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Dear Reader:

We take great pleasure in presenting to you the first issue of our new journal, the Protestant Reformed Theological Journal. We hope you will read it and appreciate its contents. Any comments or suggestions you may have should be addressed to our editor, Prof. H. Hanko. We would like to hear your reaction to this first issue.

Plans are, D.V., to publish this journal each school term, in the fall and in the spring. We are distributing it free of charge.

There is a limited number of extra copies. If you know of anyone who might like to be on our mailing list, kindly send us his name and address.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Faculty,  
Theol. School of the  
Prot. Ref. Churches

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# THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

... OF THE ...

PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCHES

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

January, 1968

Beloved members of our Prot. Ref. Churches,

It has been several months since we sent to you our last newsletter. This has been partly due to the pressures of a busy semester in school and partly due to a lack of news to include in a letter. In this case too the old adage is, no doubt, appropriate: "No news is good news."

One semester of work is already completed in the Seminary. Student Moore will, by the time you receive this letter, have entered his second and last semester of study before exams at Synod. Classroom assignments, sermon preparations and additional studies which are needed for preparation for the ministry keep him busy.

Apparently we will have but one student in the Seminary next year also. This brings to mind once again the continuing need for ministers within our Churches. We take this opportunity to remind you all of the need which still presses upon us. Surely our parents within the Churches and our Consistories have the constant obligation to bring before our young men this need for ministers and the necessity of considering this calling.

Our library has been expanded this past semester. With funds allotted by Synod, the Seminary has purchased many books--especially from bookhouses overseas. We believe these books enrich our library and make the studies of the students easier to perform within our own school facilities. We remind our people that these books are also available for use outside the Seminary. If, in the course of your own studies or Consistorial work or in preparation for societies any of you desire a book which the Seminary has, a simple request to us will bring the book to you through the mail.

The professors are busy preparing new notes on the various subjects being taught. These notes are mimeographed and bound with plastic binding. They are for sale to anyone who is interested in obtaining them. Perhaps in the future a list of these notes which are available will be sent.

Preparations are being made for the second issue of the Protestant Reformed Theological Journal. The reception of the first issue was better than anticipated and we were soon out of copies. This is the reason why some of you who wanted the Journal did not receive it. But more copies will be prepared of the second issue. You can still get your name on our mailing list if you wish to receive it.

For the rest, we wish you God's indispensable blessing. Remember the needs of the Seminary in your prayers.

With fraternal greetings,

The Professors.

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EDITORIAL  
Prof. H. Hanko

When Jude admonished the Church to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints, he grounded this admonition in a graphic description of the evils present in the Church of his day: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." The evils Jude describes have remained appearing from time to time in the Church since his day. Jude's scathing denunciation of these men ought still to be heard. And to contend earnestly for the faith is, with increased urgency, our calling.

A few general observations will remind our readers that these evils indeed plague the Church. Far on the periphery of the Church are those who piously prate of God's death; of the need for a "new" morality which mocks God's law; of a new religion founded upon evolutionism, scorning the supernatural--a religion relevant to this scientific age. In Churches once conservative and confessional, the plague of modernism runs rampant and unimpeded. Old and venerable confessions are discarded; the authority of Scripture is openly mocked; ecumenism sweeps Protestantism breathlessly into the arms of a super-denomination and into the arms of Rome; the truth is despised and destroyed.

It will be objected that there is a large host of "evangelicals" whose protest against these evils is growing. And this is true. Nevertheless, even this evangelicalism is very

often a rash mixture of religion and politics in a conservative "right wing", or the Arminian and free-will evangelicalism of Billy Graham and his supporters. We may cheer when, in some denominations, there are those who stand up to decry the modernism with which their denominations are troubled; but our cheers will have to be muted when we are forced to face the alarming fact that evangelicals generally have adopted an insidious Arminianism which is but modernism in its first stages.

But there is also the witness of the Reformed faith. In this country and abroad there are Reformed Churches who are not only Calvinistic, but also the keepers of that distinctive Reformed tradition which has come down through the ages since the Protestant Reformation. And, here indeed one can still find those who earnestly contend for the faith. Nevertheless, even the Reformed witness has been (and is being) strangely altered. Even in historically Reformed Churches Arminianism has gained a foothold; the seeds of modernism have been sowed; the authority of Scripture is under attack; the winds of ecumenism blow with increasing force; and the historical creeds of the Church are either sadly neglected or the object of repeated criticism.

To contend for the faith involves therefore, two concerns. The Church which desires to remain faithful must, first of all, defend herself against attack. She must preserve her heritage. She must fight a defensive battle. She must defend again and again the truths which are her confession and life. Even though the Church has defended these truths many times in the past, she must do so again, loudly and clearly, adapting her defense to

the peculiar character of error today

But she must surely do more than this. She cannot be content with a wholly defensive battle. This is not sufficient on any battlefield. An army which wages an exclusively defensive warfare may protect her homeland for a time, but she will never subdue the enemy, never gain the victory in the war; and will ultimately lose to a tenacious opponent. The Church must do more than defend what she has. She must take the offensive. She must turn against her enemy and seek to destroy those who constantly threaten her. She must be positive as well as negative. She must not only protect what she already has, but she must also gain to herself new conquests. This means that the Church must move forward in the development of the truth. In turning to Scripture to find her defense of ancient truths, she must also uncover new treasures there which she has not hitherto found.

The two cannot, of course, be separated. To fail in defense is to make offense impossible. An army incapable of defending its homeland cannot expect to carry the attack to the land of the invaders. Only when the Church successfully and faithfully protects and preserves her heritage can she also move on to greater understanding of the truth. A successful offense is built upon an adequate defense; and no defense can be ultimately successful without a courageous offense.

In the consciousness of this calling is this Journal brought into existence.

It might be objected that there is already within our Protestant Reformed Churches the Standard Bearer which has taken upon itself the obligations implied in this calling. And this is true.

But the following must be observed:

1) The purpose of the Standard Bearer is quite different from the purpose of this Journal. The Standard Bearer is written for a broad audience; the Journal for a more select audience. The Standard Bearer is written with the purpose of edification, encouragement, as well as instruction. The Journal hopes to be of a more "scientific" nature making use of the technical tools of the science of theology. There is room, we believe, for both.

2) It has often been noted that heresy within the Church begins in the seminaries of the denomination. This is true. But there is good reason for this. The Seminary is the headquarters of heresy only because the Seminary, first of all, has the obligation to take the leadership in the Church of Christ in the development of the truth. When the armies of the saints suffer defeat on the battlefield of faith, this is because there is bad leadership from headquarters. But this places us before the fact that if the Church is to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints, this leadership, in a positive sense, must come from the Seminary. It is evidently this which our fathers had in mind when they added Article 18 to the Church Order: "The office of the professors of theology is to expound the Holy Scriptures and to vindicate sound doctrine against heresies and errors."

With the guidance of the Spirit of Truth, the Journal hopes to make some contribution to this calling.

The editors of the Journal have no illusions about the prestige or reception of the paper. It has an unpretentious format; its circulation is limited. There is no danger of its ever

having the impact upon the Church world which many other theological Journals have. Nor is this necessary. God gives the calling; God will also use these efforts in His own way for the good of the kingdom which belongs to Him. "Who hath despised the day of small things?"

We are including in our first mailing the ministers of our denomination and others who have shown an interest in this work. The Journal will be sent without charge to all those who desire to have it--either within our churches or outside of them; and who will read it and profit from it. If you desire to receive the Journal regularly, send your name and address to one of the editors.

Future issues of the Journal will contain articles similar to those appearing in this issue; book reviews of important books which are being published by the ecclesiastical press, essays written both by the professors of the Seminary and other ministers in our Churches.

May God grant His indispensable blessing upon this endeavor.

THE SCRIPTURAL PRESENTATION OF GOD'S HATRED  
Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

There are, in the main, two terms that are translated by the word "hate in Scripture. The Old Testament word is  $\text{אָנִיֵּן}$ . The Greek term is  $\mu\iota\sigma\epsilon\omega$ . The lexicons do not shed much additional light on the meaning of this word either in the Hebrew or in the Greek.

