



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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Editor: Rev. Andrew Lanning
From the Ramparts Editor: Dewey Engelsma

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And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.

—Exodus 16:32–36

The Golden Pot of Manna

God commanded Moses to preserve a pot of manna for the generations following. The pot was to be the size of an omer (around one quart)—the portion of the daily rate. The pot was a golden pot (Heb. 9:4). When God would soon give the stone tables of the law and the ark of the covenant would be built, Aaron would place the two tables of testimony and the golden pot of manna into the ark together. The manna in the golden pot would not breed worms nor stink but would remain fresh and whole in the ark for all the centuries of the ark's existence.

Why must Israel keep a golden pot of manna? For the sake of the generations to come, “that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness.”

You see, the bread with which God fed Israel in the wilderness was the answer to a question. The question was how in the world Israel could survive the wilderness. Israel was the church in the wilderness (Acts 7:38). The wilderness in which she walked was waste howling (Deut. 32:10). The wilderness was a land that was not sown (Jer. 2:2). How grievous were Israel's hardships in the wilderness! How strange Israel's life must have seemed to her! Israel did not know the wilderness—every day brought her into a new, trackless, map-less expanse of sorrow. Israel was not hardened to a nomadic life of wandering in the

desert—she had been born among the fleshpots of fertile Egypt. How often the children of Israel must have exclaimed, “What are we doing here?” How often the children of Israel must have wondered, “How did our life come to *this*?” You can hear their despair in their faithless complaint against Moses and Aaron: “Ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger” (Ex. 16:3).

How could the church stand it? How could the church survive? When the generations to come in the land of Canaan would look back and consider their forefathers in the wilderness, this would be their question: how did the church survive the wilderness? The answer to that question was God's manna. Look in the golden pot! See the bread wherewith God fed us in the wilderness! Miracle bread! Heavenly bread! Angels' food!

And that bread was wonderfully sufficient to sustain God's people. Yes, their wilderness life was exceedingly strange. No, they never could have imagined spending their life in such a place as the waste howling wilderness. Yes, they wrestled with doubt about their survival. No, they had nothing upon which they could fall back if the wilderness did not work out for them. But they had God's bread! And having God's bread, they had life and nourishment and fullness and abundance.

So it always is with the church of Jesus Christ. Always she is the church in the wilderness. Always her life is strange. Always her hardships are grievous. Always she lives and dies as a stranger in a waste howling land.

How can she stand it? How in the world does she survive? Not by her own fortitude, which is nothing. Nor because she gets used to the hardships—she never does. But the church in the wilderness survives because God feeds her the bread of life, who is Jesus Christ. Look in the golden pot

of the gospel! See the living bread, wherewith God feeds his church, come down from heaven! How perfectly sufficient Jesus is! How wonderfully abundant he is! In the strange, waste howling wilderness the church loses her life and loses it again. But behold the bread by which she lives forever! Here is the manna kept in the golden pot that we might see the bread wherewith the Lord feeds his hungry church: “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life” (John 6:35).

—AL

FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings to our readers from both near and far. Our little community here at *Reformed Pavilion* may be small by almost any standard, but what a joy for the saints of God from all nations, tribes, and tongues to be safely hidden together in the secret of God’s tabernacle. Whether our readers come from the land of fire and ice (Iceland) or from the sun-splashed beaches of the Caribbean (Cayman Islands), from one of the smallest countries in the world (Malta) or from one of the largest (China), or even from nations torn by war (Russia and the Ukraine), the people of God are one in the gospel of Jesus Christ. What a delicious foretaste of the new heavens and new earth in the day of our Lord, when “the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isa. 35:10). And what an undeserved gift of God’s grace to us that he gives us a little space here to read and to write the things of his everlasting kingdom.

