that He too loves His enemies, and demonstrates that love in the bestowment of gifts. God is the exemplar of the indiscriminate love which He calls us to imitate. And it is to be precisely in loving our enemies. And so there is a real sense in which God can be said to love all men. And as John Murray said, "It would not be

proper to withhold the implications of that love in the proclamation of the gospel offer" (Collected Writings I:59-85 "The Atonement and the Free Offer of the Gospel"). The original title was "The Free Offer of the Gospel and the Extent of the Atonement." It deals precisely with that question of the relation of the free offer and the extent of the atonement. It was written on the background of a controversy (The Torch and Trumpet ran two articles), that was going on in the Christian Reformed Church, on that issue. It gives a very balanced assessment of that doctrine. It does not refer directly to that controversy. But it is referred to as giving more balance to what is said above.

Romans 2:4 "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" We must say, of course, that God's wrath is manifested against all unrighteousness. But we usually stop short of saying--"God doesn't love you." But we can point to ways in which God's favor does come to expression even with reference to the non-Elect. And we do that in order to bring them to repentance. And to confession of sin that they might lay hold upon Jesus Christ. And so manifest themselves to be the beneficiaries of God's distinguishing, His electing, love.

3) The Love of God is a Sovereign Love.

And here the focus is on the fact that God has the authority and right to love as He wills. He is free in the exercise of His love. I am tempted to use the expression "free love" at this point, but the connotations mitigate such a use. But God's love is free, it is sovereign. God has revealed Himself to be love, inherently and eternally love. But that does not imply that He must love indifferently. His electing love is not necessarily universal. In fact, His electing love is not even necessary. That is to say, it is not necessary for God to save any (more later).

It is God's free and sovereign good pleasure to choose men to be His heirs and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus. So then, we say God is love. But the reason why God exercises His love, where and when He chooses, belongs particularly and peculiarly to Himself. So that that love which is the source of the atonement, is not only a distinguishing love, but it is also a love which is sovereignly bestowed.

4) The Love of God is Pre-eminently the Love of God the Father.

This is evident from the passages discussed. The one who loves and predestinates in Eph. 1:4-5 is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Cp. also Rom. 8:29 the image of His Son; I Jn. 4:9-10 God sent His Son; Romans 5:8 death of His Son. It is therefore the love of the Father which is especially in view.

And again you see why that is important to stress, is that there are those who are tempted to think of the Father as a symbol of the wrath of God. That is often the way father's represent themselves to their children, symbols of wrath. And then mother's manifest themselves as symbols of love and compassion. But that is not the way it is going to be in our household's, I am sure of that.

And in the household of God, the Father is not simply a symbol of wrath. To be sure, His wrath is manifested against all unrighteousness. And we do not set it over against the Father then, Jesus as a symbol of love. No, but it is God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. It is God the Father who loved and sent His Son. And that factor keeps us attuned to the inter-Trinitarian character of our salvation. And it is the atonement of Christ then, that brings the love of the Father to fruition.

5) The Love of God is unique in its Intensity.

And what is in view here is the fact that it was His own Son whom God did not spare, cf., Rom.8:32. We are reminded of the utterly unique relation between the Father and the Son, the inter-Trinitarian relationship of the persons. The Son is the beloved Son of the Father. We must never forget that, that He is the beloved Son of the Father, cf., Mt.3:17; 12:18; 17:5; etc. It would be impossible for us to conceive of a more loving relationship than that, between the Father and the Son. And yet, it was His own Son, whom God did not spare, in order to do what, in love, He determined to do. And that is why we can speak of the uniqueness of that love from which the atonement arises.

6) The Love of God is the Love of Benevolence.

You remember from your study of the doctrine of Theology Proper (Doctrine of God), that we distinguish in God between the Love of Complacency and the Love of Benevolence.

And, by Love of Complacency we do not mean a love of indifference. But the Love of Complacency is a love which is constrained by the nature of the object which is loved. John 14:21,23 is an illustration of that. And in those verses we have a love of God to men, in response to their love of Christ, and to their keeping of His commandments. People who love God and keep His commandments, they are loved of God. It is a love which is not conceived of as existing apart from man's love for God. It is a love for that man who reflects God's own perfection.

But the distinguishing, atoning love of God, however, is a Love of Benevolence. And the Love of Benevolence is not constrained by the quality of that which is loved. It is a love of pure, sovereign grace. Cf., Romans 5:8, 10.

So that love of God is a love which flows to us in spite of our ill-desert. Not on account of anything in us.

b. The Question of the Necessity of the Atonement.

Now at this point, I am going to plug into Redemption Accomplished and Applied, ch.1 (thus, start reading). More dependent on the textbook, runs parallel.

1) The Question of the Necessity of the Atonement as Equivalent to the Question of the Necessity of Salvation.

For you see, there are two questions that engage our attention under this heading. It might be better to discuss them separately. But it is not well to do that because of the terminology that is involved at this point.

But this first question that we are going to be dealing with, the question of the necessity of the atonement as the question of the necessity of salvation as such, is sometimes ignored, to be sure. But at other times it is conflated with the second question. But if we keep the two questions apart, then that will help us to understand the standard terminology that Systematic Theologians employ at this point.

Now, what are these two questions?

- a) Whether the atonement is necessary? And we mean by that, whether it is necessary for God to save anyone? Is the atonement necessary?
- b) Branting that God does, as a matter of fact, save, is it necessary for God to save by means of atonement? That is, the question is as to the mode of redemption/salvation. Is salvation by an atonement necessary?

There are two ways of answering the first question.

- i) One can say that the atonement is necessary. That is to say--God must save.

Now the case for that position can be made by means of an appeal to the attributes of God. For example, one can appeal to the fact that God is love. And we have already observed that love is the source of the atonement. And so one might argue that the love of God compels Him to save. Or at least, that the love of God compels Him to save some persons. The argument against that I have already indicated by pointing out earlier that the love of God is not only distinguishing, but it is sovereign. And therefore, the appeal to the love of God may not be made in such a way so as to deprive God of His sovereignty.

But there are other ways in which the necessity of the atonement, in this sense, could be thought of as arising. Prof. Murray suggested that it was debatable whether Anselm held to the necessity of the Atonement in this particular sense. But he does find in Anselm the suggestion that God's honor was at stake. If all mankind were to perish, there would be an unfavorable reflection on the honor of God.

Or, one could argue for the necessity of the salvation of some, from the power of God. If God is able to save, then He must save. He must demonstrate His power. And here you might think of Moses' plea in Deut. 9:28 "Otherwise the land from which You did bring ~~us~~ may say, 'Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land which He had promised them and because He hated them He has brought them out to slay them in the wilderness.'"

Or, it could be argued, that salvation arises necessarily from the goodness of God. If God can save, then He must save, because He is good. As N. F. Ferre once said--"If not all men are saved, then that comes about either because God would not save them, or He could not save them. And in either case, such a God is not worthy of our worship." Also note the phrase, "God saves because He has to. That is what He is there for."

Now, to summarize.

This view, which thinks of the atonement as necessary

in the sense that God must save, has been styled as maintaining an "antecedent necessity." And you say--Antecedent to what? Antecedent to the will of God. That is to say, God must will what He indeed does will. The atonement finds its cause antecedent to the will of God. Or, the will of God to save is determined by some factor which is antecedent to itself. And so, theologians speak about an "antecedent necessity." That is the ~~first~~ way to a answer that question.

- ii) The other way of answering it, is called "Consequent Necessity."

The argument for this view really constitutes the refutation of the other view. Or, the argument refuting antecedent necessity constitutes the argument for consequent necessity.

And the argument runs this way. We would have to say that there is nothing inman which merits atonement, and the consequent forgiveness. In other words, there is nothing inman that requires or necessitates his salvation. And indeed, the emphasis of Scripture falls not upon the merit of man, but on precisely the opposite, on his demerit, his ill-desert. And we do not find the suggestion that salvation is of necessity.

But further beyond that, the biblical emphasis is on the grace and mercy of God. And that prevents us from seeing the atonement or salvation as a necessity laid upon God. The way in which the Bible speaks of the Atonement, of Salvation, ~~as manifesting~~ the grace and mercy of God, ~~that leads us in a different direction.~~ Cf., Lamentations 3:22 "The Lord's lovingkindnesses ~~indeed never cease~~, for His compassions never fail."

So, the sovereignty of the Lord is constantly in view in the demonstration of His love, mercy, goodness. Cf., Eph. 2:8 "For by grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Those words "gift" and "grace" are not appropriate to an "antecedent necessity." But rather, they bespeak a "consequent necessity." And so, Reformed Theology has traditionally spoken of a "consequent necessity." The necessity is not antecedent to the will of God, but is consequent upon His will. God is not required to save any. But He wills to save some.

And so, it is from that point of view, that He wills to save some. That it is thus necessary to save them, but that necessity is consequent upon His will.

So you can say that everyone believes in the necessity of the atonement. But the question is whether that necessity arises out of the will of God, consequent to it. Or whether the necessity is antecedent to the will of God.

The traditional Reformed view is that the necessity is consequent upon the will of God. Because of the Scriptural emphasis on the grace, mercy, and love of God which is manifested in God's determination to send His only-begotten Son.

- 2) The Necessity of the Atonement as the Mode of Salvation.
This is the more pressing question historically, at least. Is it necessary for God to save in this particular way, by sending His Son as a satisfaction for sin?

4-23-81

Now at this point we are not inquiring into the nature of the atonement, as such. There are various theories about the atonement and what it is (more later). But that is not the immediate question before us. We are simply assuming at this point, that we are talking about, what we can call for the moment, the penal, substitutionary nature of the Atonement. Or, the Satisfaction Theory of the Atonement. What Hodge calls the Orthodox View of the Atonement. We are assuming that, for the moment. And asking whether that atonement is necessary? Is it necessary for God to save in that way?

Historically, three answers have been given to that question:

- a) The Atonement is not necessary--Maybe.

Granted that, as a matter of fact, God wills to save men by the Death and Resurrection of Christ. But the point is that the death is not necessary in the absolute sense.

Now this view is ascribed to the Nominalists of the Medieval Era. The idea that the Atonement was purely arbitrary, was determined arbitrarily by the will of God.

And obviously, if you look at the Atonement that way, as something arbitrary, then, that atonement, your understanding of the nature of the atonement, is indeed, going to be affected. And as a matter of fact, as the History of Theology works out, the people who do not view the penal, substitutionary Atonement as necessary, do ordinarily, or have ordinarily, subscribed to a Governmental Theory of the Atonement. The idea built on that then, is that the sufferings of Christ do not have intrinsic value. But are simply accepted by God as the equivalent of what is due to Him, in His justice. God could have accepted some other substitute. Or He could even have carried on the work of redemption without demanding any satisfaction at all. The Atonement is not necessary. This view passed over to Socinianism. And then, with some modification, to Remonstrant-Arminianism as well. And it has come down to us in the form of Wesleyan-Arminianism.

But although we said a moment ago that we are not talking about the nature of the atonement, as such, I think that you can see that this view is very definitely tied in with one's view of the nature of the atonement. Since we must grant, as a matter of fact, that God has been pleased to bring atonement through the death of His Son. But if the atonement is not penal satisfaction, then obviously, the atonement in that sense, is not necessary (as penal satisfaction).

- b) Hypothetical Necessity of the Atonement.

This differs from the above, in that the element of necessity is introduced. But it falls short of saying that there is an absolute necessity attached to

the atonement by penal satisfaction.

The idea here is that, the atonement is necessary because God sovereignly determined to forgive on no other condition. That is the condition on which He has determined to remit sins. So that the necessity arises from the will and decree of God. God has willed/decreed to remit sin on the basis of the penal satisfaction of Jesus Christ. And therefore that is necessary.

Now the reason for the "hypothetical" is not known to Mr. Shepherd. But the word "hypothetical" enters in because, one could say that on the hypothesis that God has determined to remit sins by means of the penal satisfaction of Christ. Granted that hypothesis, which is really a determination of His will, then, the atonement is necessary, as penal satisfaction is necessary.

Hypothesis is more than a hypothesis than we normally think of it.

L. Berkhof attributes this view to Athanasius, then to Augustine, and later then, to Aquinas.

There is further development of this view that puts it in a bit more intelligible context. And a further development then, that should be taken into account. And that is, that the necessity of the atonement resides not only in God's will or decree to remit sin in this way, but it also arises from a certain "fitness" of the atonement with respect to the ~~end~~ ^{end} to be achieved. Some speak of a "congruity" between the end to be achieved (remission of sin, salvation of particular persons) and the way in which God determined to do it. Murray's description--"God could have forgiven sins and saved His elect without atonement or satisfaction. Other means were open to God to whom all things are possible."

Now at this point, this view of Hypothetical Necessity does not really differ from the first view. Which says that the atonement is not necessary. But as a matter of fact, in accordance with His sovereign decree, God does not actually save in any other way than by atonement. That is the hypothetical Necessity. And beyond that, "The way of the vicarious sacrifice of the Son of God was the way in which God, in His grace and sovereign wisdom chose. Because this is the way in which the greatest number of advantages concur. And the way in which grace is more marvelously exhibited." Because then of the advantages, because of the exhibition of the grace of God this is the way that is chosen.

Turretin says--"As the commands of God have been transgressed, it is fit that satisfaction should be made, that transgressors may not pass with impunity" (found in the Baker reprint of his work on the Atonement).

But the point then, is that the how of the atonement, the mode of the atonement, is not simply a matter of indifference. There is a fitness to the way in which God has done it. I mention this view, because you will, from time to time, come across it.

Calvin is held as holding to this view, or at least he is interpreted as holding to this view. Berkhof

says he did. Reference is made to Institutes III: 12:1 "If the necessity be inquired into, it was not what is commonly called simple or absolute. But flowed from the divine decree on which the salvation of man depended. What was best for us our merciful Father determined."

Calvin seems clear, till you look at the previous sentence. You see that the quotation is misapplied in this context. "It deeply concerned us that He who was to be our Mediator, should be very God and very man." In other words, Calvin holds the view that a Mediator would have been necessary even apart from redemption. He maintains that very clearly. But he does not mean by that an Incarnate Mediator. Not that an Incarnate Mediator would have been necessary apart from redemption. But now he takes up the question, whether it was necessary for the Son of God, the Mediator, to become Incarnate?, is that Necessary? Now you should read the sentence first quoted. He says, Yes, it is necessary. Calvin goes on in the paragraph and paragraphs following and it becomes clear. Calvin holds to what became, certainly in Reformed Theology, the communis opinio (consensus of opinion). And that is, that the atonement was absolutely necessary.

Thus, the phrase characterizing the traditional Reformed view is...

c) Consequent Absolute Necessity.

"Consequent" is derived from the first question posed. There we saw that the Reformed view was that of a Consequent Necessity.

And now on the second question then, the Reformed position has held to the absolute necessity. And so you get the expression "consequent absolute necessity."

Murray--"It was necessary to secure this salvation through a satisfaction that could be rendered only through substitutionary sacrifice and blood-bought redemption. The atonement was inherently necessary for God."

Now, a little while ago, I said that the atonement, ~~was~~ necessary for salvation, was not necessary for God. It was not necessary for God to save, God was not under any inherent compulsion to save. He could have withheld mercy without violating His own constitution, without denying Himself. But the Reformed have argued that the same is not true with respect to the atonement as a mode of salvation. Here the Reformed have argued that God could not redeem apart from the Atonement without denying Himself. And so the necessity of the atonement as an absolute necessity arises from the perfection of His nature. This is the prevailing Reformed view.

It had an early entrance into confessional formulation in Heidelberg Catechism, Qu. 40 "Why did Christ have to suffer 'death'?"

"Because the righteousness and truth of God are such that nothing else could make reparation for our sins except the death of the Son of God."

Also, cf. Canons of Dordt, Second Head, Article 1

The Westminster Standards are very clear on the point that God saves by way of atonement, which is a satisfaction for sin. But the WCF is not as explicit on the point of the necessity of the atonement. But it is the same as the other confessional materials. I do not think they held any other view though.

3) Argumentants for Consequent Absolute Necessity grounded in the Attributes of God.

a) Appeal to the Justice of God.

Heid. Cat. #40 "because God's justice and truth demand it." Also cp., Heid. Cat. #12 "God requires that His justice be satisfied. Therefore the claims of His justice must be paid in full. Either by ourselves or ~~by another~~."

Now the fact that they, as a matter of fact, can be paid by another, is not something that becomes apparent anywhere else but in the gospel itself. It is the gospel that informs us, not only of that possibility, but of that fact. That the claims indeed are paid by another. As Murray puts it--"It is this inviolable sanctity of God's law, the inmutable dictate of holiness, and the unflinching demand of justice, that makes mandatory the conclusion, that salvation from sin without expiation and propitiation is inconceivable."

Now I think that, in view of some other comments I have made, about this concept of justice, that you can see very possibly behind some of that language, lies a kind of neutral conception of justice. But I do not think that is required of us here, to think of justice as "to each his due."

But we have only to think of the justice which is appealed to here as God's faithfulness to His covenant promise and commitment. And this includes His fidelity to the threat of condemnation and death which is attached to the Covenant. A threat of condemnation and death which belongs to them who transgress His covenant. And if God's covenant is transgressed, then there is bound to be condemnation and death. And we can count on that, because God is just. And He is faithful to His word. And then you see, on that background, it belongs precisely to the glory of redemption, that the demands of divine justice are not bypassed. But they are met. It is just the glory of redemption, that in redeeming us, God does not sidestep His covenant, but He deals with us precisely in terms of the covenant.