In Gesenius' "Hebrew-English Lexicon To The Old Testament" we find the following:

.....TO HATE, whether persons, Ps. 5:6;31:7; Deu. 22:13; 2 Sam. 13:15, 22; or things, Isa. 1:14; Ps. 11:5; Prov. 1:22. Part.  $\text{אָנִיֵּן}$  subst. a hater, an enemy, Ps. 35:19; 38:20; with suff.  $\text{אֲנִיֵּן$  one who hates him, Deu. 7:10; also  $\text{לִי אֲנִיֵּן}$  Deut. 4:42; 19:4, 6, 11; Josh. 20:5. Fem. plur.  $\text{אֲנִיֵּן$  female enemies, Eze. 16:27.

NIPHAL, pass. Pro. 14:17.

PIEL, part.  $\text{אֲנִיֵּן}$  hater, enemy, Psalm 18:41; 55:13; 68:2, etc.

Derivatives,  $\text{אֲנִיֵּן}$ ,  $\text{אֲנִיֵּן}$ .

Brown, Driver, and Briggs, "Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament" adds little to the above, except that it notes:

- 1) That the term in some instances stands opposite  $\text{אָהַב}$ .
- 2) That  $\text{אָהַב}$  and  $\text{אָהַב}$  are somewhat synonymous.

It is also interesting to note that this lexicon, in discussing the use of this verb in connection with Jehovah as subject, makes Ps. 5:6 and Ps. 11:5 refer not to persons, but to wickedness. Gesenius, cited above, gives Ps. 5:6 as a reference for divine hatred of persons, but refers Ps. 11:5 to divine hatred of things.

Concerning μισέω, Thayer's "Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament" remarks:

- 1) That this is the term used by the LXX for the Hebrew אָיַץ .
- 2) That the translation is "to hate, to pursue with hatred, detest; pass. to be hated, detested." That it is used with τινά or with τι in various passages.
- 3) "not a few interpreters have attributed to μισέω in Gen. 39:31 (cf. 30); Deut. 21:15, sq.; Matt. 6:24; Lk. 14:26; 16:13; (John 12:25); Rom. 9:13, the signification to love less, to postpone in love or esteem, to slight, through oversight of the circumstance that 'the Orientals, in accordance with their greater excitability, are wont both to feel and to profess love and hate where we Occidentals, with our cooler temperament, feel and express nothing more than interest in, or disregard and indifference to a thing'; Fritzsche, Com. on Rom. 2, p. 304; cf. Ruckert, Magazin f. Exegese u. Theologie des N.T. p. 27 ff."

From the above sources, therefore, we learn little that will help us in our discussion of this subject. It becomes plain, of course, even from remarks made in the lexicons that the attempt is made to soften the meaning of the word "hate" in those instances where Scripture presents God as the subject of the verb "to hate" and persons as the object. Without at this point entering into any argument and exegetical study of this issue, it may nevertheless be pointed out:

- 1) That the lexicons do indeed give both the Hebrew and the Greek verbs the denotation of active hatred.
- 2) That the lexicons do not attempt to soften the meaning of the word when applied to men as the subject or to things as the object.

3) That no linguistic reasons in favor of softening the term and interpreting it as meaning "to love less, to postpone in love or esteem, to slight" are presented. If there are reasons, therefore, they must be exegetically discovered. We shall have to turn, therefore, to the various passages of Scripture where these terms are used in order to arrive at a clear understanding of their meaning. And we are especially interested in those passages of Scripture in which God Himself is presented as the subject of the verb "to hate."

Instructive, in the first place, are two passages which do not speak of God actually hating but which potentially attribute to Him a hatred of His people. This ascription of a hatred of His people is pictured as potentially arising from the mouth of the enemy. Significantly, too, this hatred is presented as the direct opposite of God's love of His people.

In Deuteronomy 1:27 Moses is reminding the children of Israel of their unbelieving murmuring and rebellion at Kadesh and of their blasphemy at the time when Israel had listened to the majority report of the ten spies. He reminds them that they had said, "Because the Lord hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us." Two observations may be made here:

1) It is obvious, even though the term love does not occur here, that the term "hatred" is used as the direct opposite of "loved." The truth was, of course, that the Lord had brought His people out of the land of Egypt because He loved them. A little later in the same book of Deuteronomy this is literally stated: "But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you

out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." But at Kadesh the wicked blasphemy of rebellious Israel consisted exactly in that they attributed their being brought out of the land of Egypt to the opposite motive: hatred instead of love. It is to be noted, too, that this statement is concerned with motives. Love and hate are attitudes of the heart and constitute the motives behind certain activities.

2) Secondly, it is evident that even in this blasphemy the true operation of hatred is depicted, namely, destruction. Arising out of this hatred, according to the blasphemy of that unbelieving generation at Kadesh, was the divine purpose and intention to deliver them "into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us." Hence, the operation and manifestation of hatred is destruction. He who hates someone wills that person's destruction.

In Deuteronomy 9:28 the same ideas occur in a different connection. Here Moses refers to his intercession in behalf of Israel at Kadesh. The entire content of this intercession is worthy of note in connection with our subject (cf. vss. 26-29): "I prayed therefore unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou has redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin: Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance, which thou

broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm."

We may note the following here:

1) At the very heart of Moses' intercession is his appeal to the

honor of God's own name. He prays for God's own name's sake.

His intercession is concerned not, first of all, with the woe or weal of the people of Israel, but with the glory of God's name,

and with the salvation of His people only for God's name's sake.

Hence, he appeals to the fact that God's greatness, God's mighty

hand, God's ability to bring them into the promised land are at

stake. His appeal is that it would bring dishonor upon God's

name, and that too, at the mouth of the Egyptians, should God

destroy His people.

2) In connection with the preceding element, stands the fact

that Moses bases his intercession on the fact that Israel is God's

inheritance. In verse 26 he speaks of "thy people" and "thine

inheritance." And again, in verse 29 he concludes with this

plea: "Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance...." The

implication is obvious: it is divinely impossible that God should

hate and destroy His elect and redeemed people. They are pre-

cious unto Him, and He loves them.

3) It is evident that God's hatred appears here as the very op-

posite of His love. Moses suggests that if God should destroy

Israel, the Egyptians would say that God hated them. And this,

such is his plea, would bring reproach upon God's name: for the

fact is that Israel is God's people, His inheritance, the object

of His love, and that God had already revealed this by devoting

His greatness and power and mighty hand and stretched out arm to

redeeming and delivering them out of the land of Egypt.

4) It is also evident that the result, the end, of divine hatred is destruction. In fact, this forms an integral part of Moses' reasoning in this intercession. For God's name's sake, Moses fears that if God destroys His people on account of their stubbornness and wickedness and sin, the Egyptians will say that God hated them. They will conclude that God brought them into the wilderness to slay them because He hated them. The reasoning here is from effect to motive. And in his intercession Moses takes for granted that such reasoning would be correct, and that therefore God cannot destroy His people.

5) Finally, we should note that the divine hatred is ethical in its character. It is inseparably related to God's holiness and righteousness. For Moses pleads that God will "look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin." The implication is, clearly, that if God would indeed do this, He would certainly destroy them in divine wrath and hatred. His hatred and His wrath have as their objects all that which and all those whom He beholds as being contrary to His own holiness, His own infinite perfections. For this same reason, Moses in beautiful and concrete language pleads that God will behold His people in the light of His covenant and His promise: "Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

In Deuteronomy 12:31 the people of Israel are warned not to inquire after the manner in which the heathen nations of Canaan served their gods, nor to imitate those heathen nations, as follows: "Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have

burnt in the fire to their gods." And in Deuteronomy 16:22 ✓  
is found a prohibition against the setting up on an image, "which  
the Lord thy God hateth." Examples like these can, of course, be  
multiplied. They are cited here not as examples of a divine  
hatred of persons; fact is that they do not speak of persons, but  
of actions. But these passages are cited because they point to  
the intimate relation between God's holiness and God's hatred.  
As the Holy One, God hates that which is contrary to His own  
holiness. And it is as the Holy One that He is to be worshipped  
by His people. For this reason, His people may not worship Him  
after the manner of the heathen; nor may they set up a graven  
image. For these are an abomination unto Him: that is, He hates  
these things.

We next turn to two of the Psalms which instruct us con-  
cerning the divine hatred.

