

DAILY MEDITATIONS ON THE BELGIC CONFESSION

by pastors of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America

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Articles 10-12

Article 10: Jesus Christ is True and Eternal God.

We believe that Jesus Christ, according to His divine nature, is the only begotten Son of God, begotten from eternity, not made nor created (for then He should be a creature), but coessential and coeternal with the Father, the express image of His person, and the brightness of His glory, equal unto Him in all things. He is the Son of God, not only from the time that He assumed our nature, but from all eternity, as these testimonies, when compared together, teach us. Moses saith that God created the world; and John saith that all things were made by that Word, which he calleth God. And the apostle saith that God made the worlds by His Son; likewise, that God created all things by Jesus Christ. Therefore it must needs follow that He who is called God, the Word, the Son, and Jesus Christ did exist at that time when all things were created by Him. Therefore the prophet Micah saith: His goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. And the apostle: He hath neither beginning of days nor end of life. He therefore is that true, eternal, and almighty God, whom we invoke, worship and serve.

March 5 – Jesus the Only Begotten Son of God
by Rev. J. Kortering

John 1:18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

We now focus our attention on Art. 10 of the Belgic Confession. It begins this way, "We believe that Jesus Christ, according to His divine nature, is the only begotten Son of God, begotten from eternity, not made nor created (for then He should be a creature)."

The subject matter of this article challenges our faith to accept what the Bible teaches even though we may not be able to comprehend it.

Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God according to His divine nature.

We must not envision the triune God giving birth to a baby. No, the Father begets a Son, and reference here is to the first two Persons of the Holy Trinity. To beget a Son is different from making or creating a Son. It spells out a relationship that persists, the Father was never without the Son; rather they enjoyed a personal fellowship between themselves.

Jesus described it this way, "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1:18) Jesus in the Person of the Son reclined upon the bosom of the Father, or more accurately, continues to recline upon the bosom of the Father. This indicates to us that there was a beautiful relationship of love and friendship between the Person of the Father and the Person of the Son. As we saw before, it included the Person of the Holy Spirit by which God breathed this love within Himself.

This makes Jesus unique; He is the ONLY begotten Son of God. We are adopted, He is naturally God's Son by this eternal begetting.

Because this is true, Jesus possesses the nature of God, for the Person of the Father and the Person of the Son are equally divine. We speak of this as being His Divine Nature which He possessed as the second Person of the Holy Trinity. We will take time to see that this is important for our understanding of Jesus as our Savior. He is not a man among men, He is the Son of God.

This is taught us in the Bible and we receive this instruction by faith.

March 6 – Jesus, the Eternally Begotten Son of God
by Rev. J. Kortering

Hebrews 7:1-3 “For this Melchisedec, King of Salem....who met Abraham.... To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all....King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the son of God; abideth a priest continually.”

We add a few thoughts to the opening sentence of Art.10, “We believe that Jesus Christ, according to His divine nature, is the only begotten Son of God, BEGOTTEN FROM ETERNITY, not made nor created.”

The idea of the first Person of the trinity, the Father, begetting a second Person, the Son, emphasizes for us the intimate relationship of love between these two Persons. Begetting must not be viewed as childbirth, for then the earthly father begets a son and the son never existed before this act. The figure of “begetting” used here emphasizes that the Father is the author and originator of life within the trinity, and the Son receives His life from the Father. Sometimes the verb “generates” is used to describe this passing on of life, the Father generates the Son and the Son is generated by the Father. It stands to reason that if this “begetting” or “generating” should end, it would mean the end of the existence of the Son. Hence, we must follow the example of this article and embrace the doctrine that holds, “We believe that Jesus Christ, according to His divine nature, is the only begotten Son of God, begotten from eternity.”

Hebrews 7 makes comparison between Melchisedec of the Old Testament and Jesus Christ. The point of comparison is that according to the Aaronic priesthood, establishing genealogy was crucial. Melchisedec had no genealogy (no father or mother), he came out of nowhere and there is no record of his end. His priesthood is continual. The comparison is that Jesus also is such a priest after the order of Melchisedec, without beginning of days nor end of life, but abides a priest continually. How can this be? Jesus is the Son of God, eternally generated by the Father according to His divine nature.

It is true, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost when he took on His human nature. We know that He existed long before He was born, He existed Personally within the Godhead and enjoyed fellowship with the Father and the Spirit. In addition to this, He took on our flesh.

Jesus is both God and man, a perfect mediator.

March 7 – Jesus, Co-essential and Co-eternal with the Father
by Rev. J. Kortering

John 10:30, "I and my Father are one."

It is important for us to ask, who is our Savior? By this question we do not imply that we do not know who He is among the children of men. Rather we ask, what is His character?

We ask this especially as a sequel to the assertion that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. He is begotten not for a brief moment at conception, but He enjoys eternal begetting as the Father infuses His love in the Son, and together with the Holy Spirit, share in the covenant life of the triune God.

This has a significant impact upon our understanding of WHO Jesus is.

He partakes of the divine nature.

It is one thing to say this in the setting of a class on Reformed doctrine. We must draw from the Scriptures that Jesus is very God, who possesses all the virtues of the Godhead. This makes Him very special.

The practical significance of this comes to the fore when we consider what work Jesus had to accomplish for us when He came into this world to die as our mediator. More than that, He now continues to work on our behalf in heaven, in the presence of His Heavenly Father. Because He possesses the divine nature and is in truth, co-essential and co-eternal God, He is abundantly qualified and capable of accomplishing the tasks which the Father gave Him to do.

Jesus said in John 10:30, "I and my Father are one". Note with me briefly, the context in which He spoke these words. He referred to Himself as the Good Shepherd. He spoke those words which we cherish, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." In response to this teaching, some of the Jews accused Him of blasphemy and took up stones to kill Him. Did this make Jesus a weakling, a victim of enemy assault? No, he said, "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." His Father was sovereign over all men, Jesus was one with His Father in possessing all power to accomplish His work.

He was this in His divine nature.

He had this power because He was begotten eternally of the Father.

Our salvation is secure in Him.

March 8 – Jesus, the Express Image of the Father
by Rev. J. Kortering

Hebrews 1:1-3, "God, who at sundry times...hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son....Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Sons look like their fathers, some more than others. The genes take care of this. What the Belgic Confession is saying here is that something of this applies to Jesus, the Son of God. It states that because Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, begotten not created, He is "the express image of His person, and the brightness of His glory, equal unto Him in all things. He is the Son of God, not only from the time that He assumed our nature, but from all eternity." The author of the Hebrews expresses this in the above text.