And that comes out in the Heid. Cat., in the transition from questions 11 to 12. At the end of the section dealing with our Misery, some kind of escape is sought by the questioner--"But is not God merciful also?" "God is indeed merciful and gracious, but He is also righteous. . . ." And you see, you can't appeal to the mercy of God in order to sidestep His justice. Qu's 12ff go on to show how God is just and merciful at the same time.

So it belongs to the glory of ~~our~~ redemption to under-

stand the demands of divine justice are not bypassed. It is just the foundation of our redemption to know that God is faithful. If God did not stick by His word, then what assurance would we have that, having redeemed us, He would as a matter of fact, take us into the eternal home? What assurance would we have that, having told us the wages of sin is death, He simply bypasses that and saves us anyway? Well, what assurance would we have that that salvation would be definitive? Any foundation we would have would be undercut because we could not rely on the truth of God's word, His justice. And so, what we see in the gospel, is the absolute fidelity of God to His word.

And that gives us the confidence to believe, that having atoned for our sin, in the person of His Son, He will indeed take us to the eternal home, as He has promised. That is the firm foundation and the secure basis for the assurance and the security of the believer. And that firm foundation, you see, does not reside in cheap grace, which bypasses the justice of God. But it resides in the fact that God has been faithful to His word. In a way that we could not have conceived. That whole plan of redemption did not arise out of the mind of man. But it is the wisdom of God, the wonder of His redemptive grace. (Use of "cheap grace" is not quite what Bonhoeffer meant.)

You can put it differently--As a sinner we stand in need of forgiveness. But we cannot assign forgiveness, simply and solely, to the sovereign will of God to remit sin. Forgiveness in that sense, does not measure up to what is entailed in God's justification of sinners. Justification certainly does entail forgiveness. But forgiveness which is not simply an executive act of remission. But, as Murray says, "A salvation from sin, divorced from justification, is an impossibility. And a justification of sinners without the God-righteousness of the Redeemer is unthinkable." And that God-righteousness entails His death as a penal satisfaction for us. And so the righteousness of God is manifested for justification and for our acceptance with God.

God has determined to punish sinners, He has determined to punish the rebellious and the apostate. But He has determined to forgive the sin of the elect. How can both things co-exist? How can both things be true? How can sin be both punished and forgiven? You see, we are naturally inclined to say, sin must either be punished or forgiven. But the gospel is--that God does not forsake either one of these words. He both punishes sin and forgives sin. And that is to say, sin is atoned for. And that is the argument for the absolute necessity of the atonement based on the justice of God.

- b) The Argument based on an Appeal to the Truth of God.
 The Heid. Cat., Qu. 40 points not only to the justice of God, but to the truth of God also.
 And, if you define justice in a biblical way, as His fidelity to His word, then the concept of truth is

closely tied to it. The justice and truth of God are bound up with one another. Cp. Gen.2:17; Rom.6:23. Now God does not say that the way parents sometimes do--"If you do that, I will spank you." But the child knows better, and does it with impunity.

God has not undermined the foundation for His own discipline. The penal sanction of the Law is, as Turretin pointed out, a part of the law itself. And it therefore it shares in the inviolability of the law. And just as we cannot violate the law with impunity, so God Himself cannot violate His law, without denying Himself. And He does not violate the truth of the law with respect to the penal sanctions. So it is the truth of God which is at stake with respect to the penal sanctions of the law. Just as it is at stake in connection with the promise.

c) The Argument based on the Appeal to the Love of God.

The Atonement is the supreme demonstration of the Love of God. This is clear from the gospel. Murray asks--"Would the cross of Christ be a supreme exhibition of love if there were no necessity for such costliness?" The atonement then demonstrates the love of God then because it was absolutely necessary.

Now, as I look at that argument, I think it means something like this--that apart from such necessity the atonement would not be a demonstration of love, but would only be an example of foolishness.

L. Berkhof introduces the observation of A.A.Hodge at this point. "The sacrifice would be most painfully irrelevant, if it were anything short of absolutely necessary, in relation to the end designed to be attained. That is, unless it be indeed the only possible means to the salvation of sinful men."

I am not sure of the precise force of this argument from the love of God, as Murray presents it. So I am not in a position to speak forcefully for this. Something has eluded me.

4) Exegetical Arguments for the Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement.

READ MURRAY REDEMPTION ACCOMPLISHED AND APPLIED!!!

a) Heb.2:10,17.

The divine proprieties which make it requisite that the many sons should be brought to glory, in this particular way.

b) John 3:14-16.

The alternative to the giving of God's only-begotten Son, and His being lifted up on the accursed tree, is the eternal perdition of the lost.

c) Heb.1:1-3; 2:9-18; 9:9-14, 22-28.

But do know what Murray says on...

d) Heb.9:23.

Summarizing--The thought here presented is that only such a person offering such a sacrifice, could have dealt with sin, so as to remove it. And could have made such purification as would secure, for the many sons to be brought to glory, access to the very holiest of the divine presence.

The point is--the faultiness of the Old Covenant is indeed a fault that lies in the covenant, not in God. Not simply that God decided not to find the blood of bulls acceptable. But they were, as a matter of fact, unacceptable. They could not atone for sin. It had to be done in the way in which Christ did it, through the sacrifice of Himself.

c. Theories of the Atonement.

Really what we are taking up is the question of the Nature of the Atonement. But we are not as yet.

There has not always been unity on the view of the Atonement. There have been many divergent views, especially since the Reformation. But read especially the two essays by B.B. Warfield in The Person and Work of Christ, pp. 351-382; "The Chief Theories of the Atonement" and "Modern Theories of the Atonement."

1) The Orthodox View. (Hodge's designation)

Not saying that this is one of several. But its significance will come out as we go. The Biblical warrant will be given later.

In the history of the development of theology, you are aware that the early Church concerned itself with the doctrine of the Trinity, and the Person of Christ. And then on to the Fifth-Century, the focus of interest shifts to the doctrine of Man and Sin (Augustine vs. Pelagius). In the Eleventh-Century, the doctrine of the Atonement. In the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries the Application of Redemption. And in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, the doctrine of Eschatology, the Millennial views, and the Theology of Hope. Anselm is the chief figure. The Orthodox doctrine is associated with him. But he did not define the Orthodox view of the Atonement in any definitive way. He laid the foundation for the Orthodox view, known as the Satisfaction View of the Atonement.

Anselm sought to present a rational argument for the Atonement. He viewed sin as an affront to the honor of God. And that affront to honor could not be simply remitted by an exercise of divine mercy. God must vindicate Himself in keeping with the demands of His own nature. Consequently, either the sin must be punished or satisfaction must be offered. And satisfaction is offered through the death of Christ. And so arises the Satisfaction View of the Atonement.

4-24-71

L. Berkhof criticizes Anselm's view. (We are not interested so much in the fact of the criticism but the two points as to why.)

a) The Necessity of the Atonement is not seen to be grounded in the justice of God, but rather in the Honor of God.

Some interpreters mention both, but weight is given to the honor of God. Berkhof suggests that justice should be seen in the foreground. If it is simply the honor of God, strictly speaking, the death of Christ is not an endurance of the penalty of sin. But it is precisely this element that comes into the fore, in the later developments of the Satisfaction view. It is the enduring of the penalty that becomes the focal point of the doctrine.

- b) Focusses our attention on the Death of Christ to the Exclusion of a place for His Active Obedience.
The active obedience does not come into view as constituting a significant element in the total view of the Atonement. (More later.)
But if the active obedience tends to fall out of view, we could go a step further and add (though not a point of Berkhof's)...
- c) The Resurrection of Christ does not play a significant part in the Mediatorial Work.
The focus is on the death. Rather than on what precedes--the active obedience; or what follows--the Resurrection of Christ.

Significant and crucial considerations. Not to discount Anselm but to remind ourselves that doctrines take time to gel. And I would say the same of the doctrines of the Reformation. Did not have a definitive statement at the beginning of the Reformation. But there was development, amazing progress. But not all progress was made at that time.
A summary of the Orthodox view is found in Redemption Accomplished and Applied. Murray begins with the question, whether there is a comprehensive category under which the various aspects of the biblical teaching may be assumed. He concludes that "obedience" is "generic, and therefore embracive enough to be viewed as the unifying and integrating principle."

And you want to note that that obedience is not construed in some external or quantitative way. It would never occur to someone working out of the understanding or framework of John Murray to ask, as the Pharisees would ask, "How many times must I forgive? What does the Law require of me?" You can not quantify obedience in that way. That is not the obedience that is in view. That is, it is not obedience as the perfunctory discharge of duty. Murray says that account must be taken of "the disposition, will, determination, and volition which lie back of the formal acts." Or we could say simply, that the obedience which Christ rendered is the obedience of faith, the obedience of love. It is not the formal discharge of duty.
And because the obedience is the obedience of love, the obedience of faith, it is pre-eminently the exemplar of covenantal loyalty and obedience. Or, to put it in terms we used earlier--Jesus is the Covenant-Keeper par excellence, the Faithful One, the Righteous One. He is the Righteous Man who lives by faith pre-eminently.

As Murray develops his discussion, and here he is surely consonant with the teaching of Reformed Theology as a whole, he distinguishes between the Active and Passive Obedience of Christ.
Active Obedience of Christ is His adherence to and discharge of the obligation of God's law without exception. Again, not simply formal discharge of duty. But recognizing that that law is pre-eminently the command to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled that Law without exception. And there we refer to the sinlessness of Jesus Christ.

Passive Obedience is the endurance of the penal sanctions of the Law. This endurance arose not because He deserved them, but they occurred because He willingly bore our sins.

Now you want to note in your reading how the word "passive" is to be understood here. We do not mean that Jesus was passive, a kind of Caspar Milquetoast, in this operation. Nor does it mean that His endurance of the penalty of the Law was involuntary. That He was an involuntary victim of what overcame Him (as is sometimes said in contemporary literature), cp. John 10. And therefore the passive obedience of Christ is, in the most profound sense, exemplary of His active obedience. That is, He came to do the Father's will. So He willingly endured the penalty of the Cross. That passive obedience is therefore active obedience. But we speak of "passive obedience" and refer that to His endurance of the penalty of the Law. Remembering the origin of the word "passive" from the Latin patior, "to suffer." And the point is that He suffered the penalty of the Law, but He did that actively, willingly. So you can make the distinction--active and passive. But not as is sometimes done--Jesus did this but was the victim of something else. No, in all His works He is actively obedient.

As we have seen, since the time of Calvin, it has become customary for us to view the work of Christ in terms of the Three-fold Office of Prophet, Priest, and King. I do not object to that analysis so far as it goes. It is very helpful and I recommend clinging to it. But I do think there is room for raising the question whether that analysis, in and of itself, is adequate to cover all that needs to be said at that point. Or, whether it covers all that is historically said in Reformed Theology at this point.

By this reservation, I mean this--the work of the priest, after which Christ is understood, if we analyze it according to the three-fold office, focusses surely, pre-eminently, on the offering up of the sacrifice. That was one of the main duties. And then associated with that is the work of intercession. But it is an intercession which focusses upon the offering up of sacrifice. And that is exactly why the discussion of the Atonement--Christ's work for us--tends to focus on the death of Christ. It tends to be the all-absorbing interest and concern. And that is going to be apparent even in our discussion.

But you see, when that happens, then the active obedience of Christ is introduced only with a certain degree of awkwardness, under the rubric of the Priestly Office of Christ. And tends to drop out of view at this point and does not come back into view until you get to the discussion of Justification. And then reference is made to the active obedience of Christ.

This is mentioned to make you aware that, when we are talking about Prophet, Priest, and King, and thereby analyzing the totality of the mediatorial work of Christ, that we can not lose from that conception an adequate understanding of the obedience of Christ.

Which may not fall appropriately, narrowly speaking, under one of these particular categories.

Just an observation. Must take account of Christ's active obedience because it is integral to His mediatorial accomplishment. And has always been regarded as such in Reformed Theology.

Another side of the above remark.

Viewing the work of Christ as a Priestly Work also tends to subordinate, if not to obscure and to exclude, a consideration of the Resurrection of Christ, as entering into the totality of the Mediatorial Work of Christ. We can understand how sacrifice can be discussed under the Priestly work heading. But under which heading do we discuss the resurrection of Christ as part of His Mediatorial Work. And as you read through the literature on the Mediatorial Accomplishment of Christ, or as Murray calls it, the Accomplishment of Redemption, you will not see resurrection taken up under the rubric of Atonement, normally. And it was that particular question that Dr. Gaffin addressed himself to. And Murray himself was sensitive to that question. It also has a bearing on our understanding of the "application" of redemption.

So when you consider atonement, and you see that as the leading feature of the mediatorial accomplishment of Jesus Christ, you do not want to ~~focus so exclusively~~ focus so exclusively on the death. So that you overlook the active obedience on the one hand, and the resurrection on the other hand. The resurrection of Christ is integral to His mediatorial work. And I would say, in particular, in the Gospel accounts it is integral to an understanding of His death. It is of a piece with His death.

It is really very striking in the gospels that Jesus, at various points predicts His death. He warns His disciples about His death. But He never does that without simultaneously mentioning His resurrection. That He would die and on the third day rise again from the dead. And it is the resurrection of Christ which makes His work for us a definitive work, makes it a finished work, and also to be an effective work. And it is precisely here that we can appreciate the excellence of the sacrifice that we have under the New Covenant. For the Old Covenant sacrifices lacked precisely that dimension. There was no resurrection of the bulls and the goats. And that dimension was lacking because there was no theanthropic man. No Son of God being offered up as a sacrifice. And so, our understanding of the Priestly office must be expanded to include the dimension of the resurrection. So as to take account of the excellence, the faultlessness, of the Priestly Work of Christ. As opposed to the faultiness of the priestly work of the Old Covenant, according to Hebrews. And, the fulness of that mediatorial accomplishment is essential then, and is foundational for, the discharge of the Kingly Office.

I suppose what we are saying simply is, that we have to take account of the definitiveness and the excellence of the accomplishment of Jesus Christ, as over against the shortcomings of the Old Covenant. And therefore we have to expand the horizons that are given to us in the OT categories of Prophet, Priest, and King. Murray goes on to expound the comprehensiveness of the

biblical category of obedience, in terms of four specific biblical categories. These are: Sacrifice, Propitiation, Reconciliation, and Redemption. We will look at these in due course. But do look at the pre-eminently biblical and exegetical character of his material. This particular way of setting up the doctrine of the Atonement is distinctive with Murray. It was published in 1955, and printed first in the Presbyterian Journal.

In 1969 Westminster Press published a Dictionary of Christian Theology, edited by A. Richardson. The contributors were representative of contemporary Liberal theology. It is a very useful reference and bibliographic tool, for the Liberal-Existential view on a topic.

There was a major article on the "Atonement" by James Atkinson (Univ. of Sheffield). One of the major sub-headings was "Biblical Explanation of the Atonement." The sub-divisions are very interesting. They are: Christ as Obedient Servant; as Sacrifice; as Propitiation; as Reconciliation; as Redemption; as Victor over the Devil. A very interesting correspondance! Especially since Murray's book does not appear in the bibliography.

2) A Complex of Models.

Murray begins his discussion of the atonement by focusing on obedience as the over-arching, comprehensive category. So that what is thrown into the foreground is the unity and coherence of the biblical representation of the work of Christ. There are then various elements that enter into the work of atonement: Sacrifice, Propitiation, Reconciliation, and so forth. But these supplement one another. And the total complex displays the richness of God's provisions for our needs. The need is manifold and complex, and so is the remedy, which God supplies for the need. But the focus is on the unity and coherence of the biblical view of the atonement.

Modern theology does not share that view of the unity of biblical teaching, or even of the unity of NT teaching. And we can get a handle on that by looking at John Macquarrie in Principles of Christian Theology (Scribners, 1966) of Union Seminary. It is a good, one volume, existentialist-Bultmannian ~~Treatment of~~ Systematic Theology. He does not wish to separate the life and death of Christ. Reconciliation is to be connected both with the Incarnation and the Death of Jesus Christ. It is to be connected with the Christ-Event as a whole. And he goes on to say that "some of the materials given to us in the Gospels undoubtedly has some historical basis." But that is not the important point. "But it is not the dateable occurrence, the bare fact, that could have been observed by anyone there at the time, that is of interest to faith and theology. It is rather this fact as seen in depth, as revelation and providential event, as the vehicle for God's acting" (pp. 282-82).

So that, God's acting is to be understood as lying in a different dimension, in the dimension of inwardness. Rather than in the dimension of historical fact. The question then arises, "How is the Death of Jesus Christ to be singled out as the high-water mark of God's providential activity?" Macquarrie answers--"There is

no single answer to that question." Page 283, "The Church has never formulated a doctrine of the atonement with the same precision with which it has tried to define the person of Christ. Instead we find several explanatory models that have developed side by side." Shepherd thinks some groups have, but there is nothing like an ecumenical council to define the common understanding with respect to the Atonement. But Macquarrie's point is that there are several explanatory models. And that variety of models in the history of doctrine has parallel within the NT itself. The rival themes in the history of theology are to be traced back to the NT itself. "These models may supplement or complement one another, but they may also conflict with one another. And in the case of conflict the truth is found precisely in the paradox. The variety of models is necessary."

Why is it necessary? Well, the attempt is to put into an account or to suggest through historical occurrences, we might say, what in essence lies in a different dimension. What does not lie in the dimension of fact, of historical occurrence, or what can not be comprehended in any particular set of words. And so you need a variety of models.

