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Lamentation and Jubilation

MEDITATION | **HERMAN HOEKSEMA** | 507

Reflections on Synod 2024 and the Experience of Salvation (3)

EDITORIAL | **REV. JOSHUA ENGELSMA** | 510

Nahum (5) The Coming Judgment of Nineveh (2)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES | **REV. RONALD HANKO** | 514

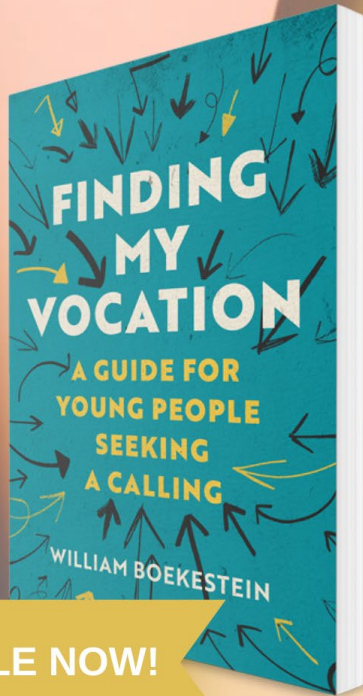
The Ordo Salutis (7a) Sanctification: Changed from Glory to Glory (1)

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE | **REV. MARTYN MCGEOWN** | 517

INDEX TO VOLUME 100 | 520



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pastor of Unity Protestant Reformed Church
(Byron Center, MI)

by the author of *The Story of...* series and *Glorifying and Enjoying God: 52 Devotions through the Westminster Shorter Catechism*



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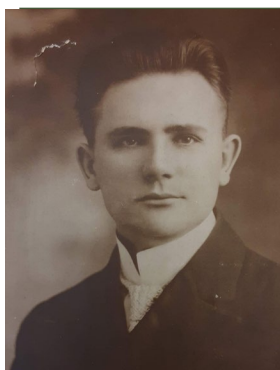
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LAMENTATION AND JUBILATION

HERMAN HOEKSEMA

(1886-1965) was the first editor of the *Standard Bearer*, one of the founders of the PRC and her seminary, and longtime pastor of First PRC in Grand Rapids, MI.

This is a reprint (with minor edits) of an English translation by Homer C. Hoeksema of a Dutch meditation from the pen of his father. Klaagtoon en Jubellied was published in the Nov. 1, 1927 Standard Bearer (v. 4, p. 49). The English version was first published in the March 15, 1988 Standard Bearer (v. 64, p. 412).

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord—Romans 7:24, 25.

Lamenting and rejoicing!

Singing through our tears!

Wrestling in fearful battle, and in the heat of the fight shouting for joy about the sure victory!

Wondrous paradox!

Strange, almost irreconcilable contrast!

Nevertheless, a contrast that is the characteristic which immediately strikes one in these words of the apostle. “O wretched man that I am!” Such is the lamentation. Thus the apostle cries out. Thus we hear his almost despairing outcry above the noise of the fearful struggle. “Who shall deliver me?” Thus sounds the desperation cry of him who is in grave danger, who is surrounded by mighty enemies, and who, exhausted, is at the point of giving up the struggle; who looks round about him for a way out but nowhere sees any deliverance! “I thank God!” That is the triumph-song of the delivered soul, the joy of the enlarged heart, the outcry of hope of the soldier who, surrounded by dense troops of enemies, grips anew his weapons, full of courage, certain of victory! “Through Jesus Christ our Lord!” It is the triumph-shout of the weary battler who, well-nigh exhausted, takes courage anew in the heat of the battle at the sight of a mighty Helper who will carry him to sure victory....

Thus understood, the contrast is also reconciled.

For then we can recast the meaning of these mysterious words as follows: O wretched man that I am, wretched in myself, without strength for the battle and without hope of victory when I look at myself; I thank God, who has in principle delivered me and who shall make me partake of the full salvation and shall bestow the final and complete victory through Jesus Christ, the mighty Help, my God and my Lord!

Who would there be, except the delivered child of God, with the grace of salvation in his heart, who would take upon his lips this lamenting song of jubilee, this weeping triumph-song?

Who is there in the world who cries, “O wretched man that I am”?

Who is there among the children of this world, who have their portion in this world, whose belly the Lord fills with His hid treasure, who complains, “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

No one! This complaining jubilation is never heard in the world.

Indeed, also the world knows misery. There is much world-woe. Also in the world there is weeping and crying and tears because of the suffering of this present time. Inexpressibly great and deep is the suffering that also causes the world to cringe in pain; beyond description is the pain of soul, the excruciating heart-pain that is suffered also in the world. Also there you find grief and sadness; also there you find anxiety and gnawing fear. Just visit the hospitals and let your eye fall upon the sufferers, the bedridden; enter the institutions for the mentally ill, for those whose mental powers are disturbed, and observe here the dull eyes of those deprived of the light of understanding and there the twisted features of the otherwise beautiful human face, or there the senseless grin of the insane

that bedevils the countenance of the sufferer. Or I stand at the deathbed of the ungodly, the deathbed that puts an end to all his hope; or at the open grave of the world, when the remains of its children are lowered into it. Or bring up before your imagination the hellish scene of an earthly battlefield with its blood-drenched soil, its roar of a cannonade and its death-dealing projectiles, with its atmosphere of poison gas, its devilish rage and bloodthirstiness, its raging emotions, its cries and its moans, its raging and cursing. Or visit the prison-houses of the world and their cellblocks, where man, created to be image-bearers of the Most High and to dwell with Him in everlasting blessedness, must be guarded as wild beasts behind strongly sealed iron doors and bars....

And then say for yourself whether there is not a fathomless depth of worldly woe!

And yet...?

Who says, who is there who laments in the world, "I am a miserable man"? Who is there who seeks the cause of all his wretchedness in "the body of this death"? Who cries out, "Who shall deliver me"? And who is there in the world who concludes his lamentation with the triumph-song of thankfulness, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord"?

No one!

The world does not seek the cause of all misery in itself; and it does not understand that man's sin and guilt lie at the basis of all questions. The misery is ascribed by the world to the situation of things, to wrong conditions, to lack of education, to a bad environment, to bad examples, to external things. And salvation the world seeks with itself, in an arm of flesh, in more thorough education, in its own righteousness and in better examples, in man's ability to conquer suffering and death. And in the midst of that fearful struggle of the world to suppress or to ban world-woe through human ingenuity, it raises its clenched fist in the face of the Righteous One!

O miserable man that I am!

Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

I thank God!

Who is there who so lamentingly exults?

Who, that so supplicatingly gives thanks?

Who, besides God's saved child?

No one!

Lamenting in jubilation!

Singing though crying!

Entreating and giving thanks for that which was desired in the entreaty.

Rejoicing in the salvation obtained, and yet crying for deliverance!

Surely, such is the apparently irreconcilable contrast in the life of every child of God as long as he is in this world and still carries about with him the body of this death.

No, it is not doubt, much less is it despair, that is expressed in that nevertheless painful question, "Who shall deliver me?" He knows very well that he is delivered in principle. The fearful power of guilt and of sin no longer testifies against him. Condemnation no longer leers with grinning face against him. He has once learned to exult and he may daily confess, as he stands in the consciousness of faith, "I am justified by faith, and I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And he rejoices with the apostle that there is no condemnation for him, because he is in Christ Jesus. In free grace and out of His eternal good pleasure God was merciful to him. Electing love predestinated him unto the highest conceivable glory. Unfathomably deep Father-love gave the life of the Son for the salvation of the children. On Golgotha the blood was shed that paid completely also for his sins. And by the law of the Spirit of life he was also set free from the law of sin and death. Almighty grace gripped his heart and made him alive. Divine power dispelled the darkness and gave light, cut the root of enmity out of his heart and filled it with new life.

No, this outcry, "Who shall deliver me?" is not born of anxious doubt concerning the reality of salvation.

Much rather is it thus, that in the measure that he lives more out of that salvation, he also more earnestly prays, "Deliver me, Lord, from the body of this death." According as he stands higher in the consciousness of salvation, he also cries out more emphatically and mournfully, "O wretched man that I am!"

After all, it was when he was first delivered that he felt the depth of his misery. Formerly, he was darkness and did not even notice the fearfulness of the darkness in which he walked. Then he was of the flesh, and he did the desires of the flesh. And his entire mind was

enmity against God. It was death. Therefore, he did not even feel the terror of the power of death that held him prisoner. His inmost mind was in harmony with the service of sin. There was no knowledge of misery, because he loved his own misery. There was no awareness of struggle because he was himself enmity against God. There was no feeling of the awful burden of the body of his death, because his entire inner existence was in agreement with the power of unrighteousness.

But the love of God was shed abroad in his heart....

Life and light came....

And with that life and light there came a new life's desire, and different life-drive.... It was the drive of the love of God, to be well-pleasing to Him, to be the friend of God and always to dwell in His tent.

It was the drive of the principle of the liberated life. According to that drive of his heart he went out toward the things of God and he sang in principle,

Thy Word is as a lamp unto my feet,
A light upon my pathway unto heaven;
I've sworn an oath, which gladly I repeat,
That I shall keep, as always I have striven,
Thy righteous judgments, holy and complete,
When unto me Thy helping grace is given.
(Psalter# 428, stanza 8)

But then came also the struggle!

Then it seemed that in him the entire wicked power of sin and death was unchained, in order to oppose that new principle of life, to fight it and, if possible, to annihilate it. And he began to feel the power of the body of this death. The entire old, sinful nature, as it minds the things of the flesh, as it is ruled by the power and principle of death, and as it manifests itself through the body in the desires of the flesh, in the vainglory of life, the lust of the eyes, was awakened in him and turned against the new life-principle. There seemed to be in him a twofold law, the law of sin in his members and the law of the new life in his mind. Battle came, and trouble. When he willed to do good by grace, then evil was present with him. And so he frequently became a riddle to himself. He willed the good, but did not do it. He hated the evil, but did it. And yet it was always thus, that he himself no more did the evil. His inmost heart was no more in it, as formerly. The depth of his desires always went out toward God and His commandments. With his inmost being he had an aversion of iniquity

and an inner longing to make his members servants to righteousness....

When through God's grace he may do the good, then his soul enjoys it. When the law of sin that is in his members takes him captive and prevents him from being well-pleasing to God, then a deep pain and sorrow grip his soul. Then there is grief and sorrow toward God.

And now there comes out of that fearful contrast in his own life the irresistible urge toward complete salvation. O, as long as he still carries about with him that body of this death, and he views that body of this death with the enlightened eye of his understanding, he feels the greatness of the misery in which he is by nature, and he cries out, "O wretched man that I am!" And when the urge of the new life becomes powerful, and the longing for perfection begins to cry out in him, then he calls out, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Thus it is that the contrast comes about. No doubt, no despair, no fearful terror, but the love of God shed abroad in the heart, sorrowing over the old power of sin that is still in his members, is the deep root from which the lamentation is born, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Wondrous and yet understandable contrast!