If we pursue this figure of speech a bit more, we can see how this was true. The second Person of the Holy trinity possessed the image of the first Person, like Father, like Son. The Father imparts His glorious virtues unto the Son through the work of the Holy Spirit. The same truth applies to the incarnation of Jesus in the flesh. There He took on, in addition to His divine nature which He possessed personally, the human nature. At such a time, Joseph did not father Jesus, it is abundantly established in the New Testament that Joseph was at first upset that Mary was pregnant because he knew he did not father that child, there had to be someone else. He contemplated to put her away (divorce her) privately. The angel made clear to Joseph that the power of the highest came upon Mary and that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost. God had fathered His own Son according to the flesh.

Hence, Jesus is called, "the express image of His person [the Father]". This related to His divine nature which He retained when He took on in addition to it, the human nature.

As an aside, we can say that He took on his human nature from the virgin Mary. He was truly human.

In this way, God qualified His Son to be our Savior.

March 9 – Jesus, the Creator of the World
by Rev. J. Kortering

Hebrews 1:1,2 "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."

The Confession continues to demonstrate from the Bible that Jesus is the Son of God, eternally generated by the Father. It reasons this way, "Moses saith that God created the world; and John saith that all things were made by that Word which he calleth God. And the apostle saith that God made the worlds by His Son, likewise, that God created all things by Jesus Christ. Therefore it must needs follow that He who is called God, the Word, the Son, and Jesus Christ did exist at that time when all things were created by Him."

Reference is made to the sublime words of John 1:3, "All things were made by him (the Word of vs. 1 and 2) and without him was not anything made that was made."

Jesus obviously existed prior to His birth in Bethlehem; He lived in the presence of the Father as the Son of God, called the logos or the Word. As such, He participated in the creation. God as Father called forth the creative word, "Let there be light". The Son, as the Word, echoed that call throughout the abyss of space. The Holy Spirit effectively brought into existence what the Father and Word called forth. Jesus was intimately connected with the Person of the Son of God. Hence the confession says, they all refer to the same Person, God the Son, the Word, and Jesus Christ.

Take a moment to reflect on this.

Our Savior not only existed before He was born, He participated in the origin of this world. As the Word, He brought forth this perfect world, free from sin. No wonder then, our Reformed forefathers say that when Adam fell into sin, he fell into the arms of Jesus. Jesus was there and Adam was told that there was hope for a sinner who had listened to the devil and was flattered by his lie, "Ye shall be as gods".

Jesus, creator is also Savior. The blood of the slaughtered animal covered sins which the fig leaves could not. Put your trust in Him alone.

March 10 – Jesus is True, Eternal, and Almighty God
by Rev. J. Kortering

Micah 5:2, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

There are two more thoughts which bring to a close this detailed article of the Belgic Confession on the important truth that Jesus is true and eternal God. We have this summary statement at the end, “He therefore is that true, eternal, and almighty God, whom we invoke, worship, and serve.” At this time, we will consider the summary of His deity: true, eternal, and almighty God. Next time we will consider what our response must be, “invoke, worship and serve” Him.

Let’s say something in conclusion on each of these three descriptions.

Jesus is truly God. Though we cannot comprehend what this really means, we can at least get the sense of importance. How could Jesus ever make atonement for our sins on the cross except He is truly God? Our sins carry the guilt for everlasting punishment. No mere man, no matter how important he may be, can bear God’s wrath against sin in a few hours of time. Jesus was truly God and thereby qualified to accomplish such satisfaction of divine justice. Likewise, who can break the stubborn will of fallen man and move him in such a way that influences him to desire God and turn from the pleasure of sin? Only Jesus, who is truly God, can make such a spiritual change.

Jesus is eternal God. The Prophet Micah makes that point in the quote above, “whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.” We considered how important it is for us to think of Jesus as the Son of God, comprehended in the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. As such, Jesus is before creation and much involved in the work of God from everlasting. Within all the years of time, Jesus is actively involved. His goings forth includes creation, salvation in the old covenant, His incarnation, His exaltation and on-going gathering of the church.

Jesus is almighty God. All His work involves power that is beyond human understanding and ability. Because Jesus is true, eternal, almighty God, He not only proposes to save, He does save.

And He is your Savior.

March 11 – Jesus, the Object of Our Worship and Service
by Rev. J. Kortering

John 20:26-28, "And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut and stood in the midst and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."

Our Reformed fathers bring to a close their consideration of the deity of Christ with a statement of awe and wonder, "He therefore is that true, eternal, and almighty God, whom we invoke, worship, and serve."

That was the response of Thomas who doubted when He was told that Jesus had risen from the dead. The other disciples had seen Him for He had appeared in their midst towards the end of the first resurrection Sunday. Thomas was not present with them. How could Jesus be alive when they all admitted he had been crucified, dead, and buried. Thomas was so adamant that he had said, "unless I shall see in his hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe," vs. 25. And there Jesus stood before Him and took the initiative to insist that Thomas do as he said he had to do in order to believe. His response was, "My Lord and my God."

Thomas is not alone. Believing in the divinity of Christ is beyond our comprehension. Jesus understood this and gently accommodated Thomas without harsh reprimand. This is encouraging for us as well. We come to Jesus with our struggles and doubts and here Jesus says to each of us, "Behold my hands and feet". Yes, it is true, Jesus is more than a man, for no man ever entered the grave and came out alive. Because He is true and eternal God, He is almighty to save.

Worship is a proper and beautiful response to the truth of the gospel of Jesus, the Son of God

We invoke Him, that is, we pray to Him. We pray to God as our Father in the Name of Jesus our Savior. Everything about God as our Father is because of Jesus His Son and our Savior.

We worship Him, daily and every Lord's Day.

We serve Him, as our Lord. We say to Him, "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth." (1 Sam 3:9)

Article 11: The Holy Ghost is True and Eternal God.

We believe and confess also that the Holy Ghost, from eternity, proceeds from the Father and Son, and therefore is neither made, created, nor begotten, but only proceedeth from both; who in order is the third person of the Holy Trinity, of one and the same essence, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son; and therefore is the true and eternal God, as the Holy Scriptures teach us.

