

PEACE  
*for the*  
TROUBLED  
HEART

*Reformed Spirituality*



HERMAN HOEKSEMA

*Edited by* DAVID J. ENGELSMAN



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## Preface

HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S exegetical and dogmatical writings are well-known. The same cannot be said of his devotional writings. By the publication of this book of Hoeksema's meditations, long buried in past volumes of the Reformed periodical, the *Standard Bearer*, we give especially Christian readers access to his devotional writings.

Beginning with the first issue of the magazine in October, 1924 and continuing until September 1, 1947, Hoeksema wrote the meditation in every issue of the *Standard Bearer*. The very first article in the first issue of the magazine was Hoeksema's meditation on Psalm 145:9a, 20b, "Jehovah's Goodness." In the span of almost twenty-three years, Hoeksema produced more than four hundred meditations.

These meditations are deliberately and distinctively devotional. In language that is often poetical, they breathe the rich experience of the believing child of God.

Hoeksema's meditations express and form genuine Reformed spirituality.

Always exegetical (whereas much purported spirituality is rooted in the emotions of the teacher), always biblical (whereas much purported spirituality is fanciful), and always doctrinal (whereas much purported spirituality is mystical), the meditations of Herman Hoeksema are instructive as well as moving (whereas much purported spirituality merely titillates the feelings for a fleeting moment).

From the approximately four hundred meditations, I have selected the thirty-seven that make up the content of this book. The overarching theme is the struggle and suffering in this life of every

believer as a pilgrim on the earth. I have distinguished these meditations as three categories and divided the book into three corresponding parts: pilgrimage, suffering, and struggle. Of course, there is some overlapping of thought. A pilgrim must suffer, and suffering demands struggle.

As an expression of *Reformed* spirituality, these meditations implicitly renounce both the error of supposing that the Christian experience is all exuberant joy and exhilarating power, as well as the error of dreaming that the Christian life is (or ought to be) earthly conquest by those who are at home in this world.

As an expression of *Reformed* spirituality, these meditations address the members of the church not as unbelieving doubters, but as believers who struggle with doubts and fears.

As an expression of *Reformed* spirituality, these meditations do not obsessively concentrate on the struggles within the believer. They do justice as well to his and the church's struggles against a hostile world of ungodly men and women.

As an expression of *Reformed* spirituality, these meditations are not content to leave the believer plagued with doubts and fears. Hoeksema's meditations are gospel, every one: "Believer, you *need* not doubt or fear! You *must* not doubt or fear! You *may* not doubt or fear! you *will* not doubt or fear!"

The title of the book is taken from the especially profound meditation in part two on John 14:1: "Not Troubled."

A number of these meditations were originally written in Dutch. Marvin Kamps has ably translated them into English, retaining the devotional character of the language.

It is our intention to publish more volumes of Hoeksema's meditations on other themes and of a somewhat different, though consistently devotional nature.

DAVID J. ENGELSMA



# PART I

## Pilgrimage



# 1

## *The Pilgrim's Confession*

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

—Hebrews 11:13

The pilgrim's confession!

We confess that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

It is a confession—if it is not merely lip service—that expresses what lives in our hearts and, relative to all things earthly, rules our entire life on the earth.

Only two confessions are possible: One is either a stranger and a pilgrim or one is a citizen on the earth and seeks and finds one's home here below.

If you choose the latter, that is, if you seek your permanent home on the earth and you do not acknowledge or seek another home for yourself, your whole world view—your thinking, willing, desiring, and striving—is limited by the horizon of this present time. Then you seek the things below that lie under the law of time. Then you strive to possess as many earthly things as possible. Then you chase after the full enjoyment of earthly pleasures. You view earthly things not as a means to achieve a purpose, as a way to an end, but as the goal of all your striving and labor, of all your drudgery and struggling. Then you are without God in the world and also without hope. For then, from the vantage point of the present, you will look toward the future and constantly seek

better things, peace-giving realities for your soul, since present realities can never give you peace and satisfaction. But your hope is a continually disappointing expectation, a mirage that you chase in the vanity of your earthly life until death and eternal darkness put an end forever to your vain expectations.

