

Putting on the New Man

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

I have agreed to write an article for you on the topic of conversion. The possibility exists that the reason I was asked to write on this topic was that there is a marked difference between the conversion that we knew at Netherlands Reformed, and the process of conversion as we now know and believe as Protestant Reformed. The conversion that we used to speak of is a turning to God that He may save us, but to illustrate all of that would only increase your knowledge of their doctrine, and not be for your personal edification and growth, which should be our primary purpose.

Conversion then, is a work that you and I are to be busy about every day and moment of our life. It is the turning from our wicked ways, thoughts and desires of the old man of sin, and putting on the good works of the new man in Jesus Christ. This is not an easy task; in fact, we cannot do it of ourselves, but need the strength of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in us to accomplish this good work.

Many times during any given day you and I do wrong, and then think lightly of it. We really don't think the evil that we do is so wrong that we can't put off the consequences of it if we want to. We, by nature, love to pamper ourselves and fulfill the lusts of the flesh and fortify ourselves with the pride of life, but do not stop to realize that by doing so we are living spiritually slothful lives. We are young, self-confident and feel independent, and for the moment or next couple of hours our destiny is our own. So yes, let's go to a movie against our parents' wishes. And when in our car, let's listen to the music we want to with its seductive lyrics and rhymes, and forget for the moment that we were warned that we should not listen to the world's music. While we know we shouldn't partake of these things, we will anyway because it appeals to our flesh.

Young people, we must flee from our sin. Our sins are many and varied, and no age group is exempt from sinning. What is our incentive to flee from sin? Why must we turn from the evil and do the good? I'll tell you.

We are children of God, and as such we are incorporated into His covenant of grace; we are friend-servants of Jehovah, and He is our Friend-Sovereign. Because He has chosen us as His own, we had and have no choice for we are His by grace, and therefore it is our privilege and responsibility to live our lives to His honor and glory. This much is sure, it is impossible to live to His honor and glory while we are walking in the ways of the world, partaking of the sinful words, actions, and ways of the ungodly, for they are motivated by enmity to live ungodly, while our motivation to live godly is love.

This is what conversion is about: a turning from the old ways of sin, and a turning to the new ways of living in Christ. When we repent of and forsake the old way of sin, and turn to Christ, we can rejoice for it is only His work in us that gives us the desire and ability to do so. Our Heidelberg Catechism (LD 33 Q&A 88) tells us the two parts of true conversion to God are 1) a mortifying of the old man of sin, which is to manfully determine to put off our sinfulness, and 2) a quickening of the new man, which is a yielding of our members as instruments of righteousness to God.

To do these things we need to pray to our covenant God for the strength and ability to carry out that which we must do. Thus, believing we have this strength we must take positive

action to forsake our sins. You that are infatuated with the world's music, go out to your car and change the preset button on your radio to a station which plays music which is not destructive to your soul's warfare. Throw out those wicked tapes, and buy God-glorifying, soul-edifying tapes. Resolve to find good activities to take your dates to, and furthermore resolve to be an influence for good on your friends and advise them to do the same things. Then you can rejoice to see God's work in yourselves, and be thrilled that He has chosen you unto Himself, for it is He that is working in you to do His will and good pleasure.

Carry on, fellow saints, for the victory is ours in Jesus Christ! Then we shall grow in grace and the knowledge of Him, our Covenant God, which is our calling and reasonable service.

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