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*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;
he shall set me up upon a rock.*

—Psalm 27:5

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The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

—Exodus 15:2

My Strength, My Song, My Salvation

What relief is here expressed!
What exultation here finds voice!

Moses and the children of Israel continued their song of triumph on the far shores of the Red Sea. Out of their ecstatic hearts burst a joyful noise. Out of their jubilant mouths pealed the crescendo of their praise. The Red Sea rang with the children of Israel's glad celebration of their God. "The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation!"

Can you hear them singing? Can you hear their voices saturated with relief? A few short hours earlier, the children of Israel were as good as dead. Shut in by the wilderness on either side and by the Red Sea before them, the children of Israel were easy prey for the pursuing chariots and horsemen and footmen of Egypt. A brief night of savage butchery is all it would have taken, and the nation of Israel would have been no more. How the weakness and impotence and insufficiency of the people of Israel must have pressed itself upon them. There was nothing that they could do! In their fear they cried, "Now we die in the wilderness!" (see Ex. 14:12).

But whereas the hand of Israel hung at her side, the hand of God was stretched out. Whereas the arm of Israel failed of strength, the arm of Jehovah was mighty to save. "Stand still!" Moses said. "The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (Ex. 14:13–14). When Israel had only weakness, the Lord was her strength. When Israel had only crying and bitter complaining, the Lord was her song. When Israel had as good as perished, the Lord became her

salvation. What relief! "The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation!"

And can you hear the note of exultation in the singing of Moses and the children of Israel? How glad they were. How triumphant and how jubilant and how exuberant. For the mighty Jehovah was Israel's God! By God's free gift of grace, Israel could claim this mighty, sea-dividing, enemy-thrashing, salvation-bringing Jehovah as her own. "He is my God! And he is my father's God!" Egypt had had all manner of mighty gods: the sun and all the creatures under it, the Nile and all the creatures in it. But Egypt's gods had all fallen to Jehovah. And Egypt's gods had utterly failed to deliver Egypt from the hand of Jehovah. Egypt's mighty army lay drowned and dead and bloated on the shores of the Red Sea. But Israel stood alive, exulting, singing!

Thus it always goes with God's people through Jesus Christ. We are weak and unbelieving and perishing. But God's mighty arm hath gotten him the victory at the cross of Christ, our Red Sea. This God is our God and our fathers' God. And in the blood and obedience of Jesus Christ, this God is our strength and our song, and he is become our salvation.

What could this relieved, exultant Israel do but praise her God? To "prepare him an habitation" means to adore him and love him and worship him and thus to build a temple of praise around him. To "exalt him" means to revere him and cherish him and esteem him and thus to build a lofty throne under him. Not as if Israel could advance God. God establishes his own throne and

builds his own temple. Rather, Israel's praise of God was her recognition of and rejoicing in what God had done.

No wonder Israel loved to sing this song again and again. The form of the verb "sang" in verse 1 indicates that this was not a one-off song but that she sang it repeatedly throughout her history. And the psalmists incorporated this song word for word and doctrine for doctrine in

many of the psalms, so that the church still sings it today in her psalmbook (see Ps. 18:2; 59:17; 62:6; 118:14; 140:7). Relieved and exultant in our sovereign God, let us sing!

"The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him."

—AL

FROM THE EDITOR

Great things are afoot in Herman Hoeksema's *Banner* articles in *Reformed Pavilion*. After many articles in which Hoeksema has developed the idea of "The Fallen King and His Kingdom," the *Banner* articles by Herman Hoeksema now turn to "The New King and His Kingdom." These articles are tremendous. The reader now beholds Jesus Christ. In Hoeksema's words,

This question brings us immediately face to face with Christ. Even as the discussion of the kingdom as God originally created it naturally concentrated itself around the first king, Adam, so our discussion of the New Kingdom and the eternal covenant naturally leads us first of all to the Christ of scripture.

But these articles are tremendous as well because Hoeksema sticks to his essential theological principle, which is that God is God. Even as he develops the truth of Jesus Christ, he explains Christ as the revelation of God. In Hoeksema's words,

But there is more. If we ask the question: who is Christ Jesus? we are referred first

of all to the counsel of God, for He is the Anointed of the Father. God ordained that He should be King and Head of His people, and that in Him all things should be united, both things in heaven and things in earth. We cannot answer the question: who is Christ? without turning back to the eternal counsel of the Almighty.