Then your motto is: Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

Then you will attempt to keep what you have so that you may be identified with the rich and with the possessors of this world. If you belong to the poor and indigent of the earth, you will strive to steal from those possessors of the world whatever you can. You do not understand any explanation of, and you can have no peace with, the suffering of this present time. You do not practice submission in the midst of painful realities, nor do you have any patience with adversity. You have no comfort in circumstances of grief and sorrow, but are held captive by the fear of death all your life long.

Then you become more and more convinced: Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!

How radically different is the world view, the assessment of life and attitude toward life, of him who confesses that he is a stranger and a pilgrim in the earth!

His horizon reaches out far beyond the horizon of time to the distant reaches of eternal life. There, in the eternal, in the heavenly, in the consummation of all things, is his home, his destination, the goal of all his striving and the fulfillment of all his expectations. He seeks the things that are above. Upon them he sets his heart. His treasure is in heaven. He sees and evaluates all things in the light of that eternal hope. He specifically seeks not the things below, the things that are on the earth. Temporal things are in themselves not his goal, but are the means to achieve his goal, as well as the means to fulfill his life's purpose—God's purpose here on the earth. Then he struggles to climb to the top of Zion. Then he hopes with a living hope that never disappoints. It is a hope that stretches far beyond the temporal into the eternal, that reaches far beyond the range of the earthly unto the heav-

enly, that is victorious over the world, and that defeats even death itself.

He is then thankful in prosperity and patient in adversity.

He has an explanation for the suffering of this present time, for he knows that all things must work for his good and must serve to the attainment of his eternal dwelling place.

He has comfort even in death.

He sings through his tears.

He confesses that he is a stranger and a foreigner in the earth.

Then he can die in faith.

Looking to the promise.

Glorious confession!

---

Strangers and pilgrims.

Those who are described in the text confessed that truth about themselves.

In this manner they died. They died in the faith, that is, according to faith. This means that they died as those die who did not in this life receive the promises and viewed the fulfillment of the promise from afar, but who believingly embraced and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth.

They were not yet home.

Such is the underlying thought of both strangers and pilgrims. Being a stranger has essentially the same meaning as being a pilgrim. There is, however, a difference of emphasis. Being a pilgrim implies that you are not a citizen in the country where you temporarily reside. In this foreign land you have no rights of citizenship; a language different than your own is spoken there; you are not at home or comfortable there; your family and friends do not live there; the common customs are foreign to you. The country is not your fatherland. Being a stranger emphasizes that you dwell only temporarily in that land, that you reside in an unfamiliar house, find shelter, and are cared for regarding the needs of the body and soul. But with respect to both descriptions the funda-

mental idea is that of not yet being home. You do not have your residence here. Your home is elsewhere and you seek it elsewhere. You reside here only temporarily and you intend to be here only temporarily. You do not put down any roots. You do not seek to establish any continuing relationships. You are a traveler and must travel farther.

Stranger and pilgrim *on the earth*.

Note well, the meaning of this confession is not that you are a stranger *in the world*, although that is true. In the midst of the world that lies in evil, the world from a spiritual and ethical perspective, you are undoubtedly a foreigner. You are indeed in the world, but not of the world. With the world you have no fellowship. However, this is not the meaning here. You are never a guest in the world. You do not form any temporal friendships with the world as it lies in sin. Besides, what the world offers and proposes to you cannot be of benefit to you. Its pleasure is not your pleasure. Its striving is not your striving. You do not drape yourself with its banner. Darkness has no fellowship with the light. Rather, the meaning is that these all confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. This includes the whole of earthly life, all earthly things, relationships, and experiences—money and possessions, name and position, husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, friend and acquaintance, servant and master, pleasure and happiness, sickness and suffering, prosperity and adversity.

