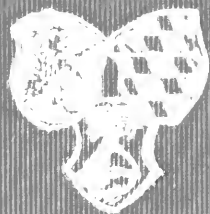
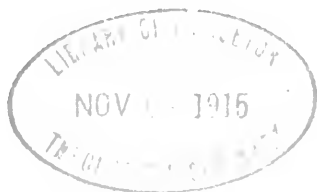


# COMPENDIUM EXPLAINED

BY

DR. HENRY BEETS





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Beets, Henry, 1869-1947.  
The compendium explained







# COMPENDIUM EXPLAINED

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*The*  
Compendium Explained

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A POPULAR EXPOSITION OF THE  
ABRIDGEMENT OF THE HEIDEL-  
BERG CATECHISM, KNOWN AS  
THE "COMPENDIUM OF THE  
CHRISTIAN RELIGION," OF THE  
REFORMED CHURCHES OF HOL-  
LAND, AND OF HOLLAND ORIGIN

BY  
REV. HENRY BEETS, LL. D.

With an Introduction by  
PROF. DR. M. KOLYN.



1915

EERDMANS-SEVENSMA CO.  
Grand Rapids, Mich., U. S. A.

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DEDICATED

To the Beloved Teacher of his youth,  
PROF. GEERHARDUS VOS, Ph. D., D. D.

And to the not less beloved  
LAGRAVE AVE. CHURCH,  
Served during a blessed ministry of nearly 16 years,

By  
THE AUTHOR.

Presented to \_\_\_\_\_

On the occasion of \_\_\_\_\_

By \_\_\_\_\_

## FOREWORD.

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The abridgement or KORT BEGRIP of the Heidelberg Catechism, known in English as the "COMPENDIUM OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION," has been in continual use in the Reformed Churches of Holland for over three centuries. Recommended by the great Synod of Dordrecht of 1618-19, it was printed in the Psalters alongside the standards and in this manner won its way into the Dutch Churches of South Africa and of the New World, as well as into those of the Netherlands. Because its answers are much shorter than those of the Heidelberg Catechism, the Compendium has been used far more generally in catechetical classes in Holland than the Catechism in its complete form, and such is still more the case in the Reformed Churches of North America and South Africa.

Several Expositions of the KORT BEGRIP have been published in the Dutch language, but so far as known to us nothing of the kind has hitherto appeared in English.

Appreciating the value of the Compendium, and realizing the need of a popular exposition of it for the use of those of our Reformed Churches who are not familiar with the Holland language, we prepared the book here offered.

While we have made grateful use of some of the Dutch explanations of the Compendium, notably of Rev. S. Idema's "Toelichting van het Kort Begrip," we have in many ways followed our own plan and method. Most of the expositions we consulted were too antiquated in treatment, or too brief, and none of them reckoned with the peculiar religious surroundings in which we of the New World find ourselves, and which call for constant warnings against "old foes with new faces," such as Mormonism, Christian Science, Russelism, Adventism, etc., as well as Evolutionism, Theosophy, etc., etc. We have made it a special point to embody as much as possible the utterances of the official standards of the Reformed Churches. The complaint is often heard that, while our people are tolerably well acquainted with the Heidelberg Catechism, the two other Reformed standards, the Netherland Confession of Faith and the Canons of Dordrecht, are sealed books to many of them. Realizing that this complaint is as just as the fact itself is deplorable, we have incorporated prac-

tically all of the articles of the Confession, and as much of the Canons as proportionate treatment of their subjects permitted. We trust that this peculiar feature will appeal to all who know what rich treasures of divine truth are contained in our Reformed Creed. We have also made considerable use of the Westminster Catechisms, particularly in the case of definitions wherein they are peculiarly excellent.

The chapters of this book follow those of the COMPENDIUM ENLARGED published in 1903 by the present writer and his never-to-be-forgotten colleague, the late Rev. M. J. Bosma. The COMPENDIUM EXPLAINED really is designed as a commentary on the COMPENDIUM ENLARGED, and we hope it will prove useful in connection with this little book which has met with a very cordial reception in the Reformed Churches of Dutch origin in the U. S. The "Questions for Written Work" at the end of each chapter are of course meant for use in catechetical classes, although they will be helpful as resumés to all who study the chapters. To facilitate answering the questions we print a full INDEX in the rear of the book.

We hereby thank Revs. J. Groen and J. J. Weersing, and particularly Prof. W. Heyns, for helpful hints while writing the work, and Prof. Dr. M. Kolyn for his kind word of Introduction following this Foreword.

The binding of the book (blue and white) is in the colors of the Palatinate in which the Heidelberg Catechism was composed, and of the Elector Frederick III whose initiative brought about its composition. If imitation is the sincerest kind of flattery, then Prof. Dr. J. I. Good, of the (German) Reformed Church, one of the most devoted friends of the Heidelberg Catechism in the U. S., has reasons to feel gratified. We thank him for his interest in this work.

The coat of arms on the cover and title page is a reproduction of the one printed on the title page of the first edition of the Catechism (in German) printed in 1563.

Committing this book prayerfully to the Great Bishop and Shepherd of his Flock, and to the good will of his undershepherds, I remain,

Yours truly,

HENRY BEETS,

Grand Rapids, Mich., U. S. A., July 29, 1915.



## A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

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No one who appreciates the value of intelligence in religion, can fail to place a very high estimate upon catechetical instruction to the young; there is nothing that can take its place of thorough instruction in the fundamental truths of our religion.

Leaders of the Church have therefore always felt that careful provision must be made for this form of christian effort, and manuals of instruction of various kinds have been prepared and used. The story of catechisms, both before and after the Reformation, is a very interesting one. But for obvious reasons catechetical manuals were most abundantly produced after the Reformation, and for the purpose of formulating reformatory doctrines and principles.

Among these the Heidelberg Catechism occupies a very prominent place, and its Compendium or abridgement shares with the Catechism itself in the love and devotion of all who love the Reformed faith. In the important work of indoctrinating the children and youth of the Churches of the Reformation, the Compendium has been a very helpful manual.

If the work of catechizing is exceedingly important, no one who has attempted it seriously, will claim that it is without its difficulties. Not a few men who have excelled in preaching, have failed in the catechetical exercise. For this reason we ought to welcome any aid that may come to us in the pursuance of this important branch of the pastoral work. To those who have access to books in the Dutch language, the need of an additional book, explanatory of the Compendium, may not at once appear. An extensive literature has grown up around the Heidelberg Catechism, both in the Netherlands and in Germany. The author of this new book, "**THE COMPENDIUM EXPLAINED,**" is well acquainted with this literature, but apart from the fact that not much has appeared in the English language, he feels justified in offering an additional book upon this catechetical manual.

In his FOREWORD he says frankly: "Most of the expositions we consulted were too antiquated in treatment, or too brief, and none of them reckoned with the peculiar religious surroundings in which we of the New World find ourselves, and which call for constant warnings against 'old foes with

new faces,' such as Mormonism, Christian Science, Russellism, Adventism, etc., as well as Evolutionism, Theosophy, etc., etc."

One of the difficulties in catechetical work, and the use of the old manuals, has been that of attempting to adapt a sixteenth century catechism to a twentieth century mode of thought, forms of expression and views of life. And when I was asked by Dr. Beets to write a few lines of introduction to his latest work, I enquired first of all whether he had this difficulty in mind, and if so, whether he had succeeded in offering some helpful solution. The quotation made from his FOREWORD indicates that this very thing was to be a special feature of this new book, and I was at once interested, for I have long felt that old truths need to be stated in fresh ways and be applied to present-day problems and situations, if we would secure acceptance for the truths themselves on the part of those whom we are called to teach. And if one engages to dress the old Catechism in forms of expression which seem to fit it in with the thought and life of the twentieth century, I am interested.

My next enquiry was to ascertain whether the author had redeemed his promise in the treatment of his material. Does he succeed in making the Compendium live in the present age? Does he connect its teachings up with American thought and life? Does he make the teacher and the pupils feel that here is a treasure of truth that is as applicable to the twentieth century as to the sixteenth, and as important to the people of the United States as it ever was to the peoples of Germany and the Netherlands? Does he make the Compendium usable? After a somewhat careful examination, especially upon this point, I take pleasure in stating it as my conviction that the author has succeeded to an admirable degree in carrying out his purpose; it is before his mind from the beginning, and is adhered to till the end. In the introductory chapter the reader is interested at once and his attention is arrested, as the various religions of the world are made to pass in review before his mind; after all, no subject is so universally interesting as religion; and what the world believes and teaches is a question of vital human interest; the author gives a glimpse of comparative religion with the purpose of preparing the mind for appreciating the infinite superiority of the only true religion as made known by divine revelation.

It seems to me that the treatment of the various topics has the following commendable features:

1. It gives to each subject or doctrine an interesting historical setting, indicating its relation to the time in which it was written, and to other doctrines to which it stands related.
2. It compares the teachings of the Compendium with

that of the other standards of our Churches, where the matter is often more fully stated, and with the historic symbols and catechisms of other great communions in the Reformed family; this gives a comprehensiveness that is illuminating and inspiring.

3. It shows in what respects these doctrines are either neglected or perverted or denied at the present time, and suggests weapons that they who would be champions for the truth may use effectively.

To illustrate: in treating of Infant Baptism in Chapter XXIII., a brief historic reference is made to the Anabaptist movement, and it is made clear that the various bodies of Mennonites and Baptists in this country and in England have a common origin; incidentally a few statistics are introduced which bring the subject up to date.

In treating of the subject of "good works," on page 165, an interesting comparison is made between two opposite opinions which have been held as to the value of good works, and the relation of this old controversy to present-day religious thinking is indicated, and the impression is received that the treatment of this subject has a present value, which had not been suspected.

4. One more feature may be named, namely, the "Questions for Written Work," which are appended to each chapter, and which can be made of great service as an aid and inspiration to a little research work on the part of pupils.

We feel certain that the book has a reason for being, and can be a very effective aid in the important work of catechetical instruction; it is a book that will interest both teacher and learners, and will be read with interest and profit also by the general reader, who desires to be informed in regard to the great facts and doctrines of our religion.

Bespeaking for the book a ready sale, and recommending its use in the catechetical classroom, while believing that it is calculated to contribute towards an intelligent christianity, and in that way further the glory of Him Who is the God of truth.

Respectfully,

MATTHEW KOLYN.

Holland, Michigan,  
May 29, 1915.



# THE COMPENDIUM EXPLAINED.

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Popular Exposition of the Abridgement of the Heidelberg Catechism known as the "Compendium of the Christian Religion" of the Reformed Churches of Holland and of Holland origin.

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## CHAPTER I.

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### INTRODUCTORY: RELIGION AND THE SOURCES OF ITS KNOWLEDGE, GENERAL AND SPECIAL REVELATION, THE BIBLE, CREEDS OF CHRISTENDOM.

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The Christian Religion is the proper belief in and service of the true God. It includes as its elements: knowledge of God, love toward him, and obedience to him. It requires an enlightened mind, a renewed heart, and a sanctified life. The word "religion" is derived from two Latin words: to gather, or to bind, again, viz. to God.

We speak of the "Christian" Religion because it was revealed by Christ as God's chief prophet, is based on his work as our only high priest, and aims to gather or bind us again to God through his activity as our eternal king.

The name "Christian Religion" is also used to distinguish our religion from the "religions" of the heathen, the Moham-medans, and the Jews.

1. There are many kinds of **heathen religions**. The oldest of them is **Brahmanism**, said to be founded by a priestly caste called Brahmins, during the early days of the Aryan race in India. It annuls personality and declares: everything is God and God is everything. In the course of time Brahmanism was merged into **Hinduism**, which believes in many millions of divine beings or gods, and is grossly immoral in its teachings, and inhuman in its caste system, which divides people into very distinct and widely separated classes. **Buddhism** denies that there is an eternal God. God, man, life, death, eternity, all, is nothing, and a delusion.

**Taoism** is mainly devil-worship in the sense that it aims chiefly at the pacifying of evil spirits.

**Confucianism** lays all stress on morality and ignores the soul and God, while **Shintoism** mainly teaches patriotism and hero-worship. The followers of these religions are found mostly in India, China and Japan.

The Parsees in Persia adhere to **Zoroastrianism** which involves fire-worship, and belief in a good God, Ormazd, and an evil one, Ahriman, between whom a struggle of 12,000 years is to go on.

In Africa many heathen are living who practise what is called **Fetichism**, a worship of all kinds of material things, living and dead, to which they ascribe supernatural powers. It seems to be connected with **Animism**, or the worship of the souls of the dead.

The Bantu race in Africa and the Indians in North and South America, as well as other heathen people combine their **Poly-theism**, or belief in many gods, with **Witchcraft**, filling them with constant fear for evil spirits.

There are about one thousand million heathen people of all kinds.

What a challenge to missionary zeal!

We call these heathen religions false or **pseudo-religions**, for, although they contain some fragments of religious truths, as remnants of God's revelation in Paradise and later, and are to some extent manifestations of the sense of religion implanted in our heart, Acts 14:19, and Rom. 1:19, so much in them is distorted, untrue, men-invented and no doubt suggested by the Devil, that they contain an essentially false conception of God and the service he requires. In practical life they lead to God-provoking worship of idols, to soothsaying and sorcery; they ignore God's holiness, and while they may have some ideas concerning deliverance from misery, such is not sought as a gift of God's grace, but much rather endeavor is made from man's side to merit salvation by works. Consequently they lead astray for eternity. Rom. 2:12.

2. **Mohammedanism** is also classed as a pseudo-religion. Founded by Mohammed, an Arab who died in 632 after Christ, it is a mixture of Christianity, the Jewish religion and heathenism. It is called "**Islam**", which means submission because it preaches absolute submission to the decrees of "Allah". The Mohammedan "holy book" is called Koran. There are over 220,000,000 followers of the false prophet, divided into numerous sects.

3. The Jews are standing closest to Christianity. The **orthodox** or rabbinical Jews claim to believe in the Old Testament, but ascribe equal authority to the **Talmud**, a large

work, containing and discussing civil and religious laws, the "Traditions of the Fathers". They still look for a Messiah. The Reformed Jews, many of whom are living in America, have practically discarded the religion and hope of their ancestors. Still more astray are the Radical Jews, to whom Moses is a mere teacher, the prophets mere politicians, poets and orators. They deny all revelation and positive religion. There are about 13,000,000 Jews in the world of whom over two million live in North America.

4. Over against these false religions of the heathen and the Mohammedans and the falsified religion of the Christ-rejecting Jews, we hold the Christian religion to be supreme, and the only true religion. This is clearly shown by the lofty conception of God which it contains, by its inspired Book, the Bible, by its blessed and uplifting influence, by the light and comfort and satisfaction it brings to our heart, mind and conscience, and also because the truths of the Christian Religion have been revealed to mankind.

All the knowledge of God which we possess is derived from God's revelation of himself. We know him only because and in so far as he has revealed himself, and made our mind capable of receiving this revelation by making us in his image.

5. The revelation of God is two-fold: general and special.

(a) God's general revelation is written in our heart, Rom. 2:14,15, proclaimed by nature, Ps. 19:1-3, taught by the history of mankind, by the conscience and the experience of the individual, and by science and art.

In fact the whole world shows the "footsteps" of God.

Because in this general revelation God speaks both in man and through man, we distinguish between a two-fold knowledge of God, viz. innate and acquired.

Innate means: born in us. We are born with an impression that there is a Supreme Being; we have by nature what Calvin called the "seed of religion", the germ of our knowledge of God, of justice and morality. No one is born as an "atheist", i. e., one who denies the existence of God. Therefore Ps. 14 tells us: "the fool hath said in his heart: there is no God".

Acquired knowledge of God we obtain by studying the works of God round about and within us. While the agnostics claim that God is the "Unknowable", we believe that "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity".

That God exists is evident because the world must have a Maker and the beautiful order and constant movement in the world must have a cause. God's power is shown by the way he fitted earth for our dwelling place, and made our eyes, ears, lungs etc. to work in harmony with our surroundings. God's goodness is plain as we consider how he provides for man and beast, so that we all are pensioners living on his bounty. (See Ch. VIII for detailed arguments proving God's existence.)

God's wrath is also revealed by nature, in all manner of afflictions, individually or nationally visited on us, Rom.1:18. We should appreciate this general revelation of God, and try daily to trace his footsteps in the world, and his finger in our own life, that it may help us to know, love and serve our God.

It is evident, however, that this general revelation is not sufficient for us sinners to be reunited to our Creator. It does not show us how we can be reconciled to him. If the Almighty had left us to the dim light of general revelation, our race would have been indeed:

"An infant crying in the night,  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry."

(b) In sovereign mercy special revelation was granted, as Article II. of the Netherland Confession of Faith tells:

"We know him by two means: first, by the creation, preservation and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to contemplate the invisible things of God, namely, his eternal power and Godhead, as the apostle Paul saith, Rom. 1: 20. All which things are sufficient to convince men, and leave them without excuse. Secondly, he makes himself more clearly and fully known to us by his holy and divine Word; that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to his glory and our salvation."

In the earliest period of the history of God's people this revelation was given through dreams, visions, and oral communications, handed down orally from one generation to another. Later, as stated in the Confession, beginning with Moses, 1571-1451 B. C., it was committed to writing, and is contained in the collection of books called the Bible, which word is the plural form (biblia), of the Greek word "biblion" which signifies a little book. Other names given to the sacred volume are: Holy Scripture, or Holy Scriptures, Word of God, Holy Writ, etc.



This revelation contained in the Bible we call **special**; (1) because of its **contents**, the grace of God toward us sinners; (2) because of its **method**, or **manner** of revelation, prophecy, miracle; (3) because of its **extent**, coming to a particular group of people; (4) because of its **purpose**, the renewal of the sinner and the restoration of God's sin-ruined creation. The Bible has been given us by **inspiration**, which means that the Holy Spirit, the primary Author of the Bible, inspired, (literally: "breathed into") certain men to write infallibly the Word of God, the special revelation of the Almighty, to us. He **moved** them to write, instructed them as to the matter to be recorded, and **directed** them to choose the proper words, keeping them free from error. Art. III of the Confession states:

"We confess that this Word of God was not sent, nor delivered by the will of man, but that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, as the apostle Peter saith. And that afterwards God, from a special care, which he has for us and our salvation, commanded his servants, the prophets and apostles, to commit his revealed word to writing; and he himself wrote with his own finger, the two tables of the law. Therefore we call such writings holy and divine scriptures."

This inspiration is not **mechanical**, i. e. reducing the writers to mere machines, neither is it **partial**, i.e. only covering matters of faith and morals, but it is **plenary** (full), and **literal** and **verbal** insofar as the original manuscripts of the Bible are concerned.

The Bible does not simply **contain** the Word of God, as many claim in our day who hold to the "Concept" or "Thought" inspiration, leaving men in an awful and calamitous uncertainty of what is and what is not "inspired," but the Bible is the Word of God, all of its contents having been written down by inspiration. 2 Tim. 3:16.

6. But, have we **sufficient grounds** to maintain this all-important contention about the Bible as our infallible and indispensable compass on the Sea of Life? And we can answer, praised be God, that many grounds can be enumerated.

1. There is, first of all, the **testimony of Christ**, of great importance for us since many infallible signs have proven him to be "God manifested in the flesh." Everywhere we find him quoting the O. T. as divine, as the revelation of his Father, full of authority, as the "Word of God," the "Scripture" which "cannot be broken," John 10:35, as the "Law" of

which not even "one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass away" till all be fulfilled. Matt. 5:18; 11:10; John 5:39; Rev. 1:19.

2. The **testimony of the apostles** may be mentioned next. These men had the special promise that the Spirit would guide them "into all the truth," John 16:13, and, moved by that Spirit of Truth they spoke and wrote. Paul assured the Thessalonians that his message was indeed "the Word of God," (1 Thess. 2:13), and those who brought another gospel were to be accursed, Gal. 1:8. In 2 Tim. 3:16 he testified "all scripture is given by inspiration of God," while Peter wrote equally sweepingly: "For no prophecy ever came by the will of men but men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost," (2 Peter 1:21).

3. The **contents of the Bible** bear witness to their inspiration. In the teachings of Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius (Chapter I), and other heathen authors, there may be jewels of truth, but they are imbedded in swamps of untruth, superstition, childish ignorance. The Bible however has truth unmingled with error, it contains all truth we need to know to be saved, and contains more divine truth within its small compass than all other books combined!

4. The **influence** of the Bible bears witness to its inspiration as it instructs, uplifts, purifies, comforts, renews, as no other book.

5. The **fulfilled prophecies** of the Bible are an unanswerable argument in favor of its divine origin. What the Savior foretold about the Jews and Jerusalem and the seven churches of Asia Minor, and what the O. T. prophets predicted about Judea, Ammon, Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Sidon, Egypt etc. has been fulfilled so strikingly as to prove the inspiration of those who foretold these coming things. (Compare Nelson on "Infidelity," and Keith on "Prophecy," for details.)

6. The **mysteries** of the Bible such as those of the Trinity, creation of nothing, the two natures of Christ, the atonement, etc., mysteries so entirely beyond human comprehension or invention, show plainly that God is back of the book which revealed them.

7. The **character of the writers of the Bible** testifies to its authority. Those who wrote it were too intelligent to be deluded, and too noble to delude others, their lives and deaths bearing witness to these things.

8. The remarkable **unity of the Word of God** also testifies to its divine origin, and trustworthy character. Although seventeen centuries elapsed between the writing of the first

books and the last, and although men of different stations of life and different degrees of culture contributed to it, yet throughout the Bible there is wonderful continuity, striking, gradual development of ideas, and marvelous harmony. As a vast building, erected from stones brought from widely separated quarries, and of all manner of shapes, and built during a lengthy period, but of wonderful unity of conception and great harmony of outlines and details, shows one master mind which drew the plans and gave to each worker his individual instructions, so the unity and harmony of the Bible proclaim one Author—God.

We may briefly allude to still more arguments, such as:

9. The confirmation of Bible statements by recent excavations and discoveries in the East, such as those about Darius, Belshazzar, Nineveh, the Hittites etc.;

10. The acceptance of the Bible by the Church of all ages, especially in its purest periods. The closer one lives to God, the more he loves the Bible;

11. The Bible's ability to outlast all attacks. "Hammer away, ye hostile bands, the hammers break, the anvil stands:"

12. The character of its enemies, often the profane, the scoffers, the profligates and the rebellious; and of its friends: those who fear God and try to walk in humility, faith and love.

13. Its impartial way of describing the lives of the Bible heroes, without hiding their faults.

14. Last but not least, we accept the Bible as inspired, divine and holy, because of the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the true believers. One cannot fully and truly acknowledge the Scripture as the Word of God, before having heard out of Scripture the voice of God speaking to him. Art. V of the Confession states the following about this testimony:

"We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith; believing without any doubt, all things contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such, but more especially because the Holy Ghost witnesseth in our hearts, that they are from God, whereof they carry the evidence in themselves. For the very blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are fulfilling."

Read 1 Cor. 2:12; 2 Cor. 4:6; Ps. 43:3; 119:18; John 6:45; 16:3; 1 Thess. 1:5; Eph. 1:17, 18.

7. As to the number of the Bible books, the Reformed Churches accept sixty-six as being inspired and canonical, of which 39 are contained in the Old Testament part and 27 in the New Testament part of the Word of God. Art. IV of the Confession declares:

“We believe that the Holy Scriptures are contained in two books, namely, the Old and New Testament, which are canonical, against which nothing can be alleged. These are thus named in the Church of God. The books of the Old Testament are, the five books of Moses, viz.: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; the book of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, two books of Samuel, and two of the Kings; two books of the Chronicles, commonly called Paralipomenon, the first of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, the Psalms of David, the three books of Solomon, namely, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs; the four great prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel; and the twelve lesser prophets, namely, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Those of the New Testament are the four evangelists, viz.: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; the Acts of the Apostles; the fourteen epistles of the apostle Paul, viz.: one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, one to the Galatians, one to the Ephesians, one to the Philippians, one to the Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, two to Timothy, one to Titus, one to Philemon, and one to the Hebrews; the seven epistles of the other apostles, namely, one of James, two of Peter, three of John, one of Jude; and the Revelation of the Apostle John.”

These books are called “canonical” because they form the Canon or Rule of our faith and life. The O. T. Canon was closed after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian Captivity, by the learned men who formed what was named the “Great Synagogue,” about 132 B. C. Ezra and Nehemiah took part in this labor, as shown by 2 Maccabees, 2:13. Josephus’ list of Bible books of the Jews, whose history he composed, between 37 and 96 A. D., covers all the O. T. books which we consider canonical. Rom. 3:21. The N. T. Canon was closed at the councils of Hippo, 393 A. D., and Carthage, 397.

We speak of the 66 books of the Bible as **canonical** to distinguish them from the so-called apocryphal or hidden books, which the Roman Catholic Church acknowledges as equally divine and inspired as the others. The Reformed Churches reject them in the sense expressed in Art. VI of the Confession:

“We distinguish those **sacred books** from the **apocryphal**, viz.: the third and fourth book of Esdras, the books of Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Jesus Syrach, Baruch, the appendix to the book of Esther, the Song of the three Children in the Furnace, the history of Susannah, of Bell and the Dragon, the prayer of Manasses, and the two books of the Maccabees. All of which the Church may read and take instruction from, so far as they agree with the canonical books; but they are far from having such power and efficacy, as that we may from their testimony confirm any point of faith, or of the christian religion; much less detract from the authority of the other sacred books.”

8. The Word of God possesses certain attributes or qualities which are usually described as the **necessity, plainness, completeness and authority** of the Bible.

This Necessity is denied by Quakers and other Mystics and Spiritists, who speak of the “inner light.” Isa. 8: 20, however, tells us:

“To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them.” Compare John 5:39; 1 Tim. 3:16.

The Plainness, or Perspecuity of the Word of God expresses that it is sufficiently plain and clear to make us wise unto salvation, so that we do not need popes and church councils to explain the true meaning of the Bible to us, as the Romanists do who assert that the reading of the Bible according to private, individual interpretation, is not sufficient to learn Christ’s religion. This however is contrary to the express statements of the Bible which call it a light, and able to make us wise unto salvation. Ps. 119:105; John 5: 39; Rom. 15: 45; 2 Tim. 3: 16.

Concerning the **Completeness or Sufficiency of Holy Writ**, Art. VII. of the Confession states:

“We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe, unto salvation, is sufficiently taught therein. For since the whole manner of worship, which God requires of us, is written in them at large, it is unlawful for any one, though an apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in the Holy Scriptures: **nay, though it were an angel from heaven**, as the apostle Paul saith. For, since it is forbidden, **to add unto or take away anything from the Word of God**, it doth thereby evidently appear, that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects. Neither may we compare any writings of men, though ever so holy, with those divine Scriptures, nor ought we to compare custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or

succession of times or persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, with the truth of God, for the truth is above all; for all men are of themselves liars, and more vain than vanity itself. Therefore, we reject with all our hearts, whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule, which the apostles have taught us, saying, **Try the spirits whether they are of God.** Likewise, **if there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house.**" Matt. 15:9; Isa. 8:20.

In our days the Completeness has been denied by the Mormons, who place their "Book of Mormon," (published in 1830), and their "Book of Doctrines and Covenants" on a par with the Bible, while Christian Scientists practically put their "Science and Health," written in 1875, on a level with the Word of God.

The Authority of the Bible means that the Word of God is the only rule of our faith and life, to be believed and obeyed. Rome places the Church above the Bible, and Rationalism, and Higher Criticism make human reason its judge. But we claim that the Word is the basis of the Church, Deut. 4:1; Isa. 8:20; Ez. 20:19; Luke 16:19; John 5:29, while Paul speaks in 2 Cor. 10:5 of "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." We are not to judge the Bible; it judges us. Herein lies the ground of all true authority in preaching.

9. The Old Testament was written originally in the Hebrew language, except a few portions which are in the Chaldee tongue, viz., Ezra 4:8; 6:19; 7:12-27; Jer. 10:11, and Dan. 2:4—7:28.

The New Testament was written in the Greek language.

The three oldest Bibles are in manuscript form and are known as the Vatican, Sinaitic and Alexandrine Manuscripts or Codices.

The Septuagint is the name given to a famous translation of the O. T. in the Greek tongue (285 A. D.), and the Vulgate is an old translation into Latin, dating from 380. From this Vulgate the English "reformer before the Reformation," Wycliffe, translated the N. T. in English in 1380. Luther published the whole Bible in German in 1534. The Dutch "States Bible" appeared in 1637, taking its name from the States General which ruled the Netherlands at the time. The English Authorized or King James Version, dates from 1611, while the English Revised Version appeared in 1885, and the American Standard Version in 1901.

The division of the Bible into chapters is ascribed to Stephen Langton, who died in 1228, while others claim this was done by Hugo of St. Cher, about 1240. In 1551 the N. T. was divided into verses by Robert Stephen. In 1528 the O. T. had been printed already with verse divisions.

10. The **Creeds of Christendom** are the official statements of the belief of the Churches which uphold them as their "Standards." They were formulated originally to combat heretics who usually appealed to some statement of the Bible to support their false views.

They were also made to give to outsiders an account of what was held by the Christian believers in common, and likewise served as a bond of union between them, as well as being the consensus of their opinions concerning the cardinal doctrines of their faith. The difference between God's Word and doctrinal standards is: 1, the Bible is judge of the Confession, not the reverse; 2, the Bible is the Word of God, the Standards in their formulations are words of men; 3, the Bible is necessary to salvation, the Standards only for the position and communion of the churches; 4, the Bible is unchangeable, the Standards can be improved and revised.

The generally adopted or ecumenical creeds are four in number: The **Apostles' Creed**, complete in its present form in about 500 A. D.; the **Creed of Nicea**, 325, defending the divinity of Christ; the **Creed of Athanasius**, mainly a defense of the Holy Trinity, (about 360), and the **Creed of Chalcedon**, 451, defining the relations between the two natures of Christ,

In the days of the Reformation the Roman Catholics formulated their Canons, Decrees and Profession of Tridentine Faith in 1563 and 1564. The Orthodox Confession of Faith of the Eastern Church was adopted in 1643. Luther published his **Smaller Catechism** in 1529. The **Augsburg Confession** dates from 1530. The Church of England published its **Confession of Thirty-nine Articles** in 1563-1571, while the Presbyterians gave to the world their valuable **Westminster Confession** and **Larger and Shorter Catechisms** in 1643-1649.

The Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, in the course of time adopted three "Formulas of Unity," viz.: the **Heidelberg Catechism**, (1563) written by Ursinus and Olevianus, two German professors in Heidelberg, in the Palatinate, in

Germany, and also the official Standard of the Reformed Churches of German and Swiss and Hungarian origin; the Belgic or Netherland Confession of Faith, consisting of 37 articles, and written mainly by Guido de Bray, in 1559; and the Canons of Dordrecht, five articles against the Arminians or Remonstrants, promulgated in Dordrecht in 1619.

Of the Heidelberg Catechism an abridgement or "Compendium" was prepared in 1608 by the Rev. H. Faukelius, of Middelburg, Neths. It was recommended by the Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-19. It is this "Compendium of the Christian Religion" which forms the basis of this book. Our American version in its present form was made by the Rev. Archibald Laidlie, and first published in 1767.

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### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 What is the Christian Religion?
- 2 What are the elements of the true religion?
- 3 What does the true religion require of us?
- 4 How many kinds of false religions can you mention?
- 5 Why do we call them false or pseudo-religions?
- 6 What can you say about Mohammedanism?
- 7 How many parties are found among the Jews of today?
- 8 What is the Talmud?
- 9 Why do we hold the Christian Religion supreme and the only true one?
- 10 How many kinds of revelation do we speak of?
- 11 In which way does the general revelation reach us?
- 12 What is meant by the innate knowledge of God?
- 13 What does the acquired knowledge of God teach us about God?
- 14 Why do we call the revelation of God through the Bible a special revelation?
- 15 What is meant by inspiration?
- 16 Which reasons for holding that the Bible is divine and inspired can you give?
- 17 Which are the attributes of the Bible?
- 18 Mention the main versions of the Bible.
- 19 Which are the ecumenical Creeds?
- 20 What can you tell about the three confessional writings of the Reformed Churches of Holland origin?



# THE FIRST PART.

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## Of the Misery of Man.

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### CHAPTER II.

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#### THE CHRISTIAN'S COMFORT; THE THREE MEANS TO OBTAIN IT; THE LAW AS TEACHER OF SIN.

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- Q. 1 How many things are necessary for thee to know, that thou enjoying real comfort mayest live and die happily?
- A. Three: first, how great my sins and miseries are; the second, how I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries; the third, how I shall express my gratitude to God for such deliverance.
- Q. 2 Whence knowest thou thy misery?
- A. Out of the law of God.
- Q. 3 What hath God commanded thee in his law?
- A. That is contained in the ten commandments, which he hath revealed in Scripture, Ex. 20 and Deut. 5.
- Q. 4 How are the ten commandments divided?
- A. In two tables.
- Q. 5 Which is the sum of what God requires of thee in the four commandments of the first table?
- A. That I love the Lord my God, with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength: this is the first and great commandment.
- Q. 6 Which is the sum of what God commands thee in the six commandments of the second table?
- A. That I love my neighbor as myself: on these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets.

1. The Christian Religion has been revealed and is propagated with the grand and primary purpose of glorifying God. The Bible assures us: "This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise," Isa. 43:21. Prov. 16:14 tells us: "The LORD hath made all things for himself," while Paul commands the Church, in whatever it does, to glorify God. For that matter, even "the heavens declare the glory of God," Ps. 19:1. It is the glory of Calvinism to have emphasized this great biblical truth as no other system of religion has done. To bring this out the authors of the Pres-

byterian Westminster Catechisms gave as answer to the first question about the chief end of man: "Man's chief end is to glorify God."

But in that same famous answer there is added: "and to enjoy him forever." That is because the Christian Religion has as its **secondary** aim the promoting of the highest, best, and most enduring interests of the children of men. The Heidelberg Catechism, from its nature as a practical handbook of doctrine lays stress on that feature. Therefore its opening question, as well as the first question of the Compendium, is about the **Comfort** to be enjoyed in life and in death as the blessed fruit of that religion whose fundamental truths it explains. And in that manner the glorification of God is brought about.