What soul-stirring theology for the edification of us readers!

In other material, the publication of the devotions from Jesus' Passion Week continues with a consideration of the Tuesday before Jesus died. The end of the article refers to some other articles that the undersigned contributed to a different publication. Our experience on our computers here is that the links to those articles sometimes work and sometimes do not. If any readers are having trouble getting the actual links to work, you might be able to start at this address instead and find the articles within the website: https://cerc.org.sg/ss_home.php.

Blessed reading.

—AL



Passion Week: Tuesday

Today we continue our study of Jesus' Passion Week. All his life long Jesus suffered the curse of God against our sins but especially at the end of his life. Scripture records many of the events of Jesus' Passion Week, which began on Sunday with his triumphal entry into Jerusalem and culminated on Good Friday with his death on the cross. All of Jesus' work during the Passion Week was for our salvation. Because today is Tuesday, we turn our attention to the events of the Tuesday of Jesus' Passion Week.

Tuesday appears to have been the busiest day of Jesus' Passion Week. Scripture records more events on Tuesday than on any other day of that week. We can divide the events of Tuesday into three main segments. The first segment was Jesus' journey with his disciples from Bethany to Jerusalem. Because Bethany was only a short distance from Jerusalem, Jesus and his disciples had spent Monday night in Bethany at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. On Tuesday morning Jesus and his disciples returned to Jerusalem. On their way Jesus and his disciples passed the fig tree that Jesus had cursed on Monday morning as they had made their way to the temple. Tuesday morning was the first time that the disciples saw the fig tree again after Jesus had cursed it. The fig tree was completely withered, dried up from the roots. The disciples marveled at it, and Jesus instructed them in the nature of faith.

The second segment that we can distinguish on Tuesday of the Passion Week was Jesus' time in the temple. Jesus and his disciples spent the entire day in the temple, until evening. Jesus taught in the temple, and he also answered many accusations against him. Those who had seen him cleanse the temple on Monday had all of Monday night to regroup and to gather themselves; and so the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the

scribes, the chief priests, and the elders all came on Tuesday with seemingly impossible questions, hoping to ensnare Jesus in a wrong answer.

First, the chief priests and the elders came and challenged his authority. "By what authority doest thou these things?" (Matt. 21:23). Jesus answered them and used the occasion to teach some parables that condemned the hypocrisy of those chief priests and elders.

The Pharisees came next to try to entangle Jesus in his words. They asked Jesus an apparently impossible question about whether it was lawful for Jews to pay taxes to Rome. No matter what Jesus answered, he would be on the wrong side of some group in Jerusalem. If he answered that the Jews should not pay taxes, then he would be in trouble with Caesar. But if he answered that the Jews should pay taxes, then he would fall out of favor with the people, who chafed under Roman occupation. But Jesus was not entangled in his words and did not enter into the politics of the day. Rather, Jesus had them bring him a coin; asked them whose image was on it; and when they said, "Caesar's," he said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's" (Luke 20:24–25).

The Sadducees had seen all that; and, hearing that the Pharisees were confounded, the Sadducees came in order to entangle Jesus with their doctrine. The Sadducees denied that there was any spiritual thing. They denied angels; they denied the resurrection of the dead. They came to Jesus with a story about a woman whose husband died; and when she remarried, her next husband died; and so on, until she had outlived seven husbands. The Sadducees' "Gotcha!" question was, "Now, in the resurrection, which man's wife will she be?" The Sadducees thought that this question would trap Jesus by forcing

him into an absurdity. Either Jesus would have to teach that there is polygamy in heaven, or Jesus would have to arbitrarily choose one husband of the seven to be the eternal husband of the woman. Jesus, of course, was not trapped by the Sadducees' question because in heaven there is no marrying or giving in marriage. And Jesus exposed the Sadducees as those who erred and as those who did not know the scriptures.