The first is Psalm 5, and the passage which is pertinent is Psalm 5  
verses 4-6: "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wicked-  
ness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall  
not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.  
Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor  
the bloody and deceitful man." In this passage it is evident:  
1) That the objects of God's hate are not merely things or  
actions, --sin, wickedness, evil. The objects of the divine  
hatred are the workers of iniquity, foolish men, bloody and de-  
ceitful men, and that too, according to the context, as enemies  
of God's people. It is important to note this. Some attempt to  
separate between the sinner and his sin, and they claim that God  
hates sin, but not the sinner. This is clearly contrary to the  
language of this passage, according to which God hates "all

workers of iniquity."

2) In this passage the operation of God's hatred is depicted as being unto destruction. "Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing."

3) That to abhor a man (vs. 6) is essentially the same as to hate him. The bloody and deceitful man is repulsive to Jehovah: in His infinite and perfect holiness He repels such a man.

4) That God's hatred, in the psalmist's consciousness and experience, is contrasted with His love, here specified as His mercy. We must not overlook the fact that this is the case, according to the context. The psalmist, as one of the righteous, is confident that Jehovah will hear his voice; and therefore in the morning he will direct his prayer unto the Lord, vs. 3. The reason for this confidence, negatively speaking, is expressed in the passage under our consideration. God is not a God that has pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with Him. Hence, the foolish shall not stand in His sight; that is, there shall be no fellowship between God and the foolish. On the contrary, He hates all workers of iniquity, will destroy them that speak leasing, and will abhor the bloody and deceitful man. And then, by way of contrast, the psalmist says: "But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple."

5) That throughout this psalm there is an underlying distinction, of which the psalmist also is aware, between himself and his enemies, between the righteous and the wicked. There are here distinguished from a spiritual, ethical viewpoint two classes of men: the righteous and the wicked. The former are the object of

of His love, His mercy, His blessing; the latter are the object of His hatred, His wrath, His destruction.

Another Psalm which speaks the same language is Psalm 11. Ps 11  
This psalm also speaks of the wicked as over against the righteous. It is the language of the righteous man, the child of God, in the midst of enemies, wicked men, who "bend their bow, ... make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart," (vs.2) In the midst of his enemies the psalmist has his confidence in Jehovah, Who is "in the temple of his holiness" and Whose "throne is in heaven." His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men. It is this sovereign and holy Lord of Whom the psalmist says in verse 5: "The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth." And then, in verse 6, the effect of this hate of God's soul is depicted in terms which remind one of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." It is evident in this passage, therefore:

- 1) That again, as in the other passages considered, the divine hatred is an attitude of God that is inseparably connected with His holiness. God's hatred, therefore, is not simply arbitrary, but is always ethically consistent with His own infinite holiness.
- 2) That by no stretch of exegesis can it be maintained that the Lord hates sin, but not the sinner. The text explicitly states that "the wicked and the lover of violence his soul hateth." In fact, it is difficult to understand how anyone can make the claim

that this passage speaks only of a divine hatred of sin or of a sinful action, but not of sinful persons. Moreover, not merely the violence and the wickedness experience the operation of God's hatred, as if that were possible; but the snares and fire and brimstone and burning tempest (the holocaust of the divine wrath which is the expression of His hatred) come upon the wicked and constitute the portion of their cup.

3) That this hatred is an attitude of God's soul. This expression is significant not only because in a general way it is emphatic. We may take the expression in its literal meaning: God with heart and mind and will, intelligently and volitionally, hates the wicked and them that love violence.

4) That here again the underlying supposition is that from an ethical viewpoint there are two classes of men: the righteous and the wicked, the former the object of God's love, the latter the object of His hatred. For we must remember that though the passage does not literally and directly mention God's love of righteous men, this is nevertheless the implication. In the first place, this is the implication of verse 7: "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright." And, in the second place, we must remember that the Lord's trying of the righteous (vs. 5) is essentially always an act of love.

In Proverbs 6:16-19 we also read of Jehovah's hatred: "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies,

and he that soweth discord among brethren." Concerning this passage in relation to our subject, we may observe the following:

1) Again it is plain that God hates certain men, sinners, not merely their sin. We recognize the fact that literally only the last two of this series of seven mention men: a false witness and he that soweth discord among brethren. This alone would be sufficient proof in support of this observation. We ought also to recognize that the text does not intend to teach merely that the Lord hates a look, a tongue, hands, a heart, and feet. Also these expressions refer to men, not merely to actions or to parts of a human being. They are very graphic figures of speech referring to the whole man from the point of view of certain concrete manifestations of his wicked nature. What we have in the first five of this series is the figure of the part for the whole.

2) It is plain also here that God's hatred is not arbitrary, but is in perfect harmony with His holiness and His holy Self-love. Pride and the proud man, the lie and the liar, murder and the murderer, etc., are contrary to God's holiness; and therefore they are the object of His hatred.

3) When we note that in verse 16 there is synonymous parallelism, we may observe the close association between the idea of God's hatred and the idea of being an abomination to Him. To be the object of God's hatred is essentially the same as being an abomination unto Him, and vice versa. This is significant: for it means that Scripture speaks more often of God's hatred, even when it does not literally employ the word "hate." The same is true of passages which speak of the destruction and punishments which God sends upon the wicked. We have already noted in

several passages the cause-effect relationship which there is between God's hatred and His destruction of the objects of His hatred. Because of this relationship it is always true that when Scripture speaks of the destruction and punishment of a man, we must view that destruction as the revelation of God's hatred.

Thus, for example, when we read in Proverbs 3:32 that "the froward is abomination to the Lord; but his secret is with the righteous," this passage also refers, in the light of Scripture, to God's hatred in contrast with His love, His wrath in contrast with His favor, His curse in contrast with His blessing. The same is true of a passage like Proverbs 6:12-15: "A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth. He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers; Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord. Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy." That sudden calamity and being broken without remedy are the manifestation of the divine hatred. In fact, it is significant that in the very next verse, already cited, literal mention is made of that which Jehovah hates. Or when we read in Psalm 92:7: "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever," then the reference to God's hatred may not be ignored.

Passages of this kind can be multiplied, both from the Psalms and from Proverbs, as well as from other parts of Scripture. We call attention to some of these passages: Psalm 1; Ps. 7:11-17; Ps. 18:26, ff.; Ps. 21:9-13; Ps. 31:17-24; Ps. 32:10; Ps. 34:16, 17; Ps. 36:8, ff.; Ps. 37; Ps. 40; Ps. 52:3-10; Ps. 57:4; Ps. 58:

7-12; Ps. 59:6, 12-18; Ps. 69:17, ff.; Ps. 104:35; Ps. 109; Ps. 125:4,5; Ps. 143:12; Ps. 138:6; Ps. 146:7-9; Ps. 147:6; Proverbs 3:32-35; Prov. 10:2,3,6-8,16,24,29; Prov. 11:20; Prov. 12:7,21, 22; Prov. 13:9,22; Prov. 14:11,32; Prov. 15:6,8,9,25,26,29; Prov. 21:12; Prov. 24:15-20.

But there are more passages which speak directly and literally of God's hatred.

In Isaiah 1:14 the Lord declares to Jerusalem and Judah which are become spiritually Sodom and Gomorrah: "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." Apparently here God's hatred is directed against things rather than persons. Yet the context shows very plainly that also here God's hatred is directed against men. For the Lord declares, vs. 21, ff.: "How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgement; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water: Thy princes are rebellious and companions of thieves," etc. And in verse 24 we read of the operation of that hatred and its effect upon personal objects, adversaries: "Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin....And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed." We may remark in passing that passages like this cannot possibly be understood except on the basis of the truth that

the church is here addressed organically, as a whole in which there is present a two-fold seed, the carnal and the spiritual, the reprobate and the remnant according to the election of grace. There is one factor which prevents Israel from being completely like Sodom and Gomorrah and which prevents its complete destruction; and this factor is mentioned in verse 9: "Except Jehovah of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah."

In Isaiah 61:8 we read of both God's love and God's hate in such a way that it is again very clear that they are always in harmony with His perfect holiness and also that they are direct opposites: "For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them."

In Hosea 9:15, in connection with its context, the hatred of God and its manifestation toward ungodly Ephraim are depicted very sharply: "Give them, O Lord: what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts. All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolvers. Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb. My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations." In Amos 5:21 the hatred of God toward apostate Israel is mentioned in a context which speak of the day of the Lord: "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day

of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?" And then: "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts." And then, vs. 24: "But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." And in verse 27: "Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is The God of hosts."

