

Systematic Theology 2.1

Man in His Original State

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Part Two: The Doctrine of Man in Relation to God — Section 1: Man in His Original State

Editorial note

The text has been updated to UK English; gloss boxes have been added to explain technical terms; summaries have been included; and questions for further study have been added. We have also included a master outline with the part represented in this volume shown in bold.

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Berkhof's Systematic Theology: Master Outline

This six-part guide is designed for use at the beginning of each volume. The part represented in this volume is shown in bold.

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I. The Origin of Man

Scripture presents man as the direct and purposeful creation of God, bearing a unique dignity and sharing one common human origin.

A. The Doctrine Of Man In Dogmatics.

GLOSS Anthropology: the theological study of humanity: our origin, nature, dignity, purpose, and relation to God as Creator and Judge.

The transition from Theology to Anthropology, that is, from the study of God to the study of man, is a natural one. Man is not only the crown of creation, but also the object of God's special care. And God's revelation in Scripture is a revelation that is not only given to man, but also a revelation in which man is vitally concerned. It is not a revelation of God in the abstract, but a revelation of God in relation to His creatures, and particularly in relation to man. It is a record of God's dealings with the human race, and especially a revelation of the redemption which God has prepared for, and for which He seeks to prepare, man. This accounts for the fact that man occupies a place of central importance in Scripture, and that the knowledge of man in relation to God is essential to its proper understanding. The doctrine of man must follow immediately after the doctrine of God, since the knowledge of it is presupposed in all the following loci of Dogmatics. We should not confuse the present subject of study with general Anthropology or the science of mankind, which includes all those sciences which have men as the object of study. These sciences concern themselves with the origin and history of mankind, with the physiological structure and the psychical characteristics of man in general and of the various races of mankind in particular, with their ethnological, linguistic, cultural and religious development, and so on. Theological Anthropology is concerned only with what the Bible says respecting man and the relation in which he stands and should stand to God. It recognises

Scripture only as its source, and reads the teachings of human experience in the light of God's Word.

B. Scriptural Account Of Origin Of Man.

GLOSS Immediate creation: the belief that God directly created the first human beings, rather than humanity arising only through natural processes.

Scripture offers us a twofold account of the creation of man, the one in Gen. 1:26,27, and the other in Gen. 2:7,21-23. Higher criticism is of the opinion that the writer of Genesis pieced together two creation narratives, the first found in Gen. 1:1—2:3, and the second in Gen. 2:4-25; and that these two are independent and contradictory. Laidlaw in his work on *The Bible Doctrine of Man*[pp. 25f.] is willing to admit that the author of Genesis made use of two sources, but refuses to find here two different accounts of creation. He very properly denies that in the second chapter we have “a different account of creation, for the plain reason that it takes no account of the creation at large.” In fact, the introductory words of the narrative beginning with Gen. 2:4, “These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created,” seen in the light of the repeated use of the words “these are the generations” in the book of Genesis, point to the fact that we have something quite different here. The expression invariably points, not to the origin or beginning of those named, but to their family history. The first narrative contains the account of the creation of all things in the order in which it occurred, while the second groups things in their relation to man, without implying anything respecting the chronological order of man's appearance in the creative work of God, and clearly indicates that everything preceding it served to prepare a fit habitation for man as the king of creation. It shows us how man was situated in God's creation, surrounded by the vegetable and animal world, and how he began his history. There are certain particulars in which the creation of man stands out in distinction from that of other living beings:

1. MAN'S CREATION WAS PRECEDED BY A SOLEMN DIVINE COUNSEL.

Before the inspired writer records the creation of man, he leads us back, as it were, into the council of God, acquainting us with the divine decree in the words, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," Gen. 1:26. The Church has generally interpreted the plural "us" on the basis of the trinitarian existence of God. Some scholars, however, regard it as a plural of majesty; others, as a plural of communication, in which God includes the angels with Himself; and still others, as a plural of self-exhortation. Of these three suggestions the first is very unlikely, since the plural of majesty originated at a much later date; the second is impossible, because it would imply that the angels were co-creators with God, and that man is also created in the image of the angels, which is an un-Scriptural idea; and the third is an entirely gratuitous assumption, for which no reason can be assigned. Why should such a self-exhortation be in the plural, except for the reason that there is a plurality in God.

2. THE CREATION OF MAN WAS IN THE STRICTEST SENSE OF THE WORD AN IMMEDIATE ACT OF GOD. Some of the expressions used in the narrative preceding that of the creation of man indicate mediate creation in some sense of the word. Notice the following expressions: "And God said, Let the earth put forth grass, herbs, yielding seed, and fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind" — "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures" . . . and, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind"; and compare these with the simple statement, "And God created man." Whatever indication of mediacy in the work of creation is contained in the former expressions, is entirely wanting in the latter. Evidently the work of God in the creation of man was not mediated in any sense of the word. He did make use of pre-existent material in forming the body of man, but even this was excluded in the creation of the soul.

3. IN DISTINCTION FROM THE LOWER CREATURES MAN WAS CREATED AFTER A DIVINE TYPE. With respect to fishes, birds, and beasts

we read that God created them *after their kind*, that is, on a typical form of their own. Man, however, was not so created and much less after the type of an inferior creature. With respect to him God said, “Let us make man *in our image, after our likeness*.” We shall see what this implies, when we discuss the original condition of man, and merely call attention to it here, in order to bring out the fact that in the narrative of creation the creation of man stands out as something distinctive.

4. THE TWO DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF HUMAN NATURE ARE CLEARLY DISTINGUISHED. In Gen. 2:7 a clear distinction is made between the origin of the body and that of the soul. The body was formed out of the dust of the ground; in the production of it God made use of pre-existing material. In the creation of the soul, however, there was no fashioning of pre-existing materials, but the production of a new substance. The soul of man was a new production of God in the strict sense of the word. Jehovah “breathed into his (man’s) nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” In these simple words the twofold nature of man is clearly asserted, and their teaching is corroborated by other passages of Scripture, such as, Eccl. 12:7; Matt. 10:28; Luke 8:55; II Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:22-24; Heb. 12:9. The two elements are the body and the breath or spirit of life breathed into it by God, and by the combination of the two man became “a living soul,” which means in this connection simply “a living being.”

5. MAN IS AT ONCE PLACED IN AN EXALTED POSITION. Man is represented as standing at the apex of all the created orders. He is crowned as king of the lower creation, and is given dominion over all the inferior creatures. As such it was his duty and privilege to make all nature and all the created beings that were placed under his rule, subservient to his will and purpose, in order that he and his whole glorious dominion might magnify the almighty Creator and Lord of the universe, Gen. 1:28; Ps. 8:4-9.

C. The Evolutionary Theory Of The Origin Of Man.

GLOSS Theistic evolution: an attempt to reconcile evolutionary development with belief in God; Berkhof assesses it against the biblical account of humanity.

Among the various theories that have been broached to explain the origin of man, the theory of evolution at present holds the field, and therefore deserves brief consideration.

1. STATEMENT OF THE THEORY. The theory of evolution is not always stated in the same form. It is sometimes represented as if man is a direct descendant of one of the species of anthropoid apes now in existence, and then again, as if man and the higher apes have a common ancestry. But whatever difference of opinion there may be on this point, it is certain that, according to thorough-going naturalistic evolution, man descended from the lower animals, body and soul, by a perfectly natural process, controlled entirely by inherent forces. One of the leading principles of the theory is that of strict continuity between the animal world and man. It cannot allow for discontinuity anywhere along the line, for every break is fatal to the theory. Nothing that is absolutely new and unpredictable can appear in the process. What is now found in man must have been potentially present in the original germ out of which all things developed. And the whole process must be controlled from start to finish by inherent forces. Theistic evolution, which seems more acceptable to many theologians, simply regards evolution as God's method of working. It is sometimes represented in a form in which God is merely called in to bridge the gaps between the inorganic and the organic, and between the irrational and the rational, creation. But to the extent to which a special operation of God is assumed, gaps are admitted which evolution cannot bridge, and something new is called into being, the theory naturally ceases to be a pure theory of evolution. It is sometimes held that only the body of man is derived by a process of evolution from the lower animals, and that God

endowed this body with a rational soul. This view meets with considerable favour in Roman Catholic circles.

2. OBJECTIONS TO THE THEORY. Several objections can be raised against the theory of the evolutionary descent of man from the lower animals.

a. From the point of view of the theologian the greatest objection to this theory is, of course, that it is contrary to the explicit teachings of the Word of God. The Bible could hardly teach more clearly than it does that man is the product of a direct and special creative act of God, rather than of a process of development out of the simian stock of animals. It asserts that God formed man out of the dust of the ground, Gen. 2:7. Some theologians, in their eagerness to harmonize the teachings of Scripture with the theory of evolution, suggest that this may be interpreted to mean that God formed the body of man out of the body of the animals, *which is after all but dust*. But this is entirely unwarranted, since no reason can be assigned why the general expression “of the dust of the ground” should be used after the writer had already described the creation of the animals and might therefore have made the statement far more specific. Moreover, this interpretation is also excluded by the statement in Gen. 3:19, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” This certainly does not mean that man shall return to his former animal state. Beast and man alike return again to the dust. Eccl. 3:19,20. Finally, we are told explicitly in I Cor. 15:39 that “All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts.” As to the spirit of man the Bible teaches explicitly that it came directly from God, Gen. 2:7, and therefore cannot be regarded as a natural development of some previously existing substance. In perfect harmony with this Elihu says, “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty giveth me life,” Job 33:4. Furthermore, Scripture also teaches that man was at once separated from the lower creation by an enormous chasm. He at once stood on a high intellectual, moral, and religious level, as created in the image of God

and was given dominion over the lower creation, Gen. 1:26,27,31; 2:19,20; Ps. 8:5-8. By his fall in sin, however, he fell from his high estate and became subject to a process of degeneration which sometimes results in bestiality. This is quite the opposite of what the evolutionary hypothesis teaches us. According to it man stood on the lowest level at the beginning of his career, but slightly removed from the brute, and has been rising to higher levels ever since.

b. The second great objection is that the theory has no adequate basis in well established facts. It should be borne in mind that, as was pointed out before, the evolutionary theory in general, though often represented as an established doctrine, is up to the present time nothing but an unproved working hypothesis, and a hypothesis that has not yet given any great promise of success in demonstrating what it set out to prove. Many of the most prominent evolutionists frankly admit the hypothetical character of their theory. They still avow themselves to be firm believers in the doctrine of descent, but do not hesitate to say that they cannot speak with any assurance of its method of operation. When Darwin published his works, it was thought that the key to the process was found at last, but in course of time it was found that the key did not fit the lock. Darwin truly said that his theory depended entirely on the possibility of transmitting acquired characteristics, and it soon became one of the corner-stones of Weismann's biological theory that acquired characteristics are not inherited. His opinion received abundant confirmation by the later study of genetics. On the basis of the assumed transmission of acquired characteristics, Darwin spoke with great assurance of the transmutation of species and envisaged a continuous line of development from the primordial cell to man; but the experiments of De Vries, Mendel, and others tended to discredit his view. The gradual and imperceptible changes of Darwin made place for the sudden and unexpected mutations of De Vries. While Darwin assumed endless variation in several directions, Mendel pointed out that the variations or mutations never take the organism outside of the species and are subject to a definite law. And modern cytology in its study of

the cell, with its genes and chromosomes as the carriers of the inherited characters, confirmed this idea. The so-called new species of the evolutionists were proved to be no true species at all, but only varietal species, that is varieties of the same species. Nordenskiöld in his *History of Biology* quotes the following sentence from a popular account of the results of heredity research, as reflecting the true state of affairs: “For the very reason of the great number of facts that modern heredity-research has brought to light, chaos prevails at present in regard to the views on the formation of species,” p. 613. Prominent evolutionists now frankly admit that the origin of species is a complete mystery to them. And as long as that is so, there is not much chance of their explaining the origin of man.