Now the view that the NT offers a complex of theories, so that the truth of the atonement lies not in this or that theory, but precisely in the complex itself, is not an entirely new idea. Back in 1910, the General Assembly of the PCUSA, offered as an essential doctrine of the Word of God and the Standards of the Church, "Christ offered up 'himself ~~as sacrifice~~ to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile us to God.'"

The quote within the quote is from the WSC, a slightly inaccurate quote unfortunately. It inserts a "to." The obvious intention was to quote the Catechism. It was re-affirmed in 1923 by the PCUSA, as is. But the quote from the WSC is no longer set off by quotations.

In December of '23 the Auburn Affirmation is drawn up. It declared that that deliverance of 1923 embodied a "theory of the atonement." But it was not the only "theory" allowed by the Scriptures and the Standards. One must hold, according to the Auburn Affirmation, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, and that Christ died for our sin. It goes on to say-- anyone who holds this, whatever theory he employs to explain it, is worthy of all confidence and fellowship. Thus the Catechism embraced simply a theory and was not to be a test for ordination in the Church.

The Auburn Affirmation of '23 has now become the official position of the Church. In the sense that the Confession of 1967, by which office-bearers of the Church promise to be guided, contains this sentence. Cf., Paragraph 9.09-- "God's reconciling act in Jesus Christ is a mystery which Scripture describes in various ways. It is called the sacrifice of a lamb, a shepherd's giving his life for His sheep, atonement by a priest. Again, it is ransom of a slave, payment of debt, vicarious satisfaction of a legal penalty, and victory over the power of evil. These are expressions of a truth which remains beyond the reach of all theory, in the depths of God's love for man. They reveal the gravity

cost, and sure achievement of God's reconciling work. This is a slightly different perspective than Macquarrie, more Barthian. But comes out at basically the same point. That, whatever has to be said about the atonement is simply to direct our attention to the fact that the atonement itself lies in a different dimension. And therefore, anything that can be said about it, amounts to nothing more than a theory. And there are many theories of the atonement. And all together or in isolation do not touch ~~really what~~ lies beyond the reach of all theory, in the depths of God's love for man.

This is a common approach of our day. The truth does not lie in this or that theory, but in the complex of theories as such. There is one exception to this though. Well, we have to draw the line someplace. You can not ~~admit just~~ any theory. Macquarrie, (p.284) says, "One model that, ~~as~~ it seems to me, has usually been developed in such a way, that it becomes sub-Christian, in its thought of God and of reconciliation, is the notion of substitutionary punishment. The thought, that Christ was punished by the Father for the sins of men." He then goes on specifically to note, "The idea of vicarious punishment has had considerable importance in the history of the doctrine of the Atonement. Especially in Calvinism and in Fundamentalist Evangelicalism. It offers an affront to reason and to conscience."

Macquarrie also appeals to the Parable of the Prodigal Son. This Parable allows the Liberal to stress the fact that God's unchanging attitude is one of reconciliation. God is ever ready to forgive, to receive back the prodigal son. And there is no complicated machinery which is necessary to bring about that reconciliation. Nothing about sacrifice, etc. "No complex historical happening was necessary for God to be able to accept men." He does not take account of the fact that the parable must be understood as part of the total NT revelation. And not every parable is designed to say everything about a given subject, that can and should be said about it.

Now several theories. Begin with Macquarrie's own theory, derived from what is sometimes called the...

3) Classic View of the Atonement.

Macquarrie classifies the various views of the atonement as Subjective or Objective. A convenient classification.

Objective views recognize an atonement outside of man and independent of him. Models of Sacrifice and Satisfaction (the classic Reformed view would go here). He finds that these views are deficient because they do not stress the existential dimension. He wants to stress that man is saved only in so far as he responds to and appropriates into his existence the saving activity that is directed toward him. And it is that aspect of appropriation that is lacking in this view (Objective) of the atonement. Or, to put it ~~in~~ Warfield's terms, the problem is that these views of the atonement terminate on God rather than on man.

A Reformed response--we are at this point simply talking about the atonement. We have to go on to the next major division in Sys. Theo., which is the application of redemption. So that it is not as if the application or

the existential aspect is left entirely out of view. But when we are talking about the atonement it does terminate on God and not on man.

Subjective views are described thus by Macquarrie-- They concentrate on the impression and influence that the life and death of Jesus has exercised on man. Man responds to the manifestation of love in Jesus Christ by becoming loving himself. So that the mediatorial accomplishment of Jesus Christ terminates upon man and is effective in the impression and the influence that it has on man. And then you would think of the Moral Influence Theory and the Governmental Theory of the Atonement (more on these later).

Macquarrie rejects those views because they never really get beyond the idea of an imitatio Christi. That is, they never get beyond the idea that man must imitate Christ. They see the Atonement as influencing man's way of life! That, to be sure, is the good element, from Macquarrie's point of view. It lacks the dimension of the intrusion of a saving work of God, the objective element. And so, in good dialectical fashion, we move beyond Subjective and Objective views, by means of an appeal to the Classic View. Here Macquarrie is indebted to a work by G. Aulen Christus Victor, (which represents a highwater mark in modern discussion of the Atonement). Aulen distinguishes three types of Atonement: Objective/Anselm, Subjective/Humanistic approach, and Classic. The Classic view is found to be rooted in the NT and in the description that is given there of Christ's victory over principalities and powers.

You recall, that in the early Church there developed a Ransom Theory of the Atonement. That the atonement is a ransom price paid to Satan, that Satan has control over men. But the atonement of Christ, that is a ransom price paid to Satan. So that Satan has to relinquish control over men and so men are liberated from the power of sin.

The basic idea of the Classic view, according to Macquarrie, is that Christ achieves a victory over the powers that enslave man, And therefore Christ achieves deliverance from them. Christ battles the powers of darkness and He overcomes them. Now of course, the ancients thought in terms of Satan and demons (real demons, principalities and powers). But that language has to be demythologized. The demonic power that enslaves men is now to be understood as that which estranges man from his true being, his neighbor, and from God. It is a demonic power in terms of which man finds his security and ultimate concern in being(s), instead of in BEING. As an illustration: you get an unemployment check instead of contributing to the unemployment coffers.

The point is-- On the Cross, Jesus Christ oriented Himself so fully and so unreservedly to BEING (God), that He abandoned all security in beings, even to the point that He refused to lay hold even on His earthly existence. And so, sustained by BEING, He became capable, in the ultimate sense, of self-giving love. And so He became in effect, the model of self-giving love. Because you see, what it comes down to is this: That that victory of Christ, victory over enslavement to things, is

to be repeated in the lives of His disciples. And that does not arise above a notion of imitatio Christi (Shepherd suggests).

Macquarrie is aware of this. He continually asks--But how does this get beyond an imitation of Christ? Because you see, if you say there is an objective victory over forces that oppose (however modern or contemporary the language used), it is still a resort to mythology. And the most there is by way of an objective element here is the noetic thrust to whatever happened then and there. And who knows what happened then and there? But whatever happened nudges us to respond by way of an imitation. And so, really the very last words (not chapter), by way of trying to give an account, to what the death of Christ actually achieves. The last word is this: "empowered by the unitive being of the Holy Spirit (whatever that is?) operating through the revelatory event of the Cross, the disciple commits himself in faith. That is to say, rejects the temptations of idolatry, and gives himself in love."

That does not amount to much more than a Moral Influence Theory of the Atonement. And therefore does not rise above the level of a Subjective view. Unless you are prepared to do full justice to the substitutionary, penal quality of the Atonement of Christ, you are inevitably, whatever efforts you make to the contrary, you inevitably sink back into a subjective, moral influence theory.

4-28-81

1 4) Moral Influence Theory of the Atonement.

This theory had a significant place in theology since the Reformation, but its roots are older than that. I say, Moral Influence Theory, but actually there are many variety, nuances, in the theory, in terms of different writers. Hodge and Warfield discuss the doctrine at length, as do the systematic theology textbooks.

The basic idea--what Christ does for us, He does in order to move us to repentance. And there is nothing then that stands in the way of God's forgiving of the penitent heart. The man who repents is forgiven. But the death of Christ comes in order to move us to repentance.

The influence that Jesus brings to bear upon us may be thought as brought in different ways. More broadly, it can be the influence of His teaching as a whole, or His example. But when that influence is brought into conjunction with His, specifically with His, Death, then that death may well be conceived of as a supreme manifestation of love on the part of God. Of love which enters into and takes up into itself, our griefs and sorrows. That sympathetic resonance with man in the miseries of his life. And when we see that kind of love exhibited in the Cross, then we are moved to respond appropriately. In particular, to repentance, and then forgiveness follows upon that.

This theory was initially advanced by Abelard (1079-1142). In opposition to that of Anselm. Abelard's view became that of the Socinians, at the time of the Reformation. And so Warfield describes it, the Socinian view, as-- "They look upon the work of Christ as summed up in the proclamation of the willingness of God to forgive sins

on the sole condition of its abandonment" (Person and Work of Christ, p.360). And then, Jesus Christ would be looked on as a kind of martyr-figure. A martyr in the cause of righteousness.

Now I suppose there are other ways we come into contact with the Moral Influence Theory of the Atonement. Compare for instance, #186 of the Trinity Hymnal--"When I survey the Wondrous Cross." As far as the language of the hymn is concerned it would be hard to prove it rises above a Moral Influence idea. But I think you would also have to say that, what is said in the hymn can certainly be said within the broader and deeper context of the Orthodox Satisfaction Theory. Presumably that is how it got into the Trinity Hymnal. It was also Prof. Machen's favorite hymn.

But the Moral Influence Theory was most recently revived in the Reformed community, in the Synodical Reformed Churches (GRK--Berkouwer, et.al.). It was revived by H. Wiersinga, a student's pastor in Amsterdam. In 1971 he produced a dissertation which bears the title The Atonement in Theological Discussion (Kok in Kampen, 1971), written under G.C.Berkouwer. There is a summary in English, pp.2-0-207, at the end of the dissertation. Wiersinga was motivated by a deep concern for the theological relevance of the doctrine of the atonement. And he finds that the question of the relevance of the gospel, in our day, does not have to do with the question of personal salvation--"How do I find a gracious God?" But the question of the relevance of the gospel is its relevance with respect to social disintegration. And what he felt was, that the traditional doctrine of the atonement makes the atonement simply to be a matter of the past. And therefore is lacking in the kind of relevance which our situation demands. And it is in that context that he undertook his study, which is both exegetical and dogma-historical in character. And he turns attention to the effect that the sacrifice of Christ must have upon us. And that is the characteristic expression--he wants an effective doctrine of the Atonement, an atonement that effects something. And so he seeks to argue exegetically, that the atonement is not directed to God, to satisfy His justice or His honor. In other words, to back away from the Anselmian way. And indicates that if he has to choose between Anselm and Abelard, then Abelard wins. But he does not quite want to do that either. But in any case the atonement is directed to man in order to bring him to repentance. The death of Christ has a shock effect that leads to repentance and renewal.

Wiersinga's position led to several years of intense theological discussion in the Netherlands. And was made a matter of ecclesiastical discipline. That too raised all kinds of questions. In the end (provisionally, at least), the Synod pronounced the view to be unacceptable. But Wiersinga was allowed to maintain his ministerial standing, and to discharge the office of a minister.

5) The Governmental Theory of the Atonement.

Warfield--"The work of Christ so affects man by the spectacle of sufferings born by Him, as to deter man from sin. And by thus deterring man from sin, enables

God to forgive sin with safety to His moral government of the world." That is to say, we look upon the spectacle of the suffering of Christ, we look upon His sufferings and death. And therein we see God's hatred of sin. And we see how much He detests sin. And in viewing that we are ourselves, we are deterred from sinning. We are, to put it another way, brought to repentance and reformation. And so God can forgive us. But He can do so with safety to His moral government. Because we have had demonstrated to us the fact that God does indeed hate sin. And that forgiveness is not in a vacuum. But it is in the context of the demonstration of His hatred for sin.

It is sometimes called The Rectoral Theory of the Atonement. And it is that feature of it, that idea of safety that carries it beyond a simple Moral Influence Theory. You see in the death of Christ now, not so much a manifestation of God's love for man (although this is not necessarily excluded). But we see His hatred for sin. And so the death of Christ functions as an example of what sin deserved.

That view was developed by Grotius (1583-1645) as an alternative to the Socinian Moral Influence Theory. And it seeks to do more justice to the objective side of the work of Christ. But it still falls short of the Orthodox doctrine of Penal Satisfaction. And therefore can not be classified as an Anselmian view. And yet, because it is set against the Moral Influence view it is not simply Abelardian either. The sequence is: Anselm -- Grotius -- Abelard. Hodge also classifies the Remonstrants under this heading. But he observes the distinctive note that is sounded here. The idea that the death of Christ does not satisfy the justice of God, but is nevertheless accepted as such. It is accepted as the equivalent. And that is a medieval idea, a nominalist idea. That, strictly speaking, the death of Christ satisfies for sins no more than does the blood of bulls and goats. And yet it avails for the purpose God sees fit to let it avail. And God has seen fit to make the death of Christ the condition of the pardon of sins against His moral law. And so that death is accepted. The so-called *expiation* view of the Medieval period, revived again in the Remonstrant context.

acceptilation

That twist has its kinship obviously with the Anselmian view, in that sense that, there is some concept of satisfaction being made. But it is not a full satisfaction, it is the equivalent, or what is accepted as such a satisfaction.

The Governmental Theory is important to us because of the place it has come to hold in Wesleyan-Arminianism. For example in R. Watson and Miley (in particular).

And Miley presents an extended argument for it, and holds that it is the only theory of the atonement that is compatible with settled Arminian principles. The atonement simply renders men saveable, but does not necessarily save them. And therein Arminianism distinguishes itself consciously from Calvinism.

But you see, when you conceive of the atonement as penal substitution and satisfaction of the justice of God, it is difficult to escape the notion of an effective atonement. An atonement which does not simply make men saveable,

but actually saves them. If the justice of God is satisfied then a man is saved. But in the Arminian scheme the Atonement does not save. God saves those who repent and who believe. And He can do that with safety to His moral government. Sometimes when we think of Arminianism, we think largely of the doctrine of Predestination, and maybe that of the extent of the atonement. But also tied in with that whole complex is a view of the nature of the atonement. And that should not be overlooked.

d. The Nature of the Atonement as Expiatory Sacrifice.

1) Definition of the Doctrine.

We begin with WSC #25--"How does Christ execute the office of a Priest?"

"Christ executes the office of a Priest, in His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us."

Now, in due time, we will come back to the idea of Reconciliation and Intercession. For the moment we concentrate on the fact that Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice.

It seems to me very clear that the adherents of the Westminster Standards are clearly committed to a Satisfaction Theory of the Atonement. And the Atonement as Satisfaction appears most clearly as we focus in on that atonement as expiatory sacrifice.

You can look at it this way--in particular we would have to say that the atonement is designed to meet our needs as sinners. And these needs are various. Or, we have one need, with various aspects or angles to it. In particular, sin entails guilt. And guilt, from the perspective of sin, or sin as resulting in guilt, has in view, blameworthiness. And as blameworthiness guilt entails liability. And that liability is the liability to punishment. Sin--Guilt--Liability--Punishment(Penalty). So you have that series of words (Latin words) you will come across in theology:

Peccatum--Sin	(which gives rise to...)
Culpa-----Guilt	{ " " " }
Reatus-----Liability	{ " " " }
Poena-----Penalty.	

The sinner is guilty and liable to punishment. Gen.2:17 the penalty for the first transgression was death. And sinfulness is the lot of the human race and so is death. Ezek.18:4 the soul who sins is the one who will die. The point of the text--each soul must bear responsibility for his own sin, for the penalty. But incidental to it, it is clear that the penalty of sin is, as a matter of fact, DEATH. Rom.6:23 is clear. So that sin involves guilt. And guilt makes us liable to that punishment which is death.

The gospel is that Jesus has died in our place. His atonement is vicarious. And by that word "vicarious" we do not mean that His death is simply for our benefit. Of course, the death of Christ is for our benefit. But it is not simply for our benefit. It is death in our place. He bore our sins imputed to Him. And as the bearer of my sins He was put to death in my place.

A question was asked in class--What do you mean by death?

Death is--1) Separation from God, 2) Destruction of what is opposed to God. And therefore it is the destruction of sin as it is opposed to God. And for sinners it means their separation from God, their separation from God who is for them their life. It is the opposite of life. Life wherever it manifests itself. On the biological, soiritual, etc. level. And life for us, the ~~essence of life~~ ~~effordus~~ as image-bearers of God, is, at least in my judgement, communion with God. And the opposite of that is separation from God and the undergoing of punishment. It is not annihilation. Read the article "Immortality," by N. Shepherd in the Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia.

I do not want to spend too much time here. Though this does not reflect the theological or homilectical weight of the area. We are at the heart and center, the core of the gospel. The fact that our sins are ~~Borne by~~ Jesus. He bears our sins together with the guilt. He expiates the guilt. He bears punishment resulting in forgiveness. That is obviously at the heart and core of the gospel. And so it is familiar to us, to be sure. But it bears reflection on as perhaps, no other subject does.

But the gospel is not simply that Jesus Christ died for me. It is that He died for me and He rose again for me. II Cor. 5:15 "and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who ~~died~~ and rose again on their behalf." And that is to say, the penalty of sin is borne, but it is exhausted. It is fully borne. The penalty for sin has been paid. The liability to penalty has been satisfied. ^T The guilt of sin has been removed. And the sin itself has been expiated.

