

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### The Just Shall Live By Faith

"But the just shall live by faith."

—Hab. 2:4b.

The just shall live!

That just man shall live now and for evermore.

He shall live by faith!

That is the ever-reassuring answer of all the Holy Scriptures to a constantly recurring question.

We may eagerly ask: Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? Or who will stand in His holy place?

The answer is given: The just.

We may desperately cry out, What must I do to be saved? The only possible answer can be, Believe, for the just has life through faith.

Or we may anxiously inquire, Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? And again the reassuring word is: The just shall live, even by faith.



The just shall *live*!

It is the promise of the living God that resounds throughout the realm of the dead.

Our present existence in the flesh is actually nothing more than a continual death. Conscious of the fact that he dwelt in a body of death the apostle Paul cried out, "I die every day."

This death is not so strange to us, for actually we know no other condition. We cannot even form a clear mental picture of a world where sin and death do not reign.

Ever since our first parents transgressed the commandment of God by eating of the forbidden tree in paradise the sentence of death was executed upon a fallen human race.

One generation after another enters into a world where death has long held its sway. Each one moves within the narrow compass of death, never to shake off its bondage. As soon as a babe is born the mother wonders whether it is too warm or too cold, whether it eats too little or too much. As the child grows she consistently warns it against thousands of dangers that actually lurk everywhere. She is worried about devastating germs, anxious about ravaging diseases, troubled about every kind of accident that could possibly happen.

And this never changes. A slight pain raises forebodings of a sickbed, fears of a dread operation, the grim picture of a newly dug grave. For we spend our days as a tale that is told. Scripture quite correctly speaks of the fear of death that holds us in bondage all our lives.

Yet this is after all, but a small aspect of the power of death that holds us in bondage. For we are conceived and born in sin, even as children of wrath. The curse of God is upon us wherever we turn. This is not a mere threat that might some day be carried out in the hereafter, in an eternal hell. Then we might cherish the thought that we could still evade it.

But this curse is upon us even now. For the soul that sins must die. God gives the sinner over to his sin, so that one sin only leads to another, ever enmeshing us deeper in a net from which there is no escape. He who sins is a slave to sin, according to the righteous judgment of the living God. No sin has ever passed unnoticed before the all-seeing eyes of the Judge of heaven and earth.

Thus we all are swept into wickedness and sin, greed and warfare, hatred and destruction, until the measure of sin is full upon the earth.

In the meantime floods and famines, earthquakes and every sort of disaster, unrest and confusion reign upon the earth, as God visits the world in His anger.

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven! And

what is true of mankind in general is equally true of each one individually. The author of Psalm ninety expresses our sentiments perfectly when he cries,

"In Thy wrath our spirits languish,  
Sinful 'neath Thy searching eye;  
All our days are passed in anguish,  
In Thy wrath we pine and die."

Into that hopelessly dark night of sin and death there shines but a single ray of hope and deliverance. That single shaft of light, gloriously shining down from heaven and penetrating into our bitter darkness is the glad tidings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, proclaiming: The just *shall live*.

Even as at the very dawn of creation the heavens were made by the word of the Lord, and all their hosts by the breath of His mouth, so also the voice of the Lord is mighty to recreate, bringing forth life in the midst of death.

Out of a fallen human race God gathers to Himself a people ordained from before the foundations of the world unto life eternal. Just as God once sent His word over this present creation, saying, "Let there be light," and there was light, so He also calls the dead sinner out of the dominion of death unto His light of life.

Just as the Saviour once stood at the grave of Lazarus, saying, "Lazarus, come forth," so also He causes the dead to hear the voice of the Son of man, and they that hear shall live.

They are new creatures, born of the Spirit. They have the new, heavenly life, even the life of the resurrected Christ within them. That life never perishes. At death they lay off this mortal body, and their spirit goes to be with Christ. For we know that at the very moment that this earthly house of our tabernacle collapses, we have a house with God, eternal in the heavens.

And at the end of time, when Christ appears with the clouds, our bodies will be raised from the dust of the grave in a likeness of His resurrection body. We shall be with Him in eternal perfection.

The just shall live, now and unto all eternity.

Our human language fails us when we try to describe the fulness of the blessedness of that life. We know that it consists of peace with God in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Even more, we have joy unspeakable and full of glory. For blessed is that people whose God is Jehovah. Who is like unto that God, and who can compare with that people?

Yea, we have fellowship with God in Christ. God assures us, "I am thy God," so that we respond from the heart, "O my God, I am Thine for ever and ever."

This is more than a passing fancy or an appealing hallucination, for the glories we await far exceed our fondest expectations. Now we are sons of God, and we cannot possibly know what we shall be except that God assures us that when it appears, we shall be like Him, as sons in His house.

We shall see Him face to face, and tell that story, Saved by grace.

For the just shall live, now and unto endless eternity, saith my God!



The *just* man shall live.

The question is a pertinent one: Who can ascend the mount of the Lord? And who can stand in His presence without terror or condemnation?

Who? The promise is not a mere offer or invitation promiscuously extended to all, and thus dependent on our acceptance. The assurance cannot be claimed by just anyone.

Even the prophet Isaiah makes distinction between the just and the unjust, declaring, "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him, for he shall eat of the fruit of his doing. Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him."

And the book of Revelation speaks of the judgment upon the unjust who shall be unjust still, and the filthy who shall be filthy still, saying, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they shall have no rest day or night."

The promise is very personal. The Just. That man shall live.

The just man is the one who is perfectly righteous according to the verdict of the holy and righteous Judge of heaven and earth. The Lord Himself is the eternal Judge. He sits upon His judgment seat and judges every man according to the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil. Every act committed, every word spoken, every thought that flashes through the mind, and every impulse that arises within us are known perfectly to Him, and are judged accordingly. His verdict falls in strictest justice upon every man that spends his days upon the earth.

In that great day when the Son of man appears with the clouds of heaven, every rational creature will appear in judgment to carry away an eternal verdict, according to the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil.

But let no man deceive you, for God also judges the sons of men even now, every moment of our lives on the earth. He declares guilty or not guilty, just or unjust. He makes the guilty inexpressibly miserable by giving them over to the vanity of their sins. He declares the just free from sin and guilt, spotlessly righteous in His sight, and assures them of their right to eternal life before His face.

To the just He gives life.

But that only accentuates the question: Who is that just man? Who is he that keeps God's law perfectly? Who can wash his hands in innocence? Who is free from sin and guilt, worthy of the eternal blessedness of God's inheritance in the heavens?

Is it the man who presents a handful of his own "good works" or boasts of his merit?

True enough, God's law declares that man blessed who keeps the commandments. The law says, "The man that doeth these things shall live by them."

But we also know that God's law is more than a mere code of precepts governing our outward walk of life. It is not satisfied with a mere external show of obedience, particularly to the second table of the law.

The rich young ruler confessed that he had kept these things scrupulously since his youth, but he still was burdened with the question: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

For God's law demands love. It requires: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. It insists: Thou shalt do so in thy actions, words, thoughts, and very impulses of thy heart perfectly.

That man shall live that does these things.

But who is fit? Well may we ask: Who, then, can be saved? For we find in ourselves the very opposite. We do not discover that we love God a little, at certain given times, even though we fail to love Him in the measure that He requires.

No, we hate. We hate God, and we manifest that hatred over against the neighbour. Even our pretense of loving God and our neighbour is still only pure selfishness and therefore nothing short of hatred. The inclinations of our hearts are only evil continuously. As the Scriptures testify against us, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one."

And God's law is inexorable, rigorous, severe. It insists: Do this! And just as emphatically it adds, "Accursed is every one that does not abide in all that is written in the book of the law to do it." The soul that sins must die. Surely, before that holy law no man is justified!

Who, then, is the just man that shall live?

In the final analysis there is none, save one, our Lord Jesus Christ. He came into our flesh and entered under our law. To every demand of the law He gave a satisfactory answer. He loved the Lord

with His whole being, even while He was cast into amazing torments of hell.

He is our only righteousness! For He laid down His life for His sheep.

He atoned for our sins and merited for us eternal life. Thus God raised Him up, even exalting Him to the highest heavens. From heaven He calls His own unto Himself. He draws them unto Him. For He causes them to labor under the burden of their oppressive guilt.

And He calls them, saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Thus we experience the power of the Gospel that proclaims to us: The just shall live!



But he shall live only *by faith*.

That is the answer to the age old question: What must I do to be saved? There is only one answer: Believe! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for there is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved.

Believe, for it is the only possible way of salvation.

By grace are ye saved through faith.

Yes, it is as simple as that. Simply believe!

All our works avail us nothing. But neither is that necessary, for in Christ is all our Righteousness. Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling.

Yet that way of faith is the most difficult way. Nay, it is the humanly impossible way. For no man can believe. No man will believe.

Faith is not of us. It is the gift of God, wrought by the Gospel.

It is the wonder of grace whereby the blinded eye is made to see, the deaf ear is made to hear, and the stubborn will is broken to humble submission. In awed amazement we discover that this is the one thing that we can do. We cry out: Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief.

For by grace are ye saved through faith. And that faith is not of you, it is God's gift. It fills us with love to God, submission to His law. It arouses in us the consciousness of guilt and condemnation. It leads us to the cross, where we realize,

"There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;  
And sinners washed beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains."

How wondrous are the ways of God, unfathomed and unknown.

For the just shall live, even by faith!

C. Hanko.

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As is customary *The Standard Bearer* will not appear on the 15th of July.

## EDITORIALS

### An Important Decision

The following was adopted by our last Synod:

#### A BRIEF DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCHES

The Protestant Reformed Churches stand on the basis of Scripture as the infallible Word of God and of the Three Forms of Unity. Moreover, they accept the Liturgical Forms used in the public worship of our churches, such as the Baptism Form, *et alii*, as confessions of a minor order.

On the basis of this Word of God and these confessions:

I. They repudiate the errors of the Three Points adopted by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, 1924, which maintain:

A. That there is a grace of God to all men, including the reprobate, manifest in the common gifts to all men.

B. That the promise of the gospel is a gracious offer of salvation on the part of God to all that externally hear the gospel.

C. That the natural man through the influence of common grace can do good in this world.

D. Over against this they maintain:

1. That the grace of God is always particular, i.e., only for the elect, never for the reprobate.

2. That the promise of the gospel is not a gracious offer of salvation on the part of God to all men, nor a conditional offer to all that are born in the historical dispensation of the covenant, that is, to all that are baptized, but an oath of God that He will infallibly lead all the elect unto salvation and eternal glory through faith.

