



REFORMED

— PAVILION —

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*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;
he shall set me up upon a rock.*

—Psalm 27:5

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Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no...This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

—Exodus 16:4, 16–21

The Daily Rate

God gave manna to the children of Israel according to a strict daily rate. Each person was to gather one omer of manna per day, an omer being around one quart. If there were ten people in the family, the family would gather ten omers of manna in the morning. If there were a single person, the individual would gather one omer. The strict daily rate of one omer was the exact amount that each person needed. The old man who hardly ate anything needed one omer per day, and the growing teenager who ate everything in sight needed one omer per day. Any less than an omer would be too little for one person; any more than an omer would be too much. The omer of manna was to be entirely consumed in the day in which it was gathered, with none left over until the next day. This strict daily rate was the thing that the Lord had commanded.

But why such a strict daily rate of one omer of manna per person per day? Ah! Therein lies the gospel of our pilgrimage!

Imagine being an Israelite in the wilderness the day God sent manna. All the food that you took from Egypt is gone. You are hungry. Your wife is hungry and fainting. Your children are hungry and crying. They are slowly perishing before your eyes! Where is the food?? And then,

with the emergency of starvation staring you in the face, two things happen. First, God speaks a word: “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you.” Second, in the morning the ground is covered with manna. Food! Nourishment! Life!

What would you do? Gather it. Give it to your children. Eat it. And, especially, stockpile it, of course! After all, the manna would not last forever. It only stayed upon the ground until the sun waxed hot, and then it melted away. If each member of the family needed an omer per day, then best gather several omers per person now. Best take a little extra to set aside. Who wants to watch their children starve? I’ll never be caught short again!

But God had set a daily rate: one omer per person per day. No more, no less, and none left until morning. The child of God had to go out in the morning with his omer jar and gather his daily rate of manna. When his jar was full, he must look around upon the leftover manna, thick upon the ground, and leave it. When the sun waxed hot, he must watch all the extra manna melt away.

How could the child of God stand it? When today’s manna was gone, it was gone! And today’s manna was such an unlikely miracle in the

first place that who knew if there would be manna tomorrow? The child of God had nothing for tomorrow but the word of God: “I will rain bread from heaven for you.”

But there is the point! The child of God had nothing for tomorrow but the word of God! And that word of God was sufficient for him. That word of God was abundant for him. Man could live by that word of God! This was the lesson of the manna: man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by the word of God.

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth

out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. (Deut. 8:3)

Unbelief would not heed the word. Israel disobeyed. The stockpiled manna stank. Moses was wroth. But faith hears the word and lives.

So it is for the church in her pilgrimage today. Though God brings her into the wilderness, where she must watch her entire life melt away before her eyes, nevertheless he gives her Jesus Christ, the true bread from heaven. And God gives his church every word of the gospel of his love and grace in Christ. With her life gone and her sojourn weary, the church nevertheless is satisfied and happy and overflows. For she does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.

—AL

LETTER

Editorial on “Assurance of Justification”

Andy –

Have you ever seen anyone living willingly in unrestrained, unrepentant sinfulness that had true assurance of justification? Or do you think that individual is dragged into Heaven kicking and screaming? I think not.

Sincerely,
John Mantel.

Welcome to our Protestant Reformed correspondent. Mr. Mantel would occasionally write to *Sword and Shield* when the undersigned was editor of that magazine.¹ Mr. Mantel has also written to *Reformed*

Pavilion, although his previous letter was published without his name.² It is with gratitude to God that we welcome Mr. Mantel to the pages of *Reformed Pavilion* again. Criticism of the magazine’s doctrine, and even outright opposition, serves to sharpen our understanding of the truth.

Our correspondent writes in response to last week’s editorial, which condemned the 2024 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches.³ The editorial accused the Protestant Reformed synod of denying justification by faith alone. The editorial also interpreted synod’s denial of justification by faith alone as God’s judgment upon the apostate Protestant Reformed denomination. Our correspondent takes issue with the editorial’s analysis. Although he does not spell out his argument in detail, he writes in defense of the Protestant Reformed synod and in opposition to the editorial’s condemnation of the synod.

¹ John Mantel, *Letter to the Editor, Sword and Shield* 1, no. 7 (November 2020): 11; Andrew Lanning, “What the Sheep Are Saying,” *Sword and Shield* 2, no. 12 (January 2022): 8–9.