That is in view with the Resurrection. There is more in view than that of course. But you can not escape the idea that Jesus not simply suffers and dies. But He puts an end to suffering and death. He rises from the dead on the third day. He does not remain under the power of sin. So the sacrifice which Christ made is both expiatory and vicarious. And therefore ~~benefits~~ flow to those for whom it was made (spoken of earlier). Specifically, the benefit that comes into view at this point is that of forgiveness. And forgiveness is simply the annulment of the judicial sentence of condemnation. That sentence of condemnation under which we come into the world, by virtue of our connection with the forefather's, is annulled. Sin is forgiven. And forgiveness is grounded in the expiatory sacrifice of Christ.

And how that has to be pressed home to the hearts and minds of God's people, so that they see that very clearly. And that bears repeating in the pulpit, application of the message in preaching. And application is tremendously important. But you do not equate application with instruction as to doing. You can not say that there is application in a sermon only when the ~~people~~ have been told to do something. Application can be also to the intellect or understanding, or mind. Application can also be to the understanding so that the people

of God know what they are to think and are to believe. As well as what they are to do. I do not mean to suppress application as doing. I hope that recent history has demonstrated that fact, if anything else. And it is that truth that has to be brought home. And it is as we grasp hold of that truth. Of course, that does not exhaust what faith is. Saving faith certainly entails an understanding of Jesus and what He has done for us.

Now there is another aspect of that doctrine, that it seems to me cannot be overlooked. Sin not only entails guilt and liability to punishment, but sin also entails pollution. After all, sin is defined as transgression of the Law, or want of conformity to the Law. And it is just because of sin in its character as transgression of the Law, that it entails guilt and punishment. And so the expiatory sacrifice is directed to our need. The objective accomplishment of Jesus Christ is directed to our need in all of its aspects. To our need not only as guilty sinners, but also to our need as polluted sinners.

And that is why Murray says in the chapter on the "Nature of the Atonement"; in the subsection on sacrifice, "In this offering Himself He expiated guilt and purged away sin. So that we may draw near to God in full assurance of faith, and enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

Expiated and Purged away--note the double reference. Now that passage alluded to is Heb.10:22. But also cf., Heb.10:2. Jesus does what the ineffective sacrifices could not do. He gives us freedom from sin and freedom from guilt. As we may distinguish these two from one another. As we have it in I Jn.1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

And there is that double aspect to the redemptive accomplishment of Jesus Christ. And that double aspect is forensic and transformational. And you see, if you do not see that transformational aspect as grounded in the work of Christ, then you make Justification dependent on what Christ has done. And Sanctification dependent on what you can do for yourself. And then, when you realize that we are to strive for that sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord(cf., Heb.12:14). Then you make salvation dependently partly on what Christ has done and partly on what you can do for yourself. And that is destructive of the Reformation. The Reformation was designed to teach us that, our redemption in every aspect of its application is the benefit purchased by Jesus Christ. And therefore it is grounded in His Mediatorial accomplishment. And therefore when we look at that Mediatorial accomplishment, specifically under the categories of Sacrifice, we have to see in it, at one and the same time, not only the ground for our forgiveness, in the sense that the penalty for sin has been exhausted in the death of Jesus Christ. But we must also see the ground for our transformation, our cleansing, because that was what the sacrifice was intended to do--to cleanse. Cleansing is frequently a theme, and refers not to the guilt of sin.

It is not simply another way of saying freedom from guilt. Cf., Heb. 9:14 "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" It is not simply with reference to guilt, but from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God. Though the change is not simply in the conscience but in patterns of behavior. Also Cp., II Peter 1:9 which is in the context of faith, moral virtue, knowledge, etc. And then he adds--"For he who lacks these is blind or shortsighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins." And the vocabulary is that of . . . And you can not help but be impressed with that vocabulary in the NT. With how tightly woven together are the legal and moral benefits which flow to us from the work of Christ. Because they are given to us in one and the same act of sacrifice.

Jesus is the sacrifice for sins. And, in a word, sin is not only forgiven, but it is destroyed by the death of Jesus Christ. It is a full redemption that our Savior has purchased for us. Or, Jesus does not cleanse simply the outside of the cup, but the inside as well.

- 2) The Foundation for Expiatory Sacrifice in the O.T.
The biblical warrant for this has deep roots in the O.T., it is quite apparent. And therefore the OT is foundational for understanding the work of Christ. But as Murray points out--"Not as though the work of Christ is patterned after what we find in the OT . . . but the opposite is the case. The OT sacrificial system is patterned after the true and final work of Christ."

It is from that point of view a preview. And it has a pedagogical purpose--to lead us to Christ. And so, Hebrews 10:1 points out that the Law was only a shadow of good things, not the reality. Not that Jesus was the shadow. The shadow of the sacrifice is cast ahead of the reality of Jesus Christ, in order to bring us to the reality.

But the shadow is defective, as shadows are. And can not really do the job it is designed to do, cf. Heb. 10:1. "For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near." Also 10:4 "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." And because that shadow is defective, as Murray shows, we cannot expect to find a one for one correspondence between shadow and reality. And yet, the basic point is clear. The blood sacrifice is made because of sin. And the result is deliverance from sin and its consequences. The sacrifices expiate and cleanse. And the book of Hebrews makes clear that the work of Christ is to be understood in the light of the OT sacrificial system.

Murray notes that Heb. 9:6-15 singles out the transactions of the great Day of Atonement, as illuminating for us the work of Christ. And the law for the great Day of Atonement is given to us in Lev. 16. It is not superfluous, in that connection, to note that there were two goats. The blood of the one makes atonement

for the sins of the people. The other is kept alive, and all the sins of Israel are placed upon it. And then it is sent into the Wilderness, as the scapegoat. The death penalty is meted out and the sins are born away. Sin, together with its guilt, is dealt with in an efficacious and definitive way. The sacrificial system is not the only background we have in the OT (more later on that).

4-30-81

Another background for understanding the sacrifice of Christ as substitutionary atonement, is also found in the history of David toward the end of his life. This is from when he took a census of the people. Cf., II Sam. 24 and I Chron. 21-22:1. David takes the census in order to show the strength, the numbers, at his disposal, for war. The Lord then comes to him, through the prophet, and sets before him three possible penalties. And of these David chose the three-day plague. In terms of which 70,000 people died, throughout the Land. And so, it is just at that point where David thought he was strong in numbers of people, that the Lord struck and numbers of people perished. And then, as the story unfolds, the Death Angel is poised above Jerusalem on the threshing floor of Araunah, on that hill above Jerusalem. In order to strike the fatal blow at the heart of the covenant people, right at Jerusalem itself. And at that point the Lord stays the hand of the Death Angel, and the plague is brought to an end. And it is precisely there on the threshing floor of Araunah, that David builds an altar for sacrifice. So the sin of the nation is laid upon the animals. And the wrath of God is not just simply suspended. That wrath of God is poured out on the sacrifices that are offered. And it is precisely there where the substitute dies, that the Death Plague ceases. And so, as the author of Chronicles is especially concerned to point out, it is the threshing floor of Araunah that becomes the site for the Temple. Planned by David and then finally executed by Solomon (cf., I Chron. 22:1). And so the threshing floor of Araunah becomes a place of perpetual sacrifice in Israel. And the Temple service of sacrifice is a fore-shadowing of the offering up of Jesus Christ.

3) Jesus Death is represented as Sacrifice.

There is adequate even abundant biblical evidence for regarding the work of Jesus Christ in terms of Sacrifice. Cf., Eph. 5:1-2 "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."

In vs. 1 urges us to be imitators of God as loved children. And the idea of imitation there, of course, has reference to the love which is demonstrated in Jesus Christ. We are to love as Christ has loved us. But the idea of imitation doesn't extend to the self-offering or the sacrifice as such. The idea is not that we are to destroy ourselves, to destroy our lives as sacrifices. Rather we are to love with a love that is patterned after the love which led Jesus Christ to offer Himself as a sacrifice.

And you remember earlier, that we were tracing the source of the atonement. And that we found that it had

its source in the love of God. And that love comes to expression in the way in which Jesus Christ willingly undertakes the mediatorial commitment. And that love is a love which is directed to enemies (cf. Rom. 5:8,10). And our love also is to be patterned after that, we too are to love our enemies. And that love is a distinguishing love at the same time. That sacrifice, as we shall see next week as we get into the doctrine of the extent of the atonement, that sacrifice is a sacrifice for the Elect. And I think that comes to expression by way of reflection, imitation, in our response to that. In that our love which is to extend to all men, in terms of common grace. Is nevertheless, directed in a special way, to the household of faith (Gal.6:10).

But Eph.5:2 speaks of a self-giving that is to be construed as an offering, as a sacrifice. And the greek terms here are $\thetaυσία$ and $\προσφορά$ - As a sacrifice, $\thetaυσία$ is the more general of the two terms. And more abstractly it could refer to any kind of offering or presentation. But in Eph.5:2 the term is not so used. It is an offering that is described as a sacrifice, $\thetaυσία$. Now in his commentary on Eph., C. Hodge, $\thetaυσία$ was something slain. And that is what it is that determines the nature of an offering. Well, I think we would have to say that the term does not necessarily mean something slain. In Phil.4:18 Paul is said to have received gifts from the Philippians. And these gifts are called "an acceptable sacrifice" ($\thetaυσίαν ἀρετῆς$). And in Rom.12:1 we are told that we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices" ($\θυσίας ζώσαντων$). And there it would be hard to think in terms of something that had been slain, except in a figurative sense.

But although the point is not that $\thetaυσία$, as a word, does not mean contain the idea of something that is slain. The point is nevertheless, the point that Hodge is trying to make is quite right. The language of Eph.5:2 is derived from Exodus 29:18 where the sacrifice is a ram, that has been slaughtered. And if you ask yourself the question--How and when did Christ offer himself as a sacrifice? Then the only answer could surely be, at the cross.

The Book of Hebrews, more than any other, applies the language of sacrifice and offering to Jesus Christ. And the background is clearly the sacrificial system of the OT, in the Book of Hebrews. The animals are slain in order to deal with the problem of sin. And so, Heb. 10:10 says that we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all." Again, you note the particular reference to our being "made holy through the sacrifice," and that was the point that I was trying to bring out yesterday. That when you think of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as expiation, you do not think of that exclusively in terms of the benefit of forgiveness. But you think of that in terms of the benefit of transformation, also. We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.

Then vs. 11 & 12, "And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered

one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God." The work of Christ is spoken of in vs.12 as the "offering of sacrifice" (προσφορά θυσίας). And this work of Christ, which is the offering of sacrifice, takes the place of daily blood sacrifices, mentioned in vs.11. And there are many other verses of similar import: Heb.9:26; 10:26; etc. All of which serve to give us ample warrant to construe the work of Jesus Christ, in terms of expiatory sacrifice.

Now we must also take into account the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant on this point of Sacrifice.

And first of all, It was necessary for the priest of the Old Covenant to offer sacrifices for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. Cf., Heb.7:27;9:7. And only then, was he in a position, having offered sacrifices for his own sin, to offer sacrifice for the sins of the people. But Jesus did not offer sacrifices for His own sins. He was without sin. He died because He bore our sins. And the fact that Jesus does not offer sacrifices for His own sins, in contrast to the OT priests who must do that, that fact again, is an index to the transcendent efficacy, definitiveness, and perfection of His atoning work. And the emphasis in Hebrews, on the defectiveness of the old provision, in comparison to the definitiveness, finality, and efficacy of the provision of the New Covenant. And this is another example of how the New Covenant exceeds, goes beyond, the Old Covenant.

Second-- Jesus was not only a priest offering sacrifice, but He was Himself the sacrifice. J. Murray draws this out well in Redemption Accomplished and Applied. This is an element that obviously could not be prefigured in the OT sacrifices. That simple truth in Heb.9:14 that "Jesus Christ offered Himself unblemished unto God." And in offering Himself, as the sacrifice, in His own offering up of Himself. Again you see, that point that we dwelt on earlier, here we have His passive obedience. But it is abundantly clear, that Jesus Christ is not passive in that obedience. He is intensely active-- He offers Himself, in enduring the penalty that is attached to sin. It is passive in the sense that He is suffering the penalty of sin. But as He offers Himself a sacrifice for sins He is intensely active.

Now in the light of all that, and all that the gospel has to say about the death of Jesus Christ as sacrifice. And the shedding of blood without which there is no remission of sins. The Gospel accounts of the Crucifixion may strike you as somewhat surprising. From this point of view-- that, as you read that account, it is not the blood-shedding which is prominent in the actual account of the crucifying of Jesus Christ. Certainly the idea of blood-shedding is not in the foreground, in the literary description of that event, in comparison with (if you will pardon the pun) the colorful picture that we have in the OT of the blood which poured out on the altar and so forth. That picture of the sacrifices in the OT.

In the Gospel accounts the blood is not mentioned in connection with Jesus dying. I think it is certainly

implied in the fact, that He was nailed to the Cross. And this blood, which is poured out because of the wounds, certainly comes put in the hymnology of the Church. It is not so much in the foreground, in the Crucifixion. In a certain sense, you could almost say that the shedding of blood is incidental almost, to the particular method in which Jesus is put to death, that being hanged on a cross.

But blood is mentioned in Jn. 19:34 "but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water." But even that incident occurs after the death of Jesus Christ, after He had expired. And is offered to us, from a certain point of view, as a confirmation of that death.

But just for that reason you see, it is all the more remarkable that the Apostles so clearly bring the benefits of salvation into conjunction with the blood of Christ. We are justified by His blood. We are purged, cleansed by His blood. And you see, the fact that the Apostles use that, is just another indication of the pervasive character of the category of Sacrifice as derived from the OT. And it is the OT category pre-eminently in terms of which we are to understand the work of Jesus Christ.

The Atonement then, is to be thought of in terms of Sacrifice, and sacrifice means the death of the victim. And the atonement is therefore to be thought of as issuing from the death of Christ. If Christ had simply suffered and not died, there would be no atonement. And that is why you see, you can not think of the resurrection as simply a recovery from a deep swoon. Because a Swoon Theory not only affects our understanding of the Resurrection as a miracle. But it also has implications, and is destructive for our understanding of the Atonement, it has consequences for our ~~view of the atonement~~. The atonement does not arise simply from the suffering of Christ, but from His death. His death in our place. He died and then rose again from the dead.

4) The Sacrifice as a Gift.

It is quite clear that Jesus Christ had given Himself a sacrifice for sins. And therefore the benefits which come to us from the atoning work of Jesus Christ, from His death. Come to us as a gift in fulfillment of God's promise of salvation. God's promise of salvation, promises of that sort are gifts. And that salvation comes as a gift. And because it is a gift, it can only be received. Someone gives you a gift you can only receive the gift. And that receiving is faith. And faith means to rest in what God has done for us in the gift of His Son. And as we rest in what God has done for us in the gift of His Son. We receive the gift of forgiveness and eternal life. So the gift character of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is surely something that we have to appreciate, and I think, by and large, that we do.

Now when you recall that the sacrifices are a shadow, a pre-shadowing of the things ~~which are~~ to come. When you recall that they are patterned after the reality which is in Jesus Christ. So clear in Heb. 10:1. Then you can understand that as shadows of that reality those sacrifices reflect this all-important aspect of our salvation as well. Namely the pure gift character

of our salvation, the pure grace character of our salvation. And you see, it is so important to keep that in mind, just because of the way in which the sacrifices are imbedded in the legal system that we call the Mosaic Economy, or the Mosaic Covenant. The sacrificial system as a shadow of what we are given in Jesus Christ, was obviously not devised by man as a means for gaining favor with God. The sacrifices therefore are not to be construed, even in their context in the Old Covenant; they are not to be construed as works of the flesh. Which the Apostle condemns as contrary to the gift ~~and~~ grace character of our redemption. Those sacrifices are not to be construed in their context in the Mosaic Covenant, as a shadow of what we have in Christ; they are not to be construed as an effort from the bottom up, to achieve reconciliation with God. Rather we have to understand that that system, that Mosaic System flows from the will of God to forgive. And the will of God to forgive freely. And therefore, that ~~system~~, as a system, is an exhibition of God's goodness, of His grace, of His compassion, to His chosen people Israel. And precisely as such, it leads us directly to Jesus Christ. Not through a back door, but through the front door. As a shadow leads us to the reality. Specifically, the sacrifices are God's gifts. They are the divinely appointed way of forgiveness. And therefore that system, that Mosaic System, is not to be construed as a kind of "do it yourself kit," which God has given to Israel. Where it is complete in itself, with instructions. So go ahead. And when you fail come back and I will do something else for you. No, that system leads directly to Jesus. But because it leads directly to Jesus, it does not yet contain Jesus. In terms of the redemptive-historical unfolding. And that is why it is defective. And you see, when you appreciate the God-given, ~~grace character~~ of that dispensation. You can appreciate how difficult it was for the Jews to abandon that for the sake of the definitive work of Jesus Christ. And yet it must be abandoned, because everything, even that God-given system, everything that falls short of the name of Jesus Christ, is ineffective for our salvation. And if that system is ineffective for our salvation, how much more so the systems that we might devise for ourselves.

But you see, just because that system was not a "do it yourself" ~~system~~. And on the contrary exhibited the grace of God and the gift of redemption. That is precisely why those sacrifices had to be received as all of God's gifts had to be received, in faith. And that is why the sacrifices had to be offered in faith, in utter dependence on the grace of God, in dependence on the goodness of God exhibited in the fact that the system is given to Israel. And apart from faith, those sacrifices are an abomination to God, a stench in the nostrils of God. And that is what the Prophets were talking about. And they excoriated Israel for its sacrifices that were not the sacrifices of faith, that were not demonstrative of a love for the covenant God. And again, the fact that that sort of activity was possible. In terms of which, God's good gifts of grace were transformed into works of the flesh, that were an abo-

mination to God. Is just another indication of the faultiness of the system. Which ~~was~~ at last overcome in the gift par excellence, namely the gift of God's Son, who died on the Cross.