March 12 – Faith in the Holy Ghost
by Rev. J. Kortering

Matthew 28:19, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Our Reformed fathers open Art. 11 which is entitled, “The Holy Ghost is True and Eternal God” with these words, “We believe and confess also, that the Holy Ghost, from eternity, proceeds from the Father and Son”.

This leads us to the consideration of the third person of the Holy Trinity. We quoted from the well-known baptism formula above. We baptize persons in the name of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

We might raise the question, what is the proper name for this third person? Is He “Holy Ghost” or “Holy Spirit”? Our King James Version of the Bible uses Holy Ghost 90 times and Holy Spirit an additional 7 times. From all indications, there is no reason why one or the other is used. Historically, Holy Ghost is an older English word used, and more modern translations reflect the more current use by naming Him Holy Spirit.

The significance of this is two-fold.

First, the use of ghost has also been commonly associated with the spirits of the dead and even the demons of the underworld. Obviously, we must make a strong dis-association with these notions and not add “Holy” to the name of the third person of the Trinity simply to distinguish him from demons or the spirits of the dead. This is important in your Singapore culture in a special way.

Second, the name Holy Ghost or Spirit indicates to us that He is a Person and He is not embodied in any way in a physical body. In fact, it is good to reflect upon the character of the Holy Spirit as “breath”. That is the original meaning of the word in Scripture. As the Holy Spirit within the Godhead, He is the life or breath of God. Reverently speaking, when we said in the past that the Father loves the Son and the Son returns love to the Father, they express this love for each other in the breath of the Holy Spirit. We use human terms, but we say that the Holy Spirit animates God, He gives life to the persons of the Godhead.

Because He is personally God and He also has an important place in our salvation, our faith is in Him, and we are baptized in His Name as well.

March 13 – The Holy Ghost Proceeds from the Father and the Son
by Rev. J. Kortering

John 15:26, “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.”

We are focusing our attention on this sentence, “We believe and confess also that the Holy Ghost, from eternity, proceeds from the Father and Son”.

There are two ways in which we speak of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, called “Double Procession” in the history of the Christian church.

First, within the Holy Trinity itself, the Person of the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Person of the Father AND the Person of the Son. You recall in the case of the Son, it is said, the Father begets or generates the Son and the Son is so begotten. Now in the case of the Holy Spirit, it is not said that the Father begets the Spirit but that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and also the Son. The language of the confession (and Scripture) accommodates us to help us form some sort of visible picture of the relationship between the persons of the Godhead. As the Father generates the Son (and the language must be viewed with all its limitations for it uses temporal language as applied to the eternal godhead) He does this in the Person of the Holy Spirit. So also the Son, being begotten, returns affection to the Father who begot Him in the Person of the Spirit. Thus the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son in the Godhead.

Second, outside of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit is given to Christ to powerfully realize the work He legally established on the cross and now must realize in the salvation of the people for whom He died. Hence the Father gave to His Son upon the completion of His redemptive work and His ascension into heaven, the Holy Spirit to finish the work. This Jesus referred to in the text quoted above, the Comforter (Holy Spirit) whom I will send unto you from the Father, who proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me. The exalted Christ in the Person of the Son sent the Holy Spirit as His Spirit to the church to finish the work of salvation. This too is Double Procession, from the Father and the Son.

Think on the important role the Holy Spirit has in our salvation

March 14 – The Holy Ghost is the Third Person of the Trinity
by Rev. J. Kortering

Genesis 1:2, The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

We now want to meditate a bit on the statement in the article which says, “who in order is the third person of the Holy Trinity”.

One of the things that needs to be stressed over and over is that the Holy Ghost is not a force or spirit, but a Person. We often fall into the error of referring to Him as “it”. The above quoted verse illustrates this, “a power moved over the earth”. It is bad to refer to the Holy Spirit as “it”, for it limits our ability to direct our attention to the relationship which He realizes in our salvation. If He is simply a power who works, we soon think of our relationship to Him as very impersonal and formal. This contributes to historical faith, we focus so much attention on our belief system that we ignore our salvation. The Holy Ghost as a Person so works in us that we interact with Him as we do with the Savior. We love Jesus and we love the Holy Spirit for both enable us to have a love relationship with the Father (the triune God as our Father). Give this some thought, do you really appreciate the Holy Ghost as a Person?

The other thing which needs mention is that He is the third Person of the Holy Trinity. Again, when we speak of first, second, and third, we immediately think in temporal terms, after all it describes a succession of moments or events, we cannot think differently. Keep in mind that the use of these terms when applied to the Godhead, simply help us with our thinking. Yet, reality is that there never has been a moment when there was no Son or Holy Spirit. First, second, and third describe the relationship between each of these persons. The Father is first as the source of all things, the Son is second as the one who benefits from the Father and enjoys this special relationship with Him. So also the Holy Spirit is third not in rank but in relationship, He is the one who breathes the life of the Father in the Son, He is the person through whom the Father generates His Son.

This means all three persons are equally God and each one has His own personal role in the work of God. Rejoice in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

March 15 – The Holy Ghost is Equally Divine
by Rev. J. Kortering

I Corinthians 3:16, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

Reflect a moment on this quotation from the Bible. When God works in us by His Holy Spirit, he works a saving work and that work is described here as making us the temple of God, the place where God dwells. That is amazing, isn't it? What an incentive for us to be holy, for the God of our salvation is the Holy God and He performs His work of salvation by His Holy Spirit. It is significant that in the same breath where God says that we are the temple of God, He indicates that we are that because the Spirit of God is dwelling in us. Both “temple of God” and “Spirit of God dwelleth in you” are used in the same sentence as of equal value. As the Spirit of God dwells in us, God is dwelling in us. Both Spirit of God and God Himself are used on the same level. The Spirit of God is God Himself.

This Art. 11 of the Belgic Confessions states, “We believe and confess also that the Holy Ghost, from eternity, proceeds from the Father and Son, and therefore is neither made, created, nor begotten, but only proceedeth from both; who in order is the third person of the Holy Trinity, of one and the same essence, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, and therefore is the true and eternal God, as the Holy Scriptures teach us”

The Holy Ghost is equally divine with the Father and the Son, or, as the articles states, “the same essence”. The confession mentions some of these qualities: majesty, glory, true, and eternal. Majesty refers to amazing wonder of His work which stirs us to bow in reverence. Glory describes the beauty of God shining through His works. True tells us that he is faithful to His values. Eternal reminds us that He is without beginning or end. These attributes or virtues of God apply equally to the Holy Ghost.