The ethical character of God's hatred is set forth plainly in Zechariah 8:16,17: "These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord." Similar, from this point of view, is the passage in Malachi 2:16, if we adopt the King James translation: "For the Lord, the God of Israel saith that he hateth putting away; for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously."

The notable passage of Malachi 1:2-5, quoted in Romans 9, speaks very plain language: "I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau,

and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel." Here the contrast between the love and the hatred of God, between Jacob and Esau, between Israel and Edom, between the salvation and bliss of Israel and the everlasting desolation of the objects of God's hatred, is brought into very sharp focus.

In the New Testament, with reference to the attitude and activity of God the only passage which speaks directly and literally of His hatred is the so-called locus classicus for sovereign predestination, Romans 9. There we find the well-known words, in vss. 10-13: "And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." To this passage, in its context of the example of Pharaoh and the figure of the potter and the clay and the vessels unto honor and unto dishonor, vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction, we shall return presently. But even now let it be noted:

1) That this passage speaks of a hatred of which God is the subject.

- 2) That this hatred is very evidently personal, both as far as its subject and its object are concerned: God hated Esau.
- 3) That God's hatred stands here in sharp contrast with His love.
- 4) That, while it must and can very well be maintained that this word as it occurs in Malachi 1 is also both personal and individual, nevertheless, regardless of what the meaning may be in Malachi, here in Romans 9 and in the peculiar connection in which the apostle Paul adduces it, it is undeniably personal and individual. The reference to the objects of God's love and God's hatred respectively is very definitely to the two children, Jacob and Esau, that were in Rebecca's womb.

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We are now ready to attempt a formulation of the concept of God's hatred. We shall limit ourselves in this connection to the idea of God's hatred as such, in order to treat separately the question of the objects of that hatred and the origin of God's hatred of those objects.

In the light of the Scripture, especially the passages cited, we posit the following:

1. In the first place, we may state that God's hatred as such is not, in the positive sense of the term, one of His attributes, or virtues, as are, for example, God's love, God's righteousness, God's holiness. God is in Himself, apart from any relation and attitude toward the creature, love. He is righteousness. He is holiness. But in this sense we never read in Scripture that God is hatred; and this cannot properly be posited of God. Within the divine Being and life as such there is no positive attribute of hatred. Hatred is negative.

2. In the second place, and in close connection with the preceding, we would maintain that God's hatred is implied in and is an aspect of His holy Self-love as that Self-love is revealed toward the creature. It is the contrast, the counter-part, the antithesis of love. In the revelation of His love of Himself to the creature outside of Himself, God's hatred is the "no" of the "yes" of God's love. From this already it would follow that the revelation of that hatred stands essentially in the service of the revelation of His love.

3. Hence, in the third place, God's hatred must be defined and circumscribed in terms of His love. We may therefore state the following:

a. If God's love is a bond of fellowship, a virtue and power that unites, draws, fastens to Himself, His hatred implies a gulf of separation. It is the negative aspect of that virtue of and power of love which separates, repulses, drives away.

b. God's love is ethical in character. It requires an ethical subject and an ethical object. Thus it is with God's hatred. Just as animals and inanimate objects cannot properly be said to be the object of love, so also animals and inanimate objects cannot properly be said to be the object of hatred.

c. God's love can exist only in the sphere of ethical perfection. It requires an ethically perfect subject, but also an ethically perfect object. The corollary of this is that God's hatred is the attitude of aversion, of repulsion, on the part of the ethically perfect subject toward the ethically corrupt object. Just as love implies the longing for and the delight in the ethically perfect object on the part of the ethically perfect

subject, so God's hatred is the aversion for and the repulsion of and the displeasure in the ethically corrupt object on the part of God, Who is the implication of all infinite perfections. It is the thought and the will to repulse and to destroy, to cast out of His presence and to make miserable all that which and those who stand contrary to the ethical perfection and holiness of the divine nature.

4. Finally, we may state that there is most perfect harmony and unity between this hatred of God, as an aspect of the revelation of His holy Self-love, and all the other attributes and virtues of God. This follows both from the fact that God's hatred is the antithesis of His love, and from the truth of God's simplicity. Here, of course, we come face to face with the truth that a priori God's hatred is absolutely independent and sovereign. This stands in connection with the next question to which we will address ourselves. But first let it be emphasized that God's infinite and perfect hatred is rooted in His absolute holiness and goodness. He is the Light, in Whom is no darkness at all. As the Holy One, He loves and seeks and delights in Himself. And for His own holy name's sake, as the God Who always maintains Himself in His infinite holiness, He reveals Himself as the God Who hates with perfect and infinite hatred all that stands contrary to His holy Being. And this hatred is operative in wrath, in the curse, in the destruction of the objects of that hatred, whatever and whoever they may be.

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We are now ready for our second question, namely: who are the objects of the divine hatred? We may ask this question from

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a.  
a two-fold point of view. In the first place, who are they his-  
torically? Who are they as far as their ethical character is con-  
cerned? What is their historical and ethical identity? And, in  
the second place, when we discover that historical and ethical b.  
identity of the object of God's hatred, in contradistinction from  
the objects of God's love, what is the origin of that distinction,  
and, therefore, of that hatred?

In answer to the first question, we must note that every-  
where Scripture pictures the objects of God's hatred from the  
point of view of their spiritual, ethical character. This is true  
in the various passages cited which speak literally of God's  
hatred. This is also true of all the passages mentioned which  
speak by implication of God's attitude of hatred as it is revealed  
in the operation of that hatred in wrath, the curse, and destruc-  
tion. It is the ungodly, the foolish, the workers of iniquity,  
the transgressors, etc., that are the object of God's hatred and  
of the revelation of that hatred in wrath and the curse both in  
time and eternity.

Moreover, we must understand, in this connection, that the  
Word of God throughout draws a very sharp line of demarcation be-  
tween the godly and the ungodly, the righteous and the wicked,  
the church and the world, the children of light and the children  
of darkness. We must not fall into the error that is so common  
today, and that sounds so piously evangelistic, of speaking simply  
of the "unconverted," conceiving then of the unconverted from  
our own point of view, not as God sees and knows and views them.  
When Scripture makes the distinction between the godly and the un-  
godly, it always refers principally to the ungodly that will never

be converted, the ungodly that can never be converted, the ungodly that will persist in his ungodliness until he is cast into everlasting destruction. Nor must we say that we cannot very well make these the object of our contemplation for the simple reason that we do not know who they are. For, in the first place, while it may be true that the individual identity of the ungodly to a certain extent may belong to the realm of the secret things, nevertheless the fact that there are such men belongs to the revealed things of God. This must be reckoned with, both as far as the preaching of the gospel is concerned, lest the preacher delude himself that all men are potential converts, and as far as the life and calling of God's people in the midst of the world are concerned, lest they make common cause with the wicked. In <sup>But they must be identified then</sup> the second place, we must not forget the principal truth: by their fruits ye shall know them. And, in the third place, the question is not whether we in every case can individually distinguish the ungodly, but whether God knows them, and what is His attitude toward them. And then the fact is that God does not have before His divine eyes a mass of unconverted men who are possible candidates for conversion; but there are before Him the righteous and the unrighteous, the godly and the ungodly,--two distinct classes of men.