Darwin in his attempt to prove the descent of man from a species of anthropoid apes relied on (1) the argument from the structural similarity between man and the higher animals; (2) the embryological argument; and (3) the argument from rudimentary organs. To these three were added later on, (4) the argument derived from blood tests; and (5) the palaeontological argument. But none of these arguments furnish the desired proof. The argument from structural likeness unwarrantably assumes that the similarity can be explained in only one way. Yet it can very well be accounted for by the assumption that God in creating the animal world made certain typical forms basic throughout, so as to have unity in variety, just as a great musician builds up his mighty composition on a single theme, which is repeated time and again, and at each repetition introduces new variations. The principle of preformation gives an adequate explanation of the similarities under consideration. The embryological similarity, such as it is, can be explained on the same principle. Moreover recent biological studies would seem to indicate that no structural similarity but only a genetic relationship can prove affinity or descent. As far as the rudimentary organs are concerned, more than one scientist has expressed doubt as to their vestigial character. Instead of being the useless remains of animal organs, it may very well be that they serve a definite purpose in the human organism. The blood tests in their original form, while

pointing to a certain likeness between the blood of animals and man, do not prove genetic relationship, since in these tests only part of the blood, the sterile serum which contains no living matter, was used, while it is an established fact that the solid portion of the blood, containing the red and white cells, is the carrier of hereditary factors. Later tests, in which the spectroscope was called into use and the entire blood was examined, proved conclusively that there is an essential difference between the blood of animals and that of man. The palaeontological argument is equally inconclusive. If man really descended from the anthropoid apes, it might be expected that the intermediate forms would be in existence somewhere. But Darwin was not able to find this missing link any more than the thousands of missing links between the various species of animals. We are told that the early progenitors of man have long since died out. This being so, it was still possible that they might be found among the fossil remains. And to-day scientists actually claim that they have found some bones of very ancient men. They have reconstructed these men for us, and we can now enjoy looking at the imaginary photos of the reconstructed Java man (*Pithecanthropus erectus*), the Heidelberg man (*Homo Heidelbergensis*), the Neanderthal man (*Homo Neanderthalensis*), the Cro-Magnon, the Piltdown man, and others. These reconstructions seem to be taken seriously by some, but really have very little value. Since only a few bones were found of each, and even these were scattered in some cases, so that it is not certain that they belong to the same body, they merely testify to the ingenuity of the scientists who reconstructed them. In some cases the specialists are by no means agreed as to whether the bones in question belonged to a man or to an animal. Dr. Wood, professor of anatomy in the University of London, says in a booklet on the *Ancestry of Man*: “I find no occupation less worthy of the science of Anthropology than the not unfashionable business of modelling, painting, or drawing these nightmare pictures of the imagination, and lending them in the process, an utterly false value of apparent reality.”[Quoted by Allen, *Evolution in the Balances*, p. 110.] Fleming, one of the most prominent present day scientists,

says: “The upshot of it all is that we cannot arrange all the known fossil remains of supposed ‘man’ in a lineal series gradually advancing in type or form from that of any anthropoid ape, or other mammal, up to the modern and now existing types of true man. Any supposition or statement that it can be done, and is true, is certainly incorrect. It is certainly misleading and unspeakably pernicious to put forward in popular magazines or other publications read by children pictures of gorillas or chimpanzees labelled ‘Man’s cousin’ or ‘Man’s nearest relative,’ or to publish perfectly imaginary and grotesque pictures of a supposed ‘Java man’ with brutish face as an ancestor of modern man, as is occasionally done. Those who do such things are guilty of ignorance or deliberate mis-representation. Neither is it justifiable for preachers in the pulpit to tell their congregations that there is general agreement among scientific men as to the evolutionary origin of Man from an animal ancestor.”[*The Origin of Mankind*, p. 75.] But the body of man does not even present the greatest difficulties to the evolutionist. These arise from the consideration of the spiritual element in man, or what is usually called “the origin of mind.” It is at this point that his helplessness becomes most painfully apparent. In spite of all his attempts, he has signally failed to give a plausible explanation of the origin of the human mind, or intelligence (progressiveness), language, conscience, and religion. This might be pointed out in detail, but we do not deem it necessary. There are many who, like Dennert and Batison, still profess to believe in the doctrine of descent, but disown the Darwinian method of evolution and regard it as a well-nigh complete failure. Yet they know of no other method which might take its place. This means that for them evolution has ceased to be a science, and has become once more a mere philosophical theory. Batison said: “We read his (Darwin’s) scheme of evolution as we would those of Lucretius or of Lamarck. . . . We are just about where Boyle was in the seventeenth century.” The testimony of Dr. D. H. Scott is very similar. In a presidential address before the British Association for the Advancement of Science he made the following statements: “All is again in the melting-pot. . . . Is evolution, then, not a scientifically established fact? No, it is

not . . . It is an act of faith — because there is no alternative.” Creation, of course, is not to be thought of. He further said that there is in natural science “a return to pre-Darwinian chaos.” Dr. Fleischmann of Erlangen writes: “The Darwinian theory has not a single fact to support it . . . is purely the product of the imagination.” Even stronger is the assertion of Dr. B. Kidd: “Darwinism is a compound of astonishing presumption and incomparable ignorance.” [Quotations taken from Zerbe, *Christianity and False Evolution*, pp. 271f.] Such scientists as Fleming, Dawson, Kelly, and Price do not hesitate to reject the theory of evolution and to accept the doctrine of creation. Respecting the origin of man, Sir William Dawson says: “I know nothing about the origin of man, except what I am told in the Scripture — that God created him. I do not know anything more than that, and I do not know of anyone who does.” [Quoted by W. Bell Dawson, *The Bible Confirmed by Science*, p. 146. Cf. also what the later Dawson says in Chap. VIII.] Fleming says: “All that science can say at present in the light of definitely ascertained and limited human knowledge is that it does not know, and has no certain proof how, where, and when man was originated. If any true knowledge of it is to come to us, it must come from some source other than present modern anthropology.” [*The Origin of Mankind*, p. 76.]

D. The Origin Of Man And The Unity Of The Race.

GLOSS **Unity of the race:** the conviction that all people share a common origin and therefore one human nature, dignity, and accountability before God.

1. **SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY TO THE UNITY OF THE RACE.** Scripture teaches that the whole human race descended from a single pair. This is the obvious sense of the opening chapters of Genesis. God created Adam and Eve as the beginning of the human species, and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. Moreover, the subsequent narrative in Genesis clearly shows that the following generations down to the time of the flood stood in unbroken genetic relation with the first pair, so that the human

race constitutes not only a specific unity, a unity in the sense that all men share the same human nature, but also a genetic or genealogical unity. This is also taught by Paul in Acts 17:26, “And God made of one every nation of man to dwell on all the face of the earth.” The same truth is basic to the organic unity of the human race in the first transgression, and of the provision for the salvation of the race in Christ, Rom. 5:12,19; I Cor. 15:21,22. This unity of the race is not to be understood realistically, as it is represented by Shedd, who says: “Human nature is a specific or general substance created in and with the first individuals of a human species, which is not yet individualized, but which by ordinary generation is subdivided into parts, and those parts are formed into distinct and separate individuals of the species. The one specific substance, by propagation, is metamorphosed into millions of individual substances, or persons. An individual is a fractional part of human nature separated from the common mass, and constituted a particular person, having all the essential properties of human nature.” [*Dogm. Theol.* II, p. 72.] The objections to this view will be stated in another connection.

2. THE TESTIMONY OF SCIENCE TO THE UNITY OF THE RACE. Science in various ways confirms the testimony of Scripture as to the unity of the human race. Scientific men have not always believed in this. The ancient Greeks had their theory of autochtonism, to the effect that men sprang from the earth by a sort of spontaneous generation, a theory that has no solid foundation whatever, since spontaneous generation has never been proved but rather discredited. Agassiz propounded the theory of the Coadamites, which assumes that there were different centres of creation. As early as 1655 Peyrerius developed the theory of the Preadamites, which proceeds on the assumption that there were men before Adam was created. This theory was revived by Winchell, who did not deny the unity of the race, but regarded Adam as the first ancestor of the Jews rather than as the head of the human race. And in recent years Fleming, without being dogmatic in the matter, says that there are reasons to assume that there were inferior races of man preceding the appearance of Adam on the scene about 5500 B.C. While inferior

to the Adamites, they already had powers distinct from those of the animals. The later Adamic man was endowed with greater and nobler powers and probably destined to bring the whole of the other existing humanity into allegiance to the Creator. He failed to preserve his own allegiance to God, and therefore God provided for the coming of a descendant who was human and yet far more than man, in order that He might accomplish what the Adamic man failed to do. The view which Fleming has been led to hold is “that the unquestionably Caucasian branch is alone the derivation by normal generation from the Adamic race, namely, from the God-worshipping members of the Adamic race which survived the flood — Noah and his sons and daughters.”[Cf. *The Origin of Mankind*, Chaps. VI and VII.] But these theories, one and all, find no support in Scripture, and are contrary to Acts 17:26 and to all that the Bible teaches concerning the apostasy and deliverance of man. Moreover, science presents several arguments in favour of the unity of the human race, such as:

a. *The argument from history.* The traditions of the race of men point decisively to a common origin and ancestry in Central Asia. The history of the migrations of man tends to show that there has been a distribution from a single centre.

b. *The argument from philology.* The study of the languages of mankind indicates a common origin. The Indo-Germanic languages are traced to a common primitive tongue, an old remnant of which still exists in the Sanskrit language. Moreover, there is evidence which goes to show that the old Egyptian is the connecting link between the Indo-European and the Semitic tongue.

c. *The argument from psychology.* The soul is the most important part of the constitutional nature of man, and psychology clearly reveals the fact that the souls of all men, to whatever tribes or nations they may belong, are essentially the same. They have in common the same animal appetites, instincts, and

passions, the same tendencies and capacities, and above all the same higher qualities, the mental and moral characteristics that belong exclusively to man.

d. *The argument from natural science or physiology.* It is now the common judgment of comparative physiologists that the human race constitutes but a single species. The differences that exist between the various families of mankind are regarded simply as varieties of this one species. Science does not positively assert that the human race descended from a single pair, but nevertheless demonstrates that this may have been the case and probably is.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY: What can be said against the view that we have in Gen. 1 and 2 two different and more or less contradictory accounts of creation? Does it seem reasonable to think that the world existed millions of years before man appeared on the scene? Is the hypothesis of theistic evolution in harmony with the Scriptural account of the origin of man? Is the notion that the body of man at least is derived from the animals tenable in the light of Scripture? Has evolution established its case on this point? What has it proved in connection with the far more difficult question of the derivation of the human soul? What becomes of the doctrine of the fall in the theory of evolution? What is the theological significance of the doctrine of the unity of the human race?

