

The Three Musketeers

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Some years ago, just before Easter, we were in a dime store in town. There we saw a box full of day old ducklings. We bought three, for we thought that we would have a male and female out of three anyway. Then we put them in a pen on our yard and dug a hole in the ground, and put a tub in it. We often would fill the tub with water and let the ducks out of their pen. Then you should have seen them run: one after the other, head first into the tub! I at once called them The Three Musketeers.

Well, they grew up into beautiful good sized white ducks in about three or four months time. Then we saw that there were two males, so one had to go!

Then one night, we had a severe thunderstorm. I could see in the light of the lightning flashes that the two ducks stood in the open part of their runway. There they stood together with the rain beating hard down upon them. I could not understand why they did not go under the sheltered part of their runway. The female had her head under the breast of the male. And the male stood with his head and beak straight upward, letting the rain pour down their backs. But when the thunder and lightning came near, then they would stand about two or three inches apart. And both stood with head and neck stretched out, sometimes even standing on tiptoes. Why did they stand there like that?

I had never seen such a thing before. But it reminded me of a sermon of the Rev. H. Hoeksema when he preached in the Holland language on the text of Rom. 8:19: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope."

Rev. Hoeksema said, that the meaning of earnest expectation (als met opgestoken hoofde) was, "rijkhalzend," that is, with outstretched neck. When I saw those ducks stand there in that hard thunderstorm, I at once thought about those words. How true they were. How beautiful is the Word of God to us. We also must call out: "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who has set Thy glory above the heavens." Ps. 8:1.

When I see the pain and suffering of the creatures all around us, then I think that they must suffer for our sake, because of our sins. "Therefore the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, For we know' that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Rom. 8:21, 22.

What a beautiful picture of the true children of God. As the apostle also says in the next verse: "And not only they, but we ourselves also which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

For the Living God came Himself in the flesh and He bore our sins in His body, to deliver us from bondage, called and justified us, and made us joint-heirs with Him through the Holy Spirit.

To understand that work of God in the heart of a person that is born in sin, and then is regenerated, or born again from above, we must think of the incarnation of Christ. As the Netherlands Confession explains about the two natures of the Son of God (Art. 19). That is also the meaning of being born again through the Holy Spirit, because it is a living Spirit. You see now why the Living God had to come in our flesh, and He Himself had to be the Lamb slain for us, so that we could really become His brethren and true children of God? That beautiful work of

regeneration can take place anytime in our life, young or old, but without sanctification, which is the fruit of regeneration, no one shall see God. Heb. 12:14. John 3:3, 5.

We can see also that the whole human race, with all the creatures represent one spirit, as it was reflected in paradise. One needs the other, because they all together make one whole. So too, when the Lord regenerates us through the Holy Spirit, we become one whole with Christ, as our elder brother. Heb. 2:11. That is the highest and most glorious manifestation of the love of God. That Spirit of God is not divided or broken up in little pieces, but is one living Spirit, which is the Spirit of the Triune God. Which is as the breath of God to His Son Christ, and from Christ through His people back to the Living God. They become one whole and cannot be separated, no more than Christ can become separated from God. Even though such a person sins, thereby grieving the Holy Spirit, yet they cannot be separated from God, nor from the whole.

Therefore we also, as with outstretched neck, long for that time when Christ shall come again, and “change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His most glorious body.” Phil. 3:21. According as that new life of God which He forms within us that cries Abba, Father, I love Thee. That Spirit prays within us with great longings and groanings which cannot be uttered.

We cannot seek the shelter of this world, but we stand in all the vicissitudes of life, of sorrow and cryings and pain, looking up to the face of our loving Saviour Jesus Christ. For He holds us under His hand or wings, for “He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust.” Ps. 91:4.

We therefore, wait patiently in hope, knowing that nothing can separate us from the love of the Living God. For He shall bring us to Him, to be in His glorious presence for evermore. “As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness.” Ps. 17:15.

Let us stand strong together in truth and love, knowing that we must give account of all we do. “And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

Even so, come, Lord Jesus, yea, come quickly. Rev. 22:12, 20.

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