Amid all those earthly things you behave as a stranger and a foreigner.

You live as a stranger, you appreciatively and thankfully enjoy whatever you may temporally receive from the hand of the Lord.

Yet you do this as a pilgrim.

No matter how hospitable your temporal residence may be, and no matter how long you may with pleasure dwell in that hospitable house, you never make it your home.

You never give your heart to it.

Your temporal shelter and your temporal accommodations must serve the purpose of continuing your journey.  
You must travel farther.

---

The pilgrim's confession.

The content of this confession is that while on the earth and in the midst of all earthly things, we are strangers and pilgrims.

From what rich source does that confession draw its strength?

Certainly not from our natural existence.

Truly, apart from the consideration of the sin that lives in us, by which we are always inclined to seek our salvation in the things of this world and to seek our happiness far from God, we are of the earth earthy. We have by nature an earthly body and an earthly soul. We are adapted to the earth. We have earthly senses, and we appropriate earthly realities. We are dependent upon the earth and have earthly needs and earthly desires. Our longings are directed to the earthly. Precisely because of this, though our confession is that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, we can nevertheless feel at home on the earth in various circumstances and at certain times. Just as a traveler in a foreign country sometimes can live comfortably for a few days in a friendly and hospitable home and does not feel the need to press onward on his journey, so too the pilgrim-Christian can become attached to his foreign residence during times of earthly prosperity and temporal pleasures, when he experiences that life is good, so that he would not forsake it except for necessity.

Apart from any consideration of sin, we are of the earth earthy. We wish not to be unclothed, but clothed upon.

Consequently, the confession that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth could never arise from our earthly nature.

But according to our spiritual existence we are actually pilgrims on the earth.

God makes his people pilgrims.

In his eternal counsel before the foundation of the world, he

appointed them as foreigners, for he chose them and foreordained them in order that they should be made like unto the image of his Son, so that the Son would be the firstborn among many brethren. He chose them unto eternal, heavenly glory and unto citizenship in the heavenly Jerusalem. He also causes them to be foreigners temporally on the earth, for he gives to them the new, eternal life through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and he calls them out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The new life is resurrection life!

It is differentiated from the life of the world not only because it is free from the law of sin and death, and thus free to express itself according to the law of the Spirit of life, but also because it is from above.

It is the life of heaven.

By virtue of having received the new life that is from above, they have actually become citizens of the Jerusalem that will presently descend from heaven as God's blessing.

Their conversation is in heaven.

There is their real, eternal home.

And out of the principle of the new life springs forth the confession that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For here is not their continuing city.

They seek the city that comes down out of heaven.

---

A confession of hope!

These all *confessed* that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

They not only *were* that, but they also *revealed* it. They lived in the consciousness that they were strangers on the earth. They gave witness of that fact and expressed it before each other, before others, and before the whole world.

"These all" were the saints named earlier in this chapter—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They were those who confessed their pilgrimage. They told others about it. This fact is obvious from



what follows: “For those who declare such things reveal clearly that they seek a country.” This truth the aged Jacob literally confessed. When the king of Egypt asked him how old he was, he answered: “The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.” Such is always the confession of God’s people in the world.

They confessed it as well by their walk of faith.

They showed clearly that they were pilgrims who sought a fatherland, for being obedient to the calling of God through faith, they forsook country and home and family circle in order to live in tents as pilgrims in a foreign land. And they remained steadfast. Truly, had they thought about their former fatherland, they would have had opportunity to return.

But now they desire a better, a heavenly, country.

God’s people are always called to make this confession, not merely with the mouth—while by their walk they seek the things below—but also in actuality. Confession and walk go together. Not as if it is the calling today of believers literally to dwell in tents. Not as if they may not be citizens of an earthly country. Not as if they must go out of the world or hole up alone in the cell of a monastery. Such is precisely not their calling. Such would make their confession impossible. Their specific calling is to seek the better fatherland by means of all earthly things, to regard everything they have as means—upon which they never set their hearts and which they do not seek for their own sake—to seek the things above.