The sacrifices then tell us, that forgiveness ~~comes as~~ a gift from God. And the gift, is not in the nature of a pure executive act, or decree of forgiveness. No, the sacrifices are ~~necessary~~. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. And that blood-shedding is not simply God's appointment, in some legalistic sense. But it is God's gift. It is exactly what we need for our redemption.

e. The Nature of the Atonement as Propitiation.

Will be following the outline of Murray in Redemption Accomplished and Applied. And so will not be dealing with the next three topics to the extent that Expiation was dealt with. But do read Murray on Propitiation, Reconciliation, and Redemption.

But just a few words about Propitiation, the notion of.

There are four texts which come into view at this point-- I Jn. 2:2; 4:10; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17.

The group of words that comes into view at this point are
ἱλαστήριον ἰδίοιο καὶ ἀδικουμένων

And those words mean "to propitiate" in the sense of "to appease," "to conciliate." And so the word has reference to the wrath of God. Sin is an offense against the holiness of God, And as such, it calls for the wrath of God. Because you see, sin is not only a breach of the divine law, it is also a provocation of the Almighty God. And when men defy the living and true God, God gets angry. He gets very angry. And His wrath is manifested against all the godlessness and wickedness of men (cf Rom. 1:18). And that manifestation is in the form of punishment inflicted on the ungodly. And so it is b

And so it is not surprising then, that when we come to the Atonement, we see that that Atonement is designed to meet our need as sinners. And therefore specifically, it is designed to meet the need which is ours because of the wrath of God. And so we are not surprised to discover that the Atonement, is viewed in Scripture as Propitiation. As appeasement, as conciliation.

Now, as J. Murray points out, men find it unacceptable to speak of the atonement as Propitiation. Because of, in the popular mind it is very difficult ~~sometimes to think~~ of God as exhibiting wrath. It is argued that God is love, and does not love, in fact, exclude wrath. Confer Murray's argumentation that Love and Wrath are not mutually exclusive. Any more than they are in the experience of a father. Who loves his children very deeply. And yet, becomes wrathful when they are disobedient. But that antipathy to seeing God as a God of wrath, has come to expression in the way in which the four passages mentioned above have been translated, in the RSV (following the work of C.H. Dodd), has consistently translated the Greek terms as "expiation." But R. Nicole in Westminster Theo. Jnl., 1955, effectively destroyed the work of Dodd.

And so, we are somewhat disappointed that the NIV seems to show a little bit of the same antipathy. Consistant avoidance of the term "propitiation." Uses "atoning sacrifice," or similar. No theological problem with it.

f. The Nature of the Atonement as Reconciliation.

The word-group in view is that of $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\acute{\iota}\xi\eta\varsigma$, $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\acute{\iota}\xi\eta\varsigma$,
and the two cognates-- $\delta\iota\alpha\lambda\acute{\iota}\xi\eta\varsigma$, $\alpha\pi\omicron\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\acute{\iota}\xi\eta\varsigma$.

The atonement as reconciliation, has in view the alienation ~~which exists~~ between God and man, on account of sin. We look at that sin now, from the point of view, of the alienation that exists between God and man. You recall that the Israelites were chosen by God to be a people separated unto the Lord. They were separated out from among the nations, to be the Lord's special treasured possession. Communion with the Lord is surely at the heart of that covenant relation. But instead of maintaining that covenant relation, as Isaiah said, "your iniquities have separated you from your God." There is a separation, an alienation, ~~which is~~ characterized by enmity between God and man.

But on God's part, as Murray points out, it is enmity without malice and without the malignity which characterizes our relations often with people. Or the alienation that sometimes enters in between people, and they become hostile to one another. It is hard for us to think of that relation without malice. But we have to think of God's ~~enmity~~ as without that kind of evil malice. But in any case, reconciliation is needed. And so we are not surprised to find that atonement effects reconciliation, which is needed because of sin.

Now I think we would have to say that there is enmity on both sides, along with that enmity between God and man. There is obviously man's hostility toward God. That is involved surely in the idea of sin. But there is also God's hostility towards men. The wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness. And when we think of the atonement, as atonement, we have in view not man's hostility towards God, as some theologians would want it stated. But it has in view God's hostility towards man. Because of ~~man's~~ man's sin against God. And that is important to remember, because it is of a piece with an idea we developed in the beginning, over against the Subjective Views of the Atonement, that the atonement terminates on God, not on man. It has in view the reconciliation of God, the Propitiation of God, the Satisfaction of God's justice.

Now this is the case, even when the Scripture, rather uniformly, speaks of our being reconciled to God, or the reconciliation of men to God. We think of the exhortation--"Be ye reconciled to God!" And it is because of that language that some theologians have thought of that as exhortation for you to cease your hostility towards God. But in fact the thought is to lay hold upon the means whereby the enmity of God is put away. And Murray argues that point at considerable length, in Redemption Accomplished and Applied. And so I think the argument is clear enough that I will not argue it here at length. But you should digest it.

Now that theme of alienation has been given prominence in recently in the Confession of 1967 of the UPCUSA. The Confession was dated because every confession has to be overcome with more relevant statements as time moves on. And it is the that the Confession is dated, not only in its title, but also in view of the fact that it has its ~~back-~~origin on the background of the Vietnam War, and the Race riots that were going on in the 1960's. And on that back-

ground Reconciliation was made a theme. But it is pretty obvious that that is reconciliation in the horizontal sense of the term, rather than in the vertical dimensions. The focus is on the reconciliation of persons with one another. That is always accompanied with vertical language, but it was clear where the weight of the plea lay in the Confession. So much so, that one could argue that the horizontal takes the place of the vertical. Or, better the vertical is achieved through the horizontal. That is, the reconciliation with God takes on a concrete form in our reconciliation with one another.

Now we can not deny that reconciliation has a horizontal dimension in the Scripture. Not sure that that is the language in the Scripture, but that is the idea. It is there pre-eminently, in the breaking down and cessation of that hostility between Jew and Gentile. It is a horizontal dimension that is obviously clearly rooted in the history of redemption. Eph. 2:14-18 is very clear. God overcomes the wall of separation, that He established, through the work of Jesus Christ, who is the Savior of both the Jews and the Gentiles. And out of the two God makes one New Man. But I think it would be a fair application of the principle developed there, to say, that if that hostility is broken down in Jesus Christ, then the pattern is set for the breaking down of the hostilities between different Gentile, ethnic, or racial groupings. In Jesus Christ the differences between various members is overcome. That is, there is not the hostility, the alienation. That is not to say that the differences are done away with. As though God's creation in all of its variety was not something desirable. That uniformity was to be achieved. The Lord created variety. There is not uniformity. And it is just the glory of the human race to be able to rejoice in its diversity. But which is united and bound together indissolubly in the blood tie. Not only of the first Adam, but also in the Second Adam. It is by His blood that we have been reconciled and brought together in one Church.

Yet saying all of that, I think we would have to maintain, that it is the vertical dimension that remains in view, in the biblical representation of the doctrine of Reconciliation. It is God's hostility that is overcome in the Atonement. And one of the benefits of the Atonement is ~~certainly the suppression~~ of our hostility against God, as the benefits of the Atonement are applied to us. And then coupled with that the overcoming of the hostility between men, as we have the Law of God written in our hearts: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength. And the second is like unto it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

9. The Nature of the Atonement as Redemption.

Not seeking to use this or any other term in an artificial way. When one uses the term one does not necessarily have in view what is of the distinctive character of that word. Terms are being used very broadly here. We speak of "redemption" when we mean "salvation" in the very broadest sense. Compare the title of Murray's book "Redemption Accomplished and Applied". In it he covers a lot of things that go beyond what he deals with in a particular section on "redemption. And so it is with the other terms we use in our discussions. So we do not want to falsely accuse brethren of misapplying terms, when people are not always

attuned to the kind of refinements that we are seeking to appreciate here. On the other hand, we do want people to appreciate the richness of the revelation.

With this term we come to language, which I think, is somewhat figurative. The basic noun is λύτρον. And that word means "the price of release, a ransom." it is used to describe the price that is paid to release a slave from bondage. And it goes back to a Greek word, which is I think familiar to all of you, the word λύω. The loosening is accomplished in a specific way through the payment of a price. And that is the word λύτρον. Now, from that noun arises a more specific kind of word λυτρώμαι -- "to free by paying a ransom, to redeem." And the abstract noun, which is derived from it, is λυτρώσις -- "a ransoming or redemption." And then in addition to the derivative, there are compound verbs as well -- λύτρον, ἀπολυτρώσις. The point here is that the sinner is viewed as in bondage to sin, and the atonement works deliverance for him. And that deliverance is deliverance which is at cost, there is the payment of a price. And I think that is about as far as we can go with that figure. The basic idea of being in bondage, to sin and condemnation; being delivered from that by the payment of a price. That is, it costs something to accomplish that freedom. And there is no need to carry out that figure further, and to begin to ask -- "To whom is the price paid?" Questions like that developed into various Ransom Theories in the Early Church.

Read Murray.

k. The Perfection of the Atonement.

In the chapter by this title in Murray's book it is kind of a miscellaneous collection of **pb**servations of a polemical character, that have different implications. You will see those various aspects, I will comment on them in a moment. But there is one I would like to develop in particular. And that is the Reformed stress on the Perfection of the Atonement, as over against Roman Catholic teaching.

As you may know, Roman Catholicism distinguishes between Temporal and Eternal Punishment. And Eternal Punishment is the punishment of Hell. One who breaks the eternal law of God can not hope for escape from hell. But through repentance, through pre-baptismal faith, a sinner may be converted to God. In baptism sanctifying grace is infused, so that sin is expelled. And in that expulsion of sin resides its forgiveness. And so the liability to eternal punishment is removed completely. But the removal of Eternal punishment does not involve the removal of Temporal punishment.

Now it is not customary for us to operate with that kind of distinction. Perhaps an illustration will explain it. Suppose a friend were to borrow some money and not pay it back. May result in a loss of friendship. But through an act of forgiveness the friendship may be restored. The Creditor forgives the Debtor and the friendship is restored. But nevertheless, it is appropriate that some form of satisfaction be made. Maybe it would be better, for the illustration, if I said the money were stolen. The one stolen from may forgive and thus the two can become friends.

But you feel that the money ought to be restored, or at least some effort should be made to restore the money, or goods.

Well, in the Roman Catholic system, through the infusion of grace into the soul, a repentant sinner has the Eternal punishment remitted. There is righteousness which takes the place of unrighteousness. But provision is also made for the remission of Temporal punishment as well. And this Satisfaction one offers partly himself in his personal sufferings, in penance. Through the use of Indulgences. But it is also possible for the Church to ascribe some satisfaction to him, out of the Treasury of Merit, to apply the merits of others to him. And finally, there is a certain amount of final cleansing which takes place in Purgatory, where the rest of the Temporal punishment is worked off. And so, one's sin is atoned for, either in this life, or in the life to come.

What is really amazing in this regard to see the type of language which can be employed in Roman Catholic theology at this point. Let me quote a statement or two from Teaching of the Catholic Church by George D. Smith, vol. II:1142, on the Sacrament of Penance. I am quoting from this book as a statement of classic Roman Catholic orthodoxy. "Again, we ourselves should devise further atonements. Either by doing good works to satisfy our bad works, or by punishments self-inflicted. Here the Church helps us. She suggests good works and penances to choose from, when we seek something to offer to God in atonement." . . . "Further, after all our repentings and atonings we look for the days of purgation." Well, there you have one perspective from which the Roman Catholic Church challenges the Perfection of the Atonement.

It is challenged in this sense, that the idea that the suffering and the death of Christ ~~has~~ to be supplemented by the sufferings of men. And not only that, but the idea that suffering, apart from death, these various repentings and atonings, that these make atonement. Whereas the Bible makes it clear that the wages of sin is not simply suffering, but the wages of sin is death. And then thirdly, the idea that man can satisfy for his own sin. Now it is surely the case that a man can suffer temporal consequences because of sin. But he can not satisfy for them. Because death is the wages of sin, and that rules out the possibility of satisfaction. In the sense of a full satisfaction so that the penalty of sin is brought to an end. There is as a matter of fact no hope held out for those who suffer the pains of hell and damnation. There is no hope held out for them in Scripture. Satisfaction is never completed, the debt is never fully discharged.

But in the NT the sufferings of the faithful are not represented as making satisfaction for sin. Christ alone bears the liability for sin. The satisfaction is complete. And the Scripture says there is therefore now, no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus. And is not that the heart of the Reformation, the glory of our Protestant Faith. That there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. The qualification for the "no condemnation" is not in ourselves, but is in Christ Jesus. And so, at that point there can be no abatement of the Protestant polemic against the perversion of the Gospel, which does not find full satisfaction for all of our sins, the consequences of those sins,

in the death of Jesus Christ. And it seems to me that that aspect of Tridentine theology, of Roman Catholic theology, remains unreformed. Even after the Second Vatican Council. It is still part and parcel of the Roman Catholic mentality and approach to the whole area of Soteriology.

There is a second area in which Roman Catholic teaching challenges the Perfection of the Atonement, and is of vital importance as well. And that is the Mass as sacrifice. The Mass is spoken of persistently as a sacrifice. And the relationship of the Mass to the Atoning work of Christ. There are three matters of concern at this point--

1) According to Roman Catholic dogma Christ is physically present in the bread and the wine, at the moment of Consecration ("Hoc est corpus meum"--This My Body). And the bread and wine are transformed into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. At least as far as the substance is concerned. The accident remains the same. So if you were to analyze it chemically it would not come out any different than if you were to analyze it before the Consecration. But as far as the substance is concerned that is transubstantiated.

2) The Mass is to be thought of as a Sacrifice. That belongs to the dogma of the Church. The theologians may differ to a greater or lesser extent as to how that is to be conceived of precisely. But in any case, the Mass is a sacrifice. And therefore, although the Mass can be viewed from various points of view, as an act of praise, of adoration, and so forth. Still it is a matter of sacrifice. And the significance of the Mass is not exhausted in the notion of praise and adoration. And there are some circles, and there are some circles in which the Mass is viewed as a Propitiation. You will see that in the Smith volume, vol. II:909ff. Quoting from page 910 "The Mass as we have already seen is a prayer, the highest possible prayer of adoration and thanksgiving. But we are now looking at it from another point of view, we are now considering it as a way of bringing God's grace to man, by the process of propitiation. Further, we are looking at it not as something we do, but as something that we give to God by way of compensation or satisfaction for our sins. And for which He gives us something in return." And the writer recognizes immediately that, it is this doctrine which tends to give offense to Protestants.

Protestants respond to this, by pointing out that in terms of this Roman Catholic teaching, there is inevitably a repetition of sacrifice. Propitiation is made again and again. And it would seem to me very difficult to escape the charge, if the Mass is indeed thought of as propitiatory. And over against that Protestants have rightly stressed the ringing NT affirmation of the once for allness of the death of Jesus Christ. Cf. Heb. 7:27; 9:12; 10:10; cp. Romans 6:10. The once for all, final, definitive character of the work of Christ, as over against the idea of the repetition of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

But now, the Roman Catholic response to that would be, and with some warrant too, that the Mass is not and is not intended to be a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ. For example, the Council of Trent, Session 26, ch. 2 (cf. Denzinger, paragraph 940)--"For it is one and the same victim, the same one now offering by the ministry of the priest, as He who then offered Himself on the Cross. The

manner of offering alone being different." What is different is the manner of offering, but it is the same victim. And just preceding that--"And since in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, ~~that~~ same Christ is contained and immolated in an ~~unbloody~~ manner, Who on the altar of the Cross"once offered Himself"(cf., Heb.9:27), in a bloody manner. The Holy Synod teaches that this is truly propitiatory."

Now in view of that, does this mean that the Protestant polemic is misplaced and without force. Well, I do not think so, and for this reason. The Protestant polemic is to be directed, not simply, against the idea of repetition. That certainly has to be condemned. But we have to remember that the Book of Hebrews uses the ~~ἐν ἑκείνῳ~~, the once for all, not on the background of the declarations of the Council of Trent, to be sure(except in the mind and purpose of God, to be sure). But the "once for all" was written on the background of the OT ritual. And that OT ritual has ~~really~~nothing to do with the presence of Christ, in the sense of Transubstantiation. Because the Bible is quite clear that those rituals and those sacrifices were in terms of a shadow of what is to come. And that means that the once for all is directed against what is a shadow of what is to come. But is it not a fair and necessary application of that historically-defined teaching, to say that if the once for all is appropriate and effective over against a shadow of what is to come, it is also appropriate for what is a shadow of what has taken place. But the Roman Mass is not simply a shadow of what has taken place, it is more than that. It is spoke of as a sacrifice of Christ Himself--transubstantiation. A-fortiori, much more is it the case, that the once for all of Hebrews would apply.

If you think of the Mass, as some Roman Catholic theologians do, not as a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ, and not as a representation(kind of a Zwinglian ~~idea~~), but as a Re-Presentation of the one victim. Then I think that surely the once for all is directed against pre-presentation. It is because of the definitiveness of the work of Christ that there can not be any more sacrifices of bulls and goats. Is it not a reasonable and necessary application of that once for all to find it valid against the thought of a Re-Presentation of the offering of Christ. And so I think the Protestant polemic still has to be maintained in order to demonstrate the finality and the perfection of the Atonement. It must be asserted also against the idea of the Mass as a re-presentation of the sacrifice of Calvary.