2. "Comfort" signifies a state of ease and satisfaction; freedom from care and distress and confidence that all will be turned to our true advantage. Our English word *com-fort* comes from two Latin words, meaning: to be brave and strong, **together**. It presupposes some means or person in communion with which we become brave and strong. The Dutch and German words for comfort (*troost*, *Trost*), are related to the English word "trust." They express **reliance** on some one, whereby we feel at ease, satisfied, trustful.

Comfort is a **blessed possession**. It gives us strength in the hour of trial, and it brings impulses to praise God, so that in that manner we begin to reach the purpose of our creation.

Such comfort is **needed** in general because the world is full of woe, misery, sorrow, around us, back of us, and often ahead of us. In **particular** do we need comfort at certain **moments** of our life. In the day of bodily illness we need it, when disappointments crush our hopes, break our hearts, and ruin our prospects, when our best friends turn their back upon us, when our beloved are snatched away from us, or when spiritual distress overtakes us, when our sins trouble us, or when the Devil tempts us. At such times we need comfort such as the true religion brings.

At the moment of death also it is needed, when:

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away,  
Change and decay we all around us see . . ."

What is the comfort that will hold out, even in the face of foes, of sins, of devil and of death? It is the consolation of the christian, who can say: "That I, with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ."

3. "**How many things are necessary for thee to know, that thou, enjoying real comfort, mayest live and die happily?**" the opening question of the Compendium asks. And the answer is: "**Three: first**, how great my sins and miseries are; **secondly**, how I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries; **thirdly**, how I shall express my gratitude to God for such deliverance."

This threefold division is not arbitrary. It fits our relation to the **triune God**, whom to know, to love and to serve is the very essence of our religion. When we learn to know, personally and experimentally, how great our sins and miseries are it brings us in repentance before **God the Father**. In deliverance we come to seek the **Son**, in the way of faith. In a life of gratitude the **Holy Spirit** is the divine person who stands upon the foreground in our sanctification.

The threefold division also corresponds to the three **offices of Christ**. To learn of our sin we need him as prophet; for redemption Christ as priest is indispensable; in gratitude Christ as king is to control us in our struggle to live to the praise of God, in christian obedience.

These three parts are as the links of a chain which cannot be separated. Unless we realize our sin and misery we shall not feel the absolute need of redemption, and without both these preceding discoveries we cannot be truly thankful. These elements are dependent the one upon the other, and closely and vitally related. Paul based upon them his arrangement of the Epistle to the Romans, and mentioned them as in one breath in Rom. 7:24, 25: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I **thank God**, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Compare Eph. 5:8-10; Ps. 40:1-4; Ps. 130:1-4.

Blessed are those who experience these three parts! Without a realization of them we cannot be saved. Therefore also they are brought out plainly in the Forms for the

administration of Baptism and Communion used by the Reformed Churches.\*

The chief contents of the Compendium may be summarized thus:

SIN	REPENTANCE	FATHER
DELIVERANCE	FAITH	SON
GRATITUDE	OBEDIENCE	SPIRIT

The Compendium speaks first of all of the means to obtain the knowledge of our Misery, (Q. 2-6); then of its source, (Q. 8-11); and finally of its extent, (Q. 7, 12, 13).

4. **Misery** comes from a Latin word signifying wretchedness. The German and Dutch words for this (*Elend*, *ellende*), have reference to exile, to being removed from one's land, and proper sphere of life. These terms very appropriately describe our condition through sin. We are wretched, because we are exiles, wandering far from the Father's Home, roaming in darkness, in danger of destruction. To be saved we must come to KNOW this, Jer. 3:13: "Only acknowledge, (margin: know), thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against Jehovah thy God."

Without such knowledge deliverance will neither be sought nor appreciated.

5. **How extensive must it be?** It should be wide enough and deep enough so that we confess as did Job: "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." We must realize to some extent that sin is God-provoking in its nature, awful in its manifestation, and as a result bringing us under the just indignation of a righteous and holy God. Moreover we must see sin as rendering us personally guilty before God, as well as a race, while the disabling nature of sin and consequent helplessness in ourselves must likewise be recognized. In short, we must come to see:

"Sin, like a venomous disease  
Infects our vital blood,  
The only help is sovereign grace,  
The sole Physician—God."

Such conviction will lead us to seek salvation out of our—

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\* Other Forms, belonging to the Liturgy of the Reformed Churches, are designed for the installation of pastors, elders and deacons, for excommunication, and restoration of the penitent, and for marriage.

selves, in Christ Jesus. Blessed if it is ours, reader! Have we come to realize this?

6. Whence knowest thou thy misery?" it is asked. To ask this is eminently proper. Men do not, of themselves rightly know their misery, nor its origin, nor its extent, the way it should be known. While we all have some knowledge of our imperfection and sinfulness, and all experience the results of our misery time and again in sickness, sorrow, and death, their real meaning is hidden from us by nature. Nor do we properly understand the true cause of it all, while its woeful extent is likewise unknown to us. The evils of life are usually ascribed by the unconverted to secondary causes: to men, to society, to fate, to the inevitable struggle for existence, to ignorance of the so-called "laws of nature," to misfortune, to enemies, or even to birth "under an unlucky star."

We need better ideas than these, and more reliable instruction!

Therefore the Compendium answers that we know our misery "out of the law of God." That is the divinely given standard, to show us what we should be, and, alas, are no longer.

The Law referred to is the Moral Law, the Law of the Ten Commandments, recorded in Ex. 20 and repeated in Deut. 5. It is sometimes called the "Ten Words," or Decalogue. This Law was given in 1491 B. C., while Israel was encamped near Mt. Sinai. We call it Moral Law because it covers our life as we are to live it before God, as a truly "moral" life in the best sense of the expression. This name is also given to distinguish it from the Ceremonial Law covering the religious rites or ceremonies of Israel, and from the Civil Law, governing the Jewish people as a nation. The Ceremonial Law has been abolished, as stated in Art. XXV of our Confession of Faith:

"We believe, that the ceremonies and figures of the law ceased at the coming of Christ, and that all the shadows are accomplished; so that the use of them must be abolished amongst Christians; yet the truth and substance of them remain with us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have their completion. In the meantime, we still use the testimonies taken out of the law and the prophets, to confirm us in the doctrine of the gospel, and to regulate our life in all honesty, to the glory of God, according to his will." Coll. 2: 16, 17.

The **Civil Law**, given to Israel as a theocratic nation, i. e., one ruled directly by God, became obsolete when the Theocracy ceased to exist, although its principles are still of great value. Many of them have been incorporated in the laws of the civilized world.

But the **Moral Law** is still in force, and ever will be. That is because its essence is something which God will forever require from his creatures. That essence is **love**, the fulfilling of the law, Rom. 13: 8-10. The Savior brought this out in Matt. 22:37-40. When a Pharisee lawyer asked him, "Master, which is the great commandment of the law?" he said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and the great commandment. And a second like unto it is this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets."

In sofar as this essence of the Law is concerned, the law was already written in the heart of Adam, at his creation. According to the two objects of this love, God and man, we speak of **two Tables** of the Moral Law, a figure taken from the fact that originally the Decalogue was written on two tables or tablets of stone. Ex. 32:15; 34:1

There is some difference in the way the contents of the Law have been **arranged**. The Jews call verse 2 of Ex. 20 the "First word" or commandment, and they combine the first and second commandments as the "Second word." But Luther termed Ex. 20:2 the "Preface" of the Law, and has been followed in this by all Protestants.

Lutherans and Roman Catholics combine the first and second commandments and divide the tenth. According to the division of the Reformed Churches however, the first table contains four commandments, Ex. 20:3-11, and the second table six, Ex. 20:12-17, a division defended by the **Church** fathers Origen (182-251 A. D.), Athanasius, and Ambrose, as well as found in the works of Josephus, and adopted by the Greek Catholics. We do not believe in the uniting of the first and second commandments, because there is a marked difference between worshiping **other gods**, (idolatry) as mentioned in the first commandment, and the

use of images as named in the second. On the other hand, the tenth commandment covers only the one sin of covetousness, whether applied to a man's wife or a man's property. Paul gives coveting as one commandment, Rom. 7:7; 13:19.

This Moral Law now, as it insists upon love to God and man, is to serve us as a mirror and standard to show us how much God requires of us, and how much we fall short of this divine Rule.

To love God involves that we esteem him supremely high, that we desire his communion more than anything else in the world, and that all our life and all our being be entirely devoted to him. We are to love God thus with all the heart, all the soul, and all the mind, and all our strength. Besides this it requires loving God all the time, from the hour of our birth, till the end of our life, without interruption or slackening, in adversity as well as in prosperity.

Our neighbor must also share in our love. We must love him "as ourselves." Love to ourselves includes three things: self-esteem, proper care of one's interests, and proper development of our gifts and faculties. Love to the neighbor should involve these three elements. Naturally those nearest to us by ties of blood, religion, friendship and nationality are entitled to a greater portion of this love than those outside of these circles. But the Law requires that we love all men with whom we come in contact, of whom we know, and not alone the friendly "neighbor" but even the enemy, and we are to love them all the time, and in all places and circumstances.

Love, in short must be the impelling and ruling force of all our motives, thoughts, gestures, words and actions, both towards God and towards man. So exceeding broad is God's commandment, Ps. 119:96, so deep, so searching, so all-embracing! It is before this Law that God places us, as before a perfect picture, to see, by way of comparison how far we fall short of the divine requirements. The Law is as a mirror to show our vileness and deformity, James 1:23. If we desire to know how great our sins and miseries are, let us pray often: "Open **Thou** my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law!" We need the Holy Spirit to reveal this to us! For, while it is true, Rom. 3:20: "Through the

law cometh the knowledge of sin," the Holy Spirit alone can so apply the law to our hearts and minds that we are truly convicted in respect of sin and righteousness and judgment, John 16:18. In view of much superficiality in this respect in our days, let us lay all stress on this matter. The more we realize the exceeding sinfulness of our sin, the more Christ will be appreciated.

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### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 What is the grand and primary purpose of the Christian Religion and of all revelation?
- 2 Which system of religion has brought that out the clearest?
- 3 What is the secondary purpose of religion?
- 4 What does the idea "comfort" include?
- 5 Why do we need comfort, in general and in particular?
- 6 How many things do we need to know to obtain true comfort?
- 7 Why is this three-fold division not arbitrary?
- 8 What does "misery" mean and involve?
- 9 How extensive must the knowledge of our misery be?
- 10 Why should we investigate "whence" our misery is?
- 11 What is meant by the "Moral" Law?
- 12 What is meant by the "Ceremonial" Law?
- 13 What is meant by the "Civil" Law?
- 14 What is the essence of the Moral Law?
- 15 Why do we speak of two TABLES of the Law?
- 16 Why do the Reformed hold that the first Table contains four commandments (our duties toward God), and the second the remaining six, about our duties toward man?
- 17 State the all-embracing features of this love.
- 18 What should be our prayer that we may see how wide the commandments are?



## CHAPTER III.

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### SIN RUINED US: GOD CREATED US GOOD.

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Q. 7 Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?

A. In no wise: for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor; and to transgress the commandments of God in thought, word, and deed.

Q. 8 Hath God created thee naturally so wicked and perverse?

A. By no means: but he created me good and after his own image, in the true knowledge of God, in righteousness and in holiness.

1. It is very evident, if we get at all acquainted with the deep and broad meaning of the Law, and then observe the condition of our heart and the imperfections of our life, that we are far from meeting its requirements. This has been the conviction of God's people of all ages. Job said in his days (9:1-3): "How can men be just with God? If he be pleased to contend with him he cannot answer him one of a thousand." Isaiah confessed: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," (64:6), and Ecclesiastes assures us: "For there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not," (7:20). Throughout the history of the Church we meet with similar testimonies. Those who lived nearest to God were the most outspoken as to their own inherent vileness.

Because this is so the question of the Compendium: "Canst thou keep all these things (of the Moral Law) perfectly?" is answered positively and strongly: "In no wise, for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor." With this statement Pelagians, Socinians and Unitarians and others have found fault as too harsh and untrue to fact. But it does not claim too much, alas. "Prone" does not mean that every one of our deeds is desperately wicked, as if we had become devils, but that we are inclined, i. e., leaning in this direction. The statement of our Compendium signifies that we have a tendency by nature to hate God and our fellow beings, and it is very plain that such is the case. The Bible

distinctly declares this to be so. Paul tells us: "For we also were aforetime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving diverse lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." (Tit. 3:3).

The **history** of the world confirms this. What feelings nations harbor toward nations, individuals toward individuals, even those whom they have never seen, is shown throughout the world's history, from the earliest days till the present. The most "religious" nations are no exception. Some of the bloodiest and cruelest wars have been fought in the name of religion!

**Daily life** reveals this proneness to hate God and men. Children at times show it in their play and quarrels. Adults manifest it in social and business life, even in church life at times!

Especially the life of the **heathen**, with but a small measure of God's restraining grace operating among them, reveals our natural depravity in blood feuds, torture, yea cannibalism, and all sorts of uncleanness, proving very plainly: "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

All children of men, instead of keeping the Law as they should are sinning daily in **thoughts, words and deeds**.

Our **thoughts**, how often are they vile, wicked, abominable, and we are at times glad that people do not know what is in our mind!

Our **words** are sometimes uncharitable, perhaps cutting, maybe vile, and **profane**.

Our **deeds** also cannot pass muster, as what we mentioned above shows. Indeed, the most "moral" among us has abundant reasons to say as Job: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." (40:4).

2. Now, what is the cause of this depravity? "Hath God created thee naturally so wicked and perverse?" the Compendium asks. And the reply is: "In no wise!" Sin cannot be from God. That would be contrary to his very essence. "Far be it from God that he should do wickedness." Job 34:10).

Some heathen people have claimed this, especially the

Parsees, (Chapter I). **Pantheism** involves this in its teaching that "all is God."

**Evolutionism**, in so far as it acknowledges that God had anything to do with our creation, implies this, since sin is called the remnant of our original animal nature.

But the Compendium denies this. "God created me good, and after his own image," it states. That is Biblical. "Behold, this only have I found, that God made man upright," Ecclesiastes assures us, (7:29).

That God made us "good" signifies that we were made without imperfection, and able to reach the end of our creation, viz., to glorify God.

That we were made in "God's image," means that we were true pictures of God in his perfections, in so far as finite beings could be such.

Man was God's image, the Reformed believe, and not simply its possessor, as Rome teaches. It was part of our being or essence, and not simply a halo of divine justice or holiness as some have taught. Neither was it simply ability and tendency of goodness, as others claimed.

This image consisted originally in three elements: true knowledge of God, righteousness, and holiness.

This is inferred from Coll. 3:10 where Paul speaks of "being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him who created him," and from Eph. 4:24: "And put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness."

3. We distinguish between the image of God in a wider and in a narrower sense.

(a) In a wider sense God's image involves our soul, as being spiritual and immaterial as God is, who is a pure Spirit, and the faculties of our soul, our mind, affections, and will. (Chapter XI)

The dominion over animals was likewise a part of this image, Gen. 1:26. While some have considered this as one of the effects of common grace, (Chapter XV), we may well enumerate it as belonging to God's image since it stamped man as king of the earthly creation, a reflection of him who is the Sovereign of all the Universe. In this respect we differ from the angels, who are "ministering" spirits.

(b) The Compendium dwells exclusively on God's image in the narrow sense. The true knowledge which belonged to it means that the mind of man originally was a brightly burning lamp. Adam knew God, he knew himself, and he knew the world. This knowledge was not superficial, but thorough. Adam knew the essence of things, and not merely, as in our case at present, their appearance. Therefore he could name the animals with a name appropriate to their nature. Gen. 2:20.

**Righteousness** means: right with God, in perfect harmony with his justice.

**Holiness** signifies three things: separation from sin, devotion to God, and being "whole," i.e. sound and pure. (Chapter XXV). That man originally occupied such a high station, we hold over against Evolutionists who claim that we are of brute origin. (Compare Chapter XI). A study of the races and their history confirms our belief in man's condition as an excellent being, even as the traditions of savage tribes all claim that they descended from people who were higher in the scale of civilization. The dwarfs whom Stanley met in the heart of Africa show by their language that they are degenerates. All skulls of human beings found in ancient caves are equal in brain capacity to the average skull of the white people of today. All the ancient races show that already many centuries ago there was a very high state of civilization, as the ruins of Egypt and Babylon testify. Furthermore, all of these old races placed a "golden age" in the remote past. That we are depraved at present is not to be laid at the door of the Creator therefore. We ought much rather to praise him that he created our race in such an excellent condition, adorned with so many great gifts. They were sovereignly bestowed, let us ever bear that in mind!

4. Let us, however, humble ourselves before God that we are depraved at present! For such we are, alas! Sin has ruined us, so that we lost God's image in the narrow sense. And a fearful ruin has been wrought in our case!

Sin separated us from God, as Isaiah proclaimed: "Your iniquities have separated between you and God!"

Our understanding has become darkened through sin, Eph. 4:18.

Our heart became desperately wicked, Jer. 17:9, and its very imaginations evil from our youth, Gen. 8:21. The Bible tells us we have become "disobedient, serving diverse lusts and pleasures," Titus 3:3, yea we have become "slaves of sin," Rom. 6:17, (R. V.) under control of the devil, Eph. 2:2, children of wrath, Eph. 2:3, while the "mind of the flesh" is enmity against God, Rom. 8:7-8.

Eph. 2:1 calls us "dead in trespasses and sins," which involves not merely separation from God, already mentioned, but also being unclean, impotent, corrupt and corrupting as a dead body.

We are not alone subject to unhappiness and at times anguish, under the sentence of God's condemnation, John 3:36, exposed to all manner of temporal and external punishment, but so disabled that we cannot change ourselves for good, in the biblical sense, as little as the Ethiopian can change his skin, and the leopard his spots, Jer. 13:23. (Compare Chapter V on punishment and total depravity.)

True, we have not lost God's image in the wide sense, but even in this respect the image has become marred, and the vestiges of our former grandeur do not enable us to serve God aright.

Canons III., IV. of Dordrecht, Articles 4 and 5 state:

"There remain, however, in man since the fall, the glimmerings of natural light, whereby he retains some knowledge of God, of natural things, and of the difference between good and evil, and discovers some regard for virtue, good order in society, and for maintaining an orderly external deportment. But so far as his light of nature from being sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God, and to true conversion, that he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil. Nay further, this light, such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted, and holds it in unrighteousness, by doing which he becomes inexcusable before God. In the same light are we to consider the law of the decalogue, delivered by God to his peculiar people the Jews, by the hand of Moses. For though it discovers the greatness of sin, and more and more convinces man thereof, yet as it neither points out a remedy nor imparts strength to extricate him from misery, and thus being weak through the flesh, leaves the transgressor under the curse; [thus] man cannot by this law obtain saving grace."

God grant us to see and deplore our misery in true humiliation. Do we?

“O Lord, my soul convicted stands  
Of breaking all thy ten commands:  
And on me justly might'st thou pour  
Thy wrath in one eternal shower.

To all that's good, averse, and blind,  
But prone to all that's ill;  
What dreadful darkness veils my mind!  
How obstinate my will!

Vain are the hopes the sons of men  
On their own works have built:  
Our hearts by nature are unclean,  
And all our actions guilt.

Our beauty and our strength are fled,  
And we draw near to death;  
O Lord of grace, recall the dead,  
With thine almighty breath!”

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#### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Can you prove from the Bible that we fall far short of the requirements of God's Moral Law?
- 2 How does the history of the world show the corruptness of men?
- 3 What does daily life show of our proneness to hate God and man?
- 4 Can you mention happenings among the heathen to prove our corrupt condition?
- 5 In which ways are we sinning daily?
- 6 Who claim that our depraved condition should be charged to the Creator?
- 7 What does it mean that God created us good and in or after his image?
- 8 Which are the three elements of God's image in the narrow sense?
- 9 What is God's image in the wider sense?
- 10 Mention in detail the ruin sin wrought in us.
- 11 Prove from the Bible our total depravity.
- 12 What is left in us of God's image in the wider sense?

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CAUSE OF OUR RUIN: THE FALL. THE COVENANT OF WORKS.

- Q. 9 Whence then proceeds that depravity which is in thee?  
A. From the fall and disobedience of Adam and Eve in Paradise; hence our nature is become so corrupt, that we are all conceived and born in sin.
- Q. 10 What was that disobedience?  
A. That they did eat of the fruit of the tree, which God had forbidden them.
- Q. 11 Does the disobedience of Adam concern us?  
A. Certainly: for he is the father of us all; and we have all sinned in him.

After stating that the cause of our depravity does not lie in our creation, since God created our race good and in his image, the Compendium takes up the discussion of the true origin of our wicked condition. Let us notice: 1) the fall; 2) its results for Adam; 3) for us; 4) the Covenant of Works; and 5) how sin is imputed to us.

1. The depravity in us proceeds "from the fall and disobedience of Adam and Eve in Paradise."

Paradise is the name given to a beautiful garden in that part of Asia which is at present called Armenia, or Persia. It was richly watered by four rivers, no doubt with a very beautiful vegetation, and a delightful climate, while the creature-world in it was tame and everything reflecting the glory of God. Among the trees of Paradise, two are singled out in the sacred narrative of Genesis, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life. The word "Paradise" is derived from a Greek word meaning a park. In Is. 51:3 Paradise is called "the garden of Jehovah," and "Eden," which last mentioned word signifies "delight." In that beautiful garden the Lord placed the first human pair, Adam and Eve, and there they lived for a season, happy, pure and blissful, in undisturbed communion with their maker, cultivating the garden, and glorifying God, the end of their creation. We do not know how long the "state of innocency" continued, but this we know, in Paradise the Fall of man

took place. The Confession of Faith contains the following about this ruinous event, Art. XIV:

“We believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after his own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things to will, agreeably to the will of God. But being in honor, he understood it not, neither knew his excellency, but wilfully subjected himself to sin, and consequently to death, and the curse, giving ear to the words of the devil. For the commandment of life, which he had received, he transgressed; and by sin separated himself from God, who was his true life, having corrupted his whole nature; whereby he made himself liable to corporal and spiritual death. And being thus become wicked, perverse and corrupt in all his ways, he hath lost all his excellent gifts, which he had received from God, and only retained a few remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse; for all the light which is in us changed into darkness, as the Scriptures teach us, saying: “The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not; where St. John calleth men darkness. Therefore we reject all that is taught repugnant to this, concerning the free will of man, since man is but a slave to sin; and has nothing of himself, unless it is given him from heaven. For who may presume to boast, that he of himself can do any good, since Christ saith. No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him? Who will glory in his own will, who understands, that to be carnally minded is enmity against God? Who can speak of his knowledge, since the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God? In short, who dare suggest any thought, since he knows that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of God? And therefore what the apostle saith ought justly to be held sure and firm, that God worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. For there is no will nor understanding, conformable to the divine will and understanding, but what Christ hath wrought in man: which he teaches us, when he saith, Without me ye can do nothing.”

The tragedy of Paradise has been called the “great riddle of human history.” The question “whence is sin?” has occupied the thoughts of the greatest philosophers. Many attempts have been made to solve the problem of the origin of sin. The Gnostics, a heretical sect in the early days of the Church, said sin was the result of the existence of matter. Spinoza, a Dutch Jew, taught that sin was simply a result of our finiteness. Evolution denies the Fall altogether. Our race is constantly climbing! “Christian Science” so-called,



claims: because soul is immortal, soul cannot sin. "Evil is not; sin, sickness, death, are unreal. Matter and the mortal body are nothing but a belief and illusion." It even claims: "a lie is all the Satan there is." "New Thought," or "Theosophy" asserts: "There are no sins. What seems so are the lessons given us to master. Vice is but virtue in the making." But the Bible narrative is plain, and no better answer to the question about the origin of our depravity has yet been found than the one of the Compendium: "the fall and disobedience of Adam and Eve in Paradise."

The Bible does not give many details of

"Man's first disobedience and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,  
With loss of Eden."

But the following may be said about it.

(a) The possibility of the Fall was involved in man being created as a finite and changeable being.

(b) The instrumental cause was the probationary or trial command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This "forbidden tree," as it is often called, stood in Paradise as an expression of God's revealed will. God sovereignly chose that tree to bring out whether or not Adam and Eve would be loyal to God, and obedient to his will, even though they did not fully understand its purpose. They should have left the tree alone, subjecting themselves to the command and arrangement of their Sovereign, believing it to be for their good. Instead of that they, as it were, usurped the sovereignty of God by saying practically: "It is good to eat of that tree, although God said it is evil." An attempt to dethrone God as Sovereign was the sin of our first parents in its essence, even as rebellion against God, for such it was in reality, still lies at the root of all sin.

(c) The moving cause of the Fall was the temptation of the Devil, Satan, the head of the fallen angels, who, before the fall of the human race, had already rebelled against his Sovereign, most likely through pride, 1 Tim. 3:6. (Chapter XI, on Creation.) Using a serpent as an instrument the Devil entered into conversation with Eve. "First the probationary command was represented as a burden imposed arbitrarily, and needlessly limiting man's liberty, and in that manner

there was sown in Eve's soul the seed of doubt concerning the divine origin and the justice of the command. Next this doubt is made to develop into unbelief by means of the suggestion that God gave the command solely because he feared that men would become like him, knowing good and evil as he does. Then this unbelief in its turn acts on the imagination, and represents the transgression of the command as a way not leading to death, but to true life and equality with God. The **imagination** influences the tendency and impulse in man, so that the forbidden tree is viewed in a different light and becomes a delight to the eye, and desirable to the heart. This **finally** acts on the will and produces the sinful deed; Eve took of the fruit and ate, and she also gave to her husband and he ate. Gen. 3:1-6.

In this simple but deeply psychological manner the Bible relates the history of the Fall and the origin of sin. In this way sin always originates. It **begins** with darkening the mind, continues in exciting the imagination, arouses desire in the heart, and ends in an act of the will. But Holy Writ does not attempt to explain sin i.e. to deduce it from existing factors. In the changeable state wherein man was created, and in the probationary command which God gave, the **possibility of sin** was involved; but the change from possibility to **reality** is wrapt in darkness and hidden from us. Sin is existing, but it might not and may not exist; it is and remains forever contrary both to God's law and to the testimony of our conscience." (Bavinck).

2. The results of this transgression were very disastrous for Adam and Eve. Instead of dethroning God they dethroned themselves.

They lost God's image, in the narrow sense, as well as their happiness and peace of mind. They became guilty before God, and depraved within.

They became subject to **death** in all its wide meaning.

**Spiritual death** took hold of them, i.e. separation from God as the source of their spiritual life. Eph. 2:1; 1 Tim. 5:6, and 6:19.

**Bodily or corporal death** affected them in time: separation of body and soul. Gen. 5:5.

And they became exposed to **eternal death**: separation

from every blessing of God forever, called the second death in Rev. 21:8.

Adam and Eve were also driven out of Paradise and away from the tree of life, while the ground was cursed for their sake, to produce thorns and thistles. Labor was imposed on Adam as a burden, instead of a delight: eating bread in the sweat of the brow; and womankind, "because Adam was not deceived but the woman," 1 Tim. 2:14, had the sentence pronounced upon it recorded in Gen. 3:16. Truly, we have reason to lament:

"Now back with humble shame we look  
                   On our original;  
 How is our nature dashed, and broke  
                   In our first father's Fall!"

3. What was still worse, Adam's fall involved not alone the original human pair but also all of its posterity. "In Adam's Fall, we sinned all," the old verse says. And the Compendium, in answer to its inquiry, (Q. 11), "Does the disobedience of Adam concern us?", states: Certainly; for he is the father of us all; and we have all sinned in him."

That Adam was our natural head, our "father," is plain from various Bible statements. "God made of one blood all nations." Acts 17:26.

Science confirms this constantly. Whenever and wherever men have been found, their body has not alone the same bony structure in a general way, but exactly the same number of bones as well. The nature of the soul and the capacity of the mind is the same in the same surroundings. The one, common origin of language is also proven more and more by comparative study.

It was but natural therefore that the offspring of the original pair should be corrupt. "Like begets like" is a universal law. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." (Job 14:4).

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh," John 3:6; Ps. 51:5.

Agreeably with this Canon III states in Art 2, 3:

"Man after the fall begat children in his own likeness. A corrupt stock produced a corrupt offspring. Hence all the posterity of Adam, Christ only excepted, have derived corruption from their original parent, not by imitation, as the Pela-

gians of old asserted, but by the propagation of a vicious nature.

"Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto; and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose of themselves to reformation."

4. Adam however was more than our **natural** head. His being the father of the human race may explain our **depravity**, our sinful nature, since a corrupt tree cannot bear good fruit, but according to the Bible we are **guilty** as well as depraved, guilty before God, as children of wrath, with his wrath abiding on us, unless we come to accept Christ, as shown by Rom. 3:19, Eph. 2:3, John 3:36.

How did we become thus guilty before God? And the reply is: because Adam was our **federal head**, as well as our natural head, so that in that sense, and because of that, as the Compendium state: "we all sinned in him." Adam was our representative in a covenant which is usually called the **covenant of works**, although others named it "**covenant of life**." Rom. 7:10, or after the place where it was made: the "**Edenic covenant**."

"The distance between God and his creature is so great," says the Westminster Confession, (Ch. VII, 1), "that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of him as their blessedness and reward but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant."

The first covenant made with man contained **three elements**: a condition, a promise, and a penalty. The **condition** was perfect obedience to God. The **promise**: eternal life for Adam and his posterity. The **penalty**: death.

That such a covenant existed is very evident. Hos. 6:7: "But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant?"

The account given in **Genesis** possesses all the **elements** of a covenant.

(a) Two parties are mentioned: God and man.

(b) A **promise** on the part of God is implied in the threat: "thou shalt die," Gen. 2:17. Compare Rom. 7:10; 8:3; 10:5; Matt. 19:16, 17.

(c) There is **mutual agreement**, such as usually belongs to covenants from God's side expressed in his command and promise, and implied on the part of man in the fact of his perfect agreement with the will of God, as a perfect being, as well as in the reply of Eve to the serpent, and in Adam's apology to God for his sin.

(d) Various Bible statements express or at least infer Adam's **representative** character, since we are said to have "sinned in him," (Rom. 5:12, margin), and being "made" or constituted "sinners" by his disobedience, Rom. 5:19. All "died" in him, 1 Cor. 15:22. Paul assures us: "by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation," Rom. 5:17. Such likewise appears from the representative character of Christ, John 6:37, Isa. 53:10, 11, and elsewhere, taken in connection with the fact that Adam is called his "figure" or type, Rom. 5:14. "For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift of grace which is by one man, Jesus Christ," Rom. 5:15.

(e) Last but not least, we find the proof that Adam represented his posterity in the moral character and **condition of infants**, it being impossible to account for their subjection to the Law and its curse except by a reference to "the offense of one," by which judgment came upon all men, to condemnation, including children, Rom 5:14; 1 Cor. 7:14; Eph. 2:3.

5. This sin of Adam is imputed to us all. Some of the texts mentioned above bring that out clearly. It is as a result of this that we enter this world deprived of the image of God in the narrow sense, and subject to all manner of misery.

Consequently we do not sin by "imitation," as the Pelagians claim. Nor are we connected with Adam's sin only by a principle of "social liability," according to which sin was only the natural ground of our corruption, and not the judicial ground, so that we have no more to do with the first sin of Adam than with the sin of any others of our ancestors. Such views are unscriptural and dangerous. If we do not entertain clear conceptions of our fall in Adam, we are apt to form wrong ideas of our restoration in Christ, the last Adam. Our fathers used to say: "unsound views of Paradise produce unsound views of Calvary." The doctrine of the

covenant of works is the best explanation of the Bible teaching of our guilt before God by nature. Even the evolutionist Huxley was led to say: "the doctrines of original sin, of the innate depravity of man, and the evil of our race.....appear to me vastly nearer to the truth than the "liberal" popular illusions that babes are all born good, and that the example of a corrupt society is responsible for their failure to remain so."

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### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Where was Paradise, the scene of the Fall of man?
- 2 Can you mention some attempts made to explain the origin of sin?
- 3 Wherein did the possibility of man's Fall lie?
- 4 What can you say about the probationary command as the instrumental cause of the Fall?
- 5 What constituted the moving cause of the Fall?
- 6 Can you describe how the process of sin worked in the mind and heart of Eve?
- 7 What were the results of Adam's sin for himself and for Eve?
- 8 What can you tell about the three kinds of death we speak of?
- 9 Can you prove in different ways that Adam was our "natural" head?
- 10 How does the fact of Adam being our natural head explain our depravity, that is, our corrupt condition by nature?
- 11 Was Adam more than our natural head and father?
- 12 What do we mean by calling Adam our "federal" head?
- 13 Which are the elements of the covenant of works?
- 14 Prove that there actually was a "covenant of works."
- 15 What did this covenant relation in Adam render us before God?
- 16 How is Adam's sin charged to us?

## CHAPTER V.

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### THE RESULTS OF THE FALL: ORIGINAL SIN, TOTAL DEPRAVITY, AND PUNISHMENT.

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- Q. 12 Are we then incapable of doing any good of ourselves, and prone to all manner of wickedness?
- A. Indeed we are: unless we are regenerated by the Spirit of God.
- Q. 13 Will God suffer such disobedience and corruption to go unpunished?
- A. By no means: but in his just judgment will punish them, both in time and eternity, as it is written: "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

The previous chapter explained why Adam's Fall affected us and the whole human race. It was because the first man was not alone our natural head, our father, but, especially, our federal head, our representative in the covenant of works. In this chapter we are to discuss the results of the Fall, for us and in us. These results are, viz. that we are born in original sin, totally depraved, and subject to the punishment of sin. In this chapter we shall discuss: 1, Sin, original and actual; 2, total depravity; 3, the punishment of sin.