They always seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness.

With their eyes focused on the eternal inheritance.

For they saw the promises, believed them, and embraced them as their own. Therefore, they could confess that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Those promises are the eternal promises of God in Christ. They are ultimately the one prom-

ise that God the Lord proclaimed throughout all the ages of time from the first paradise unto the Christ. The final fulfillment of that one promise yet today lies in the future—the promise that will be fulfilled when Jesus Christ returns from heaven. That promise we expect, in order that we may enter into the life of the new Jerusalem in its full revelation (though we possess it now only in principle), when the new Jerusalem will descend out of heaven from God, when sorrow and death will be no more, when God will wipe away all tears from our eyes, when our God will make all things new, and when his tabernacle will be eternally with men in the new heaven and the new earth.

That promise they saw from afar.

But we see it before our very eyes.

For we see Jesus! We have seen his day. Fundamentally the promise is fulfilled already now.

We have come to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Its final revelation lies immediately before us.

The hope of the pilgrim!

## 2

### *The Pilgrim's Goal*

“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”

—Hebrews 13:14

Christian, press on!

At the end of your way, there is a city—the city that has foundations, prepared for you from before the foundation of the world by your God.

It is your goal.

Until it is reached and you have entered through its pearly gates, you may not, you cannot, you must not tarry. Onward you must go; ever onward you must press, never once tarrying or abiding, never fearfully or hesitantly clinging to the things you might meet on your pilgrim's journey.

Does not the pilgrim dwell in a tent?

He has no city.

In a city one abides, digs foundations, builds firmly to erect a lasting and permanent dwelling place, a continuing home. There are the ties that bind, the treasures one loves, the joys one seeks. There is one's life. In a tent, however, one tarries but for a night, to rest and recuperate, in order to pull up the stakes at daybreak and press forward and travel onward until the final goal is reached.

The Christian's life is not like that of the continuing citizen, but like that of the passing stranger, pitching his tent by the wayside to tarry but for a night. Onward, ever onward points the way, now rugged and steep, now for awhile on the level and even, but mostly narrow and rough. At sundry stations you may stop long

enough to put up your Ebenezers and pray over them, gratefully acknowledging the Lord Jehovah's help in the past and hopefully imploring his care and guidance and protection all the rest of the way. Sometimes the way may lead you through the midst of a city, fair and beautiful, stealing the love of your heart, tempting you to abide and to bid farewell to the pilgrim's life.

But you cannot stay, and you must not tarry.

No city here has foundations.

No dwelling place here is continuing.

The goal lies yonder, at the very end of your earthly way, when time is no more and the heavenly light of eternity's morn beckons you.

The light of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Thither you must press.

On, Christian, on!

---

Oh, Zion eternal!

Glorious city of God!

How thou art the chief joy of all who have their garments washed in the blood of the Lamb and who love the light!

Surely, I know that I know but little of the glory and beauty and heavenly joy and eternal pleasures of that city. But even the little I know of the final goal is abundant comfort in the narrow way.

I know that of its heavenly beauty I can but stammer in earthly language, and of its glorious reality I can but conceive in earthly images. But even the partial and earthly image of that eternal city so sets my heart aglow with joy and hope and so fills it with earnest expectation and yearning that for the glory of it, I am gladly willing to sacrifice every earthly joy and pass outside of the gate of every earthly city.

For I do know that it is the city of God.

God is the chief joy of the heavenly Jerusalem. His presence fills the city. His blessed covenant friendship perfected is the very essence of all its bliss and rejoicing. Unlike the earthly Jerusalem,

built of wood and stone, it has no temple. If you entered the gates of Jerusalem that once was, and if you would inquire as to the dwelling place of the Most High, and you would be pointed to a building made with hands. If, approaching the temple and entering through its outer gate, you would repeat your query, bystanders would direct your gaze to the sanctuary proper, at the same time warning you that you could not enter there to see the face of God. It was all so imperfect, earthly, and prophetic of things to come. But when you enter the heavenly city through its pearly gates, you need not inquire, for there is no temple there. God himself and the Lamb are the temple of that city, and its preeminent joy and glory is that there the tabernacle of God is with men; he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God.