Delivered and longing for deliverance!

Lamenting triumph-song!

Who shall deliver?

I thank God! The deliverance is in view!

God Triune is the Author of and the Surety for my final deliverance.

Sure is that salvation, because it rests in the unchangeable good pleasure of the Father, who never forsakes the work of His own hands. For those whom He did foreknow and in eternal love predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, these He also glorified!

Sure is that deliverance, because it is in Christ Jesus.

God Triune sent Him in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, to condemn sin in the flesh. And He came. And He joined battle for me against the powers of sin and death and hell. And He was victorious. And He deprived sin of the might and the right to rule in my life. And He arose out of the depth of death and was glorified. And He ascended into heaven full of honor,

with captivity as His captive and with gifts of comfort for all His brethren. He merited not only the beginning but also the end; not only the principle but also the completion of the full salvation....

Through Christ Jesus God shall also deliver me from the body of this death.

He shall sanctify and purify through the Spirit of our Lord; He shall preserve and guard against the powers of darkness that assault me from within and from without; presently He shall glorify me, and when the earthly house of this tabernacle is broken down,

shall provide me a building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens....

Then the body of this death shall remain behind forever!

He shall have dominion also over my body in the dust of death, and shall one day clothe me, according to body and soul, with glory.

Who shall deliver me? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

To Him be the glory!

Now and forever!

EDITORIAL



REFLECTIONS ON SYNOD 2024 AND THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION (3)

REV. JOSHUA ENGELSMA

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INTRODUCTION

In the past two editorials I have been reflecting on decisions of Synod 2024 of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRCA) on a case of doctrinal error related to the believer's experience of his salvation. In my first editorial I set forth the doctrine of Christ's saving work as it relates to the experience of salvation, and in my second editorial I addressed the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins and its relation to the experience of salvation. In this article I want to explain the doctrine of faith and how it relates to the experience of salvation.

For several years now I have wondered whether part of the explanation for the doctrinal struggles our churches have experienced is a confused or deficient understanding of faith.

On the one hand, there have been instances where faith has been confused and conflated with good works. Perhaps in an attempt to give the activity of faith its full due, some have defined faith in terms of sanctification and some have ascribed to good works a place and function in salvation that belongs only to faith.

On the other hand, there have been instances where some have evidenced a deficient understanding of faith.

Perhaps in an attempt to guard against faith becoming a new work that man must perform, some have defined faith only in terms of its being an unconscious bond, some have little conception of faith as believing and trusting, some have resisted the preaching of the call of the gospel to believe in Jesus, and some have little understanding of what it means that we are justified by faith.

It is necessary, therefore, that we come to a better understanding of faith and its relation to the experience of salvation.

WHAT IS FAITH?

To begin, let's take note of the biblical words for faith. The main Old Testament word for faith has the idea of holding something to be true and also trusting or confiding or resting in a person or truth. This is the word used in Genesis 15:6: "And he [Abraham] *believed* in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness."

The main New Testament word is translated in noun form as "faith" and in verb form as "believing." This word has the same basic meaning as the Old Testament word: holding something to be true and also trusting

or confiding or resting in a person or truth. The same root word is used as a noun and as a verb in Romans 4:5: “But to him that worketh not, but *believeth* on him that justifieth the ungodly, his *faith* is counted for righteousness.”

The Heidelberg Catechism in Lord’s Day 7 reflects the sense of these biblical words when it gives the definition of faith in A. 21 as “not only a certain knowledge...but also an assured confidence.”

The first element in the definition of faith is that faith is a certain knowledge.

There is an intellectual element to faith. Faith is not simply a feeling of excitement or an emotional high. Faith is not “blind” acceptance, a leap in the dark. As we will come to see, faith is especially confidence and trust, but you cannot believe in or trust someone or something without knowing who that person is or what that thing is. Faith is more than just intellectual knowledge, but it is never less than that.

This knowledge is a certain knowledge whereby we hold for truth what God has revealed to us in His Word. We not only know these truths, but we assent to them. In Reformed theology we speak of a “historical faith,” by which we mean that someone has an intellectual knowledge of the truths of the Bible. The devils and some unbelievers have this knowledge. But that is not true faith. Faith is not simply that we know and understand the truths of the Bible intellectually, but faith is believing these things, knowing them to be true, and holding them to be precious.

The second element in the definition of faith is that faith is an assured confidence. According to the wording of Lord’s Day 7, this element is especially what defines faith.

Faith is not only an intellectual apprehension and assent to the truth of God’s Word, but it is also personal confidence and assurance. The child of God does not simply say, “I know all these doctrines and how they are true for some people,” but he says, “I know all these things are true for me personally!” The assurance of faith is the assurance of *my* election, the assurance that God is *my* Father, the assurance that Christ died on the cross for *me*, the assurance that the Holy Spirit dwells in *me*, the assurance of the forgiveness of *my* sins, and the assurance of *my* place in the everlasting glories of the new creation.

There are some who deny that an essential part of faith is assurance. They claim that assurance does not belong to the essence of faith, but is a separate gift of God, received by only a few, usually after a long quest and much effort, and often through a mystical experience. For the rest of God’s people, they wallow in doubt. Doubt is even encouraged as humble piety. Some sadly live in doubt their whole life long.

But this teaching is not Reformed. It is contrary to God’s Word and the Reformed confessions. Assurance is the normal experience of the believer because faith is assurance. This is not to say that there are never times when we doubt. We are tempted to doubt on account of our sins. We are tempted to doubt in times of trial and chastening from the Lord. Doubt arises on account of the weakness of our faith. Although doubt is a reality at times, it is not something to be encouraged. It is not something spiritually beneficial. The will of God for His children is that they live in the assurance of their salvation. And this is the ordinary experience of the child of God—he lives in the confidence of faith. This is not spiritual pride. This is not proud self-confidence, but humble confidence in Jesus Christ. Even a weak faith clings to a strong Savior.

Included in the element of faith as confidence is the idea of trust. The phrase “assured confidence” in Lord’s Day 7 can be faithfully translated as a “heartly trust.” As noted above, both the Old and New Testament words for “faith” mean at their root “trust.”

To trust in God means that we rely on Him, depend on Him, have confidence in Him, and expect only good from Him. This is closely related to faith’s knowledge. In earthly terms, we trust a person because we know who he/she is. Our trust in God flows out of the knowledge we have of who He is and what He has done for us.

The Bible uses a rich variety of phrases and figures to describe faith as believing and trusting in Jesus: seeking refuge in Him (Ps. 57:1), clinging to Him (the idea of “following hard after” God in Ps. 63:8), leaning upon Him (Prov. 3:5), coming to Him (Matt. 11:28; John 6:35, 37), eating and drinking Him (John 6:51, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58), and abiding in Him (John 15:4, 5, 6, 7).

Our Reformed confessions use similar language when they speak of faith. Lord’s Day 23 of the Heidelberg Catechism speaks of faith as “embracing, believing, receiving, applying to oneself.” Belgic

Confession, Article 22 speaks of faith as “embracing Christ, appropriating Him, seeking nothing more besides Him” and as “an instrument that keeps us in communion with Him in all His benefits.” Article 23 speaks of faith as “relying and resting upon Christ.” Article 35 speaks of faith as “eating Christ, applying and receiving Him,” and as “the hand and mouth of our soul.”

TWO CLARIFICATIONS

There are two clarifying points that ought to be made.

First, we ought to say something briefly about what is often called in our circles “the bond of faith.”

Recently there has been some discussion in the pages of this magazine over this point. Without delving into the whole matter and at the risk of oversimplification, it seems to me that the discussion centers on a difference of terminology and emphasis, rather than a difference in substance. All ought to be agreed that faith is not an inherent ability of man but a gift of God, and a gift of God that is given in one’s regeneration and living union with Christ. Historically, Protestant Reformed writers have referred to faith from this point of view as a “bond,” with appeal to Q. & A. 20 of the Heidelberg Catechism (although it should be noted that the language of “bond” is not strictly confessional since the Heidelberg Catechism uses the language of “ingrafted”). Others have argued that this runs the risk of confusing the biblical concepts of *faith* and *union with Christ*. Throughout the history of Reformed theology, theologians did not speak of faith in terms of “bond” but used terms like the disposition of faith, the principle of faith, the power of faith, the faculty of faith, the seed of faith, or the habit (Latin: *habitus*) of faith.¹

1 It is worth noting the judgment of the influential Reformed theologian, Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676), in this regard. Voetius said: “[By *potency* we understand] the root, the faculty, the supernatural principle, the seed or germ out of which, in due course, grows faith. This is imprinted and implanted in the first regeneration—which should be taken in the strict sense here. It is also present in children who are going to be saved, and it is more specifically called by some the spirit of faith. However, we explicitly notice that this faith can only be called faith analogically, improperly, and metonymically as its cause or principle; in essence, it is as little faith as a seed is a tree, an egg is a chicken, and a bud is a flower.” As quoted in Maarten Wisse, “*Habitus fidei*: An essay on the history of

What also ought to be clear and agreed upon by all is that the overwhelming emphasis of God’s Word and the Reformed confessions is on faith as believing and trusting. The quotations from the confessions given earlier clearly indicate this. This means that, while it is appropriate to speak of faith in terms of it being a “bond” or “power” or “faculty,” the emphasis of our teaching and thinking about faith ought to be in terms of faith as believing and trusting. This is in no way “suspect;” it is simply Reformed.

Second, we ought to say something briefly about the terminology “activity of faith.”

Often the language of “bond of faith” is juxtaposed with the language “activity of faith,” by which is meant faith as believing and trusting. To speak this way is legitimate. I would only caution that we ought to be clear what we mean when we speak of the activity of faith. The idea could be left that the activity of faith is something different from faith itself, which is not the case, because faith by its very definition is believing and trusting. Also, we ought to be clear by what we mean when we speak of the activity of faith because some might assume (wrongly) that we are referring to repentance or good works. Repentance and good works are activities that are the fruits of faith, but are not in view when we speak of the activity of faith. By the activity of faith is simply meant faith itself—believing and trusting—not the fruits that inevitably flow out of faith.

FAITH AS INSTRUMENT

Faith is the God-ordained instrument or means by which we consciously receive and enjoy the other blessings of salvation. Ephesians 2:8 says: “For by grace are ye saved *through faith*; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Summarizing the teaching of God’s Word, the Heidelberg Catechism says in A. 20 that we “receive all His benefits, by a true faith.”