The Pharisees came back after that with another attempt to entrap Jesus. This time one of their number who was a scribe asked Jesus, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" This question was meant to expose Jesus as ignorant about the scriptures. The people considered Jesus to be a great teacher of God's word. But the scribe considered himself to be the foremost expert in the Bible, and he thought that he could demonstrate to the whole audience that he was more knowledgeable than Jesus. His question meant something like this: "Jesus, if you are such a great teacher, do you even know what the great commandment in the law is?" The scribe expected Jesus to have no answer or to give a wrong answer, after which the scribe could rebuke all the people for listening to a man who didn't even know the Bible. It would be like someone challenging a Christian today, "If you really are a Christian, you should know the Bible very well. Which is the greatest verse in the Bible, which summarizes the entire scripture?" But of course Jesus was not trapped by that question. The whole Bible is Jesus' Bible, and his Spirit wrote the Bible, so that Jesus answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 22:37–39).

So the chief priests, the Pharisees twice, and the Sadducees had all failed in trapping Jesus, and now Jesus had a question for them: how is it that David can call his son his Lord?—a reference to Psalm 110. And now those who had thought to trap Jesus by making *him* be without an answer found that *they* were without an answer. They could not answer how David could

call his son his Lord. That was because they did not know who Jesus was. They didn't believe him. They didn't understand the truth of who Jesus was. Jesus then went on to declare woes unto the scribes and Pharisees, recorded in Matthew 23, that powerful and even sobering chapter: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"

Then, still on the temple grounds, Jesus and his disciples sat down over against the treasury, that is, the place where people would bring their money for the care of the temple. As Jesus and his disciples sat over against that treasury, they saw the widow cast in her two mites, and Jesus used that to teach about giving.

The third and final segment of Jesus' Tuesday was his return to Bethany with his disciples. As they were leaving the temple grounds, the disciples looked around at the tremendous grandeur, glory, and beauty of the temple and remarked upon it. They were impressed and told Jesus to look at the huge stones that had been cut and carried long distances and placed there in the temple. Jesus used that opportunity to say that the day was coming when not one of those stones would be standing upon the other, but they would be cast down.

As they left the temple grounds then, they came to the Mount of Olives; and Jesus and his disciples stopped there and rested on the Mount of Olives with a view of Jerusalem, being able to look at the temple and the temple mount; and there Jesus taught his disciples the truth of the end times. The disciples asked him while they were sitting on the Mount of Olives, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3). And there Jesus taught them the well-known signs of Matthew 24: wars and rumors of wars, false prophets, pestilences, the gospel going forth to the ends of the world. Jesus taught them the truth of his coming and of the end times. And then they finally finished by going back to Bethany Tuesday night.

Today, from all of that, we are going to pick out just one statement of our Lord. At the end of Matthew 23, after Jesus had finished all his instruction, after he had announced woes on the

scribes and Pharisees, and before he and his disciples went to sit over against the treasury, he explained the long succession of prophets that God had sent to Jerusalem over the years.

Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Matt. 23:34–39)

This passage is rather well known. Many people like to quote especially verse 37. People don't very often quote the "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites" passages, but they really like to quote "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

Why is this passage so well known and quoted by so many? Because there are many who think that this verse is proof that Jesus desires the salvation of all men. This passage is often quoted by those who teach common grace and by those who teach the well-meant offer of the gospel. The doctrines of common grace and the well-meant offer teach that God has an attitude of favor, grace, mercy, and pity for every person

who ever lives, whether elect or reprobate. The word *grace* in *common grace* refers to God's attitude of favor. The word *common* in *common grace* means that God has this attitude of favor for all men in common. In his common grace for all men, God desires the salvation of all men, whether elect or reprobate. In his common grace for all men, God offers all men salvation with the intention that they accept his offer. Yet, the teaching goes, even though God desires the salvation of all men in his common grace, men can resist God's desire by refusing God's well-meant offer of salvation.

The proponents of common grace believe that they have proof in Matthew 23:37 for their doctrine. After all, in the passage Jesus said what he willed, what he desired. Jesus said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together," and that word "would" means "That is what I want. That is what I desire. That is what I will." "How often I willed, how often I desired, to gather thy children." But then Jesus says about his will to gather the children of Jerusalem that Jerusalem would *not*. Jerusalem had a different will than Jesus' will. "How often would I have gathered thy children, but you, Jerusalem, would not. You did *not* will that your children be gathered. You had a different plan and a different desire than I did." And so the teaching goes that here Jesus was saying what *he* wanted—he wanted to save everybody in Jerusalem—but Jerusalem didn't want that, and so Jerusalem wasn't saved. And therefore, Jesus' will to save did not come to pass in the case of many. Those who teach the well-meant offer of the gospel say that that is what always happens: Jesus wills to save everybody who ever hears the gospel; God has common grace for everybody; but there are many who are not saved because they don't want to be saved. And therefore, in the end it is up to you. It is up to you whether you are delivered by Jesus' will or whether you are not delivered by Jesus' will. The Arminians would call that resistible grace. God has grace for everyone, but man is able to resist that grace, so that some men are not saved.