He fills the city. I know that it is the city of all the perfected saints, the bride, the Lamb's wife. They walk there in garments white, for they had them washed in the blood of their redeemer, the mighty Lamb of God. There shall be no sin, no corruption, no stain of defilement and pollution left on the robes of its elect inhabitants. Wreaths of victory they wear on their heads, for the battle is ended and won through him who loved them even unto death. I know that there shall be no enemy there to harass and attack and inspire with fear, for the fearful and unbelieving, abominable and murderers, whoremongers, all sorcerers and idolaters and liars, and dogs shall not enter in any wise into that city, but shall have their part with the old serpent in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

I know that there shall be no shadow of death there, no pain or sorrow, no trouble and affliction, no fear or distress, for God shall himself dry the tear-stained faces of his weary pilgrim-children and fill their hearts with everlasting joy.

I know that there shall be neither hunger nor thirst, for the inhabitants shall drink of the fountain of eternal life and eat of the fruit of the tree of life and be abundantly satisfied with the goodness of their God.

His face they shall see  
In his light they shall walk.  
His name shall be in their foreheads.

They shall have put off all imperfection and all that is of the earth earthy, they shall know as they are known, and forever and ever they shall behold the beauty of the Lord their God.

There shall be no night there.  
All the weary night shall be past, changed into eternal day.  
There shall be perfect peace.  
Glorious city of God!  
Chief joy of all God's children!

---

Press forward, Christian, you must!  
For here we have no continuing city.

Not only because here there is nothing that abides, although this is also true. Nothing is permanent in this world. There is no city here that can boast of lasting fame, for the world is a child of time, and chance and change are ever busy. We are like the grass that flourishes in the morning and withers before the sun goes down. We are like the delicate flower of the field that blooms but for a moment and soon dies and is past, even so that its place knows it no more. The life of generation after generation is like a passing show, a pageant, always coming, always moving, always disappearing behind the veil of death. As we are, so are all things. Nothing is stable; all things move. A stream is life, and all things drift along with it. For the world passes away and the lust thereof, and there is in all the world nothing to which our soul can cling.

In this sense it is true for all men: we have no continuing city here. All things loudly preach: Prepare your house, for you will die.

The man of the world, the inhabitant of proud Babylon, may dig deeply, lay his foundations firmly, and raise his dwelling place in the midst of this world proud and beautiful. He may close his eyes to the reality of fleeting things and say to his soul, "My house shall stand for aye."

But he is a fool.

Yet a little while and the world shall be no more. Every home, every city, and every proud structure built upon the foundation of this world shall perish with the world.

For the Christian this is not all.

He has no continuing city here in the sense that wherever he looks and in whichever direction he may turn his seeking gaze, nowhere in the world does he find a place to satisfy his soul and to build his permanent home. He is a pilgrim not only because all things pass away, but also because of the state and condition of his own heart and soul.

He is a stranger here, for he was born from above.

By nature he is from below and an inhabitant of this world, seeking the things below. But he has received new life through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. His new life is from above, not from below. His new life is the life of the city that has foundations, whose builder and artificer is God. His new life stands antithetically against the old, for the old was of darkness, while the new is of the light; the old was of his father the devil, while the new is of God through Christ; the old loved what was evil, while the new loves that which is good and pleasing to God; the old life was of the earth earthy, while the new life is of the Lord from heaven.

He has become a citizen of the new city, and he walks here with the life of that city in his breast. Therefore he can find no continuing city here, no place where he would care to build and to abide forever.

He longs and hopes and yearns and presses forward, until through the gate he will enter into the city.

Christian, here you have no continuing city.