Well there are other elements stressed by Murray in that chapter, you will see. He focusses in on four points--

- 1) on the Historical~~Objectivity~~ of the Atonement, the idea that the atonement is not in the first place calculated to produce effects in us, but terminates on God.
- 2) He stresses the Historicity of the Atonement as a once and for all event, accomplished then and there in time, not as suprahistorical.
- 3) The Finality of the Atonement as over against the idea that there is a continuing, ongoing atonement, in a supernatural sphere.
- 3) He stresses the Uniqueness of the Atonement against the Old Liberal idea that all love is vicarious, that it

bears within itself the pain and the suffering of others, that of those who are loved. And therefore the sacrifice of Christ becomes simply exemplary of the general principle.

- 4) The Intrinsic Efficacy of the Atonement over against the idea that we noticed in connection with the Remonstrants, that the atonement is simply something accepted in the place of a full satisfaction of divine justice. Murray says here, that our debts are not merely cancelled, but they are liquidated.

i. The Extent of the Atonement.

1) Preliminary Observations having to do with Universal-Type Language in the Scripture.

The topic that we are taking up now is sometimes referred to as the Design of the Atonement. And then the question is--"For Whom is the Atonement designed?" Or, "For What End is the Atonement designed?" And when the question is looked at that way, the topic is considerably broader than the one that we have in view with the use of the word "extent." The design of the atonement may include in its scope, benefits which flow from the atonement, which are not saving in character. And that is a legitimate topic. And it will be discussed in a moment. The design of the atonement could include many things in it that actually fall short of salvation.

But the question that we have now before us is a much narrower one--"For Whom did Christ die?" And that is a legitimate question. And it would seem that, as we come to the Scriptures, that we are provided with a clear and unequivocal answer, in terms of the universality of the atonement. If you consider Heb.2:9 "He tasted death for everyone." I Jn.2:2 "He is the propitiation for our sins, but also for those of the whole world." II Cor.5:14-15 "He died for all." And would not those passages clearly relate the death of Christ to all men. And there are other passages which do not use the expression "died for" but which seem to have this same kind of universalist import. Cf. I Tim.4:10 "The living God is the savior of all men."

Now I think it will prove to be the case that the Bible does give us clear guidance to the question "For Whom did Christ die?". But we can not simply coast along on a kind of superficial appeal to a series of proof texts. But we have to reflect on the question. And as we reflect on the question we come to the perception that, there are these expressions in the Bible. That may, as far as the rules of Grammar are concerned, bear Universal significance. But in the context seem to do something less than that. The Bible speaks in terms of the "world," or the "whole world," when it means something less than every man, head for head. And the Bible uses the expressions "all men," "every man" also, when something less than every person, head for head, is in view.

We can illustrate that, for example Romans 11:12 "Now if there transgression (Israel's) be riches for the world, and there failure be riches for the Gentiles. How much more will there fulness be?" And there, the "world" can not include all men, simply because the "world" is contrasted with "Israel." The "world" is thought of

bears within itself the pain and the suffering of others,
of those who are loved and therefore the sacrifice of Christ
is exemplary simply of the general principle.

exclusive of "Israel." And so you have the word "world" used in a way that is not comprehensive ~~person for person~~. And more than that, it is not true that the fall of Israel must necessarily be the salvation of every Gentile head for head. And so that is a further limitation that is laid upon the designation "world."

From the point of view of "the condemnation of the world" one could look at Revelation 12:9 "Satan is the one who deceives the whole world" (the whole inhabited earth - οὐκὴν ὅλην). And in the previous verse, it is the "cosmos" ~~that is deceived~~. But the idea is the same. And again it is not an expression that can be understood as meaning that Satan does indeed deceive every individual without exception. There are notable exceptions. But nevertheless it is appropriate to say that "the world was deceived."

Well, you have the expression "all men," "every man" in Romans 5:18 as a good example. It is true that every man, head for head, is under condemnation, "as in Adam all die." It is true. And so, it is not in dispute whether the expression "all men" could include every man head for head. That is not the point. But in the next clause--"even so in Christ shall all men be made alive." This could hardly be understood in the same way. Paul is talking about actual justification and not all men are justified. Unless you want to maintain that the Atonement is universal as to its saving design, and as to its application. Then in vs. 19 you have the word "many" used in tandem with respect to "condemnation" and "justification." And there the word "many" would not have to exclude a universalism with respect to the involvement in sin and condemnation. And may be understood to refer us to the multitude that is saved, as over against the multitude that is lost. Then Romans 5:18 would have to be understood in conjunction with I Cor. 15:22 "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." "As in Adam all die," we understand to mean the universal involvement of the race in sin and condemnation. But "in Christ shall all be made alive," we understand that making alive to be a resurrection idea. It has reference to those who will be saved. Christ is the first fruits of them that slept. He is the beginning of the resurrection harvest. And that is a redemptive concept. And resurrection in Christ is characteristically a soteriological idea. It is union with Christ in His death and resurrection. But again, not all men, man for man, are saved. Not all are raised in Christ. And so the reference to, is one the one hand, to the first Adam and to all those who are in federal union with Him ("as in Adam all die"). And all of those who are in federal union with him are all his natural descendants. "So also shall all be made alive" in Christ. That is to say, all who are in federal union with Christ shall be made alive. And that is not every man, head for head. But those who, ~~by Faith~~ are ingrafted into the Redeemer, they are made in Him.

There are other examples of this phenomenon that could be cited as well. I Cor. 6:12; 10:23 Col. 3:20.

2) What is not at Issue--What the Question is not.

And we may note that the question is not whether there are benefits flowing from the Atonement to all men, which fall short of salvation. And there need be no hesitation on our part, as committed to the doctrine of the particular extent of the Atonement, in recognizing that there are, in fact, many benefits which flow from the death of Jesus Christ, which do fall short nevertheless of actually saving us. And these benefits are not limited to some. They do not flow evenly to all; to be sure, there are discriminations in God's providence, there are discriminations in common grace. But these benefits do flow to men indiscriminately, in that, they are not limited to them who are the heirs of salvation. They are benefits which flow both to the Elect and to the Reprobate.

Consider for example Phil. 2:8-10 which speak about the obedience of Jesus Christ. Obedience unto death, which is rewarded with the Exaltation to the right hand of the Father and the bestowment of authority. So that, as Paul says in Eph. 1, "all things are ~~in subjection~~ ^{in subjection} to Him." And therefore all the benefits which come to men, are bestowed within the sphere of the mediatorial dominion of Jesus Christ. He is exalted to the right hand of the Father. All things are subject to Him. And therefore it is under the umbrella of the mediatorial dominion of Jesus Christ that benefits flow to us. And we have to say ultimately, from the cross of Jesus Christ. The authority which Jesus has is as comprehensive as the sovereignty of God. And the gifts that are bestowed, think of the sunshine and the rain and so forth, are bestowed ultimately in virtue of the cross and the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Now I think it is important to reflect on that. We come up against it again in the next course (Doc. of the Holy Spirit) when we deal with the subject of Common Grace specifically. If you think about it a moment, you can see that the terms of the probation: man is created in the image of God, placed under the command not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, under the threat of death for disobedience. That that threat of death would lead us to think in terms of immediate and instant damnation, flowing from disobedience. And indeed that would have been the case, apart from the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Which was, right from the time of the Fall, in view. And at the heart of that redemptive work is the work of Expiation.

A. A. Hodge in his Outlines of Theology puts it this way: pp. 358-359--"Hence all that happens to the human race, other than that which is incidental to the instant damnation of Adam and Eve, is part of the consequences of Christ's satisfaction as the second Adam." And there you see that all the benefits that are enjoyed are enjoyed by virtue of the grace of God which flows ultimately from the Cross of Christ. And that is a very sobering fact. And it seems to me, it ought to be impressed upon men and women who ~~are living in~~ ^{are living in} disobedience to Jesus Christ, who are rejecting Christ. We have the right to remind them that they are living on borrowed capital. They are living by virtue of Him whom they reject. And that mediatorial reign of Jesus Christ which

is characterized by forbearance, in the face of opposition. It is indeed, one of longsuffering with a view to the repentance to those who are disobedient.

Now when you emphasize longsuffering in terms of Romans 2:4 "the kindness of God leads you to repentance," you see that that kindness of God is indeed designed to bring men to repentance. And so we have the Gospel overture coming on the background of God's favor to all men. And so we can say that, all of the benefits, those that flow both to the just and to the unjust, flow from the death of Christ according to the divine design. And if those benefits flow to us from the design of God, then I think that you can understand why we hesitated to use the designation the "Design of the Atonement" to state the doctrine that we are trying to develop here. When you think of the design of the atonement that design can be construed in universal terms, in terms of the truth that we have just tried to enunciate. In other words, it covers more than the specific topic with which we are dealing. Which is ordinarily designated the "Extent of the Atonement."

Now the question is also not whether the Atonement is sufficient for all. Now that term is one that you may hesitate to use. I hesitate to use it. Because it can be easily misunderstood in an Arminian or in an Amyrauldian sense. That is to say, an atonement that actually expiates the sin of all, but which must be made personal by an act of decision on our part. We think of Christ as the Redeemer of all men. And then, by an act of faith, which is then thought of as arising from the will of man, Jesus is accepted as personal Savior. As over against the universal Savior of all men. Well, we want to avoid that idea of sufficiency.

But the term "sufficiency" is, nevertheless a legitimate term. And the point to be made here, is that it can not be said that any man perishes because of a deficiency in the atonement. Or to put it another way. If the number of the elect were larger than it actually is, then Jesus Christ would not have had to suffer more than He actually did. Now that is a staggering thought too. It is staggering when you realize that the eternal condemnation of the elect, is focussed in on this one victim. And not only that, but that eternal condemnation is satisfied and exhausted. And it is sufficient for all, in that sense.

And then, we would also have to say that the question is not whether the atonement is applicable to all men. It is applicable to all. C. Hodge speaks about the suitability of the atonement. That is in part also why the Gospel can be offered to all men. Because it is applicable. There is no conceivable sin for which Jesus did not atone. That is apart from the question of the Unforgivable Sin. The point is that Christ has fulfilled the conditions of the covenant under which all men are placed. And His accomplishment is for our benefit. And again you see, the point is, that there is no excuse for our unbelief. And no excuse for our refusal to come to Christ. To be found in some deficiency or other in the atonement. The atonement is not deficient. It is applicable to all. And then we would also have to go on to say, that the

Gospel is offered to all. There is no question to me, but that each and every sinner is invited, indeed urged to come. We can put it even stronger, is commanded to come.

In terms of the unfolding of the history of redemption it is a Gospel which is offered, not only to the Jew, but also to the Greek. Now again when we come to the subject of Calling, in connection with the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit course, then we will have to speak more specifically and more fully to that point. That is, about the Universal Offer of the Gospel. But that is not our particular concern here. What we are saying is that there are these various angles, these various aspects, in terms of which we can see the universal reference of the atonement. But these are not the question ~~that~~ are at issue when we come to the specific question that has been debated, concerning the extent of the atonement.

3) What is the point at Issue--What are we talking about?
Specifically, for whom did Christ die?

We can make the question more specific than that. Remember the category in terms of which we tried to define what the atonement was. And we followed the pattern set out for us by Prof. Murray. We defined that atonement in terms of Expiation, it is a sacrifice for sin. We defined it in terms of Propitiation, it counters the wrath of God, the death of Christ absorbs the wrath of God. It reconciles us to God, the alienation between men and God is overcome. And we are redeemed from the bondage of sin and its consequences.

Now you see when you look at the atonement in those categories, and you define it that way, then the question is--For whom did Jesus Christ actually make expiation, whose sins are expiated? ~~Against~~ ^{Against} whom does the wrath of God no longer burn because of the death of Jesus Christ? Who actually is reconciled to God? Who is redeemed from the bondage of sin? So then, these are the categories that have to define "die for." That expression ^{ἀντὶ τῶν ἡμῶν} "he died for," cf., I Thess. 5:10; I Cor. 15:3. "He died for us." "He died for us that we might live with Him." And the expression ~~certainly~~ ^{would} include these categories. And I would have to say at this point, that I agree with John Murray, when he says that, "Die for" is used here in that specific sense. Not in a generic sense, for the benefits that accrue to men, ~~indef-~~ ^{indef-} ~~initely~~ ^{initely}, because of the death of Christ. But specifically, whose sins are expiated. That is the question."

The next point that Murray makes is of central significance and of great force. And so I would like to mention that here. And that is this. Before you are tempted to universalize the atonement's extent, you should try to discover what it means for Christ to die for any man. Or even more pointedly--what does it mean for Jesus to die for one man? Murray has asked this question, and so have others. You find it throughout the history of Reformed theology. That, if you can define that idea, then you have a clue to the answer to this question with which we are dealing. And you notice the triumphant ~~lan-~~ ^{character} of the language that we used in the Scripture.

Cf. Rev. 5:9; Heb. 9:12; Titus 2:14. And in those verses you sense the definitiveness of the work of Christ. The finished character of that work. The efficacy of it, And when you appreciate the definitiveness of it and the efficacy of that work. Then you are in a position to appreciate the definiteness of it. Or as it is more frequently stated--Jesus did not die ~~simply~~ to make sin expiable, but He died to expiate sin. Jesus did not die to make men redeemable, but He died to redeem them. Jesus Christ did not die to make provision for our salvation, but He actually saves.

Now from time to time, in ordinary discourse, and even at times as you speak from the pulpit, you will find yourself speaking extemporaneously (hopefully), and there will be times when you will use forms of expression in which, if you are cornered by a well-meaning Elder, you will promptly revise. Because they might otherwise be misunderstood. But forms of expressions that, any one of these could be understood in a perfectly legitimate way, for example. So, you do not need to get too excited as long as you realize what you are doing. But, when you are ~~striving~~ for precision then you say "not expiable but expiated," "not redeemable but He redeemed them." All of us, ~~have~~ suppose, at one time or another have said, "Jesus Christ has made provision for our salvation." And in the orbit of our discourse we are not making a technical, theological affirmation about the extent of the atonement. But if we are making such an affirmation about the extent of the atonement, then we would have to say, "Christ not only makes provision for our salvation, but by His death He actually saves us." John 6:38-39 "If all that the Father would give Him, that He would lose none." You see, the point there, is that there is a security for the believer, a security that arises out of the efficacy of the atonement. Or as J. Murray used to say, "If we universalize the extent of the atonement, then we limit its efficacy." And what is frequently in the foreground in the NT is precisely the efficacy of the atonement. And it seems to me, to constitute the major argument for the definite, limited extent of the atonement. Its efficacy, it does what it is intended to do. It accomplishes its purpose. And that is why I do not see the argument for the limited atonement suspended in the first place, upon our ability to establish that the so-called "universalistic" passages do not actually teach universalism. I am going to try to show that in a little while. So I do not think that that question is unimportant. But it is not a kind of shouting match--You name a specific text, and the Arminian names a universal text, back and forth. It is not that kind of a shouting match. But if you approach it in terms of the efficacy of the atonement of Christ, that He actually does what He intends to do. Then you get a feel for what is at stake here. And in the light of that you are in a position to understand the particular forms of expression that the Bible uses. And you become comfortable with those forms of expression. You can speak with the Bible, in the way that the Bible speaks. And you do not feel uncomfortable with the way that the Holy Spirit has been pleased to give to us the language of Christ's atonement.

There is a book on the atonement by William Symington. In that book he argues well and forcefully for the limited extent of the atonement. And he says that that atonement is "the perfect satisfaction to the law and the justice of God. The atonement removes the offense subsisting between God and men. And procures reconciliation." And then he says, "From its very nature then, all for whom the atonement is made must reap its fruits. His work is an atonement, that is, a reconciliation. And to talk of His making atonement for such as are never reconciled, is a contradiction in terms. It is to say, He makes atonement and yet, no atonement in the case of the same individuals." Again, "He is said to give satisfaction for sin. But how can He have given satisfaction for the sins of those on whom the law is to take satisfaction eternally."

And I think it was Charles Spurgeon who said, "God will not punish twice for one thing. He will not punish both Christ and us for the same thing. He punishes men for their sin. Or, in the case of believers, Jesus has borne that punishment in their place."

And so that is what I would ask you to consider. And as the point of the question--the efficacy of the atonement. And for whom is that atonement made? It is made for those who become the actual beneficiaries of its provision. That theologically stated, is the point we are interested in. And now we turn to some particular passages in Scripture where this truth is brought out.

4) Exegetical Considerations.

- a) John 10:15 "I lay down My life on behalf of the sheep." "Sheep is, of course, a figurative expression. But we have to ask--"Who are these sheep, on behalf of which, Christ laid down His life? Cf., John 6:38-39. Jesus testifies that He came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. It is the will of the Father that He lose none of them who the Father has given Him. But rather, that He should raise them up at the last day. And it is not difficult to associate "the sheep", for on behalf of whom He lays down His life, with those whom He would not lose but raise up on the last day. So the correlation of Jn. 10:15 with 6:38-39.