3. That the unregenerate man is totally incapable of doing any good, wholly depraved, and therefore can only sin.

II. They teach on the basis of the same confessions:

A. That election, which is the unconditional and unchangeable decree of God to redeem in Christ a certain number of persons, is the sole cause and fountain of all our salvation, whence flow all the gifts of grace, including faith. This is the plain teaching of our confession in the Canons of Dordrecht, I, A, 6, 7.

"Article 6. That some receive the gift of faith from God, and others do not receive it, proceeds from

God's eternal decree, 'For known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world,' Acts 15:18. 'Who worketh all things after the counsel of his will,' Eph. 1:11. According to which decree, he graciously softens the hearts of the elect, however obstinate, and inclines them to believe, while he leaves the non-elect in his just judgment to their own wickedness and obduracy. And herein is especially displayed the profound, the merciful, and at the same time the righteous discrimination between men, equally involved in ruin; or that decree of election and reprobation, revealed in the Word of God, which though men of perverse, impure and unstable minds wrest to their own destruction, yet to holy and pious souls affords unspeakable consolation."

"Article 7. Election is the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, he hath out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his own will, chosen, from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault, from their primitive state of rectitude, into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, whom he from eternity appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect, and the foundation of salvation."

"This elect number, though by nature neither better nor more deserving than others, but with them involved in the common misery, God hath decreed to give to Christ, to be saved by him, and effectually to call and draw them to his communion by his Word and Spirit, to bestow upon them true faith, justification and sanctification; and having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of his Son, finally, to glorify them for the demonstration of his mercy, and for the praise of his glorious grace; as it is written: 'According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.' Eph. 1:4, 5, 6. And elsewhere: 'Whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified.' Rom. 8:30."

And in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day XXI, Qu. and Ans. 54, we read:

"What believest thou concerning the holy catholic church of Christ?

"That the Son of God from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to himself by his Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith; and that I am and for ever shall remain, a living member thereof."

This is also evident from the doctrinal part of the

Form for the Administration of Baptism, where we read:

"For when we are baptized in the name of the Father, God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us, that he doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for his children and heirs, and therefore will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil or turn it to our profit. And when we are baptized in the name of the Son, the Son sealeth unto us, that he doth wash us in his blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of his death and resurrection, so that we are freed from all our sins, and accounted righteous before God. In like manner, when we are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost assures us, by this holy sacrament, that he will dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ, applying unto us that which we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins, and the daily renewing of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal."

B. That Christ died only for the elect and that the saving efficacy of the death of Christ extends to them only. This is evident from the Canons of Dordrecht, II, A, 8:

"For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of his Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation: that is, it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby he confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to him by the Father; that he should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, he purchased for them by his death; should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing; and having faithfully preserved them even to the end, should at last bring them free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in his own presence forever."

This article very clearly teaches:

1. That all the covenant blessings are for the elect alone.
2. That God's promise is unconditionally for them only: for God cannot promise what was not objectively merited by Christ.
3. That the promise of God bestows the objective right of salvation not upon all the children that are born under the historical dispensation of the covenant, that is, not upon all that are baptized, but only upon the spiritual seed.



This is also evident from other parts of our confession, as, for instance:

Heidelberg Catechism, Qu. 65: "Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, whence doth this faith proceed? From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments."

And in Qu. 66: "What are the sacraments? The sacraments are holy visible signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof, he may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel, viz., that he grants us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross."

If we compare with these statements from the Heidelberger what was taught concerning the saving efficacy of the death of Christ in Canons, II, A, 8, it is evident that the promise of the gospel which is sealed by the sacraments concerns only the believers, that is, the elect.

This is also evident from Heidelberg Catechism, Qu. 74: "Are infants also to be baptized? Yes: for since they, as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God; and since redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult; they must therefore by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, be also admitted into the christian church; and be distinguished from the children of unbelievers as was done in the old covenant or testament by circumcision, instead of which baptism is instituted in the new covenant."

That in this question and answer of the Heidelberger not all the children that are baptized, but only the spiritual children, that is, the elect, are meant is evident. For:

1. Little infants surely cannot fulfill any conditions. And if the promise of God is for them, the promise is infallible and unconditional, and therefore only for the elect.
2. According to Canons II, A, 8, which we quoted above, the saving efficacy of the death of Christ is for the elect alone.
3. According to this answer of the Heidelberg Catechism, the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to the little children no less than to the adult. And God surely fulfills His promise. Hence, that promise is surely only for the elect.

The same is taught in the Netherland Confession, Articles 33-35. In Article 33 we read:

"We believe, that our gracious God, on account of our weakness and infirmities hath ordained the sacraments for us, thereby to seal unto us his promises, and also to be pledges of the good will and grace of

God toward us, and also to nourish and strengthen our faith; which he hath joined to the Word of the gospel, the better to present to our senses, both that which he signifies to us by his Word, and that which he inwardly works in our hearts, thereby assuring and confirming in us the salvation which he imparts to us. For they are visible signs and seals of an inward and invisible thing, by means whereof God worketh in us by the power of the Holy Ghost. Therefore the signs are not in vain or insignificant, so as to deceive us. For Jesus Christ is the true object presented by them, without whom they would be of no moment."

And from Article 34, which speaks of Holy Baptism, we quote: "We believe and confess that Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law, hath made an end, by the shedding of his blood, of all other sheddings of blood which men could or would make as a propitiation or satisfaction for sin: and that he, having abolished circumcision, which was done with blood, hath instituted the sacrament of baptism instead thereof; by which we are received into the Church of God, and separated from all other people and strange religions, that we may wholly belong to him, whose ensign and banner we bear; and which serves as a testimony to us that he will forever be our gracious God and Father. Therefore he has commanded all those, who are his, to be baptized with pure water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; thereby signifying to us, that as water washeth away the filth of the body, when poured upon it, and is seen on the body of the baptized, when sprinkled upon him; so doth the blood of Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, internally sprinkle the soul, cleanse it from its sins, and regenerate us from children of wrath, unto children of God. Not that this is effected by the external water, but by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God; who is our Red Sea, through which we must pass, to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, that is, the devil, and to enter into the spiritual land of Canaan. Therefore the ministers, on their part, administer the sacrament, and that which is visible, but out Lord giveth that which is signified by the sacrament, namely, the gifts and invisible grace; washing, cleansing and purging our souls of all filth and unrighteousness; renewing our hearts, and filling them with all comfort; giving unto us a true assurance of his fatherly goodness; putting on us the new man, and putting off the old man with all his deeds."

That all this, washing and cleansing and purging our souls of all filth and unrighteousness, the renewal of our hearts, is only the fruit of the saving efficacy of the death of Christ and therefore is only for the elect is very evident. The same is true of what we read in the same article concerning the baptism of infants: "And indeed Christ shed his blood no less for the washing of the children of the faithful, than for the adult

persons; and therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of that, which Christ hath done for them; as the Lord commanded in the law, that they should be made partakers of the sacrament of Christ's suffering and death, shortly after they were born, by offering for them a lamb, which was a sacrament of Jesus Christ. Moreover, what circumcision was to the Jews, that baptism is to our children. And for this reason Paul calls baptism the circumcision of Christ." If, according to Article 8 of the Second Head of Doctrine, A, in the Canons, the saving efficacy of the death of Christ extends only to the elect, it follows that when in this article of the Netherland Confession it is stated that "Christ shed his blood no less for the washing of the children of the faithful than for the adult persons," also here the reference is only to the elect children.

Moreover, that the promise of the gospel which God signifies and seals in the sacraments is not for all is also abundantly evident from Article 35 of the same Netherland Confession, which speaks of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ. For there we read: "We believe and confess, that our Saviour Jesus Christ did ordain and institute the sacrament of the holy supper, to nourish and support those whom he hath already regenerated, and incorporated into his family, which is his Church."

In the same article we read: "Further, though the sacraments are connected with the thing signified, nevertheless both are not received by all men: the ungodly indeed receives the sacrament to his condemnation, but he doth not receive the truth of the sacrament. As Judas, and Simon the sorcerer, both indeed received the sacrament, but not Christ, who was signified by it, of whom believers only are made partakers.

It follows from this that both the sacraments, as well as the preaching of the gospel, are a savour of death unto death for the reprobate, as well as a savour of life unto life for the elect. Hence, the promise of God, preached by the gospel, signified and sealed in both the sacraments, is not for all, but for the elect only.

And that the election of God, and consequently the efficacy of the death of Christ and the promise of the gospel, is not conditional is evident abundantly from the following articles of the Canons.

Canons I, A, 10: "The good pleasure of God is the sole cause of this gracious election; which doth not consist herein, that out of all possible qualities and actions of men God has chosen some as a condition of salvation; but that he was pleased out of the common mass of sinners to adopt some certain persons as a peculiar people to himself, as it is written, 'For the children being not yet born neither having done any good or evil', etc., it was said (namely to Rebecca); 'the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written,

Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.' Rom. 9:11, 12, 13. 'And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' Acts 13:48.

In Canons I, B, 2, the errors are repudiated of those who teach: "That there are various kinds of election of God unto eternal life: the one general and indefinite, the other particular and definite; and that the latter in turn is either incomplete, revocable, non-decisive and conditional, or complete, irrevocable, decisive and absolute."

And in the same chapter of the Canons, B, 3, the errors are repudiated of those who teach: "That the good pleasure and purpose of God, of which Scripture makes mention in the doctrine of election, does not consist in this, that God chose certain persons rather than others, but in this that he chose out of all possible conditions (among which are also the works of the law), or out of the whole order of things, the act of faith which from its very nature is undeserving, as well as its incomplete obedience, as a condition of salvation, and that he would graciously consider this in itself as a complete obedience and count it worthy of the reward of eternal life."

Again, in the same chapter of the Canons, B, 5, the errors are rejected of those who teach that "faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, godliness and perseverance are not fruits of the unchangeable election unto glory, but are conditions, which, being required beforehand, were foreseen as being met by those who will be fully elected, and are causes without which the unchangeable election to glory does not occur."

Finally, we refer to the statement of the Baptism Form: "And although our young children do not understand these things, we may not therefore exclude them from baptism, for as they are without their knowledge, partakers of the condemnation in Adam, so are they again received unto grace in Christ." That here none other than the elect children of the covenant are meant and that they are unconditionally, without their knowledge, received unto grace in Christ, in the same way as they are under the condemnation of Adam, is very evident.

C. That faith is not a prerequisite or condition unto salvation, but a gift of God, and a God-given instrument whereby we appropriate the salvation in Christ. This is plainly taught in the following parts of our confessions.

Heidelberg Catechism, Qu. 20: "Are all men then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ? No; only those who are ingrafted into him, and receive all his benefits, by a true faith."