#### I

1. The term **original sin** includes two things: our original guilt and our original pollution.

Our original guilt is imputed to us. Rom. 5:19: "through the one man's disobedience the many are made sinners." "Made" sinners, here means constituted, accounted as such. As a whole nation suffers when its head loses in war, so God imputes to us, as the posterity of Adam, the sin of him as our representative. In the same manner the Lord imputes to those in Christ, the righteousness he as our representative merited for us.

Now, because God as righteous imputes to us the guilt of Adam, he at our creation deprives us of his image, in the

narrow sense, and the result is that we enter the world polluted, i. e. with a corrupt nature, and incapable of doing spiritual good. This original **pollution**, which we inherit, is referred to in John 3: 16: "What is born of the flesh, is flesh," i. e. corrupt. In Art. XV of our Confession it is stated:

"We believe that, through the disobedience of Adam, original sin is extended to all mankind; which is a corruption of the whole nature, and an hereditary disease, wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mother's womb, and which produceth in man all sorts of sin, being in him as a root thereof; and therefore is so vile and abominable in the sight of God, that it is sufficient to condemn all mankind. Nor is it by any means abolished or done away by baptism; since sin always issues forth from this woeful source, as water from a fountain; notwithstanding it is not imputed to the children of God unto condemnation, but by his grace and mercy is forgiven them. Not that they should rest securely in sin, but that a sense of this corruption should make believers often to sigh, desiring to be delivered from this body of death. Wherefore we reject the error of the Pelagians, who assert that sin proceeds only from imitation."

2. From this "root" or "fountain" of our original pollution proceed our **actual sins**. These may be divided in sins of **omission** and of **commission**. Sins of **omission** we are guilty of in all cases wherein we fail to serve and glorify God, and help our neighbor as we should, according to God's Law of love toward the Lord and man. They may be called our **negative sins**.

"The wounds I might have healed;  
The human sorrow and smart!  
But evil is wrought by want of thought  
As well as by want of heart!"

Sins of **commission** on the other hand, are our **positive sins**. We commit them as we transgress in thoughts, words, and deeds.

To our sinful **thoughts** belong our wrong motives, sinful intentions, and all evil deliberations of our heart.

Sinful **words** include wicked ejaculations as well as all our expressions tainted by sin, be they in prose or in rhyme, in jest or in earnestness, all words of flattery and frivolity as well as of bitterness and profanity.

Our sinful **deeds** comprise sinful gestures as well as all acts whereby we transgress the Law of God.

3. Sin has been **defined** as "want of conformity unto,



or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature."

Sin is not merely "selfishness" as some want us to believe, nor "weakness" as others claim, nor can it justly be termed a "remnant of our original animal nature," as evolutionists teach. In its essence all sin is rebellion against the Most High. In 1 John 3:4 it is defined as "lawlessness," i. e. something suggestive of anarchy. Several O. T. words expressive of sin clearly bring out sin's nature as revolt, rebellion, disobedience. Most of the N. T. words used for sin in their origin signify: "missing the mark," "stepping aside," "disobedience," "impiety," "injustice," "debt."

4. **Kinds of sin.** Various distinctions have been made in attempts to classify sins of different nature. The Roman Catholic Church, for instance, calls some sins "**venial**," thereby understanding transgressions of the Law which are "not of grave importance." But the Reformed hold that every sin is an abomination in God's sight, though we of course admit that not all transgressions are equally grievous.

People have in former times spoken of the "Seven Capital or Deadly Sins" viz. pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth, and Rome also mentions "**mortal sins**," understanding by them such sins which "deprive the soul of supernatural life."

Likewise do Roman Catholics enumerate "six sins against the Holy Spirit," viz. presumption of God's mercy, despair, resisting the known christian truth, envy at another's spiritual good, obstinacy in sin, and final impenitence.

While these sins are of course very grievous, Protestants as a rule prefer to abide by the Word which tells us, Matt. 31:32: "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto man; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.... neither in this world, nor in the world to come." What this one, "**unpardonable sin**" is, has been discussed times innumerable. The following may be safely said on the subject:

(a) "Not every sin against the Holy Spirit is unpardonable." Eph. 4:30.

(b) The texts mentioning the sin plainly, Matt. 12:32; Mark 3:29, and Luke 12:10, speak of "blaspheming" against

the Holy Spirit, that is: conscious, deliberate, continued rejection of the Holy Ghost in sofar as he reveals the Savior.

(c) The falling away mentioned in Heb. 6:4-6, 10:29, was also a sinning against the Holy Spirit which could not be pardoned, but it seems that this manner of committing the unpardonable sin was possible only in the apostolic period when special gifts of grace were given.

(d) In the days of the apostles this sin could be known, 1 John 5:16, but whether we in our times can recognize it is questionable. The best test in regard to this sin is negative: one who fears he committed this sin usually has not been guilty of it." (Dr. G. Vos).

5. There is one more thing we should bear in mind concerning the subject of sin. It is that there are not alone sins of us as **individuals** but also sins belonging in common to **groups of persons**, such as families, congregations, denominations, organizations, corporations, and nations. May God grant us to see how numerous our sins are, so that we duly humble ourselves before Him !

## II

As Reformed Churches we believe that we are **totally depraved**. The Compendium states that we are "incapable of doing **any good**," and in the Canons it is declared (III, IV, 3): that men are "neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation." This doctrine of total depravity is called the Augustinian view of sin, named after the great Churchfather Augustine, (354-430), who opposed the Pelagian view that we sin only by imitation. Semi-Pelagians teach that "man is half-sick, half-well." But the Bible tells us that we are "**dead in trespasses**," Eph. 2:1, 5, Coll. 2:13, and assures us that as the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots, so are we unable to do good. (Jer. 13:23). The Augustinian view of total depravity however, does not mean, as some have stated, that we cannot do **natural** good, such as eating or drinking, or **civil** good, such as filling our positions in life, or **moral** good, viz. living decently and attending to outward church duties. Such good the unregenerated also can do, aided by common grace. (Chapter XV). What is meant by "total depravity" is that we, by nature,

without divine aid, are wholly incapable of pleasing God aright, and so to act that we merit salvation. **Regeneration**, and that alone, alters this deplorable condition of ours, as stated by the reply to Q. 12. What that term signifies is expressed in Chapter XV, so that we shall not discuss it here.

### III

**The Punishment of Sin.** It is very evident that a just and holy God cannot allow men to be thus ruined by original sin, and guilty of all sorts of actual sin, and suffer such disobedience and corruption to go unpunished. Answer 13 of the Compendium states that He "in His just judgment will punish them, both in time and eternity, as it is written: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law, to do them." Gal. 3:10. Ps. 7:11 informs us: "God is a righteous Judge, yea a God that hath indignation every day."

That brings us to the subject of the **Punishment of Sin.**

Many people curtail or entirely deny the fact that God punishes sin. Some of them do this by elevating the mercy of God so high that his justice is overshadowed. Now, it is true that God is merciful—full of mercy. "There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea." and "the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind, and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind." But, as it is expressed in Canon II, Art. 1:

"God is not only supremely merciful, but also supremely just. And his justice requires (as he hath revealed himself in his Word) that our sins committed against his infinite majesty should be punished, not only with temporal, but with eternal punishment, both in body and soul; which we cannot escape, unless satisfaction be made to justice of God."

This is based on Holy Writ. Rom. 1:18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man." Since these punishments are meted out not alone in this world but also in the world to come, we speak of two kinds of punishment: **temporal and eternal.**

1. The punishment in this world or temporal punishment may be divided into inward and outward.

(a) **Inward punishments** are such afflictions as blind-

ness of the mind, hardness of the heart, vile affections, horrors of conscience, delusions of Satan.

(b) **Outward punishments** are the evils of life befalling our bodies, our names, our property, our employments, our relations. Poverty, pain, insanity, loss of life or limb, bereavements, sickness, all these and many more of such afflictions may be considered to belong to this outward, temporal punishment.

Some of these punishments are meted out to **individuals**, while others afflict **groups** of people, be they families, congregations, cities, districts, tribes or nations. To some ills of life all human flesh is heir. God uses man to punish men, in persecutions, feuds and warfare. Yea, all the forces of nature are at times employed by him to pour out his just wrath, whether he makes use of the invisible bacillus of disease, or of powerful tornadoes, overwhelming tidal waves, and startling earthquakes. Conflagrations, crop failures, famine, and all that involves affliction in any way, comes to mankind not by accident, or fate, but as sent and ruled and overruled by him concerning whom it is said: "Shall evil befall a city, and Jehovah hath not done it?" Amos 3:6; Eph. 4:18; Rom. 1:28; 2 Thess. 2:11; Rom. 2:5; Isa. 33:14; Deut. 28:15-18.

2. But there is also punishment in the **world to come**, or **eternal**. This consists in everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, deprivation of all his blessings, and grievous torments in soul and in body in hell.

The **place** where this punishment is inflicted is usually named **hell**, "the hell of fire, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," Mark 9:44. It is also called "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone," Rev. 21:8; the **bottomless pit**, Rev. 9:2.

The **dreadful nature** of the punishment of the wicked is implied in such expressions as "outer darkness," "weeping and gnashing of teeth," and "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Other phrases employed to designate the misery of the lost are suggestive of its awful character: "I am tormented in this flame," Luke 16:24; "unquenchable fire," Luke 3:17; "furnace of fire," Mat. 13:24; "blackness of darkness," Jude 13; "torment in fire and brimstone," Rev. 19:10; "the second death," Rev. 21:8.

Many people have denied the everlasting character of this punishment, viz., Universalists, Restorationists, Adventists, Russellites, Annihilationists, etc.

The Universalists and Restorationists believe in an ultimate "restoration of all things," including the fallen angels, a final "universal salvation," from which tenet they derive their names. (Compare Chapter XVII). Adventists and Russellites hold the doctrine of the **annihilation** of the wicked, after the judgment day. They deny the inherent immortality of the human soul. (Chapter XI). The Churches of Christendom however, with the exceptions just mentioned, believe that the punishment of the wicked will be of **endless duration**. And they have abundant reasons for entertaining this view. 2 Thess. 1:9, 10 speaks of being "punished with everlasting destruction;" Matt. 25:41: "Depart from me ye cursed, into the eternal fire," and Matt. 25:46: "and these shall go away into eternal punishment." The constant use in the Bible of such terms as "fire that shall not be quenched," "fire unquenchable," the "worm that does not die," the necessity of paying the "uttermost farthing," and the "smoke of their torment arising forever and ever," is consistent only with the doctrine that punishment is everlasting in the sense of endless duration. No forced interpretation of "aionios" (eternal), can gainsay the clear sense of the sacred text that it means what the orthodox church has always understood it to be: without end, forever and ever. Compare Luke 3:17; Mark 9:45, 46; Rev. 14:10, 11; Matt. 12:32; Mark 3:29; Jude 13.

While it is true that in some cases "forever" may mean limited duration, such as the statement about slaves being bondmen "forever," Ex. 25:46; Deut. 15:17, and elsewhere statements about **temporal** possessions or promises, as clearly shown in each case by the text and context, such a meaning is an exception to the rule. "Eternal" and "everlasting" certainly indicate endless duration as applied to God, 1 Tim. 1:17, to Christ, Rev. 1:18, and to the Holy Ghost, Heb. 9:14. Yet they are the same words used in connection with punishment, quoted above, and consequently must have the same significance. These terms are also used to express the endless happiness of the saints, in John 6:57, 58, 2 Cor. 9:9, Matt. 19:29, Mark 10:30, John 3:15, and Rom. 2:7. In Matt. 25:46 the very same word is employed in the same clause to define

at once the duration of the happiness of the saints and the misery of the lost: "And these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life," and if the bliss of the saved is endless, as all admit, then the misery of the lost, the duration of which is indicated by the very same word, must also be endless. There is nothing in the Bible to suggest that the sufferings of the ungodly will only be temporary. Compare Rev. 17:8, 11, to 19:20, and 20:10.

Reason and experience confirm this testimony of Holy Writ concerning the endless duration of the punishment of the wicked. Man is dead in sin, as we have shown above. Repentance and faith are wrought in the soul only by a higher power, the Holy Ghost, Chapter XV. It is impossible that a lost soul in the most unfavorable circumstances could regenerate itself and seek and find a Savior despised in this life, rejected in the only day of grace we have—the present. Heb. 3:7. Moreover, because sin is hardening in its character, sinners in hell will naturally continue in sin and rebellion, instead of ceasing to provoke God, and consequently they will increase his indignation rather than diminish it. Therefore the Bible warns us: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" Heb. 10:31.

We should not wonder at it, that God punishes sin thus. For as already stated, sin in essence is rebellion. And against whom? Against the great God and Sovereign of the world before whom entire nations are as a drop in a bucket, and accounted as small dust of the balance. Isa. 40:15.

Moreover, in the case of the impenitent who lived in christian circles, their damnation is unmistakably clearly shown to be just since they have wilfully rejected the gospel offer of the Son, and in many, if not in all cases, did despite to the Spirit of God. Heb. 10:26-29. Such crimes against the Triune Supreme Majesty of the Universe deserves the most severe punishment. It has been observed, and it is a most significant fact, that those who hold the shallowest views of God's greatness and sovereignty, who have no heart for his glory, nor any desire after a consecrated life, are apt to rebel the strongest against the doctrine of endless punishment. On the other hand, it is remarkable that the more we see the true character of sin as hideous, and of God and his Christ

and his Spirit as worthy of our praise, the more we see how just it is that those who persist in rebelling against God shall be banished from his presence forever. It has also been noticed that the more closely one lives to his Lord the more serious minded one becomes about the awful prospect of the impenitent, and the more earnest about trying to save souls from the wrath to come. But people and churches which are lax and worldly in their life are apt to adopt the loosest views about the future, and be lukewarm as to saving souls. Mission zeal, though for a while it may continue in "liberal" churches, if it ever existed, is sure to die out, and among those who avowedly hold the doctrine of annihilation, restoration and universalism, there is a noticeable absence of earnest spiritual power. They may be zealous at proselyting, skilful in debate, but have no power with God, and as a rule are poor winners of souls. By such fruits the tree is judged! May God grant us to heartily believe the orthodox doctrine of the punishment of sin. It may spell the awful condition of friends and relatives who died unsaved, but our feelings do not set aside the plain statements of Holy Writ! Moreover, we should love God supremely, and our desire to have him justified and glorified should supersede mere human sympathy. "The judgments of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether," Ps. 91:9. May it make us the more earnest to try to rescue the perishing near us and far away from us, in true mission love! And let us be sure ourselves that we have fled for our life's sake! The Bible tells us that punishment will be especially severe for those of the lost who knew the Lord's will, (as we all do who read this), "and made not ready, nor did according to his will." Such will be "beaten with many stripes." For there will be degrees in punishment. Luke 12:47, 48; Matt. 10:15.

"Lord, open sinners' eyes,  
Their awful state to see,  
And make them, ere the storm arise,  
To Thee for safety flee!"

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"Our nature's totally depraved;  
The heart a sink of sin;  
Without a change we can't be saved;  
We must be born again.

That, which is born of flesh, is flesh,  
 And flesh it will remain;  
 Then marvel not that Jesus saith,  
 'Ye must be born again.'

Spirit of life, thy grace impart,  
 And breathe on sinners slain;  
 Bear witness, Lord, in every heart,  
 That we are born again."

### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Which are the two main results of Adam's fall for us?
- 2 Which two parts make up what is called our "original sin"?
- 3 Can you prove from the Bible that we have "original GUILT"?
- 4 How does original guilt become ours?
- 5 What is meant by "original POLLUTION"?
- 6 How does original pollution become ours?
- 7 What proceeds from the root or fountain of our original sin?
- 8 In which ways can you CLASSIFY our actual sins?
- 9 What is sin in its essence?
- 10 Which sins are referred to by the term "Seven Capital Sins"?
- 11 What can you say about the one "unpardonable sin"?
- 12 What is meant by the statement that we are "totally depraved"?
- 13 Can you prove our total depravity from the Bible?
- 14 Of which two classes of punishment does the Compendium speak?
- 15 How do we divide or classify the punishment of sin in this world?
- 16 What is meant by eternal punishment?
- 17 What can you say of the place of punishment?
- 18 What can you tell about the character of this punishment?
- 19 Prove that this punishment is eternal.
- 20 What is our duty in view of this punishment of sin, regarding ourselves and others?



## THE SECOND PART.

### Of Man's Deliverance.

#### CHAPTER VI.

##### THE MEDIATOR WE NEED

- Q. 14 By what means canst thou escape this punishment, and be again received into favor?
- A. By such a Mediator, who is in one person very God, and a real righteous man.
- Q. 15 Who is that Mediator?
- A. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who in one person is true God, and a real righteous man.
- Q. 16 Could not the angels be our mediators?
- A. No; for they are neither God nor man.
- Q. 17 Cannot the saints be our mediators?
- A. No; for they themselves have sinned, and have obtained salvation by no other means, than through this Mediator.

The first part of the Compendium closed with the statement that our Misery would inevitably lead to our everlasting punishment in the world to come! Naturally the question arises: "can we escape this punishment and be again received into favor;" that is: be restored to God's communion? It is indicated in the answer that such is possible. Mankind has been called savable, that is: capable of being saved. It was possible that our deliverance or redemption should be brought about. As to the fallen angels there was no such possibility, it seems. This has been ascribed to the fact that there is no Mediator for them. Nor could they be represented—the one for the many because of lack of organic unity between them, as such is existing in our race. Especially the utter wilfulness of their sin is mentioned as the great reason why there is no redemption for them. They sinned without any provocation or temptation from the outside, such as took place in the case of Adam and Eve.

No doubt there is some truth in these statements. But we believe that the deep and ultimate ground for leaving the

fallen angels in their misery was the sovereign choice of God who has mercy on whom he will have mercy, (Rom. 9:15), and who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven," as well as "among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand or say unto him what doest Thou?" Dan. 4:35. That in the case of man there was a possibility of being redeemed, has been ascribed to the fact that all human beings have one nature because of their common origin, and could be represented, and because they sinned through temptation from the outside. All this cannot be gainsaid. But here also we may well seek the ultimate ground in sovereign choice. It pleased God to have mercy on our race, and to seek it anew when the first human pair broke loose from him in Paradise. Therefore the Reformed Churches confess in Art. 2, Canon 2: "He hath been pleased of his infinite mercy to give his only begotten Son for our Surety!" Of course it was impossible to forgive sin without some kind of satisfaction made for transgression. God could not leave sin unpunished because of three of his attributes: his truthfulness, his justice, and his holiness.

His truthfulness required propitiation, because God had threatened: "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

His justice implies that He not only rewards the good but also punishes the offender. (See Chapter IX on the Attributes of God.)

His holiness is too averse to sin to permit restoration to his favor without a covering for sin.

Neither was there any possibility that man himself should pay the ransom for his own soul. His total depravity barred the way. (Chapter V., II., p. 38.)

The only way to be delivered from sin and misery would be through some One able to be our Representative, and equipped in every way to satisfy all the demands of God in bearing the penalty of sin for us, and in fulfilling all the demands of the Law, since it was the condition of the Covenant of works: "do this and thou shalt live." In other words, what we needed was some person to be our Mediator, i.e. one who interposes between parties at variance.

The first five questions of the Second Part of the Com-

pendium are devoted to him: his **Necessity**, and his **Qualities**, Q. 14; his **Person**, Q. 15; and the fact that **he alone** meets the required conditions, and not angels or saints, Q. 16 and 17.

1. **The Necessity** of a Mediator is apparent from what we have already said concerning the truthfulness, justice and holiness of God.

What mankind needed was "a man in the gap," Ex. 22:30.

We needed One to bridge the chasm between the Almighty and his fallen and guilty creature.

We needed a second Adam, to be head of a better Covenant, that He might obtain for us what we could not secure: life, favor, heaven. We needed one to bear all the curse of the first Covenant, because of the breaking of God's supreme Law of love involved in man's transgression. We needed a Substitute, entirely satisfactory to God, and at the same time thoroughly united with us.

And, glory to God, such substitution, whereby the Mediator took the sinner's place and suffered and wrought in his stead, God allowed in mercy! He had foreshadowed this in the sacrificial service of the Old Testament sanctuary. The prophets had been bidden to prophecy about the coming Servant of Jehovah who was to bear the sin of man, who would justify many, who would be "the Lord our righteousness," and to whom "for the transgression of my people," "the stroke was due." (Isa. 53; Jer. 23:6).

2. But such a Mediator had to possess several indispensable attributes or qualifications. Paul suggests that when he speaks in Heb. 7:26 about the high priest which "became us," i. e. fitted our case: "holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens."

Four qualifications of the Mediator are mentioned in the Compendium: the one to redeem us must be: **very God**, a **real man**, a **righteous man**, and one who is God and man in **one person**.

1. **Very God** the Mediator had to be. This was because no mere man, in fact not any finite being, could bear the infinite wrath of God against sin and satisfy for it. This was also required to lend infinite value to his merits, and to make us actual partakers of them forever, and likewise demanded in order that **God** might receive all the praise and

glory for redemption. Moreover a **divine** Mediator was needed that in giving and receiving the thankfulness and due homage of a redeemed people, no idolatry should be committed.

2. **Real man** the Mediator had to be. It was but just that sin should be **atoned** for by and in the same human nature that had transgressed. Besides this, God was to be **served** in the same nature which had been set aside for his service at the beginning. No animal could take our place. An animal has neither a human soul nor can add moral worth, ethical value, to his sacrifice. And there is no real bond of union between an animal and our race. The humanity of the Mediator and Redeemer was also demanded in order that humiliation, and dying might be gone through as well as exaltation. And if the Mediator were God alone, this could not be done, since divinity is not subject to change. Moreover, it was God's purpose to manifest himself "in the flesh," that is, in a human nature, that there might be the closest bond of union between the substitute and those whose place He took, and likewise that he might be fully able to sympathize with us, having been afflicted in all our affliction. To this we may add that his humanity was required that we with our finite minds might understand at least something of the "mystery of godliness." As the well-educated missionary coming to uncivilized heathen people must **stoop down** as it were mentally, that the untutored savages may at least comprehend something of his message, so our God had to **descend** to us, and send a Mediator who was man as well as God, to bring his good tidings of love in a comprehensible manner.

3. **Righteous man** the Mediator had to be. Perfectly righteous. Because one himself a sinner could not satisfy for others, as little and less as one helplessly bound in a prison can deliver others in the same plight. An immaculately pure substitute was required even as the lambs of the tabernacle service of old had to be without blemish, (Ex. 12:5; 1 Pet. 1:19). Only in such a case God's holiness and justice could accept the offer. An unrighteous one would himself have been subject to the punishment of sin, because polluted with its pollution and guilty with its guilt. As little as one who himself has died of pestilence can stamp out that dread disease, so little could one himself unrighteous deliver us.

4. **God and man in one person**, that also was just requirement of the one to be our Substitute! God and man **together** could not have brought about redemption. But only a God-man, a divine person, in perfect union with the human nature. Without that personal union the divinity of the Mediator might support the humanity, but that was not sufficient since in that manner the deeds of the Mediator would after all be merely **human** efforts and would not have the infinite value they were to have to be representative. What was necessary to redeem us was as Acts 20:28 tells us, **God**, purchasing the Church with **His own blood**. So intimate the union had to be. Therefore in prophecy the Coming One was announced as "Immanuel"—God with us. (Isa. 7:14, Matt. 1:23). Besides this, his person was required to be divine because all merely human persons were reckoned in the Covenant of Works and considered fallen and guilty in Adam. Moreover, all human persons, by virtue of their creation, were in duty bound to serve God **for themselves**, to obey the law, to satisfy all the demands of God. The person of the Mediator had to be divine to be above these requirements, that he might be able to give himself for others.

3. And—thanks be to God—this Mediator with all these wonderful and strict requirements and qualifications has been found.

Jubilantly the answer to the question: "Who is that Mediator?" can be given: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who in one person is true God and a real, righteous man." The Scriptures thus speak of the Christ, the Mediator whom God provided. That He is **very God** is shown by his **Names**, his **Attributes** and his **Works** as well as by the divine honors paid Him. (See Chapters X and XII). His true **humanity** is plainly shown by the Bible speaking of his body, his soul, his affections, his hunger and thirst, his subjection to death, etc. Matt. 26:38, 1 Peter 2:24, 1 Tim. 2:5. His **righteousness** has been proclaimed by his words and works, even his enemies bearing witness to this: John 8:46; 18:38; 19:4, 6; Heb. 7:16. That He in one Person was **divine and human** is shown by John 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16. The personality in our Savior, the "ego," was not a human one but the divine personality of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. See

Chapter XII., II, 3). In this one divine Person both natures of our Lord were intimately united.

The life of our Lord has abundantly proven that He was the God-given Mediator. He has brought about satisfaction by both his **passive** and his **active** obedience. This **passive** obedience, suffering in our stead the curse of the Law, is proclaimed by Paul, (Gal. 3:13): "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

Isaiah foretold this: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. 53:4-6).

His **active** obedience is mentioned in Rom. 5:19: "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous."

The satisfaction was **actual, complete** and **personal**.

**Actual**—He really laid down his life for his sheep, John 10:11; Heb. 9:28.

**Complete**—expiring on the cross he could exclaim: "it is **finished**!" John 19:30. Paul declares in Rom. 5:8-9: But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him."

**Personal** satisfaction was wrought by Christ. He did not alone "purchase his church," Rev. 20:28, but each individual whose name was in the book of life, Phil. 4:3, and given him is the Covenant of Redemption, Chapter XIX. In Rev. 5:9-10, we read: "And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom

and priests." (Compare Chapter XIII for details about Christ being the true Savior and the satisfaction and atonement he brought about.)

4. Let us be grateful to the Lord of sovereign mercy in thus providing a satisfying Redeemer. Q. 16 and 17 of the Compendium remind us that Christ alone meets the required conditions. Angels could not become such, for they are not divine so that they could perform salvation's work for us. They are not "man" to form a union with us. And they themselves are in duty bound to serve their Lord and Creator on their own behalf, unceasingly. (See Chapter XI, on the Angels). Neither could saints help us, as the Roman Church teaches, for "they themselves have sinned and have obtained salvation by no other means than through this Mediator." Even the Virgin Mary felt the need of a "Savior," Luke 1:47. May none of us rest till we know Christ the Mediator has become for us personally our Substitute and Redeemer!

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### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK

- 1 Why has mankind been called "savable"?
- 2 Why have some considered the restoration of the fallen angels impossible?
- 3 What is the deep reason for the possibility of our salvation?
- 4 Why could not God leave sin unpunished?
- 5 Why could man not save himself?
- 6 What is the meaning of the name Mediator?
- 7 Which are the four main qualifications for one who could be our Substitute and Mediator?
- 8 Why was our Mediator required to be "very God"?
- 9 Why was the Mediator required to be "real man"?
- 10 Why was he to be a righteous man?
- 11 Why was the Mediator required to be God and man in one person?
- 12 What double or twofold obedience was our Mediator to render?
- 13 What is meant by our Mediator's passive obedience?
- 14 What is meant by our Mediator's active obedience?
- 15 What is the nature of satisfaction rendered by Christ?
- 16 What is meant by calling his satisfaction actual?
- 17 What is meant by the satisfaction being complete?
- 18 What do we mean by terming the satisfaction of Christ personal?
- 19 Why could not angels and saints save us?
- 20 What should be our prayer concerning this wonderful Mediator?

## CHAPTER VII.

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### FAITH

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- Q. 18 Shall all men then be saved by the Mediator, Jesus, as they are all condemned in Adam?
- A. No; but those only who receive him by a true faith; as it is written, John 3: 16. "for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
- Q. 19 What is true faith?
- A. It is a certain knowledge of God, and of his promises to us in the gospel, and a hearty confidence that all my sins are forgiven me, for Christ's sake.

Since the Mediator took the place of Adam the question naturally arises: "shall all men be saved by the Mediator, Jesus, as they are all condemned in Adam?" The Universalist answers: yes. Chapter V. And so do many who have never given earnest attention to the matter and say as Tennyson:

"Behold, we know not anything;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last—far off—at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring."

But the Compendium asserts that there is no ground for this so-called "larger hope." Only those are to be saved by Christ who receive him by a true faith. That is very clearly proved by the well known text which contains the whole gospel in the smallest compass: John 3:16. Only in the way of faith do we become partakers of Christ and all his benefits. Not even hearing the gospel is sufficient. "Without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. 11:6. Salvation is by faith, that it might be of grace, to the praise of God, and excluding all human boasting. It is by faith that a childlike disposition may be cultivated, and that even the vilest sinner be led to hope in sovereign mercy. In this chapter we shall discuss: 1) true faith in its elements; 2) historical, miraculous and temporary faith.



1. The faith that unites with Christ is called true faith because it is genuine in its character. It is also termed **saving** faith and **justifying** faith because it is instrumental in **saving** and **justifying**: Acts 16:31; Rom. 5:7, (Chapter XVIII.) True faith consists of two elements: **knowledge** and **confidence**. These were the elements of the faith which Adam possessed in Paradise. For he also could please God only through faith. In fact true faith is, to some extent at least, a restoration of the knowledge and trust which man possessed in his state of innocency.

Some have spoken of **three elements** or parts of saving faith. Besides knowledge and confidence they named **assent**, meaning a hearty consent to be saved by Jesus and on his own terms. It follows knowledge and precedes confidence. This assent is mentioned in the beautiful definition of true faith as given in the Westminster Larger Catechism: Que. 72. "Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and Word of God, whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures to recover him out of his lost condition, not only assenteth to the truth of the promise of the gospel, but receiveth and resteth upon Christ and his righteousness, therein held forth, for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation."

However, since assent is so closely associated with true knowledge and hearty confidence it is not necessary to consider it a separate element.

(a) The **knowledge** of faith, mentioned as its first part or element, is a very important part of true faith. Jesus said: to know God is eternal life, i. e. the way and the means to obtain it. (John 17:3).

In Isaiah 53:11 we are told that the Servant of Jehovah by the **knowledge** of himself should justify many. Even in natural life we need knowledge to appreciate things, to appropriate things to ourselves, and in order to serve intelligently. No wonder the Lord requires it if we are to appreciate Him and appropriate salvation, and to serve God as we ought, to reach the purpose of our creation. This knowledge of saving faith concerns itself with **God** and **his promises revealed** to us

in the gospel. They are the objects of our faith. We must come to know them. We do not believe in what is called "implicit" faith, as Rome teaches, which claims that it is sufficient to believe what the Church believes, even though one does not personally know the details of the object of faith. The true knowledge of faith is not merely **theoretical**, a knowledge which only concerns the head and does not touch the heart. It is **experimental** knowledge, i. e. based on actual experience. It is of a **practical** nature. It lives in the soul, and is felt by us, at least at times. It has been compared to the opening of the eyes of the blind (Isa. 42:7; Eph. 1:17). It makes spiritual things, formerly vague and unreal, more or less clear and real to us. When first wrought in our soul, this knowledge alarms us, especially if granted to us more or less suddenly, although with some people it comes slowly as the gradual rising of the sun. It throws new and remarkable light on the subject of sin, on the meaning of life, on our responsibility before God, on the awfulness of being lost and on the need of serving God whom we begin to consider as worthy of our service and praise as we never did before. The knowledge of true faith gives us as it were a new Bible. It seems to place us in a new world. And it makes us especially concerned about the subject of our **personal salvation**. Seeing we in our undone and helpless condition can never make ourselves acceptable before a holy God, we begin to look anxiously for a **Mediator** between God and man. Because of this, "God and his promises revealed to us in the gospel" become very precious to us. No wonder, since we begin to realize that the Mediator and Redeemer we need is the very **heart** of what the Lord revealed to us in His Word.

This knowledge is called **certain**. That means positive. There is no uncertainty about it as if it depended on learned men to prove to us that the objects of faith are real. Even though the wise of the world should endeavor to prove to us that God was not existing, his gospel a fiction and Christ non-existent, those truly enlightened cannot be robbed of the conviction of their reality. (Heb. 11:1). This knowledge is never lost entirely, though its light may not always shine equally clear. Blessed who have experienced its workings in the mind. Have we?

(b) **Confidence** is the second element of true faith. It

is called **heartly** because it dwells in the heart and proceeds from it, involving the activity of our will. This confidence or trust enables us to receive and embrace Christ as the God-given Mediator. It "rests upon Christ and his righteousness" as the definition of the Larger Catechism expresses it so beautifully, Isa. 26:3: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

This confidence accepts all of God's promises and relies on them, as promises meant personally for each one who receives them believingly. It is "taking God at his Word." Compare Rom. 4:19-21; 2 Chron. 20:20.

Since for a new believer the forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God stands on the foreground, this pardon of sin is particularly mentioned in the Compendium. But we should bear in mind that all God's promises are involved in this trusting of faith. For in Christ all promises of the Lord are yea and amen. 2 Cor. 1:20).

This confidence leads us to commit ourselves entirely. We surrender unconditionally. We learn to "lean" on the Beloved. (Song of Sol. 8:5). This trust is of such nature that it **grows** as we increase in the knowledge and fear of the Lord. In course of time we learn to rely **more and more** on what God has promised to us in his gospel. In the first stages of this confidence a fleeing to God to find refuge is predominant. Therefore the Reformed Dutch fathers spoke of "toevlucht nemend geloof," which expresses the idea of **fleeing** for refuge. (Ps. 36:7; Ps. 46:1.) But this confidence in true believers **develops more and more**, or should at least do so, in an "assured confidence," (Heidelberg Catechism, Que. 21), that we **are accepted** in the Beloved, (Eph. 1:16), that we have redemption, that we **are saved**, and not simply that we **may** or shall be delivered. That does not mean, however that true believers at all times feel equally assured of their salvation. There is a marked difference between the **confidence** of faith and the **assurance** of sense, or feeling. Assurance in the sense of **feeling** or being fully **conscious** of our salvation is the ripened fruit of true faith. The Larger Catechism speaks of this when it says: "Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith,

true believers may wait long before they obtain it; and, after the enjoyment thereof, may have it weakened and intermitted through manifold distempers, sins, temptations, and desertions; yet are they never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair." (Larger Catechism, Q. 81).