II. The Constitutional Nature of Man

Human beings are embodied souls: a unified creature whose material and spiritual dimensions belong together in God's design.

The previous chapter is of a more or less introductory nature, and does not, strictly speaking, form an integral part of the systematic presentation of the doctrine of man in dogmatics. This explains why many treatises on systematic theology fail to devote a separate chapter to the origin of man. Yet it seemed desirable to insert it here, since it furnishes a fitting background for what follows. Under the present caption we shall consider the essential constituents of human nature, and the question of the origin of the soul in the individuals that constitute the race.

A. The Constituent Elements Of Human Nature.

GLOSS Dichotomy: the view that a human being consists of body and soul or spirit, two distinct but united aspects of one person.

1. THE DIFFERENT VIEWS THAT WERE CURRENT IN HISTORY:
DICHOTOMY AND TRICHOTOMY. It is customary, especially in Christian circles, to conceive of man as consisting of two. and only two, distinct parts, namely, body and soul. This view is technically called *dichotomy*. Alongside of it, however, another made its appearance, to the effect that human nature consists of three parts, body, soul, and spirit. It is designated by the term *trichotomy*. The tri-partite conception of man originated in Greek philosophy, which conceived of the relation of the body and the spirit of man to each other after the analogy of the mutual relation between the material universe and God. It was thought that, just as the latter could enter into communion with each other only by means of a third substance or an intermediate being, so the former could enter into mutual vital relationships only by means of a third or intermediate element, namely, the soul. The soul was regarded as, on the one hand, immaterial, and on the other, adapted to the body. In so far as it appropriated the *nous* or *pneuma*, it was regarded as immortal, but in so far as it was related to the body, as carnal and mortal. The most familiar but also the crudest form of trichotomy is that which takes the body for the material part of man's nature, the soul as the principle of animal life, and the spirit as the God-related rational and immortal element in man. The trichotomic conception of man found considerable favour with the Greek or Alexandrian Church Fathers of the early Christian centuries. It is found, though not always in exactly the same form, in Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Gregory of Nyssa. But after Apollinaris employed it in a manner impinging on the perfect humanity of Jesus, it was gradually discredited. Some of the Greek Fathers still adhered to it, though Athanasius and Theodoret explicitly repudiated it. In the Latin Church the leading theologians distinctly favoured the twofold division of human nature. It was especially the psychology of Augustine that gave

prominence to this view. During the Middle Ages it had become a matter of common belief. The Reformation brought no change in this respect, though a few lesser lights defended the trichotomic theory. The Roman Catholic Church adhered to the verdict of Scholasticism, but in the circles of Protestantism other voices were heard. During the nineteenth century trichotomy was revived in some form or other by certain German and English theologians, as Roos, Olshausen, Beck, Delitzsch, Auberlen, Oehler, White, and Heard; but it did not meet with great favour in the theological world. The recent advocates of this theory do not agree as to the nature of the *psuche*, nor as to the relation in which it stands to the other elements in man's nature. Delitzsch conceives of it as an efflux of the *pneuma*, while Beck, Oehler, and Heard, regard it as the point of union between the body and the spirit. Delitzsch is not altogether consistent and occasionally seems to waver, and Beck and Oehler admit that the Biblical representation of man is fundamentally dichotomic. Their defence of a Biblical trichotomy can hardly be said to imply the existence of three distinct elements in man. Besides these two theological views there were, especially in the last century and a half, also the philosophical views of absolute Materialism and of absolute Idealism, the former sacrificing the soul to the body, and the latter, the body to the soul.

2. THE TEACHINGS OF SCRIPTURE AS TO THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS OF HUMAN NATURE. The prevailing representation of the nature of man in Scripture is clearly dichotomic. On the one hand the Bible teaches us to view the nature of man as a unity, and not as a duality, consisting of two different elements, each of which move along parallel lines but do not really unite to form a single organism. The idea of a mere parallelism between the two elements of human nature, found in Greek philosophy and also in the works of some later philosophers, is entirely foreign to Scripture. While recognising the complex nature of man, it never represents this as resulting in a twofold subject in man. Every act of man is seen as an act of the whole man. It is not the soul but man that sins; it is not the body but man that dies; and it is not merely the soul, but man, body and soul, that is redeemed in Christ. This

unity already finds expression in the classical passage of the Old Testament — the first passage to indicate the complex nature of man — namely, Gen. 2:7: “And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” The whole passage deals with man: “God formed man . . . and man became a living soul.” This work of God should not be interpreted as a mechanical process, as if He first formed a body of clay and then put a soul into it. When God formed the body, He formed it so that by the breath of His Spirit man at once became a living soul. Job 33:4; 32:8. The word “soul” in this passage does not have the meaning which we usually ascribe to it — a meaning rather foreign to the Old Testament — but denotes an animated being, and is a description of man as a whole. The very same Hebrew term, *nephesh chayyah* (living soul or being) is also applied to the animals in Gen. 1:21,24,30. So this passage, while indicating that there are two elements in man, yet stresses the organic unity of man. And this is recognised throughout the Bible.

At the same time it also contains evidences of the dual composition of man’s nature. We should be careful, however, not to expect the later distinction between the body as the material element, and the soul as the spiritual element, of human nature, in the Old Testament. This distinction came into use later on under the influence of Greek philosophy. The antithesis — soul and body — even in its New Testament sense, is not yet found in the Old Testament. In fact, the Hebrew has no word for the body as an organism. The Old Testament distinction of the two elements of human nature is of a different kind. Says Laidlaw in his work on *The Bible Doctrine of Man*: [p. 60.] “The antithesis is clearly that of lower and higher, earthly and heavenly, animal and divine. It is not so much two elements, as two factors uniting in a single and harmonious result, — ‘man became a living soul.’” It is quite evident that this is the distinction in Gen. 2:7. Cf. also Job 27:3; 32:8; 33:4; Eccl. 12:7. A variety of words is used in the Old Testament to denote the lower element in man or parts of it, such as “flesh,” “dust,” “bones,” “bowels,” “kidneys,” and also the metaphorical expression “house of clay,” Job 4:19. And there are also

several words to denote the higher element, such as “spirit,” “soul,” “heart,” and “mind.” As soon as we pass from the Old to the New Testament, we meet with the antithetic expressions that are most familiar to us, as “body and soul,” “flesh and spirit.” The corresponding Greek words were undoubtedly moulded by Greek philosophical thought, but passed through the Septuagint into the New Testament, and therefore retained their Old Testament force. At the same time the antithetic idea of the material and the immaterial is now also connected with them.

Trichotomists seek support in the fact that the Bible, as they see it, recognises two constituent parts of human nature in addition to the lower or material element, namely, the soul (Heb., *nephesh*; Greek, *psuche*) and the spirit (Heb., *ruach*; Greek, *pneuma*). But the fact that these terms are used with great frequency in Scripture does not warrant the conclusion that they designate component parts rather than different aspects of human nature. A careful study of Scripture clearly shows that it uses the words interchangeably. Both terms denote the higher or spiritual element in man, but contemplate it from different points of view. It should be pointed out at once, however, that the Scriptural distinction of the two does not agree with that which is rather common in philosophy, that the soul is the spiritual element in man, as it is related to the animal world, while the spirit is that same element in its relation to the higher spiritual world and to God. The following facts militate against this philosophical distinction: *Ruach-pneuma*, as well as *nephesh-psuche*, is used of the brute creation, Eccl. 3:21; Rev. 16:3. The word *psuche* is even used with reference to Jehovah, Isa. 42:1; Jer. 9:9; Amos 6:8 (Heb.); Heb 10:38. The disembodied dead are called *psuchai*, Rev. 6:9; 20:4. The highest exercises of religion are ascribed to the *psuche*, Mark 12:30; Luke 1:46; Heb. 6:18,19; Jas. 1:21. To lose the *psuche* is to lose all. It is perfectly evident that the Bible uses the two words interchangeably. Notice the parallelism in Luke 1:46,47: “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.” The Scriptural formula for man is in some passages “body and soul,” Matt. 6:25; 10:28; and in others, “body and spirit,” Eccl. 12:7; I Cor. 5:3,5. Death is

sometimes described as the giving up of the soul, Gen. 35:18; I Kings 17:21; Acts 15:26; and then again as the giving up of the spirit, Ps. 31:5; Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59. Moreover both “soul” and “spirit” are used to designate the immaterial element of the dead, I Pet. 3:19; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 6:9; 20:4. The main Scriptural distinction is as follows: the word “spirit” designates the spiritual element in man as the principle of life and action which controls the body; while the word “soul” denominates the same element as the subject of action in man, and is therefore often used for the personal pronoun in the Old Testament, Ps. 10:1,2; 104:1; 146:1; Is. 42:1; cf. also Luke 12:19. In several instances it, more specifically, designates the inner life as the seat of the affections. All this is quite in harmony with Gen. 2:7, “And Jehovah God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Thus it may be said that man *has* spirit, but *is* soul. The Bible therefore points to two, and only two, constitutional elements in the nature of man, namely, body and spirit or soul. This Scriptural representation is also in harmony with the self-consciousness of man. While man is conscious of the fact that he consists of a material and a spiritual element, no one is conscious of possessing a soul in distinction from a spirit.

There are two passages, however, that seem to conflict with the usual dichotomic representation of Scripture, namely, I Thess. 5:23, “And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”; and Heb. 4:12, “For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.” But it should be noted that: (a) It is a sound rule in exegesis that exceptional statements should be interpreted in the light of the *analogia Scriptura*, the usual representation of Scripture. In view of this fact some of the defenders of trichotomy admit that these passages do not necessarily prove their point. (b) The mere mention of spirit and soul alongside of each other does not prove that, according to Scripture, they are two distinct substances, any more than

Matt. 22:37 proves that Jesus regarded heart and soul and mind as three distinct substances. (c) In I Thess. 5:23 the apostle simply desires to strengthen the statement, “And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly,” by an epexegetical statement, in which the different aspects of man’s existence are summed up, and in which he feels perfectly free to mention soul and spirit alongside of each other, because the Bible distinguishes between the two. He cannot very well have thought of them as two different substances here, because he speaks elsewhere of man as consisting of two parts, Rom. 8:10; I Cor. 5:5; 7:34; II Cor. 7:1; Eph. 2:3; Col. 2:5. (d) Heb. 4:12 should not be taken to mean that the word of God, penetrating to the inner man, makes a separation between his soul and his spirit, which would naturally imply that these two are different substances; but simply as declaring that it brings about a separation in both between the thoughts and intents of the heart.[Cf. for a discussion of the psychology of Scripture especially, Bavinck, *Bijbelsche en Religionize Psychologie*; Laidlaw, *The Bible Doctrine of Man*, pp. 49-138; H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, pp. 4-150; Delitzsch, *System of Biblical Psychology*; Dickson, *St. Paul’s Use of Terms Flesh and Spirit*.]