Netherland Confession, Art. 22: "We believe that, to attain the true knowledge of this great mystery, the Holy Ghost kindleth in our hearts an upright faith, which embraces Jesus Christ, with all his merits, ap-

propriates him, and seeks nothing more besides him. For it must needs follow, either that all things, which are requisite to our salvation, are not in Jesus Christ, or if all things are in him, that then those who possess Jesus Christ through faith, have complete salvation in him. Therefore, for any to assert, that Christ is not sufficient, but that something more is required besides him, would be too gross a blasphemy: for hence it would follow, that Christ was but half a Saviour. Therefore we justly say with Paul, that we are justified by faith alone, or by faith without works. However, to speak more clearly, we do not mean, that faith itself justifies us, for it is only an instrument with which we embrace Christ our Righteousness. But Jesus Christ, imputing to us all his merits, and so many holy works which he has done for us and in our stead, is our Righteousness. And faith is an instrument that keeps us in communion with him in all his benefits, which, when become ours, are more than sufficient to acquit us of our sins."

Confer also Netherland Confession, Articles 33-35, quoted above.

Again, confer Canons of Dordrecht II, A, 8, quoted above.

In Canons III and IV, A, 10, we read: "But that others who are called by the gospel, obey the call, and are converted, is not to be ascribed to the proper exercise of free will, whereby one distinguishes himself above others, equally furnished with grace sufficient for faith and conversions, as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains; but it must be wholly ascribed to God, who as he has chosen his own from eternity in Christ, so he confers upon them faith and repentance, rescues them from the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of his own Son, that they may show forth the praises of him, who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light; and may glory not in themselves, but in the Lord according to the testimony of the apostles in various places."

Again, in the same chapter of the Canons, Article 14, we read: "Faith is therefore to be considered as the gift of God, not on account of its being offered by God to man, to be accepted or rejected at his pleasure; but because it is in reality conferred, breathed, and infused into him; or even because God bestows the power or ability to believe, and then expects that man should by the exercise of his own free will, consent to the terms of salvation, and actually believe in Christ; but because he who works in man both to will and to do, and indeed all things in all, produces both the will to believe, and the act of believing also."

III. Seeing then that this is the clear teaching of our confession,

A. We repudiate:

1. The teaching:

- a. That the promise of the covenant is conditional and for all that are baptized.
- b. That we may presuppose that all the children that are baptized are regenerated, for we know on the basis of Scripture, as well as in the light of all history and experience, that the contrary is true.
2. The teaching that the promise of the covenant is an objective bequest on the part of God giving to every baptized child the right to Christ and all the blessings of salvation.

B. And we maintain:

1. That God surely and infallibly fulfills His promise to the elect.
2. That when He so fulfills His promise and establishes His covenant, the elect are not mere stocks and blocks, but obliged and willing to fulfill their part of the covenant, to love the Lord their God with all their heart and mind and soul and strength, to forsake the world, to crucify their old nature, and to walk in a new and holy life.
3. That the ground of infant baptism is the command of God and the fact that according to Scripture He establishes His covenant in the line of continued generations.

IV. Besides, the Protestant Reformed Churches:

A. Cannot condone the action of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands whereby:

1. They imposed certain doctrinal decisions upon the churches synodically, making these decisions binding upon the churches before they had the right to protest.
2. And whereby they deposed many local office-bearers.

B. And they believe and maintain the autonomy of the local church.

\* \* \*

If Synod adopts the above proposition, we advise:

1. That Synod subject this entire document to the approval of the churches.
2. If no objection is offered, to adopt this at our next Synod.
3. To adopt this in the meantime as a working hypothesis for our mission committee and for our missionaries in the organization of churches.

Respectfully submitted,

Your Committee:

Rev. R. Veldman

Rev. G. Vos.

Elders: J. Doctor, and

Wm. Huiskens.

Advisors: Prof. H. Hoeksema

Prof. G. M. Ophoff.



## THE TRIPLE KNOWLEDGE

### An Exposition Of The Heidelberg Catechism

#### PART TWO

#### Of Man's Redemption

#### LORD'S DAY XXIX.

#### Chapter I.

#### The Fearful Error Of The Romanists.

Again, in Canon VI we read: "If anyone saith, that, in the holy sacrament of the eucharist, Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is not to be adored with the worship, even external of latreia; and is, consequently, neither to be venerated with a special festive solemnity, nor to be solemnly borne about in procession, according to the laudable and universal rite and custom of holy church; or, is not to be proposed publicly to the people to be adored, and that the adorers thereof are idolaters: let him be anathema."

It is a well-known fact that the laity do not partake of the communion wine, but only of the wafer. It admits, of course, that this usage is contrary to Holy Writ, as well as to the custom of the early church. But it claims that it is not necessary to partake of the wine on the ground, in the first place, that the blood is in the body; and secondly, seeing that the whole Christ, as to His body, soul, and divinity, is in every particle of both species, he who eats the consecrated bread eats the whole Christ. But this absurd and wanton violation of the ordinance of Christ is really the result of the doctrine of transubstantiation itself. According to this theory the cup after consecration does not contain wine, but the real blood of Christ. And it was feared that in passing the communion cup a drop of wine, that is, therefore, a drop of the blood of Christ, would be spilled. In order to avoid this profanation, it was decided that the priests alone should drink the wine, while the laity received only the wafer. Thus the simple and beautiful institution of the supper of the Lord was corrupted and profaned.

Naturally this corruption did not enter into the church all at once, but gradually developed. Even some of the earlier church fathers already began to speak of the signs in the Lord's Supper as being connected with the body and blood of Christ. Augustine did not teach anything like the doctrine of transubstantiation. He held that the unbelievers received nothing through this sacrament. But in the Middle Ages the awful lie of transubstantiation was gradually adopted, although even then some opposed this doc-

trine. The scholastics, whose purpose always was to maintain the tradition of the church, defended it. The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 adopted it; and as we have already shown, the Council of Trent in the 16th century finally set its seal upon it and called them accursed that denied it.

Of course, the Romanists, although they do not value proof from Scripture as highly as did the reformers, nevertheless try to find support for this theory of transubstantiation in Holy Writ. They point especially to John 6:48-65, where the Lord speaks of Himself as the bread of life, the living bread, whereof if any man eat, he shall live forever. And of that living bread the Lord says in verse 51: "And the bread that I give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." And in verse 53: "Then said Jesus unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." And again, in verse 54-56: "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." But in regard to this passage we may remark first of all that certainly there is no direct reference to the institution of the Lord's Supper. And even if there be a very indirect reference to that institution, there certainly is no proof for the doctrine of transubstantiation here. Surely, the Lord in these passages does not speak of a literal eating of His flesh and a literal drinking of His blood. This was exactly the error which the Capernaumites made. For we read in verse 52: "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" And at the end of His discourse at Capernaum the Lord specifically states: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The Lord is therefore speaking of this sacrifice which presently He is to offer on the cross, and which cannot be partaken of except by faith. Moreover, as Hodge remarks, this argument proves too much for the Romanists. Says Hodge: "Our Lord expressly declares that the eating of which He speaks is essential to salvation. If, therefore, His words are to be understood of the Lord's Supper, then a participation in that sacrament is essential to salvation. But this the church of Rome explicitly denies, and must in consistency with its whole system, insist on denying. Romanists teach that spiritual life is as necessary to an experience of the benefits of this sacrament, as natural life is to the body's being nourished by food. They further teach that baptism, which precedes the eucharist, conveys all the saving benefits of Christ's redemption; they therefore cannot make the eucharist essential,

and consequently they cannot, without contradicting Christ or themselves, interpret John 6:48-65 as referring to the Lord's Supper."

Secondly, the Romish Church also appeals to the words of the institution of the Lord's Supper, "This is my body." But, as has been frequently pointed out over against this argument of the Romanists, the copulative verb *is* certainly does not necessarily denote the identity of the subject and the predicate which it connects. In the first place, when the Lord pronounced these words, "This is my body," He was still present in the flesh; and therefore He cannot mean that the bread which at that moment at the institution of the Lord's Supper He hands to His disciples is identified with, or transubstantiated into, His own body. Certain it is that in the night in which He was betrayed, the disciples did not eat the body of the Lord, but mere bread. Besides, the word *is* in Scripture frequently means *signifies*. Of that there are many examples in Holy Writ. In Matthew 13:38 we read: "The field is the world;"—meaning, of course, that in the parable the field signifies the world. Again, in John 10:7 we read: "Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep." And again, in verse 9 of the same chapter: "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." In the same sense when the Lord at the institution of the Lord's Supper pronounces the words, "This is my body," the verb *is* simply means *signifies*, or *symbolizes*. And therefore, there is no reason whatsoever in Holy Writ to interpret these words as indicating a change of substance. The signs certainly are not changed into the body of Christ.

It certainly is a valid objection against this doctrine of transubstantiation that it involves an impossibility. On this Hodge remarks, (*Systematic Theology*, Part III, Chapter 20, page 684): "The impossible cannot be true, and, therefore, cannot, rationally, be an object of faith. It is impossible that the accidents or sensible properties of the bread and wine should remain if the substance be changed. Such a proposition has no more meaning in it than the assertion that an act can be without an agent. Accidents or properties are the phenomena of substance; and it is self-evident that there can be no manifestations where there is not something to be manifested. In other words, nothing, a 'non-ens' cannot manifest itself. Romanists cannot turn to the theory that matter is not a substance; for that is not their doctrine. On the contrary, they assert that the substance of the bread is transmuted into the substance of Christ's body. Nor can they help themselves by resorting to the prophetic doctrine that all accidents are phenomena of God, for that would upset their whole system."

Another, and perhaps more serious, objection to

this doctrine, an objection which is closely connected with the former objection, is that according to it God creates a lie. For we must remember, as was stated above, that according to the Romish Church the accidents or properties of the bread and wine remain even after the consecration. The bread and the wine still appeal to our senses as bread and wine, and nothing else. They look like bread and wine; they feel like those substances; and they taste like them. Yet, according to the Romanists, after the formula of consecration is expressed by the priest, the substance of bread and wine are transubstantiated into the substance of the body and blood of Christ. Hence, it is evident that through the priests God is presented as making a lie. Also on this point Dr. Hodge says in the same connection as above: "It is moreover impossible that the well-attested testimony of our senses should be deceptive. If it once be assumed that we cannot trust to the laws of belief impressed on our nature, of which faith in our sense perceptions is one of the most important, then the foundation of all knowledge, faith, and religion is overturned. What has Catholicism to say for itself, if the people cannot trust their ears when they hear the teachings of the church, or their eyes when they read its decrees? It has nothing to stand upon. It is engulfed with all things else in the abyss of nihilism. To believe in transubstantiation we must disbelieve in Him who is the author of our nature and of the laws that are impressed upon it. There is no more and destructive infidelity than the want of faith in the veracity of consciousness, whether it be the consciousness of our sense perceptions, or of the truths involved in our rational, moral, or religious nature."

