

VII.

The Neo-Kohlbrugians.

“And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, and after his image; and called his name Seth.”—*Gen. v. 3.*

232

Many are the efforts made to alter the meaning of the word, “Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness,” (*Gen. i. 26*) by a different translation; especially by making it to read “*in*” instead of “*after*” our likeness. This new reading is Dr. Böhl’s main support. With this translation his system stands or falls.

According to him, man is not the bearer of the divine image, but by a divine act he was set in it, as a plant is set in the sun. As long as the plant stood in the dark, its shape and flowers are invisible; carried into the light its beauty becomes apparent. In like manner, man was without luster until God put him in the shining glory of His image, and then he appeared beautiful. Of course, this idea requires the translation: “Let Us create man *in* Our image.” (*Gen. i. 26*)

Let us explain the difference: *Gen. i. 26* in the Hebrew has two different prepositions. The one standing before “likeness” (לְכַדְמֹוּ) is invariably used in comparisons; while the other before “image” is mostly used to denote that one thing is found in another. Hence the translation, “In our image and after our likeness,” has apparently much in its favor. This translation (altho we believe it to be incorrect; for our reasons see the next article) does not alter the meaning, if rightly interpreted.

And what is that right interpretation? Not that of Dr. Böhl; for, according to him, the newly created man did not stand in the midst of that image, but only in its reflection and radiation. The plant is not set in the sun, but in the sun-rays. No; if Adam stood in the midst of God’s image, then he was wholly encompassed by it.



Let us illustrate. There are wooden images covered with paper on which is printed a head or bust, colored to imitate marble or bronze. The wood may be said to be *in the image*, covered by it from all sides. Again, the sculptor actually chisels the image, in his mind, or posing as a model, *about the marble* until it encloses the whole block. In like manner it may be said that Adam, upon his first awakening to consciousness, was enclosed by God’s image; not externally, and he only its reflection, but its ectype penetrating his whole being.

233

The correctness of this exegesis appears from *Gen. v. 1-3*, the contents of which, tho often overlooked, settle this matter. Here Scripture brings Adam’s creation in direct connection with his own begetting a son after his own likeness. We read: “In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.”

In both instances the Hebrew word *zelem*, image, is used. Hence to obtain a clear and correct understanding of the statement, “to be created in the image and after the likeness of God,” Scripture invites us to let the child’s resemblance to the father assist us. And the father’s likeness lies in the child’s being, is part of it, and does not merely beam from the father upon the child externally. Even in his absence or after his death the resemblance of features continues.

Hence to beget a child in our image and after our likeness means to give existence to a being bearing our image and resemblance, altho as a person distinct from us. From which it must follow that when Scripture says, regarding Adam, that God created him in His image and after His likeness, using the same words “image” (*zelem*) and “likeness” (*demoeth*), it can not mean that the divine image shone upon him, so that he stood and walked in its light; but that God so created him that his whole being, person, and state reflected the divine image, *since he carried it in himself*.

It is remarkable that the prepositions used in [Gen. i. 26](#) appear also in this passage, but *in a reversed order*. Rendering the preposition “” “*in*,” as in [Gen. i. 26](#), it reads: “He begat a son *in* his likeness and after his image.” And this is conclusive. It shows how utterly unfair it is to deduce a different meaning from the use of different prepositions. Even if we translate “” by “*in*” — “*in* the image of God” — the sense is the same; in both, the image is not a reflection falling upon man, indicating his state only, but also his form, both *state* and *being*.

However, before we proceed, let Dr. Böhl speak for himself. For we might possibly have wrongly understood him; it is therefore reasonable that his own words be laid before our readers.