Faith is the instrument by which we receive and apply to ourselves the blessing of justification (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:5). That is, by faith we trust in and depend upon Christ and His righteousness as our only salvation and by faith

a concept,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 56 (2):181-182. The original Latin is found in Voetius, *Disputationes Selectae*, 2:499. Herman Bavinck also quotes these words of Voetius with approval in his *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 4:114-115.

we receive and apply to ourselves God's declaration to us in the gospel that we are forgiven for Christ's sake. Faith is also the instrument of our sanctification (Acts 26:18), that is, by faith we look to Christ for cleansing and rely upon Him for strength to flee sin and live godly.

To say that faith is the *instrument* or *means* of our salvation is not to make faith the *basis* of our salvation. We do not receive the blessings of salvation on account of the worthiness of our faith, as if faith earns them. Faith is simply the instrument, and that too supplied by God, by which we receive them from the hand of God. The basis for our being justified and sanctified is Christ crucified alone.

We can discern several reasons why God appointed faith as the instrument of salvation. First, God ordained faith as the instrument of salvation because it pleases Him to work in us as renewed, rational-moral creatures in such a way that we are brought consciously to know our total dependence upon Him and to rely upon Him for all things. Second, God ordained faith as the instrument of salvation because faith itself is a gift of God's grace to us (Eph. 2:8; Phil. 1:29) and a blessing of salvation merited for us by Christ. Third, God ordained faith as the instrument of our salvation because faith stands over against all working for salvation. Repeatedly, the Scriptures contrast the one who receives salvation by believing and the one who attempts to gain salvation by working (for example, Rom. 4:4-5; 11:6; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 3:4-9). We must have clear in our minds the fact that faith (believing/trusting) and doing good works are two different concepts. In the activity of obedience, we are always doing and giving. But faith is not a doing or giving; the activity of believing is unique in that it is a resting in, relying upon, and receiving from Christ. This means that faith is not just another work that we perform. Faith is not working but relying upon the working of Another. Fourth, God ordained faith as the instrument of our salvation because of faith's object, which is Jesus Christ. By its very nature faith always looks away from self, renouncing all trust in self, and faith looks to Jesus Christ, trusting in Him alone. The all-important matter with respect to faith is its Object. To summarize these four reasons, we can say that God appointed faith as the instrument of salvation so that even in this respect there is no room for boasting but all the glory for salvation goes to God.

Faith is the *sole* instrument of salvation.

Faith is the instrument of salvation, and not good works. Good works are not an instrument equal to or alongside of faith. The place of good works is that they are the fruit of faith.

Faith is the instrument of salvation, and not confession and sorrow over sin (that is, repentance).

It is certainly true that the Bible often makes the connection between forgiveness and confession and sorrow over sin (Ps. 32:5; Prov. 28:13; I John 1:9). It is true that, on the basis of these passages, we can properly say that forgiveness is consciously enjoyed in the way of sorrow over sin.

That being said, we need to understand that repentance is not a means alongside of faith. The reason why the Scriptures connect repentance and forgiveness is because of the close relation between repentance and faith. Faith and repentance are inseparably connected, so that where there is true faith it will always be accompanied by genuine sorrow over sin. Yet faith and repentance are distinct. Sorrow for sin is the fruit of faith. Faith is the sole instrument of forgiveness because, while repentance looks at sin, faith alone looks to Christ.²

RELATED TO THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR SALVATION

All that we have said up to this point leads to the

2 Calvin has some helpful comments in this regard in his commentary on Psalm 32. He first relates faith and repentance: "This voluntary confession is always conjoined with faith; for otherwise the sinner will continually seek lurking-places where he may hide himself from God." He then carefully distinguishes the two: "Should any one infer from this, that repentance and confession are the cause of obtaining grace, the answer is easy; namely, that David is not speaking here of the cause but of the manner in which the sinner becomes reconciled to God. Confession, no doubt, intervenes, but we must go beyond this, and consider that it is faith which, by opening our hearts and tongues, really obtains our pardon. It is not admitted that every thing which is necessarily connected with pardon is to be reckoned amongst its causes. Or, to speak more simply, David obtained pardon by his confession, not because he merited it by the mere act of confessing, but because, under the guidance of faith, he humbly implored it from his judge." Cf. John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, trans. James Anderson (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 1:530, 531-532.

conclusion that faith is the sole instrument of the believer's experience of his salvation. He consciously enjoys fellowship with God and the blessings of his salvation in Christ through faith alone.

It is for this reason that Synod 2024 of the PRCA judged the following statements to be in error:

- Statement #1: "Scripture teaches that something must be done that we may be saved" (where the something that must be done refers to good works).
- Statement #2: "We must accurately distinguish between a right to life and the possession of life. The former must be assigned to the obedience of Christ, that all the values of our holiness may be entirely excluded.

But certainly, our works, or rather these, which the Spirit of Christ worketh in us, and by us, contribute something to the latter."

Synod judged that both statements "convey the idea that good works have the same necessity, place, and function in salvation as faith." Synod affirmed that "the confessions plainly teach that we receive and apply to ourselves all the blessings of salvation by the instrument of faith alone" and stated that "the confessions deny that good works are the instrument to receiving and enjoying the blessings of salvation alongside of faith but instead are the fruits of faith."

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES



NAHUM (5)

THE COMING JUDGMENT OF NINEVEH (2)

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But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies. What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time. For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry. There is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the LORD, a wicked counsellor. Thus saith the LORD; Though they be quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder. And the LORD hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image: I will make thy grave; for thou art vile—Nahum 1:8-14.

For the first and last time in his prophecy (1:12) Nahum identifies his words as God's Word: "Thus saith the

Lord." He does not mean to say that verse 12 alone is the Word of God, but emphasizes the certainty of Nineveh's judgment, the threat of which is repeated in verses 12-14. Though "there is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the LORD, a wicked counsellor," neither he nor his successors would be any help against the Lord and His intent to destroy Nineveh. God had spoken.

The evil counselor, literally a "Belial counselor," was Sennacherib, the greatest of Assyria's kings, but a son of Belial who counseled his nation against the Lord and against the Lord's people. There would be only two other kings after him, his son, Esarhaddon (II Kings 19:37; Ezra 4:2; Is. 37:38), and his grandson, Ashurbanipal (called Asnappar in Ezra 4:10). These two successors ruled for a total of fifty years, and then God did make an utter end of Assyria and did so while the nation was still at the height of its power.

Nahum 1:12 is God's assurance to His people that the might and multitude of Assyria would not stand

against Him: “Though they be quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through.” Assyria, in the days of Nahum, was a great nation as witnessed by Jonah, whose presence and preaching in Nineveh found it to be a city of three day’s journey. It was also quiet (peaceful) in the days of Nahum, since it had conquered all its enemies. Yet Nineveh and its people would be “mowed down” by the Lord, like a field of grass.

Who it would be that would “pass through” Nineveh is not clear. Some think it refers to Sennacherib passing through Nineveh on his way to Judah and bringing down on himself and his nations the judgment of God. Others think, Calvin among them, that it refers to God and to His passing in vengeance through Nineveh: “Whatever strength there might be in the Assyrians, it could not resist the coming of God’s vengeance.”¹ With Calvin’s view we agree: God would pass through Assyria and His footsteps would ruin that nation.

As is always the case, God’s coming in judgment would also be for the salvation of His people, and so God adds through Nahum, “Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more.” God takes the responsibility for Nineveh’s depredations, though not the responsibility for their wickedness. For their wickedness, especially in Judah, they would be destroyed, though God had used them to chastise Judah. In Isaiah 10:15 God describes Assyria as the axe with which He hewed Judah and the nations, the saw with which He sawed Judah, and the rod with which He beat His people in His anger against their sins. That boasting and wicked axe and saw and rod He would break.

God often uses wicked men to chastise His church when they bring heresies and evil behavior into the church and the reproach of the ungodly on the church; but when He is finished chastising, it is the wicked nation or wicked men against whom He turns His anger. Of God’s use of Assyria in this way Isaiah as well as Nahum speaks: “Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks” (Is. 10:12).

So it is always. God controls and directs the lives and actions of wicked men and even of Belial himself, but never is He accountable for their wickedness. He is able in His sovereignty to use them without any injustice or unrighteousness that can be charged to Him. Their wickedness remains their own and for it He punishes them.

How different it is for us. We are accountable even for those evil things for which we are only indirectly responsible. The sin of a person who transgresses as a result of my bad example can be laid at my door. The blasphemy of a person that I hear and do not rebuke becomes my sin. I am accountable for the sins of others with whom I am associated, corporately and communally accountable in family, church, and society, just as the nation of Israel was held accountable for the sin of Achan.

We are held accountable for Adam’s sin, though none of us were present when he and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. That is the biblical doctrine of original sin, and it is neither believed nor understood today. Not only have we come beyond the doctrine of corporate responsibility but we are largely beyond acknowledging any accountability for sin at all. It is always someone else’s fault. There is always an excuse. No one is accountable because everything is done anonymously—by committees and organizations—and so personal responsibility and corporate responsibility are things of the past. No one is accountable because they have been trained to believe that the fault lies with their parents, their education, their upbringing, their environment, their friends, anything but themselves.

Yet God held Judah collectively responsible for the sins of the nation and chastised the nation as a whole through the coming of the Assyrians. He would do the same when He sent the Babylonians at a later date. Daniel, when confessing sin on behalf of the nation, would acknowledge his own responsibility:

And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our

¹ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1950), vol. 3, 441.

princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land... (Dan. 9:4-6).

Nevertheless, having chastised, God assures His people in the last part of verse 12 and in verse 13 that His love and care for them had not ceased: “Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder.” God would deliver His people from the oppression they suffered under the Assyrians when He destroyed that nation. He uses wicked men but, when He is finished using them, He punishes them for their pride, stubbornness, and for what they did to His people.

The word translated “afflict” has not only the force of the English word, but refers to God’s humbling of His people. Affliction has that fruit:

Through pain and trouble Thou hast led,
And humbled all our pride;
But, in the end, to liberty
And wealth Thy hand did guide.

Psalter #174, stanza 2

It has that fruit because all the fury of God’s judgments that would otherwise be felt in affliction has been removed through the afflictions of Christ, of whom the word is used in Isaiah 53:4, 7.

So God promises that He will break Assyria’s yoke from the neck of His people and burst their bonds. Under Assyrian domination the people were no better than beasts under a yoke or slaves (cf. Is. 14:25). The promise of God, then, has reference to Assyria’s cruelties, common in those days. The Assyrians were not content to subjugate other nations, but made the people slaves or sold them into slavery, often uprooting them from their own lands and scattering them among the nations, as Assyria had done to the people of the Northern Kingdom.

The striking thing about verse 12 is the promise that God would afflict them “no more.” It would be but a few years and the Babylonians would come, as God prophesied through Isaiah and Habakkuk, and Judah would be afflicted as never before. How then could God say, “No more”?

Surely God is speaking not only of Nineveh and the Assyrians, but of all who afflicted His people in the Old Testament and who continue to do so in the New. The promise is prophetic of a coming day, when delivered

forever from their enemies and from their own sins, the cause of their affliction, they would be given a glory and blessedness that would never again be touched by suffering.

