

THE 5 W'S ABOUT CONVERSION

WHY IS CONVERSION SO IMPORTANT

In the darkness of night, a man came to see Jesus. Like his parents and grandparents before him, he was a child of the covenant. On the eighth day after his birth he received in his flesh the sign and seal of God's covenant promises. He belonged to God's chosen nation, God's special people. He was a leader among them, a spiritual leader, thus very familiar with the Scriptures. He was a Pharisee, a sect which adhered to the law of God with strictness and precision. He honoured the Sabbath. He paid his tithes. He looked forward in faith to the coming of the Messiah who would usher in the kingdom of God. He was filled with hope and confidence of his place in this glorious kingdom. In every way Nicodemus seemed to be a living and faithful member of the church.

Yet the Lord sees what we cannot see. For we judge the outward man, but God judges the heart. God is able to see what lies buried deep within our secret self. In this instance, the Lord saw a corrupt heart, a darkened mind and an enslaved will. The Lord saw a man who was still under the dominion of Satan and in slavery to sin. The Lord saw a man who was spiritually dead. Therefore Jesus said to this outstanding member of the church, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

So you see that you can belong to the covenant; attend church faithfully, be a leader in the church community; and pay your contributions to church and school; live your life in seeming obedience to the law of God, and nevertheless be excluded from the kingdom of God, and cast into the outer darkness for eternity. *"You must be born again."*

Paul once spoke in a similar fashion. In Romans 9, he recounted the rich blessings that the Israelites enjoyed: *"...to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen."* Though they all received the promise of the covenant, not all received what was promised.

Why was that? Paul explained, *"For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.' That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed."*

One does not become a true child of Abraham by means of natural birth, but by means of spiritual birth. Paul went on to explain this by way of example, *"For this is the word of promise: 'At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.'"* Ishmael was a son of Abraham by natural birth. But the promise of the covenant would find its fulfilment, not in those of natural birth, but in those of supernatural birth. To show this, God closed Sarah's womb until long after the age of child-bearing. When Sarah was as good as dead—that is, when she was no longer able to conceive a child, God miraculously enabled her to conceive a son. Isaac was a child of supernatural birth. He would be the heir through which God's promise would be fulfilled, but Ishmael, a child of natural birth would not.

The same is true today. One does not become a true ¹ child of God simply by natural birth. The promise of the covenant is not fulfilled in those who are included in the covenant of grace by way of natural birth, but in those who respond to the covenant demands by way of supernatural birth, by rebirth, by regeneration. Those who are included in the covenant by birth must be born again if they are to see the kingdom.

¹ We qualify this statement with the word *"true."* All those who are born in the covenant are God's children. They have all received God's promise. But only those who are born again acknowledge themselves and live as children of God. As Paul said, *"Not all Israel is Israel,"* so we could say that not all God's covenant people are God's covenant people, and not all God's children are God's children.

WHY IS CONVERSION NECESSARY?

The form for Baptism stresses this need for conversion when it says, *“First, we and our children are conceived and born in sin and are therefore by nature children of wrath, so that we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we are born again.”* Conversion is necessary because of our depraved nature.

Our Catechism teaches that by nature we are inclined to hate God and our neighbour. By nature we are so corrupt that we are incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil (Q/A 5,8).

The Canons of Dort (III/IV, Art 3) describe our depravity in this way: *“All men are conceived in sin and are born as children of wrath, incapable of any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in sins, and slaves of sin. And without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they neither will nor can return to God, reform their depraved nature, or prepare themselves for its reformation.”*

That we conceived and born in sin is clear from David's lament: *“For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me”* (Psalm 51:3,5).

Paul said that *“we all once ... were by nature children of wrath, just as the others”* (Eph 2:3f.). He also said that by nature we are dead in our trespasses (Eph 2:5).

Our inability to do any good is clear from what Isaiah wrote, *“But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses [our good works AvD] are like filthy rags”* (Isa 64:6). Christ said, *“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing”* (John 15:4,5). Paul said, *“There is none who does good, no, not one”* (Rom 3:12).

Concerning our inclination to do evil, Scripture is emphatic: *“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”* (Gen 6:5). Also, *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”* (Jer 17:9).

Our slavery to sin is clearly described by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans: *“But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness”* (Rom 6:17-18).

If we contrast our depravity to the perfection of God, our corruption to His holiness and purity, we will understand that we are not acceptable to God as we are by nature. We must be changed. We must be recreated in His image. We must become holy and pure, even as God is holy and pure. If we are to enter into the kingdom of God, we must be born again. We must be converted.

WHAT IS CONVERSION?