3. THE RELATION OF BODY AND SOUL TO EACH OTHER. The exact relation of body and soul to each other has been represented in various ways, but remains to a great extent a mystery. The following are the most important theories relating to this point:

a. *Monistic*. There are theories which proceed on the assumption that body and soul are of the same primitive substance. According to Materialism this primitive substance is matter, and spirit is a product of matter. And according to absolute Idealism and Spiritualism the primitive substance is spirit, and this becomes objective to itself in what is called matter. Matter is a product of the spirit. The objection to this monistic view is that things so different as body and soul cannot be deduced the one from the other.

b. *Dualistic*. Some theories proceed on the assumption that there is an essential duality of matter and spirit, and present their mutual relations in

various ways: (1) *Occasionalism*. According to this theory, suggested by Cartesius, matter and spirit each works, according to laws peculiar to itself, and these laws are so different that there is no possibility of joint action. What appears to be such can only be accounted for on the principle that, on the occasion of the action of the one, God by His direct agency produces a corresponding action in the other. (2) *Parallelism*. Leibnitz proposed the theory of pre-established harmony. This also rests on the assumption that there is no direct interaction between the material and the spiritual, but does not assume that God produces apparently joint actions by continual interference. Instead it holds that God made the body and the soul so that the one perfectly corresponds to the other. When a motion takes place in the body, there is a corresponding movement in the soul, according to a law of pre-established harmony. (3) *Realistic Dualism*. The simple facts to which we must always return, and which are embodied in the theory of realistic dualism, are the following: body and soul are distinct substances, which do interact, though their mode of interaction escapes human scrutiny and remains a mystery for us. The union between the two may be called a union of life: the two are organically related, the soul acting on the body and the body on the soul. Some of the actions of the body are dependent on the *conscious* operation of the soul, while others are not. The operations of the soul are connected with the body as its instrument in the present life; but from the continued conscious existence and activity of the soul after death it appears that it can also work without the body. This view is certainly in harmony with the representations of Scripture on this point. A great deal of present day psychology is definitely moving in the direction of materialism. Its most extreme form is seen in Behaviorism with its denial of the soul, of the mind, and even of consciousness. All that it has left as an object of study is human behaviour.

B. The Origin Of The Soul In The Individual.

GLOSS Traducianism: the view that the soul, like the body, is propagated through human generation; it is contrasted with the view of immediate creation.

1. HISTORICAL VIEWS RESPECTING THE ORIGIN OF THE SOUL. Greek philosophy devoted considerable attention to the problem of the human soul and did not fail to make its influence felt in Christian theology. The nature, the origin, and the continued existence of the soul, were all subjects of discussion. Plato believed in the pre-existence and transmigration of the soul. In the early Church the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul was practically limited to the Alexandrian school. Origen was the chief representative of this view and combined it with the notion of a pre-temporal fall. Two other views at once made their appearance and proved to be far more popular in Christian circles. The theory of creationism holds that God creates a new soul at the birth of every individual. It was the dominant theory in the Eastern Church, and also found some advocates in the West. Jerome and Hilary of Pictavium were its most prominent representatives. In the Western Church the theory of Traducianism gradually gained ground. According to this view the soul as well as the body of man originates by propagation. It is usually wedded to the realistic theory that human nature was created in its entirety by God and is ever-increasingly individualized as the human race multiplies. Tertullian was the first to state this theory of Traducianism and under his influence it continued to gain favour in the North African and Western Church. It seemed to fit in best with the doctrine of the transmission of sin that was current in those circles. Leo the Great called it the teaching of the catholic faith. In the East it found no favorable reception. Augustine hesitated to choose between the two views. Some of the earlier Scholastics were somewhat undecided, though they regarded creationism as the more probable of the two; but in course of time it became the consensus of opinion among the Schoolmen that the individual souls were created. Says Peter the Lombard: "The Church teaches that souls are created at their infusion into the body." And Thomas

Aquinas went even further by saying: “It is heretical to say that the intellectual soul is transmitted by way of generation.” This remained the prevailing view in the Roman Catholic Church. From the days of the Reformation there was a difference of opinion among the Protestants. Luther expressed himself in favour of Traducianism, and this became the prevailing opinion in the Lutheran Church. Calvin, on the other hand, decidedly favoured creationism. Says he in his commentary on Gen. 3:16: “Nor is it necessary to resort to that ancient figment of certain writers, that souls are derived by descent from our first parents.” Ever since the days of the Reformation this has been the common view in Reformed circles. This does not mean that there were no exceptions to the rule. Jonathan Edwards and Hopkins in New England theology favoured Traducianism. Julius Mueller in his work on *The Christian Doctrine of Sin* again put up an argument in favour of the pre-existence of the soul, coupled with that of a pre-temporal fall, in order to explain the origin of sin.

2. PRE-EXISTENTIANISM. Some speculative theologians, among whom Origen, Scotus Erigena, and Julius Mueller are the most important, advocated the theory that the souls of men existed in a previous state, and that certain occurrences in that former state account for the condition in which those souls are now found. Origen looks upon man’s present material existence, with all its inequalities and irregularities, physical and moral, as a punishment for sins committed in a previous existence. Scotus Erigena also holds that sin made its entrance into the world of humanity in the pre-temporal state, and that therefore man begins his career on earth as a sinner. And Julius Mueller has recourse to the theory, in order to reconcile the doctrines of the universality of sin and of individual guilt. According to him each person must have sinned willingly in that previous existence.

This theory is open to several objections. (a) It is absolutely devoid of both Scriptural and philosophical grounds, and is, at least in some of its forms, based on the dualism of matter and spirit as taught in heathen philosophy,

making it a punishment for the soul to be connected with the body. (b) It really makes the body something accidental. The soul was without the body at first, and received this later on. Man was complete without the body. This virtually wipes out the distinction between man and the angels. (c) It destroys the unity of the human race, for it assumes that all individual souls existed long before they entered the present life. They do not constitute a race. (d) It finds no support in the consciousness of man. Man has absolutely no consciousness of such a previous existence; nor does he feel that the body is a prison or a place of punishment for the soul. In fact, he dreads the separation of body and soul as something that is unnatural.

3. **TRADUCIANISM.** According to Traducianism the souls of men are propagated along with the bodies by generation, and are therefore transmitted to the children by the parents. In the early Church Tertullian, Rufinus, Apollinarus, and Gregory of Nyssa were Traducianists. From the days of Luther Traducianism has been the prevailing view of the Lutheran Church. Among the Reformed it is favoured by H. B. Smith and Shedd. A. H. Strong also prefers it.

a. *Arguments in favour of Traducianism.* Several arguments are adduced in favour of this theory. (1) It is said to be favoured by the Scriptural representation (a) that God but once breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and then left it to man to propagate the species, Gen. 1:28; 2:7; (b) that the creation of Eve's soul was included in that of Adam, since she is said to be "of the man" (I Cor. 11:8), and nothing is said about the creation of her soul, Gen. 2:23; (c) that God ceased from the work of creation after He had made man, Gen. 2:2; and (d) that descendants are said to be in the loins of their fathers, Gen. 46:26; Heb. 7:9,10. Cf. also such passages as John 3:6; 1:13; Rom. 1:3; Acts 17:26. (2) It is supported by the analogy of vegetable and animal life, in which the increase in numbers is secured, not by a continually increasing number of immediate creations, but by the natural derivation of new individuals from a parent stock. But cf. Ps. 104:30. (3) It also seeks support in the inheritance of

mental peculiarities and family traits, which are so often just as noticeable as physical resemblances, and which cannot be accounted for by education or example, since they are in evidence even when parents do not live to bring up their children. (4) Finally, it seems to offer the best basis for the explanation of the inheritance of moral and spiritual depravity, which is a matter of the soul rather than of the body. It is quite common to combine with Traducianism the realistic theory to account for original sin.

b. *Objections to Traducianism.* Several objections may be urged against this theory. (1) It is contrary to the philosophical doctrine of the simplicity of the soul. The soul is a pure spiritual substance that does not admit of division. The propagation of the soul would seem to imply that the soul of the child separates itself in some way from the soul of the parents. Moreover, the difficult question arises, whether it originates from the soul of the father or from that of the mother. Or does it come from both; and if so, is it not a compositum? (2) In order to avoid the difficulty just mentioned, it must resort to one of three theories: (a) that the soul of the child had a previous existence, a sort of pre-existence; (b) that the soul is potentially present in the seed of man or woman or both, which is materialism; or (c) that the soul is brought forth, that is, created in some way, by the parents, thus making them in a sense creators. (3) It proceeds on the assumption that, after the original creation, God works only mediately. After the six days of creation His creative work ceased. The continued creation of souls, says Delitzsch, is inconsistent with God's relation to the world. But the question may be raised, What, then, becomes of the doctrine of regeneration, which is not effected by second causes? (4) It is generally wedded to the theory of realism, since this is the only way in which it can account for original guilt. By doing this it affirms the numerical unity of the substance of all human souls, an untenable position; and also fails to give a satisfactory answer to the question, why men are held responsible only for the first sin of Adam, and not for his later sins, nor for the sins of the rest of their forebears. (5) Finally, in the form just indicated it leads to insuperable difficulties in Christology. If in Adam human nature as a whole

sinned, and that sin was therefore the actual sin of every part of that human nature, then the conclusion cannot be escaped that the human nature of Christ was also sinful and guilty because it had actually sinned in Adam.

4. CREATIONISM. This view is to the effect that each individual soul is to be regarded as an immediate creation of God, owing its origin to a direct creative act, of which the time cannot be precisely determined. The soul is supposed to be created pure, but united with a depraved body. This need not necessarily mean that the soul is created first *in separation from the body*, and then polluted by being brought in contact with the body, which would seem to assume that sin is something physical. It may simply mean that the soul, though called into being by a creative act of God, yet is pre-formed in the psychical life of the foetus, that is, in the life of the parents, and thus acquires its life not above and outside of, but under and in, that complex of sin by which humanity as a whole is burdened.[Cf. Bavinck, *Geref. Dogm.* II, pp. 630 f.]

a. *Arguments in favour of Creationism.* The following are the more important considerations in favour of this theory: (1) It is more consistent with the prevailing representations of Scripture than Traducianism. The original account of creation points to a marked distinction between the creation of the body and that of the soul. The one is taken from the earth, while the other comes directly from God. This distinction is kept up throughout the Bible, where body and soul are not only represented as different substances, but also as having different origins, Eccl. 12:7; Isa 42:5; Zech. 12:1; Heb. 12:9. Cf. Num. 16:22. Of the passage in Hebrews even Delitzsch, though a Traducianist, says, "There can hardly be a more classical proof text for creationism." [*Bibl. Psych.*, p. 137.] (2) It is clearly far more consistent with the nature of the human soul than Traducianism. The immaterial and spiritual, and therefore indivisible nature of the soul of man, generally admitted by all Christians, is clearly recognised by Creationism. The traducian theory on the other hand, posits a derivation of essence, which, as is generally admitted, necessarily implies

separation or division of essence. (3) It avoids the pitfalls of Traducianism in Christology and does greater justice to the Scriptural representation of the person of Christ. He was very man, possessing a true human nature, a real body and a rational soul, was born of a woman, was made in all points like as we are, — and yet, without sin. He did not, like all other men, share in the guilt and pollution of Adam’s transgression. This was possible, because he did not share the same numerical essence which sinned in Adam.