² *Letters to the Editor, Reformed Pavilion* 1, no. 42 (January 7, 2024): 6 (second letter on the page).

³ Andrew Lanning, “I Will Come Unto Thee Quickly,” *Reformed Pavilion* 2, no. 11 (June 22, 2024): 4–9.

Synod declared that a man's good works are not to be slighted in assuring that man of his justification. In the words of synod, the statement "Hence, I conclude, that sanctification and its effects, are by no means to be slighted, when we treat of assuring the soul as to its justification" is "not erroneous."⁴ Mr. Mantel comes to synod's defense by pointing out the unbreakable connection between justification and good works. The connection is that good works are the inevitable fruit of justification. In our correspondent's words, "Have you ever seen anyone living willingly in unrestrained, unrepentant sinfulness that had true assurance of justification?" Justified individuals are not dragged into heaven kicking and screaming; rather, justified individuals live lives of thankful good works as the effect of their justification. Our correspondent's argument, then, appears to be the following: Because good works are the inevitable effect of justification, a man can reason backward from the effect to the cause: I do good works; therefore, I must be justified. Because a man can reason from his good works to his justification, synod was correct to declare that a man's good works are not to be slighted in assuring a man of his justification. And *Reformed Pavilion* was wrong to accuse the Protestant Reformed synod of teaching justification by faith and works.

I believe that the above is a fair statement of our correspondent's argument. However, if I have misunderstood him, he is invited to write in again to set the record straight.

Our correspondent is correct about one thing, but he errs grievously in his use of that thing. He is correct that good works are the inevitable fruit of justification. A justified man is also a sanctified man. So says our Lord: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). And so say the confessions:

Therefore it is so far from being true that this justifying faith makes men remiss in a pious and holy life, that on the contrary, without it they would never do anything out of love to God, but only out of

self-love or fear of damnation. Therefore it is impossible that this holy faith can be unfruitful in man; for we do not speak of a vain faith, but of such a faith which is called in Scripture *a faith that worketh by love*, which excites man to the practice of those works which God has commanded in His Word. (Belgic Confession 24)

But our correspondent errs grievously—fatally—when he uses the fact that good works are the fruit of justification to defend synod's teaching that good works assure the soul of its justification. That good works are the inevitable fruit of justification does not mean that one's assurance of justification can come in any way by those good works. In justification one cannot reason backward from the effect to the cause. One cannot behold his good works and conclude from them that he is right with God. In fact, if one looks to his good works in justification in the slightest, he would not have assurance but doubt.

Moreover, though we do good works, we do not found our salvation upon them; for we can do no work but what is polluted by our flesh, and also punishable; and although we could perform such works, still the remembrance of one sin is sufficient to make God reject them. Thus, then, we would always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences continually vexed, if they relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior. (Belgic Confession 24)

When we are dealing with justification, we are dealing with righteousness. The question in justification is this: Are you and all your works right with God? If you have deviated in the slightest from what God requires, then you are not righteous and must be condemned. "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Ps. 130:3). Only if you and all that you have ever thought, said, and done conform

⁴ Synod 2024 Committee 3 advice, II.D.

to God as perfectly as God conforms to himself can you be right with God. “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart” (24:3–4).

But man and all his works are not right with God. Man is shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin (Ps. 51:5). All men are liars (116:11). All men are gone aside; they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one (14:3).

Shall such men look to their works even in the slightest to find out if they are right with God? What will such men see when they behold their works? Nothing but filthy rags! Even their best works—their righteousnesses—are disgusting. “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6). With one’s good works in view at all, one could only conclude that he is not right with God. All that the believer can see is that he is ungodly.

But, miracle of grace, God justifies the ungodly! God justifies those who do not work (Rom. 4:5)! How can this be? Only because of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ and all his works are right with God. Jesus obeyed the law of God in every respect. “The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me” (Ps. 18:20). Jesus suffered the curse of the law against the sins of his people. “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5). And God counts to his elect people what Christ did as if they themselves had done it. The righteousness of God’s people is entirely the righteousness of Christ, counted to them as their own. “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:21–22).