Some of our hawk-eyed readers might notice a fascinating change in one of the articles today. For the past sixty-five *Banner* articles by Herman Hoeksema, he always signed off with

“Holland, Mich.” Beginning with the 66th article in this issue, Hoeksema will sign his articles with “Grand Rapids, Mich.” The explanation for this change is that in 1920 Herman Hoeksema was called away from Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan, where he had begun his ministry, to take up his pastorate in Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The change in Hoeksema’s signature line marks this event.

With the move to Eastern Avenue, Herman Hoeksema would enter squarely into the controversy over common grace that was beginning to foment in the Christian Reformed denomination in the early 1920s. The minister that had preceded Herman Hoeksema in Eastern Avenue was Johannes Groen. Groen was part of the progressive movement in the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) that pushed the denomination to become more “American,” which was simply a deceptive way of pushing to be less Reformed.¹ Groen, for example, was in favor of labor union membership, while Hoeksema was decidedly opposed. The progressive, “Americanizing” party of men like Groen would more and more find a theological justification in the theory of common grace for its apostatizing. It was largely this progressive party

¹ See Andrew Lanning, “100 Years in the Covenant: Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church,” *Reformed Pavilion* 1, no. 52 (April 6, 2024): 6–7.

that led the Christian Reformed Church to adopt the three points of common grace at Synod Kalamazoo in 1924. With the move to Eastern Avenue, Hoeksema arrived at the scene where his main battle over common grace would take place.

The subsequent history of Eastern Avenue CRC is a story of defeat for the Christian Reformed Church but of victory for the gospel of Jesus Christ and for the true church of Christ in the world. The CRC committed itself to the doctrine of a beggar god with a failed grace that does not save. Even though the CRC won all the political maneuvering in the battle—getting common grace adopted as official Christian Reformed dogma and ousting Herman Hoeksema from the denomination—the CRC lost the gospel. One need only scan the headlines today to see how dim the gold of Eastern Avenue CRC has become.² But God caused his gospel to triumph through the reformation of the church in the formation of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC), which stood for a sovereign God with a sovereign and particular grace that infallibly saves his people.

Hoeksema’s change to his signature line might appear to be a small detail, but for us who

can look back on the history that would follow, that change is a stark foreshadowing of things to come. And let it be a lesson to this generation that the tendency of man is always to cast away the gospel. Whether in the CRC or the PRC or Remnant Reformed Church today, man’s nature will not rest until he has made man his savior and his god. And let it be a comfort to God’s people that over against the constant idolatry and heresy of man, God graciously maintains the gospel of salvation by grace alone and thus graciously saves his people and preserves his church, even through reformation. Though the CRC became false and though her Protestant Reformed daughter eventually followed suit, the Lord knoweth them that are his and sovereignly, graciously, and infallibly saves them and gathers them unto himself.

As we read the small but significant change to Hoeksema’s signature line, then, let us not fear but rejoice. “Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you” (Isa. 35:3–4).

—AL



² For example, the home page of Eastern Avenue CRC (www.eacrc.org, accessed on July 9, 2024) includes this note: “We would love to welcome you at Eastern Avenue! Whatever your age, sex, race, abilities, economic status, sexual orientation, or gender identity, you are invited to participate fully in our Jesus-following community of faith. God loves you!” This note is followed by an image of the “pride flag,” which flag is a godless desecration of God’s beautiful rainbow. A link on Eastern Avenue’s home page will take one to its affirmations page (<https://www.eacrc.org/affirmations>, accessed on July 9, 2024), where one will find this affirmation: “We affirm that people of all sexual orientations and gender identities are equally eligible to be full members and ministry leaders at Eastern Avenue, without partiality. All belong and can serve.”

Andy -

We have agreed that Faith and Repentance are God's work and that Repentance proceeds out of Faith. So when the unrepentant elect person loses the sense of God's favor because of his unrepentance, is he defeating God's work of faith in him? Also why would God take away that sense of His favor when, as you say, he doesn't need to repent anyway. Why would God give faith that inevitably leads, as you say, to repentance if it's not needed or required. Or is it maybe, like I said, that God is leading that person to repent so he can once again experience God's favor? Of course that repenting doesn't earn God's favor or justification but the purpose is to bring that sheep back into the fold.