b. *Objections to Creationism.* Creationism is open to the following objections: (1) The most serious objection is stated by Strong in the following words: “This theory, if it allows that the soul is originally possessed of depraved tendencies, makes God the direct author of moral evil; if it holds the soul to have been created pure, it makes God indirectly the author of moral evil, by teaching that He put this pure soul into a body which will inevitably corrupt it.” This is undoubtedly a serious difficulty, and is generally regarded as the decisive argument against Creationism. Augustine already called attention to the fact that the Creationist should seek to avoid this pitfall. But it should be borne in mind that the Creationist does not, like the Traducianist, regard original sin entirely as a matter of inheritance. The descendants of Adam are sinners, not as a result of their being brought into contact with a sinful body, but in virtue of the fact that God imputes to them the original disobedience of Adam. And it is for that reason that God withholds from them original righteousness, and the pollution of sin naturally follows. (2) It regards the earthly father as begetting only the body of his child, — certainly not the most important part of the child, — and therefore does not account for the re-appearance of the mental and moral traits of the parents in the children. Moreover, by taking this position it ascribes to the beast nobler powers of propagation than to man, for the beast multiplies itself after its kind. The last consideration is one of no great importance. And as far as mental and moral similarities of parents and children are concerned, it need not necessarily be assumed that these can be accounted for only on the basis of heredity. Our knowledge of the soul is still too deficient to speak with absolute assurance on this point. But this similarity

may find its explanation partly in the example of the parents, partly in the influence of the body on the soul, and partly in the fact that God does not create all souls alike, but creates in each particular case a soul adapted to the body with which it will be united and the complex relationship into which it will be introduced. (3) It is not in harmony with God's present relationship to the world and His manner of working in it, since it teaches a direct creative activity of God, and thus ignores the fact that God now works through secondary causes and ceased from His creative work. This is not a very serious objection for those who do not have a deistic conception of the world. It is a gratuitous assumption that God has ceased from all creative activity in the world.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

a *Caution required in speaking on the subject.* It must be admitted that the arguments on both sides are rather well balanced. In view of this fact it is not surprising that Augustine found it rather hard to choose between the two. The Bible makes no direct statement respecting the origin of the soul of man, except in the case of Adam. The few Scriptural passages that are adduced as favouring the one theory or the other, can hardly be called conclusive on either side. And because we have no clear teaching of Scripture on the point in question, it is necessary to speak with caution on the subject. We ought not to be wise above that which is written. Several theologians are of the opinion that there is an element of truth in both of these theories, which must be recognised.[Cf. Smith, *Chr. Theol.*, p. 169; Dabney, *Syst. and Polemic Theol.*, pp. 320 f.; Martensen, *Chr. Dogm.*, p. 141; Bavinck, *Geref. Dogm.* II, p. 630; Raymond, *Syst. Theol.* II, pp. 35 f.] Dorner even suggests the idea that each one of the three theories discussed represents one aspect of the whole truth: "Traducianism, generic consciousness; Pre-existentism, self-consciousness or the interest of the personality as a separate eternal divine thought; Creationism, God-consciousness." [*Syst. of Chr. Doct.* II, p. 94.]

b. *Some form of Creationism deserves preference.* It seems to us that Creationism deserves the preference, because (1) it does not encounter the insuperable philosophical difficulty with which Traducianism is burdened; (2) it avoids the Christological errors which Traducianism involves; and (3) it is most in harmony with our covenant idea. At the same time we are convinced that the creative activity of God in originating human souls must be conceived as being most closely connected with the natural process in the generation of new individuals. Creationism does not claim to be able to clear up all difficulties, but at the same time it serves as a warning against the following errors: (1) that the soul is divisible; (2) that all men are numerically of the same substance; and (3) that Christ assumed the same numerical nature which fell in Adam.[For further study of this subject confer especially the study of Dr. Honig on *Creationisme en Traducianisme*.]

III. Man as the Image of God

The image of God marks humanity's distinctive calling and original righteousness, revealing both likeness to God and responsibility before Him.

A. Historical Views Of The Image Of God In Man.

GLOSS Image of God: the distinctive likeness to God with which humanity was created, involving moral, spiritual, rational, and representative capacities.

According to Scripture man was created in the image of God, and is therefore God-related. Traces of this truth are found even in Gentile literature. Paul pointed out to the Athenians that some of their own poets have spoken of man as the offspring of God, Acts 17:28. The early Church Fathers were quite agreed that the image of God in man consisted primarily in man's rational and moral characteristics, and in his capacity for holiness; but some were inclined to include also bodily traits. Irenæus and Tertullian drew a distinction between the "image" and the "likeness" of God, finding the former in bodily traits, and

the latter in the spiritual nature of man. Clement of Alexandria and Origen, however, rejected the idea of any bodily analogy, and held that the word “image” denoted the characteristics of man as man, and the word “likeness,” qualities which are not essential to man, but may be cultivated or lost. This view is also found in Athanasius, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, and John of Damascus. According to Pelagius and his followers the image consisted merely in this, that man was endowed with reason, so that he could know God; with free will, so that he was able to choose and do the good; and with the necessary power to rule the lower creation. The distinction already made by some of the early Church Fathers between the image and the likeness of God, was continued by the Scholastics, though it was not always expressed in the same way. The former was conceived of as including the intellectual powers of reason and freedom, and the latter as consisting of original righteousness. To this was added another point of distinction, namely, that between the image of God as a natural gift to man, something belonging to the very nature of man as man, and the likeness of God, or original righteousness, as a supernatural gift, which served as a check on the lower nature of man. There was a difference of opinion as to whether man was endowed with this original righteousness at once at creation, or received it later on as a reward for a temporary obedience. It was this original righteousness that enabled man to merit eternal life. The Reformers rejected the distinction between the image and the likeness, and considered original righteousness as included in the image of God, and as belonging to the very nature of man in its original condition. There was a difference of opinion, however, between Luther and Calvin. The former did not seek the image of God in any of the natural endowments of man, such as his rational and moral powers, but exclusively in original righteousness, and therefore regarded it as entirely lost by sin. Calvin, on the other hand, expresses himself as follows, after stating that the image of God extends to everything in which the nature of man surpasses that of all other species of animals: “Accordingly, by this term (‘image of God’) is denoted the integrity with which Adam was endued when his intellect was

clear, his affections subordinated to reason, all his senses duly regulated, and when he truly ascribed all his excellence to the admirable gifts of his Maker. And though the primary seat of the divine image was in the mind and the heart, or in the soul and its powers, there was no part even of the body in which some rays of glory did not shine.”[*Inst.* I. 15:3.] It included both natural endowments and those spiritual qualities designated as original righteousness, that is, true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. The whole image was vitiated by sin, but only those spiritual qualities were completely lost. The Socinians and some of the earlier Arminians taught that the image of God consisted only in man’s dominion over the lower creation. Schleiermacher rejected the idea of an original state of integrity and of original righteousness as a necessary doctrine. Since, as he sees it, moral perfection or righteousness and holiness can only be the result of development, he regards it as a contradiction in terms to speak of man as being created in a state of righteousness and holiness. Hence the image of God in man can only be a certain receptivity for the divine, a capacity to answer to the divine ideal, and to grow into God-likeness. Such modern theologians as Martensen and Kaftan are quite in line with this idea.

B. Scriptural Data Respecting The Image Of God In Man.

GLOSS **Original righteousness:** the moral integrity and holiness with which Adam was created, enabling him to live rightly before God.

Scriptural teachings respecting the image of God in man warrant the following statements:

1. The words “image” and “likeness” are used synonymously and interchangeably, and therefore do not refer to two different things. In Gen. 1:26 both words are used, but in the twenty-seventh verse only the first. This is evidently considered sufficient to express the whole idea. In Gen. 5:1 only the word “likeness” occurs, but in the third verse of that chapter both terms are

again found. Gen. 9:6 contains only the word “image” as a complete expression of the idea. Turning to the New Testament, we find “image” and “glory” used in I Cor. 11:7, “image” alone in Col. 3:10, and “likeness” only in Jas. 3:9. Evidently the two are used interchangeably in Scripture. This naturally implies that man was *created* also in the likeness of God, and that this likeness was not something with which he was endowed later on. The usual opinion is that the word “likeness” was added to “image” to express the idea that the image was most like, a perfect image. The idea is that by creation that which was archetypal in God became ectypal in man. God was the original of which man was made a copy. This means, of course, that man not only bears the image of God, but is His very image. This is clearly stated in I Cor. 11:7, but does not mean that he cannot also be said to bear the image of God, cf. I Cor. 15:49. Some have considered the change of prepositions in Gen. 1:27, “*in* our image, *after* our likeness,” as significant. Böhl even based on it the idea that we are created in the image as a sphere, but this is entirely unwarranted. While the first meaning of the Hebrew preposition *be* (rendered “in” here) is undoubtedly “in,” it can also have the same meaning as the preposition *le* (rendered “after”), and evidently has that meaning here. Notice that we are said to be renewed “after the image” of God in Col. 3:10; and also that the prepositions used in Gen. 1:26 are reversed in Gen. 5:3.

2. The image of God in which man was created certainly includes what is generally called “original righteousness,” or more specifically, true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. We are told that God made man “very good,” Gen. 1:31, and “upright,” Eccl. 7:29. The New Testament indicates very specifically the nature of man’s original condition where it speaks of man as being renewed in Christ, that is, as being brought back to a former condition. The condition to which he is restored in Christ is clearly not one of neutrality, neither good nor bad, in which the will is in a state of perfect equilibrium, but one of true knowledge, Col. 3:10, righteousness and holiness, Eph. 4:24. These three elements constitute the original righteousness, which was lost by sin, but is regained in Christ. It may be called the moral image of God, or the

image of God in the more restricted sense of the word. Man's creation in this moral image implies that the original condition of man was one of positive holiness, and not a state of innocence or moral neutrality.

3. But the image of God is not to be restricted to the original knowledge, righteousness, and holiness which was lost by sin, but also includes elements which belong to the natural constitution of man. They are elements which belong to man as man, such as intellectual power, natural affections, and moral freedom. As created in the image of God man has a rational and moral nature, which he did not lose by sin and which he could not lose without ceasing to be man. This part of the image of God has indeed been vitiated by sin, but still remains in man even after his fall in sin. Notice that man even after the fall, irrespective of his spiritual condition, is still represented as the image of God, Gen. 9:6; I Cor. 11:7; Jas. 3:9. The crime of murder owes its enormity to the fact that it is an attack on the image of God. In view of these passages of Scripture it is unwarranted to say that man has completely lost the image of God.

4. Another element usually included in the image of God is that of spirituality. God is Spirit, and it is but natural to expect that this element of spirituality also finds expression in man as the image of God. And that this is so is already indicated in the narrative of man's creation. God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Gen. 2:7. The "breath of life" is the principle of his life, and the "living soul" is the very being of man. The soul is united with and adapted to a body, but can, if need be, also exist without the body. In view of this we can speak of man as a spiritual being, and as also in that respect the image of God. In this connection the question may be raised, whether the body of man also constitutes a part of the image. And it would seem that this question should be answered in the affirmative. The Bible says that man — not merely the soul of man — was created in the image of God, and man, the "living soul," is not complete without the body. Moreover, the Bible represents murder as the destruction of the body, Matt. 10:28, and also as the destruction of the image of God in man,

Gen. 9:6. We need not look for the image in the material substance of the body; it is found rather in the body as the fit instrument for the self-expression of the soul. Even the body is destined to become in the end a spiritual body, that is, a body which is completely spirit-controlled, a perfect instrument of the soul.