The righteousness of Christ cannot be received in any sense by working. It is a righteousness

“without the law” (Rom. 3:21). It is a righteousness “without the deeds of the law” (v. 28). It is a righteousness for the “ungodly” (4:5). It is a righteousness for “him that worketh not” (v. 5). It is a righteousness imputed “without works” (v. 6). One cannot know his righteousness by works. One cannot be assured of his righteousness by works. Works do not enter into any aspect of a man’s justification.

Rather, the righteousness of Christ is received by faith and only by faith. It is “the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 3:22). It is a righteousness “by faith without the deeds of the law” (v. 28). It is a righteousness for “him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly” (4:5). The child of God knows his justification by faith alone. The child of God is assured of his justification by faith alone.

And note well that assurance of justification is justification. It will not do for one to make a division between justification, on the one hand, and the assurance of justification, on the other hand. One might make such a division in order to pay lip service to *justification by faith alone* but to teach *assurance of justification by faith and works*. The fact is that the assurance of justification is justification. God’s declaration to one through the gospel that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him as his own assures that one that he personally is right with God.

The scriptures often speak of justification by faith alone in terms of its blessedness and peace—that is, in terms of the assurance of justification.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. (Ps. 32:1–2)

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:1)

The confessions also teach justification by faith alone in terms of knowledge and assurance.

We believe that, to attain the true knowledge of this great mystery, the Holy Ghost kindleth in our hearts an upright faith, which embraces Jesus Christ with all His merits, appropriates Him, and seeks nothing more besides Him. (Belgic Confession 22)

We believe that our salvation consists in the remission of our sins for Jesus Christ's sake, and that therein our righteousness before God is implied; as David and Paul teach us, declaring this to be the happiness of man, that God imputes righteousness to him without works. (Belgic Confession 23)

The Holy Ghost teaches us in the gospel, and assures us by the sacraments, that the whole of our salvation depends upon that one sacrifice of Christ which He offered for us on the cross. (Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 67)

Therefore, it is a fatal false doctrine to teach that one's good works, as the effects of his justification, are of any use in the *assurance* of one's justification. These good works "are of no account towards our justification. For it is by faith in Christ that we are justified, even before we do good works" (Belgic Confession 24). And "if we should appear before God, relying on ourselves or on any other creature, though ever so little, we should, alas! be consumed" (Belgic Confession 23). The man who looks in any sense to his works to assure his soul of his justification is not justified. "For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16).

The only assurance of justification is Jesus Christ and his good works.

And therefore we always hold fast this foundation, ascribing all the glory to God, humbling ourselves before Him, and acknowledging ourselves to be such as we really are, without presuming to trust in any thing in ourselves, or in any merit of ours, relying and resting upon the obedience of Christ crucified alone, which

becomes ours when we believe in Him. This is sufficient to cover all our iniquities, and to give us confidence in approaching to God; freeing the conscience of fear, terror, and dread, without following the example of our first father, Adam, who, trembling, attempted to cover himself with fig leaves. (Belgic Confession 23)

Our correspondent's letter demonstrates that the members of the Protestant Reformed Churches are getting the message from their leaders loud and clear. It is Protestant Reformed doctrine that good works are required in some sense for justification. Synod has now declared that a man's good works are not to be slighted in assuring his soul of his justification. And that message has been lodged in the hearts and understanding of the people. The people will not suffer a man's good works to be slighted in that man's assurance of his justification.

Once that message has reached home, it does not matter that the synod wrote many qualifications to try to talk its doctrine straight. It does not matter that some ministers think they can juggle all the nuances in their heads. It does not even matter that some minister somewhere in the denomination might know the truth about justification. It is too late. The sheep of the Protestant Reformed flock, having been fed justification by works, have tasted, chewed, and swallowed. And now they will not tolerate anyone—not even a worm over in *Reformed Pavilion*—to teach that justification is without works. And if someone does teach it, the members sneer about being dragged kicking and screaming to heaven.

Perhaps there is yet a Protestant Reformed minister or elder who knows the truth about justification. But by your constant toleration of false teachers and their heresy, you have killed the sheep. Instead of slaying the wolves who came in among your flock, you suffered the wolves to savage your sheep. Now your people are not justified. Whoever of them truly believe synod's doctrine are not justified. For their assurance of justification, they do not slight the works of the law! But those who do not slight the works of the law in

justification are not justified, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Let the shepherds who suffered the heretics tremble, for Jehovah is against the shepherds. And in his judgment God now will not suffer your denomination to be rid of its heresy.