This we acknowledge as we consider His works, creation, and providential care of it, conception of Jesus, and most of all His saving work in us, He gives sight to our blind eyes and calls life out of death.

The Holy Ghost is truly God. What a joy to believe this.

March 16 – Scripture Reveals to us Who the Holy Ghost is
by Rev. J. Kortering

Isaiah 48:16, "Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I; and now the Lord GOD, and his spirit, hath sent me."

In connection with the Holy Ghost, as was also true with the entire Trinity, the confession emphasizes that what we believe and teach about the three Persons of the Holy Trinity is derived from the teaching of the Holy Bible. Only God is able to tell us who He is and He does that through the Bible itself as it is His revelation. The importance of this is obvious, no human being would invent the idea of three Persons in one Being because it defies human imagination and understanding. This is true as God tells us about the third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Ghost. The Word of God guides us in our understanding of Him.

The above quote from Isaiah does this. God is speaking through the Prophet Isaiah. He calls us to come near and listen to what He has to say. What He says is not new, He spoke from the beginning. He did this through the Holy Spirit and this same Spirit hath sent Isaiah to be His mouthpiece.

In Gen 1:2 we read, "And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." In creation, God as Father spoke and He did that through the Word, His Son. The Holy Spirit as God's breath, brought it into existence.

Of the conception of Jesus, we read in Luke 1:34,35; "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

The Holy Ghost demonstrated His power at Pentecost, the doubting and unbelieving disciples were not able to preach the gospel of the Living Lord. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." (Acts 2:17) What glory and power of God is demonstrated when the Holy Ghost works!

The Bible is reliable, the Holy Ghost is God. Your salvation is secure.

March 17 – We Believe and Confess that the Holy Ghost is True and Eternal God
by Rev. J. Kortering

Acts 16:30,31, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house."

Our Reformed fathers reminded us in this article that "We believe and confess ALSO that the Holy Ghost...is the true and eternal God, as the Holy Scriptures teach us."

This is something beautiful to ponder as we draw to a close our consideration of Art. 11.

Do you believe this? You accept for truth that the third Person of the Holy Trinity is true and eternal God? Do you understand that unless you believe this, your own salvation is impossible? I do not mean by this statement that you have to believe in the divinity of the Holy Ghost, which is true enough. Rather, I mean by this statement that unless the Holy Ghost is truly God, your salvation would be impossible. This is the sad teaching of those who deny the Reformed faith concerning the sovereignty of God and insist on the free will of man. Man without the Holy Ghost is nothing but an enemy of God, and that is true of you and of me as well. Rejoice that God the Holy Ghost is qualified and powerful to save us and hence our salvation is secure.

This we confess because we, like Paul, are not ashamed of the gospel of sovereign grace. Rather than draw back and speak softly, we eagerly shout it from the mountain top. Because the Holy Ghost is true and eternal God, the work of salvation He began in us is God's work, and what God begins He will finish. This is our comfort and hope for the future.

When the jailor, referred to in Acts 16, asked, "What must I do to be saved?" the Apostle did not say to him, you are asking the wrong question because you cannot do anything to be saved. He admitted that the question was worked in him by the Holy Ghost and that question is always important and demands an answer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved and thy house." When the Holy Ghost arouses such a question, He provides a solid answer.

What about you? Do you believe and confess that the Holy Ghost is true and eternal God?

You stand on solid, biblical ground when you do.

March 18 – A Final Reflection on the Holy Ghost, Another Comforter
by Rev. J. Kortering

John 14:16, “And I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.”

Would you agree with me that we do not give enough acknowledgment to the Holy Ghost of His role in our salvation?

The very name “Father” evokes in us thoughts of intimacy and love. From creation to Calvary, His love defies understanding. He calls us unto Himself as our Heavenly Father. The same is true of the name “Son”. This is Jesus who was born in Bethlehem, climbed the hill of Golgotha, gave His very life for the sins of the world. Now He is the exalted Lord of Lords who ministers to our needs. Since He was “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb 4:15), He can minister to our needs very well.

But, what of the Holy Ghost? How close do you feel towards Him? Admittedly, we have to work harder to give Him His due.

Reflect a few moments on the text quoted above. Jesus here assures us that He will pray to the Father to give us another Comforter. To be sure, Jesus came to earth to function as our first comforter. How precious are His words to us as we meditate upon the gospel record. We cling to His atonement and exalt in His resurrection and ascension into heaven. We derive comfort from every assurance of His redeeming love.

He knew that when He departed from the midst of His beloved church on earth, they needed continuing comfort. This Comforter He would pray to the Father that He would send Him to His beloved church on earth. That Comforter is the Holy Ghost. By His abiding with us forever, we enjoy the comfort until we enter everlasting life and glory in the day of His coming.

Comforter! Yes, when we struggle with our faith and sometimes cannot understand or discern truth from error, the Holy Ghost draws near to us and guides us into the truth and gives us direction and conviction.

Comforter! Yes, when the demands of life go contrary to our desires and we struggle with disease and heartache, even death itself, He is our great Physician who is able to give healing and deliverance.

Comforter! Yes, when we face persecution and opposition for our faith, what will be the cost? Only God knows, but the Holy Ghost will take care of us.

I believe, help my unbelief, also regarding the Holy Ghost.

Article 12: The Creation.

We believe that the Father, by the Word, that is, by his Son, hath created of nothing the heaven, the earth, and all creatures as it seemed good unto Him, giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its Creator; that He doth also still uphold and govern them by His eternal providence and infinite power for the service of mankind, to the end that man may serve his God.

He also created the angels good, to be His messengers and to serve His elect; some of whom are fallen from that excellency, in which God created them, into everlasting perdition; and the others have, by the grace of God, remained steadfast and continued in their primitive state. The devils and evil spirits are so depraved that they are enemies of God and every good thing, to the utmost of their power, as murderers, watching to ruin the church and every member thereof, and by their wicked stratagems to destroy all; and are therefore, by their own wickedness, adjudged to eternal damnation, daily expecting their horrible torments.

Therefore we reject and abhor the error of the Sadducees, who deny the existence of spirits and angels; and also that of the Manichees, who assert that the devils have their origin of themselves, and that they are wicked of their own nature, without having been corrupted.