Then God’s purpose in affliction will have been reached, His people, through affliction, will have been purified and brought to glory, and their enemies will be forever destroyed. O. Palmer Robertson quotes William Henry Green:

Thus Nahum’s predictions have a meaning for all time to come, so long as there remains aught in which the spirit of Nineveh survives—aught which has inherited its criminality and its hostility to God’s people. The doom of Nineveh shall attach in substance, if not in form, to all its successors. And not until the last foe of God and of human salvation shall be finally destroyed, shall it in its full import be accomplished.²

Verse 14, then, concludes God’s threat of judgment against Nineveh. As in verse 13, God speaks of Nineveh as if it were a single person. The reference, no doubt, is to the Belial counselor of verse 11, the king of Nineveh as the agent of Satan, Sennacherib or one of his descendants, perhaps especially the last of them, Ashurbanipal. These men were the leaders of the nation in wickedness, the ones who imagined evil against the Lord and the leaders in afflicting God’s people.

God reminds this evil counselor, and with him every evil ruler, that He is King of kings. They command their armies and their nations and their commands are the law of the land, but God gives command also and His command supersedes theirs. Their commands, though determining the lives of thousands and millions, are overruled by His sovereign command. They take counsel against the Lord and against His anointed, insisting that they have power and authority that can stand against Him, power that seems to stand when they oppress and persecute His people, but He laughs. Their might is but “borrowed capital,” which they squander in their opposition to Him to whom all power belongs. He has set His King on the holy hill of Zion and no power, earthly or hellish, can prevail.

Through Nahum God commands the utter end of the king of Assyria and with him of the nation and Nineveh.

2 O. Palmer Robertson, *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970), 84.

The king of Assyria will be left without descendants: “no more of thy name be sown.” His idols, the gods in which he trusted, would prove worthless and be carted off to Babylon: “out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image.” God would be his undertaker: “I will make thy grave.”

Robertson, in his commentary on Nahum, has an interesting reference to several of Ashurbanipal’s inscriptions, Sennacherib’s grandson and the last king of Assyria:

Ashurbanipal (669-627 B.C.), the last great king of Assyria prays that the son who follows him would honor and preserve his name on the building inscriptions he had carved as his own memorial. But the decree of God declares that no one shall survive to maintain his name. None shall be sown, apparently indicating that his descendants would perish.

Ashurbanipal warns in the same inscription that anyone who dares to remove his name shall be judged by Ashur, Sin, Shamash, Adad, Bel, Nabu, Ishtar of Nineveh, the queen of Kidmuri, Ishtar of Arbela, Urtu, Nergal and Nusku. These most important deities of Assyria certainly should prove adequate to guarantee the perpetuity of the king of Assyria’s name. But the one true living God, Yahweh of Israel, has determined something contrary.³

God calls him vile, a word that can mean “worthless”

but is usually translated in the KJV as “cursed” (for example, Gen. 8:21; 12:3; Ex. 21:17). Both ideas fit here. To be worthless in God’s sight and to be cursed of Him are not much different. God’s contempt and curse, however, are not empty as ours are, but are as potent and powerful as God Himself, and accomplished His displeasure against Nineveh, accomplished it so entirely that until modern times the location of Nineveh was not known. His contempt destroys and His curse drives men into the darkness of which verse 8 speaks.

What other response is possible but that of Psalm 96:

To all the nations of the earth
The blessed tidings bring;
Tell all the world Jehovah reigns,
The universal King.
The world shall therefore stand unmoved,
Established by His might;
And just is He to judge the wrong
And vindicate the right.

Let heaven and earth and sounding sea
To Him glad tribute bring;
Let field and wood and all therein
Before Jehovah sing;
For, lo, He comes to judge the earth,
And all the world shall see
His everlasting faithfulness,
His truth and equity.

Psalter# 257, stanzas 4, 5.

3 Robertson, *Nahum*, pp. 78, 79.

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE



THE *ORDO SALUTIS* (7a) SANCTIFICATION: CHANGED FROM GLORY TO GLORY (1)

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But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord—
II Corinthians 3:18

INTRODUCTION

In the last two articles we studied the fifth step in the *ordo salutis*: justification. Remember the steps: regeneration, calling, conversion, saving faith, justification, sanctification, preservation, and glorification.

Justification is God's legal declaration of righteousness, freeing us from sin's guilt and punishment. But there is more to salvation than justification: justification *by itself* does not make salvation complete. That is because, when God graciously saves us from sin, He saves us from every aspect of sin. Justification without sanctification would be akin to a judge leaving a pardoned man in prison. Justification without sanctification would be for God to leave us in the shameful misery of the bondage and pollution of sin. Justification without sanctification would be for God to abandon His goal of conforming us to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). Sanctification, too, is necessary, and a wonderful blessing of salvation.

THE IDEA OF HOLINESS

We begin with a definition: "Sanctification is God's work of making elect, regenerated, justified sinners holy." But what is holiness? First, holiness is separation. In the Old Testament certain objects, persons, and activities were holy. They were holy not because of any inherent quality in them, but because of their separation from the ordinary, the common, or the profane. "Holy" meant that they were separated from ordinary use.

Second, holiness is devotion, consecration, and dedication to God. Separation in the Bible is never separation for mere separation's sake. Separation is *unto* God: in the Old Testament an object, person, or activity was devoted to God's service. In the Old Testament the separation was external or ceremonial, while in the New Testament external or ceremonial holiness no longer applies. Holiness, then, is moral or ethical, internal and spiritual separation from sin and true, spiritual devotion to God. Holiness manifests itself in external behavior and in good works, but holiness itself is internal and spiritual.

Third, holiness concerns sin: it concerns the sanctified person's relationship to sin. The unbeliever, the unsanctified person, has a certain relationship to sin. The unbeliever is under the guilt of sin: he is liable to sin's punishment; he is unforgiven. The unbeliever is also polluted and defiled by sin: he is corrupt and filthy in God's sight or, to use theological language, he is totally depraved. The unbeliever is also under the power or dominion of sin; the unbeliever is a servant or slave of sin. "Whosoever committeth sin," says Jesus, "is the servant of sin" (John 8:34).

From those different aspects of sin Christ saves us. Christ saves us from the guilt of sin (justification); and

Christ saves us from the pollution and defilement of sin and from its power and dominion (sanctification). If Christ saved us only from the guilt of sin, but left us still under the power and dominion of sin (so that sin still ruled over us) and in the pollution, defilement or filth of sin (so that we remained filthy in God's sight and were not cleansed), He would not be a complete Savior.

Herman Hoeksema understood this when he wrote,

I rather think that some sincere antinomians place a wrong emphasis on justification at the expense of sanctification. They place all the emphasis on the work of Christ for us, in our behalf and in our stead, *at the expense of the work of Christ in us and through us by His Holy Spirit*. Their motive is, no doubt, the fear to derogate the work of free grace, the fear to give any credit to man, and the desire to let God in Christ be all, and to let the sinner be nothing. Nevertheless, they do not understand that *by failing to give due emphasis to the work of Christ in the believer and through him*, and therefore by failing to understand that it is inevitable that those that are justified in Christ, and therefore are by faith engrafted into Him, walk in a new and holy life, *they detract from the glory of Christ as a complete Savior*.¹

SANCTIFICATION'S IMPORTANCE IN SCRIPTURE AND THE CONFESSIONS

The Bible and the creeds teach that sanctification is an important aspect of our salvation. Jesus prays in John 17:17, "Sanctify them through thy truth." Paul writes, "Sin shall not have dominion over you" and "being made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:14, 18). In fact, the whole sixth chapter of Romans concerns sanctification. You are encouraged to read it. Ephesians 1:4 identifies sanctification as the goal of election: "Chosen in him before the foundation of the world *that we should be holy*." In Ephesians 5:25-26 sanctification is the goal of the cross: "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, [that] he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Titus 2:4 is similar: "[Christ] gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and *purify unto himself* a peculiar people zealous of good works."

The creeds testify to the same truth. Heidelberg Catechism, A. 43 states one benefit of the cross: "Our old man is crucified, dead, and buried with Him, that

¹ *The Triple Knowledge*, 3:29-30 (Grand Rapids, MI: RFPA, repr. 1990). Italics added.

so the corrupt inclinations of the flesh may no more reign in us.” Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 70 teaches in connection with baptism: “What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ? It is...also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives.” Heidelberg Catechism, A. 86 explains salvation in these words: “Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image.” Belgic Confession, Article 24 teaches: “This true faith...doth regenerate and make him a new man, causing him to live a new life, and freeing him from the bondage of sin.” Belgic Confession, Article 34 teaches, again in connection with baptism, “The Lord...giveth...the gifts and invisible grace, washing, cleansing, and purging our souls of all filth and unrighteousness, renewing our hearts...putting on us the new man, and putting off the old man with all his deeds.” Canons V, 1 describes salvation in these words: “God...delivers [us] from the dominion and slavery of sin in this life.”

We also find this truth in our liturgical forms. The Baptism Form says, “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.” Let not the Reformed believer minimize or neglect sanctification.

To summarize: holiness is separation from sin, that is, separation from the *power and dominion* of sin, so that we are consecrated, devoted, and dedicated to God, and free to serve God with a good conscience; and holiness is separation from the *pollution and defilement* of sin, so that we are able to live new, pure lives to God’s glory. Sanctification is God’s work of making us holy.

Sanctification is not justification and must not be confused with it. In justification God changes our legal state: the divine Judge declares us righteous, in harmony with the standard of His law. Justification is God’s verdict: “Righteous! Worthy of everlasting life on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ!” Sanctification naturally follows from justification: if God has rendered a verdict of righteousness, He also releases us from the power and pollution of sin. A pardoned and justified man is released

from prison so that he enjoys his newly granted freedom. That release is sanctification. Indeed, justification is the ground or the basis for our sanctification. On what basis does the jailor release the prisoner? The judge’s verdict of justification. On what basis are we delivered from sin’s power and pollution? God the Judge’s verdict of justification. Christ died to secure our justification and to secure our sanctification. Both belong to the blessedness of our salvation.

THE GLORY OF HOLINESS

In II Corinthians 3 the words sanctify, sanctification, and holiness do not appear. Instead, the apostle uses the word “glory.” That is fitting because *holiness is glory*. The chapter is an extended contrast between the law and the gospel, or between the Old Testament and the New Testament. One of the great differences between those two is “glory.” In verse 7 the apostle speaks of the glory of “the ministration of death.” The ministration of death is the law of God in the Ten Commandments, which, although in force as a guide for a thankful life, was never a source of righteousness and salvation. In verse 9 the apostle calls it “the ministration of condemnation.” In verse 11 the apostle calls it “that which is done away.” The Old Testament dispensation (the old covenant or testament of the law), then, brought death and condemnation, and it was “done away with.” It is abolished and became obsolete. But it had glory.