But let those who have been delivered—and will be delivered—from the Protestant Reformed Churches and from heresy rejoice! Though you have lost your lives again and again, rejoice! For Christ and his gospel and his kingdom—and

his righteousness!—are yours. Behold the infinite grace of God that saves sinners!

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Gal. 2:16)

—AL

HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES

The Banner

February 5, 1920

(Pp. 85–86)

Our Doctrine by Rev. H. Hoeksema

Article LXIV. The New King and His Kingdom (continued)

The Son is the Word of God. He is the expression of God's inmost Being. In Him the Father reveals, objectifies Himself. That Son, moreover, is eternally with the Father. He turns Himself toward the Father. The constant tendency of His person is in the direction of the Father. He does not emanate from the Father and move in the direction away from Him. But being generated by the Father He turns with personal freedom and love toward the Father. Within the Holy Trinity the Son, so to speak, faces the Father. Hence, if the Father is called God revealing, the Son is God revealed. God the Father knows Himself thru God the Son.

So much we discussed in our last week's article in connection with John 1:4

All that we find in Scripture, particularly in the New Testament, is in the fullest harmony with this presentation. The Son always is presented to us as occupying that same position within the Holy Trinity.

In the O.T. we obtain a glimpse of this truth. Especially in the wonderful manifestation of the

Angel of Jehovah this relation of the second Person in the Holy Trinity appears sometimes with surprising clearness. That this Angel of Jehovah is not a mere created Angel we will take for granted as sufficiently established. In many passages where He appears He literally identifies Himself with Jehovah. What we are concerned about now is the relation of this Angel of Jehovah to the Godhead. We want to call your attention to just two passages, Ex. 23:20, 21 and Ex. 33:14.

In the former passage we read: "Behold, I send an angel before thee to keep thee by the way and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Take heed before him and hearken unto his voice; provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him." We may notice in passing that what is said of the angel that is to lead the people of Israel thru the desert and into the land of Canaan could never be ascribed to a merely created angel. The people are admonished to take heed and hearken to his voice. They are warned not to provoke him to anger. But above all, the right to retain sin,

and therefore, the divine right to forgive sin is ascribed to this angel. And surely, only to God belongs the right and authority to retain the sins of men. There can be little doubt that here we have not a creature, but very God Himself. But what we wish to emphasize in this connection is the very last clause of the passage: “for my name is in him.” The Name of God is His Being revealed. It is the sum of His virtues and glories manifested. And, therefore, the Angel of Jehovah is here presented as being the very manifestation of God. The same idea that was expressed in John 1:1 by the term Word.

In the second passage we read: “And he said, My face (presence) shall go with thee and I will give thee rest.” To understand this text we must consider it in its context. It was the time immediately after the people of Israel had committed the sin of worshipping the golden calf. The Lord had threatened: “I will not go up in the midst of thee for thou art a stiffnecked people.” 33:3 Hitherto Jehovah had gone up with them. And the manner in which Jehovah had accompanied the people of Israel thus far was, according to ch. 23:21, thru His Angel, the Angel of Jehovah in whom was His Name. Now, therefore, Jehovah threatens that this Angel shall lead them no more. Instead He proposes to the people that another angel, a created angel, shall lead them, lest the Angel of Jehovah consume them in His anger. But when Jehovah makes this announcement the people mourn and are filled with grief. They evidently come to sincere repentance and humiliation before Jehovah. They willingly strip themselves of their ornaments. And Jehovah is merciful and promises: “My face shall go with thee and I will give thee rest.” Clearly, with this promise the former condition is restored. As before, the Angel of Jehovah shall lead them again. And the peculiar significance of this passage is, therefore, that this Angel of Jehovah is here called God’s face. Evidently, the same conclusion is arrived at as before. There is in these passages a God that is in Himself hidden. But this hidden God becomes manifest thru the Angel of Jehovah, who is Jehovah’s face, in whom is Jehovah’s name, who is, therefore, the personal manifestation of God.

The consideration of a few more passages will lead us to no other conclusion.