But after all, the most serious objection to this doctrine of transubstantiation is perhaps that it presents the grace of God as being in things. According to this doctrine the gracious operation of God through the signs and seals of the Lord's Supper is not upon the heart of believers, but is upon the signs themselves. The signs are changed: the bread is changed into the body of Christ, and the wine into His blood. Christ, therefore, operates magically upon the signs, and they are placed within my physical reach. Grace is in things. And by a physical act of taking and eating and drinking I receive the grace of Christ. I can lay hold upon grace as it is presented in the bread and wine with my physical hands, I can taste it with my mouth, I can chew it with my teeth, I can digest grace in my stomach. As one of the defenders of this doctrine expressed it in the eleventh century: "The very body of Christ was truly held in the priest's hand, broken and chewed by the teeth of the faithful." Hence, according to the Romish Church it is not necessary in order to partake of the Lord's Supper to possess an active faith, but merely to go to the eucharist

with an empty stomach. This probably is the principal error of the doctrine of transubstantiation.

And because of this principal error our controversy with the Romish Church is still very significant.

We must not foster the notion that our controversy with Rome on this score is antiquated and of no significance. For after all, the chief and fundamental error of the fallacy of transubstantiation is this, that grace, that Christ's righteousness and salvation, are bound up in physical things; and that, too, by an act of the institute of the church. The blessings of salvation are therefore divorced from the operation of the Holy Spirit and from the activity of faith. They are made accessible to all that can physically eat and drink, hear and see, and understand with their natural minds.

Closely related to this Romish fallacy is the new theory of common grace. It also postulates that grace is in things. The reprobate too receive many blessings from God, food and drink, life and health, wives and children, homes and riches, talents and powers. According to the defenders of this theory of common grace, all things *are* grace to the wicked reprobate. And according to them even the preaching of the Word is grace to all that hear. Over against this false theory that grace is in things, we must insist that although men have all things in common, yet there is no grace except through an operation of the Holy Spirit; and that operation is only upon the elect.

H. H.



## The Power Of A New Life

Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

John 5:25.

Christ was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Rom. 4:25. Therefore, the resurrection of Christ from the dead is God's own verdict that all His own are justified in Him. And when we experience, by faith, the power of His resurrection, we are righteous before God with an everlasting and perfect righteousness. And "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:1.

However, this imputed righteousness is not the only gift of grace bestowed upon us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We are also raised with Him unto a new life through that same power. This new life which we have in the risen Lord, and receive through the power of His resurrection, can never be separated from the righteousness we have in Him by faith. The two are always together. It is true, we can distinguish the two. Imputed right-

eousness is first. It is the ground upon which we are worthy of life, just as our sin is the ground of the sentence of death that is against us. If there were no righteousness in Christ, so that we are justified in Him, there would be no life. For we must be judged righteous before we have the right to be delivered from death. The righteousness we have in the risen Lord, therefore, is the basis of the life we have in Him. But this does not mean that one can never have the one without the other. One would never be able to say that he is justified by faith in the risen Lord, while he continued in sin and death. When we are ingrafted into Christ, we do not receive His blessings of grace piecemeal, first one and then the other, but we become partakers of the living Lord, and of all the glorious benefits of salvation there are in Him. Hence, through the power of His resurrection we are also raised from the dead with Him. The resurrection of the Lord is the power unto a new life.

The Word of God frequently speaks of this wonderful change that is wrought in us through the power of the living Lord. It is called resurrection from the dead. The Lord Himself declares in John 5:21, 24, 25: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death into life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." It is evident that our Lord is not speaking here of the resurrection of the last moment, but of the spiritual resurrection that is wrought in us now through the gospel, and by the Spirit of Christ. The mighty call of the gospel is, therefore: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. 5:14. The apostle Paul writes in Rom. 6:3-5: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Again, he writes in Eph. 2:4-6: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved); And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And the believers are admonished: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead,

and your life is hid with Christ in God. Col. 3:1-3.

With Christ we are crucified, with Christ we are raised. His resurrection is the power unto a new life.

This new life we possess only in fellowship with the living Lord. Not for one moment do we have this life in ourselves. We must not conceive of this new life as something that is bestowed upon us only, in the moment of regeneration, and that, henceforth, we possess in ourselves, apart from Christ. On the contrary, it is never we that live, but Christ that lives in us. Just as the branch has no life in itself, but only in organic connection with the vine; so the believer has no life in himself, but only in communion with the living Lord. We live only because He lives. It is He that lives in us. If we were, even for one moment, say that this were possible, which it is not, separated from him, that moment we would sink back into our state of death. In fellowship with Him, we are raised from the dead. By His Spirit and through the Word, it is He that calls: "Awake, thou sleeper, and arise from the dead." He says to us "Live", and we do live. But it is also the same risen Lord that, by His Spirit and through His Word, continues to live in us, and we in Him. And thus He constantly makes us partakers of His resurrection life. Hence, the apostle confesses: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. 2:20. And this is the confession of all that are raised by the power of the risen Lord.

The question may be raised: what kind of life is it that we thus receive, and that we possess in fellowship with the risen Lord? In general, we may answer that it is like unto His own life: it is resurrection life. And this implies three characteristics: first, that it is life from spiritual death, and, therefore, without sin; secondly, that it is life beyond death: death has no dominion over it, it cannot die, it is everlasting; thirdly, that it is life from above: it is not earthy, but heavenly. Let us look at each of these characteristics of our new life in Christ a little more closely.

It is life from spiritual death. By nature we are dead in sin. The image of God in us is changed into reverse. Instead of living in true knowledge of God, we are in darkness; we love the darkness of the lie rather than the light of the truth of God. Instead of being righteous, so that we know and love the will of God, we have become wholly unrighteous, perverse of heart and mind and will, so that we seek and do the will of the flesh, and love the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Instead of being consecrated, with all our heart and mind and soul and strength, to the living God, we are corrupt, defiled with pollution, and with all our heart and de-

sires we turn away from Him who is the sole Good. Such is our death, in which we lie by nature. Through the power of Christ's resurrection, however, we are called out of this death, and raised unto a new life. This new life is life indeed. Its essence is the fellowship of friendship with the living God. It is life eternal. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." The image of God is restored in us. This new life is, therefore, characterized by love of the light, and opposition to darkness; by love of the will of God, and hatred of iniquity; by consecration to the living God in true holiness, and an inner aversion to all that is not of Him and to His glory. In this life, it reveals itself in true sorrow after God, a hearty repentance, and a true delight in God and desire to be pleasing to Him, and to keep all His commandments. The outcry of the publican: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner", is the cry of one that is raised from the dead, that has heard the voice of the Son of God: "Awake, thou sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!"

To be called out of our natural darkness, perversion, corruption, and enmity against God, into that life of light and knowledge, of righteousness and holiness, of most intimate fellowship with the God of our salvation, in which we dwell in His house, and taste that He is good,—that is resurrection from the dead through the power of the living Lord!

It is, secondly, life that is wholly free from the dominion of death. Christ is raised from the dead. Death has no more dominion over Him. The power of death can never reach Him. His life is the life of the Son of God in the glorified human nature. He is, therefore, forever victorious over all death. He is beyond the reach of death's clutches. So they that are in Him, and are partakers of the power of His resurrection, are beyond the reach of all death. In Him they are victorious. In this respect, the life we have in Christ is far more excellent than the life Adam possessed in the state of rectitude. Adam was created a living soul. To be sure, he lived. As long as he stood in righteousness before God, he did not taste of death. But he was not created beyond the reach of death. His life was ammissible. He could fall, and become a victim of death. And so he did. But the life unto which we are raised by the power of the living Lord is everlasting. It is immortal. Death can never reach it. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." John 3:36. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." John 11:25, 26. To be translated out of the darkness of this present death, and mortal life, in which we are beset by death on every side, and pursued by the fear of death in all our

living, into the freedom from the fear of death, that glorious state of immortality, in which the shadow of death can never spread its horrible wings over our existence anymore,—that is resurrection from the dead. And unto this new and victorious life we are raised, even now, by the power of the living Lord.

Finally, the life we have in fellowship with the risen Lord is from above. It is heavenly life. Also in this respect the new life is far more excellent than the life Adam had before the fall, in the first paradise. He was of the earth earthy. He indeed had true life. For he was created after the image of God, in true knowledge of God, righteousness, and holiness. He knew God, and lived in covenant fellowship with Him. But he lived on the earthly plane. He did not have the life of the son of God. He knew God, not face to face, but through the revelation of earthly things. But the life we have in Christ is not of this earth. It is from above, heavenly. For Christ is the Lord from heaven. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, so we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Completely, this will be realized in the final resurrection, when also our bodies shall put off all corruption and mortality, and shall put on incorruption and immortality. But spiritually, we have the beginning of that heavenly life even now in fellowship with the risen Lord. It is that knowledge of God which is obtained, not by looking into a glass darkly, and beholding a mere reflection of God's face, but by seeing Him face to face, and knowing as we are known. To be called into that spiritual likeness of our heavenly Lord, in virtue of which we put off the image of the earthy, and partake of the image of the heavenly,—that is resurrection from the dead. And, in principle, we now partake of that resurrection, through the power of the risen Lord.

And thus, the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord reveals itself as a living hope, that is not satisfied until the final resurrection of the last day is attained. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." I Pet. 1:3.

What is the Christian hope?

It is the spiritual tension of the new life we have in Christ, striving upward, and looking and longing for its perfect realization, while we are still in this world, and in the body of this death. For we have the beginning of a new life in us. Yet, we are still in the old nature, and in that nature, we are carnal and earthy. The new life is holy, and in virtue of it we are new creatures: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new! II Cor. 5:17. The old life is carnal, and by its power the motions of sin are in our members. The new life is victorious: it is free from the fear of death; the old life is under the dominion of death, and death still besets us on every

side. The new life is from above: it is heavenly. But the old life is still in our members, is of the earth earthy. The new life strives upward: it seeks its own level, the level of heavenly things in the resurrection of the Son of God. But the old life pulls us downward: it seeks earthy things. And the striving of the new, resurrection-life of the believer in Christ to seek and attain to its own level,—that is the Christian hope.

If you analyze it, you will find, that it is an earnest expectation of the future glory. "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?" Rom. 8:24. We hope for the final adoption, to wit the redemption of our body. Rom. 8:23. The new life of the Christian is strictly "other-worldly" in the sound sense of the word. If only in this life we hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable. But we look for the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The future resurrection is the goal of the Christian's hope.