However, the New Testament, the new covenant, the new dispensation of the gospel is much more glorious; it has a better glory. It is called “the ministration of the spirit” (v. 8); “the ministration of righteousness” (v. 9); and “that which remaineth” (v. 11). To illustrate the glory, the inferior glory, of the Old Testament the apostle cites the end of Exodus 34. Moses had been speaking with God at Mount Sinai and when he returned to the people, the people noticed something: *the skin of his face was shining with the glory of God*. That was quite an amazing sight, but it was not pleasant; it dazzled the people and frightened them: “Behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come nigh him” (Ex. 34:30). Moses put a veil on his face, which he wore when he spoke to the Israelites, and which he took off when he spoke to God.

The apostle explains that there were two reasons for Moses’ veil. First, it prevented the Israelites from being dazzled by the sight of God’s glory; and, second, it prevented the Israelites from seeing the fading away

of that glory. In II Corinthians 3:13 we read, “And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.” If the Israelites had looked at Moses’ face, they would have seen the fading of the glory, which is a picture of the passing away of the Old Testament in preparation for the New. They were not ready to see that because Christ had not yet come and they did not yet have the fullness of the Spirit. The glory of the New Testament is greater: it is not the reflected glory of God hidden under and obscured by a veil, but the actual glory of Christ that we see *without a veil*.

That is the meaning of verse 18: “But we all with open face.” The word “open” in verse 18 means “not covered with a veil” or “unveiled.” Moses wore a veil. The Jews, when they read the Old Testament today, still have a veil on their hearts that makes it impossible for them to understand the gospel of Christ (vv. 14-16). We do not have a veil on our hearts because “[the] veil is done away in Christ” (v. 14). We read that in II Corinthians 4:6: “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

The “glory of the Lord” is the issue in verse 18: “But we all with open face beholding as in a glass *the glory of the Lord*, are changed into the same image *from glory*

to glory.” The glory of the Lord is the shining forth of the perfections of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ’s glory is the effulgence of His power, His wisdom, His goodness, His righteousness, His grace, His mercy, His love, and His holiness, to name but a few of His perfections. The effect of beholding Christ’s glory is *our transformation into the image of that glory*.

Such a transformation did not happen to Israel under the dispensation of Moses: the Israelites saw the glory of God reflected in Moses’ face, but they were not transformed into that glory; and, indeed, that glory faded away. But it happens in the church: we see the glory of Jesus Christ, and seeing it and no longer hindered by a veil, we are transformed into the image of that glory. That is the very essence of sanctification. Christ’s glory, into whose image we are transformed, is His holiness. To be transformed into the image of Christ is to be separated from the power and dominion and from the filth and pollution of sin and to be devoted or consecrated to God. There is nothing more glorious than that.

Next time, we will continue an explanation of sanctification by examining more closely the transformation that takes place in our lives in sanctification. When, how, and to what degree are we changed from glory to glory into the image of God’s dear Son?

INDEX TO VOLUME 100

TEXTUAL INDEX

Text	Author	page	Text	Author	page	Text	Author	page	Text	Author	page
Judges 3:31	MDB...	291	Nahum 1:1.....	RHH...	200	Mark 16:9-20.....	DJK...	450	Ephesians 3:7, 8	DL...	123
Psalms 89:15	MS.....	51	Nahum 1:2-6	RHH...	298	Acts 8:30, 31	HJB...	135	Ephesians 5:1, 2	SJR...	483
Psalms 103:14.....	HH.....	3	Nahum 1:7.....	RHH...	396	Acts 8:30, 31	HJB...	406	Ephesians 6:18	MDV.....	27
Psalms 108:1	BLH...	441	Nahum 1:8-14.....	RHH...	464	Romans 7:24, 25.....	HH...	507	Philippians 1:20, 21....	JPM...	459
Psalms 119:25-32.....	JPM...	314	Nahum 1:8-14.....	RHH...	514	Romans 12:9.....	JDS...	219	Philemon 1:1-3	KB...	274
Proverbs 3:5, 6	DJH...	399	Habakkuk 3:3-6	RHH.....	8	I Corinthians 10:13.....	JDS...	339	Hebrews 12:5	JM...	209
Jeremiah 29:11.....	DL...	267	Habakkuk 3:7-13... RHH.....	82	II Corinthians 3:18 ..	MMG...	517	James 3:13-18	GJE...	435	
Jeremiah 31:18, 19 ..	MMG.....	11	Habakkuk 3:13-16 ..RHH ...	154	II Corinthians 6:17, 18..	MDB....	75	I Peter 5:8, 9	MDV...	195	
Ezekiel 11:19, 20....	MMG...	203	Habakkuk 3:17-19 ..RHH ...	178	II Corinthians 12:7-11..	DL...	411	Revelation 2:8-11.....	DRN...	152	
Joel 2:13.....	MMG.....	85	Matthew 1:21-23	JPM...	147	Ephesians 2:20-22	SJR...	243	Revelation 22:6, 7....	SRK...	171

BOOKS REVIEWED

Book Title	Author	Reviewer	page	Book Title	Author	Reviewer	page
A.C. VanRaalte: <i>Pastor by Vocation, Entrepreneur by Necessity</i>	Robert P. Swierenga...	DJK ..	287	Luther’s <i>Augustinian Theology of the Cross</i>	Marco Barone.....	BF ..	938
<i>Christian Manifesto: Jesus’ Life-changing Words from the Plain, The</i>	Alistair Begg.....	BH ..	430	<i>Short of Glory: A Biblical and Theological Exploration of the Fall</i>	Mitchell L. Chase...	DJE ..	167
<i>Critical Dilemma: The Rise of Critical Theories and Social Justice Ideology—Implications for the Church and Society</i>	Neil Shenvi and Pat Sawyer...	JAH ..	334	<i>Through Many Dangers</i>	P.M. Kuiper...	RPS ..	237
				<i>When the Stars Disappear: Help and Hope from Stories of Suffering in Scripture</i>	Mark Talbot....	MB ..	190

TITLE INDEX

Title	Author	page	Title	Author	page
Abortion Reversal	DRN	297	Grace Through Our Thorn	DL	411
Alleged Mistranslation	DJH	394	Gysbert VanBaren Family, The	JH	476
Andreas Hyperius: Reformer of Preaching	CJG	3	Habakkuk: The Just Shall Live by Faith (13), God's Judgment and Salvation (3).....	RHH	8
<i>Answers in Genesis</i> : Faithful Defense of God's Word ...	DRN	449	Habakkuk: The Just Shall Live by Faith (14), God's Judgment and Salvation (4).....	RHH	82
Antithesis in Paradise, The	HH	331	Habakkuk: The Just Shall Live by Faith (15), God's Judgment and Salvation (5).....	RHH	154
Ants and You	RJB	305	Habakkuk: The Just Shall Live by Faith (16 concluded), Rejoicing in Troublous Times.....	RHH	178
Are You Ready for Persecution? A Training Plan.....	BLG	368	Hide and Seek	SK	185
Artificial Wombs	DRN	296	High Eyes.....	RJB	471
As a Roaring Lion	MDV	195	History of Persecution in Myanmar, The	TS	377
Battling the Devil (5), Offense in the War.....	RJB	15	Honor	JAH	181
Battling the Devil (6), Praying in the War	RJB	165	How to Study the Bible	HJB	135
Belgic Confession and Missions (5), The	DK	13	How to Study the Bible (2).....	HJB	406
Bitter Weeping and Gracious Restoration.....	TC	227	Imitators of God	SJR	483
Bless the Lord, O My Soul	ML	327	In Memoriam, Herman C. Hanko (1930-2024)	DJE	429
Briefing on the Persecution Against Christians in India, A....	JYP	372	Introduction to Isagogics, An	DK	127
Building Fitly Framed, A	SJR	243	Is the New Man the Holy Spirit? (1)	WAL	492
Called to Separate	MDB	75	It Depends on What You Mean: The Importance of Definitions	BLG	29
Called to the Ministry of Preaching Unsearchable Riches... DL...	123		Jehovah's Deliverance Through Shamgar.....	MDB	291
Calling Our Neighbors to Trust in God.....	DJH	399	Keep Reading, Johnny, Keep Reading!.....	BLH	70
Catechism and Confessing Faith: Head or Heart?	BLG	341	Knowing the Joyful Sound	MS	51
Causes for Discipline, and Private Sins	JJ/JDE	188	Lamentation and Jubilation.....	HH	507
Chastisement Versus Punishment.....	JM	209	Letters	SK/MMG	445
<i>Christian Renewal</i> : "Getting to Know Jordan Peterson" ..	DRN	448	Letters	JBR	445
<i>Christian Renewal</i> : A Closer Look at Minister Shortages, Cults, and More.....	DRN	448	Letters	JR/DJH	445
<i>Christianity Today</i> : A Closer Look at Christians in Haiti..	DRN	449	Light Pollution: A Distracting Light	DK	90
Christ's Speedy Coming.....	SRK	171	Lord's Thoughts Toward Us, The.....	DL	267
Church: The Kingdom of God, The	JAL	225	Magnifying Christ.....	JPM	459
Cicadas: Showing Forth the Majesty of God	DK	424	Manifesting True Unity and Catholicity	MMG	233
Compassionate Remembrance.....	HH	3	Manipur, India: A Sister of Smyrna	DRN	152
Conference on Abuse with Moles and Denhollander.....	BLH	245	Marks by Which Christ's Church Is Known	JAL	250
Congress and the Supreme Court Review Exclusion of Religious and Conservative Groups	BVE	355	Martyr	BLH	365
Conscription in Myanmar	DRN	296	Matthew: Jesus Christ Fulfilling Old Testament Prophecy..	DK	319
Conspiracy Against the Word, The	JM	353	May Coach K Pray?	NV	261
Corresponding Relationship with the BERG	MMG	500	Minister's Fixed Heart, The	BLH	441
Council of Nicea (787), The: Meeting	DJK	32	Ministry of Archippus, The	KB	416
Denominational Changes Close to Home.....	DJH	248	Mirages: Distortions of Light	DK	211
Device	JCS	272	Missing Evidence.....	DJH	395
Domestic Missions Newsletter	JAL	351	Misuse of Power, The	BLG	173
Elder's Blessed Calling to Oversee the Gospel Preaching, The.....	HP	64	Myanmar Semi-annual Report: June 2024	PRC	474
Elders Knowing the Sheep	BLH	389	Nahum.....	RHH	200
Focusing on Christ in the Midst of Cancer: Remembering My Brother's Example	DJH	162	Nahum (2)	RHH	298
Follow the Leader	SK	403	Nahum (3) God a Stronghold.....	RHH	396
Forgiveness of Philemon, The	KB	274	Nahum (4) The Coming Judgment of Nineveh (1).....	RHH	464
Gender Dysphoria and Transgenderism (5), "Religious" Objections to the Bible's Teaching on Gender.....	CJG	182	Nahum (5) The Coming Judgment of Nineveh (2).....	RHH	514
Gender Dysphoria and Transgenderism (6), "Religious" Objections to the Bible's Teaching on Gender.....	CJG	230	New Alliance of Reformed Churches.....	DJH	249
Gender Dysphoria and Transgenderism (7), "Religious" Objections to the Bible's Teaching on Gender.....	CJG	256	Of Jesus Christ, True God and Man, the Only Savior of the World 11f.....	RLC	157
Genuine Love	JDS	219	Of Jesus Christ, True God and Man, the Only Savior of the World 11g.....	RLC	322
Glimpse into the Current Work of the FMC.....	RJB	473	Of Jesus Christ, True God and Man, the Only Savior of the World 11h.....	RLC	453
God Is God! Explanation and Use.....	BLH	293	Of Jesus Christ, True God and Man, the Only Savior of the World 11h (2)	RLC	469
God Is God: Application	BLH	317	On the Persecution of Christians in Germany.....	JBK	370
God's Folly	RLC	56			