We take these citations from his work; entitled, “Von der Incarnation des Gottlichen Wortes”; a dogmatic, highly important book, wherein he deals the Vermittlungs theologians blows that have filled our hearts with joy, partly because God is honored thereby, and also because of the consolation offered to broken hearts. Hence it does not enter our minds to belittle the labor of Dr. Böhl. We only contend that his presentation of the image of God is not the true one. We point, therefore, to the important and exceedingly clear sentences of pages 28 and 29:



“Gott nun veranstaltete es so, dass der Mensch gleich anfangs unter den Einfluss des Guten zu stehen kam and somit das Gute that. Er schuf ihn *im Bilde Gottes*, nach seiner Gleichheit ([Gen. i. 26](#)). Was dies heisst, wird dann erst recht deutlich, wenn wir die Wiederherstellung des gefallen Menschen (nach [Ephes. iv. 24](#); [Col. iii. 9](#)) in Betracht ziehen. Paulus blickt hier auf den anfänglichen Zustand hin, wenn er redet von dem neuen Menschen, den wir nach Ausziehung des alten anzuziehen hätten. Er bezeichnet nun diesen neuen Menschen als einen Gott gemäss geschaffen (Kappa tau iota sigma theta epsilon w/ tonos nu tau alpha) in Gerechtigkeit und Heiligkeit, wie sie nach Wahrheit ist. Diese apostolischen Ausdrücke enthalten sine Umschreibung jener Ausstattung, welche Mose mit den Worten: ‘Im Bilde Gottes, nach seiner Gleichheit’ kennzeichnet. Die Wiedergeburt ist sine neue Schöpfung, die aber nach der Vorschrift der alten bestellt ist, ohne etwas davon- nosh dazuzuthun. *Der Stand im Bilde Gottes, in dem der Mensch nach der Gleichheit Gottes war, ist also etwas, was man von dem Menschen hinwegnehmen kann, ohne die Creatur Gottes selbst aufzuheben.* Es ist dem Apostel weiter eigenthümlich, die Bewegungen des neuen Menschen unter dem Bilde von verschiedenen Gewändern darzustellen, die man anzuziehen habe ([Col. iii. 12 ff.](#)). Grund and Veranlassung für solche Umwandlung ist Christus, der Geist, den Christus vom Vater her sendet, oder der Stand in Christo odes in der Gnade (z.B. [2 Cor. v. 17](#); [Gal. v. 16, 18, 25](#); [Rom. v. 2](#)) Und ganz ebenso ist nach [Gen. i. 26](#) Grund für die Gleichheit mit Gott der Stand im Bilde Gottes.”²

2 “God ordered it so that immediately, from the beginning, man came to stand under the influence of that which is good, and consequently did that which is good. He created him in the image of God, after His likeness. The significance of this is made clear when we consider the restoration of fallen man (according to [Ephes. iv. 24](#); [Col. iii. 9](#)). Paul, speaking of the new man that we must put on, after having put off the old man, has reference to the original state. And now he describes this new man as one that is created after God in righteousness and holiness, as he truly is. These apostolic expressions contain a description of the same equipment that Moses characterizes with the words: In the image of God, after, His likeness. Regeneration is a new creation, which, however, is ordered after the model of the old, without taking anything from, or adding anything to it. *Hence man’s standing in the image of God, wherein he was after the likeness of God, is something that can be taken away from man without removing God’s creature itself.* Furthermore, the apostle describes the movements of the new man under the image of various, garments which must be put on ([Col. iii. 12 ff.](#)). The ground and occasion of such being clothed upon is Christ, the Spirit whom Christ sends from the Father; or the standing in Christ, or in grace (e.g. [2 Cor. v. 17](#); [Gal. v. 16, 18, 25](#); [Rom. v. 2](#)). And in just the same way is the ground, for likeness with God, the standing in the image of God, according to [Gen. i. 26](#).”

The words in italics dispel, alas! all doubt. It is possible to conceive of the image of God as having completely disappeared, and yet man remaining man.