But this same Catechism also testifies, Q. 80: "Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavor to walk in all good conscience before him, may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in the state of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation. 1 John 2:3. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 1 Cor. 2:12. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given us of God. 1 John 3:14. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren; he that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

Many are weak in their faith because they are slothful in spiritual things. Neglect of prayer, neglect of Bible study, sabbath desecration or imperfect preparation for sabbath-day services, a lack of attendance on preaching or want of appreciation of it, improper use of the sacraments or neglecting of them, worldliness, lack of communing with the saints, and unwillingness to engage in christian activities, all these and many more things of this kind, are the fruitful sources of weakness in our faith. Let us pray much: "Lord, increase our faith," and may we often supplicate for the operations of the Holy Spirit in behalf of our faith. For we should always bear in mind, for our own humiliation, and to keep us dependent before God, that true faith is the work of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of men and the result of special grace. (Eph. 2:8).

2. Therein lies the great difference between true and saving faith and three other kinds of faith usually called **historical, miraculous and temporary.**

(a) **Historical faith** is called thus because it believes the truths of the christian religion as one considers true and acceptable the statements of any reliable book on history. It is the result not of special but of common grace. While it may convince the mind, it does not reach the heart. Nor does it bend the will to a real desire to walk before God in newness of life. Much less does it actually lead to humiliation before God, a denial of self, a crucifixion of the flesh and a hearty surrender to Christ. Historical faith, is merely a matter of the mind and has therefore been called "speculative" in the sense of only leading to speculations about religion, its value, truth, etc., whereas saving faith is appropriating in its nature. A well known example of historical faith is King Agrippa, Acts 26:27. It is ascribed to the devils in James 2:19. Nevertheless, historical faith is a valuable acquisition. Although not sufficient unto salvation (James 2:17), it is necessary to furnish us with information concerning the fundamental facts and truths of christianity. May we therefor diligently study the records of our holy religion—the inspired Bible. (Chapter I).

(b) **Miraculous faith** is also a result of merely common grace and not the fruit of special grace. It leads people to expect miracles to be performed by them or on them. Plain examples are the nine lepers of Luke 17:17. They had faith enough to be healed but not sufficient to return to Christ, thankful and saved. Jesus refers to such who possessed miraculous faith only, in Matt. 7:22, 23. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out devils, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity."

This miraculous faith does not humble us before God, nor does it change the heart and make us seek Christ for our salvation's sake. At times the Evil One seems to influence it, to delude souls and to fill us with pride. However, it should not be forgotten that the N. T. furnishes examples of people who possessed true faith as well as miraculous faith. Think of the leper who was a Samaritan. (Luke 17:15-19).

(c) **Temporary faith** is likewise the result of common

grace, and perhaps in some cases is also influenced by the devil to delude souls for eternity. Artificial methods such as are used in some revival meetings are apt to result in this, especially in excitable natures and in people but little instructed in the fundamentals of religion. It has been called "presumptuous faith," because it presumes far too much. Temporary faith can usually be distinguished from true faith in the following particulars:

1. An unbroken heart,—involving absence of poverty of spirit.
2. Rapid growth, accompanied often with great joy, but lacking in solid conviction of unworthiness and helplessness.
3. Frequently splendid gifts of speech mark its sudden rise, Matt. 7:22.
4. There is freedom from doubts and fears respecting one's self and one's spiritual state.
5. Usually the doctrine of General Atonement is relied on. (Chapter XIII).
6. Often temporary believers give up their profession of Christianity when persecution comes or disappointment sets in regarding the joys of religion, although there are reasons to believe that some maintain this kind of faith to their dying day and to their everlasting ruin. (Luke 13:24-27). The parable of the sower, Matt. 13:3-9, 18-23, illustrates these different kinds of faith. Let us "examine" ourselves carefully whether our faith is of the genuine and saving kind. (2 Cor. 13:5).

"Mistaken souls! that dream of heav'n,  
And make their empty boast  
Of inward joys, and sins forgiv'n,  
While they are slaves to lust.

Vain are our fancies, airy flights,  
If faith be cold and dead;  
None, but a living pow'r unites  
To Christ the living head.

'Tis faith, that changes all the heart,  
'Tis faith, that works by love,  
That bids all sinful joys depart,  
And lifts the thoughts above.

Jesus it owns as King,  
An all-atoning Priest;  
It claims no merit of its own,  
But finds it all in Christ.

To him it leads the soul,  
 When fill'd with deep distress;  
 Appropriates his precious blood,  
 And trusts his righteousness."

But while we must be careful to "examine" ourselves diligently and honestly, let us bear in mind that our test and standard of faith is not the manner of the conversion of this or that one, nor our changing feelings and sentiments, but the elements of faith as outlined above. (Compare Lesson XXII concerning self-examination before the Lord's Supper.)

### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Who claim that all people will be saved at the end?
- 2 Do the Reformed Churches believe that all shall be saved by Christ as they are lost in Adam? If not—why not?
- 3 Why did God appoint faith as the instrument for saving men through Christ?
- 4 Which are the main elements of faith as given in the Compendium?
- 5 What is the knowledge of faith as to its essence and character?
- 6 What is meant by the assent of faith?
- 7 What can you say of the confidence of saving faith?
- 8 How do some Reformed distinguish between degrees of confidence?
- 9 Why are many believers weak in the faith?
- 10 How many kinds of faith have been enumerated?
- 11 How can you describe historical faith?
- 12 What is meant by miraculous faith?
- 13 What is temporary faith?
- 14 In which way can we tell the difference between saving and temporary faith?
- 15 What is our duty concerning this highly important subject of faith?
- 16 What should be the test or standard in "examining" ourselves?

## CHAPTER VIII.

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### THE APOSTLES' CREED, THE EXISTENCE, ESSENCE AND NAMES OF GOD.

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- Q. 20 What is the sum of that which God has promised in the gospel, and commanded us to believe?
- A. That is comprehended in the twelve articles of the Catholic Christian faith, which are as follows:
- 1 I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth:
  - 2 And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:
  - 3 Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary:
  - 4 Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, he descended into hell:
  - 5 The third day he rose again from the dead:
  - 6 He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty:
  - 7 From then he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
  - 8 I believe in the Holy Ghost:
  - 9 I believe the holy Catholic Church: the communion of saints:
  - 10 The forgiveness of sins:
  - 11 The resurrection of the body:
  - 12 And the life everlasting.
- Q. 21 When you profess to believe in God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, do you mean three Gods thereby?
- A. In no wise; for there is but one only true God.

The objects of the christian faith, as already mentioned, are "God and his promises revealed in the gospel." In other words: God with all He is and all He has for us. We are "commanded" to believe the promises concerning this because they are authoritative, having been revealed by God who wants us to believe what he makes known to us. These "promises" are scattered throughout the whole Bible. A brief and comprehensive statement of them is contained in the Apostles' Creed. As Chapter I stated, this ecumenical creed was completed in its present form about 500 A. D. But its essence is much older, and seems to be an outgrowth and development of the baptismal formula of Matt. 28:19. In the course of time as the statements of heretics required enlarge-



ment, or as the christian consciousness of certain doctrines became clearer, additions were made to it until finally its present form was obtained. We may say the Apostles' Creed was not made, but it grew, slowly on. We call it "Apostles' Creed" because it is founded on the teachings of the Apostles of Jesus, contained in the Bible. It grew out of the general life, spirit and wants of the apostolic Church. The Roman Church believes that each one of the twelve Apostles contributed one article. This, however, we consider simply a tradition fathered by Ambrose, bishop of Milan (died 397), one of the four great Latin Church fathers. There is no proof for his belief in this regard. The Apostles' Creed contains the articles of our catholic christian faith. Catholic signifies general. The truths of the Creed are called thus because they are held by the Church of all ages, and of all lands, by Roman and Greek Catholics as well as by all orthodox Protestants. Christian indicates that it is the Church of Christ which believes these truths, and not those outside of its pale. The twelve articles are divided into three parts: the first article speaking of God the Father; articles 2-7 of God the Son; and articles 8-12 of God the Holy Spirit and his works.

The present Chapter will be devoted to : 1, the **Existence** of God; 2, his **Essence**, and 3, his **Names**. Following ones will describe God's Attributes, his Persons (the Holy Trinity), and his works of Creation and Providence.

1. **God's Existence** has already been mentioned briefly in Chapter I. Let us here state in detail the main arguments usually adduced to prove that there is one Supreme Being.

The first argument is called the **cosmological** one, from the word "cosmos," meaning world. That this universe exists, with all its rich and wonderful contents, with its space and its time, necessarily leads us to infer that there must be a Maker of it all, since it could not come into being of itself. No theory of an "eternal series," or "accident," can account for a created universe, as little as a house with its brick, mortar, wood and paint could originate of itself, or come into existence by chance, Heb. 3:4. Moreover the vastness of the universe presupposes that its Maker must be inconceivably great, and powerful, in other words—God.

The second argument is termed the teleological one, from

the word "telos," meaning purpose or design. As a watch proves not only a maker but also a designer, so the world in which we live with its wonderful purposes, its order, its unity and harmony, and the co-operation of its forces, leads us to infer the existence of a great Cause back of it all, with an originating and superintending intelligence and will.

The third argument is named **ontological**, from the word "ontos" or being. Man has an idea of an infinite, eternal supreme Being. Whence is this idea? From finite and imperfect beings like ourselves? Certainly not! Therefore this idea suggests the existence of such a Being as a Person and not a mere thought.

The fourth argument is called the **moral** argument. Man is not alone an intelligent creature, but is also a moral being with a conscience. Conscience in man says: "thou shalt," and "thou shalt not." These mandates cannot be self-imposed but imply a moral Governor to whom we are responsible—God.

The fifth argument is based on the **universality** of belief in the existence of God. It has been called the "consensus" argument. Man everywhere believes in the existence of a Supreme Being or beings. Whence is this general conviction? Reasoning cannot wholly account for it, for even the most uncivilized tribes entertain this belief. Nor can tradition account for it, for tradition can perpetuate only what has been originated. We therefore argue that it must be based on the existence of God.

The sixth argument is termed the **historical** one. History, the more it is studied, the more it reveals to us that it has a plan and that it is a process. This can only be the case since there is One back of its events and progress, one Ruler of the thoughts and purposes of man—God.

The seventh argument is called the argument from **congruity**. Congruity signifies appropriateness. If we have a key which fits all the wards of the lock we know it to be the right key. If we have a theory which fits all the facts in the case, we know then that we have the right theory. Belief in a self-existent, personal God is in harmony with all the facts of our mental and moral nature, as well as with all the phenomena of the natural world. Atheism leaves all these

matters without an explanation. We therefore infer from this fact also that there is a God.

Last but not least we mention the **argument from Scripture**: That the Scriptures are of divine origin and thoroughly reliable, we saw in Chapter I. Now these Scriptures everywhere assert and declare the existence of God. They show it on every page and do not even consider it necessary to prove this existence. They even state twice: "the fool hath said in his heart there is no God." (Ps. 14:1; 53:1).

God's existence is assumed without hesitation. In view of the character of Holy Writ, we may well consider its declarations and assumptions to be a well established fact and an incontrovertible argument.

2. **The Essence of God.** The Bible teaches, and the arguments mentioned infer, the **Unity of God**. While heathen nations have believed and do believe in many gods (polytheism), in the nature of the case there can be only one Supreme Being (monotheism). Even heathen philosophers have admitted this, guided by the light of reason. The Scriptures abundantly prove this unity, Deut. 6:4: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord." Isa. 44:8: "Beside me there is no God." 1 Cor. 8:4: "There is none other God but one." On the ground of this the Compendium states: "there is but one only true God." (Que. 21).

Now, as to the **Essence** of this one God, Scripture teaches that he is a personal, spiritual Being, of infinite perfection, existing in three Persons.

God is a personal Being. This we hold over against **Pantheism**, which teaches, as the name indicates: "all is God." It teaches that the universe in its ever changing forms is the one, ever changing substance which is God. God is thus identified with nature. Some pantheists claim He comes to consciousness in man, but apart from man is an unconscious force. The Bible however everywhere denies such assertions and represents God as a Person, with all the attributes of what we term a person, viz. intelligence, will, self-consciousness, and self-determination. God speaks of himself with personal pronouns. "I am that I am," Ex. 3:14. The names given him in Holy Writ denote personality, such as Jehovah-Jireh, "the Lord will provide," Gen. 22:13, 14; Je-

hovah- Rapha, "the Lord that healeth," Ex. 15:26, etc. The Bible speaks of God loving, Rev. 3:19, hating, Prov. 6:16, grieving, Gen. 6:6, etc., all expressions belonging to personality.

God is a **spiritual** Being. This we maintain against Mormonism which teaches that God has flesh and bones. But the Savior declared: "God is a Spirit," John 4:24, and "a spirit hath no flesh and bones," Luke 24:39. Elsewhere he is spoken of as "the invisible God," Coll. 1:15, 1 Tim. 1:17. While the Bible mentions God's hands, eyes, ears, feet, etc. these **anthropomorphic**, or "man-like" expressions must not be taken literally, since this would contradict God's spirituality so plainly taught in the above mentioned texts, but **figuratively**, indicating different attributes or acts of God. (About God's **perfections** see Chapter IX, and about his existence in three Persons, Chapter X).

3. The principal Names of God as given in the O. T. are three in number, God, (Hebrew: El, Elah, and Elohim), Gen. 1:1; LORD, (Hebrew: JEHOVAH), and sometimes abbreviated to JAH, Ex. 2:13, 14, Ps. 68:4; and Lord, (Hebrew: Adon, or Adonai), Gen. 15:5.

Compounded with the name El (God), are the names Almighty, El-Shaddai, Gen. 17:1; Most High, (El-Elyon), Gen. 14:8; and Everlasting God, (El-Olam), Gen. 21:33.

Compounded with JEHOVAH are likewise three names: LORD God, (JEHOVAH-Elohim), Gen. 2:7; Lord GOD, (Adonai-JEHOVAH), Gen. 15:2; and Lord of Hosts, (JEHOVAH-Sabaoth), 1 Sam. 1:3, James 5:4, Rom. 9:29.

In the preceding paragraph we already mentioned the names JEHOVAH-Jireh and JEHOVAH-Rapha. Other names of a similar character are JEHOVAH-Nissi, "the Lord our Banner," Ex. 17:8-15; JEHOVAH-Shalom, "the Lord our Peace," Judges 6:24; JEHOVAH-Tsidkenu, "the Lord our righteousness," Jer. 23:6; and JEHOVAH-Shammah, "the Lord is present," Ez. 48:35.

All these names of God are of great significance to us because they reveal something of God's **perfections** to us. The name Jehovah is particularly significant because it is God's name as Covenant God of his people, expressive of his self-existence and unchangeableness. In the Authorized version it is translated LORD, with capital letters, while in the Revised

version it is printed Jehovah. The N. T. name for God, (Theos), is a translation of El and Elohim, while Kurios stands for JEHOVAH. Jesus named God with the precious name **Father**. Israel collectively, recognized God as the national Father, Isa. 63: 16; 64: 8, but the N. T. revealed fully God's Fatherhood with reference to the individual, Gal. 3: 26; 4: 6, 7; Matt. 6: 8, 9. "God" emphasizes the supremacy of the Deity, and "Lord," God's ownership of us, while the name "Father" lays stress on his kindness and love. Some have tried to express God's Essence with only one name, such as Light, Love, Life, Goodness, Righteousness. But this is not biblical since the infinite fulness of the Godhead cannot possibly be described by one name. Our God is indeed the Existing One, wondrous in his Essence, glorious in his Names! May we praise him for thus revealing himself, and daily call upon his Name!

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#### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Which are the objects of our christian faith in a general sense?
- 2 How did the Apostles' Creed originate?
- 3 Why do we call it "Apostles' Creed"?
- 4 Into how many, and which parts is this Creed divided?
- 5 How many arguments have been constructed in proof of the existence of God?
- 6 Can you describe the cosmological argument?
- 7 What does the teleological argument mean?
- 8 What is meant by the ontological argument?
- 9 What is the moral argument?
- 10 On what is the consensus argument based?
- 11 What is understood by the historical argument?
- 12 What is the argument from congruity?
- 13 What is the scriptural argument?
- 14 Can you prove the unity of God, i.e. that there is only One Supreme Being?
- 15 Can you prove the personality of God?
- 16 Prove that God is a spiritual Being.
- 17 Which are the principal Names of God?
- 18 Which lessons can you draw from the existence, essence and names of God?

## CHAPTER IX.

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### THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

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Closely connected with God's Names are God's Attributes, or the perfections of his Being which reveal still more of his infinite Essence, and which will be discussed in this Chapter. We shall notice 1) these attributes in general, 2) the incommunicable, 3) the communicable ones, and 4) God's Sovereignty.

1. The word "attribute" denotes a quality which is ascribed as due or belonging to some one or something. (Dutch: eigenschap). Some prefer the name "excellencies" or "virtues" of God, taken from 1 Peter 2: 9.

Article I. of the Confession mentions some of these attributes:

"We all believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God; and that he is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the overflowing fountain of all good."

The Westminster Confession gives a more complete enumeration of the attributes: Art. II.:

"There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty."

These attributes are not separable in fact or idea from the divine Essence, neither are they simply manifestations of God's Being, but are his Essence. For instance, God does not

simply have love, justice, truth, etc., but God is Love, Light, Truth, etc. (1 John 4: 16; John 14: 6.)

These attributes are usually divided into **incommunicable** and **communicable**. **Communicable** signifies imparted in the sense that we possess something similar. (2 Peter 1: 4.) **Incommunicable** means that nothing like it has been imparted to us.

2. The **incommunicable** attributes are God's independency, simplicity, eternity, omnipresence and immutability. We possess none of these attributes. We are dependent, instead of independent, etc. **Independence** signifies God's self-existence and all-sufficiency. God is not dependent on anything or any one outside of Himself. He is not in need of anything "seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things," (Acts 17: 25). God's **simplicity** indicates that in the Lord there are no component parts or distinctions. We, however, are complex creatures. The **eternity** of God expresses that he is not subject to the limitations or measures of time or duration. He is the eternal God without beginning of time or end, and past, present and future are all before him as an everlasting present, an eternity, one and indivisible, (Ps. 90: 2-4). The **omnipresence** of God signifies his everywhere-ness. "Do not I fill heaven and earth saith Jehovah?" Jer. 23: 24. The term "incomprehensible" used in the Confession expresses the same attribute under a different aspect. It indicates that God is exalted above the limits of space. He is **transcendent**, i.e. above the world, distinct from it, independent of it. **Omnipresence** on the other hand signifies that he is present at every point of space. This is called God's **imminence** as contrasted to his transcendence.

"On mountains and in valleys  
Where'er we are is God;  
The cottage and the palace,  
Alike are his abode.  
Above us and beside us,  
Our God is ever near,  
To watch, protect and guide us  
Whatever ills appear."

Sometimes the term "incomprehensible" indicates that God is above human comprehension in the sense that we cannot fully understand him since the finite is not capable of the

Infinite. God's **immutability** is his unchangeability. James 1: 17; Mal. 3: 6. With him is "no variableness nor shadow of turning." In the case in which the Bible speaks of God's **repenting** (Gen. 6: 6; Judges 1: 18), such clearly indicates a change in God's **methods** of dealing with men in grief over them and not a change in his Being. Deut. 32: 36.

3. The **communicable attributes** of God are his **knowledge**, his power, and his will, his will including his holiness, truth, justice and goodness. God's **knowledge** or **intelligence** includes all things and events, past, present and future, and everything possible as well as everything actual. (Ps. 147: 5): "His understanding is infinite." Because of its all-comprehensive character we speak of God's omniscience, or all-knowledge, (1 John 3: 20). It is **intuitive** or immediate, that is, God discerns all things directly, and not, as with us, through logical processes of reasoning. It is **independent**, total, **simultaneous** and **perfect**. It is also **essential**, that is, God knows all things directly, in their true essence, while we know them only by their appearance. This knowledge is likewise **eternal**, Acts 15: 18: "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." We also speak of the **wisdom** of God, thereby indicating that God uses his knowledge to reach the highest aims by the best methods. The **power** of God is all-power or omnipotence. Matt. 19: 26: "With God all things are possible." It is the perfection whereby God is able to perform whatever he wills to do. It is infinite and absolute. Jer. 23: 17; Luke 1: 27; Rev. 19: 6. The will of God is the infinitely and eternally wise, powerful and righteous essence of God's willing. It has been called God's faculty or power of determining and choosing. We distinguish between the will of God's **decree** or his **secret will** and the will of his **command** or his **revealed will**. The terms "decretive will" and "preceptive will" are of the same significance. The will of **decree** or the **secret will** indicates God's eternal purpose according to which he effects all things in time. Eph. 1: 11. (See Chapter XVII.) God's **revealed will** or the will of his **command** is that what he prescribes in his Word as a rule and unto which he demands obedience. The Bible itself suggests this distinction in Deut. 29: 29: "The **secret things** belong unto Jehovah our God: But the things that are **revealed** belong unto us and to our children forever,



that we may do all the words of this law." We shall never be able, in this life, to harmonize these distinctions in the will of God, nor need we try to do so. Our great concern should be to obey the revealed will!

The attributes of God's holiness, truth, justice and goodness are subsumed under God's will because they and their operations depend on the will of God. God's **holiness** is that perfection whereby the Lord is separated from all evil, devoted to himself as the highest good, and immaculately pure. As the Holy One, he claims all creation to be "set apart" for him, to glorify him. Isa. 6:3; Hab. 1:13. God's **truth** indicates the perfection of God's self-consistency. He is what he represents himself to be. On this attribute rests God's **faithfulness**. Deut. 32:4; 7:8; Isa. 49:7. God's **justice** is the infinite moral perfection or universal righteousness of his Being. It is the perfection whereby he rewards every one according to his work. Rom. 2:6; Rev. 22:12.

We speak of **rectoral justice**, displayed in governing men; **distributive justice** in giving each creature his due reward or punishment; and **punitive** insofar as it punishes the offender. God's justice was especially evident in the sufferings of Christ. The lost will feel its full weight in hell.

God's **goodness** appears in various forms. It includes God's love, grace, mercy, patience and benevolence. **Love** is the goodness of God which has rational beings for its object. Its component elements are: complacency, desire for union, promoting welfare. John 3:16. We distinguish between God's **general** and **special** love. (Ps. 106:4.) God's **grace** has for its objects the undeserving and guilty. Rom. 5:8. We distinguish between God's **special** grace towards his people, and his **common** grace in its far wider bearings. (Compare Chapter XV.) The **mercy** of God concerns itself with the miserable. Isa. 63:9. The **patience** of the Lord is engaged in sparing sinners. Rom. 3:25. When God is called long-suffering and slow to anger (Ex. 34:6), the same idea is involved. God's **benevolence** (Dutch: goedertierenheid), has for its objects sensitive beings. Ps. 145:9: "His tender mercies are over all his works." This is called kindness in Eph. 2:7, and lovingkindness in Ps. 25:6; 89:49; and Isa. 63:7. The name "**good pleasure**" (Dutch: welbehagen), is used to indicate that all the bounties of God's goodness are gifts of free and sov-

ereign mercy. Matt. 11: 26; Luke 2: 14; 12: 32; 2 Thess. 1: 11: "That our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness."

4. The prerogative arising out of all these perfections of God is his **sovereignty**. Dan. 4: 35: "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say unto him: what doest thou?" This sovereignty is absolute and infinite, although exercised in harmony with his other qualities, so that it cannot be otherwise than an infinitely wise, righteous and merciful sovereignty. May we ever meditate reverently and believingly on all these attributes of our God and seek a saving interest in them. Do we?

#### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 What do we understand by the "attributes" of God?
- 2 How are they divided or classified?
- 3 Mention the **INCOMMUNICABLE** attributes.
- 4 What is meant by God's independency?
- 5 Describe God's simplicity.
- 6 What is God's eternity?
- 7 What can you say about the omnipresence of God?
- 8 What is God's immutability?
- 9 Name the **COMMUNICABLE** attributes of God.
- 10 What can you say of the knowledge of God?
- 11 What is the power of God?
- 12 What is the will of God?
- 13 What is meant by the distinction between the secret and the revealed will of God?
- 14 What is God's holiness?
- 15 What is God's truth?
- 16 What is the justice of God?
- 17 Which forms does the goodness of God assume?
- 18 Describe the grace of God.
- 19 What is God's mercy?
- 20 What is the patience of God?
- 21 What is God's benevolence?
- 22 What is God's "good pleasure"?
- 23 Describe and prove the sovereignty of God.
- 24 What lessons should we learn from this chapter on the attributes of God?

## CHAPTER X.

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### THE HOLY TRINITY.

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Q. 22 Why do you then name three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?

A. Because God hath so revealed himself in his Word, that these three distinct persons, are the only one and true God, and we also are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Question 21 asked: "When you profess to believe in Father, Son and Holy Ghost," (mentioned in the Apostles' Creed), "do you mean three Gods thereby?"

The answer was very definite: "In no wise, for there is but one only true God." But while this is entirely true, the Christian Church believes that there are **personal distinctions in the one, indivisible Godhead**. What the Church believes on this subject is expressed in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. This word Trinity is a contraction of the word tri-unity, meaning three-in-one. In Art. VIII. of the Confession of Faith the doctrine is unfolded in the following statements:

"According to this truth and this Word of God, we believe in one only God, who is one single essence, in which are three Persons, really, truly and eternally distinct, according to their incommunicable properties; namely, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The **Father** is the cause, origin and beginning of all things visible and invisible; the **Son** is the word, wisdom, and image of the Father; the **Holy Ghost** is the eternal power and might, proceeding from the Father and the Son. Nevertheless God is not by this distinction **divided** into three, since the Holy Scriptures teach us, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, have each his personality; distinguished by their properties; but in such wise that these three persons are but one only God. Hence then, it is evident, that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, and likewise the Holy Ghost is neither the Father nor the Son. Nevertheless these persons thus distinguished are not divided, nor intermixed; for the Father hath not assumed the flesh, nor hath the Holy Ghost, but the Son only. The Father hath never been without his Son, or without his Holy Ghost. For they are all three co-eternal and co-essential. There is neither first nor last; for they are all three one, in truth, in power, in goodness and in mercy."

The **proof** of the foregoing article of the Trinity of Persons in one God is given in detail in Art. IX.

“All this we know, as well from the testimonies of Holy Writ, as from their operations, and chiefly by those we feel in ourselves. The testimonies of the Holy Scriptures, that teach us to believe this Holy Trinity are written in many places of the Old Testament, which are not so necessary to enumerate, as to choose them out with discretion and judgment. In Genesis, Chap. 1: 26, 27, God saith: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, etc. So God created man in his own image, male and female created he them. And Gen. 3: 22: Behold the man is become as one of us. From this saying, ‘let us make man in our image,’ it appears that there are more persons than one in the Godhead; and when he saith, God created, signifies the unity. It is true he doth not say how many persons there are, but that, which appears to us somewhat obscure in the Old Testament, is very plain in the New. For when our Lord was baptized in Jordan, the voice of the Father was heard saying, ‘This is my beloved Son’; the Son was seen in the water, and the Holy Ghost appeared in the shape of a dove. This form is also instituted by Christ in the baptism of all believers. Baptize all nations, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. In the gospel of Luke, the angel Gabriel thus addressed Mary, the mother of our Lord, ‘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’; likewise, ‘the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you.’ And, ‘there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.’ In all which places we are fully taught, that there are three persons in one only divine essence. And although this doctrine far surpasses all human understanding; nevertheless we now believe it by means of the Word of God, but expect hereafter to enjoy the perfect knowledge and benefit thereof in Heaven. Moreover, we must observe the particular offices and operations of these three persons towards us. The Father is called our Creator by his power; the Son is our Savior and Redeemer, by his blood; the Holy Ghost is our Sanctifier, by his dwelling in our hearts. This doctrine of the Holy Trinity hath always been defended and maintained by the true Church, since the times of the apostles, to this very day, against the Jews, Mohammedans, and some false christians and heretics, as Marcion, Manes, Praxeas, Sabellius, Samosatenus, Arius, and such like, who have been justly condemned by the orthodox fathers. Therefore, in this point, we do willingly receive the three creeds, namely, that of the Apostles, of Nice, and of Athanasius: likewise that, which, conformable thereunto, is agreed upon by the ancient fathers.”

As indicated in the closing lines of this Article, there have been people who **denied** the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in olden days. During the Reformation and shortly afterwards, the **Socinians** refused to believe in the Trinity. They insisted on the **Unity** of God, claiming that the only divine Person of the Godhead was the Father. The Son was called God's firstborn, a creature therefore, and the Holy Ghost simply a divine influence, not a divine Person.

The Socinians have been followed in this by the present-day Unitarians who derive their name from the fact that they insist on the **Unity** of God but deny the Trinity. The Swedenborgians reject the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as a human invention. "Christian Science" states: "The theory of three Persons in one God (that is, a personal Trinity or Trinity) suggests heathen gods, rather than the one ever-present I AM." "Life, Truth and Love constitute the triune God, or triply divine Principle." This includes, naturally, a denial of the personality of the Holy Ghost. He is not a Person. The Holy Ghost is—"Christian Science!" Russellism denies the Holy Trinity since it teaches that Christ was not God before his incarnation. Mormonism also rejects the orthodox conception of the Trinity, practically on the same grounds as the Russellites, although it grants that the Holy Ghost "is a personage in the godhead," but "is not that which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," thus teaching the unscriptural doctrine that the Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit are two different beings. The Holy Spirit is called a "substance," such as electricity!

But no matter how many voices have been raised to combat this doctrine of the Holy Trinity, we have abundant reasons to hold it, and to maintain it as a very precious and fundamental part of our Creed. It is amply revealed in the Word of our God.

This revelation was a very **gradual** one. At the dawn of history, when there was a great danger of having the people of God commit the sins of idolatry and image-worship, God emphasized his **unity**. Gen. 17: 1; Ex. 3: 6, 14, 15, 20, etc. But even in these early days there were suggestions of personal distinctions in the godhead. The plural form of the name God (Elohim), the statement: "Let us make men," Gen. 1: 26,

the mention made in the Old Testament of God's Spirit, and of his Word and Voice, Gen. 1:3; Ps. 29:3-10; Ps. 139:7; Job 26:13, and of "Wisdom" in Prov. 8:22-31, as well as the appearing of the "angel of the Covenant," Gen. 16:13; 31:13; 32:28, 30; Ex. 23:21; Ps. 34:8; 35:5, all these things showed plainly a distinction of personality in the One God of the Bible. Gradually it was revealed that this distinction involved **three** divine Persons. Ps. 33:6 stated: "By the **Word** of **Jehovah** were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the **Breath** of his mouth." and in Isa. 61:1, the Servant of the LORD practically proclaimed the Trinity: "the **Spirit** of the **Lord Jehovah** is upon Me."

What the Old Testament suggested was revealed fully in the New Testament. While maintaining the unity of God, John 17:3; 1 Cor. 4:1; 1 Tim. 2:5, the three distinct Persons manifested themselves plainer and plainer as such. At the **incarnation** we find the Father, sending his Son, John 3:16, and this Son conceived of the Holy Spirit, Matt. 1:20. At Christ's **baptism** the Son received the Spirit in the shape of a dove, while the Father spoke, from heaven, Matt. 3:16, 17.

The **works** which Christ performed were shown him by the Father, John 5:19, while wrought by the Spirit, Matt. 12:28. Heb. 9:14 tells us that the Savior at his death, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself to God. Finally, in the **baptism command** of Matt. 28:19, in the apostolic **benediction** of 2 Cor. 13:14, and in the **salutation** of Rev. 1:4-6, we find the three divine Persons placed side by side, receiving equal honor, mentioned in close conjunction, and thus completing the gradual revelation of the Holy Trinity.

These three divine Persons are **one** in essence, each one possessing all the divine attributes, while they are **three** in **Person**, each possessing distinct personal attributes, or properties. The **personal property** of the **Father** is his Paternity, i.e. that he is Father, existing of himself, John 5:26. In a **primary** sense he is thus called because he is the Father of the **Son**, a relation existing from eternity, and lasting forever, John 1:14; 17:24.

In a **secondary** sense he is named Father as Creator of the universe and all its creatures, 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:15, and Father of his people as the One who chose and called it, and

who adopts each believer into his family, Deut. 32: 6; Isa. 63: 16; John 1: 12.

The **personal property** of the Son is his Sonship, his being begotten of the Father in what is called his eternal "generation," Ps. 2: 7, and which has been defined as an eternal, personal act of the Father, generating the Person (not the essence) of the Son, by communicating to him the whole indivisible substance of the Godhead, without division, alienation or change, so that the Son is the express image of the Father's Person. (A. A. Hodge.) Heb. 1: 3; John 10: 38; 14: 11; 17: 21.

The **personal property** of the Spirit is his procession, i. e. his proceeding from both the Father and the Son, who unite in him, and through him dwell in men, John 15: 26. This **procession** from Father and Son has been called "spiration," or blowing, breathing, John 20: 22, and signifies the eternal act of the Father and the Son wherein their whole divine essence, without division, alienation or change is communicated to the Holy Ghost.

Although each of the three divine Persons is in essence "Spirit," John 4: 24, and "holy," Isa. 6: 3, yet the third Person is distinctively called "Holy Spirit." The name "Holy" is given him evidently to distinguish him from the spirits of angels and men. Why he is specifically called "Spirit" is because just as we as human beings, as to our soul, are spirits, and at the same time have a spirit, by means of which we know ourselves and search ourselves, so God who is a Spirit, likewise has a Spirit whereby he searches all things, 1 Cor. 2: 11.

Greek Catholics claim that the Spirit proceeds only from the Father, and not from the Son, but Roman Catholics and Protestants believe that he proceeds from both, since he is not alone called the Spirit of God, the Father, Rom. 8: 9, but also the Spirit of the Son, and the Spirit of Christ, Rom. 8: 9; Gal. 4: 16.

In **order of existence** the Father is named the **first** Person, the Son the **second**, and the Spirit the **third** Person.

This order is also evident in the **order** or method of **works**, of the Holy Trinity.

The Father works of himself, i. e. originates, even as he exists of himself. Predestination, creation, providence, and the kingdom is of him.