What is conversion? According to our Heidelberg Catechism, conversion can be defined as *“the dying of the old nature and the coming to life of the new”* and is identified by the Catechism with true repentance (LD 33). The Belgic Confession does not speak about conversion. It speaks rather about regeneration. In Article 24 we read, *“We believe that this true faith, worked in man by the hearing of God's Word and by the operation of the Holy Spirit, regenerates him and makes him a new man. It makes him live a new life and frees him from the slavery of sin.”* The Canons of Dort identifies conversion and regeneration, and describes it in this way: *“This conversion is that regeneration, new creation, resurrection from the dead, making alive, so highly spoken of in the Scriptures, which God works in us without us.”*

From our confessions we learn that conversion can be viewed from two perspectives; from the **conception** of spiritual life and from the **growth** of spiritual life.

When we deal with the creation of the life of a baby, we may speak about the moment of conception, when the egg is fertilised by sperm. Where there was no human life before, suddenly there is human life. So it is with conversion. Conversion, or regeneration, is the conception of new spiritual life where formerly there was no spiritual life. This occurs in a moment.

But conversion can also be viewed from the perspective of the growth of spiritual life. An expecting mother does not suddenly conceive a child which is fully grown. I dare say that the miracle of new life in her womb is something of which she has no sensation. A tiny egg is fertilised by a single sperm invisible to the naked eye. The single cell divides and develops. Unknown to her, the little baby within her grows and grows, and the growth goes undetected for weeks. So it is with conversion. Conversion, or regeneration, is the growth and strengthening of spiritual life. This occurs over one's whole lifetime, and its beginning is often undetected.

Thus our confessions understand conversion to include both the instantaneous conception of spiritual life as well as the life-long growth and development of spiritual life. Conversion begins at a certain moment in time, and continues throughout the time of our life here on this earth. Conversion will be complete only when we leave this life.

WHOSE WORK IS CONVERSION?

If we have understood well what was said concerning the extent of man's depravity, and if we have also comprehended what conversion is, we will come to the conclusion that conversion cannot be a work of man. The principle of life is not man's to give.

Just as the body of Lazarus lay impotent in the tomb, waiting for the Lord to raise him from the dead, so we who have died spiritually are impotent, waiting for the Spirit of Christ to raise us from our spiritual death.

In the Old Testament, conversion is clearly portrayed as a work of God. Conversion is a promise which God made to His covenant people. God had promised to give His people a new heart. God said to Israel through Moses, "*And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live*" (Deu 30:6). And through Ezekiel, God said, "***I will give** you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; **I will take** the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **I will put** My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them*" (Ezek 36:26,27). The inability of God's people to change their nature was emphasised by Jeremiah when he said to Israel, "*Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil*" (Jer 13:23).

In the New Testament as well conversion is shown to be the work of God. Christ made it clear that no one can heed the invitation of the gospel to come to Christ in faith unless he is drawn to Christ by the Father. He said, "*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him*" (Jn 6:44). Paul said, "*There is none who seeks after God*" (Rom 3:11). He also said, "*the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us*" (Rom 5:5). Lydia, the seller of purple, could respond in faith to the words which Paul spoke only after the Lord had opened her heart (cf. Acts 16:14). Elsewhere Paul said, "*No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit*" (1 Cor 12:3).

Coming to Christ in faith, seeking after God, loving God, the opening of our hearts, confessing Christ as Lord, being renewed in the image of God — all these aspects of conversion are attributed to God, never to man. To use the words of our confession, "*God works [this conversion] in us without us*" (Canons of Dort, III/IV, Art 12).

But does man play no role in his conversion? Is he not an active participant in any way? At this point, we wish to make a distinction. We have noticed earlier that there are two dimensions to conversion — the conception of new life and the growth of the same. With respect to the conception of new life, man is entirely passive.

But with respect to the continuation and growth of this new life, man is active. The change in him remains the work of God, but at the same time, involves his responsible participation. Paul wrote, *“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”* (2 Cor 7:1). The saints are called to cleanse themselves, which they can do only through the power of the Spirit.

Paul also said, *“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure”* (Phil 2:12-13). To work out our own salvation means that we must continually seek to live out of our redemption from the power of sin. But we have not the strength within ourselves to work out our salvation. Our strength lies in God, who is at work in us. We must pray for the grace of the Holy Spirit that He may more and more renew us after God’s image. We must seek the strength from God which enables us to apply our Christ-given freedom from sin and live holy lives, showing thereby that we have been set free from the slavery to sin and are now ruled by Christ, our King.

WHAT HAPPENS IN CONVERSION?