Because this is such a well-known verse and because it is used so often to prove common grace and the well-meant offer of the gospel, we ought to know the truth of what Jesus was saying here.

First, we can know for sure that Jesus was not saying that he desired the salvation of Jerusalem. How do we know that that is the case? Because in verses 34–35 Jesus had explained his purpose in sending his true prophets to Jerusalem: “I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city” (v. 34). Jesus would not send prophets, wise men, and scribes to Jerusalem in order to save Jerusalem but in order to increase Jerusalem’s judgment. Jerusalem would take the prophets, wise men, and scribes and kill and crucify some of them, scourge some of them in their synagogues, and persecute them from city to city. That was what we sang in Psalm 79: the heathen in God’s heritage killed all of God’s people, so that the streets of the city ran red with blood. Jesus’ purpose in sending these prophets to be killed by Jerusalem was “that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth” (v. 35). In other words, Jerusalem had been murdering faithful prophets for its entire history. And Jerusalem in Jesus’ day would murder the prophets that Jesus sent, thus partaking of the guilt of all the prophet-murderers throughout the years.

When Jesus mentioned Abel and Zacharias, he listed the first and the last Old Testament prophets to die. Jesus was using the figure of speech that we use when we say, “From head to toe.” “From head to toe” includes the whole body. So also “from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias” includes all the prophets of the Old Testament. Abel was the first prophet, whom Cain killed: “The blood of righteous Abel.” And Zacharias the son of Barachias was the last prophet recorded as killed in the Old Testament (see II Chr. 24:17–22). Zacharias was the son of the high priest Jehoiada, and Jehoiada may have had a second name,

Barachias; otherwise Jehoiada was the grandfather, Barachias was the father, and Zacharias was the son and grandson. But this is that Zechariah whom Joash killed, which was a particularly heinous murder because Jehoiada had saved Joash’s life when Athaliah was trying to kill all the seed royal. Jehoiada had hid Joash in the temple and had crowned Joash king when Joash was seven years old. As long as Jehoiada was alive, Joash listened to him. But when Jehoiada died, Joash listened to the princes who came to him and said, “Let’s serve idols instead.” And when Joash began to serve idols, the prophets came, including Jehoiada’s son or grandson, Zechariah, and said to him, “Because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you” (v. 20). Joash responded by murdering Zechariah in the temple court, in between the altar of burnt offering and the temple building.

Now, there were other prophets who died chronologically after Zechariah; but Zechariah was the last one recorded. Jesus was referring to the Hebrew Bible, which is arranged in a little different order than our English Old Testament. The thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Bible begin with Genesis and end with II Chronicles. So Jesus’ reference to Abel in Genesis and to Zechariah in II Chronicles includes the murder of all the prophets that God had sent to his church. And Jesus said that he would send prophets in order that the blood of all the prophets would come upon Jerusalem’s head.

Therefore, Jesus was very clearly not teaching here that God’s purpose and desire was to save all men in Jerusalem. God was sending them prophets to increase their guilt, to fill up the measure of their iniquity, because Jerusalem would kill those prophets—“That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth.” That is not a desire to save all men. So the theory of common grace and the well-meant offer of the gospel fall flat right here in the context of one of the favorite verses for common grace.

So what was Jesus saying, then, if he was not saying that he desired to save all men and that God had a common grace for all men?

In the text Jesus made a distinction between Jerusalem—that was one thing—and the children of Jerusalem—that was another thing. *Jerusalem*, on the one hand, and the *children* of Jerusalem, on the other. And Jesus was speaking to Jerusalem. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem.” What Jesus meant by “Jerusalem” here was the *leaders* of Jerusalem, the leaders of that Old Testament church. That would include the scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees—all those who were prominent in the life of the church and who had been appointed as the official leaders of the church. That would include also the Sanhedrin, which was the ruling body of the Jews, something like our council or consistory today. All of those who were leaders of the Jews he referred to as “Jerusalem.” It was these leaders to whom Jesus had been speaking throughout Matthew 23. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” And now, continuing to address those scribes and Pharisees, those hypocrites, he called them “Jerusalem.” “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee.”