The Son works the works of the Father, John 5: 19, 20, 36, especially all that belongs to his task as Mediator, Chapter VI.

The Holy Spirit is the one who carries all things to their completion, by applying the merits of the Redeemer, John 15: 26.

But while in each of these several works one of the divine Persons acts in a preëminent manner, as representative, so to speak, of the Holy Trinity, there is blessed interaction and joint-action. For instance, we read of the Son that through him God "made the worlds" and is "upholding all things," Heb. 1: 3. And as the Son does not speak or act of himself but receives all from the Father, John 26, 16: 15, so the Spirit does not speak of himself, but "he shall receive of mine" (Christ's) and shall show it unto you," John 16: 15. As the Son glorifies the Father and testifies concerning him, John 1: 18, 17: 4, 6, so the Spirit witnesses about Christ and glorifies him, John 15: 26, 16: 14. As no one can come to the Father but by Christ, John 14: 6, so no one can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 12: 3. By means of the Holy Ghost we have communion with the Son and the Father, and through the Spirit God in Christ dwells in our hearts. In the love of the Father, in the grace of the Son, and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is our life, our strength and our salvation, 2 Cor. 13: 13; 1 Peter 1: 2. "For of him, and through him, and unto him are all things. To him be the glory forever." Rom. 11: 36.

They who reject the doctrine of the Holy Trinity deny as a rule the **Godhead** of Christ, and the **Godhead** and **personality** of the Holy Spirit. The Bible, however, plainly testifies to the fact that the Son is co-equal and co-eternal God, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, by ascribing to him divine **names**, **attributes**, **works** and **honors**. (See Chapter XII.)

It is true that the Word of God mentions a certain subordination of the Son to the Father, but the passages involved have reference either to the order of existence mentioned above or to the state of Christ during his humiliation as our Mediator. We may therefore say with boldness that he who rejects the Son as the second person of the Holy Trinity is guilty of the enormous sin of rejecting God himself. "Whoso



denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." 1 John 2: 23.

The deity of the Holy Spirit is testified to by the Bible in the same manner as that of the Son. We find ascribed to him also **divine names, attributes, works and honor.** (See Chapter XV). The fact that he is a **person**, and not simply a divine, impersonal **influence or power**, as some teach, is proven abundantly by the **personal attributes or qualities** which the Word of God mentions concerning him. **Personal names and titles** are given to him, such as Comforter and Advocate; **personal pronouns** are used in speaking of him, such as "He," and "himself," John 16: 7, 8, 13, 14; and **personal works** such as searching and knowing things, both personal activities, are ascribed to him, 1 Cor. 2: 10, 11, while he is said to be "dividing to every man severally as he will," 1 Cor. 12: 11. Rom. 8: 27 speaks of the "mind of the Spirit," and the word mind is here used in a comprehensive way including ideas of thought, feeling and purpose, as compared to "carnal mind," Rom. 8: 7.

The fact also that the Spirit of God is said to instruct, Neh. 9:20, to call, to command, and that we can grieve him and rebel against him, as well as the mention made of him on a footing of equality with Father and Son, who are **persons**, as all admit, abundantly shows that those who deny the personality of the third Person of the Holy Trinity, reject the plain testimony of Holy Writ and are guilty of a great sin. Moreover, for our own comfort in our christian life it is of the highest importance that we in our weakness and ignorance can rely not simply on some "power" or "influence," no matter how strong, but upon an intelligent, sympathetic, loving, divine **personality**, infinitely wise and tender as well as mighty! God grant us all to accept the doctrine of the Trinity with all our heart, and to entrust and to dedicate ourselves to the triune Covenant God. The doctrine of the Trinity marks the great and fundamental difference between Christianity and false religion, even though it may still retain the name "Christian." The doctrine shows the possibility and explains the method of our salvation. We need the Father to draw us, the Son to save, the Spirit to sanctify us. "The triune God is the only true Covenant God, **above us, for us, and in us.**"—Bavinck.

“JEHOVAH—Father, Spirit, Son  
Mysterious Godhead, three in one,—  
Before thy throne we sinners, bend,  
Grace, pardon, life, to us extend!”

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### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Who have rejected the doctrine of the Holy Trinity?
- 2 Can you show from the Bible how GRADUALLY it was revealed?
- 3 Wherein are the three persons one, and wherein three?
- 4 What is the personal property of the Father?
- 5 What is the personal property of the Son?
- 6 What is the personal property of the Holy Spirit?
- 7 What will you reply to those who say that the Spirit proceeds only from the Father, and not from the Son?
- 8 What is meant by the order of existence of the three Persons?
- 9 What is meant by the order of work?
- 10 How can you prove the deity of Christ?
- 11 How can you prove the deity of the Holy Ghost?
- 12 What proofs have we that the Holy Spirit is a divine PERSON and not simply an influence?
- 13 Is it of practical importance to hold that the Spirit is a divine Person?
- 14 Of what should we make sure as to the Holy Trinity regarding us individually?

## CHAPTER XI.

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### CREATION AND PROVIDENCE.

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- Q. 23 What believest thou when thou sayest: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth"?
- A. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of nothing made heaven and earth, and still upholds them by his providence, is my God and Father, for Christ his Son's sake.

After the discussion of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity the Compendium, following the guidance of the Apostles' Creed, takes up the work of each of the three divine Persons. Of God the Father and his work of Creation and Providence, Q. 23 speaks; of God the Son and our Redemption, Q. 24-38; of God the Holy Spirit and our Sanctification, Q. 39-42.

The present chapter is devoted to Creation and Providence. For an orderly discussion of the subject we shall first take up CREATION'S Essence, Author, Cause, Time and Order, Chief Creatures and Purpose, and then PROVIDENCE in its different features.

#### I. CREATION.

1) The Essence of Creation. To create is to bring into existence by the act of an omnipotent will. In the absolute sense it signifies producing something out of nothing. In a more limited sense it is applied to producing something out of shapeless matter,—out of chaos. When God created the world in the beginning there was absolutely nothing except God. There was no matter, as some have taught, who said that matter existed from eternity the same as God. The Lord, by the Word of his power, called things into being. "God calleth the things that are not, as though they were," Rom. 4: 17. Psalm 33: 8, 9: "Let all the earth fear the Lord: Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast." We can receive this only by faith. Heb. 11: 3: "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of

God so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear." Heathen people did not understand this and usually believed in the eternity of the material world or invented all kinds of fanciful tales about creation. The **Gnostics** believed that the world had emanated or flowed out of the fulness of divinity. (Emanation theory). **Evolution** claims that all present things were **evolved**, from the original nebulae, by "continuous progressive changes, according to certain laws, by means of resident forces," (Le Conte). It has no answer to the question: whence this original matter? and whence these so-called "resident forces." It also fails entirely to explain the bridging of the great gulf which separate the organic from the inorganic and conscious life from unconscious existence. **Christian Science** teaches God never created the heavens and the earth, for there is no matter. The stars of heaven and the earth on which we dwell are only apparent matter, for matter is not, is nothing, and does not exist. **Pantheism** declares that there is no distinction between God and his creation; all is God. **Materialism** falls into the opposite extreme—all is matter or material. But the **christian** recognizes the essential **difference** between the Lord and his creation. The world and all its fulness is his handiwork, separate from God, although entirely dependent upon him.

2) The **Author of Creation** is the triune God. To each of the Persons of the Holy Trinity the work of creation is ascribed.

To the Father in Gen. 1: 1; 1 Cor. 8: 6.

To the Son in Ps. 33: 6; John 1: 3; 1 Cor. 8: 6; Coll. 1: 15, 16.

To the Holy Ghost in Gen. 1: 2; Ps. 33: 6 (the Breath of his mouth); Ps. 104: 30; Job 26: 13 and 33: 4.

And still, the Compendium is right when it asserts that "the eternal God and **Father** made heaven and earth," even as the Apostles' Creed calls the First Person specifically "the Father Almighty, **Maker of heaven and earth.**" This is to be understood in the sense that the Father is the divine Person of whom are all things, although he works through the Son and through the Holy Spirit, Rom. 11: 36. (About God as "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," see Chapter X. on the generation of the Son, p. 75.)

3) The Cause or Motive of Creation is the good pleasure of God's will. Rev. 4:11: "Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power; for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created." We reject the teaching that God was under compulsion to create the world as if he were not complete without it. The good pleasure of God's will is the **primary cause** of all that has being as God's handiwork. In this is involved the essential **unity** of all that exists since its cause is the act of God's will. In this also is the ground of the **variety** in the things created. God willed to create things "after their kind." Gen. 1:24.

That God created the world should lead us to proper appreciation and use of the things of this life. They are God's handiwork! At the same time this should keep us from seeking our all in things visible. They are not God, but only his **creation!**

4) The Time and Order of Creation. "In the beginning God created the world." Gen. 1:1. All things finite have a beginning. Only God as the Infinite is "without beginning and without end." "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." Ps. 90:2. This beginning is the beginning of time. Before time was, God existed in his own glory. Time began when God called the world into being. Time has not been created separately. It is simply a measure of duration, a form of successive existence. We therefore deny that matter is eternal, as has already been remarked. While the idea of all things were in God before the world was, nothing was **real** until God produced all things at the moment of his good pleasure. In **one moment** God created all matter in the beginning, as recorded in the first verse of Genesis. From this matter, still "waste and void" God fashioned all in systematic order in six days. There is a beautiful **order** in this creative work. The Almighty first called into being the inorganic, such as earth, minerals, atmosphere, etc. Then he made the organic or vegetable world: plants. This was followed by creating the animal world: **sensitive creatures**, in remarkable ascent from lower to higher orders of beings, from the simple to the more complex. And finally he made man who has in him inorganic matter, who has life, as plants have it,

feeling as animals, but more than all—who has reason as the lamp of his being. There is a remarkable parallel between what was produced on the first day and on the fourth day; on the second and on the fifth; on the third and on the sixth day.

INORGANIC	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{1st day—Light} \\ \text{2nd day—Firmament} \\ \text{3rd day—Dry Land} \\ \text{Grass} \end{array} \right.$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{4th day—Sun and Moon} \\ \text{5th day—Fish and Fowl} \\ \text{6th day—Animals} \\ \text{Man} \end{array} \right.$	ORGANIC
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In “six days” God created the world. Gen. 1: 31; Ex. 20: 11. These days are commonly held to signify what we ordinarily understand by the word day. Some, however, take the creative days in the sense of periods, led thereto mostly by the theories of geology as presented today. They appeal to the wider meaning of the word “day” as given in Gen. 2: 4, “In the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven,” and such terms as “day of vengeance,” “day of judgment,” “day of salvation,” “day of the LORD,” etc. Some, especially in our days, ascribe the “waste and void” of Gen. 1:2 to some great sudden changes (cataclysms) which the earth had undergone previously, as a result of divine judgment upon so-called Pre-Adamites, while others connect it with a previous testing and fall of angels. They appeal to Jer. 4: 23-26 and Isa. 24: 1 and 54: 18, but evidently there is no solid basis for the contention of those who hold the “Restitution theory.” We should always remember that human theories and hypotheses come and go. But the Word of “the Lord abideth forever.” (For the Sabbath, and Sunday observance, see Chapter XXVI.).

5) Creation’s chief creatures. The products of God’s creative work are the world with all its fulness, heaven and earth with all their inhabitants. The chief creatures are angels and men.

(a) Angels, it is usually assumed, were created on the first day. At the time God created the heavens, its glorious inhabitants were called into being likewise. (Compare Job 38: 7.) Angels are created, finite, spiritual beings. The name “angel” denotes a messenger. Though angels are spirits, power has been given them at times to become visible in the semblance of human form. Gen. 19: 1; Ex. 3: 2; Judges 2: 1; etc.

They are exceedingly numerous. Matt. 26: 53; Heb. 12: 22; Rev. 5: 11.

Their power is very great. 2 Kings 19: 35.

Their place is about the throne of God. Rev. 5: 11; 7: 11.

Their relation to the believer is that of "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. 1: 14.) This ministry has reference largely to the physical safety and well-being of believers, as shown by 1 Kings 19: 5; Ps. 34: 7; Ps. 91: 11; Dan. 6: 22; Matt. 2: 13; Acts 5: 19, etc.

Some infer from Heb. 1: 14, compared with Matt. 18: 10 and Ps. 90: 11, that this care for the heirs of salvation begins in infancy and continues through life. Roman Catholics believe in special "guardian angels," but without sufficient ground.

The angels observe us, 1 Cor. 4: 9; Eph. 3: 10; Eccl. 5: 6, a fact which should urge us to christian conduct. They receive departing spirits of the just. Luke 16: 22. They will accompany Christ in his Second Coming and assist in the Judgment. Matt. 25: 31. The Bible speaks of **archangels** as well as angels, mentioning as such by name Michael, (Dan. 10: 13; Jude 9); and Gabriel, (Luke 1: 19, 26; Dan. 8: 16; 9: 21). Other distinctions as to the **orders** of angels are implied in the names, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, (Eph. 1: 21). The difference between **cherubim** and **seraphim** is also made. Compare Ex. 1: 6 and Isa. 6: 26 for difference in appearance and work. The four "living creatures" of Rev. 4: 6-8 are evidently throne spirits representing created life and symbolic of the fulness of creation.

In Chapter IV. reference was made already to the fact that some of the angels of heaven fell and became devils. This is taught in Art. XII. of the Confession of Faith, on 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."

The cause of the fall of angels is usually considered to have been pride and dissatisfaction with their station. John 8: 44; 2 Peter 2: 4; Jude 6; 1 Tim. 3: 6. How the fall could take place in a perfect and glorious creature like an angel is as much of a mystery as how sin could take hold of Adam and Eve, or even more so, for in the case of the angels there was no outside tempting cause as with our first ancestors. The possibility of their fall has been sought in their free will and their changeability. The time of their fall is evidently after the six creative days.

The head of the fallen angels is Satan, signifying "adversary," "slanderer." The name Lucifer (lightbearer), "son of the morning." Isa. 14: 12, is often considered his heavenly name. Some consider him described in his original state in Ez. 28.

"Christian Science" denies the existence of demons altogether and so do many followers of "New Theology," who consider them products of false opinions and of a superstitious age. It is very evident, however, from Holy Writ and corroborated by the experiences of the saints, that there is a personal Devil once cast out of heaven (Luke 10: 18), and making heaven and earth the scenes of tireless and fearful activity. (Eph. 2: 2 and 1 Peter 5: 8.) After the creation of Adam and Eve he entered into the body of a serpent, (Gen. 3: 1, compared to Rev. 12: 9), and beguiling Eve he brought about the downfall of Adam. (Chapter IV.) He constantly wages war against God's work and God's people. Of the present world-system with its principles of force, greed, selfishness, ambition and sinful pleasure, he is the prince, (John 14: 30; 16: 11), and its god, (2 Cor. 4: 4). (Compare Matt. 4: 8, 9.) He is called prince of "the powers of the air," and has a vast



host of demons at his command. (Matt. 7:22.) What **connection** there was between him and the other fallen angels is not known, but that his downfall dragged myriads of other angels down into ruin is plain from Bible statements. By means of these numerous demons, his emissaries, and helpers, (Matt. 12:26, 27 and 25:41), Satan becomes practically ubiquitous. (Mark 5:9.) But his final and awful doom is sure. Rev. 20:10. Let us watch and pray lest the devil and his helpers lead us astray, and the more so because Satan can come to us as an angel of light as well as a roaring lion. (2 Cor. 11:14.)

(b) **Man is the second chief creature of God.** He is composed of a body and a soul. We are told in Gen. 2:7: "the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Here are two distinct substances: one material and the other immaterial. They are different from each other. How the union is made between the two we do not know. The soul acts upon the body and the body upon the soul, but the details of the process of interaction no human eye can scan. The soul we hold to be the same spiritual part of man as the spirit, but looked at from a different viewpoint. Although Paul in 1 Thess. 5:23 and Heb. 4:12, speaks of three parts of man, spirit, soul and body, this does not teach that a human being consists of three distinct parts, since the names soul and spirit are used interchangeably, indicating that they refer to one spiritual substance, looked at from different sides. Gen. 1:20; Eccl. 3:21; Luke 1:46; Ps. 143:4; 139:14; Gen. 35:18; Matt. 27:50. The doctrine that we consist of three parts is called **trichotomy**, (three parts), while the other view is named **dichotomy**, (two parts).

As to the **origin** of the soul, we believe that God creates a new soul, from nothing, whenever a human being begins to live. This is termed **Creationism**. It is based on Zech. 12:1 and Isa. 57:16. We reject **Traducianism**, which is the hypothesis that the soul is transmitted to the offspring by the parents. It is sometimes called **Generationism**. It is an inadmissible theory! Each human soul, as we shall mention presently, is at once a simple and an immaterial substance, consequently it is absurd to believe that any part or spiritual germ

can be detached from the parental soul. Still more absurd, and fanciful besides, is the theory of **Pre-existentism** which teaches that all human souls were created when the world was made. It is frequently connected with the theory of **Metempsychosis**, or transmigration of souls which is still being held by the Hindus and other eastern people. (Chapter I.) There is no proof for it whatever.

**What is the human soul?** It has been defined as a real being, immaterial and indivisible in its nature, abiding in duration, individual in its character, the agent and source of sensation and vital activity as well as of thought and will.

We believe in the **immortality** of the soul, over against Adventists and others who deny it. The Bible tells us, Matt. 10: 28, that men cannot kill the soul, that at death it returns to God who gave it, Eccl. 12: 7, is present with the Lord, 2 Cor. 5: 8; to be with Christ, Phil. 1: 22-24. That shows that it survives when the body ceases to contain it as its tabernacle, its house of clay, Job 4: 19. This immortality is also inferred from the everlasting duration of the punishment of the ungodly, Chapter V., as well as from the eternal life of the godly, Chapter XVII.

The "God alone hath immortality," 1 Tim. 6: 16, means that the Lord alone possesses it of himself and perfectly, but does not deny that he made the souls of men inherently immortal. Even **reason**, independent of the plain testimony of the Bible postulates the soul's **immortality**.

1) Everywhere and at all times men **believed** it, as burial rites and cemeteries witness in all ages.

2) Even many who, like Rousseau, did not accept the Bible testimony, have considered the evident inequality and injustice of this life a proof of a life to come, that the wicked may be justly punished and the righteous duly rewarded.

3) The human mind and heart has talents rising beyond the needs of the present life, and aspirations which are not satisfied here. It is impossible to believe that He who implanted them would not provide for their adequate use and realization.

4) Conscience, by its commandments to do right and to avoid the wrong, points clearly to the fact that it is "not all of death to die nor all of life to live."

5) The soul does not perish with the body because it is not a material something which can be dissolved, but a simple, indivisible spiritual unit, incapable of disintegration and destruction.

**The faculties of the soul.** As the body of man performs certain **functions**, such as digestion and circulation, so the soul is endowed with certain powers or **faculties**. They are usually spoken of as three in number: mind, will and feeling, the latter often called emotions, affections, and sometimes comprehended in the term "the heart." These three faculties of our soul are united in the higher unity of our **personality**, our "ego," which reveals itself in our self-consciousness, our "I." The human **conscience** is the activity of the soul by which distinctions are made between right and wrong in character and conduct. It testifies when our relation to God is not right and as such condemns us whenever we do what it judges to be evil. It is a mighty phenomenon in our mind, will, and emotions. But it needs enlightenment of God's Word and Spirit, lest it judge wrongly. (Acts 26:9.) The Bible speaks about a **defiled** and a **seared** conscience, Titus 1: 15; 1 Tim. 4:2. May God keep us from it! The **heart** is spoken of as comprehending our feeling, but the Bible often speaks of it as the **centre of our soul life** whence are "the issues of life," Prov. 4: 23. In regeneration (Chapter XV.) it is the heart in which the changing work of God's Spirit begins. Ez. 36: 26: "A new heart also will I give you."

6) The **Purpose of Creation** is the glorification of God. To this everything else, including our salvation, is secondary. Prov. 16:4: "The LORD hath made all things for himself." Rom. 11: 36: "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory forever." Rev. 4: 11: "For thy pleasure were they created." This is not to be considered selfish in God since he is the Supreme Good, the absolute Owner of all as well as its indispensable Supporter and constant Benefactor.

## II. PROVIDENCE.

**PROVIDENCE**, the second work of God the Father is mentioned in our Compendium in the same answer that bears on Creation. What the Reformed Churches believe

concerning this important part of God's revelation it expressed in Art. XIII. of the Confession:

"We believe that the same God, after he had created all things, did not forsake them, or give them up to fortune or chance, but that he rules and governs them according to his holy will, so that nothing happens in this world without his appointment: nevertheless, God neither is the author of, nor can be charged with, the sins which are committed. For his power and goodness are so great and incomprehensible, that he orders and executes his work in the most excellent and just manner, even then, when devils and wicked men act unjustly. And, as to what he doth surpassing human understanding, we will not curiously inquire into, farther than our capacity will admit of; but with the greatest humility and reverence adore the righteous judgments of God, which are hid from us, contenting ourselves that we are disciples of Christ, to learn only those things which he has revealed to us in his Word, without transgressing these limits. This doctrine affords us unspeakable consolation, since we are taught thereby that nothing can befall us by chance, but by the direction of our most gracious and heavenly Father; who watches over us with a paternal care, keeping all creatures so under his power, that not a hair of our head (for they are all numbered), nor a sparrow, can fall to the ground, without the will of our Father, in whom we do entirely trust; being persuaded, that he so restrains the devil and all our enemies, that without his will and permission, they cannot hurt us. And therefore we reject that damnable error of the Epicureans, who say that God regards nothing, but leaves all things to chance."

Of Providence we may conveniently notice successively its **Essence**, its **Author**, its **Parts**, its **Objects**, and its **Value**.

1) **The Essence of Providence.** In its widest application the term Providence signifies that divine work that sustains, controls and guides to their destination all things that are made. The word Providence is related in meaning to our word **provide** in the sense of taking care, though the word literally means to foresee. It is used over a dozen times in our Bible, notably in Gen. 22: 8 and 1 Tim. 5: 8. God has not left the world to itself after he created it, as the Deists claim, but provides for it wisely, lovingly, generously and continually. Many terms of the same significance as "provide" are employed. Acts 17: 28: "In him we live and move and have our being." Heb. 1: 3: "Upholding all things by the word of his power." Col. 1: 17: "By him all things consist." 1 Chron. 29: 12: "Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand

it is to make great and to give strength unto all." The words rule, bear, care, preserve, etc., are likewise expressive of the idea of divine Providence. Ps. 103:28: "Thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good."

2) **The Author of Providence** is God the Father. John 5: 17: "My Father worketh hitherto." The first Person of the Holy Trinity is the Primal Cause of the operations of Providence, as he was so in the work of Creation. However, here also the Father does not work apart from the Son. In the text just quoted, Jesus added "and I work." Heb. 1:3 informs us that the Son is "upholding all things by the Word of his power," and in Ps. 104:30 we find ascribed to the Holy Spirit the work of renewing the face of the earth.

3) **The parts of Providence** are three in number: preservation, coöperation, and government.

Preservation is mentioned in Ps. 36:6: "Lord, Thou preservest man and beast." This **preserving** or **maintaining** is an absolute necessity. So dependent is all upon its Maker that without this work Creation could not continue to exist. We can all see that plants and animals have no inherent principle of life in them, enabling them to exist independently of God. As soon as certain conditions of soil, air and temperature are abnormal, they perish. The same applies to men. And that serves as an illustration of the way wherein the whole universe depends on its Maker to preserve it. All things, we are told in Heb. 1:3, are upheld by the Lord.

We distinguish between an **immediate** and a **mediate** preservation. **Immediately**, that is, without second causes as means, God preserves the sun, moon and stars, the angels and the souls of men, and all the forces of the Universe. **Mediately** he preserves our bodies and all living creatures, that is, by means of food, etc. If the **ordinary** means are not employed, but extraordinary ones, we speak of **miracles**. Miracles are special acts of God's providence which cannot be explained by the ordinary workings of nature. Such miracles are not only **possible**, but if we believe in a personal God, who is Ruler of the Universe and cares for mankind, miracles are to be considered reasonable and credible. God has wrought them especially at **critical** times in the history of his people, such as the days of Moses, of Elijah and

Elisha, and of Christ and his Apostles to confirm the teaching of his servants and his Son. But while God is able to work immediately or in a miraculous way, we human beings are in duty bound to use such means of nature and of grace as are placed at our disposal. Not to use them is tempting God.

**Coöperation** means literally "working together." We understand by it that almighty and omnipresent power of God whereby he coöperates with and in all the movements and operations or workings of his creatures. As little as we can exist without God, so little can we do anything without him. We are not only dependent on God as to our **being** but also regarding all our **activity**. Acts 17:28 does not alone declare that we have our being in God, but also "in him we **live** and **move**." This is true in all matters of **grace**. Phil. 2:13: "for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." But it applies equally to all **activity** of mankind, yea of all that lives. Eph. 1:11 assures us God "worketh all things after the counsel of his will;" Job 12:6-10, speaking of the prosperity of the ungodly and of the activities of the animal world asks: "Who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind."

We should bear in mind, however, that this coöperation should not be conceived of as destroying **personal initiative**. While we bow before God as the **Primal Cause**, we believe at the same time in the reality of **second causes**. And in regard to whatever is **evil** in our acts, we should never forget that Job 34:10 proclaims: "Far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that he should commit iniquity." (James 1:17; 2 Cor. 3:5.) It is a **wrong** theory which so defines this coöperation that it ascribes all efficiency to God and practically represents him as the only being in the universe, thus denying the creature's liberty of action and destroying human responsibility.

**Government** is the third part of the divine work of Providence. It signifies that God rules and overrules all activity in the world to a certain determinate end—the end he fixed in his Plan of Ages. (Chapter XVII.) It is expressed in number-

less passages in the Bible that God **rules** (Ps. 103:19, etc.). The name King which he bears involves it. And that he **overrules** the counsels of the wicked is very plainly seen in the history of Joseph, of Moses, and of Christ. It is involved in his promise to his people, Rom. 8:28: "that to them that love God all things shall work together for good." This government also is carried on in such a way that it is consistent with our nature and choice. Hos. 11:4; Ps. 81:12; Rom. 2:15.

4) **The objects of Providence.** These are literally "all things." Eph. 1:11. From the hairs of our head, the sparrows on our roof, to the stars in their courses, all that lives and moves, lives and moves only in God and through God. Matt. 10:29, 30; Jud. 5:20; Ps. 147 and 148. Providence covers nature and nature's laws, Acts 14:17; Job 8:4-10; 38:25-40. It covers the words we speak (Prov. 16:1), and our heart with all its purposes and motives is in his hand, (Prov. 21:1). Nations are included in this as well as individuals. "He removeth kings and setteth up kings." Dan. 2:21; 4:24, 25; Ps. 66:7. It covers that which we call "accident," because we cannot control its cause or its working, Prov. 16:33; Deut. 19:5; Ruth 2:3; 2 Sam. 20:1; Luke 10:31. Looked at from God's viewpoint there is no "accident" or "chance," and it is sinful and heathenish to ascribe events to so-called "Luck" or "Fortune" or "Fate." To make use of fortune-tellers or wizards is strictly forbidden in the Word of God, Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut. 18:11. While all the universe is the object of God's Providence, the Lord's relation to all differs according to the nature of these objects. That has led to distinguish between: **general** Providence, concerning all God's creation; **special** Providence, regarding rational beings; and **particular** Providence in behalf of the people of God.

5) **The value of Providence** is very great. It teaches us that we are not the plaything of heartless Fate, nor tossed about on the sea of existence as flotsam and jetsam, but that we are in the hand of God, who "is good to all and his tender mercies are over all his works." Ps. 145:9. For a believer especially there is wonderfully rich **comfort** in the doctrine, as expressed so beautifully in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day X:

"Q. 28. What advantage is it to us to know that God has created, and by his providence doth still uphold all things?

A. That we may be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity; and that in all things, which may hereafter befall us, we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father, that nothing shall separate us from his love: since all creatures are so in his hand, that without his will they cannot so much as move."

May God grant us to come to the assurance that this God is our own personal Father, for the sake of Christ, for in the saving sense he becomes such only to the true believers. John 8: 42, 44; Rom. 8: 28; Gal. 3: 26.

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#### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 What can you say as to the ESSENCE of Creation?
- 2 What does evolution teach about Creation?
- 3 Who is the Author of Creation?
- 4 What is the cause or motive of Creation?
- 5 What can you say about the time of Creation?
- 6 What order can we observe in the creative work?
- 7 What can you say about the angels?
- 8 What does the Bible teach about the fall of some angels?
- 9 Can you prove the devil's personality and work?
- 10 How can you prove the immortality of the human soul?
- 11 What can you say about the faculties of our soul?
- 12 What was the purpose of Creation?
- 13 What is the essence of Providence?
- 14 Who is the Author of Providence?
- 15 Describe the three parts of Providence.
- 16 What are the objects of Providence?
- 17 Tell of the value of Providence.



## CHAPTER XII.

### THE NATURES OF THE MEDIATOR, DIVINE AND HUMAN.

- Q. 24 What believest thou when thou sayest: "And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord"?
- A. That Jesus Christ is the eternal and only Son of the Father, co-essential with God the Father, and the Holy Ghost.
- Q. 25 Do you not believe that he also became man?
- A. Yes; for he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary.
- Q. 26 Is his Godhead then changed into humanity?
- A. No; for the Godhead is immutable.
- Q. 27 How is he then become man?
- A. By assuming the human nature into a personal union with his divine.
- Q. 28 Did he then bring his human nature from heaven?
- A. No; but he took it on him of the Virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and is thus become like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted. Heb. 2: 17; 4: 15.

Article I. of the Apostle's Creed spoke of God the Father and his work of Creation and Providence. The six following Articles are devoted to the **Son of God** and our Redemption. We are to study successively his natures (Q. 24-28 of the Compendium), his names (29-31), his offices (31), and his states (32-38). The present Chapter discusses the natures of our Redeemer, viz.: 1) his **divine** nature, and 2) his **human** nature.

I. **Christ's divine nature.** From the beginning there has been much strife concerning the natures of Christ. At times our Lord's **divine** nature has been denied. Sometimes his **humanity** has been conceived of improperly. At times their **union** was not correctly understood. But the orthodox Church of God of all ages has held that Christ is both God and man, in the unity of his divine Person. Article X. of our Confession expresses our faith in Christ's **divinity** as follows:

"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 co-essential and co-eternal with the Father, the express image of his person, and the brightness of his glory, equal unto him in all things. Who 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."

The usual method of proving the divinity of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity is by showing that the Bible ascribes to Him divine names, divine attributes, divine honor, and divine works.

(a) **Divine names** are given to the Lord Christ when he is called "Mighty God, everlasting Father," Isa. 9:6; "Jehovah our Righteousness," Jer. 23:6; "God," John 1:1; 20:28; Rom. 9:5; 1 John 5:20; "Our great God," Tit. 2:13 R. V. "God blessed forever," Rom. 9:5; and "Son of God," Matt. 3:17; John 3:16; Rom. 8:32. Five times he is named the "only begotten Son," and in Luke 22:70 he himself admitted that he was the Son of God. Christ is called "Lord of all," Acts 10:36, and "Lord of glory," (1 Cor. 2:8, compared with Ps. 24:8-10).

(b) **Divine attributes** are ascribed to him. His eternity is mentioned in Isa. 9:6, where he is called "everlasting Father"; and in John 8:58, "before Abraham was born, I am." (Compare John 1:1); omnipresence is named in Matt. 18:20; 28:20 and John 1:49; omnipotence in Rev. 1:8; omniscience in John 2:25 and Rev. 2:23; and immutability in Heb. 13:8.

(c) **Divine works** are attributed to the Son, that is, such as only a divine Person can perform. The Bible mentions creating as such; John 1:3; Coll. 1:6. In John 5:17 Jesus stated: "My Father worketh until now, and I work," evidently referring to the work of Providence. Redemption is attributed to Christ in Eph. 1:7 and 1 Cor. 1:30; power to forgive sins, Mark. 2:5-10; preservation, John 10:28 and Heb. 1:3; quickening the dead, John 5:21, 22; and glorification, Phil. 3:20, 21.

(d) **Divine honor** is claimed for the Son in the baptismal

formula, Matt. 28: 19, and in the apostolic benediction, 2 Cor. 13: 13, in which the names of Father and Son are coupled together as co-equal. Heb. 1: 6 brings the command: "let all the angels of God **worship** him." (Compare Ps. 45: 11.) John 5: 23 tells us: "that all may **honor** the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which sent him." Rev. 1: 4-6 also mentions Christ as co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit: "Grace to you and peace, from him which is and which was and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

In the Apostles' Creed the name **only begotten Son** is used. This is taken from John 1: 14, 18: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we heheld his glory, glory as of the **only begotten** from the Father), full of grace and truth. . . . No man hath seen God at any time; the **only begotten Son**, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." This means that he is the only and eternal Son of God, of the same essence, (co-essential with the Father and the Holy Spirit, as well as co-eternal with them. He did not **become** Son of God in course of time, but was such from eternity, through what is termed **generation**, and consequently partaking of the same divine nature as the Father. This is beyond our comprehension, but plainly involved in the teaching of the Bible concerning the Godhead of the Son (Chapter X.) Believers are also called "sons" of God, but only through **adoption**, Gal. 4: 5. Their sonship differs in **time, essence and manner of becoming**, from the Sonship of Christ.

Arians denied the **co-eternal and co-essential** Godhead of the Son, claiming that there was a time when the personality of our Lord did not exist. They considered him a created being, although the most important of God's creation. Russellites follow the Arians in this respect. They base their assertions on Coll. 1: 15, which speaks of Christ as the first born of all creation"; Coll. 1: 18: "first born of the dead"; and

Rev. 1:15: "the beginning of the creation of God." But these texts certainly cannot set at naught all the other plain texts which prove the co-eternal and co-essential Godhead of the Son, as mentioned above. In the texts just quoted "first born" must evidently be taken in the Jewish sense with which Paul and the people of Colosse were familiar: viz., the first one of the family as to **dignity, the head and ruler.** The word "beginning" (Greek: arché), signifies the head, origin and source. Taken in this sense the quotations rather strengthen than weaken the assertion of the Church of God of all ages that Christ is the Son of God, the partaker of the divine nature, such as no human being nor angel can ever be said to be. Therefore Paul in 1 Cor. 2:8 calls him "the Lord of glory," taken from Ps. 24:8-10. Other plain texts are the following:

Tit. 2:13: "Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

Ps. 2:7: "Jehovah said unto me: Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." (Heb. 1:5; Isa. 9:6; 40:3; John 1:34; 3:16.)