5. Still another element of the image of God is immortality. The Bible says that God only hath immortality, I Tim. 6:16, and this would seem to exclude the idea of human immortality. But it is perfectly evident from Scripture that man is also immortal in some sense of the word. The meaning is that God alone hath immortality as an essential quality, has it in and of Himself, while man's immortality is an endowment, is derived from God. Man was created immortal, not merely in the sense that his soul was endowed with an endless existence, but also in the sense that he did not carry within himself the seeds of physical death, and in his original condition was not subject to the law of death. Death was threatened as a punishment for sin, Gen. 2:17, and that this included bodily or physical death is evident from Gen. 3:19. Paul tells us that sin brought death into the world, Rom. 5:12; I Cor. 15:20,21; and that death must be regarded as the wages of sin, Rom. 6:23.

6. There is considerable difference of opinion as to whether man's dominion over the lower creation also formed a part of the image of God. This is not surprising in view of the fact that Scripture does not express itself explicitly on this point. Some regard the dominion in question simply as an office conferred on man, and not as a part of the image. But notice that God mentions man's creation in the divine image and his dominion over the lower creation in a single breath, Gen. 1:26. It is indicative of the glory and honour with which man is crowned, Ps. 8:5,6.

C. Man As The Image Of God.

GLOSS **Dominion:** humanity's God-given responsibility to exercise wise and accountable stewardship over the created world.

According to Scripture the essence of man consists in this, that he is the image of God. As such he is distinguished from all other creatures and stands supreme as the head and crown of the entire creation. Scripture asserts that man was created in the image and after the likeness of God, Gen. 1:26,27; 9:6; Jas. 3:9, and speaks of man as being and as bearing the image of God, I Cor. 11:7; 15:49. The terms “image” and “likeness” have been distinguished in various ways. Some were of the opinion that “image” had reference to the body, and “likeness,” to the soul. Augustine held that the former referred to the intellectual, and the latter, to the moral faculties of the soul. Bellarmin regarded “image” as a designation of the natural gifts of man, and “likeness” as a description of that which was supernaturally added to man. Still others asserted that “image” denoted the inborn, and “likeness,” the acquired conformity to God. It is far more likely, however, as was pointed out in the preceding, that both words express the same idea, and that “likeness” is merely an exegetical addition to designate the image as most like or very similar. The idea expressed by the two words is that of *the very image of God*. The doctrine of the image of God in man is of the greatest importance in theology, for that image is the expression of that which is most distinctive in man and in his relation to God. The fact that man is the image of God distinguishes him from the animal and from every other creature. As far as we can learn from Scripture even the angels do not share that honour with him, though it is sometimes represented as if they do. Calvin goes so far as to say that “it cannot be denied that the angels also were created in the likeness of God, since, as Christ declares (Matt. 22:30), our highest perfection will consist in being like them.”[*Inst.* I. 15.3.] But in this statement the great Reformer does not have due regard for the point of comparison in the statement of Jesus. In many cases the assumption that the angels were also created in the image of God results from a conception of the image which limits it to our moral and intellectual qualities. But the image also includes the body of man and his dominion over the lower creation. The angels are never represented as lords of

creation, but as ministering spirits sent out for the service of those that inherit salvation. The following are the most important conceptions of the image of God in man.

1. THE REFORMED CONCEPTION. The Reformed Churches, following in the footsteps of Calvin, have a far more comprehensive conception of the image of God than either the Lutherans or the Roman Catholics. But even they do not all agree as to its exact contents. Dabney, for instance, holds that it does not consist in anything absolutely essential to man's nature, for then the loss of it would have resulted in the destruction of man's nature; but merely in some *accidens*. [*Syst. and Polem. Theol.*, p. 293.] McPherson, on the other hand, asserts that it belongs to the essential nature of man, and says that "Protestant theology would have escaped much confusion and many needless and unconvincing doctrinal refinements, if it had not encumbered itself with the idea that it was bound to define sin as the loss of the image, or of something belonging to the image. If the image were lost man would cease to be man." [*Chr. Dogm.*, p. 203.] These two, then, would seem to be hopelessly at variance. Other differences are also in evidence in Reformed theology. Some would limit the image to the moral qualities of righteousness and holiness with which man was created, while others would include the whole moral and rational nature of man, and still others would also add the body. Calvin says that the proper seat of the image of God is in the soul, though some rays of its glory also shine in the body. He finds that the image consisted especially in that original integrity of man's nature, lost by sin, which reveals itself in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. At the same time he adds further "that the image of God extends to everything in which the nature of man surpasses that of all other species of animals." [*Inst.* I. 15.308.] This broader conception of the image of God became the prevalent one in Reformed theology. Thus Witsius says: "The image of God consisted *antecedenter*, in man's spiritual and immortal nature; *formaliter*, in his holiness; *consequenter*, in his dominion." [*On the Covenants*, 1. 2. 11.] A very similar opinion is expressed by Turretin. [*Opera, De Creatione, Quaestio X.*] To sum up it may be

said that the image consists: (a) In the soul or spirit of man, that is, in the qualities of simplicity, spirituality, invisibility, and immortality. (b) In the psychical powers or faculties of man as a rational and moral being, namely, the intellect and the will with their functions. (c) In the intellectual and moral integrity of man's nature, revealing itself in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10. (d) In the body, not as a material substance, but as the fit organ of the soul, sharing its immortality; and as the instrument through which man can exercise dominion over the lower creation. (e) In man's dominion over the earth. In opposition to the Socinians, some Reformed scholars went too far in the opposite direction, when they regarded this dominion as something that did not belong to the image at all but was the result of a special disposal of God. In connection with the question, whether the image of God belongs to the very essence of man, Reformed theology does not hesitate to say that it *constitutes* the essence of man. It distinguishes, however, between those elements in the image of God which man cannot lose without ceasing to be man, consisting in the essential qualities and powers of the human soul; and those elements which man can lose and still remain man, namely, the good ethical qualities of the soul and its powers. The image of God in this restricted sense is identical with what is called original righteousness. It is the moral perfection of the image, which could be, and was, lost by sin.

2. THE LUTHERAN CONCEPTION. The prevailing Lutheran conception of the image of God differs materially from that of the Reformed. Luther himself sometimes spoke as if he had a broad conception of it, but in reality he had a restricted view of it.[Koestlin, *The Theology of Luther* II, pp. 339-342.] While there were during the seventeenth century, and there are even now, some Lutheran theologians who have a broader conception of the image of God, the great majority of them restrict it to the spiritual qualities with which man was originally endowed, that is, what is called original righteousness. In doing this they do not sufficiently recognise the essential nature of man as distinct from that of the angels on the one hand, and from that of the animals on the other hand. In the possession of this image men are like the angels, who also possess

it; and in comparison with what the two have in common, their difference is of little importance. Man lost the image of God entirely through sin, and what now distinguishes him from the animals has very little religious or theological significance. The great difference between the two lay in the image of God, and this man has lost entirely. In view of this it is also natural that the Lutherans should adopt Traducianism, and thus teach that the soul of man originates like that of the animal, that is, by procreation. It also accounts for the fact that the Lutherans hardly recognise the moral unity of the human race, but emphasize strongly its physical unity and the exclusively physical propagation of sin. Barth comes closer to the Lutheran than to the Reformed position when he seeks the image of God in “a point of contact” between God and man, a certain conformity with God, and then says that this was not only ruined but even annihilated by sin.[*The Doctrine of the Word of God*, p. 273.]

3. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW. Roman Catholics do not altogether agree in their conception of the image of God. We limit ourselves here to a statement of the prevailing view among them. They hold that God at creation endowed man with certain natural gifts, such as the spirituality of the soul, the freedom of the will, and the immortality of the body. Spirituality, freedom, and immortality, are *natural endowments*, and as such constitute the *natural image* of God. Moreover, God “attempered” (adjusted) the natural powers of man to one another, placing the lower in due subordination to the higher. The harmony thus established is called *justitia* — natural righteousness. But even so there remained in man a natural tendency of the lower appetites and passions to rebel against the authority of the higher powers of reason and conscience. This tendency, called concupiscence, is not itself sin, but becomes sin when it is consented to by the will and passes into voluntary action. In order to enable man to hold his lower nature in check, God added to the *dona naturalia* certain *dona supernaturalia*. These included the *donum superadditum* of original righteousness (the supernatural likeness to God), which was added as a foreign gift to the original constitution of man, either immediately at the time of creation, or at some later point as a reward for the proper use of the

natural powers. These supernatural gifts, including the *donum superadditum* of original righteousness, were lost by sin, but their loss did not disrupt the essential nature of man.

4. OTHER VIEWS OF THE IMAGE OF GOD. According to the Socinians and some of the earlier Arminians the image of God consists in man's dominion over the lower creation, and in this only. Anabaptists maintained that the first man, as a finite and earthly creature, was not yet the image of God, but could become this only by regeneration. Pelagians, most of the Arminians, and Rationalists all, with little variation, find the image of God only in the free personality of man, in his rational character, his ethico-religious disposition, and his destiny to live in communion with God.

D. The Original Condition Of Man As The Image Of God.

GLOSS Covenant head: a representative person whose actions bear consequences for those whom he represents; Adam is treated this way in the covenant of works.

There is a very close connection between the image of God and the original state of man, and therefore the two are generally considered together. Once again we shall have to distinguish between different historical views as to the original condition of man.

1. THE PROTESTANT VIEW. Protestants teach that man was created in a state of relative perfection, a state of righteousness and holiness. This does not mean that he had already reached the highest state of excellence of which he was susceptible. It is generally assumed that he was destined to reach a higher degree of perfection in the way of obedience. He was, something like a child, perfect in parts, but not yet in degree. His condition was a preliminary and temporary one, which would either lead on to greater perfection and glory or terminate in a fall. He was *by nature* endowed with that original righteousness which is the crowning glory of the image of God, and consequently lived in a state of positive holiness. The loss of that righteousness meant the loss of

something that belonged to the very nature of man in its ideal state. Man could lose it and still remain man, but he could not lose it and remain man in the ideal sense of the word. In other words, its loss would really mean a deterioration and impairment of human nature. Moreover, man was created immortal. This applies not only to the soul, but to the whole person of man; and therefore does not merely mean that the soul was destined to have a continued existence. Neither does it mean that man was raised above the possibility of becoming a prey to death; this can only be affirmed of the angels and the saints in heaven. It does mean, however, that man, as he was created by God, did not bear within him the seeds of death and would not have died *necessarily* in virtue of the original constitution of his nature. Though the possibility of his becoming a victim of death was not excluded, he was not liable to death as long as he did not sin. It should be borne in mind that man's original immortality was not something purely negative and physical, but was something positive and spiritual as well. It meant life in communion with God and the enjoyment of the favour of the Most High. This is the fundamental conception of life in Scripture, just as death is primarily separation from God and subjection to His wrath. The loss of this spiritual life would spell death, and would also result in physical death.[Cf. especially, Kennedy, *St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things*, Chap. III.]

2. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW. Roman Catholics naturally have a somewhat different view of the original condition of man. According to them original righteousness did not belong to the nature of man in its integrity, but was something supernaturally added. In virtue of his creation man was simply endowed with all the natural powers and faculties of human nature as such, and by the *justitia naturalis* these powers were nicely adjusted to each other. He was without sin and lived in a state of perfect innocence. In the very nature of things, however, there was a natural tendency of the lower appetites and passions to rebel against the higher powers of reason and conscience. This tendency, called *concupiscence*, was not itself sin, but could easily become the occasion and fuel for sin. (But cf. Rom. 7:8; Col. 3:5; I Thess. 4:5, Auth. Ver.).

Man, then, as he was originally constituted, was by nature without positive holiness, but also without sin, though burdened with a tendency which might easily result in sin. But now God added to the natural constitution of man the supernatural gift of original righteousness, by which he was enabled to keep the lower propensities and desires in due subjection. When man fell, he lost that original righteousness, but the original constitution of human nature remained intact. The natural man is now exactly where Adam was before he was endowed with original righteousness, though with a somewhat stronger bias towards evil.

3. RATIONALIZING VIEWS. Pelagians, Socinians, Arminians, Rationalists, and Evolutionists, all discount the idea of a primitive state of holiness altogether. The first four are agreed that man was created in a state of innocence, of moral and religious neutrality, but was endowed with a free will, so that he could turn in either direction. Evolutionists assert that man began his career in a state of barbarism, in which he was but slightly removed from the brute. Rationalists of all kinds believe that a concreated righteousness and holiness is a contradiction in terms. Man determines his character by his own free choice; and holiness can only result from a victorious struggle against evil. From the nature of the case, therefore, Adam could not have been created in a state of holiness. Moreover, Pelagians, Socinians, and Rationalists hold that man was created mortal. Death did not result from the entrance of sin into the world, but was simply the natural termination of human nature as it was constituted. Adam would have died in virtue of the original constitution of his nature.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY: What is the precise distinction which Delitzsch makes between the soul and the spirit in man? How does Heard make use of the tripartite conception of man in the interpretation of original sin, conversion, and sanctification? What accounts for the fact that Lutherans are prevailing Traducianists, and Reformed prevailing Creationists? How about the objection that Creationism virtually destroys the unity of the human race? What objections are there against realism with its assumption of the numerical unity of human nature? What criticism would you offer on Dorner's view, that the theories of Pre-existentialism,

Traducianism, and Creationism, are simply three different aspects of the whole truth respecting the origin of the soul? How do Roman Catholics generally distinguish between the “image” and the “likeness” of God? Do they believe that man lost his *justitia* or natural righteousness by the fall or not? How do those Lutherans who restrict the image of God to man’s original righteousness explain Gen. 9:6 and Jas. 3:9?

IV. Man in the Covenant of Works

In the covenant of works, God placed Adam under a clear command and promise, so that his obedience or disobedience bore consequences for humanity.

The discussion of the original state of man, the *status integritatis*, would not be complete without considering the mutual relationship between God and man, and especially the origin and nature of the religious life of man. That life was rooted in a covenant, just as the Christian life is today, and that covenant is variously known as the covenant of nature, the covenant of life, the Edenic covenant, and the covenant of works. The first name, which was rather common at first, was gradually abandoned, since it was apt to give the impression that this covenant was simply a part of the natural relationship in which man stood to God. The second and third names are not sufficiently specific, since both of them might also be applied to the covenant of grace, which is certainly a covenant of life, and also originated in Eden, Gen. 3:15. Consequently the name “Covenant of Works” deserves preference.

A. The Doctrine Of The Covenant Of Works In History.

GLOSS **Covenant of works:** God’s arrangement with Adam in which life was promised upon perfect obedience and death threatened for disobedience.

The history of the doctrine of the covenant of works is comparatively brief. In the early Church Fathers the covenant idea is seldom found at all, though the elements which it includes, namely, the probationary command, the

freedom of choice, and the possibility of sin and death, are all mentioned. Augustine in his *de Civitates Dei* speaks of the relation in which Adam originally stood to God as a covenant (*testamentum, pactum*), while some others inferred the original covenant relationship from the well known passage of Hos. 6:7. In the scholastic literature and in the writings of the Reformers, too, all the elements which later on went into the construction of the doctrine of the covenant of works were already present, but the doctrine itself was not yet developed. Though they contain some expressions which point to the imputation of Adam's sin to his descendants, it is clear that on the whole the transmission of sin was conceived realistically rather than federally. Says Thornwell in his analysis of Calvin's *Institutes*: "Federal representation was not seized as it should be, but a mystic realism in place of it." [*Collected Writings* I, p. 619. Cf. Calvin, *Institutes* II, 1.] The development of the doctrine of the covenant of grace preceded that of the doctrine of the covenant of works and paved the way for it. When it was clearly seen that Scripture represented the way of salvation in the form of a covenant, the parallel which Paul draws in Rom. 5 between Adam and Christ soon gave occasion for thinking of the state of integrity also as a covenant. According to Hepp the first work which contained the federal representation of the way of salvation, was Bullinger's *Compendium of the Christian Religion*; and Olevianus was the real founder of a well developed federal theology, in which the concept of the covenant became for the first time the constitutive and determinative principle of the entire system. [Cf. the valuable chapter on *Die Foederaltheologie der Reformirten Kirche* in Hepp's *Geschichte des Pietismus*, pp. 204-240.] From the Reformed Churches of Switzerland and Germany federal theology passed over to the Netherlands and to the British Isles, especially Scotland. Its earliest representatives in the Netherlands were Gomarus, Trelcatius, Ravensperger, and especially Cloppenburg. The latter is regarded as the forerunner of Coccejus, who is often mistakenly called "the father of federal theology." The real distinction of Coccejus lies, at least partly, in the fact that he sought to substitute for the usual scholastic method of studying theology, which was

rather common in his day, what he considered a more Scriptural method. He was followed in that respect by Burmannus and Witsius. Coccejus and his followers were not the only ones to embrace the doctrine of the covenant of works. This was done by others as well, such as Voetius, Mastricht, à Marck, and De Moor. Ypeij and Dermout point out that in those days a denial of the covenant of works was regarded as a heresy.[*Geschiedenis der Ned. Herv. Kerk, Aanteekeningen* I-11, p. 315.] The Socinians rejected this doctrine altogether, since they did not believe in the imputation of Adam’s sin to his descendants; and some of the Arminians, such as Episcopius, Limborgh, Venema, and J. Alting, who called it a human doctrine, followed suit. About the middle of the eighteenth century, when the doctrine of the covenant in the Netherlands had all but passed into oblivion, Comrie and Holtius in their *Examen van het Ontwerp van Tolerantie* once more brought it to the attention of the Church. In Scotland several important works were written on the covenants, including the covenant of works, such as those of Fisher (*Marrow of Modern Divinity*), Ball, Blake, Gib, and Boston. Says Walker: “The old theology of Scotland might be emphatically described as *covenant theology*.”[*Scottish Theology and Theologians*, p. 73.] The doctrine found official recognition in the *Westminster Confession*, and in the *Formula Consensus Helvetica*. It is significant that the doctrine of works met with very little response in Roman Catholic and Lutheran theology. This finds its explanation in their attitude to the doctrine of the *immediate imputation* of the sin of Adam to his descendants. Under the influence of Rationalism and of Placæus’ theory of *mediate* imputation, which also found acceptance in New England theology, the doctrine of the covenant gradually suffered eclipse. Even such conservative scholars as Doedes and Van Oosterzee in the Netherlands rejected it; and in New England theology it was short-lived. In Scotland the situation is not much better. Hugh Martin already wrote in his work on *The Atonement* (published in 1887): “It has come to pass, we fear, that the federal theology is at present suffering a measure of neglect which does not bode well for the immediate future of the Church amongst us.”[P. 25.] And while in our own country such Presbyterian scholars as the

Hodges, Thornwell, Breckenridge, and Dabney, take due account of the doctrine in their theological works, in the Churches which they represent it has all but lost its vitality. In the Netherlands there has been a revival of federal theology under the influence of Kuyper and Bavinck, and through the grace of God it still continues to be a living reality in the hearts and minds of the people.

B. The Scriptural Foundation For The Doctrine Of The Covenant Of Works.

GLOSS **Federal theology:** a way of reading Scripture that emphasises God's covenants and the representative roles of Adam and Christ.

The widespread denial of the covenant of works makes it imperative to examine its Scriptural foundation with care.

1. THE ELEMENTS OF A COVENANT ARE PRESENT IN THE EARLY NARRATIVE. It must be admitted that the term “covenant” is not found in the first three chapters of Genesis, but this is not tantamount to saying that they do not contain the necessary data for the construction of a doctrine of the covenant. One would hardly infer from the absence of the term “trinity” that the doctrine of the Trinity is not found in the Bible. All the elements of a covenant are indicated in Scripture, and if the elements are present, we are not only warranted but, in a systematic study of the doctrine, also in duty bound to relate them to one another, and to give the doctrine so construed an appropriate name. In the case under consideration two parties are named, a condition is laid down, a promise of reward for obedience is clearly implied, and a penalty for transgression is threatened. It may still be objected that we do not read of the two parties as coming to an agreement, nor of Adam as accepting the terms laid down, but this is not an insuperable objection. We do not read of such an explicit agreement and acceptance on the part of man either in the cases of Noah and Abraham. God and man do not appear as

equals in any of these covenants. All God's covenants are of the nature of sovereign dispositions imposed on man. God is absolutely sovereign in His dealings with man, and has the perfect right to lay down the conditions which the latter must meet, in order to enjoy His favour. Moreover Adam was, even in virtue of his natural relationship, in duty bound to obey God; and when the covenant relation was established, this obedience also became a matter of self-interest. When entering into covenant relations with men, it is always God who lays down the terms, and they are very gracious terms, so that He has, also from that point of view, a perfect right to expect that man will assent to them. In the case under consideration God had but to announce the covenant, and the perfect state in which Adam lived was a sufficient guarantee for his acceptance.

2. THERE WAS A PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE. Some deny that there is any Scripture evidence for such a promise. Now it is perfectly true that no such promise is explicitly recorded, but it is clearly implied in the alternative of death as the result of disobedience. The clear implication of the threatened punishment is that in the case of obedience death would not enter, and this can only mean that life would continue. It has been objected that this would only mean a continuation of Adam's natural life, and not what Scripture calls life eternal. But the Scriptural idea of life is life in communion with God; and this is the life which Adam possessed, though in his case it was still amissible. If Adam stood the test, this life would be retained not only, but would cease to be amissible, and would therefore be lifted to a higher plane. Paul tells us explicitly in Rom. 7:10 that the commandment, that is the law, was unto life. In commenting on this verse Hodge says: "The law was designed and adapted to secure life, but became in fact the cause of death." This is also clearly indicated in such passages as Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:13. Now it is generally admitted that this glorious promise of unending life was in no way implied in the natural relation in which Adam stood to God, but had a different basis. But to admit that there is something positive here, a special condescension of God, is an acceptance of the covenant principle. There may still be some doubt as to the

propriety of the name “Covenant of Works,” but there can be no valid objection to the covenant idea.