Your writings in our correspondence appear to be a result of your antinomian viewpoint and you are obviously schismatic with ulterior motives.

This is my last correspondence with you on this matter.

John Mantel.

Another hearty welcome to our Protestant Reformed correspondent. Although he says that this will be his last correspondence with us on the matter, we won't hold him to that—the pages of the magazine continue to remain open to him.

Chastisement and Repentance

Once again, our correspondent brings a list of questions. I don't mind answering our correspondent's questions again, but I am afraid that he and I might be missing each other's point. The topic that we are addressing is the assurance of justification. Specifically, is a man assured of his justification by faith alone in Christ alone, or must a man also repent in order to be assured of

his justification? However, our correspondent keeps approaching this topic from the perspective of God's chastisement of his erring people and from the perspective of the necessity of repentance.

Does our correspondent perhaps think that I am weak on God's chastisement of his erring people? Then let me affirm for our correspondent's sake that I fully agree with him that God chastises his people. In fact, God not only chastises his people when they sin, but God makes the entire life of his people to be a life of chastisement. Many are the afflictions of the righteous (Ps. 34:19). For God's sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter (Rom. 8:36). All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (II Tim. 3:12). Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth (Heb. 12:6).

Or does our correspondent perhaps think that I am weak on *why* God chastises his people? Then let me affirm for our correspondent's sake that God chastens his people for our spiritual profit. By his chastisement of us, God exposes the wickedness and folly of our sins. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah" (Ps. 32:3-4). By his chastisement of us, God makes us sorry for our sin. "And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly" (II Sam. 24:10). By his chastisement of us, God teaches us to obey his law. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" (Ps. 119:71). By his chastisement of us, God reveals our constant need of his mercy, his grace, and his gospel. "Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the

bones which thou hast broken may rejoice” (51:8). More could be added, but that is enough to make the point. God’s chastisement is not an empty exercise; affliction hath been for my profit!

Or does our correspondent perhaps think that I am weak on the *necessity and requirement* of repentance for God’s people? In fact, I know that our correspondent thinks that I am weak on this. When I affirm that faith alone and not repentance or any other work is necessary for justification, our correspondent calls this my “antinomian viewpoint.” Well, I maintain that repentance is *not* necessary for justification or for assurance of justification. But that does not mean that I reject *any* necessity of repentance. Let me affirm for our correspondent’s sake that repentance is necessary for the child of God. Repentance is necessary as God’s requirement. “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Matt. 3:8). Repentance is necessary as the fruit of faith. “Repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Repentance is necessary as evidence to my neighbors that I have faith. “I will shew thee my faith by my works” (James 2:18). Repentance is necessary as my gratitude and praise to God for his mercy to me. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Rev. 3:19). More could be added, but that is enough to make the point. My confession is not this: repentance is entirely unnecessary. Rather, my confession is this: repentance is necessary—just as every other good work is necessary—but not for the assurance of justification.

Assurance of Justification

Our correspondent has come with many questions. But let me also ask him a question. How can a man be sure that he is right with God?

Even though our correspondent has said that he will not write again on this matter, I nevertheless implore him to answer that question in his own heart. The answer to that question is the difference between life and death, between heaven and hell, between salvation and damnation.

How can a man be *sure* that he is right with God?

In fact, we could press that question further: Can a man be sure that he is right with God even when that man is ungodly? Or even further: Can a man be sure that he is right with God even when all his works are thoroughly befouled with sin? Or even further: Can a man be sure that he is right with God even when his repenting is filled with deceit and vain show? Or even further: Can a man be sure that he is right with God even when his conscience accuses him that he has broken the whole law and that he is a totally depraved sinner?

How can a man be sure that he is right with God?