The power of Christ's resurrection causes the believer to look away from the present, and to fix his expectant gaze upon the future, to turn away from things below, and to seek the things that are above.

Secondly, that hope of the believer for the final resurrection in glory is certainty. It is not a certain doubtful and wistful yearning. Hope is certainty, for it is caused by, and based on the resurrection of our Lord. His resurrection is a pledge of our glorious resurrection. Christ is raised as the firstbegotten of the dead: He prepared the way through death into life for all His brethren. He is raised as the Head of the body, the Church: as the Head is raised to glory, so will the body follow into the same glory. He is raised as the firstfruits. The firstfruits were the beginning of the harvest: they were a sure pledge that the complete harvest would be gathered into the barns. So the resurrection of Christ is the beginning of the final resurrection-harvest. In His resurrection the final resurrection is already begun. It will surely be finished. On this resurrection of Christ the hope of the Christian is based. It is, therefore, a certain hope.

The power of Christ's resurrection gives assurance to the Christian hope of final glory!

Finally, that hope is longing, earnest longing for the final glory. It is not a cold expectation, as, for instance, one might expect that it will rain today. It is a mighty longing to be delivered from the body of this death, and to be clothed upon with that heavenly glory that shall not be fully realized until the last "moment", when death shall be completely swallowed up of life. Then this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, and in our spiritual, heavenly resurrection bodies we shall inherit the heavenly kingdom of God!

That is the glorious power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!

H. H.



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## OUR DOCTRINE

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### The Idea Of Creation. (2)

*As According To The Scriptures.*

We were discussing in our previous article the idea of God's work of creation as it is taught everywhere in the Holy Scriptures. We noted that, although the Divine act of creation as such defies all human understanding, it nevertheless is held before us in such a clear and simple manner that a child can grasp the truth that God alone is the Creator of the universe. And we concluded our article with the statement that all of creation speaks of the omnipotence, the wisdom, the greatness and majesty of the living God, inspires us unto praise and thanksgiving, renders us small, and causes us to feel our smallness and nothingness. We wish to call attention to a few more Scriptural passages before we begin our discussion proper of the idea of this mighty work of the Lord.

It is an undeniable fact that the entire Scriptural presentation of creation purposes to fix our attention upon the living God. That it serves to reveal the greatness, goodness, wisdom and love of the Lord is clear from Psalm 19, Job 37, Isaiah 40, etc. Reading Job 37 we can well understand the words of verse 23: "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: He will not afflict." This truth also strengthens our faith, establishes our confidence in God, and comforts us in the midst of suffering, as we may read in Psalm 33:16 f.f., 65:5 f.f., 89:12, 121:2, 134:5, Isaiah 37:16, 40:28 f.f., 42:5. Beautifully this is held before us in Isaiah 40:28 f.f.: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Besides, the truth of the Divine beginning of things inspires us unto praise and thanksgiving. This appears from Psalm 148:5, Rev. 14:7, and Ps. 136:3 f.f.: "O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for His mercy endureth for ever. To Him Who alone doeth great wonders: for His mercy endureth for ever. To Him that by wisdom made the heavens: for His mercy endureth for ever. To Him that made great lights: for

His mercy endureth for ever: The Sun to rule by day: for His mercy endureth for ever, etc." This truth also renders us humble and causes us to feel our smallness and nothingness over against the living God. This appears from Job 38:4 f.f., Is. 29:16, 45:9, Jer. 18:6, Romans 9:20, Is. 40:15. Permit me to quote a few verses from Job 38: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed? Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and causing the dayspring to know his place; That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?, f.f."

Besides the truth that the Divine beginning of things inspires us unto praise and humility, also the omnipotence of the Lord is emphasized by the Divine creation of the world. This is beautifully set forth in Isaiah 40: 26-28 and Amos 4:13 which we quote: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth. Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding . . . For, lo, He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The Lord, The God of hosts, is His name."

Finally, God alone is the creator of the heavens and the earth, and all the works of His hands speak of the wisdom and infinite majesty and transcendency of the Most High. "Thus saith God the Lord, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:"—Is. 42:5; "For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; and Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it. He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else."—Is. 45:18; "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to



heaven, And swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, Who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer."—Rev. 10:5-6; "Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment: as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end."—Ps. 102:25-27; "He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion. When He uttereth His voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of His treasures. Every man is brutish in his knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like them: for He is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of His inheritance: The Lord of hosts is His name."—Jer. 10:12-16.

*Logically But Three Possibilities For The  
Origin Of The World.*

*As such.*

One can conceive of but three possibilities for the origin of the universe. First, the world exists of itself. This signifies an eternal self-existence. A second possibility is that this world has developed of itself. And the third possibility is that the universe owes its existence to a source outside of itself.

*Viewed purely, logically, all three possibilities impossible.*

The wisdom of this world has shown conclusively that, viewed logically, merely from the viewpoint of human reasoning and logic, all the three above named possibilities are impossible. The first "possibility" is impossible, according to man's faculty of reason, because it violates the law of Cause and Effect. It cannot be denied surely that the law of cause and effect is the law of the human mind. Also our thinking inquires after the source and constantly postulates that the cause of something lies outside that something and is not to be identified with it. Everything in this world has a source, a cause. I myself have a cause or source, have a beginning, owe my existence to something outside of myself, do not owe my existence to myself. This is also true of the animal world, and of the entire world of vegetation and plant, of

industry, etc. Everywhere in the world round about us the law of cause and effect prevails. There is no creature that owes its existence to itself. Hence, that the world should exist of itself, whereas everything in that world is governed by the law of cause and effect, is impossible and must be rejected by the human mind.

Also the second "possibility" must be rejected by human logic because it is a "contradiction in terms." On the one hand, is it reasonable to declare that a thing is able to make itself? Remember, we are inquiring after the origin of the world, this world wherein we have a name and place. But how can anything that has been made make itself? Can the creature at the same time be a creator? To declare that the world is a creature surely implies that it is not the creator. It is contrary to all human logic to declare that the creator and the creature are synonymous. We must be one or the other, we cannot be both. To say, therefore, that the world has developed out of itself is plainly a contradiction in terms.

And, on the other hand, to say that the world develops out of itself implies that we simply evade the question concerning the origin of the world. Thereby we merely put off or delay the inevitable. Regardless of how far we may attempt to trace the origin of the universe the question will always assert itself: But what, then, was the origin of that beginning? And, to move this question into the infinite past is impossible for the simple reason that, according to my human mind and logic, there is no such thing as infinity. I cannot, therefore, ascribe an infinite and endless past to the creature for the simple reason that the creature is finite and therefore not characterized by an "infinite beginning or origin." Fact is, the term "infinite beginning or origin" is in itself a contradiction in terms. Whatever has a beginning is not infinite.

Finally, also the third "possibility" is impossible. It is a fact that whatever applies to the world must also apply to the cause of the world. Everything has a cause. My human mind, governed by the law of cause and effect, must also postulate that the origin have a cause, hence that God have a cause. And so the wisdom of the world has shown conclusively, purely from the viewpoint and upon the standpoint of human reason and logic, that the Origin of the world cannot be known by us. And thus we have come to the utterly fantastic conclusion that, although there may be a Creator of the heavens and the earth, He is and must remain unknown to us. I call this an utterly fantastic conclusion, because it is surely fantastic that the living God should create the universe and remain forever unknown as that Creator of the heavens and the earth and all the things therein contained.

*How Corrupted By The World.**The unspeakable folly of the world.*

The attempts of the world to explain the origin of the things without the revelation of Holy Writ merely serve to emphasize the depths of the ridiculous into which man can descend after he has once rejected God's own revelation of Himself. This lies in the nature of the case. We can never conclude *from the things themselves* their Divine origin, and we can never ascend to the knowledge of the living God merely in the way of human logic and reasoning. This is simply impossible. This does not mean that my human mind is not adapted to the knowledge of the living God. It is a fact that we have been created in the image of God, have been adapted unto the knowledge of the Lord, and are therefore able to know the Divine Creator of the universe. However, we attain unto the knowledge of the living God, not in the way of our own human reasoning and logic and deductions, but only when we submit ourselves unto God's own infallible revelation. And, although it is true that we are adapted unto the knowledge of the living God, this does not imply that this knowledge is such that we can understand, comprehend, fathom the Divine Creator of the universe, but that we learn to know Him exactly as the living God Who far transcends our human understanding. This is eternal life, not that we comprehend, understand, the living God, but that we *know* Him, the only true God, through Jesus Christ, Whom He has sent. And the knowledge of the living God is friendship and communion with the alone blessed Lord, rooted in His gracious operation in my heart, and based upon His own revelation of Himself.

I must be instructed by the Lord; He must tell me who and what He is; and it is impossible for me to attain unto knowledge of the Absolute from the things themselves and by the process of human thinking. The things themselves, being created, proclaim to me the law of the creature, which is the law of cause and effect. The law of cause and effect is necessarily the law of the creature. Whatever exists has a cause inasmuch as it has been created. To apply this law to the Divine Origin of the world, the law which I see everywhere round about me, would simply lead me to the conclusion that God, too, has and must have a cause. Besides, my mind itself was created, belongs to the things that have been made; consequently, I must, in my thinking, constantly move about in the sphere of the creature; my thinking is bound to the law of the creature, and I can never lift myself above the things that have been made. Even as a drop of water is irresistibly carried forward upon or in a stream to the ocean and cannot reach back or return unto its source, so I, finite creature that I am, am limited on every side by the laws of that which has

been made and cannot reach out unto the Divine Cause of all things.

Hence, having forsaken the living God as He has revealed Himself, the world has attempted, in its own way, to explain the origin of all things. And, as one might expect when the Divine record is abandoned as the only possible source of all our knowledge, the world, in doing so, is characterized by the depths of the foolish and the absurd. This will presently become clear when we call attention to these several attempts.

*The theory of materialism.*

We can distinguish between two kinds of materialism. We can speak of Monastic Materialism and Dualistic Materialism. Monastic Materialism (Single Materialism) simply proceeds from the theory that there is nothing but matter. All spiritual processes are conceived merely as functions of matter. The soul of man, his thinking and willing and inclinations, is not a spiritual substance distinct from matter, but it is the result or effect of the organization of matter in the body. Hence, only matter exists. To seek the origin of the world in Monastic Materialism implies that we ascribe an eternal existence to matter, and that, therefore, the world owes its "beginning" to itself and developed out of itself.