Dr. Böhl repeats this, clearly in the following words (p. 29):

"Wenn wir nun die Creatur aus jenem Stande hinausgetreten denken, so bleibt diese Creatur *intact*."³

This goes so far that Dr. Böhl himself felt how closely he thus returned to the boundaries of Rome, for which reason he continues, saying:

"Nur freilich, dass diese Creatur nicht, wie die romische Kirche lehrt, immer noch genug übrig behält, um sich wieder mit Hilfe des Gnadengeschenkes Christi selbst zu rehabilitiren. Sondern nach dem Falle ist der Mensch and zwar sein Ich mit den dem Menschen anerschaffenen höchsten Gaben (siehe Calvin, 'Inst.,' ii., 1, 9) aus der rechten Stellung herausgetreten und dem Tode als Herscher, dem Gesetz als unbarmherziger Treibert preisgegeben."⁴

But stronger still: Dr. Böhl is so firmly attached to this presentation that he says even of Christ, that He, before His Resurrection, lacked the divine image. See page 45: "*Our Lord and Savior stood outside the image of God.*" "Ausserhalb des Bildes Gottes stand unser Herr." Which is all the more serious since in consequence of this presentation, the passions and desires toward the sinful are, considered by themselves, sinless, just as Rome teaches it.

So we read on page 73:

"Das der Mensch Begierden hat, dass ihn Leidenschaften (pi alpha w/ tonos theta eta) treiben, wie Zorn, Furcht, Muth, Eifersucht, Freude, Liebe, Hass, Sehnsucht, Mitleid, dies Alles constituirt noch keine Sünde, denn das Vermögen, um Zorn, Unlust, oder Mitleid and dergl. m. zu empfinden, ist von Gott geschaffen. Ohne dem wäre kein Leben und keine Bewegung im Menschen. Also die *Begierde* and überhaupt die Leidenschaften sind an sich nicht Sünde. Sie werden es und sind es im actuellen Zustand des Menschen, weil durch ein dazwischentretendes Gebot and durch jene verkehrte Lebensrichtung, die Paulus einen *νόμος της αμαρτίας* nennt, das menschliche Ich bewogen wird, zu den Leidenschaften und Begierden Stellung zu nehmen, d. h. sich richtig oder unrichtig zu ihnen zu verhalten."⁵

3 "If we now think of the creature to have left this standing, yet this creature remains intact."

4 † "With this understanding, however, that the creature has not retained enough strength, with the help of the gracious gift of Christ, to restore himself, as Rome teaches. But after the fall, man's *ego*, with the highest gifts received in his creation, has left his true standing and is delivered to Death as his ruler, and to the Law as his unmerciful driver."

5 "The fact that man has desires, that he is led by passions, such as anger, fear, courage, jealousy, joy, love, hate, longing, pity; all this does not constitute sin; for the power to experience anger, displeasure, or pity, and the like passions, is created of God. Without these there would be no life nor stir in man. Hence *desires* and passions in general are no sin in themselves. They become and are sin in man's present condition, because, by

Let each judge for himself whether we said too much when we spoke of the necessity of protesting, in the name of our Reformed Confession, against the creeping in of this Platonic presentation, which later on was defended partly by the Romish, partly by the Lutheran theologians.

Dr. Böhl is excellent when he shows that the original righteousness was not simply a germ, which had still to be developed, but that Adam's righteousness was complete, lacking nothing. Equally excellent is his proof against Rome, showing that man, in his naked nature, absolutely lacks the power to holiness. But he errs in representing the image of God as something without which man remains man. This places righteousness and holiness mechanically outside of us, while the organic connection between that image and our own being, which once existed and ought to exist, is the very thing that must be maintained.

And yet, let it not be thought that Dr. Böhl has any inclination toward Rome. If we see aright, his deviation, psychologically explained, springs from an entirely different motive.