Press forward you must.

---

Seek that city!

Seek it you must, but not as one who gropes in darkness and knows not the way, neither is certain whether he will ever enter.

The way is certain.

You need not doubt as to the direction. It always starts outside the gate.

There is erected outside of the gate and on a little hill a cross, an accursed tree. On the tree there is the Man of Sorrows. The world would not have him. Jerusalem loved him not. As a thing abominable and a reproach, he was cast out to suffer without the camp. Nor will the world ever let him in again. The sign of the cross remains the symbol of his relation to the world and of the attitude of Jerusalem, whose spiritual name is Sodom and Gomorrah. But on that accursed tree this Man of Sorrows shed his lifeblood, that you might have properly washed garments to enter the city of eternal light and joy.

Over that hill, by that cross, and outside the gate leads the way.

One cannot miss it.

Go out of the gate, therefore.

Have your garments washed in his blood.

And bear his reproach. This you cannot escape on the way to the eternal city. Washed by him, you are one with him, and being one with him you will share his reproach. For the servant is not greater than his master. If they have hated him, they will also hate you. The way, then, is unmistakably certain.

But seek the city. Know that it is more precious than all the pleasures and treasures of the world. Set your heart on it. Long for it. Hope for it. Strive for it. Fight for it. Suffer for it. Bear the cross and the reproach of him who suffered outside of the gate for it. Press on and on until you enter through its gates and have the victory forever.

It is coming.

It is not yet. Its glory is not yet revealed, for we are saved in hope, and hope that is seen is not hope.

But it is certain in its coming. God prepared it for you in his eternal and immutable counsel. It cannot fail. The end of the pilgrim's journey that starts outside the gate, and on which you are



called to bear the reproach of the sufferer of Golgotha, is the beautiful city of God.

It is about to come.

Yet a little patience and a little suffering, yet a little struggle and a little battle, and the end of your journey will be reached.

A very light affliction, quickly passing and then eternal joy.

Seek that city!

Press on!

# 3

## *Desiring the Heavenly Fatherland*

“But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”

—Hebrews 11:16

The heavenly fatherland!

The eyes of the saints of all ages have been focused upon it.

It is the object of their desires. That they seek. To that desiring, to that seeking of the heavenly fatherland every other desire and striving is subordinate and subservient.

For that they hope. In that hope they are blessed, for it is a hope that never vanishes away and that never puts to shame.

The world too always looks forward. It also focuses its attention on the future. The world is driven toward the future, for we are children of time. In time we journey, live, and strive within the limits of the development of earthly things. Temporal and earthly things lie under God’s curse. The suffering of this present time is bound unavoidably and inseparably to time. Death lurks in every moment of our earthly existence. The fear of death dogs our footsteps and permeates everything we do. Present reality never gives peace. The present always manifests vanity. When the future moment for which we hope becomes the present moment, it is always disappointing. We are always seeking for something better than the present. Relentlessly swept along on the rushing stream of time, we always reach out toward the future.

Vanity of vanities!

A hope that always disappoints, because something better than the present cannot be found in earthly and temporal realities.

The longings and pursuits of a world that is far from God and that always wants something better meet with disappointment upon disappointment and have the same ultimate end—the despair of death in everlasting horror.

But the saints are desirous of a better, that is, a heavenly fatherland.

They always confess that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. The object of their desires is not below. The distant gaze of their hope is not obscured by the horizon of things temporal. They die as the world does, but in faith and with the confession that they in hope cling steadfastly to the promise that they have seen from afar.

And those who say such things demonstrate clearly that they are seeking a fatherland.

At the same time, they demonstrate that the fatherland that they seek does not lie behind them.

Of the fatherland from whence they have gone out they do not think.

They are desirous of a better fatherland—better than everything, better than the world, better than anything the earthly and temporal can offer.

---

The heavenly fatherland!

Let it be said with emphasis: Fatherland!

Not just any country is a fatherland.