And then Jesus spoke of the *children* of Jerusalem. That was a totally different group altogether. The children of Jerusalem were God’s elect people who were in that Old Testament church. The children of Jerusalem did not include those corrupt leaders on whom Jesus had just pronounced woe. Rather, the children of Jerusalem were the elect people of God who were in the city of Jerusalem. That was who Jesus desired to save: his elect people. He desired to save them and described that desire, that will, in the tenderest terms. “How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.” There is the picture of the protection and care of the mother hen for her chicks. Jesus was saying, “That is my will: to save thy children, to save my elect people.”

Jesus went on to say, “*Your* will, Jerusalem—you scribes, you Pharisees, you Sanhedrin, you hypocrites—was different than mine. You would not that I save them. And so when I sent prophets and wise men and scribes, you killed them

that my people might not hear the truth of the word of God.” Jesus did not mean that the will of Jerusalem overcame his will, that the will of the Sanhedrin prevailed. That is not at all in the passage. Rather, Jesus was highlighting the fact that the leaders’ will was contrary to Jesus’ will. Jesus said, “I have a will, and you have a will. And our wills are exactly contrary. I would gather them; you would not gather them.”

The will of the leaders could not prevail, but Jesus accomplishes his will. Look at what Jesus said in the next verse: “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. 23:38). Who would win in this conflict of the wills of the leaders against Jesus? Not the leaders! Their will did not prevail. Rather, their house was left to them desolate. Jesus was saying by that, “My desire, my will, is sovereign. My will to gather thy children prevails, and I have gathered thy children indeed.” In fact, Jesus’ victory in the salvation of his people is so sure that there will come a day when even the leaders of the Old Testament church will publicly acknowledge it. Jesus said, “Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (v. 39). Jesus was not referring to the past event when he had come into Jerusalem and the people had cried, “Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Mark 11:9). Rather, Jesus was referring to the future event of his second coming, his return on the clouds of glory, when every tongue—including the tongues of those wicked leaders—shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And though they hated him, they will be compelled to confess regarding him, “He is blessed. He is Lord. He is God’s cause. He is God’s Messiah. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

The whole passage is not the victory of the will of man over the will of Jesus Christ, but it is the victory of the will of Jesus Christ over against all the enemies of God’s people, who hate God, hate Christ, hate the prophets, hate the word of God, and kill the prophets and slay those who bring them the word of God.

The comfort of the passage for the child of God, then, is that the Lord Jesus Christ sovereignly, powerfully, effectually saves all his own by his word and Spirit. Let the false church and the leaders of the false church slay as many prophets as they want; let them slay every wise man or every prophet that is sent unto them; the Lord Jesus Christ nevertheless has his way by saving, gathering, protecting, and delivering his elect people.

The church has seen that again and again throughout her life. The church sees that in our own day when prophets are killed ecclesiastically for the sake of the gospel. God nevertheless, by his sovereign, powerful grace, saves and

protects his church. Jesus gathers his people to himself by his word and Spirit.

And as we continue our sojourn on this earth and see antichristian powers rising and the persecution of the church coming more and more to pass, this may be our comfort: the Lord Jesus Christ is sovereign in the gathering of his people; and not one of his elect, not one of the children of Jerusalem—that is, God’s elect people of Jerusalem—shall be lost. His will always prevails.

And then, too, we need not rest in our own strength. How shall the salvation of the church come to pass? Not by our strength, not by our will, but by the sovereign will of our savior.¹

—AL



¹ For a further discussion of God’s particular grace, including an explanation of Matthew 23’s parallel passage in Luke 16, see Andrew Lanning, “*Sola Gratia...Et Una Gratia*,” *Salt Shakers* no. 29 (November 2014): 3–6; “A Closer Look at Selected Passages,” *Salt Shakers* no. 29 (November 2014): 6–9, https://www.cerc.org.sg/ss_uploads/ss_29.pdf; “Hyper-Calvinists? Hardly!,” *Salt Shakers* no. 30 (January 2015): 3–6, https://www.cerc.org.sg/ss_uploads/ss_30.pdf.

Article LV. The New King and His Kingdom

We will now introduce the discussion of the second part of our subject, which is after all the more important, namely, that of the New Kingdom and its King.