March 19 – Faith and the Creation
by Prof. Russell Dykstra

Hebrews 11:3, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

Where did we come from? How did the world come into existence? How were the trees and the animals, the flowers, fish, and birds formed? What about the stars and the planets, and the galaxies; how were they formed? When did this happen? And why?

Nearly all religions and ancient cultures have vague stories passed down from one generation to the next, of a creation work by their gods. These are myths and folk stories that few would believe today. Because people of every age ask such questions, scientists, philosophers, and theologians are still seeking answers to these questions today.

The Christian religion has a clear written record of how and why all things came into being. This creation account is found in the Bible. Christians believe this record with all their hearts. This article in the Confession states it exactly that way: “We believe that the Father...hath created...the heaven, the earth, and all creatures.... The Christian knows God (by faith) as his or her own heavenly Father in Jesus Christ. Because Christians have this faith in God, they know that God’s record in His Word is both true and accurate. Christians sing, “This is my Father’s world.” And it is God’s, for He made it.

Heb 11:3 states, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God....” Only faith understands this. Only faith can answer the questions that people of all ages have asked. Sad to say, no matter how brilliant a scientist or philosopher may be, if he does not have faith, he will not be able or willing to ascribe the creation to the power of God.

This faith is confirmed by what we see in the world around us. From the glory of the morning sun, to the exquisite beauty of the flower, to the power of the wind and sea, all things point to God their Maker. Faith, therefore, is not a blind belief in old myths and stories that we cannot prove. Rather, faith is the firm conviction concerning a reality so clear to the Christian, that it is beyond proof.

We join with the church of all ages by confessing our faith in God, the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

March 20 – “We believe that the Father...hath created....”
by Prof. Russell Dykstra

Galatians 4:6, “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

God is confessed in this article as *Father*. God, in His Word (the Bible) to us, gives us the privilege to call Him by that name. In the Old Testament, God’s word to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was “Israel is my son, even my firstborn” (Exo 4:22). Jesus expanded on that, teaching His disciples to address God in prayer as “Our Father” (Matt 6:9). In God’s covenant of grace, He promises His people: “[I] will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (II Cor 6:18). And to make that possible, “God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal 4:6).

It is noteworthy that in connection with the work of creating, the Confession uses the name Father. That name indicates the source of life. As in the world of people, the father is the source of life in the family. So also in the work of creation, God gave Himself the name, Father, first of all, to teach us that He is the source of life and indeed, of all things, for He made all that exists.

Second, a good father in this life cares for his family. So likewise does God take care of His entire creation. He provides for every living thing that He has made. God does not create and then abandon His creation. Nor did God create all and then step back to allow the universe to run on its own, as a clock wound up.

On the contrary, God is deeply involved in His creation, “upholding and governing” all things, as the Confession puts it. There are bad fathers in this life who forsake their children. God, the one true Father, never neglects His creation.

Yet, although God is the creator of all men, women, and children, He is not the Father of all. For in the sin of Adam, all have lost the right to call God “Father”. God is the Father of His people in and through His Son, Jesus Christ. All those who confess their faith in His Son, Jesus, belong to Him eternally, and have the right to call God “Father”.

Let us with confidence call upon the Creator of heaven and earth, as our Father.

March 21 – Creation by the Word
by Prof. Russell Dykstra

Psalms 33:6, "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."

The Confession sets forth the Bible's clear teaching that the Triune God, our Father, created all things by His Son, Jesus Christ. This Jesus is very God and very man. He came into the world in order to save His people from their sins by redeeming them on the cross.

Jesus is called "the Word" in John 1. God gave Jesus that name to teach us about His Son. *Words* teach and enlighten; they give knowledge. Jesus came into the world to teach, to give a perfect revelation of His Father.

The Bible also teaches that the Word of God is powerful. When God spoke in His judgment, the earth melted (Psa 46:6). He sends forth His commands, and the earth is covered with snow and ice; He speaks His word again, and the ice melts (Psa 147:15-18).

By that same powerful Word, God created all things. Gen 1 records it all. "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." He spoke and His Word called into existence the firmament in the heavens, dry land and plants, the sun, moon and stars, etc. Psa 33:6 explains: "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made."

John 1:14 indicates that the Word is Jesus, who "was made flesh and dwelt among us." And the inspired apostle wrote of that Word: "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3).

Writing to the Colossians, the apostle Paul teaches that all things were made not only *by* Christ Jesus, but *for* Him (Col 1:16).

God made all things – oceans and streams, the mammoth grey whale, the butterfly, the tiger, and the lizard – all for Christ. For He enthroned His Son Jesus as king over all the creation. He rules over all for the glory of God. This same Jesus will rule forever and ever.

Before anything was created, God had a perfect plan in His own mind. In that plan, He determined to make the whole universe for His Son. Accordingly, "he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psa 33:9).

This bears out how serious it is to deny that God created all things. It is a denial of Christ, the Creator and the King of creation.

How blessed it is to confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is not only our Savior, but also the one who made all things...for us so that we may serve God with all things.

March 22 – Created out of Nothing
by Prof. Russell Dykstra

Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

Many and varied are the talents that people possess to create beauty. A carpenter selects his mahogany wood and fashions a beautiful table. The artist takes a brush in hand and fills the canvas, painting a lovely flower. A jeweler selects gold and precious stones and carefully crafts a diamond ring.

But none of them can ever do what God did. God created the world out of nothing. All that man can do is work with existing materials, be it gold, wood, paint, or canvas. Only God creates something out of nothing.

The church has confessed this since the beginning of time. Creation is *ex nihilo* – a Latin phrase meaning "out of nothing." This is the meaning of Gen 1:1 – "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." That is not a mere heading or description of the creation account. It is the creating act where God called into existence a new thing. From all eternity, "before" the beginning described in Gen 1:1, only God was. God spoke, and there was a mass of material, a physical substance, distinct from God. It was not a substance that flowed or emanated out of the being of God. It was rather created by God.

That is why Heb 11:3 states that "things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." The carpenter, the painter, the jeweler all need visible materials to make something visible. God does not. In another connection, Paul writes of God's almighty power not only to "quicken [make alive] the dead" but also to call "those things which be not as though they were" (Rom 4:17).

Only God is able to create out of nothing.

This truth contradicts a fundamental premise of the theory of evolutionism, namely, that matter always existed. Evolutionism teaches that the world as we know it formed from an existing mass of particles or gases; that somehow, life rose out of non-living material. This is a denial of the Bible truth that God created out of nothing.