The language of Scripture in describing these ungodly is clear, and the delineation between them and the godly is sharp in Holy Writ. According to Psalm 1, they are the ungodly, those who stand in the way of sinners, who sit in the seat of the scornful, and the wicked counsellors. Psalm 5 pictures them as the foolish, the workers of iniquity, in whose mouth is no faithfulness, whose

inward part is very wickedness, whose throat is an open sepulchre, who flatter with their tongue. Psalm 7 pictures them as raging enemies, as the non-turning wicked. Psalm 11 calls them the wicked, who make ready their arrow upon the string, who privily shoot at the upright, who love violence. And thus examples may be multiplied. Cf. Psalm 14:1-4; Psalm 17:9-12; Psalm 18:26,27; Psalm 28:3,5; Psalm 31:6,18; Psalm 36:1-4; Psalm 37:12,14,21; Psalm 49:11; Psalm 52:3; Psalm 53:1; Psalm 58:3; Psalm 109:5; Prov. 1:10,16; Prov. 4:16,17; Prov. 10:8,9,10,13,17,18,23; Prov. 11:12,13,17; Isa. 5:8,20,21,23; Matt. 23:14,23,24,27,29-33; John 3:36; Rom. 1:21-23; 29-32. This is Scripture's picture of the natural man throughout; and it is the picture not only of the natural man in general, but of the ungodly. True, all men are by nature and considered in themselves ungodly. But in the process of history from Adam onward there is a distinction made. There is the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. This distinction Scripture recognizes throughout. There are men who are by nature ungodly, but who by sovereign grace are distinguished, separated from, called out of the mass of ungodly men; and there are men who are not so separated and who never will be separated, men who before God from eternity to eternity appear no different than in their horrible iniquity. The latter are the object of God's hatred.

In this same connection, we must take note of the fact that Scripture throughout speaks of two classes of men, righteous and wicked, from the point of view of their final destiny and their being on the way to that destination. Here again, it should be noted that Scripture does not merely speak of ungodly men who are

potential candidates for destruction but who are also potential candidates for everlasting bliss. On the contrary, it recognizes the fact of the existence of certain men who are on the way to destruction and who shall certainly be destroyed. And distinct from these are the righteous. There are ungodly men, who are as the chaff which the wind driveth away, who shall not stand in the judgment nor in the congregation of the righteous, whose very way shall perish, Psalm 1. There are those, the foolish workers of iniquity, who shall not stand in God's sight, who speak leasing and shall be destroyed, who are bloody and deceitful and shall be abhorred, Psalm 5. There are the wicked upon whom God will rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest, Psalm 11. There are the ungodly, of whom Asaph was at first envious, but concerning whom he learned in the sanctuary of God that God did set them in slippery places and cast them down into destruction, Psalm 73. Examples of this kind could be multiplied. Indeed, they are always pictured in Scripture in their spiritual, ethical character: they are the wicked. And their destruction always stands in unbreakable connection with their being wicked. God is the righteous Judge! And shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? It is emphatically as wicked, as ungodly, that they are destroyed forever. All this does not change the fact, however, that there are such men, that God knows that there are such men, that God's people know and must know and do experience that there are such men.

When we speak, therefore, of God's hatred, we must always remember its ethical character. It is not correct to say that God reveals His hatred utterly without regard to sin. Nor is it

correct to speak of elect men and reprobate men without regard to and with no connection to righteousness and sin. In His counsel God beholds His people eternally as righteous in Christ, and as such they are the objects of His love. And in that same counsel He beholds the reprobate eternally as wicked, and as such they are the objects of His hatred. There is no arbitrariness in God's love or in His hatred.

This is by no means the same as saying, however, that God's election and reprobation or His love and His hatred are conditional and based upon foreseen godliness or ungodliness in the Arminian sense of a divine prescience. When we inquire after the origin of God's love and God's hatred, then Scripture leaves no question but that this same ethically perfect love and ethically perfect hatred are absolutely sovereign. This is the clear teaching of the passage in Romans 9, to which we referred earlier. In connection with this passage we should note:

Rom. 9

- 1) That we have here a very emphatic example because: a) Esau and Jacob were children of the same parents, and that too, "covenant" parents. b) They were twins: as far as their natural differences were concerned, there was as little difference as possible. c) Esau from a natural point of view should have the preference because he was firstborn. Yet the blessing of the covenant would be bestowed upon Jacob rather than Esau: the elder shall serve the younger.
- 2) This was said unto Rebecca "in order that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." Hence, when the children grow up and the elder reveals himself as a fornicator and the younger as a child of promise,

this must be attributed not to any natural difference, but to the determination and realization of God's sovereign purpose of election. God's predestinating purpose distinguishes and makes separation even between the natural descendants of the father of believers.

3) What this purpose of God was is further expressed by the quotation from Malachi 1. And in the light of the context in Malachi, it cannot be maintained that the hatred of God is anything else than exactly such a hatred,--the very opposite of God's love. It is not another kind of love or another degree of love. The text is by no stretch of the imagination to be read as though it said, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I loved too." For the hatred of God against Esau reveals itself in a manifestation of wrath against him and his descendants. They are called the people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever!

4) The view that objects that this election and reprobation were not personal, but national, cannot be maintained in the light of: a) The fact that the text mentions, in the first place, Jacob and Esau personally, and refers to their personal, prenatal position. b) The fact that even the nation of Edom is composed of individual Edomites. c) The fact that their personal history is quite in accord with the idea of their personal election and reprobation.

5) It was an election unto salvation and a reprobation unto damnation that was at stake here.

6) It was an election and reprobation which had their ultimate ground in the sovereign pleasure of the Most High, and which were

in no wise conditioned by either Jacob's or Esau's character and works: a) Because the text emphatically mentions this. b) because it is only in this light that the objections raised in the context in Romans 9 have any sense: "Is there then unrighteousness with God?" And: "Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?" These are objections which in their very nature will be raised only against a predestination that is sovereign. Against the Arminian presentation of a conditional election and reprobation such objections would make no sense.

7) This is in full harmony with the figure of the potter who makes out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor. All history, in which vessels unto honor or unto dishonor are formed, is the revelation and realization of the counsel of God according to which He loved Jacob and all His elect people, but hated Esau and all the reprobate.

8) And, finally, this is in full harmony with the reference in Romans 9:22,23 to the vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction. These are the men who are sovereignly ordained to be the manifestations and the objects of God's righteous wrath, vessels ordained in wrath and unto wrath, so constituted and instituted that their end must and shall be destruction.

Hence, we conclude by maintaining the absolute sovereignty of God's hatred. With electing love, sovereign, eternally independent, with a love not caused by its objects, with a love grounded solely in His good pleasure, God has chosen His people in Christ unto eternal salvation, the most blessed fellowship and bliss of His eternal covenant. That is the love of His good pleasure. And with equally sovereign hatred, with a hate that

is not caused by its objects, but is grounded in His divine good pleasure, God has predestinated the objects of reprobation unto everlasting desolation in the way of their own sin and unbelief.

Many other passages could be discussed in this connection. For example, Isaiah 6:9-11; Mark 4:11,12; Matthew 11:25,26; John 12:39,40; Romans 11:7-10; II Corinthians 2:14-16. Passages like this are especially important because they have to do with the revelation of God's sovereign hatred in connection with the preaching of the gospel. But to these we can, perhaps, devote a later study.

## WISDOM IN PROVERBS 8

Prof. H. Hanko

It is not an exaggeration to say that this chapter of the wonderful book of Proverbs is the central chapter of all the wise sayings of Solomon. While the book as a whole deals with the fundamental concept of wisdom, in this chapter wisdom is defined in its fundamental and essential character. If the central concept of wisdom, as defined particularly in this chapter, is not understood, it is conceivable that the entire book becomes a mere collection of moral platitudes and ingenious hints for better social behavior.<sup>1</sup> With a correct understanding of this concept of wisdom, the book is also a most marvelous revelation of the God of our salvation in Jesus Christ.

While it is apparent that in this chapter Wisdom is personified and itself speaks, it is above all striking that Wisdom makes most unusual claims for herself.

Already in the opening vss. as she begins her discourse, she claims to herself the ability to speak excellent things, right things, things which are true and righteous, and in which no wickedness is found. No wonder then that wisdom urges upon her listeners to prefer her to gold and silver.

But this claim to speak truth and righteousness is not by any means all. She claims far, far more; she makes claims which would seem to us preposterous in the mouth of any man, and the height of arrogant conceit. For wisdom claims to be the power by which princes rule and all the rulers of the earth. Wisdom takes

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. e.g., Prov. 23:1,2: "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee: And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.

to herself riches and honor, fruit better than gold and revenue better than fine gold. She claims to lead in the way of righteousness and in the midst of the paths of judgment.

But even these claims are small in comparison with other wonderful claims which she makes to herself which all but defy the imagination. She says of herself that she was possessed of the Lord in the beginning of His way; that she is the foremost of His works. She speaks of herself as set up from everlasting, before the earth was. She claims to have been brought forth when there were no depths, no fountains abounding in water, no mountains or hills, or earth or fields. And when the heavens were called into being and the circle of the earth was set: when the clouds were put above the earth and the sea was issued her decree: when the foundations of the earth were appointed: when all these wonderful things happened at the dawn of creation, she was there as witness to it all.