This is such an important question because I am that ungodly man. I am that man whose works are utterly polluted with sin. I am that man whose repenting is a sham. I am that man whose conscience accuses me of every heinous iniquity.

How can such a sinner as I be sure that I am right with God?!

Must I become godly first? Must my repenting be sincere enough first? Must my repenting be extensive enough first? Must I be sorry enough first? Must I hate my sin enough first? Must I perform good enough works first? Must I quiet my conscience by sufficient obedience first? If so, then I will never be right with God! I will never be *sure* that I am right with God! All I could ever be sure of is condemnation for my ungodliness!

Thus the urgent question: How can a man be sure that he is right with God?

Here is the gospel answer to that question: a man can be sure that he is right with God by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone without any reference whatsoever to that man’s repenting. In fact, a man can be sure that he is right with God before he ever repents, before he ever loves God, before he ever loves his neighbor, before he ever obeys in any respect. His assurance of being right with God simply does not come by his repenting or any other thing he does. His

assurance of being right with God is faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.

Repenting is “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 why does our assurance of being right with God come by faith alone in Christ alone? Because Christ has fulfilled all righteousness! “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. 10:4). And because Christ—who is right with God—stood in the place of his people—who were not right with God—and suffered for our sins. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (I Pet. 3:18). And because Christ has obeyed all God’s law with perfectly clean hands and a perfectly pure heart. “I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity. Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight” (Ps. 18:23–24).

Christ was right with God for me! What more do I need to be sure that I also am right with God?! Let my conscience search out all the ungodliness it can find. My conscience will speak truly: I am ungodly. Let my conscience accuse me of every insincerity. My conscience will accuse justly: I have never had perfect faith, and I have never served God with that zeal as I am bound. Let my conscience even shred my repentance. My conscience will rampage rightly: my repenting is shallow and transient. But over against every accusation of my conscience that I am ungodly stands this declaration of the gospel: but Christ is godly! And all of Christ’s godliness, all of Christ’s perfect hatred of sin, all of Christ’s perfect trust in God, all of Christ’s perfect zeal for God that consumed him—all of this God counts as mine! “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins

that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:24–26).

How can a man be sure that he is right with God? By faith alone in Christ alone. Hallelujah! “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

No Justification by Repentance

However, our correspondent’s theology, as it is the theology of the Protestant Reformed Churches, is justification by repentance. Our correspondent insists that repenting is “needed” and “required” for “God’s favor or justification.” Our correspondent cannot imagine any point to repentance if it is not needed for a man’s justification.

Why would God take away that sense of His favor when, as you say, he doesn’t need to repent anyway. Why would God give faith that inevitably leads, as you say, to repentance if it’s not needed or required. Or is it maybe, like I said, that God is leading that person to repent so he can once again experience God’s favor? Of course that repenting doesn’t earn God’s favor or justification but the purpose is to bring that sheep back into the fold.

Our correspondent will not permit a man to be sure of his justification until that man has repented. For the sense of God’s favor, for restoration to the fold, for justification—repentance is necessary! But what say the scriptures? Not this: Therefore having repented under the chastening hand of God, we have peace with God. But this: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

The fact of the matter is that there is no such thing as justification by repentance. There is certainly such a thing as repentance—the inevitable fruit of faith. There is certainly such a thing as chastisement—God’s way with his people for their profit. There is certainly such a thing as

justification—God’s gift of the righteousness of Christ. But there is no such thing as justification by repentance. Justification by repentance is as foreign a concept to God as is justification by merit. It will not do for our correspondent to affirm that “repenting doesn’t earn God’s favor or justification.” For when our correspondent insists on “repenting” being “needed” and “required” for “God’s favor or justification,” our correspondent is teaching a fiction every bit as absurd as repenting’s earning God’s favor. God only justifies by faith. And God justifies by faith alone in order that all men might know that justification is by grace alone and not by merit. “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace” (Rom. 4:16).