Even though someone in a certain country may have many treasures and possessions, even though he is an owner of much real estate in a certain country, that does not make that country his fatherland. Yet a country can be our fatherland even though we do not own the least part of it. It is more than idle fantasy when we sing, “The precious ground where once my cradle lay.”

No one feels this more poignantly than an emigrant who, when

he is a young adult, forsakes his fatherland to establish residence in a strange land. After living a few years in a strange land, he becomes really a stranger on the earth. The old fatherland still draws him, but he would not feel at home there any more, and the new country of choice will never become his fatherland.

A fatherland has the love of our hearts. It is the country where we have our residence in the fullest sense, the place where we feel entirely at home. We live among our own people there. The ties and bands of life are found there. All the relationships of life are found there. Our mother tongue is spoken there. Our citizenship is there. In our fatherland we have been born and bred. There we have a permanent place. We are pilgrims and strangers everywhere else, even though we are laden with temporal things and earthly prosperity. The fatherland is entirely entwined in our life, and the whole of our life is joined to the fatherland. Wherever we are in the world, our hearts draw us toward the fatherland.

So it is with our heavenly fatherland as well.

Certainly, the heavenly fatherland is a country—a real country—in a much greater sense than all the countries of the world. The earthly Canaan was an image of that country. The saints of the old dispensation were promised the land of Canaan. Abraham was called out of his father's house and family relationships in order to journey to a country that the Lord would show him, the land of promise that Jehovah would give to him. He believed and embraced the promise, forsook his fatherland, and journeyed to the land of promise. Yet he was a pilgrim and a stranger there as well. He lived with Isaac and Jacob in tents and confessed that he was a pilgrim on the earth. Even though he never inherited the land into which Jehovah led him, he saw the promise from afar and died in faith. The promise caused him to see in the earthly Canaan an image of the fatherland that had been promised him, but yet it was not the fulfillment of the promise. Always and ever he desired and sought a better, that is, a heavenly fatherland. That better fatherland was not merely an abstract concept, but a real

country—the new heavens and the new earth, the coming world, the incorruptible and undefiled inheritance.

It is emphatically a fatherland.

In that fatherland are all the relationships of the saints, who are strangers and pilgrims here. In that fatherland is the highest realization of God's covenant of friendship: God's house of many mansions, the most intimate fellowship with the Almighty, the experience of his favor, the knowing even as we are known, the seeing of one another face-to-face, the heavenly revelation of the charms and sweetness found at God's right hand. There God's love is eternally complete and finds its echo in our complete love of him. There we will serve him perfectly with a service of love that never disappoints, as co-workers with God as his covenantal friends. There is our citizenship, and there our joint citizenship with all the saints is perfected. There we will have fellowship in perfect light with all those who in faith reverence his name. There everyone speaks the same language. There everyone performs the same service. There all live and walk in Christ Jesus in perfect light. There everyone bears the image of the heavenly. There is no death, no sin and no failure, no sorrow and no complaint, no struggle and no distress, and no fear. There is the rest of the perfect service of God.

Everything is on the exalted plane of the heavenly.

Everything in the freedom of the eternal.

The heavenly fatherland!

Better, infinitely better, than any fatherland on the earth.

So much better, even as life is better than death, as light is better than darkness, as heaven is lifted up above the earth, and as the eternal is more excellent than time.

The saints earnestly long for the fatherland.

They are overcome with homesickness for the better, heavenly fatherland. Being desirous of the better fatherland, they are strangers and pilgrims here. Just as someone who is far from home and family and who lives alone in a strange country can be overwhelmed with homesickness, so the saints yearn for the better fa-

therland. They are ever mindful of that land in the country of their pilgrimage. The thought of the fatherland remains with them in all that they do. The longing for the fatherland rules their life: all their actions, their behavior and activities, their speaking and hearing, their struggles and battles, their sadness and joy. They, indeed, live here as citizens of the heavenly fatherland.

They are, indeed, pilgrims and sojourners upon the whole earth.