No wonder then that she can claim that in her men find blessedness. Knowing her they are blessed indeed, for she is very wonderful. Hearing her instruction, men themselves shall be wise. Harkening to her while watching daily at her gates and waiting at the posts of her doors, men themselves become like her. Finding her, men find life and obtain favor from Jehovah. But woe to him who despiseth her and turns away from her: for he wrongs his own soul and finds only death.

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In order to understand this remarkable passage of Scripture, it is important, first of all, to come to some understanding of what the term "wisdom" means in Scripture.

Wisdom is first of all an attribute of God. This is clear from Rom. 16:27 e.g., where God is called the only wise One: "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."<sup>2</sup> The same is true of I Tim. 1:17: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen."<sup>3</sup> While in these passages, God is called the only wise One, there are other passages in which wisdom is referred to God as an attribute. Cf. e.g., Ps. 104:24, Rom. 11:33, etc.

What is this attribute of God called in Scripture "wisdom?"

After including wisdom in the general attribute of holiness,<sup>4</sup> Rev. H. Hoeksema writes: "The Scriptural conception of wisdom is not the same as that of philosophia. Unlike the latter, it is not abstractly intellectual, but profoundly practical; it is not natural and earthly, but ethical and spiritual. In general, wisdom is the proper apprehension of and adaptation of one-self to reality. . . .

"In the highest sense, however, wisdom is spiritual-ethical.

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<sup>2</sup>It is well to keep this passage before our minds, for the fact that God alone is wise has important implications for the meaning of Proverbs 8.

<sup>3</sup>A reference to the Greek New Testament at this point will show that the best Greek MSS omit the word σοφῶν. This is, of course, a critical question, and we shall not go into it here. But it seems to us that various considerations suggest that the word ought to be retained. At any rate, the idea is in perfect harmony with the rest of scripture.

<sup>4</sup>The Hebrew word for "holiness" is קדוש; and this is a name of God. In "Reformed Dogmatics", Rev. H. Hoeksema divides the attributes of God under the two names אלהים and קדוש, the former including God's essential attributes, the latter including God's ethical attributes. Hence we find wisdom included under the name and attribute קדוש. (Rev. H. Hoeksema, Reformed Dogmatics, pp. 65ff.)

For the ultimate reality is the living God, and to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and with all our soul, and with all our strength is to know Him and to adapt ourselves to Him, and to do this is life. . . .

". . . With God wisdom is more than mere Platonic idealism, it is, in fact, an aspect of His holiness, according to which He seeks Himself and is consecrated to Himself as the sole ethical Good. .<sup>5</sup> He is Wisdom. With Him wisdom is absolute, self-existent, eternal, infinite, immutable. He is its subject and object. With Him wisdom is infinite understanding of Himself and adaptation of all things to one another and to Himself as the only Good. That virtue of God according to which He lives His own divine life within Himself as the triune God with perfect adaptation to His infinite blessedness as the Holy One, and according to which He is able to adapt His whole counsel and all things to the attainment of the highest purpose, and to adapt all things to one-another with a view to that purpose, His own glorification,--that is the unsearchable wisdom of God!"<sup>6</sup>

It follows from the fact that wisdom is an attribute of God that also God's counsel is wise--as Rev. Hoeksema points out in the above quotation. For God, who is wise in Himself, performs all His works in perfect wisdom. That His counsel is wise means that God's counsel is perfectly adapted to the best and highest

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<sup>5</sup>This, and what follows is a formal definition, and worthy of special attention.

<sup>6</sup>Rev. H. Hoeksema, Reformed Dogmatics, pp. 100-103.

purpose--the glory of His own name. From this point of view, while it is possible to conceive of God having other counsels besides the one He actually possesses<sup>7</sup> this is a mere abstraction. For the counsel that is eternal in God is the best counsel inasmuch as it is most perfectly suited to achieve that which is the highest good. This is worth our special notice (although here we pause to consider it only in passing) inasmuch as this too, has much to do with the meaning of Proverbs 8.

Wisdom is also to be found in man. This is also evident from <sup>2.</sup> the whole of Scripture. Wisdom is among the "communicable" attributes. Yet it must be hastily added that wisdom is not found in the natural man. Sin makes fools out of men. They are fools in such a way that they possess not a shred of wisdom. All that they do is characterized by foolishness. And foolishness is a terrible sin. Wicked man is a fool who says in his heart that there is no God even when the whole creation shouts aloud that God indeed is, and that He is the only God. In his foolishness he does not adapt his life to the highest good, but rather he does just the opposite. Knowing that the judgment awaits him at the end of his life, he nevertheless scorns this judgment and lives the days of his life in the world heaping to himself the full measure of the wrath of God. Being impressed daily with the fact that this world cannot go on forever, he nevertheless lives as if it will and sets his mind and heart upon enjoying the pleasures of sin. He is a spiritual drunkard, completely out of touch with reality in the blindness of sin, who staggers drunkenly through life to topple at last into everlasting destruction.

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<sup>7</sup>Those who hold this base this view upon God's attribute of omniscience.

Wisdom is therefore a gift of God; indeed a gift of His grace. It is merited for God's people through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ and given as a gift of God's love to those for whom Christ died. It is bestowed through the Spirit of Christ and can never be attained by mere human effort. It is the possession of those who are taken into the fellowship of the cross; never is it acquired through any intellectual effort. It cannot be obtained by attending college or university; "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God. . . ." James 1:5.

Hence, in God's people, wisdom is that gift of grace according to which they are enabled to know true reality (which is the revelation of God in Christ) and to live lives that are in perfect harmony with this reality. To know reality is to know God. To live according to this reality is the spiritual ability to take the knowledge of God in Christ and to apply it specifically to one's calling and walk of life. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." James 3:17. It is the foolish man, knowing that storms are sure to come, who nevertheless builds his house upon the sand. But the wise man builds his house upon the rock. Mt. 7:24-27. And He is the man who hears and does the sayings of Jesus. Indeed, in the highest sense of the word, it is the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom. Ps. 111:10.

There is a difference therefore between wisdom and knowledge. In general, it is possible for a man to acquire vast knowledge, yet to remain for all this, a fool. Indeed, though he acquire all knowledge to become the most learned of all men, this will not, in

itself, guarantee that the man will be wise. He remains a fool as long as he lacks the ability to apply this knowledge to his own life, and to the problems which confront him in life. On a purely natural level, this is immediately evident. A man may acquire a degree in mechanical engineering. With this degree comes a measure of intellectual attainment in the principles and intricacies of an internal combustion engine. He may therefore, be able to explain in startling detail the working of such an engine. He may be able to write learned treatises on all the principles involved. He may even, theoretically, be able to suggest improvements, But he remains, nonetheless, a fool if he is unable to start his car on a cold winter morning.

Of course, wisdom presupposes knowledge. Without knowledge wisdom is, by definition, impossible. For wisdom is the practical application of knowledge. But while one cannot have wisdom without knowledge, it is entirely possible to have knowledge and still lack wisdom. And without wisdom, knowledge is utterly useless and vain. It is of this, on the higher spiritual level, that Solomon speaks with chilling words in the book of Ecclesiastes: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." Eccl. 1:2.

Thus the wicked may have knowledge--even knowledge of God and of His truth. They may know the truth--indeed, to a greater or lesser extent, do know the truth. But they lack wisdom; and they are therefore fools. In their foolishness they pervert the knowledge they have, deny it, corrupt it and live in a way which is always opposed to it. And this foolishness is exactly such terrible foolishness because it flies in the face of the knowledge of God which they receive.

However, one point is necessary to make in this connection. The wisdom which is characteristic of the life of the people of God is not a wisdom which flows from and is the practical appli-  
cation of knowledge in the general sense. Knowledge in the mere formal sense of the word is not the knowledge which wisdom needs. Rather, the knowledge of which wisdom is the practical application, is the true and saving knowledge of God through Jesus Christ which, if a man has, he has eternal life. It is true knowledge that is part of the restoration of the image of God through Christ in man.