However, this theory of Monastic Materialism surely does not satisfy the human soul. First, is it true that anything in this world either exists of itself or can maintain its own existence? Is there any creature that owes its existence to itself or is able to perpetuate its own existence? Must not all things die, and what creature is there that controls its own life? It must, therefore, be a self-evident fact that the creature is controlled by a power over which it has not control. And, in the second place, it is simply absurd to postulate an existence which is purely materialistic. This, too, is and should be self-evident. One may attempt to reason the soul out of existence, declare that there are no spiritual substances or realities. One may insist that the only reality is matter, the purely physical world. But, the fact remains that the soul will not permit itself to be reasoned out of existence. Such phenomena as love and hate, joy and sorrow, hope and despair do not permit themselves, in the final analysis, to be explained from matter, a piece of beef-steak, if you will.

Besides the theory of Monastic Materialism, a view known as Dualistic Materialism has been advanced to explain the origin of the world. This conception of Dualistic Materialism regards spirit and matter as dualistically opposed to each other. Some seek in matter itself the power of evil, whereas others present God as standing over against an eternal principle of evil. The view which presents God as standing over against an eternal principle of evil is commonly known

as Dualism, whereas Dualistic Materialism seeks this power of evil in the matter itself. Then there are in this world two mutually hostile forces, the one the creator of all things good, and the other source of all evil, whereas, as we have stated, some seek in matter itself the power of sin and evil. To fight sin, then, implies that we crucify the flesh, mortify the body in the literal sense of the word.

Also this conception, we understand, is contrary to all the teachings of the Word of God. On the one hand, Scripture surely does not know of any dualism between the living God and a "god of evil". First, if this were true, or rather if this view be adopted, what guarantee do we have that the good will ultimately triumph over the evil? Does the history of the world teach us, for example, that the forces of good are slowly but surely triumphing over the forces of sin and evil? Is not exactly the opposite true? The world is surely not improving in the spiritual sense of the word. Besides, is not God the sovereign Lord according to the Word of God, Who controls all things, both good and bad? Do we not read in Isaiah 45:7: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."? Or in Amos 3:6: "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" That the Lord is sovereign God who controls all things and performs all His good pleasure, also with respect to the forces of sin and darkness we have shown conclusively in the series of articles which we have concluded on the Counsel of God. And, on the other hand, Scripture does not present matter as inherently sinful and corrupt, or that matter has in itself an eternal and infinite existence. Were this true, then God would not be the Creator but merely the framer and artificer of the world, Who simply molded and framed the things that already were. The Word of the Lord informs us, however, that God called the things into existence *that were not*, and that He did so by His almighty word. Besides, we are also told in the Word of God that the Lord created all things, and that He created all things good. This implies that there is no existence apart from the living God, and also that there was no evil in the world as it was called into existence by the alone living God. We must therefore reject any conception of the origin of the universe which would seek that beginning in a principle of Materialism, be it in the Monastic or Dualistic sense of the word.

H. Veldman.

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#### CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session, D. V., Wednesday morning, July 12, at 9 o'clock, at Fuller Ave.

D. Jonker, Stated Clerk.

## The Risen Christ

We turn to the eleventh and the twelfth verses of Isaiah 53; and, as quoting the text in the original, read God's Word as follows: "On account of the travail of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied. By his knowledge my servant, the righteous one, shall procure righteousness for the many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I give him the many as his portion; and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sins of many; and made intercession for the transgressors."

The text here sets before us the Lord's suffering servant raised from the dead and in glory at the right hand of the Father in the exalted position of Lord of lords and King of kings and Head over all things in the church. For the text states that on account of the travail of His soul He sees and is satisfied.

Verily, Christ arose. We, God's believing people know. For the testimony of the Scriptures as sanctified unto our hearts by the Spirit of our risen Lord is to the effect that He arose from the dead, bodily. This testimony includes, first, the silent witness of His tomb—it is empty; second, the message of the angels to the disciples of Christ at the tomb; third, the appearance of the risen Lord to His followers. This evidence certainly is conclusive to every one that believes; fourth, the eventual conviction of His disciples that He arose, despite their initial unbelief. The incredulity of Thomas has special weight here. How slow of heart was he to believe; yet there was born also in him the conviction that Christ arose; and with that conviction burning in his soul he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God."

We cannot, of course, examine this mass of testimony to the fact of Christ's bodily resurrection. But we may take notice of Christ's tomb on the morning of the resurrection. Verily, it is empty! For Peter and John come to His sepulchre. John stoops down and looks in. He sees the linen cloths lie, and the napkin that was about His head wrapped together in a place by itself. But they see not the body of Jesus. *The tomb is empty!* Attend with me to the message of the angel to the two Marys of all the friends of Jesus first at the tomb. "Fear not ye," are his words to these women, "for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come see the place where he lay. And go quickly, and tell the disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there ye shall see him; Lo, I have told you."

The Lord is risen indeed! Let unbelief scoff at the idea of the physical resurrection of the man of sorrows. We who believe are not perturbed. For we

know that He is risen; for the virtues of His cross are realized in us by His Spirit, so that we know Him in the power of His resurrection.

But what real comfort could God's believing people take from the knowledge of the fact of His resurrection, had they no spiritual understanding of its meaning? No comfort whatever, certainly. The Scriptures therefore tell us not alone that Christ arose; they also reveal to us the necessity, meaning, and significance of this redemption fact both for Christ and His people. My text does so. Let us now concentrate on my text. It sets out with this statement, "Because of the travail of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied." Reference here is to the nameless sorrows, pains, and agonies of the Lord's suffering servant. Because of that travail He as risen now sees a wonderful thing to behold, namely, His people, by nature under the sentence of condemnation and on this account dead in their sins, raised up with Him and set with Him in heaven, blessed with all spiritual blessings. He sees His people, a great family of redeemed, conformed according to His very image and on this account reflecting all the virtues of His Father. And He sees them in the full, deep, and abiding love of His great heart; and imbibing the spiritual beauty of their heavenly perfection, He is satisfied, refreshed, says my text. Mark you well, satisfied, not satiated. Were He satiated, He would look away from His people, as saying, "It is enough." But not for an instant in all the ages to come will He divert His gaze from His people. For He hungers and thirsts after the beauty of their heavenly perfection. And seeing, He is satisfied but satiated never. It cannot be. For it is the Holy Christ seeing and satisfied by the beauty of the holiness of His redeemed people.

However, it must not be supposed that Christ now commenced seeing His people, now that the Father had raised Him up. He was seeing them eternally in His Father's counsel, a people chosen in Him before the foundation of the world and by virtue thereof called and justified and glorified in Him their eternal Mediator; thus seeing them as vessels of mercy before prepared unto glory by His Father. And this people Christ loved; He loved the beauty, the glory of their heavenly perfection that they had with God before the world was. He so loved that people, their spiritual glory, that by the travail of His soul He brought them up out of their sin and death and hell that it, this glory, might be revealed on them, who were by nature ugly in their spiritual death. For what was that glory but the creaturely reflection of the riches of the glory of His Father. The man of sorrows has His desire. For He is now our risen Lord. And He sees His people, by nature dead in sin, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, built up in Christ, the head of the corner; offering up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. And seeing and hearing He is satisfied and His Father with

Him; for the temple is a building of God; it is thus the glory of the Father and of His Christ that it reflects; and therefore also the praises that rise from its rooms are praises sung to their names.

But now there is this question: how in the point of view of God's own righteousness could it be right for Him to set this people before the eyes of the risen Christ a revelation of His glory? What raises this question is the fact that by nature this people are under the sentence of death and on this account lost and undone in their spiritual death. My text contains the answer. It is on account of the travail of His soul that the risen Christ sees and is satisfied. There is then connection between His soul's travail and His seeing and being satisfied. Just what this connection may be is clear from the statement that follows. It reads (quoting the text in the original), "By His knowledge shall my servant, the righteous, procure righteousness for the many; for he shall bear their iniquities." The statement is rich in meaning and is to be paraphrased thus: He, the Lord's righteous servant, performed for His people, in their stead and in their behalf, a righteous work. He suffered and died for their sins on the cross as their Mediator. With this righteous work of the Saviour—His righteousness—imputed unto them by the Father in the way of Christ's intercessory prayer for them, they, we, His people, are righteous before God with all the rights of a righteous people—righteous in Christ—securely ours, to wit, the right to be called the sons of God; the right to be forgiven of the Father; the right to be cleansed of all our sins in His blood; the right to be conformed according to the likeness of God's Son, our risen Lord; the right to fellowship with God through Christ and to be satisfied by His likeness; the right to inherit the earth—that new earth where the tabernacle of God is with men. All these rights and benefits Christ procured for us. He did so by His knowledge; that is, by sustaining the wrath of God against our sins in His soul and body in full knowledge of God's will and in perfect obedience to it.

It is well that we take notice also of the fact that in this part of the prophet's discourse the suffering servant of the Lord is called the Lord's righteous servant. We should understand that He bears this name not as one of many righteous servants but only because He is the righteous servant of the Lord in contradistinction to the many—His people—who by nature are unrighteous before God in their guilt and spiritual death. It was on this account that the Lord's righteous servant was sent by the Father to procure for us, His people, righteousness. For by nature the only right we have is to be driven by the curse of God into everlasting desolation, we being men by nature under the sentence of death, it is true; yet men verily holy and blameless before God in Christ Who is our righteousness.

For Christ bore away our iniquities. And, there-

fore, in the language of my text, the Lord gave Him, His righteous servant, a portion in the many, that is, consisting in the many. The meaning is that the Lord gave Him as His portion the very people for whom He had procured righteousness by the travail of His soul. Assuredly, the Lord already had given this people unto His righteous servant even before the foundation of the world in His counsel, doing so by His choosing them in Christ unto life everlasting, and thereby constituting Him their head and them His body. And assuming the flesh and blood of His brethren, the many, He, the incarnate Son of God procured righteousness for the many by the travail of His soul. And with this task completed, the Lord God again gave Him the many now by raising Him up from the dead unto the justification of the many and by raising up the many with Him, by setting them with Him in heaven and blessing them with all spiritual blessings approximately 1900 years ago now.