Title	Author	page	Title	Author	page
<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (4), The: Conversion: Turned So That We Turn	MMG	11	Religious Persecution in Korea	SL	376
<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (4a), The: Conversion: The Old Man.....	MMG	85	Remember the Persecuted Church.....	CJH	363
<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (4b), The: Conversion: The New Man ...	MMG	203	Report from the United Kingdom.....		382
<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (5), The: Saving Faith: Given to Believe ...	MMG	276	Reporting to the Consistory	JJ/JDE	235
<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (6), The: Justification: Justified Freely by God's Grace	MMG	343	RFPA Annual Secretary Report	RG	142
<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (6a), The: Justification and Assurance: No Condemnation to Them Who Walk After the Spirit ...	MMG	420	Rumblings on the Canadian-American Fault Line of the CRC.....	DJH	248
<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (7a), The, Sanctification: Changed from Glory to Glory (1).....	MMG	517	Sabbath The: Delighting in the Gospel's Rest	BLG	221
Our Calling Regarding the Church Institute.....	JAL	301	Sampling of Worthwhile Reads	DRN	448
Our Forgotten (?) Wayward Children.....	BLG	77	Secret Sins	JJ/JDE	214
Our Savior Born of a Virgin	JPM	147	Seeking the Heavenly Homeland.....	SM	92
PCUSA and PCA General Assemblies, and CRC and URC Synods	DJH	490	Seminary News	RLC	44
Peace with God's Plan	TC	35	Seminary News	RLC	284
Perfectly Fitted for a Lowly Station.....	JM	17	Snow	JCS	224
Persecuted Church, The.....		361	Solar Eclipse.....	DJH	395
Persecution Report from Kolkata, India	ES	374	Soldiers Exhorted to Pray.....	MDV	27
Planned Departure of Onesimus, The	KB	33	Spreading the Reformed Gospel to the Four Corners of the Earth.....	DK	139
Prayer to be Delivered from the Dust, A.....	JPM	314	<i>Standard Bearer</i> : Loving Service of the Church, The	BLG	7
PRCA: 1924-2024, Guarding the Lord's Day Landmark ..	BLG	197	Strength in Weakness.....	JM	259
Preaching in Missions.....	WGB	63	Supreme Court Expands Public Accommodation Protections for Christians.....	BVE	137
Preaching in the Great Congregation (special issue)		49	Taken by Temptation.....	JDS	339
Preaching the Call of the Gospel	JDE	59	Threats to the Christians and the Church—Which Are Current and Real?	MDV	308
Prepare Your Hearts and Minds	AP	68	Three-self Formula and PRCA Foreign Missions (11), The.....	RJS	324
Pressures on the Saints in Singapore, The	MW	380	Three-self Formula and PRCA Foreign Missions (12), The.....	RJS	349
Preview of Synod 2024.....	JDE	413	Thys Feenstra History	JH	20
Protestant Reformed Churches, The: Their Beginnings (4): Common Grace in the Assemblies.....	RJD	159	To Young Men in Christ.....	SRK	387
Protestant Reformed Minister Today, The	BLH	40	Total Solar Eclipse—A Marvel and a Sign, A.....	JM	303
Protestant Reformed Missions, Years of Rebuilding: Missions Revived, 1954-1962 (2)	WGB	88	Tried by the Word	SM	282
Protestant Reformed Missions, Years of Rebuilding: Missions Revived, 1954-1962 (3)	WGB	253	2024 British Reformed Fellowship Family Conference	AS	247
Protestant Reformed Missions, Years of Rebuilding: Missions Revived, 1954-1962 (4)	WGB	401	Under His Wings We Trust	ML	133
Question Concerning Treatment of Disciplined Members.....	BLG	176	Using Social Media with Christian Intentionality	BLH	269
Rain	JCS	468	Vengeance	JAH	418
Reconciliation	JJ/JDE	329	Venom, Vitriol, and Victory	JM	498
Redeeming the Time as Husband and Wife	TC	495	Walking in the Way of Wisdom	GJE	435
Re-entry: Leaving the Mission Field and Going Back (1)	RJS	427	War in Israel.....	DJH	80
Reflections on Synod 2024 and the Experience of Salvation.....	JDE	461	What the Layman Should Know About Textual Criticism: Introduction.....	DJK	130
Reflections on Synod 2024 and the Experience of Salvation (2)	JDE	485	What the Layman Should Know About Textual Criticism: History.....	DJK	206
Reflections on Synod 2024 and the Experience of Salvation (3)	JDE	510	What the Layman Should Know About Textual Criticism: The Right Method	DJK	280
<i>Reformed Perspective</i> : Advice for Young People on Marriage and More.....	DRN	449	What the Layman Should Know About Textual Criticism: Internal Evidence	DJK	347
Regeneration, Saving Faith, and Union in Christ ..	TP/MMG	392	What the Layman Should Know About Textual Criticism: Mark 16.....	DJK	450
Religious Accommodation Victory for Employees	NV	37	When Discipline 'Descends into Butchery'	BLG	125
			When Discipline Is Naïve	BLG	149
			When the Weak Come to Worship.....	DVD	67

SUBJECT INDEX

ABORTION

Abortion Reversal DRN.. | 297 |

ABUSE

Conference on Abuse with Moles and Denhollander...BLH... 245

ADVENT

Our Savior Born of a Virgin JPM.. | 147 |

ANNUAL MEETING

RFPA Annual Secretary Report RG.. | 142 |

Title	Author	page	Title	Author	page
ANNUAL MEETING (cont.)			CHURCH/STATE		
Spreading the Reformed Gospel to the Four Corners			Supreme Court Expands Public Accommodation		
of the EarthDK..		139	Protections for Christians, The BVE..		137
ANTITHESIS			CICADAS		
Antithesis in Paradise, The HH..		331	Cicadas: Showing Forth the Majesty of GodDK..		424
Called to SeparateMDB....		75	COMFORT		
ANTS			God a Stronghold.....RHH..		396
Ants and YouRJB..		305	COMMON GRACE		
ARCHIPPUS			Protestant Reformed Churches, The: Their Beginnings (4):		
Ministry of Archippus, The KB..		416	Common Grace in the Assemblies RJD..		159
ASSURANCE			COMMUNICATION		
<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (6a), The: Justification and Assurance: No Con-			It Depends on What You Mean: The Importance of		
demnation to Them Who Walk After the Spirit...MMG...		420	Definitions..... BLG....		29
ASTRONOMY			Bless the Lord, O My Soul ML..		327
Total Solar Eclipse—A Marvel and a Sign JM..		303	COMPASSION		
BEKENDE EVANGELISCH-REFORMIERTE GEMEINDE			Compassionate Remembrance HH.....		3
Corresponding Relationships with the BERG..... MMG..		500	CONCEPTION		
BIBLE			Artificial WombsDRN..		296
Conspiracy Against the Word, The JM..		353	CONFERENCES		
BIBLE HISTORY			2024 British Reformed Fellowship		
Forgiveness of Philemon, The KB..		274	Family Conference..... AS..		247
Ministry of Archippus, The KB..		416	CONFESSION of FAITH		
Planned Departure of Onesimus, The KB....		33	Catechism and Confessing Faith: Head or Heart?... BLG ..		341
BIBLE STUDY			CONSCRIPTION		
How to Study the BibleHJB..		135	Conscription in Myanmar.....DRN..		296
How to Study the Bible (2).....HJB..		406	CONTACT COMMITTEE		
CHASTISEMENT			Manifesting True Unity and Catholicity MMG..		233
Grace Through Our Thorn..... DL..		411	Corresponding Relationship with the BERG MMG..		500
Chastisement Versus Punishment JM..		209	CONVERSION		
CHILDBEARING			<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (4), The Conversion: Turned So That		
Artificial WombsDRN..		296	We TurnMG....		11
CHRIST			<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (4a), The: Conversion: The Old ManMMG....		85
Magnifying Christ..... JPM..		459	<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (4b), The: Conversion: The New Man ...MMG...		203
Of Jesus Christ, True God and Man, the Only Savior			CONVOCATION ADDRESS		
of the World 11hRLC..		453	Protestant Reformed Minister Today, The BLH....		40
Of Jesus Christ, True God and Man, the Only Savior			CORRESPONDING RELATIONSHIPS		
of the World 11h (2).....RLC..		469	Corresponding Relationship with the BERG MMG..		500
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION			COUNCIL of NICEA		
Threats to the Christians and the Church—Which Are			Council of Nicea (787), The: Meeting DJK....		32
Current and Real?MDV..		308	COUNSEL of GOD		
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH			Lord's Thoughts Toward Us, The DL..		267
Denominational Changes Close to Home..... DJH..		248	DEATH		
Rumblings on the Canadian-American Fault Line			Focusing on Christ in the Midst of Cancer: Remembering		
of the CRC DJH..		248	My Brother's Example..... DJH..		162
PCUSA and PCA General Assemblies, and CRC and			DELIVERANCE		
URC Synods DJH..		490	Prayer to be Delivered from the Dust, A..... JPM..		314
CHURCH			DEVICES		
Building Fitly Framed, A SJR..		243	Device JCS..		272
Church: The Kingdom of God, The..... JAL..		225	DEVIL		
<i>Standard Bearer</i> : Loving Service of the Church, The....BLG.....7			As a Roaring Lion.....MDV..		195
Our Calling Regarding the Church Institute..... JAL..		301	DISCIPLES		
CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE			Imitators of God SJR....		483
Questions Concerning Treatment of Disciplined			DOMESTIC MISSIONS		
Members BLG..		176	Domestic Missions Newsletter JAL....		351
When Discipline Is Naïve BLG..		149	DUNG BEETLE		
CHURCH ORDER			Perfectly Fitted for a Lowly Station..... JM.....		17
Causes for Discipline, and Private Sins JJ/JDE..		188	ECUMENICAL COUNCILS		
Reconciliation JJ/JDE..		329	Council of Nicea (787), The: Meeting DJK.....		32
Reporting to the Consistory JJ/JDE..		235			
Secret Sins JJ/JDE..		214			