In II Cor. 4:4 we read: “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ (literally: the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ) who is the image of God should shine upon them.” The apostle in this passage is speaking of the fact that in some his gospel is veiled. But this is not because of the gospel but because the devil hath blinded their eyes so that they cannot see. The gospel reveals centrally the glory of Christ Jesus. That glory consists in this, that He is the image of God. As the eternal Son He is that image **par excellence**. He is not merely created after the image of God. He does not manifest a finite reflection of God in His Person. But He is God’s image. To look upon Him is to look upon God. As He says to Philip in answer to the request of that disciple that the Lord might show them the Father: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father and how sayest thou, Shew us the Father?” John 14:9. That glory for a time had been hidden behind his humiliation. But now the Father had glorified Him with the glory He had with Him before the world was, now that glory shone perfectly even thru His perfected human nature. And, therefore, the Son of God is the image of the Father, the image, the manifestation of God.

So also in Col. 1:15: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.” It is sometimes doubted that the reference in this passage is to the Son of God as such. In the verses that precede, mention is made of the work of redemption. And, hence, it is said that this passage refers not to the eternal Sonship of Christ but rather to Him as the Mediator. Yet, this is not the case. True, it is also said that thru the work of the Son as Mediator we have redemption. But in the first place, in the verses that precede, mention is made of both the Father and the Son, vss. 12, 13. In the second place, in the verses that follow the apostle carries us, as John in his prologue, and tells us that by this Son all things are created and exist for him. And further he emphasizes the eternal nature of the Son, when he says

that He is before all things and that all things consist by Him. The expression “the first-born of every creature” can in the light of this context offer little difficulty. It cannot mean that the Son belongs to creation, that He is the first among the creatures, highly exalted, high above the rest of creation but nevertheless a creature. If that were the meaning the apostle could hardly say that he is before all things, that all things were made by Him and they consist by Him. All the apostle wishes to emphasize is that this Son was prior to creation. And the phrase may very well be circumscribed as follows: “He is born, begotten, before all creation was made.” But however this may be, what interests us here is that this eternal Son of God is also in this passage called the image of the invisible God. The idea that God is in Himself invisible is emphasized here. Just as in the O. T. there is an invisible God and a visible Angel of Jehovah, in whom is God’s name, who is God’s face, so also here, there is mention of God invisible and His image. It is in and thru that image that God reveals Himself. And that not in the first place to the creature. What we are concerned about now is the relation of the Son in the Trinity. He is God revealed, God objectified, God manifest to God. As second Person of the Holy Trinity He so possesses the entire divine nature, that He reveals the Godhead.

And finally, of great significance in this connection is Heb. 1:3: “Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of this person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.” The Son is here called “the brightness of his glory.” The meaning is not so much that the Son is the glory beaming forth from the Father, as that He is the personal reflection of that glory. In Himself He possesses the fullness of the glory of God. But as second Person He reflects that glory back to the Father. As John expressed it so beautifully: the Word was with, was toward God. The tendency of His being is toward the Father. Even as the mirror, the image in the mirror reflects

the glory of the person standing before it, so the Son with personal love eternally and constantly reflects the glory of the Father to the Father. In Him the Father knows Himself. How perfect and full that reflection is becomes plain from the next phrase: “the express image of his person.” The original word for “express image” makes us think of an impress made in wax or some other substance. That impress is in every respect the counterpart, the image of the original. So the Son is the impress, the perfect reflection of the Father’s subsistence.

Hence, all the passages we have briefly considered agree in this, that the Son is the image of the Godhead. This same idea is expressed in various ways. He is called the face of God, of Him is said that the name of Jehovah is in Him, He is said to be the Word of God, who always is with God, He is called the image of the invisible God, the brightness of the Father’s glory, the very impress of His subsistence. But essentially, all these terms convey the very same idea. And that idea is that the Son is God revealed.

The question whether a one-personal God could ever know Himself we may leave out of consideration. It is possibly best not to speak about possibilities and impossibilities in regard to the existence of the infinite God. But this is certain, that Scripture reveals to us that God knows Himself thru the Son. In that Son, generated eternally by the Father, subsisting in oneness of Being with the Father, the Father manifests, objectifies Himself. And the Son being thus generated, and being God of God, turns with eternal love to the Father and reflects the fullness of the Godhead, the brightness of His glory.

The Father is God revealing, the Son is God revealed. And the eternal connection between these Two lies in the fact that they meet in the Holy Spirit, proceeding from both the Father and the Son.

But about this next time.

—Holland, Mich.