The purpose in coming is to do the will of the Father. Elsewhere Jesus says He came into the world to give His life, a ransom for many. John 10:17 "I lay down My life in order that I may take it again." His coming, and the giving of His life, are in order to achieve the end contemplated, that none of those who have been given to Him be lost. And that is simply to say, that the salvation of the sheep is rendered infallibly secure. Or, in terms of Jn. 10:10 the purpose of Christ's coming is that the sheep might have abundant life. He dies to make this abundant life secure for them. But in Jn. 10 there is also the distinction between those who are the sheep, and those who are not of the sheep. Cf., vs. 26 "You believe not, because you are not of My sheep." And together with that distinction you have again the element of security. Cf., vs. 11 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." Vs. 28 "I give eternal life to them

they shall never perish. No one shall snatch them out of My hand." And vs.29, "No one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand." And again you have that element of security, which is given in Jesus' work on behalf of His sheep. And you have in that context then, to take account of the discrimination between the sheep and the goats. And you could say, Jesus died for the sheep and not for the goats. In other words, there is a guarantee which belongs to the sheep, a security.

It is difficult, in terms of John 10, to say that Jesus has laid down His life for those who are not and never will be His sheep. The atonement in its specific character as atonement, is for the sheep. And to lay down His life for the sheep, has an inescapable element of efficacy attached to it. So that the argument does not turn simply on the distinction between the sheep and the goats. That Jesus Christ gave His life for the sheep but nothing at all is said about the goats. It is not that simple distinction. But again, it is that distinction functioning within the context of this consistent reference to the security of the blessing which accrues to them. "No one can snatch them out of the Father's hand." Jesus' work for them guarantees their inheritance.

b) Ephesians 5:25-27.

And especially the words in vs.25 "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her."

This verse, verse 25, speaks of the love of Christ and what that love constrains Christ to do. And doubtless, that giving up--"Christ gave Himself up for her"--refers to the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross. And that work of Christ is motivated by His love for the Church. And that love is a distinguishing love, because it is the love of Christ for the Church. And that is the only motivation for sacrifice mentioned in the text.

Now with reference to the extent of the atonement, we simply have to note that it is expressly said to be an atonement on behalf of the Church. There is no broader extent hinted at or implied in the text. And the purpose of this death for the Church is made clear in vs.26 and 27. Namely the sanctification and the glorification of the Church. Christ gave Himself up for the Church, to cleanse her, to purify her. That she would be a Bride without spot or blemish or wrinkle, or anything such thing. And again it is striking how the purpose of the atonement is described in terms of Transformation. That Jesus may have a Church on this earth, that will be everything that His Bride is to be. And it is necessary to insist that that end is being, and will be, achieved. That is exactly what Jesus will have for Himself, exactly such a Church. And if we do not say that, then we are saying that the expiatory offering of Christ has failed of its purpose. But it is just impossible for us to maintain that thesis.

If we eliminated the particularity of the atonement from the text, we would have to say that Jesus loved both the wicked and the Church, and gave Himself up for them all. And then the cleansing and the sancti-

fication in the verses that follow, would have to have reference to all. Even those who are not cleansed or sanctified. Because there would be no reason for introducing the particularism into verses 26 and 27. Which is not already present in verse 25. And so we are driven back to the idea that the expiatory offering can not be separated from the particularity of God's love for the Church, or from the particularity of the efficaciousness of the atonement. And again you see what is involved in that concept of dying for. It carries with it the notion of efficacy. And as we already saw in John 10 the idea of security as well.

c) Romans 8:31-39.

Now I think, of the texts we have mentioned so far, this is probably the strongest in its testimony to the definiteness of the atonement of Christ. And of central significance is the clause in vs.32, and the form of it may surprise you, that you would come to that conclusion, "He gave Himself up for us all." But again, when we read that word "all" we are not going to be misled, to a premature conclusion. It is "all" within the orbit of discourse. And that "us" all is doubtless the "us" of vs.32. And you see, the meaning of those words is determined in turn, by what has gone on before. Cf., vss 28 and 29. You think of those who are "predestinated," and those who are "called," and are "justified," and are "glorified." If God is for these who is against them. We are the predestinated, the called, the justified, the glorified.

Now it might be possible to say, well that is what is said indeed of the elect. And that the efficacy of the atonement for them. But really nothing is said about others. And that God is for "them." But vs.32 moves in a little bit of a different direction. "He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all. Will He not also give us all things with Him?" How shall He not also with Him bestow all things on us. And the "all things" is made clear in vs.33. We are to think of election, of justification, we are to think of the redemptive benefits which accrue from the benefits of Christ. And these are infallibly secure for those for whom Christ died. If God has given up His Son, if He has not spared His Son. Is it conceivable that He would stop short of actually bestowing on us what Jesus has wrought for us? And the answer is--NO!

Christ can not be thought of as dying for those who do not actually participate in that justification. Christ can not be thought of as dying for those against whom charges not only may be brought but will also be sustained. And so the assurance of the gift is to be coupled with the guarantee of the security of the love which is in Christ Jesus. What is going to separate us from that love? It is impossible!

And you see, to the extent that you universalize the extent of the death of Christ, the reference of the atonement, to that extent you introduce an element of insecurity. Which is not compatible with the security of which Paul speaks in this and other passages.

And so we come back again to that same point--the efficacy, the security.

And it seems to me, that that is what needs to come out in our homiletical treatment of this doctrine in the pulpit. The purpose of our dealing with the extent of the atonement is not to exclude people from the benefits of Christ. And we ought not to convey that that is the issue. That we are trying to exclude some people, but we are not quite sure just who will be excluded. Because we do not know. But what comes out again and again in terms of the doctrine of the definiteness of the atonement, is the security, the assurance that the doctrine gives to us. That those for whom Jesus Christ died will be saved. And that constitutes the motivation to lay hold of, in faith, upon Jesus Christ. Again you see, how, in the dynamic of the Gospel, the covenant responsibility is not undermined by the definiteness of the atonement, or the efficacy of its provisions. But it is just the finished character of it, the complete character of it that gives us the warrant to lay hold upon Jesus who is presented to us in the Gospel. Jesus is everything for us. Everything, just everything. And there is nothing to be sought outside of Him.

d) II Corinthians 5:14-15.

This passage too contains that expression "He died for all." And so the text has to be considered under the category of the so-called "universalistic" texts. But it is not that aspect of the text that concerns me at this point. But it is the teaching that may be derived from this passage concerning what it means for Christ to die for anyone. And again if you have the answer for that, you can see the implications for the text as far as the definite atonement is concerned. What does it mean for Christ to die for one? He died for all. But what does it mean for Christ to die for anyone?

Well, several observations based on this text, or derived from this text.

- i. The death of Christ is inseparable from the resurrection of Christ. Cf., vs.15 says He died, and no less important, that He rose again. The death of Christ is inconceivable without the resurrection. And that is the consistent witness of Paul. And you might say the Gospels as well. Rom.4:25 "He was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Rom.8:34; I Thess. 4:14. And we might add, in passing, there is in that form of expression no transition from fact to fiction or from history to myth. The one is as historical as the other.
- ii. The conjunction of the death of all with the death of Christ. That is the implication of vs.15, but it is the express statement of vs.14.
In the older King James Version we had, "If one died for all, then were all dead." But that does not quite convey the thought. And most of the more recent versions, consequently, have a different translation. The idea is--one died for all

therefore all died. That is the conjunction of the death of all with the death of Christ. Well, how did all die? Well, they died in union with Christ. And so there is that conjunction between the death of Christ and the death of all.

- iii. There is also a conjunction between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of all. In the latter part of vs.15 we are told that He died for them and rose again. And it seems to me that that "for them" has to be taken, not only, with the dying, but also with the rising. He died for them, they died with Him. He rose for them, they rose with Him. And that is they for whom Christ died, vs.15b, are said to be alive, vs.15a. And how could they be alive except they died with Him, vs.14b, they also rose with Him, vs.15b.
- iv. Because of the inevitable connection between the death and the resurrection of Christ. There is an anacorresponding inevitable connection between those for whom Christ died and those who rise with Him. Or, all for whom Christ died, in point of fact, rise with Him. Or as you have it in Romans 6:8 "If we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with Him."
- v. What does it mean then, to die and to rise with Christ other than to partake of the fulness of the benefits of salvation, which flow from His death and resurrection? To die and to rise with Christ is to partake of the fulness of the benefits of salvation which flow to us from His death and resurrection. "I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live! Yet not I, but Christ lives in me." (Gal.2:20). Jesus was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Now when you reflect on those verses again, I think you can see, how transparent it becomes that those for whom Christ died are actually saved. He died for all. Now we may not know how broad that is. Or who are included in that in terms of God's decree. But it certainly is true, that all for whom Christ died are saved. Because all for whom Christ died are risen with Him.

Or, you could put the sequence of thought in another way. You could state it negatively. We can not say that Christ died for everyone, unless we are willing to say, that Christ rose for everyone. And we can't say that Christ died for everyone, unless we are willing to say that everyone died with Christ. And we can not say that Christ rose for everyone, unless we are willing to say that everyone rose with Christ. And we can not say that Christ died and rose for everyone, unless we are willing to say, that everyone is saved.

But can it be said that those who have no interest in Christ, and reject Him, that they have died with Him? Can it be said that those who have no interest in Christ, are raised to newness of life in Him? Well, if we can say that, then Paul would be a bit psychopathic in saying, "Knowing the fear of the Lord we persuade men." And Christ would be guilty of falsehood when He said, "He that believes not the Son of

God, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on Him."

Well, when you see what is involved in the concept of "dying for," and therefore of "rising with." Then you can see that it is a little bit short-sighted to say even that there is some sense in which Christ died for all men.

I use that form of expression myself, but I use it in a slightly different context that we will come to in a little while. But you see, in terms of the definiteness of the atonement, what kind of appeal is it to say to people, "Christ died for you, in some sense." Or, "God loves you, in some sense." Then you have to rob that language of the intensity of its meaning. But that is one side of the picture. Next time we will take up a whole series of passages which seem to bear a different emphasis. And so we want to see those and do full justice to them as well.

5-7-81

5) Universalistic Passages.

a) General Remarks.

- i. When the Bible was written it was necessary to emphasize the ethnic universalism of the gospel. Of course the Bible was written at that period—when the transition was being made from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. And I can not stress enough how earthshaking that transition would be to the pious Jewish mind. To realize that the God of the fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; was also the God of the Gentiles as well. And we are not surprised to find that truth therefore, reinforced again and again. The opposition to Jewish particularism, the fact that the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile has now been broken down. And I think that is a major consideration that has to be in the background in our dealing with various "universalistic" passages.
- ii. And closely coupled with that is the realization that the Gospel is not reserved for an elitist group in the population. It is not reserved for the intellectually and the culturally elite. It is a Gospel for all. And therefore the mysteries of the Faith are not to be concealed from the weak and the ignorant. But we are to work for the propagation of that Gospel and its reception among all classes and groups of the population. That means we are going to have to adjust the way we speak, and so forth, to meet the needs of particular persons. But there is that aspect to the universalism of the Gospel.
- iii. These so-called "Universalistic" texts use the expression "world" (more later). That Jesus is the Savior of the world. And that word carries through the idea of ethnic universalism, that I mentioned a moment ago. But in addition to that, that word also carries a distinctively "ethical" connotation, as well. That is, it is often used to describe the world as alienated from God. And therefore as under the domination of Satan. And then

what we are appraised of is that God loves, God has sent His Son to redeem, What contradicts His own perfection. It is not the question of number that is in the foreground. But it is the quality, it is when we were enemies, that Christ died for us. God so loved the world. I think that is very clear in John 3:16. That it is this world, which did not know, did not receive, the Son of God when He came. Such was its hostility. That is nevertheless loved. It is the people's of the world who are now called to faith in Christ.

- iv. We have also to take account of the Universe of Discourse. And we have already noted that at the beginning of our discussion of the Limited Atonement. That universal term may be used. But its significance may not be extended beyond the scope of the subject matter with which the writer may be dealing at a given moment. We may use the expression "all were saved." And have the reference, not to a universal "all," but to the "all" within the ~~orbit of discourse~~ ^{orbit of discourse}. Within that group of which we are speaking. And there are examples of that within the Scriptures, too, as we have seen.
- v. Universal language within the Scriptures sometimes points to the exclusiveness ~~of the redemption~~ ^{of the redemption} that is in Christ. He is a Savior for all. And what we mean by that is, that He is the only Savior that any can have. He is the Savior whose significance extends to each and everyone. He is the only way of salvation. And therefore if we are to come to salvation it must be through Him. (And we will see an example of that as we go along.)

Those are basic considerations, it seems to me, that have to be kept in mind as we approach these texts that are sometimes styled as "problem texts." Very often people will put it that way. "Well we have a group of texts that teach a Definite Atonement. And then we have another group of texts that are problems." Well, you do not have didactic texts and problematic texts. The Lord God has not given us a puzzle-book. He has given us redemptive revelation. And therefore our objective is to try and appreciate the distinctiveness and the particular emphases of each of the particular passages of Scripture. And when we bear these considerations in mind, we can give these verses a positive thrust. So that we do not treat them homiletically as embarrassments to the faith. So that when you stand up in the pulpit with one of these texts, you devote 20 to 25 minutes to what the text does not say. And then maybe three or four minutes to what it does say. No we want to give the positive thrust of these verses. And we can do that in the light of these principles.

- b) Group of texts in which the Death of Christ is spoken of as having reference to the "World," or where it is said "Christ is the Savior of the World."
John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 6:51; II Cor. 5:19; I Jn. 2:1, 2.
I am not going to deal with each and everyone of these

passages. But if you look at those passages in light of the remarks made above, I think that you will become aware of the fact, in terms of those principles, none of these passages really requires a universalistic reference, in the sense of a denial of the Definite Atonement.

I would draw your attention, in particular, to Jn. Murray's exegesis of I Jn.2:2. Which says that "Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." And the question here is whether it is necessary to regard this passage as teaching a universal atonement. Or can the language be adequately accounted for on other grounds. Murray offers three suggestions to account for the universal language in this passage. He suggests:

- 1) The scope of Jesus' propitiation is not to be limited to the immediate circle of the disciples. That is, thinking of himself together with those to whom he is writing--"and not for our sins only..."
- 2) The exclusive of the propitiation. The idea that there is no other propitiation for the remission of sins, but this one.
- 3) The perpetuity of Jesus' propitiation. It endures throughout all ages. And its efficacy is not diminished.

I think the first one is a powerful consideration. And then you see, you are not approaching that text pre-eminently with the question in mind "For whom did Christ die?" in the sense of this well-developed theological point of doctrine. But what is the good news that John has given? well, it is Jesus has come, He is really the propitiation for our sins. But more than that He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. That is to say, the relevance of the good news that we have for the peoples of the world.

And associated with that, I do not think it would be amiss, to isogete here, and see there an ethnic universalism is implied as well.

II Cor.5:19 "In Jesus Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself."

And as you go back through that passage, you see, that vs.18 speaks of reconciliation to God through Christ. Vs.17 speaks of the transformation of the man who is in Christ. And those passages are on the background of what we already noted about vss.14 & 15, The dying with Christ. And therefore to die with Christ in the full-orbed sense of the word, is also to rise with Him. And then you have vss.17 & 18 the reconciliation with God through Christ. And so that when you come to vs.19 you are not really required to see a wider scope or the introduction of a new thought, beyond that which we are already prepared for, in vss.14-18.

But then the Apostle does use the word "world". And I would say that usage points to the universality of the offer and the applicability of the atonement. Specifically of the reconciliation of Jesus Christ. And that is certainly compatible with the idea that we have a ministry of reconciliation, vs.18. And

that ministry of reconciliation is, of course, world-wide. So that the point of the passage is not a commentary on the doctrine of the extent of the atonement. But it is speaking about the reconciliation of enemies and the non-imputation of sin. And this ministry that we have to those who are enemies.

John 3:16 a magnificent text that deserves to be preached on. It has been many many years since I heard a sermon on John 3:16. And that is very unfortunate. Probably the very first verse that most of us remember.

Well, here I think what is in the foreground, in the word "world," is not a quantitative reference, but a qualitative reference. There is abundant warrant for that within the Johannine writing. For example, I Jn. 2:15-16 all that is within the world, in terms of lust, pride, and so forth, is from the world. And there you see the distinctively ethical qualification. Also I Jn. 3:1 and 13; 4:5; 5:4. And in the Gospel of John cf. 12:31; 14:17, 27; 15:18; 16:11. And you can see that, if you follow on through the text. Not only 3:16 but also 3:17 "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world. But that the world, through Him, might be saved." Then you see, if you introduce there, the emphasis on number, following the pattern of verse 16. If you see vs. 16 in terms of number. Then you are left with a strange conception.

For example the Arminians will say is that the Calvinists can't really read the word "world" in vs. 16. What they read there is "the elect." Jesus loves elected children, elect children of the world: (red and yellow, black and white, some are precious in His sight. Jesus loves elected children of the world). But Calvinists do not actually sing it that way. They sing Psalm 100. But you see, if you read it that way, then, you know--"God so loved the elect." Then if that is the meaning that has to be forced on the Calvinist. Then the Arminian on his part would have to say--"That God so loved each and every man." And then in vs. 17--"For God sent the Son to teach and every man, not to condemn each and every man. But that each and every man might be saved through Him." And if you have any sensitivity at all to the efficacy of the working of Christ, you get pretty close to what amounts to a universalism.

But I think it is a distortion of the text to read it in terms of numbers. The point is, that this world, which is worthy of condemnation, receives the Son, or is the platform on which the Son works. Amazingly enough, not to condemn what is worthy of condemnation. But ~~that is what is worthy of a condemnation~~. And He, again, not only saves, but He insures the salvation of those who believe in Him. So that, "whosoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life." Jesus guarantees that in terms of the efficacy of His work for them. And the giving of the Son contemplates the infallible application of redemption. But not universally to be sure.