Hence, for the people of God, wisdom is the peculiar spiritual ability to take the true and saving knowledge of God through Christ which is given to them by the Spirit and apply this knowledge to all their walk and pathway in the midst of the world. It is the ability to live lives which are dedicated to the highest good--the glory of God. It is the ability to find the right way--the way of righteousness and obedience, and to walk in that way. It is the ability to find comfort in sorrow, to find the solution of God's will in the problems of life, to find strength in temptation and courage in the battle of faith. It is the ability to train children in the fear of the Lord, to walk in God's covenant as God's friend-servants. It is, in the final analysis, to be a pilgrim and a stranger in the earth, travelling onward and upward towards the city that hath foundations, spending the years of one's sojourn in a life of sanctification amid all the evils of an evil age.

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With this brief description of wisdom, we turn now to a more  
detailed consideration of the meaning of this word in Proverbs 8.

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It shall be the burden of the remainder of this article to show and to develop the idea that wisdom personified in Proverbs 8 is Jesus Christ. *Purpose*

Commentators, on the whole, are reluctant to take this position, in fact, are reluctant to admit to the fact that we have in this chapter a literal personification. Most are ready to grant that we have here the figure of speech called "personification", in which personal characteristics are applied to inanimate objects. But that Proverbs 8 speaks of an actual person is not readily admitted.

While we shall not burden you with an examination of the viewpoint of many commentators, we shall give two samples.

Delitzsch writes concerning this "Wisdom" of Proverbs 8 somewhat abstractly:

"But (1) Wisdom is not God, but is God's; she has personal existence in the Logos of the N.T., but is not herself the Logos; she is the world-idea, which, once projected, is objective to God, not as a dead form, but as a living spiritual image; she is the archetype of the world, which, originating from God, stands before God, the world of the idea which forms the medium between the Godhead and the world of actual existence, the communicated spiritual power in the origination and the completion of the world as God designed it to be. This wisdom the poet here personifies; he does not speak of the personal Logos, but the further progress of the revelation points to her actual personification in the Logos. And (2)

since to her the poet attributes an existence preceding the creation of the world, he thereby declares her to be eternal, for to be before the world is to be before time. For if he places her at the head of the creatures, as the first of them, so therewith he does not seek to make her a creature of this world having its commencement in time, he connects her origination with the origination of the creature only on this account, because that a priori refers and tends to the latter; the power which was before heaven and earth were, and which operated at the creation of the earth and of the heavens, cannot certainly fall under the category of the creatures around and above us. Therefore (3) the translation with ἔκτισεν (in vs. 22, H.H.) has nothing against it, but it is different from the κτίσις of the heavens and the earth, and the poet has intentionally written not חָכְמָה, but חָכְמָה.<sup>8</sup>

While it is not entirely clear precisely what the author does mean by "Wisdom" it is obvious that he neither desires to make this wisdom synonymous with the Logos nor to make this Wisdom the decree of Christ in God's counsel.

Burton Scott Eston writes concerning the idea of Wisdom:

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<sup>8</sup>Franz Delitzsch, Commentary on Proverbs, Vol. 1, Eerdmans, 1950, pp. 183 & 184.

One characteristic of the Wisdom writers that proved of immense significance for later (esp. Christian) theology was a love of rhetorical personification of Wisdom. . . . Such personifications in themselves are not, of course, remarkable (cf. e.g. the treatment of 'love' in L Cor. 13), but the studied, somewhat artificial style of the Wisdom writers carries out the personification with a curious elaboration of details: Wisdom builds her house, marries her disciple, mingles wine, etc. The most famous passage is Prov. 8:22-31, however. The wisdom that is so useful to man was created before man, before indeed, the creation of the world. When the world was formed she was in her childhood, and while God formed the world she engaged in Childish play, under his shelter and to His delight. . . .<sup>9</sup>

In the Apoc.<sup>10</sup> however, the most advanced step is taken in Wisdom. . . . Here there is no doubt that the personification has ceased to be rhetorical and has become real. Wisdom is thought of as a heavenly being, not so distinctively personal, perhaps, as an angel, but

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<sup>9</sup>This is a reference to the last part of vs. 30 and vs. 31a.

<sup>10</sup>Apocrypha.", not "Apocalypse".

none the less far more than a mere rhetorical term, i.e. she is a "hypostasis."<sup>11</sup>

While it is presumably possible to make the personification of Pro. 8 merely rhetorical, there are objections against this.

In the first place, the language of the chapter itself is too strongly personal to be referred to mere rhetorical figure of speech. While this is evident already from such statements as "Hear, for I will speak of excellent things, and the opening of my lips shall be right things." "I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions." this is the more strongly emphasized from vs. 22 on: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there were no fountains of water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world."

That this is more than rhetorical personification is evident especially from the expression "I was brought forth." The Hebrew word here is  $\text{אָנֹכִי}$ , which means "to form, to create." Concerning this word Delitzsch writes:

The old translators render  $\text{אָנֹכִי}$  partly by verbs of creating (LXX.  $\text{\textepsilon}\nu\alpha\iota\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$  . . . .), partly by verbs of acquiring. . . . Wisdom appears also as created, certainly not without reference to this passage."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Quoted from International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE) Eerdmans, 1952, Vol. V, pp. 3091, 3092.

<sup>12</sup>Delitzsch, op. cit., pp. 183, 184.

Whatever the precise meaning of חָכְמָה may be (especially in distinction from אֱלֹהִים ), it is evident that when referred to wisdom, more is meant than a mere abstract quality or even than an attribute of God. Nor will it suffice to refer wisdom abstractly to the creation as some characteristic of it, for it is exactly the point of these vss. that wisdom exists before the world was formed, i.e., wisdom is eternal.

But also the fact that Wisdom is more than rhetorical personification is evident from vs. 30: "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." This expression can surely only be a description of an actual person.<sup>13</sup>

In the second place, there are passages to be found elsewhere <sup>2.</sup> in Scripture which are of a similar kind and which most clearly refer to Christ. E.g., vss. 27-29 of this chapter are, in some respects, similar to what we read concerning the logos in John 1: 1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made."

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<sup>13</sup> It is interesting to note that the Dutch has this translation: "Toen was Ik een voedsterling bij Hem, en Ik was dagelijks zijn vermaak, te allen tijde voor zijn aangezicht spelende, spelende in de wereld zijns aardrijks, en mijn vermaak is met de mensenkinderen." It is from this Dutch translation that the expression "spelende wijsheid" comes. The translation "spelende" is undoubtedly the correct reading, and not "rejoicing". Cf. Delitzsch, op. cit.

The same is true of Hebrews 1:1-3 where Christ is more specifically spoken of: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sin sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Or again, in that familiar passage in Col. 1:14-19 where we read: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead: that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell."

Concerning this latter passage, Rev. H. Hoeksema writes:

From all these considerations we may draw the conclusion that ὃς ἐστίν (the "who is" of vs. 15, H.H.) refers indeed to the eternal Son of God, but then as the ἡ ἀρχὴ

of Proverbs 8, as the λόγος of John 1: 1-3, as the Christ in human nature, crucified, raised, and exalted at the right hand of God, as according to the eternal good pleasure of God, He stands at the head and pinnacle of all created things in heaven and on earth."<sup>14</sup>

From these considerations therefore, we conclude that the personification of wisdom in Proverbs 8 is not mere rhetorical personification, but is most emphatically literal; that, further, this Wisdom of Proverbs 8 is Christ.

Bearing this in mind, let us look a little more closely at the text.

The first point we must notice concerning the description of Wisdom is that He is eternal. This is especially taught in vss. 22-26: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled; before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world."

Bearing in mind that this חכמה is Christ, we may well ask the question first of all: In what sense of the Word is Christ eternal? And: How can it be said of Him that He was brought forth before the creation of the worlds?

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<sup>14</sup>Rev. H. Hoeksema, Commentary on Colossians, Mimeographed Notes, p. 3

The answer to this question is to be found in the fact that the reference here is to God's counsel. Christ was, in the counsel, set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was. The point is therefore, that Christ is, as the Wisdom, the eternal decree of God's counsel. Without entering into elaborate discussion of this contention, it need only be pointed out that this is the teaching of all Scripture.<sup>15</sup>

But from this answer flows the next question: "Why is the eternal Christ of God's counsel called "Wisdom?"

In answer to this question: the following observations need to be made.