It is a well-known fact that Dr. Köhlbrugge has contended, with a glorious ardor of faith, against the reestablishing of the Covenant of Works in the midst of the Covenant of Grace: and has reintroduced us with stress and emphasis to the completely finished work of our Savior, to which nothing can be added. Hence this preacher of righteousness was compelled to make the child of God remember *what he was outside of Christ*. Of course, outside of Christ, there is no difference between a child of God and a godless person. Then all lie in one heap; as the ritual of the Lord's Supper so beautifully confesses: "That we seek our life out of ourselves, in Jesus Christ, and thereby acknowledge that we lie in the midst of death"; as also the Heidelberg Catechism confesses: "That I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and kept none of them, and am still inclined to all evil."

If we see aright, Dr. Böhl has tried to reduce this part of the truth to a dogmatic system. He has reasoned it out as follows: "If a child of God has his life outside of himself, then Adam, who was a child of God, must also have had his life outside of himself. Hence the image of God was not in, but outside of, man."

And what is the mistake of this reasoning? This, that the child of God remains a *sinner* until his death, and is only fully restored after his death. Then only complete redemption is his. While in Adam, before his fall, there was no sin; hence Adam could never say that in himself he lay in the midst of death.

With all the earnestness of our hearts we beseech all those who with us possess the treasure of Dr. Köhlbrugge's preaching carefully to notice this deviation. If the younger Kohlbruggians should be tempted to misunderstand their teacher in this respect, the loss

an intervening law, and by that perverted tendency of life which Paul calls a law of sin, the human Ego is compelled to determine its relation to the passions and desires, *i.e.*, to adopt a good or bad attitude toward them."

would be incalculable, and the breach in the Reformed Confession would be lasting; since it touches a point which affects the whole confession of the truth.

VIII.

After the Scripture.

“In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God created He him.”—*Gen. v. 1.*

238

In the preceding pages we have shown that the translation, “*in* Our image,” actually means, “*after* Our image.” To make anything *in* an image is no language; it is unthinkable, logically untrue. We now proceed to show how it should be translated, and give our reason for it.

We begin with citing some passages from the Old Testament in which occurs the preposition “B” which, in *Gen. i. 27*, stands before image, where it can not be translated “in,” but requires a preposition of comparison such as “like” or “after.”

Isa. xlviii. 10 reads: “Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” Here the preposition “B” stands before silver, as in *Gen. i. 27* before image. It is obvious that it can not be translated “in silver,” but “as silver.” Surely the Lord would not cast the Jews in a pot of melted silver. The preposition is one of comparison; as in *1 Peter i. 17* the refining of Israel is compared to that of a noble metal. It may be translated: “I have refined thee, but not according to the nature of silver”, or simply: “as silver.”

Psalm cii. reads: “My days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.” In the Hebrew the same preposition “B” occurs before smoke, and almost all exegetes translate it, “as smoke.”

Again, *Psalm xxxv. 2* reads: “Take hold of shield and buckler and stand up for mine help.” “Stand up *in* my help” makes no sense. The thought allows no other translation than this: “Stand up so that Thou be my help;” or, “Stand up *as* my help”; or, as the Authorized Version has it: “Stand up *for* my help.”

We find the same result in *Lev. xvii. 11* : “The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Here the same preposition “B” occurs. In the Hebrew it reads: “Banefesh” (Heb. Shin dot Pe segol Nun segol Bet patah dagesh), which was translated “*for* the soul.” It would be absurd to render it: “*in* the soul”; for the blood does not come *in* the soul, nor does the atonement take place in the soul, but on the altar. Here we have also a comparison (substitution). The blood is *as* the soul, *represents* the soul in the atonement, takes the place of the soul.

239

We notice the same in *Prov. iii. 26*, where the wisdom of Solomon wrote: “The Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.” The same preposition occurs here. The Hebrew text reads “Bkisleka” (Heb. Dalet hataf qamats Lamed segol Samekh sheva Kaf hiriq Bet dagesh sheva), literally, “for ‘a’ loin to thee.” And because the loins are a man’s strength, it is used metaphorically to indicate the ground of confidence and hope