Originally we had planned to work out more in detail the development of the Fallen King and His Kingdom. Many questions of great interest still remain to be discussed. The general question: how shall the various elements in outward Christianity in this dispensation gradually develop? is of no mean significance, especially for the present time. The subject of Antichrist, the False Prophet, Babylon, — all these no doubt are worthy of consideration, and the events that inaugurate the final coming of our Lord Jesus Christ attract the interest of thousands in the present time. Yet, for practical reasons we must abandon the idea of presenting a detailed sketch of all these various subjects. The fact remains, that however important these various topics may be, and however strongly they may attract the attention of Bible students today, the positive side of the whole question is of more importance still. It is not the development of the power of iniquity, it is not the history of the fallen king and his kingdom which is of greatest significance, but rather the subject of the New Kingdom as it is firmly rooted in God's own counsel is worthy of our deepest interest. Not the kingdom of darkness, but the kingdom of light is the main thing. Not the covenant as it lies broken in Adam, but the covenant as it is re-established and confirmed in Christ Jesus is the great subject of God's revelation. The kingdom of darkness after all serves only as a dark background that the kingdom of light may appear all the more gloriously; the broken

covenant-relation after all is but a means to impress upon us all the more forcibly the sweetness of God's covenant as it is confirmed and perfected in Christ. And, therefore, it is this new covenant and this new kingdom that constitutes the more important part of God's revelation and of our discussion. And since our time is limited we would have to sacrifice too much of this second part of our discussion should we become too elaborate with regard to the first. Many of the subjects, therefore, that might very naturally have been discussed under the heading "the Fallen King and His Kingdom" we will for the present pass by in order to turn our attention to that of the New Kingdom and its King.

In very general outline we might perhaps bring before your mind what we have discussed thus far. We started with the idea that God created his world a kingdom. All the world with all its powers, hidden or already revealed, belongs to the kingdom of God as originally created. Nothing is excluded. In that kingdom God placed man, made in His image and standing in covenant-relation to Himself as the friend of God, as king under Himself, as viceroy of the living God in the world. He might rule and have dominion, but only in the Name of God. In relation to God he remained a servant, even though he was God's friend; in relation to the world he was king and had dominion over all things. We discussed further how man broke the relation of friendship with God to become His enemy and the friend of Satan. He violated the covenant relationship. He became guilty of a breach of faith and friendship. He broke the alliance with God. And he proposed to be the friend of the devil and to rule the kingdom of the world in his name. With the

fall of man the kingdom of the world had been subjected to the dominion of God's bitter enemy. Principally it had become a kingdom of darkness. And lastly we discussed the development of this fallen king and his kingdom thru the history of the world.

What we wish to discuss from now on is the restoration of that world, its redemption from the power of satan and sin, its final perfection in the completed kingdom of God in Christ Jesus.

God saves the world. He does not save a few individuals, a few branches of the human organism snatched off before the cancer of sin could have its mortifying influence upon them. He saves the world, all the works of His hands. It is by no means superfluous that stress is laid upon this truth. On the one hand we must be careful and not entertain the thought that the world that exists today, with its present institutions, will gradually develop into the kingdom of God. The idea seems to inspire the hearts of men today. We hear a good deal of the regeneration of the forms of life, of the regeneration especially of society. Many minds are lured into the deception that such a regeneration of society will herald in the kingdom of God. But aside from the fact that we can speak of such regeneration only in a figurative and derivative sense of the word and that society cannot be considered apart from its constituent individuals, the fact remains that society in its present form is never to be a constituent element in the kingdom of God. Regeneration of the state, regeneration of society, regeneration of all our present institutions will not bring the kingdom, for the simple reason that they are but temporary institutions that will pass away when they have served their purpose. And, therefore, in that sense we must not understand the term when we say that God saves the world. On the other hand, however, we must not harbor the thought that God lets the world, the works of His hands, go to perdition, while He saves a few individuals chosen to eternal life from before the foundation of the world. This view is sometimes deeply rooted. In actual life many children of God never allow the wings of their hope to spread farther than into the

house of many mansions; the salvation of their soul, the blessed life after death is often the only object of their expectation. That they be long as individuals to the organism of the Body of Christ, to a New Humanity, that this New Humanity is after all related to the entire cosmos, to all the works of God's hands, and that all these works must and will ultimately be saved and be manifested in highest glory, — these truths do not enter the hearts and minds of many of our people, or if they do, they do not appeal as strongly as the salvation of the soul, they do not set the hearts aglow. And, therefore, God saves the world, — it must emphatically be maintained. The kingdom God originally established in the world is not to be left in the power of satan and sin, but is to be snatched from him, and all his work of darkness is only to serve as a contrast to bring out the beauty of the Kingdom the more fully. And the question before us now is: how does God save that entire kingdom and lead it to perfection?