And for what purpose? In the language of the text, "that He, the risen Christ, might divide the spoil with the strong, that is, the many, His people, set with Him in heaven." It is the spoil of war of which the prophet here speaks. What explains his use of this language is that he views the work of Christ's atoning for the sins of His people on the cross from the aspect of a warfare. Christ's work of atonement was just that—a spiritual warfare; it was the good fight of faith that the Saviour was fighting. This is evident. True virtue was His only armour—virtue: implicit faith in God, obedience, meekness, humbleness and patience. He was obedient unto death, was He not, even the death of the cross. The Lord laid all our transgressions upon Him; He was bruised for our iniquities, and He opened not His mouth. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. He did no violence, neither was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He reviled not again. When He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously. Such being His arms, He gained a mighty victory, He conquered all our foes—sin, the devil, the world, death, grave, and hell. Jointly they form the spoil of His spiritual warfare, as laden with which He arose from the grave and was seated by the Father at His own right hand in the highest heavens to divide that spoil with His redeemed people set with Him in heaven; and not alone that spoil but with it all the benefits of His atonement. For having procured for His people righteousness, that spoil together with all the benefits of the travail of His soul, is rightfully theirs in Him. All things are ours, who believe in His name. Name whatever thing you will; it is ours. Death and the grave is ours; Satan and the world of which he is prince is ours, His people's; herbs and grass and rain and drought are ours; fruitful and barren years;

meat and drink are ours; health and sickness, riches and poverty are ours; war, destruction and pestilence, in a word all things are ours, who believe; included, as they are, in the spoils of Christ's warfare. We being Christ's, they are ours, are all these things; subservient are these things to our salvation. They work together for our good, for the good to them that love God, for the good to them that are the called according to His purpose.

So does He, the victorious and resurrected Christ, divide the spoil with the strong; mark you, with the strong. Such is one of the names that He gives His people. He calls them strong. By nature they are weak being, as they are, dead in sin in themselves. But whereas they were predestinated unto strength, they possess Him, their risen Redeemer and Lord, as their life; and therefore they are the strong, strong in Him. And how amazingly strong they are. The gates of hell cannot prevail against them; and nothing can separate them from the love of God, nothing, neither life nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, so that in Christ we are more than conquerors.

And as joined to Christ by a faith that is indestructible, in that Christ prayeth for us, we, God's people, face a wonderful prospect. Our lives are hidden with Christ in God, so that it shall come to pass that when He, our risen Lord, shall appear at the end of time, we all shall appear with Him in glory on that new earth where the tabernacle of God is with men. And all because He hath poured out His soul unto death; was numbered with the transgressors; bare the sins of many and made intercessions for the transgressors. Do you believe in God through this crucified, risen, and glorified Christ? Then this prospect is also yours.

G. M. Ophoff.

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#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 9, 1950, our beloved parents,

Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Vander Wal

commemorated their 30th Wedding Anniversary.

We, their grateful children, thank our covenant God that it has been His will to spare them for each other and us these many years. Our prayer is that in their reclining years God's grace may richly dwell in them, and that they may have the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Mr. and Mrs. John Koster

Harvey Vander Wal

Marvin Vander Wal

and two grandchildren.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.



## Contribution

### AMONG OUR TREASURES

It is with a feeling of sadness that I write this article. 'For how is the gold become dim'. How is the fine gold changed by the writer in the Concordia. For among our treasures is especially this one: namely, that we are unconditionally saved by grace alone, and that through faith which is the power of God unto our salvation and which overcometh the world. The world in its widest meaning. The world as that world lies 'round about us, but also that world as it is within us. For there is a world of sin and iniquity which reaches as the mountains round about us, and reaches to the very throne of God. Already of old the prophet had proclaimed, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.' And the Psalmist calls it out, 'There is none righteous, no not one, there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre. With their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips, and the way of peace have they not known.' We are dead in trespasses and sins, incapable of doing any good and prone to all evil. By nature we are nothing but a lump of sin, and like the nature of an orange tree is to bring forth oranges and the nature of an apple tree is to bring forth apples, so the nature of man after the fall is to bring forth nothing but sin. Sinner is his name, and in the doctrine of the total depravity of man, our fathers have said this, 'You must look strongly on Jesus, who hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, who though he knew no sin was made sin for us.

For we cannot even confess our sins, neither can we repent of them unless we are united to him with a true and living faith, which he works in us by His spirit; the spirit of the resurrected Lord who prays in us: O God be merciful to me the sinner; and who causes us to plead upon the righteousness which is found in Christ alone. For death is not annihilation, but death is a working. We are never stocks and blocks even in death. But we are very active in death, for death is to live apart from God. Death is disharmony. We already see that in our children when they fight with each other; when there is trouble between brethren in the church; between man and wife, etc. By nature we love unrighteousness and we love the lie. Death holds us in its clutches, surrounds us, is in us. We are in the midst of death. It is a tremendous power; a working wherein we go from death

to death into all eternity. It is the antithesis of life, and as beautiful as eternal life is, so ugly is death. So glorious heaven is, so terrible is hell. And unless we are unconditionally saved, there is no salvation at all. For faith takes hold of the promises of God, clings to His word, hears His voice when He speaks, for it is the irresistible and all-powerful voice of God through the Son and in the Spirit who preaches unto us an unconditional salvation. For, says He in Isaiah, "And I looked and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold. Therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me." He alone preaches in the great congregation. Says He, "I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the House of Israel."

For He has loved us with an everlasting love, and with cords of love has He drawn us. Seeing therefore the unconditionality of salvation let us glory in the cross of Christ alone.

Seeing our responsibility, let us trust in Him who became responsible for us and who will never leave us nor forsake us, but who will save us to the uttermost. Not on condition of faith and repentance, but in the way of faith and repentance. Wherein we are truly sorry for our sins, and wherein we have a desire to walk in the way of all of God's commandments.

O Brother Petter. May the God of all grace show you the terrible error of a conditional theology. For do you not realize that you have lost the right to write under the heading of "Among Our Treasures"? For among *our* treasures, we have learned to sing, "Welzalig hij die al zijn kracht, en hulp alleen van u verwacht. . . ."

Kryn Feenstra  
Redlands, California.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On July 22nd, 1950, the Lord willing, our beloved parents

**Mr. and Mrs. L. Lanting**

will commemorate their 30th wedding anniversary.

We thank our heavenly Father for having kept them through the years for each other and us, and may the Lord continue to bless them in the years to come.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee".—Is. 26:3.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Koole  
Mr. and Mrs. George Lanting  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Knott  
Gertrude  
Jeanette  
and four grandchildren.



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## FROM HOLY WRIT

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### Exposition Of I Cor. 15:58

In this remarkable chapter of I Corinthians 15 the apostle Paul defends the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord, overagainst all unbelief and sceptical reasoning. He defends the premise that if there is no resurrection of the dead then is Christ not risen. And, to be sure, if Christ is not risen then we are still in our sins, our faith is vain and all preachers of the resurrection facts are found to be false witnesses.

But Christ is risen!

He arose the third day according to the Scriptures and thus became the Firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

And since Christ is thus risen and His resurrection is the promise and pledge of our final resurrection we can go on hopefully and victoriously through life; thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

That final and complete victory shall be ours in that day when this mortal body shall have put on immortality, and when this corruptible body shall have put on incorruption. Then shall be brought to pass the saying of Isaiah 25:8: "Death is swallowed up to victory!" That will be the destruction of our last enemy. Then there shall be great feasting on Zion's mount and the children of God shall rejoice forevermore, saying, This is our God, for Whom we have waited.

In the light of this context the passage in I Cor. 15:58 comes to stand before our mind's eye of faith in bold relief. We read there the following: "*So then, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know, that your labor is not vain in the Lord.*"

It can do no harm to remind ourselves that in this remarkable passage, Paul is not speaking of "steadfastness" and "unmoveableness" in the abstract, but that he is speaking of this steadfastness *in the Lord*.

The apostle is here speaking of spiritual steadfastness as such is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Keeping this observation in mind, we should notice first of all the *idea* of steadfastness and of unmoveableness.

The term steadfastness in the Greek comes from the verb, which means: to sit, to be sitting. And then it comes to mean: steadfastness in mind and purpose. It reminds us of a man who had taken a certain position overagainst God and Christ and who does not

move, does not deviate from it either to the right or to the left. This idea of steadfastness must not be confused with stubbornness. Stubbornness is contrarieness. A man who is stubborn is in the wrong, he is walking contrary to the faith in Christ and to God's commandments in Him, but he will not confess his faults. Stubbornness is sin. It is the very opposite of steadfastness. For the latter is not sin, but it is righteousness. It is a *holy* resolution to walk in all good works. It is in the Lord. That such is the Scriptural idea of steadfastness is clear from a passage as Colossians 1:23, where we read: "If ye remain by faith ever founded and stedfast, unmoved from the hope of the Gospel."

Hence, steadfastness reminds us not of the horse and the mule that must be led by bit and bridle, but of the mountains about Zion which cannot be moved. It is the rock that stands planted in the midst of the raging sea. This rock is stedfast.

Closely allied with the idea of steadfastness is that of *unmoveableness*. This word in the Greek is derived from the verb meaning: to move, to stir up, to agitate. And when this is applied to the believer it means, that nothing can stir him up, nothing can agitate him in his mind. He cannot be moved by temptation to doubt and despair. Such a man is like a great oak which lifts its great crown for the birds to nest in its branches. Deep the roots of this tree are bedded in the earth. Many winds and storms have passed over it. But it stands. It stands unmoved. Such is the man that is unmoveable in the Lord.

When we thus compare the sense of these two terms, namely, *stedfastness* and *unmoveableness*, we notice that the two terms complement each other in meaning. The two belong with each other. The former is positive, the latter accents a certain quality of the former. The unmoveableness suggests the tried and approved character of the steadfastness. The steadfastness shows its genuineness in its unmoveableness. The wind may cause the great oak to sway, to bend, to lean and groan, but it does not move the tree. So too the winds and storms of our temptations in life may cause us to be swayed, may affect our life, causing us pain and temptation, it may cause us much labor, but the anchor holds, it holds sure and stedfast within the holy place behind the veil!

Such the apostle says we ought to be!

In fact, the more exact rendering of the Greek ought to be as follows: *Keep on becoming stedfast and unmoveable*. We must never think that we have already attained. Ever anew and in ever greater degree we should be more stedfast and unmoveable over against all the howling and raging of unbelieving sceptics. We must become this ever more also overagainst all of our sins and unbelief with which we have daily to struggle.

Such we must keep on becoming!

We must, according to the word of Paul here, become this evermore in regard to the work in Christ, the resurrection from the dead, the hope of final glory. We must see, ever anew and with greater intensity of joy, that Christ has arisen and become for us the First-fruits of the full harvest. That must be for us ever more the all-controlling motive of our life. And in the same measure that this is true and ever more becomes true through the preaching of the Gospel and the Sacraments, our life will be one of stedfastness and purpose true.