The spiritual nature of man is comprised of three different faculties: the heart, the mind and the will. Through the fall into sin, the heart of man became corrupt, his mind became impaired and his will was enslaved to evil. In conversion, God renews these faculties in man.

In the first place, the natural man, however wise or learned, can not rightly comprehend or accept what is revealed in the gospel concerning God and concerning man. To the natural man, the gospel is foolishness. The Holy Spirit, however, powerfully enlightens the mind of man so that man rightly understands and discerns what Scripture reveals. This is the first component of true faith.

Secondly, the Holy Spirit powerfully penetrates into the deepest recesses of man’s heart. He opens the heart which by nature is closed to God. He softens the heart, which by nature is hard. To use God’s own words spoken through Ezekiel, *“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”* (Ezek 36:26). As a result, the converted turn to God in love rather than turn from Him in hatred, as they would by nature. The converted detest sin and desire to live in righteousness. They sing out their love for God and their love for God’s commandments.

In the third place, the Holy Spirit frees man’s will from its slavery to sin and Satan. The Spirit sets the will of man free again, so that the converted no longer stubbornly rebel against God, but walk in willing obedience to him. *“Where formerly the rebellion and resistance of the flesh fully dominated, now a prompt and sincere obedience of the Spirit begins to prevail.”* (Canons, III/IV, Art 16).

As a result of the Spirit’s work those who are converted come to faith and seek their salvation outside of themselves in Jesus Christ. They also repent of their godless walk of life, and begin to live in obedience to God’s commandments.

We have already seen that conversion is a continual growth. It is not completed immediately, but is a life-long process. The catechism describes conversion as the dying of the old nature and the coming to life of the new. The old nature does not die completely until we leave this life, and the new nature is not perfected until we enter into the life to come. Those who are converted to God must repent of their sins daily and pray that they may be spiritually renewed more each day.

WHO ARE CONVERTED?

Why are some people converted, and others not? Is this because some desire to be converted and seek this conversion, while others do not.

There are many Christians today who believe that the choice is man's. God does not enter any one's heart, nor does He perform any work upon them without their consent. Like the Arminians of old, many Christians today believe that the decision whether a person is converted or not depends upon that individual's will. Each individual decides whether he will be converted or not.

This view is based upon a more positive attitude towards man's spiritual condition. They deny that man is dead in sin. They deny the total depravity of man. They believe that man is terribly sick, but not dead. He cannot do much, but he can do a little. He can still desire to be healed, to be converted. His will is free.

As we have seen, however, Scripture teaches that all men are dead in sin. Although they have physical life, they are spiritually dead. Now those who are dead can do nothing to promote their spiritual resurrection. They can do nothing to promote new life in themselves.

Our view of conversion — whether it is God's choice or ours — depends upon our view of man's depravity. If we believe that man is sick, then we will acknowledge that conversion is man's choice. But if we believe that man is dead in sin, then we will acknowledge that conversion is God's choice.

As it is, Scripture clearly teaches that man is dead in sin. Thus the choice whether a person is converted or not is wholly God's choice. To emphasise this point, let me use this rather absurd illustration.

Suppose that a doctor in a hospital research lab suddenly discovered a wonder drug that will make dead people alive. He immediately rushes to the morgue to try his new drug. When he enters, he does not ask which of the dead would like to be made alive. He does not ask for some indication, however slight, of their desire to be resurrected or not. Why not? Because the doctor knows that they can not respond in any way. They are dead. If any are to be brought to life again, then the doctor must make the choice, not the dead.

That some are converted to God and others not depends, then, not upon the will of man, but upon the will of God. Therefore God says, *"I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion. So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy"* (Rom 9:15,16).

Paul also said, *"For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"* (1 Cor 4:7). In this context, Paul rebuked the Corinthians for their pride, as though they themselves had accomplished something that others had not. Paul informed them that they were what they were because of the grace of God, and not because of anything in themselves. Do they have faith, and others not? that is not their doing; it is the gift of God (Eph 2:8). Are they faithful in their walk of life, bearing much good fruit? That is not their own doing, but the work of Christ in them. For apart from Christ they could do nothing (cf. John 15:5,6). By nature they are no different than others, but they, like them, are dead in their trespasses and sins. That they are different is to be ascribed to God, who causes them to differ through the grace of regeneration.

Paul wrote elsewhere, *"for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure"* (Phil 2:13). That we do God's good pleasure means that we believe in Him and walk in faithfulness to His covenant demands. Both the will (or desire) and the ability to do what pleases God is the result of God's work in us.