INDEX TO VOLUME 100

Title	Author	page	Title	Author	page
ELDERS			GOOD WORKS		
Elder's Blessed Calling to Oversee the			Reflections on Synod 2024 and the Experience of		
Gospel Preaching, The	HP	64	Salvation	JDE	461
Elders Knowing the Sheep	BLH	389	HABAKKUK		
END TIMES			Habakkuk: The Just Shall Live by Faith (13),		
War in Israel	DJH	80	God's Judgment and Salvation (3)	RHH	8
Threats to the Christians and the Church—Which Are			Habakkuk: The Just Shall Live by Faith (14),		
Current and Real?	MDV	308	God's Judgment and Salvation (4)	RHH	82
EVANGELISM			Habakkuk: The Just Shall Live by Faith (15),		
Calling Our Neighbors to Trust in God	DJH	399	God's Judgment and Salvation (5)	RHH	154
EVOLUTION			Habakkuk: The Just Shall Live by Faith (16-concluded),		
Answers in Genesis: Faithful Defense of God's Word	DRN	449	Rejoicing in Troubled Times	RHH	178
Missing Evidence	DJH	395	HANKO, HERMAN C.		
EXCOMMUNICATION			In Memoriam, Herman C. Hanko (1930-2024)	DJE	429
Our Forgotten (?) Wayward Children	BLG	77	HEARING the WORD		
FAITH			When the Weak Come to Worship	DVD	67
Focusing on Christ in the Midst of Cancer: Remembering			HEAVEN		
my Brother's Example	DJH	162	Seeking the Heavenly Homeland	SM	92
Letters	SK/MG	445	HOMOSEXUALITY		
<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (5), The, Saving Faith: Given to Believe	MMG	276	Alleged Mistranslation	DJH	394
Reflections on Synod 2024 and the Experience of			Letters	JBR/DJH	445
Salvation	JDE	461	HONOR		
Reflections on Synod 2024 and the Experience of			Honor	JAH	181
Salvation (3)	JDE	510	HUMILITY		
Regeneration, Saving Faith, and Union in Christ ...	TP/MMG	392	High Eyes	RJB	471
FAMILY			HUSBANDS		
Redeeming the Time as Husband and Wife	TC	495	Redeeming the Time as Husband and Wife	TC	495
FEENSTRA, THYS			HYPERIUS, ANDREAS		
Thys Feenstra History	JH	20	Andreas Hyperius: Reformer of Preaching	CJG	54
FOLLOWERS			IMITATORS		
Imitators of God	SJR	483	Imitators of God	SJR	483
FOREIGN MISSIONS			INDIA		
Glimpse into the Current Work of the FMC	FJB	473	Briefing on the Persecution Against Christians in		
Re-entry: Leaving the Mission Field and			India, A	JYP	372
Going Back (1)	RJS	427	Persecution Report from Kolkata, India	ES	374
Three-self Formula and PRCA Foreign			INSTRUCTION		
Missions (11), The	RJS	324	Hide and Seek	SK	185
Three-self Formula and PRCA Foreign			ISAGOGICS		
Missions (12), The	RJS	349	Introduction to Isagogics, An	DK	127
FORGIVENESS of SIN			ISRAEL		
Reflections on Synod 2024 and the Experience of			War in Israel	DJH	80
Salvation (2)	JDE	485	JUDGMENT of GOD		
FREE SPEECH			Habakkuk: The Just Shall Live by Faith (13),		
May Coach K Pray?	NV	261	God's Judgment and Salvation (3)	RHH	8
GENDER DYSPHORIA			Habakkuk: The Just Shall Live by Faith (14),		
Gender Dysphoria and Transgenderism (5), "Religious"			God's Judgment and Salvation (4)	RHH	82
Objections to the Bible's Teaching on Gender	CJG	182	Habakkuk: The Just Shall Live by Faith (15),		
Gender Dysphoria and Transgenderism (6), "Religious"			God's Judgment and Salvation (5)	RHH	154
Objections to the Bible's Teaching on Gender	CJG	230	Nahum (4) The Coming Judgment of Nineveh (1)	RHH	464
Gender Dysphoria and Transgenderism (7), "Religious"			Nahum (5) The Coming Judgment of Nineveh (2)	RHH	514
Objections to the Bible's Teaching on Gender	CJG	256	JUSTIFICATION		
GENERAL ASSEMBLIES			<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (6), The, Justification: Justified Freely by		
PCUSA and PCA General Assemblies, and CRC and			God's Grace	MMG	343
URC Synods	DJH	489	<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (6a), The, Justification and Assurance: No Con-		
GERMANY			demnation to Them Who Walk After the Spirit ...	MMG	420
On the Persecution of Christians in Germany	JBK	370	KOREA		
GOD			Religious Persecution in Korea	SL	376
God Is God! Explanation and Use	BLH	293	LAZINESS		
God Is God: Application	BLH	317	Ants and You	RJB	305

Subject	Title	Author	page	Subject	Title	Author	page
LEADERSHIP				ORDO SALUTIS			
Letters.....		JBR.....	445	<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (4), The: Conversion: Turned So That			
LIGHT				We Turn	MMG.....	11	
Light Pollution: A Distracting Light	DK.....	90		<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (4a), The: Conversion: The Old Man ...	MMG.....	85	
LISTENING				<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (5), The: Saving Faith: Given to Believe	MMG	276	
When the Weak Come to Worship	DVD.....	67		<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (6), The, Justification : Justified Freely by God's			
LITERATURE				Grace.....	MMG.....	343	
Spreading the Reformed Gospel to the Four Corners				<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (6a), The, Justification and Assurance: No Con-			
of the Earth	DK.....	139		demnation to Them Who Walk After the Spirit.....	MMG.....	420	
LOVE				<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (7a), The Sanctification: Changed from			
Genuine Love.....	JDS.....	219		Glory to Glory	MMG.....	517	
LOVE for the CHURCH				PARENTS			
<i>Standard Bearer</i> : Loving Service of the Church, The....	BLG.....	7		Follow the Leader	SK.....	403	
MARKS of the CHURCH				PASTORS			
Marks by Which Christ's Church Is Known	JAL.....	250		Protestant Reformed Minister Today, The	BLH.....	40	
MARRIAGE				PERSECUTION			
<i>Reformed Perspective</i> : Advice for Young People on				Are You Ready for Persecution? A Training Plan... BLG.....	368		
Marriage and More	DRN.....	449		Briefing on the Persecution Against Christians			
MARTYRS				in India, A	JYP.....	372	
Martyr	BLH.....	365		History of Persecution in Myanmar, The.....	TS.....	377	
MATTHEW, BOOK of				On the Persecution of Christians in Germany	JBK.....	370	
Matthew: Jesus Christ Fulfilling Old Testament				Persecuted Church, The (special issue)		361	
Prophecy	DK.....	319		Persecution Report from Kolkata, India	ES.....	374	
MINISTERS				Pressures on the Saints in Singapore, The	MW.....	380	
Christian Renewal: A Closer Look at Minister Shortages,				Religious Persecution in Korea.....	SL.....	376	
Calls, and More.....	DRN.....	448		Remember the Persecuted Church.....	CJH.....	363	
Minister's Fixed Heart, The.....	BLH.....	441		Report from the United Kingdom		382	
MIRAGES				Threats to the Christians and the Church—Which Are			
Mirages: Distortions of Light	DK.....	211		Current and Real?	MDV.....	308	
MISSIONARIES				PETERSON, JORDAN			
<i>Christianity Today</i> : A Closer Look at Christians in				<i>Christian Renewal</i> : “Getting to Know			
Haiti.....	DRN.....	449		Jordan Peterson”	DRN.....	448	
MISSIONS				PHILEMON			
Belgic Confession and Missions (5), The	DK.....	13		Forgiveness of Philemon, The.....	KB....	274	
Domestic Missions Newsletter	JAL.....	351		POWER			
Preaching in Missions	WGB.....	63		Misuse of Power, The	BLG....	173	
Re-entry: Leaving the Mission Field and				PRaise			
Going Back (1)	RJS.....	427		Bless the Lord, O My Soul	ML....	327	
Three-self Formula and PRCA Foreign				PRAYER			
Missions (11), The.....	RJS.....	324		Battling the Devil (6), Praying in the War	RJB....	165	
Three-self Formula and PRCA Foreign				May Coach K Pray?	NV....	261	
Missions (12) The.....	RJS.....	349		Soldiers Exhorted to Pray.....	MDV.....	27	
MYANMAR				PREACHERS			
Conscription in Myanmar.....	DRN.....	296		Called to the Ministry of Preaching Unsearchable			
History of Persecution in Myanmar, The.....	TS.....	377		Riches.....	DL....	123	
Myanmar Semi-annual Report: June 2024	PRC.....	474		PREACHING			
NAHUM				Andreas Hyperius: Reformer of Preaching	CJG.....	54	
Nahum.....	RHH.....	200		Elder's Blessed Calling to Oversee the Gospel Preaching,			
Nahum (2)	RHH.....	298		The	HP.....	64	
Nahum (3) God a Stronghold	RHH.....	396		Keep Reading, Johnny, Keep Reading!	BLH.....	70	
Nahum (4) The Coming Judgment of Nineveh (1)	RHH.....	464		Knowing the Joyful Sound	MS.....	51	
Nahum (5) The Coming Judgment of Nineveh (2)	RHH.....	514		Preaching in Missions	WGB.....	63	
NEW MAN				Preaching in the Great Congregation (special issue)		49	
Is the New Man the Holy Spirit? (1)	WAL.....	492		Preaching the Call of the Gospel	JDE.....	59	
<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (4b), The: Conversion: The New Man ...	MMG	203		Protestant Reformed Minister Today, The	BLH.....	40	
NEW YEAR				PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH in AMERICA			
Christ's Speedy Coming	SRK.....	171		PCUSA and PCA General Assemblies, and CRC and			
ONESIMUS				URC Synods	DJH....	490	
Planned Departure of Onesimus, The	KB.....	33		PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH in the USA			
				PCUSA and PCA General Assemblies, and CRC and			
				URC Synods	DJH....	489	