When an unbelieving sceptic asks: but *how* shall the dead arise, and with what kind of body shall they rise, then the answer must be forthcoming with full certainty. We must say: All the effects of sin and the curse will be no more seen. Indeed our body is sown in corruption, and it is raised in incorruption, it is sown in dishonour it is raised in glory, it is sown in weakness it is raised in power. That we must say and confess first of all. Then, too, we must say that all that looked like the first man of the earth earthy will be no more. It will be wholly conformed unto the glorious body of the Lord from heaven. It is, indeed, sown a natural body, but it is raised a spiritual body, it will be perfectly the bearing of the image of the heavenly.

That we must say. We must confess that God raised Jesus from the dead. We must believe this from the heart and confess it with our mouth and thus we are saved completely. In this we must evermore become stedfast, loving the appearance of Jesus our Lord upon the clouds of heaven.

For Him we must look!

Him we must expect. That does not mean that we must not be busy in life's calling, that in the literal sense we must stand and gaze into heaven. We have work, much work to perform. And this is also clearly underscored in the text. Says Paul: Always abounding in the work of the Lord.

About this "work in the Lord" we must say just a few words too.

The work of the Lord is not in the first place the work that the Lord *requires* of us. It is true, that as believers in the Lord, we are placed under the new obligations of faith, under the new obedience of love. But that is not what the apostle has in mind here first of all. When he here speaks of "the work of the Lord", he evidently has in mind the work performed for us by the Lord in His death and resurrection and glorious ascension. It is the work that He is now working in heaven for us, the work in which we may be co-workers with Him by His grace and Spirit. It is the work that He will bring to its final, ultimate and glorious consummation in the day of His return when

the word shall come to pass: Death is swallowed up of life! Then shall all tears be wiped away from our eyes and we be led besides streams of living water.

That this is the work referred to by the apostle is evident from the following facts. In the first place this is clear from the fact that the whole context speaks of this work. It speaks of the work of Jesus Christ as He suffered and died according to the Scriptures and as He arose again from the dead on the third day according to the same Scriptures. That the entire chapter speaks of this great work as given in verse 1 is conclusive to indicate that Paul is speaking here of the work performed by Christ for us, and not first of all for the work that Christ demands of us in the new obedience.

In the light of this observation, we would also notice that in the Greek this work is prefaced with the article. It is *the* work. And then the singular "work" is spoken of. From this we learn that it is the one work spoken of in the context and it is thought of as constituting a unity. It is the one all-controlling work of Christ the Lord. The text also emphasizes that Jesus is *the* Lord. He is the Lord of glory Who in the way of His suffering was made both Lord and Christ. And He must reign till He hath made His enemies His footstool. He is the Lord. And in the work of this Lord we are to be busy reaching out till He comes.

Yes, in this one, central and all-controlling work we are to *always abound*. We are to be busy in it in such a way that in this work of Christ we become living fountains of spiritual activity, become some first-fruits of His creation in Him the First-fruits, the First-born out of the dead!

The only way to be stedfast is to be ever abounding in love, faith and all the works of faith in our whole life. We are to live in the hope of His return and thus cleanse and sanctify ourselves as He is pure. Thus ever abounding in the work of the Lord we evermore will be becoming stedfast and unmoveable in the Lord!

This will entail labor. The word labor suggests toil, wearisome toil and opposition. It reminds us of Jesus' word who said: In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

This toil and labor is not vain. It is in the Lord. It is the toil of the work in the Lord. The victory is sure, the crown is certain. Life in this work, even in the toil, is not vain. We rejoice even because of the tribulation. For suffering with Christ we shall also be glorified together.

Presently all the brethren will then have the rest of Jubilee. It will be, to be forever with the Lord, to reign with Him over all the work of His hands.

Geo. Lubbers.

## IN HIS FEAR

### Called To His Praise

*Living Sacrifices.* (continued)

"The wages of sin is death", and less than death it cannot be. The extreme penalty must be inflicted by the righteous and sovereign Creator of all things and Lord of lords. For thereby He glorifies Himself. The sinner always refuses to serve God, and all sin is a failure to glorify Him Who alone is worthy to receive praise and adoration and Who made all things for His own glory. All sin is rebellion against this "jealous" God. And he who dares to oppose God, he who dares to rush at him in his rebellious acts will inevitably be opposed by God and be crushed by death in all that it implies and is. Imagine the foolish man who runs down the railroad track toward the onrushing express train in order to strike it with his fist. His cause is hopeless! He will be crushed by the power he seeks to assault. Even worse is the plight of the sinner who opposes the everlasting God. Indeed, the wages of sin is and must be death. If man will not glorify God then God will yet glorify Himself through the punishing of that man with everlasting death in the torments of hell.

But eternally this everlasting glorious God decreed to save some men from their rebellion and guilt. Everlastingly He decreed to renew a people in Christ as a royal priesthood so that they would willingly and consciously glorify Him. And that people enjoys His glory, for to it He gives eternal life.

Because the wages of sin is death there were thousands upon thousands of lives of animals sacrificed in the Old Dispensation. Thereby God taught His people that the wages of sin is death. The blood of animals was shed, the life of lambs and bullocks was taken away. This was all to instruct the elect, but the blood of bulls and goats did not take away sin and did not undo the rebellion which calls for the death of *man*.

What pleases God is not the taking away of life. Even in that general sense we may say that the word of God through Ezekiel 33:11 is true. God has no pleasure in the death of the reprobate wicked in the sense that He does not bring them into death because He delights to see men suffer and die. What does delight Him is that men turn from their evil ways. Understand well, we do not have here a sincere, well-meant offer of salvation to all men. These words were addressed only to those who pine away and seek after salvation. But God always delights in glorifying Himself, and because it always delights Him to

glorify Himself He does so through the death of those who rebel against Him. This must be established and maintained with vigor that would He inflict anything less than the extreme penalty, would He even delight in lessening the penalty for those for Whom Christ has not born God's wrath, He would be unrighteous, would be denying Himself the glory which cannot be ascribed to anyone else, and would then be a changeable God, which He is not at all. In Him there is no darkness nor shadow of turning. He is the "I Am" who never says that He was or will be.

What then does delight Him is that we be living sacrifices. It is not our death that fulfills that which He demands of us, it is a life of constant praise and service that fulfills this demand. Listen once to the inspired Psalmist, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then I said, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea thy law is within my heart." Undoubtedly you also recall the words of Samuel to wicked king Saul, "Hath the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." That is what we mean by the heading, "living sacrifices." The willing and conscious service of praise to the living God is using our bodies as living sacrifices. Paul speaks of this and calls it our "reasonable service" when he says in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

Is that really a sacrifice to serve God with our bodies? Indeed it is! But we must not draw into the picture the idea of atoning by means of this sacrifice. We must not think of a sacrifice in the sense of doing something for God whereby we turn away the fierceness of His wrath and induce Him to bestow things upon us. It is instead a sacrifice in that we give up those things which our carnal nature craves, we give up the seeking of our own glory in order that we may glorify God and He may be praised through our works. It is a sacrifice in that we dedicate and consecrate, not merely in word, but in very deed all we have and are unto the glory and praise of God. After all the word sacrifice means literally, "To make holy" coming from the two latin words, "sacrum" holy, and "facere", to make. A sacrifice is anything that is set aside for the service and glory of God.

The work then of the royal priesthood of God's people is to dedicate and consecrate all they have and all wherewith they come in contact to the glory of God. They hallow the Sabbath, and it becomes a day above all the days of the week, but during the remaining six days they use all things in His service. Their

priestly office is not for one day in the week. It is an abiding priesthood that concerns itself with all things.

Your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, as we pointed out before, and you live in that temple to serve the Almighty God. But listen, is every single member of your body dedicated in service to God? Let us begin with that most unmanageable member of them all, your tongue. Is it fully dedicated to God, do you sacrifice it to God as a living sacrifice so that it is made holy for His praise? Or is their foulness, filth, cursing, swearing, backbiting, malice and even blasphemy uttered in that temple where you are stationed to serve the Living, Holy God?

If you can manage that little member and as God's priest it is dedicated to His praise, we can go on and we need not mention any more members. If you cannot manage it, it is plain that there is much more corruption practiced in that temple where you are the priest of God. For it evidences the fact that the fountain, the heart which determines what that tongue will say is not pure. Your heart must be right with God if you are to be His priest. What is in the mind of man determines what kind of prophet he is, but what fills the heart of man determines what kind of priest he is. Still more, it too determines what kind of prophet he is. For though a man's mind be filled with the knowledge of the truth he will not yet be a prophet of God unless he love that truth. Godless prophet Baalam received the knowledge of the truth, but because he was not a priest of the most high, he remained a sinful prophet of the devil, though God used him to prophecy the truth.

And your possessions? You hold on to them and employ them, how and why? Are they dedicated to the Living God? Or are they sought after and employed for *your* carnal advantage? Never forget that they may be yours relatively over against your fellow men, but over against God they always were and always remain absolutely His. Can you sacrifice them for His cause, for His kingdom? Can you contribute regularly, consistently, liberally and let us not forget *cheerfully* for the support of the ministry of His Word, for Mission activity, for Christian instruction for your children and for that of other covenant youth. What kind of priest are you?

And your children, are they consecrated to the Living God by you? You prayed for them before they were born and vowed to dedicate them to Him? Or let us even begin before this. You take unto yourself a wife or a husband. You intend to broaden out the sphere wherein you will be God's priest. But that wife you took was taken to be dedicated to God? You saw to it then that she was a sincere believer in Christ. You married her (him) then as an helpmeet

(and not as a plaything) that together you might execute the priest's office. And now you both are priests over covenant children. Then do not sacrifice them upon the altar of your lusts and try to make them conform to your sinful ambitions. But sacrifice them upon the altar of service to the living God. Indeed offer up your children to the living God, but do so as *living sacrifices*. Teach them early to live for Him, and the material things God has given you use as a wise and good priest that they may all through their days of care under your roof receive the *best* training in the fear of God's name that can be obtained. If you know of a stricter, more God-centered instruction than they now receive, leave no stone unturned to get them there! Then your goods and your children both will be living sacrifices well pleasing in the sight of God.

J. A. Heys.

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#### ANNOUNCEMENT . . . . TO THE CHURCHES

The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches decided to announce to the churches "that brother H. H. Kuiper be permitted to exhort in our churches and after a period of six months he shall be eligible to receive a call."

D. Jonker, Stated Clerk.

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#### SALVATION

Salvation is the work of God  
Through His beloved Son;  
Who came on earth and shed His blood;  
By Him the work was done.

Salvation is by blood alone,—  
None can approach to God;  
Except in Jesus Christ, and own  
'Tis through the poured-out blood.

Salvation is the work of grace,  
Which God alone begins;  
Through Him Who took the sinner's place,  
When lost and dead in sins.

Salvation is for those who see  
And know their lost estate;  
That Jesus Christ is all their plea,  
Themselves they loathe and hate.