The Apostles' Creed also confesses the Son of God to be our LORD. He is thus called because he bought his people with his own blood, delivers them from the power of the devil, and thus becomes their owner and sovereign, 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. Moreover, the Father had given him his people in the Covenant of Redemption and he as the Son, is "Heir of all things." Ps. 2:8; Heb. 1:2. (For the Covenant of Redemption see Chapter XXI., §2.)

II. The human nature of Christ is mentioned next in the Apostles' Creed. Following this, the Compendium speaks first of the **conception and birth** of our Lord, then of the **relation** between the two natures, and finally of the **sinlessness** of Christ.

1) That our Lord possessed a **human nature** and had to have one to be our Mediator has been shown in Chapter VI. His **conception**, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, is an important part of our christian faith. Upon it hinges very largely the question of his being our divine Savior. To be such, the Son of God had to enter upon human existence in a special manner. And, thanks be to the Lord of sovereign

grace, the incarnation of our Christ **did** not take place in an ordinary way. The Bible accounts of Matt. 1: 18 and Luke 1: 26-35, plainly show this. Moreover, our Lord **could** not be gotten as an ordinary child because he was already existing as "the first born of all creation," Col. 1: 15, and "the beginning of the creation of God," Rev. 1: 15. Besides this, the Savior **should** not be generated as an ordinary child since he had to be kept free from original sin. (Chapter VI.) Bearer of our sin is our personality, our "ego" or "I." (Compare Chapter XI.) Divine intervention was necessary in the conception of the Mediator that his personality should not be a human one, since all human persons were comprehended in the Covenant of Works and tainted with original sin as a result of Adam's breaking of the Covenant, as told in Chapter V. It was the operation of the Holy Spirit which in the fulness of time brought this about as told to Mary by the angel, Luke 1: 35: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God." (Compare Heb. 10: 5.) This plain Bible teaching is entirely contrary to the heretical statement of "Christian Science," that the virgin mother conceived the idea of God and gave to her ideal the name of Jesus. According to the Word of God it was the Second Person of the Holy Trinity who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, to assume the human nature.

2) The birth of our Savior is related in detail in the gospels. "Born of the Virgin Mary," is the statement of the Apostles' Creed. While conceived in an extraordinary way, our Lord came into the world as an ordinary child, although signs of heavenly interest were not lacking. (Luke 2: 1-20.) The birth of the Virgin Mary was in fulfillment of ancient prophecy and promise that the Redeemer should be of the tribe of Judah and the House of David. Gen. 49: 10-12; Ps. 132: 17; Luke 1: 69; 3: 23; 3: 31; Matt. 1: 1, 6, 16; Heb. 7: 14. Christ became man, that is, he assumed a complete human nature, consisting of body and soul. We therefore reject the teaching of Apollinaris, a bishop of Laodicea, († 390), who taught that in the Savior the Logos or Word, John 1: 1, that is the divine Person of Christ, had taken the place of the ordinary human spirit. Such a doctrine would involve that our Sub-

stitute had not assumed a complete human nature, something which, however, was absolutely necessary if he were to be our Mediator and Substitute. (Chapter VI.)

3) The **relation** existing between his original divine nature and his assumed human nature has been a subject of much discussion, especially in the early centuries of the Christian Church. "Is his Godhead changed into humanity?" Compendium asks. And the Biblical answer is: "No; for Godhead is immutable." (Compare Chapter IX, on the Attributes of God.) And the next answer informs us that Christ's becoming man took place by his "assuming the human nature into a **personal union** with his divine." To understand this we must bear in mind that the "ego" or personality in our Lord was not a human one as in us. His personality or Person was that of the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. This divine Person assumed a complete human nature, consisting of a human body and a human soul. But he did not assume a human "ego" or person. That was the error of the **Nestorians**, who practically taught that we had a double Savior. The followers of **Eutychus** fell into the opposite extreme by teaching that in our Lord the human nature was so thoroughly absorbed in the divine that not alone his soul, but even his body was different from the ordinary human body. Both these views were condemned by the **Council of Chalcedon**, 451, which expressed the orthodox faith as follows:

"We, then, following the Holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead, and also perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and body; co-essential with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God according to the manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, **inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably**; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and Only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as

the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the Holy Fathers has handed down to us." (Compare Art. XIX. of the Confession.)

In the days of the Reformation the Anabaptists (Wederdoopers), forerunners of the present Baptists, taught that our Lord had not assumed his human body of the flesh and blood of Mary, but had brought it from heaven, as Q. 28 of the Compendium reminds. This was done in order to keep the Christ free from the taint of sin as it was considered to cling to flesh and blood. But it assailed the true humanity of our Savior and is therefore condemned as a heresy in Art. XVIII. of the Confession:

#### Of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

"We confess, therefore, that God did fulfill the promise, which he made to the fathers, by the mouth of his holy prophets, when he sent into the world, at the time appointed by him, his own, only begotten and eternal Son, who took upon him the form of a servant, and became like unto man, really assuming the true human nature, with all its infirmities, sin excepted, being conceived in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost, without the means of man. And did not only assume human nature as to the body, but also a true human soul, that he might be a real man. For since the soul was lost as well as the body, it was necessary that he should take both upon him, to save both. Therefore we confess (in opposition to the heresy of the Anabaptists, who deny that Christ assumed human flesh of his mother) that Christ is become a partaker of the flesh and blood of the children; that he is a fruit of the loins of David after the flesh; made of the seed of David according to the flesh; a fruit of the womb of the Virgin Mary, made of a woman; a branch of David; a shoot of the root of Jesse; sprung from the tribe of Judah; descended from the Jews according to the flesh: of the seed of Abraham, since he took on him the seed of Abraham, and became like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted, so that in truth he is our IMMANUEL, that is to say, God with us."

4) The sinlessness of the Lord is mentioned specifically in the Compendium. The Nestorians denied this, claiming that Christ could sin. Only by his moral exertion and continual striving against sin, he kept himself free from it. He was sinless not by virtue of his sinless Being, but because he had acquired it through a holy life. Many of those who hold the views of the Modern or New Theology teach this Nes-

lorian error. It is brought out especially in connection with the temptation of our Lord, Matt. 4: 1-11. But the Word of God plainly teaches the sinlessness or impeccability of our Mediator. As a divine Person he was sinless from eternity since God cannot sin. It would be contrary to his own Essence. The conception by the Holy Ghost kept Christ free from original sin at his incarnation. Actual sin was never found in him,—the Lamb without blemish, Acts 3: 14; 2 Cor. 5: 21; 1 Peter 1: 19; 2: 22; 1 John 2: 1; 3: 5.

“God with us! oh, glorious name!  
 Let it shine in endless fame;  
 God and man in Christ unite;  
 Oh, mysterious depth and height!  
 God with us! the eternal Son  
 Took our soul, our flesh, our bone;  
 God with us; but tainted not  
 With the first transgressor’s blot!

#### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 What is the usual method followed to prove the divinity of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity?
- 2 Why is Christ called the “only begotten Son of God”?
- 3 Why is our Savior called “Lord”?
- 4 What can you say of the way Christ received his human nature?
- 5 What do you believe about the birth of Christ?
- 6 What did Apollinaris teach about the Lord’s human nature?
- 7 What was the error of the Nestorians and of Eutychus?
- 8 Which Council set forth the relation of Christ’s natures?
- 9 What does the Church of God hold concerning the relation existing between the two natures of Christ?
- 10 What did the Anabaptists believe regarding the way Christ assumed his human nature?
- 11 Is the sinlessness of the Savior an important truth? Why?
- 12 What should be our prayer concerning this Christ with his two natures?



## CHAPTER XIII.

### CHRIST'S NAMES AND OFFICES. THE ATONEMENT.

- Q. 29 Why is he called Jesus, that is, Savior?  
A. Because he saves his people from their sins.
- Q. 30 Is there no other Savior?  
A. No; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, than in the name of Jesus, Acts 4: 12.
- Q. 31 Why is he called Christ, that is, Anointed?  
A. Because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and ordained by God the Father, to be our chief Prophet, our only High Priest, and our eternal King.

After discussing the Savior's two natures, we are to study the names he bears, and the three offices he fills, those of prophet, priest and king. In connection with the priestly office we shall pay particular attention to Christ's work of Atonement.

I. **The Names of the Mediator.** Our Savior has a great number of names given to him in Holy Writ and each of them reveals something glorious and beautiful about his character and value for us sinners. He is called the Last Adam, our Advocate, the Alpha and Omega, the Amen, the Author and Finisher of our faith, the blessed and only Potentate, Captain of our salvation, Chief Cornerstone, Chief Shepherd, Day-spring, Desire of the Nations, Faithful Witness, First and Last, Good Shepherd, Governor, Horn of salvation, the Lamb of God, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Morning Star, the Prince of Peace and Prince of Life, the Sun of Righteousness, and many other blessed names and titles are attributed to him. Two names, however, are his chief names. They are JESUS and CHRIST. The first is his personal name. The second his official name, that is, pertaining to his offices.

1) The name JESUS was given him according to the direction of the angel, Matt. 1: 21: "for it is he that shall save his people from their sin." Two Old Testament saints bore this name as his types: Joshua, the son of Nun, who brought God's people into Canaan, and Joshua, the high priest of the return from the captivity. Christ brings us into the heavenly Canaan and is our High Priest who ministers in the Taber-

nacle above. The meaning of Jesus is **Savior**, because he **saves**. This word always presupposes some great **danger**, which exposes us to some calamity. Jesus saves us from the great danger of being lost. He saves us from the greatest evil—**sin** and its results. He does even more. He makes us partakers of the highest **good**, salvation and all which that entails, for time and eternity. His work is not alone negative, but also positive.

**There is no other Savior but Jesus**, (Q. 30). This we maintain over against the orthodox Jews (Chapter I.), who still look for another Messiah. We can point them to the prophecies in their own Old Testament, which he so strikingly fulfilled, such as Micah 5: 2; Gen. 12: 3; 49: 8, 10; 2 Sam. 7: 16; Dan. 7: 14; Zech. 9: 9; Isa. 7: 14; and Chap. 53. The Old Testament saints were saved by looking to him, 2 Sam. 23: 3-5; Acts 15: 11.

But this we also proclaim in the face of the world which is ever seeking to invent other ways than those which free grace designed. The following reasons may serve to strengthen our faith in the Messiahship of our Savior:

- 1) The testimony of those who knew him best,—his disciples.
- 2) The conversion and life of Paul.
- 3) The testimony of his enemies, men and devils.
- 4) The testimony of angels.
- 5) The testimony of the Father.
- 6) His own consciousness and declarations.
- 7) His sinless life.
- 8) His sublime convincing teaching.
- 9) His works, especially his miracles, his atonement on the cross, his resurrection.
- 10) The origin of the Christian Church.
- 11) The continuance of the Church.
- 12) His influence upon men throughout the ages. He humbles those lifted up, lifts up those who are low, and renews into his image all who obey what he himself gave as the great test of his mission: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teachings, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." John 7: 17.

2) **CHRIST** is the second name of the Redeemer, a name of Greek origin and signifying "anointed." The Hebrew word corresponding to this is **Messiah**. During the Old Testament **three kinds of officebearers** of Israel were anointed with the holy oil, Ex. 30: 23-25. They were the **priests**, Lev. 8: 12; the **kings**, 1 Sam. 10: 1; and **prophets**, 1 Kings 19: 16. This anointing signifies two things: **ordaining** for the office to be filled, that is: setting aside, and **qualifying**, that is: enabling to perform the task. The **ordaining**, the first part of Christ's anointing, took place before the world was, Ps. 110: 4; Prov. 8: 23; 1 Peter 1: 20. Then he was "set aside" to be the great Mediator between God and man, he the Son of God, who in the fulness of time was to assume human nature. The **qualifying** that is equipping, of that human nature for all the redeeming work Christ was to undertake, took place in the course of time, when the Holy Ghost "prepared a body" for him, (Heb. 10: 5), and during the development of his human nature, (Luke 2: 40), but especially at the time of his baptism, Matt. 3: 16. Not with literal oil, however, was Christ anointed, but with that which the oil had typified,—the Holy Spirit, and that abundantly, Ps. 45: 7; Heb. 1: 9. Let us admire this provision of our God that gave us such a thoroughly equipped Redeemer, and let us be sure that we seek our all in this Christ.

II. **Christ's Offices.** **Three offices** have been and are held by our Lord—those of prophet, priest and king. In the Old Testament times these offices were never united in one person. Melchizedek and David held two; Melchizedek being both priest and king and David both prophet and king. God did not permit any to hold all three because no one was able to properly represent the Coming One in all his offices, (Compare 1 Sam. 13: 9, 13). But in Christ they were united. That was necessary to be our Savior. As such he had to proclaim salvation, (prophet); to merit it, (priest); and to apply it, (king). This three-fold office was also necessitated because the first Adam, whom Christ was to succeed as Substitute, had been a prophet to **know** God, a priest to **sacrifice** his life and service to God, and a king to **subdue** and **rule** the world as God's vice-regent. Again our Lord had to fill three offices because he had been **foreshadowed** as such by Israel's proph-

ets, priests and kings. Moreover, this was necessary because of the fact of sin. Sin had darkened our mind. We needed a prophet to illumine us. It had rendered us guilty,—a priest was required to atone. It had become a hostile power within us and around us—we were in need of a king to combat and conquer this. The restoration of the image of God, knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, (Chapter III.), required the work of a prophet to give us new knowledge, a priest to make us righteous, and a king to render us holy. And the reaching of the purpose of our creation also involved this three-fold office—to know, to love and to obey God.

Each of these offices was duly confirmed and emblazoned by miracles. There were prophetic wonders, to confirm Christ's teaching—such as healing the paralytic to show that he could pardon sin, and curing the blind to symbolize that he gives spiritual sight to the spiritual blind. Priestly wonders were those which manifested Jesus' pity, such as works of healing. The royal wonders were to show his power as King, such as raising the dead and stilling the storm. These wonders proclaimed the character of his mission remarkably plainly, especially as compared to those wrought by Moses. Moses' ministry was in some sense, one of death and punishment. His first miracle was that of turning water into blood, and other signs of his hand were of a similar character. But the first recorded miracle of our Lord showed him to be a minister of life and blessing—he turned water into wine! And throughout the working of his wonders and signs, he showed all manner of love to save and not to destroy, to bless and not to punish. Glory be to God for this method of showing his power and of confirming his message.

1. **The prophetic office.** That the Savior was to be a prophet was foretold by Moses in Deut. 18:15. It was typified by the God-called prophets of Israel. Jesus bore witness to his prophetic work in Luke 4:17-21 and John 4:25, 26. Prophets are not ordinary servants of God but his special ambassadors enabled by the Holy Ghost to perform their task, viz., to reveal God's will and to instruct the people. A prophet is the mouth of the Holy Spirit to express the thoughts of God toward mankind. 1 Cor. 2:7-10. He is a "seer" who has looked into the counsel of the Almighty and has been

authorized to declare it, 2 Sam. 23:2. The main work of a prophet is to **teach**. This sometimes includes **foretelling** things, and at times the performing of **miracles**. Elijah and Elisha are the great Old Testament types of our Lord as well as Moses. The ministers of the Church of the New Testament are prophets insofar as they are **teachers** of the Word of God, Eph. 4:11; Isa. 30:20. Jesus is the **chief** prophet who taught, prophesied and wrought miracles as no other of his ambassadors. In the following respects he has been active as our **chief** prophet, superior to all who ever bore the name.

1) In the revealing of God's counsel to the prophets of old. He was their source of revelation, 1 Peter 1:11.

2) In causing the Bible to be written, 1 Peter 1:10, 11; John 16:13.

3) In his actual dealings with Israel of old. Much of the history of the Old Testament Covenant people was evidently spiritual in significance, such as their departure from Egypt, their wanderings, and their conquest of Canaan.

4) In the Law-giving from Sinai the Christ was involved as the Angel of Jehovah, Acts 7:38, 53; Gal. 3:19.

5) By means of the types and ceremonies of the Old Testament worship Christ taught his people.

6) His personal **appearance** in the flesh was prophetic. He was the **Word of God** itself as well as Messenger of the Covenant. Who beheld him, beheld the Father, John 12:45.

7) His miracles were full of instruction. "Enacted parables" they have been termed.

8) Christ is also the prophet who enables his ministers to bring forth things new and old out of the Word of God, and through them he still speaks to his people, Luke 10:16.

9) He was and is a prophet who through his Word and Spirit shines in the hearts and minds of the heirs of salvation, so that they personally become enlightened to be wise unto salvation, 2 Cor. 4:6.

The **contents** of the prophetic revelation of Christ are both **Law** and **Gospel**. Christ has not given us a new Law as a second Moses, as the **Socinians** have taught. Neither has he abolished the Law as the **Antinomians** claim. But he has **explained** the Law in its highest and deepest meaning, Matt. 5.

Christ is the **end of prophecy**, in the sense that all God's counsel has been revealed by him insofar as we need to know it in this life. This is embodied in the Bible, so that we reject the views of those who speak of the need of tradition and of continuous revelation. John 1:9, speaking of Christ as the Light "which enlighteneth every man coming into the world," plainly shows that the work of the Christ as the Word of God reaches beyond the domain of particular grace into that of common grace, (see Chapter XV, II.). For the possession and use of our reason, as well as for art and literature and science, we are indebted to our Lord as the great Prophet, more than the blind world is aware of. May he teach all of us personally! Have we any evidence that

"The night has gone,  
And day eternal has begun  
Within our clouded soul?"

II. **The priestly office.** It is not sufficient for us sinners to know God. We have other needs besides having our minds enlightened. We have sin to be atoned; we have many petitions to present at the Throne of grace; we need to be blessed with the choicest favors of God, for time and for eternity. It was because of this that Christ is a priest as well as a prophet. As such he was promised likewise in the O. T. Ps. 110:4: "Jehovah hath sworn and will not repent: thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."\* The labors of a priest in the Old Testament days were three-fold—to sacrifice, to pray and to bless. Lev. 4:20; Joel 2:17, 18; Num. 6:24-26. Christ is our High Priest who performs these labors for his Church in a unique way such as no others could. He also offered sacrifices, he prays, and he blesses.

1) As to the sacrificial part of Jesus' work, he has offered himself, Heb. 7:26-28: "For such a High Priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself. For the law appointeth

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\* Melchizedek represented Christ as the exalted priest, royal and eternal. (Heb. 7:1). Aaron was a type of our Lord in his priestly work of reconciliation in the state of humiliation.

men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointeth a Son, perfected forevermore."

Our Lord could "once for all," that is, for all time, offer sufficient sacrifice because his human nature, undefiled, was supported by his divine nature which gave it not alone the needed support, but lent infinite value to the merits as well. (Compare Chapter VI.)

Christ is our **only** High Priest. We therefore reject the Roman Catholic doctrine that ministers of the gospel are still "priests" because they are in Mass offering up a "bloodless repetition of the sacrifice of Calvary!" (Chapter XXIV.)

This leads us to discuss the all-important topic of the ATONEMENT. **Different terms** are used in the New Testament to express the self-sacrifice of Christ. Several times the word "**ransom**" is used, suggesting that we were prisoners, sold under sin, captives, slaves, and people sentenced to death. Matt. 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18; 1 Tim. 2:6; Gal. 3:16; Lev. 25:47-49.

**Propitiation** is used in Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2; Heb. 2:17. It suggests "covering."

**Reconciliation** is the same in meaning as **atonement**. It indicates removal of estrangement and enmity, so that atonement takes place. Rom. 5:11 R. V. compared to A. V. Rom. 5:10; Eph. 2:16. Our Savior was our sacrifice because he had become our **substitute**. It was because Jesus was our human-divine, God-ordained, God-anointed **Substitute**, that **satisfaction** could be brought about. That word expresses the plainest what was brought about by the substitutionary sacrifice of our great and only High Priest. Our Confession states the following about it:

Art. XX. That God hath manifested his justice and mercy  
in Christ.

"We believe that God, who is perfectly merciful and just, sent his Son to assume that nature, in which the disobedience was committed, to make **satisfaction** in the same, and to bear the punishment of sin by his most bitter passion and death. God therefore manifested his justice against his Son, when he laid our iniquities upon him; and poured forth his mercy and goodness on us, who were guilty and worthy of damnation, out of mere and perfect love, giving his Son unto death for us, and raising him for our justification, that through him we might obtain immortality and life eternal."

Art. XXI: Of the satisfaction of Christ, our only High Priest,  
for us.

“We believe that Jesus Christ is ordained with an oath to be an everlasting High Priest, after the order of Melchizedec; who hath presented himself in our behalf before his Father, to appease his wrath by his full satisfaction, by offering himself on the tree of the cross, and pouring out his precious blood to purge away our sins; as the prophets had foretold. For it is written, ‘He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and numbered with the transgressors;’ and condemned by Pontius Pilate as a malefactor, though he had first declared him innocent. Therefore, ‘he restored that which he took not away, and suffered, the just for the unjust,’ as well in his body as soul, feeling the terrible punishment which our sins had merited; insomuch ‘that his sweat became like unto drops of blood falling on the ground.’ He called out, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ And hath suffered all this for the remission of our sins. Wherefore we justly say with the apostle Paul, ‘that we know nothing, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified; we count all things but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord:’ in whose wounds we find all manner of consolation. Neither is it necessary to seek or invent any other means of being reconciled to God, than this only sacrifice, once offered, by which believers are made perfect forever. This is also the reason why he was called by the angel of God, JESUS, that is to say, SAVIOR, because he should save his people from their sins.”

This satisfaction was rendered by the **obedience** of our Savior. We speak of his two-fold obedience, **active** and **passive**. The **active obedience** of Christ included all he performed to keep the Law of God perfectly and in the place of his people, to gain the reward promised: eternal life for those represented in him, as God gave a similar promise to the first Adam as the head of the Covenant of Works. The **passive obedience** of Jesus refers to all he suffered in the place of his people to pay for their sin and its awful results. The **effects** of the sacrificing work of our Mediator was that he caused all God’s excellencies to shine forth—his love and mercy toward his people, but also his justice and his indignation against sin. It covered all our **guilt**, it satisfied the demands of God’s justice; it secured the salvation of God’s people; it opened up the fountains of God’s love, choked as it



were by our sin. The main part of the atonement was not to reconcile **men to God** in the sense of removing our enmity towards God, as many hold in our days, but that **God** might be reconciled to men, by having the demands of his **holiness** and **righteousness** satisfied and his **truth** affirmed. Christ did not die to furnish a **moral example** to soften our heart and help us to reform ourselves as some teach. Nor do we believe in the **governmental theory** which claims that God in the death of Christ **exemplified** how much he hated sin, to make us realize that he was indeed the moral Governor of the world who maintained his laws at any cost. We do not even accept the "**love of God theory**," which teaches that Christ died to show us how much God loved us. And we reject emphatically the statement of "Christian Science" that "the material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon the accursed tree than when it was flowing through his veins," since the Bible represents the shedding of the blood as the very **climax** of Jesus' obedience, Phil. 2: 8, and everywhere exalts the blood of the Lord as "precious," since it stood for his life in its substitutionary obedience to the utmost. (Compare Chapter VI.)

The extent of the Atonement. Calvinists believe in a **limited atonement**, therein differing from the Arminians, or, as they are usually called in Dutch Church History, the **Remonstrants**. The Arminians claim Christ "died for all" in the sense of satisfying for all and making redemption possible for every sinner. Whether or not one is to be actually saved depends upon the exercise of his free will. "God cannot save a sinner," they have claimed, "unless he willingly opens the door of his heart to God as he stands and knocks." The difference between the Calvinists and the Arminians is not as to the **sufficiency** and **value** of the Atonement, as some enemies of our faith have represented it. When it comes to the **sufficiency** and **value**, we do not stand back of any in magnifying the power of the blood but confess in Canon II., Art. 3: "the death of the Son of God is of **infinite worth** and **value**, **abundantly sufficient** to expiate the sins of the whole world." The great **difference** between the Arminians and us is **two-fold**, viz., about the **contents** and about the **design** of the Atonement.

(a) About the **contents** of the Atonement we believe that Christ has done more for his people than rendering salvation **possible**. We hold that he not merely **merited access** to God and to heaven for us, but also earned grace to **bring us there**. In other words, he did not simply merit **atonement for us**, but also grace to **apply the atonement** to our heart. This was necessary because we have no free will to accept, totally depraved as we are. (Compare Chapter III.) The Scriptures everywhere **combine** the meriting of salvation with its application. Rom. 5: 10; 8: 32. The Arminian, while seemingly magnifying the Atonement with its claim: "Christ for all," in reality **impoverishes its contents!**

(b) About the **design** of the Atonement is our next point of difference with the Arminians. They claim Christ's death was **intended** to redeem all who fell in Adam. We hold that the Lord died with the **purpose** of redeeming those who were given to him by his Father, John 17: 2, in the Covenant of Redemption, (Chapter XIX.). This is named **Limited Atonement**, while the doctrine of the Arminians is called **General Atonement**. The Scriptures plainly teach the **limited** character of the Atonement of Christ insofar as its **design** is concerned, since they declare that the Lord gave his life for his **sheep**, John 10: 11; for his **Church**, Acts 20: 28; for his **Body**, Eph. 5: 23; for his **brethren**, Heb. 2: 11; for his **seed**, Isa. 53: 10; for the **children of God**, John 11: 52. Moreover, we claim that the use of the word "many" in Matt. 26: 28, Isa. 53: 12 and Matt. 20: 28, clearly is not synonymous with the word "all." For that matter even the Arminians somewhat limit the "all," since they as a rule except those who sinned against the Holy Ghost as well as the fallen angels. Jesus' **Intercessory Prayer** in John 17: 9 expressly states that he did **not** pray for the **world**, but for those **given** him, and this intercession was part of his work as our Redeemer. Besides this, the representation of the Bible that the believers form a **body**, plainly presupposes the **limited design** of the Satisfaction of our Lord. A "body," with head and members, cannot be enlarged at will. The limited character of the atoning work of Christ also follows with logical necessity from the biblical doctrine of **Election**, Chapter XVII. Let us, even though it be not a "fashionable" nor a "popular" doctrine in our land and in our

day, hold to the Limited Atonement here defended. It is thoroughly **biblical**. Moreover, the General Atonement view, while ostensibly magnifying the fulness of God's grace, is not alone actually **impoverishing** the contents of Redemption, as already mentioned above, but it also practically **dethrones God as Sovereign**, since not he decides as to who shall people his Mansions above, but a sinful worm of dust, by the exercise of his so-called "free will." In fact, the Arminian view **jeopardizes** the whole result of the work of the Redeemer. What if no human being should have been pleased to use his "free will" to accept the Ransom? Finally, let us bear in mind that the General Atonement view is apt to delude souls for eternity, since there is danger that some, without any real change of heart and simply through historical faith just build on the assertion: "Christ died for all, and consequently for me also." May none of us rest until we know that Jesus shed his blood, not alone for others, but also for us personally!

Those who believe in **unlimited** atonement base their assertions on the general offer of the gospel, on texts which declare that Christ died for the world, and on some instances of people for whom Christ is said to have died, while they "perished." We reply that the gospel offer is universal not because it actually assures every one unconditionally that Christ died for him, but it is much rather a gracious offer of salvation, a command to believe, and an assurance that whosoever comes in the God-appointed way—of repentance and of faith—shall not perish but have everlasting life. The expression "world" clearly indicates sometimes the world of the heathen as opposed to the Jewish nation, sometimes the cosmos or universe, but nowhere **every individual** without exception. That the Lord is said to have died for some who perished later, Rom. 14: 15; 1 Cor. 8: 11; 2 Peter 2: 1; Heb. 10: 29, refers evidently to those who "perished" only so far as their fellowshiping with the saints was concerned, but not in the sense of being damned. Those who did actually perish must have been either hypocrites or temporary believers, for the doctrine of the limited atonement, in connection with the perseverance of the saints, (Lesson XXV), is so plainly and abundantly taught in the Word of God, that one or two texts or examples which **seem** to teach the contrary, must of necessity be explained in harmony with the plain teaching of

the Bible in the great majority of texts and examples. (Read Canon II. of the Canons of Dordrecht.)

2) On p. 106 the statement was made that a **priest** not alone **sacrificed** but also **prayed**. The praying of our Lord is called the **Intercession** of Christ as our priest, the second part of his work as such. It signifies his appearing in behalf of his people before his Father with the claim that the promises in their favor made to himself as their representative, be fulfilled. Heb. 9: 24; 7: 25. It was typified by the appearance of the Old Testament High Priest in the temple on the Day of Atonement, with live coals, incense and blood. Lev. 16; 23: 26-32; Num. 19: 7-11, compared to Heb. 9: 1-12; 24-28. It may be defined as the constant and gracious will of the Savior before God the Father, by which he continually presents to him his merits and satisfaction and the persons and sacrifices of all his people—that God may accept them and apply all merits of Christ to them. Before the incarnation Christ interceded for his people, Isa. 63: 9; Zech. 1: 12, as well as during his life on earth, John 17; Luke 22: 31, 32; Heb. 5: 7; and since then in heaven as the Advocate of his people, 1 John 2: 1, to “appear before the face of God for us,” Heb. 9: 24. As our sins come up constantly before God’s face, and as in God constantly works a holy impulse to punish sin, Christ presents his merits as our Surety to his Father, that for his sake our sin may be pardoned, and that we may be adopted and treated as God’s children. The intercession also includes the purification and acceptance of the prayers of the believers, Rev. 8: 3. The intercession is **authoritative**, John 17: 24; **prevailing**, John 11: 42; and **continual**, Heb. 7: 25.

Christ intercedes only for those given him to be redeemed and for whom he gave himself as a sacrifice. Rom. 8: 32, 34; John 17: 9, 20. They are benefitted by this intercession both before and after their conversion. Before their conversion Christ seeks and secures for them access to the means of grace, so far as may be necessary for their salvation, Rom. 10: 14, 15, 16; he provides that they shall not die in their sin, John 8: 21, but in due season obtain saving grace, Ps. 32: 6. The benefits received after conversion are those of support, guidance and protection, Luke 22: 32; John 17: 20, 21; Rom. 8: 34. At death believers obtain by means of Christ’s interces-

sion, victory over death and entrance into glory. John 17: 24; Phil. 1: 21, 23. Let us thank God that our Lord (Heb. 7: 24 25): "because he abideth forever, hath his priesthood unchangeable. Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Read Art. XXVI. of the Confession.

3) The blessing of the High Priest of our faith is mentioned in Luke 24: 50, when Christ at the time of his Ascension "lifted up his hands and blessed them," and explained in Eph. 1: 3 and 4: 8.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. . . . Wherefore he saith, when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."

III. The **third** office of Christ is his **kingly** office. He must not alone **teach** us to be saved, and sacrifice himself for us and bless and pray, but he must also **lead** and **govern** us. Therefore we find him predicted as **King** in Ps. 2: 6, and prefigured as such by David and Solomon. But the kingdom of our Lord is not of the earth earthy, based on brute force. It is **spiritual**, it is **in** the world, but not **of** it. The work of Christ as king is **fourfold**, viz., to gather his Church, to rule it, to protect it and to perfect it, through his Word and Spirit, Ps. 119: 18; Acts 2: 33; John 16: 7-14; 1 Cor. 2: 12-14. He will overwhelm with shame and defeat all who are his and his people's inveterate enemies. 1 Cor. 15: 25, 27. We distinguish between the **essential** kingdom of Christ and his **mediatorial** kingdom. His essential kingdom is his Rule in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit as the divine Sovereign of the universe. This is **original**, being his by virtue of his Godhead. The **mediatorial** kingdom of our Lord is **given** him, as reward of his obedience and suffering. Phil. 2: 7-11. It is all-comprehensive. Christ now directs the whole course of Providence. Matt. 28: 8. This is called his **kingdom of power**. His **kingdom of grace** is his dominion over the hearts of his people, both the individual, John 10: 3, and the Church as a whole, Matt. 28: 19, 20. At the end of time all the true believers shall be gathered out of the world and

Christ shall reign absolutely over them and completely in them, Rev. 22: 3, 4. This is the **Kingdom of glory**. As head of this our Lord will be our eternal king, as the Compendium states. But the kingdom of **power** will at the consummation of things be turned over to the Father, 1 Cor. 15: 24-28.

The **effects** of Christ's mediatorial rule are that his people are defended against their foes, Acts 18: 9, 10, enabled to derive spiritual blessings from the whole course of Providence, 1 Thess. 5: 18, so that afflictions, even though they be consequences of their sins, can be turned to their profit, 2 Cor. 4: 17, and death becomes to them no longer the penalty of sin, but the gate to glory, 2 Cor. 5: 8, and at last they shall be more than conquerors through him that loved them, Rom. 8: 37. A true **christian** is one who personally partakes of this **anointing** of our Lord to become a prophet, priest and king to God in his own sphere. May our daily petition be that this blessed Redeemer in his three-fold office become our personal Teacher, the One who sacrifices and prays for us, and blesses and rules us ever more, and that we, through his anointing grace, may live and labor as **christian prophets, priests and kings** to the glory of the Name and the coming of the Kingdom of our God.

#### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 What does the name **Jesus** signify?
- 2 Can you prove that **Christ** is the true Messiah and Savior?
- 3 What does the name **Christ** signify?
- 4 What two things are included in his "anointing"?
- 5 Why does **Jesus** hold **THREE** offices—those of prophet, priest and king—no more and no less?
- 6 Mention some of **Christ's** activities as prophet.
- 7 Why is **Christ** called the "end of prophecy"?
- 8 Why is **Christ** called the **Light** enlightening every man?
- 9 Describe the labors of a priest.
- 10 What can you say about the sacrificial part of **Jesus'** work as priest?
- 11 Which terms are used to express the Lord's self-sacrifice?
- 12 What is meant by the "satisfaction" **Christ** brought about?
- 13 What is meant by his active and his passive obedience?
- 14 What is the extent of his atonement?
- 15 Which are the contents of the atonement?
- 16 What was the design of the atonement?
- 17 What is the intercessory work of **Christ** as priest?
- 18 What is included in **Christ's** work of blessing?
- 19 What can you say about **Christ's** office as king?
- 20 Why are believers called "Christians"?

## CHAPTER XIV.

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### THE STATES OF THE MEDIATOR.

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- Q. 32 What then hath Jesus Christ done to save us?  
A. He has suffered for us, was crucified and died, was buried and descended into hell; that is, he suffered the torments of hell, and thus became obedient to his Father, that he might deliver us from the temporal and eternal punishment due to sin.
- Q. 33 In which nature hath he suffered this?  
A. Only in his human nature, that is, in soul and body.
- Q. 34 What hath then his Godhead contributed thereto?  
A. His Godhead, by its power, in such wise strengthened the assumed human nature, that it could bear the burden of God's wrath against sin, and deliver us from it.
- Q. 35 Did Christ then remain under the power of death?  
A. No; but he rose from the dead the third day for our justification. Rom. 4: 25.
- Q. 36 Where is Christ now, as to his human nature?  
A. He is ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father; that is, exalted in the highest glory, far above all creatures. Eph. 1: 20, 21.
- Q. 37 To what end is he there so highly exalted?  
A. Particularly that he might from thence govern his Church, and there be our intercessor with the Father.
- Q. 38 Is he not with us then even unto the end of the world, as he hath promised us? Matt. 28: 20.  
A. With respect to his Godhead, majesty, grace and spirit, he is never absent from us; but with respect to his human nature, he remains in heaven, until he shall come again to judge the quick and the dead.

Our Mediator must not alone be known in his Natures, Names and Offices, but also in his States. A "State" here signifies one's status or relation to the law. One may be in accord with it and consequently he is righteous. Or one may be out of harmony with it. That renders him guilty. On this state before the law depends one's condition. The one guilty before the law is in a condition of misery; the righteous one is apt to be happy. When we speak of the States of our Lord we distinguish between two states. The one was his state of humiliation wherein he as our Surety stood guilty before the

law and was subject to misery. The other is his state of **exaltation** wherein he is righteous and consequently glorious and blessed. Of this state of **Humiliation** the Compendium treats in Q. 32-34; of the state of **Exaltation**, Q. 35-38.

I. In the state of **Humiliation** we distinguish between five steps or degrees, also called stages: 1) the Mediator's **humble Birth**; 2) his **Suffering**; 3) his **Death**; 4) his **Burial**; and 5) his **Descent into hell**.

1) The **humble Birth** of Jesus is his first step or degree of humiliation. It brought him in a state of humiliation. It was the beginning of his condition of misery, and it involved assuming the human nature, not as he possesses it at present, in a **glorious** fashion, but in its sin-degraded condition. While he assumed a sinless nature, his nature as he assumed it was "in the likeness of sinful flesh," Rom. 8: 3, yea, as Paul says, Phil. 2: 7: "He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant." Such was indeed humiliating for One who existed in the form of God, who was blessed forever from all eternity. Let us admire the wonderful condescension of the Son of God to become like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted.

2) The **Suffering** of our Lord lasted all the days of his life and was especially severe at the end of his ministry. His poverty at birth, his circumcision, the flight into Egypt, the temptation in the desert, the enduring of hatred, scorn, persecution, rejection from the side of his nation, the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter, the very fact of his dwelling in a sin-blighted world, among a crooked and perverse generation, all was a cause of intense suffering to the Lamb without blemish. But especially what took place during the so-called Passion Week, particularly in Gethsemane, and on Good Friday, till the moment of his death, constituted the suffering of our **Substitute**. For as such he underwent it all. His suffering was **vicarious**—in our place. It was bearing the anger of God against sin. It was bearing the sins of many.

This suffering took place in the **human nature** of our Lord, that is, in soul and body. The Godhead cannot suffer, and did not suffer by virtue of its immutability. What the divine nature did in this suffering is expressed in the Compendium as "in such wise strengthening the assumed human



nature that it could bear the burden of God's wrath against sin, and deliver us from it." It also lent infinite value to the merits obtained by the passion of our Redeemer. The Apostles' Creed states that this took place **under Pontius Pilate**. This governor of the Roman province of Judea represented the nation which developed human law as no other nation. And several times this representative declared Christ innocent, that we might have the more certainty of his being unblameable. But at length Pilate condemned Jesus to death—for the sake of those who accused him, and released Barabbas, so that he suffered as our Substitute, that we might never be condemned before God, whose representative Pilate was, Rom. 13: 4. Although Pilate may not have realized it, through this Roman governor God himself condemned Christ, that we might be freed from the severe judgment of God upon us. (Heid. Cat., Q. 38.)

3) The Lord's **Death by crucifixion** is the third degree of his humiliation. This mode of putting our Lord to death involved **shedding** of his **precious blood** as the plainest proof of his obedience even unto the pouring out of his life-blood. It was very **humiliating**, since only the vilest criminals were crucified, and this had to take place since our sin had rendered us unspeakably vile before a holy God. It was **extremely painful**, filling with lingering, intolerable agony, and this was necessary because we had merited the most excruciating pains of hell. It was **accursed**, Deut. 21: 23, the one crucified being suspended and perishing between heaven and earth, as an outcast. This was needed because we had become outcasts, laden with the curse of sin, the curse of a broken law, Gal. 3: 13. "With such a humiliating death our Surety bore the shame of sin, with its painfulness, its misery, and with the accursed death the **curse of sin**."—(Prof. W. Heyns.)

This **death of Christ** was a **voluntary** laying down of his life, and not simply something to which he had to submit as in the case of human beings. John 10: 17; Eph. 5: 2. It was **substitutionary** death—in the place of his people for whom death has become deprived of its sting. It was a **satisfying and atoning death**—meeting all the demands of the Judge of the world, whose law had been broken by the first Adam, and who poured out on the last Adam all the indignation of his holy and righteous nature.

4) The **Burial** of our Lord was a **proof** of his being really dead, since the capital punishment meted out to him, included due ascertaining that he had actually died. Mark 15: 44. It was also to fulfill the striking prophecy of Isaiah that his grave was "made," i.e. planned to be, "with the wicked," in the ordinary place of burial of the criminal dead, but through God's remarkable providence he was "with the rich in his death." It was a part of his humiliation, since his grave was as it were a monument of human guilt, as every tomb is, a proof of our degraded condition. Moreover, Christ was buried to rob the grave of its terror for God's people, and to proclaim that he had made an end to the Jewish ceremonial laws. And it was another token that he had humbled himself at the deepest, allowing his precious body to be entombed as if he were a sinner, although here also the difference between him and us was that no corruption disintegrated his body as in our case after burial. Acts 2: 27, 31.

5) The **Descent into hell** is named the last step of humiliation. The original meaning of this article of the Apostles' Creed seems to have been the same as buried, since the Creed of Nicea only mentions "buried," and that of Athanasius only "descended into hell." The Roman Catholics take it to signify that Christ after his death, went to the "limbus Patrum" so-called, (a department of Hades or Sheol where the believing fathers of the Old Testament were said to be confined), in order to convey them heavenward. Lutherans believe Christ descended into hell literally to show himself there triumphant over his foes. Others hold that he went to Hades to preach to the dead, that those lost before the Flood might have opportunity to hear the gospel. (Compare 1 Peter 3: 19; 4: 6.) But the Bible plainly tells us that Christ's soul was not in hell while his body was in the grave, but in heaven, in Paradise, in the hands of his Father. Luke 23: 43, 46. The Reformed Churches explain this descent into hell as signifying that our Lord suffered hellish agonies in his soul, especially at the end of his earthly life, as expressed in Ps. 116: 3, where great sorrow is called: pains of hell. The order of the articles is suggestive of the order of the way wherein we would suffer if it were not for our Substitute: first death, then burial, and finally—the agonies of hell.

Let us greatly appreciate that our Lord went through this

all. For it is indeed as the Compendium states: he "thus became obedient to his heavenly Father that he might deliver us from the temporal and eternal punishment due to sin."

II. In the state of Exaltation we distinguish between four steps or degrees: 1) the Mediator's Resurrection; 2) his Ascension; 3) his Sitting at the right hand of God; and 4) his Return or Second Coming.

1) **The Resurrection.** That our Lord did not remain in the power of death is abundantly testified to in the Word of God. It is a very important part of our christian faith, 1 Cor. 15: 14-18. It was heralded by an earthquake. Angels made it known. It involved the restoration of his wounded, lacerated body, its reunion with the human soul, and finally his triumphant coming forth out of the tomb. The value of the resurrection is very great.

It proved that Christ had overcome death.

It showed that his work had been acceptable to his Father.

It was an arising for our justification, Rom. 4: 25.

It showed that he had power as well as authority to raise his people up to a new life.

It is the pledge of the blessed resurrection of all who are united with him, Rom. 6: 5.

It was openly declared by this that he was the Son of God with power. Rom. 1: 4.

It was a convincing proof that God is faithful to his promise. He did not leave his Holy One to see corruption, Psalm 16: 10; Acts 2:27; 13: 35.

It assures us of the truth of the Christian religion. The founders of other so-called religions, (compare Chapter I.), have remained dead till this day.

Satan knowing the great importance of the resurrection of our Lord has not failed to try to assail this Waterloo of the devil and this Gibraltar of christianity! Some claimed Jesus had only been in a faint; others ascribed the testimony of the Apostles to his resurrection as due to hallucination, or the outcome of a deception planned by the disciples. New Theology calls it resurrection only in a figurative sense, as we speak of "kind words never dying," etc.

Christian Science assures us: Christ never died. Hence his resurrection is termed "ascending thought." Russellism dares to suggest that the body of our Lord "perhaps was dissolved into gases." But all of these heretical views are found to be nothing but the vain imaginings of the carnal mind and are utterly unreliable. Even the enemies are unwilling witnesses in favor of the resurrection—think of the bribed watchers at the grave. The New Testament mentions the fact of the resurrection not less than 104 times. And the establishment of the Church of Christ, the conversion of numberless men and women, the triumphant progress of the Kingdom, all proclaims: "The Lord is risen indeed!" May we believe it personally, for our faith is not of the right kind if we do not believe in the heart that God raised Christ from the dead. Rom. 10:9.

2) The **Ascension** of Jesus took place forty days after his resurrection. It was a true, visible and local departure of the Mediator. The Lutherans speak of it as a change in his human nature whereby it became omnipresent, partaking of the nature of the everywhere divinity. But the Bible calls it a leaving of the world, John 16:28, a "going to the Father," clearly indicating a change in place. It involves various blessings such as entering into heaven with the blood of the atonement, a becoming of our Advocate, a sure pledge of our own ascension, and the means of sending the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, ten days after the Ascension.

3) The **Sitting at the Right Hand of God** is the third degree of the Exaltation. It signifies that our Lord was put in the place of honor as the seating at the right hand of an earthly monarch symbolized such in olden times. It also means that Christ received great power and dominion as a reward for his suffering, as already mentioned in speaking of his Kingdom of Power, in the previous chapter. The fact of his sitting at the right hand was also to demonstrate himself as the glorious **Head of his Church** who prays for us and blesses us from thence with all manner of heavenly favors, and thus perfects his work, Heb. 10:12, 13. And, while he is absent from us bodily, with respect to his Godhead, grace and Spirit, he is with us all the days according to his promise, Matt. 28:20.

4) The last step of the Exaltation of our Mediator is yet to come. It is his Return at his Second Coming to judge the quick and the dead at the **General Resurrection** at the end of the ages. See Chapter XVII.

The doctrine of the states of our Lord should lead us to seek assurance that Christ was humbled and raised for us personally. Have we that assurance already?

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### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 What is meant by a "State" as applied to Christ?
- 2 How many steps or degrees belong to Christ's state of humiliation and which are they?
- 3 What can you say about the humble birth of our Lord?
- 4 What can you tell about Christ's suffering?
- 5 In what nature did the Savior suffer?
- 6 Why does the Apostles' Creed mention Pontius Pilate?
- 7 Describe the crucifixion of Jesus and its features.
- 8 How many steps or degrees belong to Christ's state of Exaltation and which are they?
- 9 What can you say about the meaning and value of Christ's resurrection?
- 10 What is the character and importance of the ascension?
- 11 What is meant by Christ's sitting at the right hand of God?
- 12 What should be our personal prayer and desire concerning this Christ in his two states?

## CHAPTER XV.

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS WORK. COMMON AND SPECIAL GRACE. HIS REGENERATING, LEADING, AND COMFORTING OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

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Q. 39 What do you believe concerning the Holy Ghost?

A. That he is the true and co-eternal God with the Father and the Son; and that he being given to me of the Father, through Christ, regenerates me and leads me into all truth, comforts me, and will abide with me forever.

In Chapter X., on the Holy Trinity, we have already discussed the Personality of the Holy Spirit. This Chapter will be devoted to: 1) His Deity; 2) His work of common grace; 3) His work of special grace in regenerating, leading into all truth, and comforting.

1) **The Deity of the Holy Spirit.** This is expressed in Article XI. of our Confession of Faith in these words: "We believe and confess also that the Holy Ghost, from eternity, proceeds from the Father and the Son; and therefore neither is 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."

As in the case of the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, (Chapter XII.), so in the case of the Holy Ghost, the usual way of proving his Godhead is by showing that the Bible ascribes to him divine names, divine attributes, divine works, and divine honor.

(a) **Divine Names** are given to him in the Bible such as "God" in Acts 5: 3, 4; "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie unto the Holy Spirit? . . . Thou hast not lied unto men but unto God." Ps. 95: 7-11 ascribes that same name to him. "He is our God . . . today if you will hear his voice harden not your heart." Isa. 6: 1-10 in connection with Acts 28: 25-27, in-

troduces him as "the LORD," "Jehovah of hosts." Other names of a similar character are: "Spirit of God," 1 Cor. 3:16; "Spirit of Jehovah," Isa. 11:2; "Spirit of Christ," Rom. 8:9; "Spirit of his Son," Gal. 4:6.

(b) **Divine Attributes** are also mentioned of the Holy Ghost, such as eternity, Heb. 9:14; omnipresence, Ps. 139:7-10; omnipotence, Luke 1:35; omniscience, 1 Cor. 2:10, 11; John 14:26; 16:12, 13.

(c) **Divine Works** are attributed to the third person of the Holy Trinity. In Gen. 1:2 he is said to have been moving on the waters, clearly indicating the divine work of imparting life to dead matter; in other words, he was active in the work of **Creation**, even as elsewhere we find him named the **Spirit of Life**, because he is author of all life, not alone in nature, but also in grace, Ps. 104:30: "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created"; John 6:63: "It is the Spirit that giveth life." In the divine work of **Providence** the Holy Ghost is active likewise, Ps. 104:30: "And thou renewest the face of the earth." The divine work of the **inspiration** of the Bible is ascribed to the Holy Ghost in 2 Peter 1:21, and **prophecy** in 2 Sam. 23:2, 3. That he is named Spirit of holiness, Rom. 1:4; Spirit of promise, Eph. 1:13; Spirit of truth, John 16:13; and Spirit of wisdom and counsel and might, Spirit of knowledge and fear of the LORD in Isa. 11:2, also plainly testifies to the fact of his divinity since only a divine person can perform the works involved in the titles.

(d) That **divine honors** are accorded him is plain as we see his name coupled with the divine persons of Father and Son in the baptism formula and apostolic benediction as well as in the doxologies of Revelation. Moreover, the fact that to sin against this divine person of the Godhead is of an unpardonable character, (Chap. V., p. 37), even more serious than sinning against the Son of man, Matt. 12:31, 32, clearly proves that, as our Compendium states, the Holy Ghost is the true and co-eternal God, with the Father and the Son. God grant us never to grieve him nor to rebel against him, but rather implore:

"Come Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,  
With all thy quickening powers,  
Kindle a flame of sacred love  
In these cold hearts of ours."

II. **The Spirit's work of Common Grace.** This is a doctrine which should not be overlooked. Pelagians and others deny our **total depravity**, Chapter V., by pointing to the good still done by the unregenerated. We claim, however, that whatever of human virtue and achievement is shining among those who are not born again, is not due to powers for good left in them, above the "few remains" of God's image, the "glimmerings of natural light" (Conf. Art. XIV., Canons, III., IV., 4, 5), but to the workings of the Holy Spirit in the realm of **common grace**. (Compare Chapter IX. on Grace.) By this common Grace we understand that the Holy Ghost works in men to promote whatsoever is beautiful and good, morally and mentally, fostering art, science, morality, patriotism and all kinds of outward virtues, in individuals and groups of individuals, at the same time restraining sin in its ruining, dissolving tendencies and influences. That these things must be attributed to the operations of the Holy Spirit is plain from such texts as Gen. 6: 3, telling how the Spirit **strives** with men; Job 32: 8: "The Breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding"; and Ex. 31: 1-6, speaking of how the Spirit filled Bezalel "in wisdom and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning work," and "in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded."

Other operations of common grace, though not specifically ascribed to the Holy Ghost, are mentioned in Acts 14: 17 about fruitful seasons and rains, filling hearts with food and gladness, the firmness of nature's laws and ordinances, Gen. 8: 21; Jer. 33: 20, 25; morality, Rom. 1: 19, 20; 2: 14, 15; the law against murder, Gen. 9: 5, 6; replenishing the earth, Gen. 9: 1, 7; "the fear of God and dread upon every beast of the earth," (a restoration of dominion over the animal world), Gen. 9: 2; the scattering of mankind over the face of all the earth, Gen. 11: 8; national boundaries, Deut. 38: 8; "yea, every good gift and every perfect gift is from above," Jas. 1: 17. Let us appreciate all this.

III. Besides working the work of **common grace** in all its recipients, the Holy Spirit is active and especially so in the domain of **special grace**, in applying the merits of the Redeemer to the salvation of God's people. That this is the



function of the Holy Ghost is plain from 1 Cor. 6:11: "And such were some of you; but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." The Compendium mentions four operations of the Holy Ghost in this respect: **regeneration, leading into all truth, comforting, and abiding**, the last three not being **dogmatical distinctions**, but comforting blessings following regeneration. The usual **dogmatical order** is: 1) **Calling**, (Chapter XVII.); 2) **Regeneration**, (Chapter XV.); 3) **Conversion**, Chapter XXIV.); and 4) **Sanctification**, (Chapter XXV). Some mention Regeneration as preceding Calling. Compare Chapter XVII., 2.

1) **Regeneration**. That this is the work of the Holy Spirit is taught in John 3:5-8: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

The term regeneration is used in a narrower and in a wider sense. In the **narrow** sense it indicates the implanting of new, spiritual life in the heart of those in whom it takes place. It has been likened to the planting of seed in the soil. In the **wider** sense it is used to denote the first **manifestation** of the new life in the consciousness of the recipient of regeneration in the narrow sense. This may be compared to the germinating and appearing above the surface of the planted seed, the enlightening of the mind, the bending of the will and the renewal of the affections. At present this is usually called **Conversion**, and will be treated in Chapter XXIV. Our Reformed fathers employed the term in a **still wider** sense as including, besides Conversion, the entire renewal of a believer, the latter at present usually being called **Sanctification**. See Chapter XXV. In Matt. 19:28 our Savior spoke of regeneration in the sense of a renewal of the whole earth and its social order. In this Chapter we limit ourselves to a discussion of regeneration in the **narrow** sense

—the implanting of new, spiritual life in the hearts of the chosen.

This regeneration is **mysterious in character**. No human eye can espy the workings of the Holy Ghost in the heart as he at the time of God's good pleasure implants the seed of the new life. It takes place in the center of our soul-life and hence we are **unconscious** of its implanting. When we notice the stirrings of a new nature within us it proves that the implanting has already taken place. It is a **very important work** this work of regeneration. It is called a "quickenings" of what was spiritually dead, a "giving of life," a putting within us of "a new heart and a new spirit," John 6: 63; Eph. 2:1; Ez. 36:26. It imparts to us spiritual force so that in course of time our mind, will and affections are renovated and the image of God can begin to be restored, just like in the living seed implanted in the soil is the germ of a new life, and, in embryo, all that involves the making of the complete plant.

But while accepting all this, we must be careful to bear in mind that in regeneration no new physical element or substance is imparted to us. We do not receive a new soul, but are **renewed** in the inward man. 2 Cor. 4: 16. There is a reversing of the process of sin, so that the Lord "sets right again the crooked wheel of life." A new nature is imparted, not a new **essence**.

Regeneration in the narrow sense is a **momentary** act, an instantaneous change, a "passing from death to life." Eph. 2: 5.

It is a **radical change** in the sense that the very root of our being becomes altered. We become a **new man**, in principle, a "new creature," 2 Cor. 5: 17. The fact that regeneration is called the giving of a new heart and a new spirit, Ez. 36: 26, and 11: 19, plainly involves this radical character of the new birth.

It is a **permanent** change, for the life imparted is immortal, Rom. 9: 28-30. The soul is **passive** in regeneration. We do not regenerate ourselves but are regenerated. The soul thus being passive and unconscious of the matter, it follows plainly that regeneration is **irresistible**.

It also is a free and sovereign act of grace. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." Regeneration is involved in the **promises of the Covenant**. "A new heart will I give you and

a new spirit will I put within you; I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh." Ez. 36:26.

The time of regeneration is not easily determined. Some people, no doubt many, are regenerated in infancy. Read Isa. 46:3, 4; Gal. 1:15; 2 Tim. 1:3; Ps. 71:5, 6, 17. The cases of John the Baptist, Jeremiah, Timothy and others also show this. But some evidently are regenerated later in life, as shown by Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened," while she listened to the preaching of Paul, Acts 16:14. Reformed theologians differ in opinion as to the function of the Word of God in regeneration, whether or not it occurs **mediately** or **immediately**, i.e. by means of or without the Word. About this question the following was officially declared by the General Synod of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, assembled in Utrecht, in 1905, and therefore styled the **Conclusion of Utrecht**: "This expression (Immediate Regeneration), can be used in a good sense insofar as our Churches have always confessed, in opposition to the Lutheran and Roman Church, that Regeneration does not take place, by the Word or the Sacraments as such, but by the almighty and regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit; that this regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit, however, may not be separated from the preaching of the Word in the sense that both should be separated from each other; for although our Confession teaches that we must not entertain doubt concerning the salvation of our children who die young, although they have not heard the preaching of the Gospel, and furthermore nowhere in our Standards a statement is made concerning the manner in which this regeneration takes place in them and in other children; but nevertheless, on the other hand, it is certain that the Gospel is a power of God unto salvation to every one who believes, and that in the case of adults, the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit accompanies the preaching of the Gospel. Although the Synod does not controvert the assertion that God is able, without the preaching of the Word, particularly in the heathen world, to regenerate whomsoever he will, nevertheless, Synod judges that we, on the basis of the Word of God, cannot state anything positively concerning the question whether or not this actually takes place, and hence

we follow the rule which the revealed Word gives us, to leave the secret things unto the Lord our God."

Regeneration is beautifully described in Canons III., IV., as follows:

**Article 12.** "And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture, and denominated a new creation; a resurrection from the dead; a making alive, which God works in us without our aid. But this is no wise effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel, by moral suasion, or such a mode of operation, that after God has performed his part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted, or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation, or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture inspired by the author of this work declares; so that all in whose hearts God works in this marvelous manner, are certainly, infallibly and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe.—Whereupon the will thus renewed, is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence, becomes itself active. Wherefore also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent, by virtue of that grace received."

We can know that we are regenerated by showing the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. Gal. 5: 22. God grant we may be or become able to know whether or not we are born again. Let us not rest till we know we have passed from death unto life!

2) The **leading into all truth** is also mentioned in the Compendium as a work of the Holy Ghost in behalf of the heirs of salvation. It was **promised** in John 14: 26: "the Holy Ghost . . . shall teach you all things." It was also prayed for by our Lord, John 17: 17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

This has been called **illumination** and is taught in 1 Cor. 2: 12: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." 2 Cor. 4: 6: "Seeing it is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This illumination is in connection with the Word of God, This we hold in opposition to the Anabaptists of the days of the Reformation, the Ranters of the time of Bunyan, and the Quakers who placed

the "Inner Light," so-called, or the promptings of their own heart, above the Word in authority. This leading into all truth concerns particularly five matters: 1) the fact of our sin, Jer. 31:19; 2) our misery, Rev. 3:17; 3) the insufficiency of any but Christ to redeem us, Rom. 7:24; 4) the absolute necessity of Christ, Acts 4:12; and 5) the need and manner of walking before God in newness of life, Rom. 7:6.

3) The comforting operations of the Holy Spirit are plainly involved in the names he bears, such as expressed in John 14:16, 17: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you."

The name Comforter may also be translated "Advocate," "Helper." The Greek word Paraclete, indicates one who takes some one's place. Christ is our Comforter in heaven; the Holy Spirit is his Substitute as such on earth.

The Holy Ghost comforts God's children as to the sins of the past. He does so when they are troubled by the sins of the present. He likewise comforts them concerning fears about the future. He exercises his office when troubles assail us, foes beset us, or when dangers of Church or country, or of near and dear ones fill the heart with sorrows and misgivings.

He does so sweetly, in harmony with our character and actual needs. Isa. 66:13: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." This is done by applying the promises of the gospel to the heart, by revealing Christ in all his loveliness and fulness of mercy, and by showing the glories of the world to come, so that true comfort such as the world neither can give, nor take away, becomes the portion of those who fear God and have become the property of Jesus.

"Eternal Spirit! we confess  
And sing the wonders of thy grace;  
Thy pow'r conveys our blessings down  
From God the Father and the Son.

Enlighten'd by thine heavenly ray,  
Our shades and darkness turn to day;  
We learn the meaning of thy Word,  
And find salvation in the Lord.

Thy pow'r and glory work within,  
 And break the chains of reigning sin;  
 Our wild imperious lusts subdue,  
 And form our wretched hearts anew.

The troubled conscience knows thy voice;  
 Thy cheering words awake our joys;  
 Thy words allay the stormy wind,  
 And calm the surges of the mind."

4) About the abiding of the Holy Ghost in the heart of the believers, see Chapter XXV. on Sanctification, §4.

#### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Mention some of the divine NAMES given to the Holy Spirit.
- 2 Which divine ATTRIBUTES of the Spirit can you mention?
- 3 Which divine WORKS are ascribed to the Holy Ghost?
- 4 What can you say of the Holy Spirit's work of common grace?
- 5 What is meant by special grace?
- 6 What is meant by regeneration in the narrow sense of the word?
- 7 What is meant by regeneration in the wider sense?
- 8 What is included in 'regeneration' in its widest meanings?
- 9 What can you say of the nature of regeneration in the narrow sense?
- 10 What is the function of the Word of God in the work of regeneration?
- 11 How can we know that we personally are regenerated?
- 12 What is meant by the Spirit leading us into all truth?
- 13 Why is the Holy Spirit called the Comforter?
- 14 What use does the Spirit make of the gospel to comfort us?
- 15 What should be our personal prayer and desire regarding the Holy Ghost and his work?

## CHAPTER XVI.

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### THE CHURCH AND ITS ATTRIBUTES, DISTINCTIONS, MARKS, OFFICE-BEARERS AND DUTY.

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- Q. 40 What believest thou concerning the Holy Catholic Church?  
A. That the Son of God gathers by his Word and Spirit out of the whole human race, those, who are chosen to eternal life, to be a church to himself; of which I believe I am, and always shall remain, a living member.
- Q. 41 Where doth he gather his church?  
A. Where God's Word is purely preached, and the holy sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the individual children of God leads to the doctrine of the Church, discussed in the Compendium in Q. 40-42. This is because those who become partakers of the Holy Ghost as he regenerates, form a body, a unit, with Christ as its Head and Redeemer. For an orderly discussion of this subject let us notice: 1) the essence and names of the Church; 2) its attributes; 3) its distinctions; 4) the marks of the visible Church; 5) its office-bearers; 6) its duty; and 7) how we are duty bound to join it as living members. The next chapter will be devoted to the benefits bestowed on the Church.

1) **The Essence of the Church.** This is described in Art. XXVII. of the Confession:

“We believe and profess, one catholic or universal Church, which is an holy congregation, of true Christian believers, all expecting their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by his blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Ghost. This Church hath been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end thereof; which is evident from this, that Christ is an eternal king, which, without subjects, cannot be. And this holy Church is preserved or supported by God, against the rage of the whole world; though she sometimes (for a while) appears very small, and in the eyes of men, to be reduced to nothing; as during the perilous reign of Ahab, the Lord reserved unto him seven thousand men, who had not bowed their knees to Baal. Furthermore, this holy Church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed over the whole

world; and yet is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same Spirit."

The name **Church** is derived from the Greek word *kyriakos*, signifying "of the Lord." The words *Kerk*, *Kirche*, *Kirk*, are also derived from it. In the New Testament the word *Ekklesia* is used, derived from two words, *ek*, meaning out, and *kaleo*, to call. Hence the Church has been named a gathering of those **called out**, namely, from the rest of mankind. The Church is a gathering of believers who form a community, an organism, a body, the body of Christ, Eph. 1:23. Their unity is not external, but internal, living and organic, with Christ as the Head, "from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love," Eph. 4:16.

It is also called "the **household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit,**" Eph. 2:20-22.

What a glorious thing to belong to it!

2) The **Attributes of the Church**. They are chiefly four in number, the **unity, holiness, catholicity and christianity or apostolicity**.

a. The **unity** of the Church is not external but internal and spiritual. It signifies that the Church has one Lord, one faith, one baptism, Eph. 4:3-5. It has one Head, Christ, and is led by one Spirit, and through the Spirit forms one community or body, 1 Cor. 12:13: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit."

There is what is called **pluriformity** as to outward church organizations, which frequently hides the true unity of the Church, but while there is not a christianity **above** or **below** differences in faith, (*Geloofsverdeeldheid*), there is one **within** and **notwithstanding** all differences in doctrine.

b. **Holiness**. This refers to the **spiritual renewal** of the true members of the Church so that they become separated



from the world and devoted to God. The Church is holy because it is a communion of saints, because true believers are sanctified in Christ, and born again, and being renewed in the inner man, with a desire and striving to walk before God in newness of life, John 17: 19; Eph. 5: 25-27; 1 Peter 2: 9. (Cf. Chapter XXV. on Sanctification.)

c. **The catholicity of the Church.** The word **catholic** signifies "general." It indicates three things: 1) that christianity is a religion appropriate for the whole world, in all ages, for every class of people, and for all countries; 2) that the Church is gathered out of "Every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation," Rev. 5: 9; and 3) that the truth of christianity is designed to control not alone the whole of the individual believer, but the whole of human life in every domain of activity. We should ever protest against the exclusive use of this name "catholic" by the Roman Church. It is usurpation which severely reflects on Protestantism as if it were outside of the pale of the Church Universal!

d. **Christian or Apostolic.** **Christian** is the attribute of the Church since Christ is its Head and Lord, from whose Word it is to derive strength, and according to which Word it is to regulate its life. The term **apostolic** is applied at times to indicate that the Apostles have taught us the truth proclaimed by Jesus. Therefore Paul states in Eph. 2: 20 that the Household of God is "being built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets," that is, upon their doctrine. 1 John 1: 3: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

3) **The Distinctions of the Church.** We speak of the Church on earth as **militant** or fighting, because it is struggling against sin within and without, against the devil and all his helpers, the world and all its temptations, and sinful influences, and because it fights or contends for the Headship of Christ, and for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Jude 3; 2 Tim. 4: 7; Heb. 12: 4; 1 John 5: 4.

The Church **triumphant** is the victorious Church in heaven, through Christ "more than conquerors," Rom. 8: 37,

and which overcame "because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the Word of his testimony," Rev. 12: 11.

This Church is enjoying all the blessings of life eternal prepared in the heavens for all overcomers, Rev. 2: 7, 11, 17, 26.

At the end of time the Church militant of earth shall be merged into the Church triumphant in heaven.

The distinction of the Church as **visible** and **invisible**, does not signify two separate Churches, but the one Church (on earth) looked at under two aspects.

The **visible** Church consists of those who profess faith in Christ, together with their children. This Church is visible through its organization, its institutions and office-bearers as well as because of its worship, preaching and sacramental observances, and also because its members are publicly known as such.

**Invisible** is that same Church insofar as it is a congregation of true believers. As such the Church is an object of our faith, as the Apostles' Creed states: "I believe a holy catholic Church." We cannot know with certainty who are true believers and who are not, since God only knows the hearts and knows those whose names are written in heaven. The Reformed Churches condemn as Antinomian error that believers can infallibly judge and discern who are saints and who are not. Nevertheless we know that "all is not Israel which are of Israel." Compare the parable of the Virgins, Matt. 25: 1. One day the visible and the invisible Church will be perfectly identical. Rev. 21: 27.

We also distinguish between the Church as an Institute and as an **Organism**. The Church as an **Institute** is the **visible Church**, with its professing members, its office-bearers and outward organization.

The Church as an **Organism**, however, indicates believers as forming the mystical body of Christ, a unity, rooted in Christ, fitly joined together, as a body related to its head, Eph. 4: 16. The Church as such includes all who belong to Christ, in heaven and in earth, and in this world manifests itself as a force, in the life of the home, of the state, in society, and in all christian activity in the realms of science, art, education, politics, etc.

Closely akin to the Church is the **Kingdom of God**. This

term is expressive of the sovereignty of God and of the fact that those who belong to it are subjects of the Lord and not their own masters. "The thought of the Kingdom of God implies the subjection of the entire range of human life in all its forms and spheres to the ends of religion. The Kingdom reminds us of the **absoluteness, the pervasiveness, the unrestricted dominion**, which of right belong to all true religion. It proclaims that religion, and religion alone, can act as the **supreme unifying, centralizing factor** in the life of man, as that which binds all together and perfects all by leading it to its final goal in the service of God." (Dr. G. Vos.)