Nevertheless, A. Kuyper also makes a comment here, that I think is worthy of bearing in mind. And adds

a little bit more light to it. "This world which is worthy of condemnation, Which the Father redeems through His Son. 'The Son came not to condemn, but to redeem.'" Kuyper says, "This world is saved." And by that he does not mean head for head. But what he means is that it is an organism. It is an organic unity that is contemplated. The race is created in Adam. It is contemplated as an organic unity. Death, the penalty of sin, breaks that race apart. The work of redemption is a work of restoration and of reconstitution. The heading up of all things in Jesus Christ. The reconciliation of all things to Himself. So what the Gospel holds out to us is a world which is saved, while individuals are lost. You see, it is not that Kuyper preaches a universalism in the sense of every one saved head for head. But what he wants to get in the foreground is the organic integrity of the Church, the Kingdom of God, as reconstituted through Christ. While individuals are lost. As overagainst what I think is common in Evangelicalism. And that is, to think of the world as lost, while a few individuals here and there are saved. And that feeds a certain individualistic approach to personal religious experience. And to Church experience. But when you think of that Church as the Body of Christ. And when you think of our personal relationship to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. Then you can have an appreciation for the fact that yes indeed, it is the world that is saved. And then you have the vision of the new heavens and the new earth. For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son. And that is to say, that God's original covenant purpose with His creation is not abandoned in redemption. God does not simply make the best of a bad situation, snatching a few brands here and there. God redeems the world. And we call particular persons into the fellowship of the Body of Christ.

c) A Third Group of Passages that speak of Christ as having died "for all" or for "every man."

Among these I can mention first of all three-- John 12:32; Rom. 5:18; I Cor. 15:22.

Now there are two questions that have to be distinguished from one another. The one is the question of the universal extent of the atonement--for whom did Christ die? The other question is, the question of universalism as such, Who are actually saved? And strictly speaking, these three passages have reference to that second question. Namely to universalism as such. And the question is whether they teach a universalism? Is the drawing of all, in Jn. 12:32, a universalistic drawing?

Well, if the answer is affirmative, then of course the atonement also has to be construed as universal in its extent. But if the answer is in the negative. That is, that somehow we escape the universal salvation (I say it that way, but actually I mean it very seriously). Then nothing is said, strictly speaking, to imply the universality of the atonement. Except that we learn from these passages that universal expressions need not be applied in a universal way.

That is, in terms of each man head for head. But now we have, and as a matter of fact, we had already considered two of those verses in that light (e.g., Rom. 5:18; I Cor. 15:22). In terms of the relationship of the covenant people to the Head of the Church.

Now concerning Jn. 12:32 it need only be said, that this remark of Jesus is made in the context of the approach of certain Greeks, who want to see Jesus. And that may have caused our Savior to reflect on the ethnic universalism of the gospel. And that would be especially appropriate to draw that into the foreground on the occasion of a Jewish feast. "I will draw all men unto Myself. Not simply this ancient people, but the Greeks as well."

Well, then, beyond that you have II Cor. 5:14-15. Which I spoke about at the end of the last hour. And there you get the expression that "He died for all." And I think enough has been said to indicate that I think this passage teaches a particular atonement. Rather than a universal atonement. But we might take the passage a step further, and ask why Paul uses universal language, which seems to confuse and complicate questions for us. But there is good reason for the universal language when we recall that the passage is talking, not about the extent of the atonement, but the intent of the atonement. That is, that we should not live unto ourselves but unto Christ, who died for us and rose again. And then vs. 17, the man who is in Christ is a new creature. Now Paul is writing to the church in Corinth, to those who have professed faith in Jesus Christ, in the midst of a particularly evil situation. You are familiar with the character of the city of Corinth. And there you have a group of people who have professed faith in Jesus Christ. And precisely there, the Apostle Paul stresses that Christ did not die merely for some of you, but He died for all of you. And because He died for all of you you live. And therefore none of you have an excuse for loose living. But you are all to be new creatures in Jesus Christ. You are to be, every one of you, what Christ has made you to be by virtue of His death and resurrection. He died for all--and therefore none of us is excused from participation in the process of sanctification. And it is sanctification that is the burden of the message. And sanctification is, to be sure, pre-eminently the gift of God. But precisely because of that gift we are to work out our salvation in fear and in trembling. And therefore what is the foundation on which that work is carried on. It gives it its dynamic. And Paul says it is Jesus death for all of us.

I Tim. 2:6 "Who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne in the proper time." And that passage is significant because the language of redemption is used--ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων, "a ransom for all." And also universal expression appears in vs. 1 & 4: "for all men," "desires all men to be saved" And in the light of those verses especially vs. 2, "prayer for all men; kings and those who are in high places," where you have reference

to certain classes of men. Exegetes will often proceed to interpret this passage as having a reference to all classes of men. He gave Himself a ransom for all classes of men; for kings, and those in authority, and other classes as well. And that is a possible interpretation. Perfectly legitimate theologically, if we may pass judgement on the Word of God from the point of view of our theological position. But we are not compelled to see a universal atonement there, from that point of view.

But I think there are other ways in which this passage can be understood. When vs. 6 says "He is a ransom for all," I am more inclined to see that distributively. Because of the way in which the Apostle speaks earlier of prayer that is to be made for each man. And that God desires each man to be saved, vs. 4. It seems to me to be not simply that we pray for classes of people, or that there is a desire for certain classes to be saved, or that all classes be saved. But we have to see a certain universalism there, with reference to particular persons. And then, "He is a ransom for all"-- does that mean then a universal atonement? Well, not necessarily. God desires all men to be saved. And as Savior He is also the Mediator in the person of the man, Jesus Christ. For there is one God and one mediator, between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Who is a ransom for all. That is to say, this one and only mediator is a mediator for all. There are not some who need Jesus, and some who need another mediator. No, there is one mediator. And this is a mediator for all. That is, in the sense, the only way that a man can be saved is through this one mediator. And in that sense He is a ransom for all. Not that all are redeemed, that is not the point. Not that the efficacious atonement has relevance to each and every man, resulting in a universalism. But the point is, that whoever is redeemed is redeemed by this one. In other words, what is the force that you attach to that word "for?" Well, if you say that that "for" is the equivalent of "in the place of," efficaciously in the place of, then you see, the text would disprove the definite atonement.

But it is not necessary to understand the "for" in that way. But it has to be understood in the context of what is said about the "one mediator" who is "a ransom for all." Not for the immediate circle of the disciples (I Jn. 2:2), but for all men. Not for the Jews only, but a ransom for all. Now that seems to me to be a little bit more satisfactory than to see a reference to all classes of men, that Calvin proceeds in that direction. Not that I have any theological objection to that, but I think that this other approach does a little bit fuller justice to the passage.

Then in that connection I Tim. 4:10 "For to this end do we hope and strive because we have our hope set on the living God. Who is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe." And here it is not the atonement that is in view, but what is told is that Jesus is the Savior of all men." And that gets us

into the question of Universalism. I take the passage up because it is quite often associated with I Tim.2:6. But you notice in this passage that a distinction is brought up between the way in which God is the Savior of all, and the way in which He is the Savior of believers. He is not the Savior of all in the high sense in which He is the Savior of believers. And therefore we have to conclude that the verse specifically rejects universalism. Because that which distinguishes the believers as believers is faith. And if ~~not all have a faith~~ then not all are saved. Because faith is the way of salvation. And so the question is, in what sense is God the Savior of all, a sense that falls short of actual salvation. And in the interpretation of this passage, every interpreter goes beyond the specific language of the text to answer this question. And so in the course of exegesis of the passage, a number of alternatives have been offered. In keeping with one approach to chapter 2, verse 6 it can be said that God is the Savior of all classes of men. Or it can be argued as some do, that the salvation which is in view here, is to be determined by the circumstances in which it is found. And that it need not mean anything more here than that God is the Preserver of all men. Acts 17:25 God gives to all life and breath. Thus, God is the Preserver of all, especially them that believe. That is possible. Or you could again follow the line that I suggested to you in I Tim.2:3-4. "God is the Savior of all men" as a shortened form of the expression "God our Savior, Who desires all men to be saved." He is the Savior for all, in that He is the only Savior. And He invites all men. Analogous to the expression in vs.6, He is a ransom for all. He is a Savior for all. The Savior for all. That is, if they are to be saved at all, it must be through Him. But as a matter of fact He redeems those who have faith in Him. So in any case, however you proceed with that. I do not think that there is any necessity to find here a denial of the definite atonement.

Heb.2:9 also comes up for consideration. J. Murray also deals with this in Redemption Accomplished and Applied. He also deals with many of the above texts. So I will just refer you to that discussion.

And then we have two other texts I want to comment on--Rom.14:15 and II Peter 2:1.

Rom.14:15 says "Do not destroy him, with your food, for whom Christ died." The question here arises from the fact of the contemplation of the destruction, and you would have to think of eternal destruction, of one for whom Christ has died. And so the conclusion is drawn that some ~~for whom~~ Christ died will be destroyed. And if that is the case, He can be thought of as having died for all men. Although, in point of fact, only some are saved.

Well, there are at least two different ways in which you can approach this text, in addition to the one that I just mentioned.

J. Murray took the approach that was something like this. It is not actually said that the weak believer

actually perishes. The exhortation is not destroy, with your food, him for whom Christ died. But it is not actually said that that one perishes. Nor is it said that eating the food offered to the weak believer, that he would be destroyed. Simply the point is, that it is not that one eating that would result in his damnation. But the point is that by offering this man food, you are setting him on a course, the ultimate end of which, if carried through consistently, would be his destruction. You are encouraging him in the direction of his destruction. And then the exhortation is that we are not to undo, or seek to undo, what Christ has done for him. We are not to tear down or destroy the work of God. We are not to, Jesus has died for him, He has redeemed him, why should we encourage this man on a course which would undo what Jesus has done. Without the implication that that can actually be effected. That is one approach.

Another approach is to view this brother as one for whom Christ died, thinking in terms, not of eternal election, but thinking in terms of his profession of faith. He professes faith in Christ, he claims Jesus as his Savior. Similar to John 8:30 tells us that Jesus, in speaking with the Jews, there were many who believed on Him. Now that word "believe" is full of redemptive significance. And we have to say that believers ultimately will be saved. And yet in that passage it is quite clear that those believers, those Jews that believe, end up denying Jesus. Nevertheless they are called believers by virtue of their profession of faith. So also, by virtue of profession, by relationship to the Church and so forth, you have a brother spoken of as one for whom Christ died. And then we are exhorted to destroy that one. That is, lead him to apostacy by our eating.

5-8-81

This approach becomes even more imperative in II Peter 2:1 "there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, . . ." That is--what is contemplated here, is that these people, false teachers, are denying the sovereign Lord that bought them. $\Delta\epsilon\iota\chi\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ = the Master. Surely that is Christ. "Buying" it would be hard to deprive the word of its redemptive significance (cp. I Cor. 7:23; Rom. 5:9; Rev. 13:3-4).

We have a situation contemplated, in terms of which, those who have been bought by the Lord. And, we spoke of redemption, that buying as a part of the atonement, that they deny the Lord that bought them. Now there are various ways in which this text is approached. Some say it is only in their own estimation that they are bought. They represent themselves as bought, it is according to their own analysis of the situation that they are bought. But they are inconsistent with their own testimony, with their own affirmation. They are denying indeed what they affirm to be true theoretically. This is an attempt to correlate the passage with Definite Atonement. A some-

what artificial construction placed on the text, in order to achieve that end.

I am more inclined to the view of J. Murray at this point. He said that--

- 1) We simply have to reckon with the fact that there is Apostacy. And if there is such a thing as apostacy from the Faith, then it is not unreasonable to think that that is what is described here. They will introduce destructive heresies. And they will lead some people astray, and they will apostacize from the Faith.
- 2) Other passages of Scripture describe a similar phenomenon. But in less spectacular terms. E.g., Matt. 13 the Parable of the Seed on Four Soils. As dealt with in preaching, and you try to reckon with it from the point of view of the definitiveness and efficacy of the atonement, you are sometimes inclined to reduce the number of seeds from 4 to 2: the good and the bad. The difference among the different kinds of seed that do not do what they are supposed to do is blurred in terms of that basic distinction. Well, of course, such a distinction between good and bad is perfectly legitimate, from a certain point of view.

And yet, that is not the way the Parable is written. It is not written in terms of two kinds, it is written in terms of four kinds. So we have to appreciate positively, what our Lord is saying to us. When He says there are these different kinds of seeds. And is not the way our Lord expounded that parable very helpful to us in understanding precisely what we encounter in our experience. It is so true to life. There are some people whom the seed bounces off of. They are like ...it bounces off of hard ground. You have also dealt with people, they get all head up, and interested, and Christianity is a wonderful thing, etc. And it goes on for a month or two, or a year. And then everything falls flat and they go off. Others come to the faith. But other concerns come along and they choke it out. And so it corresponds so exactly to life.

Well, what you are told in the Parable, what you are given, is not a problem, in terms of the doctrine of the Definite Atonement. But you have to see that text as addressing itself to a different issue. Or look at the phenomena from a different point of view. Not in order to contradict what must be said about God's election, and what flows from that election, in terms of the definitiveness of the work of Christ. But a parable which takes account of the phenomenon of apostacy. That is, as we look at it, as we see it, there is an apostacy from the faith. It is not to say that God's electing purpose is undone or destroyed. It is not to say that Christ's work on the Cross is ineffectual. But we would have to revise our understanding of this particular person. And while he was enthusiastic about the Faith we might say to him, "Christ has died for you." But when he apostacizes, we can no longer speak that way.

Well, it is not that the atonement ceased to be effectual. But our discernment of what is the case, has to be revised, as we see the circumstances change.

Heb.10:29 "How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?" There is a sanctifying influence which is exerted by the blood of Jesus Christ. And yet, the person sanctified, may not, as we say, in the final sense of the word, be a genuine believer.

Now again I say, in a certain point of view, texts like II Peter 2:1 and Matthew 13 create problems for us when we look at them from the point of view of the doctrine of the Definite Atonement.

And yet, think just how much more severe the problem would be for us if we did not have passages of this kind, and yet encountered, in experience, what we also encounter in experience. People who profess the Faith, they show every sign of being converted. And then they depart from the Faith. That would be a total disaster for us. If we were not, in terms of what the Scripture says about the definitiveness and efficacy of the Atonement, if we were not prepared for that, by what texts, of this kind, say to us.

So we do not see them, at least I do not see them, as destructive of the doctrine of the Definite Atonement. But, and I do not see them, as sort of embarrassments to the truth. Which have to be kept secret. But they make a positive contribution to our understanding of the Faith. And the phenomena that we encounter.

2. The Intercessory Work of Christ.

Cf., J. Murray "The Heavenly High Priesthood," Collected Writings, I. An eminently worthwhile essay.

He speaks, first of all, of the intercessory work of Christ in the narrow sense. That is, that the Son, in His exalted state, makes petition to the Father on our behalf. And that is not a novum in His ministry. The work of Atonement, the death of Jesus Christ, that is once for all, finished in His earthly ministry. But that is not the end of the Priestly Office. But the Priestly Office continues in His exalted state. And we see that in His intercession for us, He intercedes for us on our behalf. And that intercession can perhaps be understood, as Murray suggests, in terms of the petitions which the Son makes for us, even during the course of His earthly life. When He prays for His disciples, and asks the Father to keep them, to preserve them. Petitions which are not irrelevant for our needs even now. As the Son is seated at the right hand of the Father, so there is that intercessory work, in the strict sense of the word. And historically in theology we use the word to refer to that heavenly priestly ministry of Christ.

But there is more to it than just petition, in the sense of prayer. There is also the appearance of Jesus Christ in the

presence of God the Father on our behalf. He is the Paraclete, the advocate with the Father. Cf., I John 2:1 "My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We are, in ch.1, appraised of the fact that we sin. We are cleansed from our sin, to be sure. But nevertheless, if we do sin we are not to despair. Because we have an advocate with the Father. One who pleads our case. In view of our guilt He pleads our case. And He pleads it on the basis of the work which He has done for us. And so we see the Son, not simply interceding, as if were, in words. But also pleading our case as our advocate in the presence of the Judge.

And then, Murray goes on to speak about the "Sympathy of the Lord." Having been tempted as we are, He is able to help those who are tempted. And so we have that sympathy extended to us from the throne of grace. A source of great comfort to us, to realize that the temptations that we are overtaken by, and the problems into which we fall, the difficulties. They are not strange to Jesus Christ. There is nothing human, in a sense, that is alien to Him. Because He has been tempted as we are and yet without sin. And so we have the continuing priestly ministry of Christ.

Just as we have the continuing Prophetic ministry of Christ. Christ continues to give us His Holy Spirit, to lead us into all truth. "Many things I have yet to tell you, but you can not bear them now. But when the Spirit comes He will lead you into all truth." The Spirit who is sent from the Father and the Son. And so, Jesus carries on His prophetic ministry.

But He also carries on, with the above two, His Kingly Ministry. Traditionally, not much has been done with this area (though it has been 12 years since he taught this, but it has probably been generally true). Because in N. T. Biblical Theology we take up the Kingly Office of Christ under the rubric of the Kingdom of God. And so there is no need to dwell on it extensively. Jesus appeared on the earth as a King, the Son of David, the Son of God. And He was the fulfillment of that prophecy. He was the fulfillment of the covenant made with David. And as He ascends to the right hand of the Father, He rules over all. And so His Kingly Office continues.

And so you see how appropriate that the exercises of those three offices be carried on by Jesus Christ. Who continues to be incarnate. And who will again, at the end of the age, return to judge the living and the dead.

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