What a tremendous power Jehovah God possesses! The Almighty God, the eternally living God, merely by speaking the word brought into being the unformed mass covered with darkness and water. From this, He would fashion all creatures.

The church rejoices to confess that her "help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth" (Psa 124:8).

March 23 – Created in Divine Wisdom
by Prof. Russell Dykstra

Proverbs 3:19, “The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath He established the heavens.”

“We believe that the Father...hath created...all creatures as it seemed good unto Him...”

Considerable discussion has been held about whether a superior being, an intelligent designer, fashioned the universe and all creatures in it. Many scientists, recognizing the total impossibility of evolutionism explaining the universe, espouse belief in an intelligent designer, but distinguish that sharply from the sovereign, personal God of the Bible.

How foolish that is. The Bible not only reveals the Creator, but also sets forth His wisdom in creating. The Confession points to this with the words “as it seemed good to Him.”

The Bible stresses the truth that the Creator formed all things *in wisdom*. “O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all” (Psa 104:24). The Psalmist sings the praises of God, “...that by wisdom made the heavens” (Psa 136:5). Wise Solomon acknowledged this: “The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath He established the heavens” (Pro 3:19). The inspired prophet Jeremiah twice reminded apostatizing Israel that their God “hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion” (Jer 10:12; 51:15).

Wisdom is the exact opposite of folly. A foolish builder does not reckon with reality. Jesus describes the foolish man who builds his house on sand; when the heavy rains come, the house collapses. The wise builder understands this, and constructs his house on a rock. (See Matt 7:24-27.)

God is infinitely wise. His fashioning of the universe was not haphazard or without forethought. All was planned and executed with perfect wisdom.

The entire creation testifies of this perfect order. The sun, the planets, the seasons, and all living things of land and ocean were made to fit into the whole of the creation in perfect wisdom. What a thrill for the believer to look into God’s creation and behold it! Be it the astounding complexity of the cell, and the atoms; the depths of the ocean; the rocks in the desert; or the vastness of space – every discovery fills him with awe for the wisdom of the Creator.

But understand, wisdom has a goal. A wise man builds not only with foresight, but with purpose. So does God. And what is that goal? His own glory (Rev 4:11).

Christ, the one for whom and by whom all were created, is the wisdom of God (I Cor 1:24). As King, He rules now and forever, for the glory of God.

March 24 – "...giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its Creator."
by Prof. Russell Dykstra

Isaiah 40:26, "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth."

The believer stands in awe and reverence of the unspeakable wisdom and power of the Creator. God created out of nothing the mass of material, the physical substance. From that unformed, dark and watery mass, God called forth all the creatures that He determined to fill His universe. Everything He made is a creature. God is Creator; all else –giraffes, mountains, shark, and star – are creatures.

God gave existence to each creature, by His almighty word. And God gave to each its shape and form. The orangutan with its man-like features, fingers, and toes. The fish with its fins and scales. The lizard with its flicking tongue and sweeping tail. The star with its burning light. Each creature has its existence, shape, and form from God.

And each creature exists for a purpose. Each one has an "office." The idea of office is that one is appointed or set in a position, with the authority and responsibility to perform certain tasks. A prime minister in a country has a certain recognized position with authority and responsibility to rule the country well. The minister in the church has an office with authority and responsibility to preach.

Similarly, every creature that God has made has an office. God made each creature with a purpose. It fills a certain function in the creation. The office of many creatures we can readily observe. The sun is to give light and life to the earth in the day. The moon gives its lesser light for the night. The herbs are created for food for man. Birds sing God's praises. The rock provides a solid foundation for the skyscrapers, and a picture of the unchanging steadfastness of God (Deut 32:4). Trees are a source of food for man, homes for the birds, and shelter for the beasts. They are also a picture of a believer, planted by the river, bringing forth much fruit (Psa 1).

By fulfilling its office, each creature serves His Creator. Rocks and rivers – without thinking. Fish, bird, and animals, without conscious activity. Man is the one creature that was formed by God to serve and glorify God consciously and deliberately. He was made to rule over the creation, develop the powers imbedded therein, and use it in the service of God.

May God give us eyes to behold the wonders of His creation, His wisdom and power, and to worship the One only Creator and Lord.

March 25 – The Creator’s Care for His Creation
by Prof. Russell Dykstra

Hebrews 1:3, “Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”

“that He doth also still uphold and govern them by His eternal providence...”

Jehovah is a wise creator. Eternally He planned the perfect creation for the glory of His name. Eternally He also planned to uphold and govern the whole creation. This is providence. There is an eternal decree or plan of providence. And, there is a working out of that providence in time by God’s “infinite power.”

God provides for, i.e. cares for His creation. This is what one would expect of a wise creator. Every builder knows that his finished project will need to be maintained, or else it will fall into ruin. God, the perfectly wise builder, maintains and cares for all the creatures that He has made. (Art. 13 will explain this truth more fully.)

God – created all things to be creatures. i.e. as dependent on God. Nothing exists on its own power. Each creature is formed by the word of God’s power, and must be upheld by the same powerful word (Heb 1:3) so that it continues to exist. Were God to cease speaking His sovereign word, all would disappear into nothingness.

God’s providence also governs. God created each creature with a purpose. Each thing fits into God’s creation and fulfills a certain function. God’s sovereign providence governs each creature so that it fulfills God’s foreordained purpose. Not only do palm trees in general serve God’s purpose, but also each individual palm tree does, in God’s providence.

Fallen man is willingly ignorant of this astounding reality, namely, that God upholds him day by day, minute by minute, and rules him sovereignly. For if the *king’s* heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water [and] he turneth it whithersoever he will (Pro 21:1), surely every man is ruled by God. This is great mystery, yet the Bible is clear on this. By His providence, God upholds and governs the whole universe, and every creature in it, including man.

A believer is most grateful for this knowledge. God upholds us. He controls all creatures great and small. God’s providence so serves the salvation of His people that the believer knows from experience, the truth of Rom 8:28, namely, “that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

March 26 – "...to the end that man may serve his God."
by Prof. Russell Dykstra

Genesis 1:26, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

God crowned His majestic work of creation by forming man. Man is unique among all the creatures of God's hand. In one way, man is like the animals – he is part of the earth, formed from the very dust. Yet by breathing into man the breath of life (Gen 2:7), God instilled in man something more and different, namely, a spiritual aspect. Man is able to know more than he can see, hear, and touch – he is able to know God and spiritual things.