In the first place, I remind you that we posited in the early part of the article the definition of wisdom that it is the attribute of God according to which God knows Himself and seeks Himself as the highest good in the best possible way. As such, we pointed out too, that wisdom characterizes God's counsel inasmuch as it is His work.

In the second place, this means that inasmuch as the Wisdom of Proverbs 8 is Christ, Christ is also the Wisdom of God's counsel.

In the third place, this means that inasmuch as God's counsel is the best possible way to realize the eternal purpose of God--the glory of His name, Christ is precisely this way. God determines with perfect wisdom to seek the glory of His name in the

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<sup>15</sup>This could indeed be discussed much more extensively than we do here; but we resist the temptation since it is not the main point of this article.

best way. This best way is the way of Christ. God purposes to seek the glory of His name wisely; and wisdom demands that this be done through Christ. Christ is wisdom--the Wisdom of the counsel.

In the fourth place, this means that the decree of Christ is the principle decree of the counsel. He Who is called "Wisdom" and Who speaks in this chapter, claims to Himself this wonderful truth: I am the counsel!

All the other decrees of the counsel are included only inas-  
much as they stand in relationship to Christ. They have meaning and significance only because they are related to and in the service of Christ. They are wise decrees because they are connected to and follow from Him Who is the Wisdom of God.

It must be understood, of course, that when we speak of the decree of Christ, we refer to the whole of Christ and of His work, The Christ Who is born of a Virgin; Who ministers on earth for a time; Who suffers and dies on the cross to attain redemption and cosmic regeneration; (Acts 3:21) the Christ Who rises again from the dead; The Christ Who ascends to glory and is highly exalted in supreme and sublime glory and power and majesty at His Father's right hand; the Christ Who rules in God's name directing all things God has determined in His counsel so that they are carried out according to God's purpose and brought to their final destination--the complete renewal of all things when all things shall be united in Christ and He is the Head over all.

This is the achievement of the glory of God--the best possible end, attained in the best possible way; perfect wisdom.

The point is not merely that Christ was possessed in the beginning of the way, before the works of God, set up from everlasting, before the earth was. But the meaning of Proverbs 8 is that all the world and its creation has meaning and importance, has, indeed, its possibility only in Him Who alone is wisdom.

The text itself teaches this, although the meaning is not clear from the English translation. In vs. 22 we read in the AV: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old." The latter clause "before his works" is, in the Hebrew: וְיָצַדְתִּי מִתְּחִלָּה. The word מִתְּחִלָּה is the preposition "before", but as Delitzsch writes:

As מִתְּחִלָּה signifies previous existence in space, and then in time, so it may be used of the object in which the previous existence appears, thus: προτέραν τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ .<sup>16</sup>

Thus, as Delitzsch translates it, the meaning is "the foremost of his works." But then the meaning is not that Christ is the foremost of God's works in the sense that He is temporally first; rather, the meaning is that Christ is the foremost of God's works as the principle of all that God does.

This is true in the counsel. But this is no less true in God's work of creation. Because Christ is the principle of all creation in the counsel; so also is this true in the actual work of creation (and, consequently, providence). God's works in time are characterized by perfect wisdom. And they are characterized by perfect wisdom because they are the best possible way to attain

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<sup>16</sup>Delitzsch, loc. cit.

the highest possible end. But this wisdom which characterizes all God's works is Jesus Christ. He is the principle of wisdom in all God does.

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All this leads us to the next consideration of importance in II this chapter. That is that Christ is the revelation of the wisdom of God.

Christ is, of course, the full revelation of God. All revelation is only through Christ. All that is made known of God is made known through Jesus Christ and through Him alone. But this is not the foremost consideration here. The point here is that Christ is the full revelation of God's wisdom. Not merely in the sense that Christ is wise as God is wise; but rather in the sense that Christ is Himself Wisdom. In this way He reveals the wisdom of God. He is the full revelation of the highest purpose of God, God's glory, for all glory is revealed through Christ. But He is also the revelation of the highest and most perfect way to achieve that glory. He is the revelation of this in all His work from the incarnation to the full perfection of all things in the new world.

But from this it follows that all the works of God are a revelation of God's wisdom. We need not go into this at present as the statement stands by itself. What does concern us is the fact that inasmuch as all God's works reveal His wisdom, so all God's works are through Jesus Christ. This is also the clear teaching of this passage: "When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:

When he gave to the sea his decree; that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him." Vss. 27-30a.

The meaning is here, not merely that Wisdom was present at the moment of creation--present in the way an onlooker is present. This would be without meaning. The point is rather that the work of creation is performed through Wisdom. It was in and through Wisdom that the heavens were prepared and a compass set up the ~~depth~~. It was through Wisdom that the clouds were established and the fountains of the deep strengthened. It was through Wisdom that the sea was issued a command not to transgress the decree of God. Wisdom was the means of effecting all the work of creation.

This means (no doubt, among many other things) that all God's works are characterized by the highest wisdom inasmuch as they perfectly serve as the best means to attain this highest of all purposes. This naturally follows also from the fact that the counsel of God is behind all the work of God in time. And, inasmuch as the counsel of God is wise, so also is the execution of that counsel perfectly wise in all its many parts.

Further, not only is this true of the work of creation as such; it is also true of the whole of the work of God in time from the moment of the creation onwards. God is executing His wise counsel and working out His sovereign purpose. And in so doing, He is working in a way that is characterized by the highest wisdom; a way that will surely be the best way to attain this highest of all purposes--the glory of God's own name. No wonder that Wisdom can also claim: "Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am

understanding; I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. . . . I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment." Vss. 14-16, 20.

But it must be remembered once again that all this is true of Christ as the Wisdom of God.

It is evident that Wisdom itself is divine. Attributes are posited concerning wisdom which are attributes of God alone. This is clear already at the very beginning of the chapter: "Hear, for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge." Vss. 6-9. But this is more emphatically true when the attribute of eternity is applied to Wisdom in vss. 22-26. While, as we noticed, this applies to Christ in God's counsel, and therefore to the counsel itself; it is also clear that Wisdom makes this personal claim to eternity as His own attribute.

However, more must be said. For Wisdom is not only divine, but also is begotten and brought forth. This can never be said of God as He is in Himself, but it can only be stated of the creature. No doubt, it can be argued that this relationship of "being begotten" can also describe a relation which exists between the first and second persons of the trinity. And, indeed, this is true. But it is further evident not only from the language throughout, but also from the unique and beautiful expression of

vss. 30, 31 that a person distinct from the Godhead is spoken of. There we read: "And <sup>I</sup> was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him: Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." Obviously, this "spelende wijsheid" plays, as it were, before the face of God Himself, the triune God. And is therefore distinct from Him.

All of these considerations likewise lead us to the conclusion that wisdom is here Christ <sup>H</sup>imself in Whom is all the wisdom of God and through Whom this wisdom of God is revealed in all the works of <sup>G</sup>od's hand.

While this wisdom of God is revealed particularly and in the highest sense in the work of salvation, it is no less true that God's wisdom is revealed in the work of creation. But both works find their principle of unity in Christ. And this means that creation must serve salvation so that all may be one in Jesus Christ.

This is a most glorious and sublime truth, the boldest imaginations scarcely understanding it.

Finally, we turn to the practical significance of this, of which there is also mention made in the chapter.

Wisdom is Christ. Hence wisdom can only be found in <sup>C</sup>hrist. For men to possess wisdom is the highest blessedness, for in possessing wisdom men possess <sup>C</sup>hrist Himself Who "of <sup>G</sup>od is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." I Cor. 1:30.

No wonder then that wisdom is to be desired above all else. "Receive my instruction," Wisdom cries, "and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than

rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. . . . Riches and honor are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver." Vss. 10, 11, 18.

But if wisdom is to have Christ, then from this it also follows that wisdom is the way of truth and righteousness. A man walking in this way adapts his life to true reality, to the pursuit of the highest good. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate. . . . I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me. . . . I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures." Vss. 13, 17, 20, 21. Indeed this is blessedness. "Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children, for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me love death." Vss. 32-36.

This blessed gift of wisdom is imparted to those who are chosen in Christ from before the foundations of the world and who, as members of Christ's body, participate in this glorious revelation of God's Wisdom. For they too, in their salvation in Christ, show forth the wisdom of God.