They seek the fatherland.

They struggle to the heights of Zion.

For they have the promises.

They see the promise from afar. They believe it, embrace it, and place all their trust in it.

They have the new life, the principle of citizenship in the heavenly fatherland in their soul.

They are regenerated unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The attraction of that life is toward that which is above, to the eternal, to the heavenly.

The better fatherland!

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A longing that never makes ashamed!

The world's expectations will perish, but the hope of the saints will never be put to shame.

For God has prepared for them a city.

There is no essential difference between the fatherland and the city as pictures of the eternal, incorruptible inheritance that God has prepared for those who love him. This is plain from the text itself: They are desirous of a better, that is, a heavenly fatherland, and God has prepared for them a city. It is also clear from verse ten: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." A city is not merely a group of houses, but a fellowship of citizens who live together under their own governance.

There is a difference only of viewpoint in these expressions.

The city is a picture of the permanent in contrast to the tent as a picture of the temporal and transitory. The city has foundations, the tent does not. In a city one builds one's house, one establishes a residence with the intention of remaining there. In the earthly land of promise, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dwelt in tents. Thereby they confessed that they had not reached their final destination and that they lived in a land that to them was foreign, even when they were in the land of promise. They did this because they hoped for the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

The city is a picture of the eternal, final, perpetual rest.

God has prepared such a city, such a place of eternal rest, such a place of permanent residence in the heavenly fatherland!

The city has been prepared for God's people, whom he knew from before the foundation of the world, whom he foreordained to be conformed unto the image of his Son. That city was built with a view to them, in regard to their needs, according to their longings, in harmony with their glorious life that they now already in principle possess, and which they will soon receive in heavenly perfection. They have been formed for the city, and the city has been formed for them. They belong to the city, and the city belongs to them. There they find the everlasting fulfillment of all their desires. There will be their eternal blessedness.

The city has been prepared.

It is finished.

It awaits only its revelation in the day of the glory of Christ.

It was prepared when Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived in tents in the land of promise as pilgrims in a strange land, for God had prepared that city in his eternal counsel before the foundation of the world. In his counsel is everything that will occur in time and that has been so arranged in wisdom by the divine architect and master builder that it must serve to the realization of that eternal city that has foundations.

In principle it has also been prepared in Christ.

It was realized when he came in the likeness of sinful flesh—the Son, Immanuel, God with us. It was realized when he shed his lifeblood unto death on the accursed tree at Golgotha for our sins, making perfect sacrifice unto God, satisfying God’s justice, and meriting for his own the forgiveness of sins, eternal righteousness, salvation, and glory. It was realized when he arose in glory as the firstfruits of them who slept and ascended into glory at the right hand of the Father as the Lord of lords and King of kings.

Then that city was prepared for us.

For we have not come unto the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest. But we are come unto Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.

Jerusalem that is above.

The mother of us all.

The city is not yet revealed, but it has been prepared, in order to be revealed at the end of time.

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Therefore, God is not ashamed to be their God.

They, the pilgrims and strangers on the earth, call him their God.

And God the Lord, who has prepared a city for them, is not ashamed to be called their God by those who confess that they seek a city that has foundations and that they are longing for a better, that is, a heavenly fatherland.

If it were not true that he prepared the city, would he not be ashamed to be called the God of that people in the world?

For in the world they experience tribulation for his name’s sake. They were mocked, disgraced, persecuted, and hunted down.



Throughout all the centuries, they experienced more misery than all mankind. They were killed all the day long. They were pilgrims on the earth, poor and despised. They wandered in deserts and in mountains, in the holes and caves of the earth. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, endured mockings and scourgings, bands and imprisonments. They were pulled asunder, hewn in pieces, stoned, and put to death by the sword. The world was not worthy of them. And in the midst of it all, they had to listen to the world's mockery, "Where is your God upon whom you depend and in whose word you trust?"

But he is not ashamed to be called their God.

For he has prepared for them a city!