Everything about man's creation indicates that he is unique. First, before God created man in the sixth day, He paused and communed within Himself about what He was about to do: "Let us make man in our image..." (Gen 1:26). Then, rather than call man into existence as He had done with every other creature, God formed man, as it were, with His own hands. Thus, both male and female were created in God's image, possessing the true knowledge of God, righteousness, and holiness.

One reason why God created Adam to be different from all other creatures is that Adam was created king of the creation. God specifically gave Adam dominion over all other creatures on the earth (Gen 1:26, 28).

As king, under God, Adam was to "subdue" the earth, that is, develop in God's service the powers that God had placed in the creation. The Bible indicates that this started almost immediately with Jabal's advances in agriculture (raising cattle), Jubal's development of musical instruments, and Tubal-cain's fashioning of metal tools (Gen 4). Over the centuries, man has harnessed the power of water, fire, wind, and the atom, and has made many inventions.

The problem is that Adam fell from his lofty state as righteous friend/servant of God, and thus lost his right to rule the creation. Fallen man rules the creation for his own benefit and pleasure. Every new development is pressed into the service of sin, whether it be printing, cars, radios, computers, televisions, music, or art – man uses each to cultivate new ways to break God's laws.

This is not as it ought to be. God submitted every creature to man so that "man might serve his Creator" – use the whole of the creation to praise God. That is proper cultural development.

Only the believer, renewed in the image of God and sanctified by the Spirit, can use the developments of man to serve God. By God's grace, he presses into the service of God all the powers and inventions of the creation.

Believers seek to do that out of love and gratitude. Yet, we long for the life in the new heaven and earth when we will finally do that perfectly.

March 27 – God Created also Angels
by Prof. Russell Dykstra

Hebrews 1:13-14, "But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

In that first week of time when God created the material world and all that is in it, He also made creatures that belong to a different world. He created angels. And, God created a place for the angels to dwell – heaven. In distinction from the material such as earth, sky, water, roses, pineapples, and foxes, angels are spiritual. They are creatures, not gods, yet their realm is not the earth or sky, but the spiritual heaven.

What are angels? To begin with, the word *angel* means *messenger*. They are servants of God sent out with an official message to convey or a work to accomplish.

Angels were created sinless. They love what is holy and pure and are zealous for God's glory. They can see that glory when we cannot. Isaiah beheld that in a vision of God on His throne, high and lifted up, and "one [angel] cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa 6:3).

The angel's special function is to serve God's elect people (Heb 1:14). How they serve His people, God does not fully explain. It is obvious that they serve the spiritual benefit of His people. They are sent to protect them not from physical danger and destruction, as is evident from the reality that God's people are injured and die just as the ungodly do. Angels preserve God's people from spiritual dangers.

Angels ministered to Jesus at crucial times in His earthly ministry. They rejoice in heaven at the repentance of even one sinner. They will be involved in the final judgment, sent by Christ to gather the elect from the four corners of the earth, and then gather the ungodly unto destruction.

No one can see angels ordinarily. In Bible days, God sometimes gave them visible bodies so that they could accomplish God's appointed tasks, such as delivering Lot from Sodom, or announcing Jesus' birth and later, His resurrection.

Some have insisted that each believer has a guardian angel, because the Bible on a couple of occasions speaks of "his angel." Understandably, parents like the thought that each of their children is protected from physical danger by one guardian angel. Yet, it is far more significant and comforting to hold to the Bible's teaching that all the angels, myriads of powerful spiritual agents, are engaged full time in serving us and keeping us from *spiritual* destruction, and preserving us unto *eternal* life.

At death, they will escort us into the presence of Jesus. And we will join the throng of angels praising God perfectly.

March 28 – The Spiritual World
by Prof. Russell Dykstra

Read: Acts 23: 1-10

The Confession rejects errors from long ago that are still found in the world today. For that reason, it is worthwhile to examine them.

The first is the heresy of the Sadducees, a Jewish sect that existed in the days of Jesus. Jewish rulers of the people in that day were predominantly Sadducees, including the High Priests.

The error of the Sadducees was deadly serious. They denied the existence of any spiritual beings (angels or devils). They also denied the resurrection of the dead. For the Sadducees, this world and this life was all there was. They claimed to believe in the God of the Bible, but denied the afterlife – no heaven, hell, or resurrection.

Jesus taught us important information about heaven in response to a tempting question from the Sadducees. They invented a story of a woman who had legitimate marriages to several different men, and posed the question: "In the resurrection, whose wife shall she be?" Jesus' stern reply was, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." Then Jesus effectively demolished the error of the Sadducees: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt 22:27-38)

Many today claim to believe in God, but deny that there is a heaven or hell apart from this world. They teach people to live for this world and this life. Some of these believe that there is nothing after death. Others believe they will make this world into heaven.

This is a denial of the one true God Who created not only the heavens, the earth, and all creatures in it, but also angels and the spiritual heaven. And God has clearly revealed that there is a resurrection of the body. Jesus promised that "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28-29).

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: (John 11:25)

March 29 – The Origin of Devils
by Prof. Russell Dykstra

II Peter 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

God created the material universe in which we live, the world that we can see, touch, study, and enjoy. God also created a world we cannot see – a spiritual realm. In that spiritual world, angels and devils live. Angels are holy creatures formed by the perfectly holy God. Devils are evil spirits. Where did devils come from?

An ancient heresy called Manichaeism, after a man named Mani, claimed that “devils have their origin of themselves, and that they are wicked of their own nature, without having been corrupted.” Mani taught that eternally there was good, and there was evil. God is good. Opposed to God, and independent of God, is another power which is evil. The devils come out of the evil substance.

According to this view, there is a constant battle between these two forces, both seeking to overcome the other. The outcome of the battle is uncertain.

These ideas exist yet in the twenty-first century. Many believe this battle continues between the good and the evil – two independent powers fighting for domination and victory.

This dualism is contrary to everything that Scripture teaches. The Bible proclaims the truth that God is sovereign. He is Creator. Everything else is creature, and dependent on His power. Man, angels, and yes, devils too, are creatures.