3. BASICALLY, THE COVENANT OF GRACE IS SIMPLY THE EXECUTION OF THE ORIGINAL AGREEMENT BY CHRIST AS OUR SURETY. He undertook freely to carry out the will of God. He placed Himself under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, and were no more in a position to obtain life by their own fulfilment of the law. He came to do what Adam failed to do, and did it in virtue of a covenant agreement. And if this is so, and the covenant of grace is, as far as Christ is concerned, simply the carrying out of the original agreement, it follows that the latter must also have been of the nature of a covenant. And since Christ met the condition of the covenant of works, man can now reap the fruit of the original agreement by faith in Jesus Christ. There are now two ways of life, which are in themselves ways of life, the one is the way of the law: “the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby,” but it is a way by which man can no more find life; and the other is the way of faith in Jesus Christ, who met the demands of the law, and is now able to dispense the blessing of eternal life.

4. THE PARALLEL BETWEEN ADAM AND CHRIST. The parallel which Paul draws between Adam and Christ in Rom. 5:12-21, in connection with the doctrine of justification, can only be explained on the assumption that Adam, like Christ, was the head of a covenant. According to Paul the essential element in justification consists in this, that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, without any personal work on our part to merit it. And he regards this as a perfect parallel to the manner in which the guilt of Adam is imputed to us. This naturally leads to the conclusion that Adam also stood in covenant relationship to his descendants.

5. THE PASSAGE IN HOS. 6:7. In Hos. 6:7 we read: “But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant.” Attempts have been made to discredit this reading. Some have suggested the reading “at Adam,” which would imply that

some well-known transgression occurred at a place called Adam. But the preposition forbids this rendering. Moreover, the Bible makes no mention whatever of such a well-known historical transgression at Adam. The Authorized Version renders “like men,” which would then mean, in human fashion. To this it may be objected that there is no plural in the original, and that such a statement would be rather inane, since man could hardly transgress in any other way. The rendering “like Adam” is after all the best. It is favoured by the parallel passage in Job 31:33; and is adopted by the American Revised Version.

C. Elements Of The Covenant Of Works.

GLOSS Probation: a period of testing in which Adam’s obedience to God’s command was placed under trial.

The following elements must be distinguished:

1. THE CONTRACTING PARTIES. On the one hand there was the triune God, the Creator and Lord, and on the other hand, Adam as His dependent creature. A twofold relationship between the two should be distinguished:

a. *The natural relationship.* When God created man, He by that very fact established a natural relationship between Himself and man. It was a relationship like that between the potter and the clay, between an absolute sovereign and a subject devoid of any claim. In fact, the distance between the two was so great that these figures are not even an adequate expression of it. It was such that a life in communion with each other seemed to be out of the question. As the creature of God man was naturally under the law, and was in duty bound to keep it. And while transgression of the law would render him liable to punishment, the keeping of it would not constitute an inherent claim to a reward. Even if he did all that was required of him, he would still have to say, I am but an unprofitable servant, for I have merely done that which it was my duty to do. Under this purely natural relationship man could not have

merited anything. But though the infinite distance between God and man apparently excluded a life of communion with each other, man was created for just such communion, and the possibility of it was already given in his creation in the image of God. In this natural relationship Adam was the father of the human race.

b. *The covenant relationship.* From the very beginning, however, God revealed Himself, not only as an absolute Sovereign and Lawgiver, but also as a loving Father, seeking the welfare and happiness of His dependent creature. He condescended to come down to the level of man, to reveal Himself as a Friend, and to enable man to improve his condition in the way of obedience. In addition to the natural relationship He, by a positive enactment, graciously established a covenant relationship. He entered into a legal compact with man, which includes all the requirements and obligations implied in the creaturehood of man, but at the same time added some new elements. (1) Adam was constituted the representative head of the human race, so that he could act for all his descendants. (2) He was temporarily put on probation, in order to determine whether he would willingly subject his will to the will of God. (3) He was given the promise of eternal life in the way of obedience, and thus by the gracious disposition of God acquired certain conditional rights. This covenant enabled Adam to obtain eternal life for himself and for his descendants in the way of obedience.

2. THE PROMISE OF THE COVENANT. The great promise of the covenant of works was the promise of eternal life. They who deny the covenant of works generally base their denial in part on the fact that there is no record of such a promise in the Bible. And it is perfectly true that Scripture contains no explicit promise of eternal life to Adam. But the threatened penalty clearly implies such a promise. When the Lord says, “for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” his statement clearly implies that, if Adam refrains from eating, he will not die, but will be raised above the possibility of death. The implied promise certainly cannot mean that, in the case of

obedience, Adam would be permitted to live on in the usual way, that is, to continue the ordinary natural life, for that life was his already in virtue of his creation, and therefore could not be held out as a reward for obedience. The implied promise evidently was that of life raised to its highest development of perennial bliss and glory. Adam was indeed created in a state of positive holiness, and was also immortal in the sense that he was not subject to the law of death. But he was only at the beginning of his course and did not yet possess the highest privileges that were in store for man. He was not yet raised above the possibility of erring, sinning, and dying. He was not yet in possession of the highest degree of holiness, nor did he enjoy life in all its fulness. The image of God in man was still limited by the possibility of man's sinning against God, changing from good to evil, and becoming subject to the power of death. The promise of life in the covenant of works was a promise of the removal of all the limitations of life to which Adam was still subject, and of the raising of his life to the highest degree of perfection. When Paul says in Rom. 7:10 that the commandment was unto life, he means life in the fullest sense of the word. The principle of the covenant of works was: the man that does these things shall live thereby; and this principle is reiterated time and again in Scripture, Lev. 18:5; Ezek. 20:11,13,20; Luke 10:28; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12.

3. THE CONDITION OF THE COVENANT. The promise in the covenant of works was not unconditional. The condition was that of implicit and perfect obedience. The divine law can demand nothing less than that, and the positive command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, relating as it did, to a thing indifferent in itself, was clearly a test of pure obedience in the absolute sense of the word. Man was, of course, also subject to the moral law of God, which was written on the tablets of his heart. He knew this by nature, so that it did not have to be revealed supernaturally, as the special test was. Essentially, the moral law, as Adam knew it, was undoubtedly like the ten commandments, but the form was different. In its present form the moral law presupposes a knowledge of sin, and is therefore primarily negative; in Adam's heart, however, it must have had a positive

character. But just because it was positive, it did not bring to his consciousness the possibility of sin. Therefore a negative commandment was added. Moreover, in order that the test of Adam might be a test of pure obedience, God deemed it necessary to add to the commandments of which Adam perceived the naturalness and reasonableness, a commandment which was in a certain sense arbitrary and indifferent. Thus the demands of the law were, so to say, concentrated on a single point. The great question that had to be settled was, whether man would obey God implicitly or follow the guidance of his own judgment. Dr. Bavinck says: “Het proefgebod belichaamde voor hem (Adam) het dilemma: God of de mensch, Zijn gezag of eigen inzicht, onvoorwaardelijke gehoorzaamheid of zelfstandig onderzoek, geloof of twijfel.” [*Geref. Dog.*, II, p. 618.]

4. THE PENALTY OF THE COVENANT. The penalty that was threatened was death, and what this means can best be gathered from the general meaning of the term as it is used in Scripture, and from the evils that came upon the guilty in the execution of the penalty. Evidently death in the most inclusive sense of the word is meant, including physical, spiritual, and eternal death. The fundamental Scriptural idea of death is not that of extinction of being, but that of separation from the source of life, and the resulting dissolution or misery and woe. Fundamentally, it consists in the separation of the soul from God, which manifests itself in spiritual misery, and finally terminates in eternal death. But it also includes the separation of body and soul and the consequent dissolution of the body. Undoubtedly the execution of the penalty began at once after the first transgression. Spiritual death entered instantly, and the seeds of death also began to operate in the body. The full execution of the sentence, however, did not follow at once, but was arrested, because God immediately introduced an economy of grace and restoration.

5. THE SACRAMENT(S) OF THE COVENANT. We have no definite information in Scripture respecting the sacrament(s) or seal(s) of this covenant. Hence there is a great variety of opinions on the subject. Some

speak of four: the tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, paradise, and the sabbath; others of three: the two trees and paradise; still others of two: the tree of life and paradise; and still others of one: the tree of life. The last opinion is the most prevalent one, and would seem to be the only one to find any support in Scripture. We should not think of the fruit of this tree as magically or medically working immortality in Adam's frame. Yet it was in some way connected with the gift of life. In all probability it must be conceived of as an appointed symbol or seal of life. Consequently, when Adam forfeited the promise, he was debarred from the sign. So conceived the words of Gen. 3:22 must be understood sacramentally.

D. The Present Status Of The Covenant Of Works.

GLOSS Law of God: God's holy and enduring standard for human life, which continues to reveal sin and the need for grace.

With respect to the question, whether the covenant of works is still in force or was abrogated at the time of Adam's fall, there is considerable difference of opinion between Arminian and Reformed theologians.

1. THE ARMINIAN VIEW. Arminians claim that this legal covenant was wholly abrogated at the fall of Adam, and argue this as follows: (a) The promise was then revoked and thus the compact annulled, and where there is no compact there can be no obligation. (b) God could not continue to exact obedience of man, when the latter was by nature unable, and was not enabled by the grace of God, to render the required service. (c) It would be derogatory to God's wisdom, holiness, and majesty to call the depraved creature to a service of holy and undivided love. They maintain that God established a new covenant and enacted a new law, the law of faith and evangelical obedience, which man in spite of his impaired powers can keep when assisted by the enabling helps of common or sufficient grace. However, the following considerations militate against this view: (a) Man's obligation to God was

never rooted merely in the covenant requirement, but fundamentally in the natural relation in which he stood to God. This natural relationship was incorporated in the covenant relationship. (b) Man's inability is self-induced, and therefore does not relieve him of his just obligation. His self-imposed limitations, his criminal and voluntary hostility to God did not deprive the sovereign Ruler of the universe of the right to demand the hearty and loving service which is His due. (c) The *reductio ad absurdum* of the Arminian view is that the sinner can gain complete emancipation from righteous obligations by sinning. The more a man sins, the more he becomes a slave of sin, unable to do that which is good; and the deeper he sinks into this slavery which robs him of his capacity for good, the less responsible he becomes. If man continues to sin long enough, he will in the end be absolved of all moral responsibility.

2. THE REFORMED VIEW. Even some Reformed theologians speak of the abrogation of the legal covenant, and seek proof for this in such passages as Heb. 8:13. This naturally raised the question, whether, and in how far, the covenant of works can be considered as a thing of the past; or whether, and in how far, it must be regarded as still in force. It is generally agreed that no change in the legal status of man can ever abrogate the authority of the law; that God's claim to the obedience of His creatures is not terminated by their fall in sin and its disabling effects; that the wages of sin continues to be death; and that a perfect obedience is always required to merit eternal life. This means with respect to the question under consideration:

a. *That the covenant of works is not abrogated:* (1) in so far as the natural relation of man to God was incorporated in it, since man always owes God perfect obedience; (2) in so far as its curse and punishment for those who continue in sin are concerned; and (3) in so far as the conditional promise still holds. God might have withdrawn this promise, but did not, Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12. It is evident, however, that after the fall no one can comply with the condition.

b. *That the covenant of works is abrogated:* (1) in so far as it contained new positive elements, for those who are under the covenant of grace; this does not mean that it is simply set aside and disregarded, but that its obligations were met by the Mediator for His people; and (2) as an appointed means to obtain eternal life, for as such it is powerless after the fall of man.