So much is justification by faith alone that there is no justification for the man who works for it. Only to him that “worketh not” is his faith “counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5). There is no justification for the man who repents for it. Only the ungodly are justified (v. 5). Those who work the works of the law for their justification go down to their house unpardoned. “For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” And “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” (Gal. 2:16).

Something Is Missing

The debate over justification by faith alone versus justification by repentance is not a mere academic debate. It is the difference between the truth and the lie, between Christ and Belial, between heaven and hell.

Our correspondent’s letter reveals that the Protestant Reformed theology of justification by repentance has a gaping hole in it. Something is missing from Protestant Reformed doctrine. Our correspondent has written three letters now, but he has never once mentioned the one thing that is at the heart of justification. What is missing from his doctrine of justification? Jesus Christ!

In his relatively brief letters, you will find much about repenting. You will find much about repenting to regain assurance and repenting to experience God’s favor. But you will find not one single reference to Jesus Christ.

Our correspondent’s omission is glaring. There is no such thing as justification apart from Christ. You could even say that our justification is Jesus. Christ is made unto us righteousness (I Cor. 1:30). Justification is by the faith of Christ (Gal. 2:16). Jesus is “Christ our righteousness” (Belgic Confession 22). Justification is an empty term and an empty concept apart from Christ.

Our correspondent’s omission is not due to his being a layman. The same omission of Christ in favor of repentance can be found in the Protestant Reformed denomination’s greatest living theologian.¹

Nor is our correspondent’s omission due to his letters’ being brief. The one thing that there is to say about justification is Christ. Whether in brief letters or long replies, one cannot say anything about justification until one has said, “Christ.” Christ is the first, middle, and last word in justification.

Rather, our correspondent’s omission of Christ is the fulfillment of the apostle’s word in Galatians 2:21: “If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” A theology of righteousness by obedience does not need a Christ. If one’s doctrine of justification is justification by repentance, then one can state one’s entire theology without ever once mentioning Christ. One will have a lot to say about obedience and repenting and how one comes to repent and obey. But one does not need a Christ or a cross for such a theology. For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Oh yes, those who teach justification by repentance might eventually get around to mentioning Christ. But Christ is not the center of that theology. Christ is only the window dressing to deceive the unwary. But in justification one must come to the decisive moment. In that decisive

¹ See Andrew Lanning, “Man Before God...Developed,” *Sword and Shield* 2, no. 16 (March 15, 2022): 22; “Entrenched in Prerequisites,” *Sword and Shield* 3, no. 1 (June 2022): 21.

moment the poor sinner is sure that he is right with God. In the theology of justification by faith alone, there is only one thing in that moment: Jesus Christ and his righteousness! But in the theology of justification by repentance, there is a different thing in that moment: the sinner's repenting. Our correspondent has done us a favor by distilling justification down to its decisive moment of being restored to the sense of God's favor and by showing us what one finds in that moment when his theology is justification by repentance.

Conclusion

God's people, flee. There is nothing for you in the Protestant Reformed Churches. The plague of justification by works has been unleashed. Beware lest your lingering brings the plague into your house.

Saying so is not schism and ulterior motives but love for all the Lots who vex their righteous

souls in Sodom. What are you waiting for? How many more Protestant Reformed sermons, articles, decisions, or letters do you need in order to see that the brimstone is falling? God will not send angels to grab you under the arms and pull you out. But he has sent an angel—a messenger—to call you out. Are you already as hardened as Israel in the days of Jeremiah? "To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it" (Jer. 6:10). Or do you yet have an ear to hear? Let him that hath an ear hear: "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." And do not respond as Israel: "But they said, We will not walk therein" (v. 16).

—AL

HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES

The Banner

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(pp. 144–45)

Our Doctrine by Rev. H. Hoeksema

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

The personal property of the Holy Spirit is that He proceeds from both the Father and the Son. Such is the carefully formulated and beautifully expressed confession of the church with regard to the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. And in this confession we have an expression, too, of the conception of the church with regard to the relation of the Spirit to the Father and the Son.