Other Scripture could be quoted to show how incorrect the Arminians are in postulating the free will of man as the initiator of God's grace and favour towards him. Paul wrote to the Philippians that the

was “*being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ*” (Phil 1:6). Paul attributes the beginning of their spiritual life to God, not the Philippians themselves.

Christ said, “*You did not choose Me, but I chose you...*” (John 15:16). God is the one who chose us first. Any choices we make are subsequent to and dependent upon God’s choice.

James wrote: *Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth*” (Jms 1:18). To bring forth means to give them birth. In this instance, James speaks not about physical birth, but to spiritual rebirth which is accomplished through the preaching of the Word. Their rebirth, their regeneration, their conversion was because of “*God’s own will,*” not because of their own will.

Thus we conclude that all the elect are converted, and only the elect. Conversion depends, then, not upon the will of man, but upon the will of God.

BY WHAT MEANS DOES CONVERSION OCCUR?

When God created new life it pleased Him to use the agency of the spoken word.² We read in Genesis that God spoke, and through the power of the spoken word things were brought into existence that did not exist before.

When God creates new life by bringing forth children, it pleases him to use the agency of men and women and their reproductive organs.

In a similar way, it pleases God to create the new life of conversion through the means of the Word, and more specifically, the preaching of the Word through human agency. Peter wrote, “*[You have] been born again...through the word of God*” (1 Pet 1:23). We have just quoted James a moment ago, who said, “*Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth.*” Conversion is brought about by the Spirit working through the Word.

The Spirit is also pleased to continue our conversion through continued preaching, by the use of the sacraments and by means of church discipline.

In saying this, you may have noticed the reference to the three marks of the true church, and thereby understand the important place which the church has in the conversion of men. To enter the kingdom of God, one must be born again. And the keys to the kingdom — and one could also say, the keys of conversion — are given to the church.

But it is not limited to the church. Parents play a very important role in the conversion of their children. Baptism is a sign and seal of regeneration (cf. Tit 3:5). But this sign and seal is not given without the parents first promising to instruct their children in the aforesaid doctrine, and to have them instructed therein to the utmost of their power. By their sound teaching, godly discipline and pious example, parents are a powerful means which God uses in the rebirth of their children. The more readily we do our duty as parents, the more this favour of God, who works in our children, usually manifests itself and more directly God’s work of conversion proceeds (cf. canons of Dort, III/IV, 17).

By extension, we may also speak about the role which our schools have in the rebirth of our children, as well as Youth Clubs.

We must not despise the means by which it pleases God to work this conversion in us and our children. Though these means may appear to be fraught with human frailty, we may be assured that it pleases God to work this supernatural work of conversion by means of them.

² Cf. Canons of Dort, III/IV, Art 17.

WHEN DOES CONVERSION OCCUR?

At what age does conversion occur? A search of Scripture shows that some are converted at a relatively young age, while others are converted at an older age.

Consider David. He was the youngest of the eight sons of Jesse. When David voiced his intention to fight Goliath, Saul first refused because David was only a youth. Yet even in his youth David displayed great faith and trust in God.

Consider Samuel. He was brought to the temple as a boy. Yet already as a young man he displayed greater piety than the older sons of Eli. In contrast to the ungodly sons of Eli, Samuel ministered before the Lord even as a child (cf. 1 Sam 2:18).

Although we cannot be certain, it appears that Timothy was converted at a young age. He had been raised by a faithful mother, and from childhood he knew the Holy Scripture which we able to make him wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. As a minister he was very young. There is every possibility, then, that he had been converted already a number of years prior to receiving the office as a minister in the church, pointing to conversion in youth.

But not all conversions occur in youth. Some, who have been raised in covenantal homes, and have studied and know the Word of God are converted at a much later age. I think here of Nicodemus. We mentioned already that he was a rabbi, which position speaks of age. He seems to have been a truly religious man. He appears to have been sincere. Yet he was not converted when he spoke to Christ.

I think also of Saul of Tarsus, a true descendant of Abraham, circumcised on the eighth day, taught the Scriptures at the feet of Gamaliel, a very zealous Pharisee who was sincere in his beliefs. But he was not converted.

Thus we conclude that there is no established age at which conversion occurs. I believe that this is important, for in our churches we seem to see the youth all making profession of faith at the same age. Some who make profession of faith later leave the church, making us wonder whether their profession was genuine. Others among our young people who have made profession of faith led a life-style that makes us wonder whether they are truly converted. Indeed, if the point were made, there appear to be some among our mature members who go through the minimal motions of living a Christian life, and have more in common with the world than with the church. What they do, they do out of custom or superstition. These are hypocrites, of whom Article 28 of the Belgic Confession speaks.