Subject	Title	Author	page	Subject	Title	Author	page
PRE-SYNODICAL SERMON				SANCTIFICATION			
Walking in the Way of Wisdom	GJE....	435		<i>Ordo Salutis</i> (7a), The, Sanctification: Changed from			
PRIDE				Glory to Glory.....	MMG....	517	
High Eyes.....	RJB....	471		SATAN			
PRODIGALS				Conspiracy Against the Word, The	JM....	353	
Our Forgotten (?) Wayward Children	BLG.....	77		To Young Men in Christ.....	SK....	387	
PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCHES in AMERICA,				SCIENCE			
HISTORY				Cicadas: Showing Forth the Majesty of God	DK....	424	
Protestant Reformed Churches, The: Their Beginnings (4):				Mirages: Distortions of Light.....	DK....	211	
Common Grace in the Assemblies	RJD....	159		Perfectly Fitted for a Lowly Station.....	JM.....	17	
PROTESTANT REFORMED MISSIONS				Total Solar Eclipse—A Marvel and a Sign, A.....	JM....	303	
Protestant Reformed Missions, Years of Rebuilding:				Venom, Vitriol, and Victory.....	JM....	498	
Missions Revived, 1954-1962 (2)	WGB.....	88		SECOND HELVETIC CONFESSION			
Protestant Reformed Missions, Years of Rebuilding:				Of Jesus Christ, True God and Man, the Only Savior			
Missions Revived, 1954-1962 (3)	WGB....	253		of the World 11f.....	RLC....	157	
Protestant Reformed Missions, Years of Rebuilding:				Of Jesus Christ, True God and Man, the Only Savior			
Missions Revived, 1954-1962 (4)	WGB....	401		of the World 11g	RLC....	322	
PROTESTANT REFORMED SYNOD				Of Jesus Christ, True God and Man, the Only Savior			
Preview of Synod 2024	JDE....	413		of the World 11h	RLC....	453	
Reflections on Synod 2024 and the Experience of				Of Jesus Christ, True God and Man, the Only Savior			
Salvation	JDE....	461		of the World 11h (2).....	RLC....	469	
Reflections on Synod 2024 and the Experience of				SECRET SINS			
Salvation (2)	JDE....	492		Secret Sins	JJ/JDE....	214	
Reflections on Synod 2024 and the Experience of				SEMINARY			
Salvation (3)	JDE....	510		Seminary News	RLC.....	44	
PUNISHMENT				Seminary News	RLC....	284	
Chastisement Versus Punishment	JM....	209		SEPARATE			
RAIN				Called to Separate	MDB.....	75	
Rain	JCS....	468		SHAMGAR			
REFORMED CHURCH of AMERICA				Jehovah's Deliverance Through Shamgar	MDB....	291	
Denominational Changes Close to Home.....	DJH....	248		SLANDER			
New Alliance of Reformed Churches	DJH....	249		Venom, Vitriol, and Victory.....	JM....	498	
REFORMED FREE PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION				SNOW			
RFPA Annual Secretary Report	RG....	142		Snow.....	JCS....	224	
Spreading the Reformed Gospel to the Four Corners				SOCIAL MEDIA			
of the Earth	DK....	139		Using Social Media with Christian Intentionality ..	BLH....	269	
REGENERATION				SOLAR ECLIPSE			
Regeneration, Saving Faith, and Union in Christ ...	TP/MMG	392		Solar Eclipse.....	DJH....	395	
Under His Wings We Trust	ML....	133		Total Solar Eclipse—A Marvel and a Sign.....	JM....	303	
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM				SORROW			
Religious Accommodation Victory for Employees...NV.....	37			Bitter Weeping and Gracious Restoration.....	TC....	227	
RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION				SPECIAL ISSUES			
Congress and the Supreme Court Review Exclusion of				Persecuted Church, The.....	361		
Religious and Conservative Groups.....	BVE....	355		Preaching in the Great Congregation	49		
REJOICING				SPIRITUAL WARFARE			
Lamentation and Jubilation	HH....	501		Battling the Devil (5), Offense in the War.....	RJB.....	15	
RUTH, BOOK of				Battling the Devil (6), Praying in the War	RJB....	165	
Under His Wings We Trust	ML....	133		STRENGTH			
SABBATH OBSERVANCE				Strength in Weakness	JM....	259	
PRCA: 2924-2024, Guarding the Lord's Day				SYNODS			
Landmark.....	BJG....	197		PCUSA and PCA General Assemblies, and CRC and			
Sabbath, The: Delighting in the Gospel's Rest	BLG....	221		URC Synods	DJH....	489	
SALVATION				TEMPTATION			
Habakkuk: The Just Shall Live by Faith (13) God's				Conspiracy Against the Word, The	JN....	353	
Judgment and Salvation (3)	RHH.....	8		Taken by Temptation	JDS....	339	
Is the New Man the Holy Spirit? (1)	WAL....	492		To Young Men in Christ.....	SRK....	387	
Reflections on Synod 2024 and the Experience of				TEXTUAL CRITICISM			
Salvation	JDE....	461		What the Layman Should Know About			
Reflections on Synod 2024 and the Experience of				Textual Criticism: Introduction	DJK....	130	
Salvation (2)	JDE....	492		What the Layman Should Know About			
				Textual Criticism: History	DJK....	206	

Subject	Title	Author	page	Subject	Title	Author	page
TEXTUAL CRITICISM (cont.)				VENGEANCE			
What the Layman Should Know About				Vengeance	JAH....	418	
Textual Criticism: The Right Method	DJK....	280		VENOM			
What the Layman Should Know About				Venom, Vitriol, and Victory.....	JM....	498	
Textual Criticism: Internal Evidence	DJK....	347		WAYWARD CHILDREN			
What the Layman Should Know About				Our Forgotten (?) Wayward Children	BLG.....	77	
Textual Criticism: Mark 16	DJK....	450		WEEPING			
TRANSGENDERISM				Bitter Weeping and Gracious Restoration.....	TC....	227	
Gender Dysphoria and Transgenderism (5), “Religious”				WILL of GOD			
Objections to the Bible’s Teachings	CJG....	182		Peace with God’s Plan	TC.....	35	
Gender Dysphoria and Transgenderism (6), “Religious”				WISDOM			
Objections to the Bible’s Teachings	CJG....	230		Walking in the Way of Wisdom.....	GJE....	435	
Gender Dysphoria and Transgenderism (7), “Religious”				WISDOM of GOD			
Objections to the Bible’s Teachings	CJG....	256		God’s Folly.....	RLC.....	56	
TRIALS				WIVES			
Tried by the Word	SM....	282		Redeeming the Time as Husband and Wife	TC....	495	
TRIBULATION				WORD STUDIES			
Manipur, India: A Sister of Smyrna	DRN....	152		Device	JCS....	272	
TRUTH				Honor	JAH....	181	
It Depends on What You Mean: The Importance of				Rain.....	JCS....	468	
Definitions.....	BLG.....	29		Snow.....	JCS....	224	
UNITED KINGDOM				Vengeance	JAH....	418	
Report from the United Kingdom		382		WORK ETHIC			
UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES				Ants and You	RJB....	305	
PCUSA and PCA General Assemblies, and CRC and				WORSHIP			
URC Synods	DJH....	491		Prepare Your Hearts and Minds.....	AP.....	68	
VAN BAREN, GYSBERT				When the Weak Come to Worship	DVD.....	67	
Gysbert VanBaren Family.....	JH....	476					

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council and congregation of Loveland Protestant Reformed Church of Loveland, Colorado expresses Christian sympathy to Jordan and Chandra Kamps in the death of their grandfather, **Cornelius Jonker**, who was taken to his heavenly home on July 2, 2024. May we all find comfort from Revelation 21:3-4: “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

Vice President, Robert Brands

Clerk, Joel Moore

CLASSIS WEST

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Hull, Iowa, on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing. All delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the clerk of Hull’s consistory.

Rev. J. Engelsma, Stated Clerk

RFPA ANNUAL MEETING

Centuries ago, the average Christian read very little due to the difficulty in accessing books and a lack of education. While we have access to many books today and generally are well educated, are we a *reading people*? Do we understand the vital importance of reading, physically and spiritually? Join RFPA staff and Association members at Southwest PRC on Thursday, September 26, 2024, at 7:30 P.M. in learning about the research behind the relation of reading and the wiring of the brain in a presentation by Mr. Joel Minderhoud on “Is Your Brain Being Wired for Deeper Thinking?” Hear about the work of the RFPA Board and staff over the past year, and celebrate with us as we look forward into the next year. Friends and supporters of the RFPA are encouraged to attend this timely speech, and enjoy refreshments catered by the Taste of Hope!

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ANNOUNCEMENTS



PRCA100

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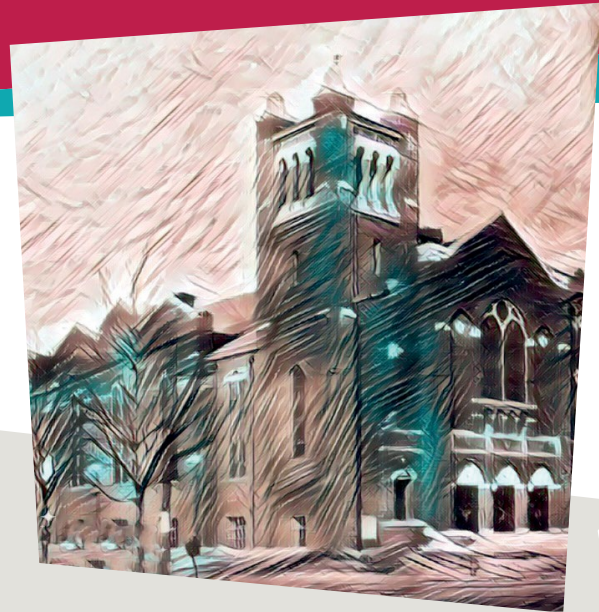
PRCA 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Let's join together to praise God for His gracious preservation of the Protestant Reformed Churches through the past 100 years.

ACTIVITIES

- Speeches
- Bible studies
- Music
- Tours & recreation

Visit prca100.org for more information.



THEME

Grace: The PRCA at 100

DATE / LOCATION

June 2-6, 2025

Calvin University, Grand Rapids, Michigan

HELP NEEDED AT CCHS (MI)

The School Board of Covenant Christian High School (Grand Rapids, MI) is addressing the future needs of our administrative team due to growing enrollment, staff size, and retirements. There are needs that must be filled in the areas of Curriculum and Instruction, Student Life and Management, School Business Office, and the position of Administrator. Individuals interested in applying for any of these positions or seeking more information about the positions are encouraged to contact Mr. Rick Noorman, Administrator, (ricknoorman@gmail.com) or Mr. Dave Moelker, Chairman of the Education Committee (dmoelker9@gmail.com).

**REFORMED
WITNESS HOUR**
FOR BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED

REV. WILBUR BRUINSMA

- 9/1 Economic Imbalance, Rev. 6:5, 6
- 9/8 The Gospel Preached to All Nations, Matt. 24:14
- 9/15 The Rise of Counterfeit Christianity, Matt. 13:21-23
- 9/22 The Emergence of the Antichristian Kingdom,
Rev. 17:9-17
- 9/29 The Man of Sin Revealed, II Thess. 2:3, 4