The Spirit proceeds.

He is not begotten like the Son. He is, therefore, not a second Son of the Father, neither is He the Son of the Son. If he were, our thoughts could find no rest in the confession of the Trinity, for

there would be no conceivable reason why God should not have an endless number of sons if He had two; or why, if the Spirit were begotten of the Son there should not be an endless emanation of sons finding its ultimate progenitor in the Father. In other words, the question: why are there three and no more than three persons in the Holy Trinity would find no answer. And, therefore, the Spirit proceeds. He is no Son, He is not Begotten, but He is Spirit, breathed forth from the Father and the Son.

The Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. He does not proceed, is not breathed forth from the Father only, but from the Father

and the Son. And again, not so, that the Spirit proceeds really from the Father in the first place and only thru the Son into the church and all creation. No, but in the same sense does the Spirit proceed from the Son as He proceeds from the Father. If it were possible to speak of eternal acts in terms derived from time, we might say that simultaneously the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. Hence, the meaning of this confession is not that the Spirit proceeds from God to the creature outside of God, but that he proceeds from the Father and the Son within the Divine Family, so that in the Spirit Father and Son meet each other.

Such is the confession of the church. The question is, first of all: is this confession based on the Word of God?

With regard to the first point it is not difficult to show that this is actually the teaching of Holy Writ. That the Spirit proceeds and is not begotten, is not a second Son, follows already from His very Name. Never is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity called Son. Neither do we read of Him, as we do of the Son, that He reveals, is the image of the Godhead. He is not the Word, the Angel of His Face, the very impress of the Father's substance. He is expressly called the Holy Spirit. It is true that the name Spirit is applicable not only to the Third Person but also to the whole Being of God. God is a Spirit. And thus applied the term stands over against, in distinction from matter. God is not material. He is a Spirit of infinite perfection. But although this term in that sense is applied to the whole Being of God, yet Scripture makes a very clear distinction between God as Spirit and the Spirit as Third Person in the divine Trinity. Failure to make this distinction would, of course, lead to a denial of the Trinity, would directly lead us to the fundamental error of Unitarianism. It maintains not only that God is a Spirit, but that God is the Spirit and the Spirit is God, and that there is no further distinction between God as Spirit and the Holy Ghost as Third Person in the Divine Family. Scripture, however, makes this distinction clearly thruout. It is not even necessary to make a special effort to prove this. Just think of such clear passages as John 15:26: "But

when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me." The distinction between the Father and the Spirit, as well as between Christ and the Spirit, is clearly drawn in these words. And, therefore, once more, the term Spirit is, indeed, applicable to the whole being of God, yet is employed distinctly with reference to the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. But if this is clear, it may also be inferred, that with reference to the Third Person it has a different meaning than when applied to the Divine Being. In the latter sense it simply is used in contradiction from matter. But when applied to the Holy Spirit it may be taken in a more literal sense. He is the Person that proceeds from the Father and the Son as the Breath of God. He is "spirited," breathed forth. In His mode of operation He is compared with the wind. In creation He is like the breath of God, giving life or causing to wither. And in this sense the name Spirit certainly denotes a personal property. It tells us that the Third Person is not begotten, but proceeds, as the breath of God.

But this personal property of the Third Person is also clearly expressed in the text we quoted above: "But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth **which proceedeth from the Father**, he shall bear witness of me." In this passage we are plainly told that the personal property of the Spirit is that He proceeds from the Father. This has been denied. Most modern expositors of this passage maintain that this passage has nothing whatever to tell us in regard to the essential, eternal, personal relationship of the Spirit within the Trinity. According to them the clause "which proceedeth from the Father" refers to the outward communication of the Spirit from the Father, not to the immanent relation of subsistence. To proceed, then, is simply the counterpart of the being sent of the Spirit by the Father. It was on Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out, that He proceeded from the Father, and that this Word of the Savior was realized. But against this interpretation there are objections that have never been sufficiently answered. In the first place, as Godet