Stating the question more fundamentally in harmony with our Reformed Faith it is: How does God reach His purpose in spite of, yea, even thru the work of satan and sin? God can never be thwarted in His purpose. Not only that ultimately He will have the victory and prove the powerful and all-wise God, but not even for the shortest conceivable moment could the work of the Almighty be frustrated, never did anything compel Him to introduce but the slightest alteration in His eternal plan. He works according to His eternal counsel, and nothing in earth or heaven or hell can prevail against that counsel of God. However deep and serious a problem the fact of sin may represent in this connection, the fact remains that also it serves its purpose in the counsel of God. Surely, to say that God is in any way the author of sin would impeach His divinity, for He is holy and pure. But no less is any view as if sin took God by surprise and compelled Him to alter His original counsel contrary to any conception of God. And, therefore, God has His purpose. That purpose He surely reaches. To that purpose also satan and sin are subservient. And while God will ultimately triumph over all sin and

evil, over satan and hell, yet all these will prove to have served the realization of the counsel of the Most High. And, therefore, the question is, how does God reach that purpose? How does He establish His glorious Kingdom, how does He perfect His covenant according to His counsel in spite of and thru the opposition of the forces of iniquity?

This question brings us immediately face to face with Christ. Even as the discussion of the kingdom as God originally created it naturally concentrated itself around the first king, Adam, so our discussion of the New Kingdom and the eternal covenant naturally leads us first of all to the Christ of scripture. Thru Christ sin and evil, the devil and his host, all the forces of iniquity will suffer defeat. Thru Christ the New Kingdom will be established and perfected. Thru Christ the eternal covenant of God with man is restored and perfected. Christ is the New King, He is the New Head of the covenant, He stands as the Representative judicially, but also as the head organically of the New Humanity that will reign with Him forever. And, therefore, the question as to the restoration and final perfection of all things, the question as to the glorification of God in all the works of His hands brings us first of all to Christ Jesus our Lord.

But there is more. If we ask the question: who is Christ Jesus? we are referred first of all to the counsel of God, for He is the Anointed of the Father. God ordained that He should be King and Head of His people, and that in Him all things should be united, both things in heaven and things in earth. We cannot answer the question: who is Christ? without turning back to the eternal counsel of the Almighty. The very name Christ, Messiah, Anointed turns our thought in the direction of that counsel. But in the second place, even back of that counsel of God stands

the counseling God. The question as to Christ Jesus our Lord, the Head of His people, the King of kings, leads us inevitably back to God Himself, especially to God the Triune. For Christ is the Word incarnated. Personally He is the Second in the Holy Trinity, God in Man, Immanuel. A discussion of this King in all His significance must needs be preceded by a discussion of the truth of the Trinity itself. Never will we understand why He and none other entered into our nature; never will we understand why He and none other is the Redeemer of the world, the New King of the New Kingdom; above all, never will we understand why He and none other is the Head of the covenant of grace and why in the Incarnated Word the eternal covenant of God with man is firmly established, unless we turn from Christ to the Logos, the eternal Word, and from Him to a discussion of the Trinitarian Life of God. Also here it is true, that we find no rest till we have found it in God Himself.

Hence, above all things we must discuss the question of the Holy Trinity. Not, you understand, as if we would propose to comprehend and explain the Trinity as such. The very claim would immediately reveal that we did not know the first thing of God. A God we could comprehend and explain would be God no more. In the very nature of the case God is above our comprehension, infinitely above it. Just because He is infinite God he cannot be comprehended by finite minds. But the fact is, that God has revealed Himself as the Triune God. The fact is, too, that the church, almost from its earliest period of existence, has expressed its faith concerning the Trinity in its confession, and that with amazing accuracy. It is this revelation of God and this confession of the church which must be investigated and discussed first of all.

—Holland, Mich.