But the question yet remains – what are devils and where did they come from? Devils are angels who fell into sin and became totally evil. Jesus indicated that the devil was at one time good, but left that. The devil (said Jesus) “was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth” (John 8:44). And II Pet 2:4 testifies that these devils were created angels: “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell....”

God is in control. God determined Adam’s fall into sin. He also determined that some of the angels would rebel against Him. The rest of the angels God preserved in holiness. Paul calls the latter “elect angels” (I Tim 5:21). But God created all the angels good, holy, and sinless.

The devils are not independent of God. They are creatures whom God upholds, preserves, and governs – all for His purposes, in spite of themselves.

The believer never underestimates the power of the devil. Yet he has every confidence that God rules supreme, also over the evil spirits.

March 30 – What do devils do?
by Prof. Russell Dykstra

Read: Ephesians 6: 10-18

Devils are evil spirits. The Confession teaches that “they are so depraved, that they are enemies of God and every good thing.”

People all over the world are convinced that evil spirits abound. Anything bad that happens to them is attributed to evil spirits – accidents, diseases, loss of a business, death in the family, or anything they consider to be “bad luck.” Such people are continually seeking to placate the evil spirits or drive them away by charms, offerings, incense, or the like.

Devils are evil spirits, and they are real. They desire to bring evil on men, most definitely. But the essence of their evil nature is that they are opposed to *God*. Jehovah God is everything good, including truth, purity, wisdom, love, righteousness, and mercy. God is infinitely good. Devils oppose God *because* He is perfectly just, righteous, and good. Devils are so corrupt that they can only oppose all that is good and right.

Thus the evil that devils seek in anyone’s life is not disease, financial ruin, or death. It is rather the spiritual destruction of man that the devils pursue relentlessly. The devils are united in their opposition to God and desire to destroy God and His rule. Failing that, they desire to bring the entire human race into the pit of everlasting destruction with them.

Devils are rightly called *evil* spirits. They love iniquity because they hate the holy God. They seek “to ruin the church and every member thereof.”

Devils will use anything in their war against God and His church. Being deceivers, they use the lie to draw men into the full bondage of sin. They make sin appear attractive. They use friends to entice to sin. Recall how the devil used Peter to tempt the Lord to forsake the obedient walk to the cross. Devils use peer pressure from society to make people conform to evil thinking and corrupt living. They will use government laws passed by evil men to encourage or compel citizens to sin.

The devil has an ally in each human being, for all are born totally depraved, willing slaves to sin and to the devil. The regenerated child of God still has that wicked nature, and the devils work in and through that.

Do not fear the evils of sickness, poverty, or even death. Fear rather the *spiritual* power of devils. Give no place to the devil (Eph 4:27). Resist him and he will flee from you (Jam 4:7).

March 31 – The Devil's Power is Real, and it is Great
by Prof. Russell Dykstra

2 Corinthians 2:10-11, "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."

Satan is the head of all the fallen angels. It is likely that God created Satan head of *all* the angels. Therefore, he was given tremendous gifts, power, and authority. He was chief over a myriad of angels, created to lead the band in service to the glorious God.

But Satan began to look too much on his own glory and power and lifted himself up. In his pride, Satan sinned and became a rebel against his Creator and Lord. From that moment on, all his power and gifts were pressed into the rebellion that he led among the angels that fell with him. They seek to destroy God and all that God has created.

Satan is, therefore, a formidable foe. He is called "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph 2:2). He has legions of angels at his command. His status is evident from the fact that even Michael the archangel, "when contending with the devil...durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 1:9).

The Bible instructs the church to recognize the devil as a dreadful enemy. He is described as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet 5:8). The church is warned not to open up any place in their lives for the devil (Eph 4:26, 27; 1 Cor 7:5; 11 Cor 2:11). Under him is one kingdom, fully devoted to the destruction of God, His kingdom, and His church.

Over the centuries, Satan has done great spiritual harm in and to the church. He introduces the lie into the church using false teachers. He sows tares (evil men) among the wheat (the elect). He rouses up ungodly men to persecute and kill believers. He strives to get ungodly men into the offices of the church so that evil men lead the church as preachers, elders, and deacons. In the days of Jesus' earthly ministry, there were many instances of demon possession, a dreadful picture of the spiritual power that a devil can have over a person.

All believers are called to be engaged in the spiritual battle. We are to put on the spiritual armor of God (Eph 6), and stand for the cause of God. We do this in the confidence that we are purchased with the blood of Christ. We are in His hand, and no one is able to pluck us out of His, or His Father's hand (John 10:28,29).

April 1 – God’s Plan for Devils – Eternal Destruction
by Prof. Russell Dykstra

Revelation 20: 10, “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

Satan is the dreadful foe of the church of Jesus Christ. He is powerful and his legions obey his command. He rules among the children of men. His greatest triumph (so he thought) was the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus.

Yet, Satan and his host have been eternally predestined for destruction in hell. And, the all-wise God is using Satan for His purposes. Satan always wills and does evil. But he is an instrument in God’s hand, accomplishing God’s will. A prime example of that is God using a lying spirit in the mouth of the false prophets to convince wicked king Ahab to go out and fight the Syrians, leading to Ahab’s God-determined death and overthrow (I Kings 22).

Satan’s end is certain. Gen 3:15 already prophesies that, in the Seed of the woman (Christ) crushing the head of the serpent (Satan). The Confession teaches: “by their own wickedness, adjudged to eternal damnation, daily expecting their horrible torments.” Jesus speaks of hell as “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt 25:41). Notice: it is *prepared* for them.

Jesus has overthrown Satan’s kingdom. Jesus, overcoming the devil’s temptations, showed that Satan could not defeat Jesus. The cross was the triumph, as Paul writes, “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it (Col 2:15). At His ascension into heaven, Jesus cast Satan and his host out (Rev 12:9).

Destruction awaits them. Knowing that they have but a little time, they go after the church. This fits God’s purpose, namely, that we fight in this spiritual battle.

We must fight. And yet, we fight not *for* the victory. The victory is accomplished in Christ’s cross and resurrection. All believers are in Christ and have the victory. We fight *in* the victory.

Satan’s sure destruction is revealed in a vision of the end: “And the devil...was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone... and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev 20:10). Likewise his followers (v15).

In the new creation that Jesus will form, there will be no place for Satan or his host. For “there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie” (Rev 21:27).

What a glorious day when God brings His people into the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ! No adversary will torment us there, and we will live with God in perfect covenant life eternally.

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