points out, if this is the correct interpretation and if the clause “which proceedeth from the Father” must be explained as referring to the mission of the Spirit, to the historical event of the outpouring on Pentecost, there is a strange tautology in the passage, an idle and meaningless pleonasm, an unaccountable repetition of the same thought. The text would then mean “But when the comforter is come, whom I will send from the Father... who is sent from the Father, he shall bear witness of me.” What is already expressed in the phrase “from the Father” the Lord simply repeats in the clause: “which proceedeth from the Father” and the latter is simply a superfluous addition. In the second place, it may not escape our attention that in the latter clause an entirely different word is used than in the former. When the Lord refers to the mission, to the pouring out of the Spirit he says: “I will send.” But the second word is not “send” but “proceed,” especially in the original a word full of meaning. It denotes a continual source. It pictures the Spirit as proceeding from the Father even as a river proceeds from its source, as the heat from the sun, as fragrance from the flower, as love from the heart. And this is hardly applicable to the single historical event of the outpouring on Pentecost. And finally, there is a difference in tense. With reference to the mission of the Comforter the Savior speaks in the future tense. He says: “I will send” evidently referring to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit soon after His departure to the Father. But in the second clause the present is employed: “which proceedeth from the Father.” And this, evidently, does not point to the event that is to take place ten days after the ascension of the Lord, but to a personal property, to an eternal relationship between the Father and the Spirit.

These weighty objections have not been sufficiently met by recent expositors, who find in these words nothing but a reference to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. And, therefore, we cannot agree with them. And we maintain that the passage actually refers to the intertrinitarian relationship of the Father and the Holy Spirit, and tells us that the Third Person in relation to the Father proceeds, is breathed forth.

If the clause “which proceedeth from the Father” is thus understood the tautology disappears. For then the personal relationship of the Spirit to the Father within the Trinity is pointed out as the eternal basis for the mission of the Spirit in the church. Just because that relation is such that the Spirit proceeds from the Father eternally, He is also the Person that is sent forth, poured out into the church on Pentecost. The works of each of the Three Persons outside of the Divine Being are in harmony with their several relationships within the Trinity. The Son is the image of the Father, God objectified, hence, He becomes Immanuel, God with us, is sent forth into the flesh. Thus the Spirit, eternally proceeding from the Father, is the Person that is poured out on Pentecost to dwell in the church and unite that church in covenant fellowship with God.

Hence, the Spirit proceeds from the Father.

The second question, however, more difficult than the first, is: “filioque”? That is: does the Spirit also proceed from the Son?

This question was the occasion of a bitter controversy in the past. It ultimately separated the Latin Church from the Greek. The former answered: “Yes, filioque, also from the Son the Spirit proceeds.” The latter said, “No, the Spirit proceeds from the Father, thru the Son, not from the Father and the Son.”

This question is of extreme significance. According as we accept the one or the other answer to the question we will have to form our conception of the Holy Trinity.

The question is a fundamental one.

Does the Spirit proceed only from the Father, not from the Son? Then it is impossible to conceive of the unity of the Three Persons, of their covenant fellowship. The Trinity does not close. There is then a Father, and that Father on the one hand begets a Son, on the other breathes forth a Spirit. There is no rest, there is no return of the Father to Himself. For granted that the Spirit proceeds from the Father **per filium**, thru the Son, the fact always remains that the Father only reveals and breathes forth, never returns to Himself in the Spirit. Father and Son do not

meet. It is impossible to conceive of the covenant fellowship between the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity if the Spirit does not proceed from the Son. If, however, the Spirit does proceed, not only from the Father, but simultaneously and in the same sense also from the Son,

the Trinity closes in the Spirit, Father and Son meet each other in the Spirit.

There are other objections of a practical nature.

But about these next time.

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