Perhaps we should rethink our system of training the youth. The present procedure sees them attending catechism classes for six years, and then it is expected that they make profession of faith. But some youths display faith already at an earlier age, even in their early teens. Yet we do not encourage making public profession of faith until they have finished a set course of catechetical instruction and reached a certain age.

On the other hand, we expect all youths to make profession about the same time, somewhere between the ages of 18-21. And most of them make profession during that time. At times one wonders whether this is a matter of peer conformity. Furthermore, making profession of faith is the only way to get out of catechism classes. The oldest class that we have is usually 16 or 17 and older. Imagine how awkward a 24 year old person feels sitting in such a class with all these younger members, going over material that he has studied year after year. There will be a certain pressure from within to make profession of faith in order to ‘graduate’ from catechism class.

This makes me wonder whether we should not adopt another procedure — namely, having our children follow an established course of catechetical instruction. If some, though they have not yet completed the course, are able to examine themselves rightly, and also bear fruits of genuine faith, they may make public profession and continue their studies until complete. Others who do not

display fruits of faith, but have completed their studies are no longer required to attend catechism. They are to continue to sit under the preaching, and attend men's or women's club to continue their study of God's Word. Profession of faith would occur at whatever age God's work of conversion makes itself apparent.

HOW DOES CONVERSION MAKE ITSELF APPARENT?

Conversion is a radical change, as radical as the change of a dead man being made alive, as radical as the change from hating God to loving Him, from delighting in sin to hating it and fleeing from it.

But this radical change may not always be evident. Understand me well — the positive fruits of conversion will always be evident, for a good tree will bring forth good fruit. But if a covenant child is converted already early in life, he may never display the negative fruits of an unregenerate life. The radical change of his nature occurred, but it occurred at such an early age that the change is hardly noticeable.

In fact, if children have been brought up in the Christian faith from infancy, we would not ordinarily expect to see the dramatic change in their lives that is associated with a crisis conversion. We would rather expect to see a gradual growth into a mature Christian faith and a dedicated Christian life. This does not mean that covenant children do not need to be converted. Every covenant child must make a personal commitment to Christ. There must be a personal realisation of sin, a deepening of faith, an acceptance of the grace of salvation, and dedicated service of God.

The conversion of covenant children will, therefore, be ordinarily of the gradual type. But since no two people are alike, there may also be many differences in their conversions.

*“Much variation is possible in the way in which those born of Christian parents later come to conversion. Some are led gently, with no earth-shaking upheavals, growing steadily from childhood to young manhood, and from young manhood to full maturity as fathers in Christ. Others, however, who for a time openly live sinful lives, or became alienated from their Christian upbringing, are suddenly brought to conversion, through some gripping word or arresting circumstance, often by means of a violent emotional struggle.”*³ These are converted at a later age.

This brings up the question: Do covenant children—that is, children of Christian parents—need to be converted? If children have been brought up in the Christian faith from infancy, we would not ordinarily expect to see the dramatic change in their lives that is associated with a crisis conversion. We would rather expect to see a gradual growth into a mature Christian faith and a dedicated Christian life. But this does not mean that covenant children do not need to be converted. Every covenant child must make a personal commitment to Christ. There must be a personal realisation of sin, a deepening of faith, an appropriation of the blessings of salvation, and a dedication to the service of the Lord.

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³ H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, Kok, 1918, 4:158; as translated by A. A. Hoekema in *Saved by Grace*, Eerdmans, 1989, pg. 119.

There is a tendency in covenant communities simply to assume that all children of believers are “automatically” saved because they have been brought up in Christian homes. As a result, preaching in covenantal churches often fails to include a summons to the unsaved to turn to Christ in faith and repentance. But this is a serious deficiency. Children of believing parents, as well as children whose parents are not believers, must personally and consciously give their hearts to Christ and their lives to His service, and they should be summoned from the pulpit to do so. Let us listen to Bavinck once again.

“In preaching addressed to the church the earnest summons to faith and conversion ought never to be lacking. Preaching on the basis of the covenant of grace does not excuse the preacher from such a summons but, on the contrary, obligates him to do so ... For no matter how great are the blessings God gives us in that covenant—that we have been included into the covenant of grace from birth, that we have been born into a Christian church of Christian parents, that we have been baptised and brought up in a Christian family— all these blessings are still not enough. Ultimately everything depends on personal, saving faith; only he who believes in the Son has everlasting life. Even within the church, therefore everyone must examine himself and prove himself, to see whether he is in the faith. ⁴

⁴ Hoekema, *Ibid.*, pg. 119-120.