The term "Kingdom of God" evidently indicates in some texts an aggregation of spiritual blessings, a treasure, a pearl of great price. Matt. 13: 44, 45; righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, Rom. 14: 17; growing as a tree, working as leaven, not coming with outward show, Luke 17:20. It is entered by the new birth, John 3: 3, 5-7; comprehending people from the east and the west, the north and the south, Luke 13: 29. Some include the angels as belonging to it, Heb. 12: 22. Matt. 16: 19 speaking of the "Keys of the Kingdom," evidently identifies Church and Kingdom. (Compare Chapter XII. on Christ's office as King, and Chapter XXII., § 6, on the Keys of Discipline.)

The name "Kingdom of heaven, used 32 times in Matthew's gospel, suggests that the Kingdom descends from heaven, has heaven as its centre, makes us heavenly-minded, and is designed to restore the authority of God on earth, which is as a revolted province of his universe. It will be complete when the King comes wholly into his own. Matt. 5: 3; ff. 6: 10; Luke 12: 32; Acts 14: 22; 2 Thess. 1: 5, etc.

4) **The Marks of the Church.** Two of these are mentioned in the Compendium: the **pure preaching of the Word**, and the **administering of the holy sacraments according to the institution of Christ**.

That purity of preaching is a mark of the Church, is evident from John 8: 31, 32 and 2 John 1: 9.

That proper administration of the sacraments is necessary, is shown by John 15: 14 and Matt. 15: 7-9.

Usually, and properly, a third mark is added: the **faithful exercise of christian discipline**. (Chapter XXII.)

The Confession, in Art. XXIX., contains the following about the marks of the true Church, and wherein she differs from the false Church:

"We believe, that we ought diligently and circumspectly to discern from the word of God which is the true Church, since all sects which are in the world assume to themselves the name of the Church. But we speak not here of hypocrites, who are mixed in the Church with the good, yet are not of the Church, though externally in it; but we say that the body and communion of the true Church must be distinguished from all sects which call themselves the Church. The marks, by which the true Church is known, are these: if the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if she maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin; in short, if all things are managed according to the pure word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church. Hereby the true Church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself. With respect to those, who are members of the Church, they may be known by the marks of Christians; namely, by faith; and when they have received Jesus Christ the only Savior, they avoid sin, follow after righteousness, love the true God and their neighbor; neither turn aside to the right or left, and crucify the flesh with the works thereof. But this is not to be understood, as if there did not remain in them great infirmities; but they fight against them through the Spirit, all the days of their life, continually taking their refuge in the blood, death, passion and obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'in whom they have remission of sins through faith in him.' As for the false Church, she ascribes more power and authority to herself and her ordinances than to the word of God, and will not submit herself to the yoke of Christ. Neither does she administer the sacraments as appointed by Christ in his word, but adds to and takes from them, as she thinks proper; she relieth more upon men than upon Christ; and persecutes those, who live holily according to the word of God, and rebuke her for her errors, covetousness, and idolatry. These two churches are easily known and distinguished from each other."

It is the duty of every believer to assist in maintaining these marks, according to the Word of God. Especially in times of laxity in doctrine and decay in morals, christians are to remind themselves of their obligations to watch for Zion's true welfare. This is part of the "office" of believers.

The Roman Catholic Church claims as marks of the Church its name (Catholic), its antiquity, duration, multitude

of believers, episcopal succession, agreement in doctrine with the ancient Church, unity of its members mutually and with its head, (the Pope), holiness of doctrine, the holy life of the fathers of the Church, the glory of its miracles, its prophetic light, the testimony of its enemies, the unhappy ending of its opponents, and its temporal prosperity. We reject these marks since several of them are contrary to Holy Writ and others are disproved by history. We also deny its claims to the exclusive use of the name "catholic."

5) The **Office-bearers** of the Church we consider to belong to **three classes**: **ministers**, representing Christ as Prophet; **elders**, representing him as King; and **deacons**, representing the Lord as merciful High Priest.

The Reformed Churches hold the office of **Apostles** to have been extraordinary and of temporary duration, since the New Testament mentions as "marks" of apostleship: 1) sending by Christ himself, Gal. 1: 1; 2) being a witness of his life, especially of his resurrection, John 15: 27; Acts 1: 21, 22; 3) infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit in teaching and writing, John 14: 26; 1 Cor. 14: 37.

**Evangelists** were helpers of the Apostles, such as Philip and Timothy, Acts 21: 8; 2 Tim. 4: 5.

We do not consider **bishops** to be successors of the Apostles, as the Romish and the Episcopal Churches claim, but believe their office to be the same as that of the pastors. The Confession contains two articles on this subject:

**Art. XXX. Concerning the government of, and offices in the Church.**

"We believe, that this true Church must be governed by that spiritual policy which our Lord hath taught us in his Word; namely, that there must be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God, and to administer the sacraments; also elders and deacons, who, together with the pastors, form the council of the Church: that by these means the true religion may be preserved, and the true doctrine everywhere propagated, likewise transgressors punished and restrained by spiritual means: also that the poor and distressed may be relieved and comforted, according to their necessities. By these means everything will be carried on in the Church with good order and decency, when faithful men are chosen, according to the rule prescribed by St. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy."

**Art. XXXI. Of the Ministers, Elders, and Deacons.**

“We believe, that the ministers of God’s Word, and the elders and deacons, ought to be chosen to their respective offices by a lawful election by the Church, with calling upon the name of the Lord, and in that order which the Word of God teacheth. Therefore every one must take heed, not to intrude himself by indecent means, but is bound to wait till it shall please God to call him; that he may have testimony of his calling, and be certain and assured that it is of the Lord. As for the ministers of God’s Word, they have equally the same power and authority wheresoever they are, as they are all ministers of Christ, the only universal Bishop, and the only Head of the Church. Moreover, that this holy ordinance of God may not be violated or slighted, we say that every one ought to esteem the ministers of God’s Word, and the elders of the Church, very highly for their work’s sake, and be at peace with them without murmuring, strife or contention, as much as possible.”

6) **The Duty of the Church**, first of all and throughout all, is to **serve and glorify** God. Eph. 1: 4-6.

Secondly, to develop each christian until he attains the fulness of his stature in Christ. Eph. 4: 11-15.

Thirdly, to be a witness for Christ to those round about, a light and a leaven, a pillar of the truth, and a salt to keep from corruption.

Finally, in regard to the **unevangelized**, the duty is to “go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ commanded.” Matt. 28: 19, 20.

The **basis** of mission work is God’s decree, God’s promises, and God’s command. We should be **impelled** to engage in the work earnestly and constantly because of a desire to glorify God in this manner, to have his Kingdom come and precious souls and bodies “saved to serve.”

May God through his Spirit make us all earnest to know that we personally are living members of the Church, and may he constantly stir up us and the gifts within us, to have the Church of God flourish and increase.

7) “**That every one is bound to join himself to the true Church,**” is thus expressed in Art. XXVIII. of the Confession:

“We believe, since this holy congregation is an assembly of those who are saved, and that out of it there is no salvation, that no person, of whatsoever state or condition he may

be, ought to withdraw himself, to live in a separate state from it; but that all men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it; maintaining the unity of the Church; submitting themselves to the doctrine and discipline thereof; bowing their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ; and as mutual members of the same body, serving to the edification of the brethren, according to the talents God has given them. And that this may be the more effectually observed, it is the duty of all believers, according to the Word of God, to separate themselves from all those who do not belong to the Church, and to join themselves to this congregation, wheresoever God hath established it, even though the magistrates and edicts of princes were against it; yea, though they should suffer death or any other corporal punishment. Therefore all those, who separate themselves from the same, or do not join themselves to it, act contrary to the ordinance of God."

Outward membership of this Church, is, of course, not sufficient. Q. 40 speaks of being a "living member" of it, i.e. one who is born again, (Chapter XV.), and between whom and Christ there is a mystical and vital union, so that we live out of him, as well as for him. The parable of the vine (John 15) serves us to illustrate the meaning of this living membership.

May we not rest till we know that such membership is ours!

### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Why does the discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit lead to the doctrine of the Church?
- 2 What is the Church as to its essence?
- 3 Which names of the Church can you enumerate?
- 4 What does the attribute of the Church's UNITY mean?
- 5 What does the HOLINESS of the Church signify?
- 6 Describe the CATHOLICITY of the Church.
- 7 What is signified by the Church being "CHRISTIAN" and "APOSTOLIC"?
- 8 What is meant by the Church MILITANT?
- 9 What is meant by the Church TRIUMPHANT?
- 10 What do you mean by the term VISIBLE Church?
- 11 In which sense is the Church INVISIBLE?
- 12 Describe the difference between the Church as an Institute and an Organism.
- 13 Which difference is there between the Church and the Kingdom of God?
- 14 Which are the three MARKS of the visible Church?
- 15 Who are the office-bearers of the Church?
- 16 Which is the great duty of the Church?
- 17 What is our duty as to our relation to the Church?

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE CHURCH, CHOSEN, CALLED, A COMMUNION OF SAINTS; THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, THE RESURRECTION, THE JUDGMENT, ETERNAL LIFE AND ETERNAL DEATH.

Q. 42. What benefits doth Christ bestow on his Church?

A. He grants her remission of sins, the resurrection of the body, and eternal life.

The Church of God enjoys many favors. Several are mentioned in Answer 40 of the Compendium, placed at the head of Chapter XVI., and others are enumerated in Q. 42.

For the sake of an orderly treatment of them and of kindred doctrines, we shall, in this Chapter, discuss consecutively: 1) That the Church is **chosen** from eternity; 2) **called** in time; and 3) forming a **communion of saints**. Reserving the **forgiveness of sin**, mentioned in Q. 42 to the next Chapter (on Justification), we shall take up next: 4) the **Second Coming of Christ**; 5) the **Resurrection**; 6) the **Judgment**; and finally, 7) **Eternal Life** and its opposite, **Eternal Death**.

1) The Church is **chosen**, and chosen from eternity. That is mentioned in Q. 40 of the Compendium and taught clearly in Holy Writ. Eph. 1: 3-6: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love: having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

In Chapter IX. on the Attributes of God, we learned of God's **secret will**, of the will of his **decree**, God's eternal purpose according to which he effects all things in time. This **decree** or **counsel** of God is **eternal**, Acts 15: 18; **free**, Matt. 11: 36; **wise**, Rom. 11: 33, 34; **unchangeable**, Isa. 46: 10; and it is **general**, Eph. 1: 11. It has been called "God's working plan



for the universe." It covers all things: masses and atoms, pebbles and mountains, drops and oceans, countries and continents, sun, moon and stars; it comprehends all personalities: cherubs and seraphim, all principalities and powers, devils and saints, beggars and emperors, the obscure and the famous, paupers and millionaires; and every event is included in it, sad or gladsome, comprehensible or past finding out, of life and of death. Job. 14: 5; Prov. 16: 33; 21: 1; James 1: 17; Isa. 45: 17; Gen. 50: 20; Job 34: 10; Jer. 31: 35, 36.

A part of this all-comprehensive decree is **Predestination**, in which God foreordained the eternal state of rational creatures. This **Predestination** consists of two parts: sovereign **Election** of some to everlasting life, and most righteous **Reprobation** of others. **Reprobation**, signifying rejection, has by some been called **Preterition**, or passing by.

Article XVI. of the Confession declares the following about "**Eternal Election**":

"We believe that all the posterity of Adam being thus fallen into perdition and ruin, by the sin of our first parents, God then did manifest himself such as he is; that is to say, merciful and just: Merciful, since he delivers and preserves from this perdition all, whom he, in his eternal and unchangeable counsel of mere goodness, hath elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without any respect to their works; Just, in leaving others in the fall and perdition wherein they have involved themselves."

The Canons of Dordrecht, Canon I., describe this in detail:

"Article 7. Election is the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, he hath out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his own will, chosen, from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault, from their primitive state of rectitude, into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, whom he from eternity appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect, and the foundation of Salvation.

This elect number, though by nature neither better nor more deserving than others, but with them involved in one common misery, God hath decreed to give to Christ, to be saved by him, and effectually to call and draw them to his communion by his word and Spirit, to bestow upon them true faith, justification and sanctification; and having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of his Son, finally, to glorify them for the demonstration of his mercy, and for the praise of the riches of his glorious grace; as it is written, "According

as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Eph. 1: 4, 5, 6. And elsewhere, "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified." Rom. 8: 30.

**Article 8.** There are **not various decrees of election**, but one and the same decree respecting all those, who shall be saved, both under the Old and New Testament; since the scripture declares the good pleasure, purpose and counsel of the divine will to be one, according to which he hath chosen us from eternity, both to grace and glory, to salvation and the way of salvation, which he hath ordained that we should walk therein.

**Article 9.** This election was **not founded upon foreseen faith**, and the obedience of faith, holiness, or any other good quality or disposition in man, as the prerequisite, cause or condition on which it depended; but men are chosen to faith and to the obedience of faith, holiness, etc., therefore election is the fountain of every saving good; from which proceed faith, holiness, and the other gifts of salvation, and finally eternal life itself, as its fruits and effects, according to that of the apostle. "He hath chosen us (not because we were) but that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love." Eph. 1: 4.

**Article 10.** The **good pleasure of God is the sole cause of this gracious election**; which doth not consist herein, that God foreseeing all possible qualities of human actions, elected certain of these as a condition of salvation; but that he was pleased out of the common mass of sinners to adopt some certain persons as a peculiar people to himself, as it is written, "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil," etc. "It was said (namely to Rebecca) the elder shall serve the younger: as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Rom. 9: 11, 12, 13. "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Acts 13: 48.

**Article 11.** And as God himself is most wise, unchangeable, omniscient and omnipotent, so the election made by him can neither be interrupted nor changed, recalled or annulled; neither can the elect be cast away, nor their number diminished."

This Election is personal. The names of the chosen are in the Book of life. Read Ps. 69: 29; 7: 6; Isa. 4: 3; Luke 10: 20; Rom. 8: 29, 30.

The elect are together chosen in Christ as the Head of his mystical body, the Church. Eph. 1: 4.

Christ himself as **Mediator** and **Head** of his Church was ordained as such. Isa. 42: 1; 43: 10; Acts 2: 23; 4: 28; Eph. 1: 4; 1 Peter 1: 20; 2: 4.

Concerning the Predestination of angels we read in 1 Tim. 5: 21.

About the reverse of Election, **Reprobation**, Art. 15 of Canon I. declares:

“What peculiarly tends to illustrate and recommend to us the eternal and unmerited grace of election, is the express testimony of sacred Scripture, that not all, but some only are elected, while others are passed by in the eternal decree; whom God, out of his sovereign, most just, irreprehensible and unchangeable good pleasure, hath decreed to leave in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves, and not to bestow upon them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but permitting them in his just judgment to follow their own ways, at last for the declaration of his justice, to condemn and punish them for ever, not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins. And this is the **decree of reprobation** which by no means makes God the author of sin, (the very thought of which is blasphemy), but declares him to be an awful, irreprehensible, and righteous judge and avenger.” Also read Mal. 1: 2, 3; Matt. 7: 23; Rom. 9: 13, 18, 22; 1 Peter 2: 8; Jude 4.

The great purpose of both Election and Reprobation, is the glorification of God. Prov. 16: 4: “The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea even the wicked for the day of evil.”

His love, eternal, rich, and unspeakably wonderful and glorious, shines in his decree of Election. His righteousness manifests itself in Reprobation. But we are to remember at all times what the Article just quoted states so well: “the decree of Reprobation by no means makes God the author of sin, (the very thought of which is blasphemy), but declares him to be an awful, irreprehensible and righteous Judge and Avenger.”

Among the Reformed there is difference of opinion as to the order of the different parts of the decree of Predestination and the condition in which God considered the subjects of it. According to some, God in his eternal decree first decided, (in logical order), to create man, and then decreed the Fall, and finally foreordained to choose some to salvation, passing by the others. This is called **Infra-Lapsarism**, a term signifying “below the Fall.” Compare Rom. 9: 22, 23; Eph. 1: 4; 2 Tim. 1: 9; 1 Peter 1: 2.

According to others, the decree of Election and Reprobation **preceded** (also in logical order), the decree of God concerning the Fall. (Chap. IV.) This is called **Supra-Lapsarism**, signifying "above the Fall." Compare Prov. 16: 4; Isa. 10: 15; 45: 9; Matt. 20: 5; Rom. 9: 15.

The **Conclusions** of Utrecht, (compare Chap. XV.), state that the Standards of the Reformed Churches undoubtedly present the **Infra-Lapsarian** view, but that the wording of Canon I., Art. 7, as well as the deliberations of the Synod of Dordrecht, show that this was not designed to exclude or condemn the supra-lapsarian view.

Dr. H. Bavinck states: "Neither the one nor the other of the two representations is able to comprise the full, rich truth of Scripture concerning this matter, nor to satisfy our theological thinking. The relation of things is so rich and so complex that it cannot be expressed in one word, **infra- or supra-lapsarism.**"

The doctrine of Election is very **important**. It has justly been called the "heart of the Church." Without Election there would be no salvation, since sin has so thoroughly ruined us, that we could not save ourselves. God had to make provision. It seems strange that any one should deny this. And yet it has been done, and is being done, times without number. One of the reasons why people oppose the doctrine is evidently because it reveals so plainly the **sovereignty** of God, and the proud heart of man hates this by nature. Another reason is that the unenlightened mind is unable to comprehend it savingly. Enemies of the Reformed religion have created prejudice against it by false representations of the matter, as if Predestination means that "God has predestined a part of mankind, without any fault of theirs, to eternal damnation, and that therefore He blinds and hardens the heart of sinners." (DeHarbe's Catechism, [Roman Catholic], 6th ed., p. 44.)

What also has prejudiced some against the doctrine is, that it, alas, has been **abused** by people **inside** the Reformed Churches, who have perverted it to their own ruin as an excuse for sin and sloth. But nevertheless the doctrine, in its true presentation, is thoroughly biblical and worthy of all acceptance. And to a believer it becomes a source of wonderful

comfort. For it assures him that his salvation is firm and sure in God, and not depending on the exercise of his will, nor subject to his ever-varying fears and feelings.

May God grant us to obey Peter's command, to make sure our calling and election. And to our encouragement we may well quote the true saying that, while Election is thoroughly sovereign and free, "as a rule it takes a definite course, proceeding along the line of the Covenant of Grace. Generally the elect are Covenant children. This is attested by the fact that the Church is continued in successive generations. There are exceptions to the rule, however, and therefore, though encouraging to the members of the Covenant, it gives no ground for false assurance." (Prof. W. Heyns.)

The first Canon of Dordrecht beautifully closes its declarations concerning the doctrine as follows:

**Article 16.** Those who do not yet experience a lively faith in Christ, an assured confidence of soul, peace of conscience, an earnest endeavor after filial obedience, and glorying in God through Christ, efficaciously wrought in them, and do nevertheless persist in the use of the means which God hath appointed for working these graces in us, ought not to be alarmed at the mention of reprobation, nor to rank themselves among the reprobate, but diligently to persevere in the use of means, and with ardent desires, devoutly and humbly to wait for a season of richer grace. Much less cause have they to be terrified by the doctrine of reprobation, who, though they seriously desire to be turned to God, to please him only, and to be delivered from the body of death, cannot yet reach that measure of holiness and faith to which they aspire; since a merciful God has promised that he will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed. But this doctrine is justly terrible to those, who, regardless of God and of the Savior Jesus Christ, have wholly given themselves up to the cares of the world, and the pleasures of the flesh, so long as they are not seriously converted to God.

**Article 17.** Since we are to judge of the will of God from his Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but in virtue of the covenant of grace, in which they, together with the parents, are comprehended, godly parents have no reason to doubt of the election and salvation of their children, whom it pleaseth God to call out of this life in their infancy.

**Article 18.** To those who murmur at the free grace of election, and just severity of reprobation, we answer with the apostle: 'Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?' Rom. 9:30. And quote the language of our

Savior, 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?' Matt. 20: 15. And therefore with holy adoration of these mysteries, we exclaim in the words of the apostle: 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.'"

2) **Calling.** Rom. 8: 30 declares: "and whom he fore-ordained them he also called." This shows that God's decree of Election, made in eternity, is carried out in time, by the Calling or Vocation of the chosen.

We speak of two kinds of Calling, the one external or outward, and the other internal or inward. Matt. 22: 14: "Many are called, but few chosen."

I. The external calling may be divided into two classes: the general calling through Nature, History and Providence; and the outward calling through the Word of God.

(a) About the general calling, Job 33: 14-16 informs us: "For God speaketh once, yea twice, though men regardeth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, When deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, Then he openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction,"

Acts 17: 26-28: "Having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitations; that they should seek God, if haply they may feel after him, though he is not far from each one of us." Compare Rom. 1: 19, 21; Ps. 19: 4.

In a general way this calling points us to God, to our need of seeking him, the blessedness of finding him, etc. It is called general because it comes to all people. Nature tells all men of the existence of God. History plainly reveals the hand of God. And Providence, as it brings various experiences to us all, points to a "Divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will."

(b) Usually the term outward calling is applied to the calling through the Word of God as it comes to us with its demands and invitation to repent of sin and to turn to God and his Christ in faith. While general calling comes to all the inhabitants of the earth, the outward calling through the

Word, reaches all within the sound of the gospel. Art. 3. Canon I. declares:

“And that men may be brought to believe, God mercifully sends the messengers of these most joyful tidings, to whom he will and at what time he pleaseth; by whose ministry men are called to repentance and faith in Christ crucified. Rom. 10: 14, 15. “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?”

This external Calling is not, as Arminians would have it, an assurance to each hearer of the gospel that Christ died for him personally, (compare Chapter XII., II.), but rather, as Dr. Charles Hodge puts it, it includes: 1) “a declaration of the plan of salvation; 2) a declaration of duty on the part of the sinner to repent and believe; 3) a declaration of the motives which ought to influence the sinner’s mind, such as fear or hope, remorse or gratitude; 4) a promise of acceptance in the case of all who comply with the conditions.”

This call is addressed equally to all who hear the gospel, as stated by Matt. 22:14, commanded in Mark 16:15, while judgment is pronounced upon those who reject it, John 3:19; John 16:9.

In Canon III, IV, Art. 8, the Reformed Churches declare: “As many as are called by the gospel are **unfeignedly** called. For God hath most earnestly and truly declared in his Word, what will be acceptable to him, namely, that all who are called should comply with the invitation. He, moreover, seriously promises eternal life and rest to as many as shall come to him and believe on him.”

Let us appreciate this external calling wherein God reveals his love, maintains his claims, upholds our moral nature, and appeals to our sense of responsibility, reverence and duty!

II. To be actually saved, however, we need more than this outward calling. This is because by nature we are blind, in a spiritual sense, dead in trespasses and sins and rebellious. (1 Cor. 2:14, Prov. 1:24). In the case of his elect people therefore God adds to this external calling a second kind of vocation, the **internal calling**.

Internal calling has also been divided into two kinds: the creative calling of God, and the effectual calling.

(a) The **creative calling** is named thus from Gen. 1, wherein God is represented repeatedly as calling things into existence by the word of his command ("and God said"), and from Rom. 4:17 speaking of "God, who giveth life from the dead, and calleth things that are not as though they were." This creative calling results in regeneration in the **narrow** sense, the implanting of new spiritual life, as explained in Chapter XV. It has been compared to the imparting of organs of spiritual sight and hearing. (See p. 125.)

(b) The second kind of internal calling is named **effectual calling** and is usually referred to when we speak of inward vocation. It may be defined as "the work of God's Spirit," (applying God's Word), "whereby, convincing us of sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel." (Sh. Cat.)

Effectual calling results in regeneration in the **wider** sense: the first **manifestation** of spiritual life. (See Chapter XXIV, on Conversion.)

It has been compared to causing the implanted organs of sight and hearing to actually see and hear. In 1 Peter 2:9 it is named a calling out of darkness into God's marvelous light. A plain example of effectual calling is Lydia, Acts 16:14, "whose heart the Lord opened—to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul." Canons II., IV. contain the following beautiful declarations of the subject of Calling:

**Article 11.** "But when God accomplishes his good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, he not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by his Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit, pervades the inmost recesses of the man; he **opens the closed, and softens the hardened heart,** and circumcises that which was uncircumcised, **infuses new qualities into the will,** which though heretofore dead, he quickens; from being evil, disobedient and refractory, he renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions."

3) The called persons form a **Communion**, in the Apostles' Creed called "**Communion of Saints.**" The Hei-



delberg Catechism defines this as follows in the answer to Q. 55. "What do you understand by "the communion of saints?"

"**F**irst, that all and every one, who believes, being members of Christ, are in common, partakers of him, and of all his riches and gifts: **s**econdly, that every one must know it to be his duty, readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts, for the advantage and salvation of other members."

Read: John 1: 3, 4; Rom. 8: 32; 1 Cor. 12: 13; 1 Cor. 13: 5; Phil. 2: 4, 5, 6.

This **Communion** is wider than congregational or denominational limits. It is not always realized as it should be. But to **feel** something of it in the heart is a blessed experience. And it is an important **responsibility** which it involves: to **strengthen** the weak brother, to **defend** the assailed, to **comfort** the grief-stricken, to **raise** the fallen and to **cheer** the faint! May God make us faithful!

The Communion of the saints is also very **helpful** to the believer himself. As a rule we feel the need of company, advice and assistance of others. To stand alone as some of the great figures of history, is something for which most of us are evidently not equipped. Even Elijah complained about it that he was left alone, I. Kings 18: 22; 19: 10, 14, as well as Paul, 2 Tim. 4: 1. The Communion of saints supplies or should supply this need of having others share our troubles and counsel with us regarding our problems. Moreover, the social instincts which the regenerated persons as well as the unregenerated ones possess find their sphere and exercise in this Communion, based on God's election and calling as One Body of Christ, and stronger and more enduring than ties of family, tribe, nation or race. May we often experience:

"Blest be the tie that binds  
 Our hearts in Christian love;  
 The fellowship of kindred minds  
 Is like to that above.  
 Before our Father's throne  
 We pour our ardent prayers;  
 Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,  
 Our comforts and our cares.  
 We share our mutual woes;  
 Our mutual burdens bear;  
 And often for each other flows  
 The sympathizing tear."

4) **The Second Coming.** At the end of the present dispensation of grace, Jesus will come again, for Peter assured us that the heavens were to receive him "until the restoration of all things." Acts 3:21.

The exact time of this Return is not revealed, Matt. 24:36-39.

But we know it will be in **glory**, Matt. 16:27; Christ will come **bodily, visibly, locally, with clouds, and accompanied by the hosts of heaven.** Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Jude 14.

It will be **suddenly** and without immediate warning. Matt. 24:27-42.

It will be accompanied by great **disturbances in nature.** Matt. 24:29; especially in the starry world.

While we do not know the exact time, various **signs are** predicted to mark the coming as at hand.

- 1) Much increase in travel and in learning. Dan 12:4.
- 2) Perilous times, politically and socially. 2 Tim. 3:1; Matt. 24:1-12.
- 3) Increase in spiritualism. 1 Tim. 4:1.
- 4) An awful apostacy or falling away from the truth. 2 Thess. 2:3.
- 5) World-wide evangelism. Matt. 24:14.
- 6) Unprecedented increase in the heaping up of riches. James 5:1, 8.
- 7) Great movements among Israel. Ez. 37:1-8; Isa. 27:12, 13; Rom. 11:11-27; Rev. 1:7.
- 8) Severe persecution of the faithful Church. Matt. 24:9, 21, 22.
- 9) The arising of false Christs and prophets, performing signs and miracles, so much that if it were possible, they would deceive the elect. Matt. 24:29.
- 10) The appearing of Antichrist. This Antichrist is to be distinguished from the false Christs just mentioned. While there were "many antichrists" already in John's days, (1 John 2:18), and the "spirit of antichrist" (1 John 4:3), has been in the world since the beginning, in all that denies the truth of the incarnation of the Son of God, these "many antichrists" but precede, and prepare the way for the Antichrist, some in-

dividual, who, at the end of time, when the restraining grace of God is withdrawn, 2 Thess. 2:7, will be a culminating manifestation of the devil and become the head of reprobated humanity, since the fall without a head, imitating Christ as the head of the chosen people. Coming up as the Beast out of the Earth (Rev. 13: 11-17), identical with the false prophet of Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10; he will set up an organization in imitation of the true Church, Rev. 13:17, and make himself the ecclesiastical head of reprobate humanity, for a time in alliance with ecclesiastical Babylon which is apostate christianity, headed by Papaey, (Rev. 17: 18).

Some present day writers distinguish between this Anti-christ as the last "ecclesiastical head," and the Beast out the Sea of Rev. 13: 1-10 as the last "civil head" of reprobate humanity, the little horn of Dan. 7: 24-26, the desolator of Dan. 9: 27, the "man of sin" of 2 Thess. 2: 4-8. The final overthrow and eternal doom of the anti-christian powers is foretold in Rev. 19: 20: "And the Beast was faken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he had deceived them that had received the mark of the Beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone."

"Scripture teaches plainly that the anti-christian power . . . at the end will develop itself completely in a general falling away and breaking of all natural and moral ties, and then embodies itself in a world-empire, which takes the false church into its service, and which apotheoses itself in the deification of the head of that empire. Christ himself, through his appearance, will destroy this anti-christian power in its highest and last development." (Bavinck).

May we prayerfully study the signs of the times and constantly be on our guard lest we be carried away by the great anti-christian movements as they appear in various forms in the present time.

5) **The Resurrection.** Rev. 20 tells us that, at the end of this dispensation, the Devil shall be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the Beast and the false Prophet are." (Rev. 20: 10). This will be followed by the appearance of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. (Rev. 20:

11-13). Often times the doctrine of "the resurrection of the body," as the Apostles' Creed speaks of it, has been denied. The Sadducees of Jesus' times have to this day many successors. Some deny its very possibility. But it is plainly taught in the Bible, and no matter how many difficulties may beset it, he who as the Almighty was able to bring the Universe into being, out of nothing, and at the word of his command, is certainly able to fulfill his own Word and raise the dead. The resurrection was believed by the patriarchs, Gen. 22: 5 and Heb. 11: 9; Job 19: 25-27; revealed through the Prophets, Is. 26: 19; Dan. 11: 2, 13, and miracles of restoration of life are recorded in the O. T., 2 Kings 4: 32, 35; 13: 21, as well as in the N. T., Matt. 9: 25; Luke 7: 15; John 11: 44; Matt. 27: 52, 53, and Acts 9: 36; 20: 9, 10. This was anticipatory of the general resurrection at the end of the N. T. dispensation, the resurrection of both the just and of the unjust. John 5: 28.

Concerning the **bodies of the unjust** we learn from Is. 66: 24 that they shall be an "abhorring to all flesh," while Dan. 12: 2 states that the wicked shall "awake to shame and everlasting contempt." They will not be turned into ashes as Adventists and others teach, as the above mentioned texts clearly show. These bodies of the unjust shall be **immortal** in the sense that they shall **continue to exist**. But in their case immortality will be a curse instead of a blessing. May God keep us from such a lot! About the **bodies of the redeemed** we are taught that they are going to be **glorious, incorruptible, powerful, spiritual**, without difference of sex, and without digestive organs. 1 Cor. 15: 42, 43, 44; Matt. 22: 30; 1 Cor. 6: 13. There will be identity between the body sown and the body raised. Job 19: 25-27 compared to 1 Cor. 15: 35-37. The bodies of those saints who shall live when Jesus comes will be changed in the twinkling of an eye. 1 Cor. 15: 52: "Behold I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." (Compare Rom. 8: 23; Eph. 1: 13, 14.)

Some distinguish between **two stages or kinds** of resurrection, separated by a period of 1000 years. (Rev. 20:5). The **first** is called resurrection of life, 1 Cor. 15: 22, 23, and the second of **judgment**, Rev. 20:11-13. According to this view, at the **first** Resurrection, the saints of the O. T. and the dead in Christ will be raised, and with the watching believers of the latter days are "to meet the Lord in the air," which latter feature is called the **Rapture**, 1 Thess. 4: 16, 17. The "**Great Tribulation**" will then take place on earth, with its vortex in the Holy Land, and marked by the cruel reign of the "beast out of the sea," Rev. 13: 1, the "great wrath" of Satan, Rev. 12: 12, unprecedented activity of demons, Rev. 9: 2 and 11, and the pouring out of the "bowls" of judgment of Rev. 16. This is to last three and one half years; or the last half of the 70th week of Daniel, 9: 24-27. At the end of these three and one half years Christ is believed to appear with his saints from heaven. He will then raise his believing people, re-establish the throne of David in Jerusalem, sit upon it in bodily form, together with the raised saints, (some say, only the martyrs of the Tribulation period, Rev. 20: 4), and reign over the world peopled by men still in the flesh and following the usual pursuits of mankind. This earthly reign will last one thousand years, (hence it is called **Millennium**, meaning 1000 years). Satan will be bound during that period, but at its close will be loosed for a season, deceive the nations in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, and marshal them to surround the "camp of the saints and the beloved city." At that juncture fire will come from heaven and destroy them; the devil will be cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet are, and then will come the resurrection of "the rest of the dead," to be followed by the general judgment, Rev. 20. This scheme of events of the last days is called **pre-millinarian**, because it asserts that Christ will come before (pre) the Millennium. Many present day evangelists hold this view. But there are very serious **objections** to it. Historically it is of Jewish origin, was furthered by such heretics of the early Church as the Ebionites and Cerinthus, condemned by Augustine, and has never found its way into the Creeds of the Evangelical Churches, but rather has been rejected by name in several Confessions. Calvin called Mil-

linarianism a "fiction too puerile to require or deserve refutation," (Institutes, Book III, chapter 25).

It not only speaks of two distinct resurrections, contrary to John 5:28, 29, but of two comings of Christ, contrary to Acts 3:21, Heb. 10:12, 13, Luke 19:13. It posits the restoration of material sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem, contrary to Heb. 7:18, 19, 9:10, Gal. 4:3-9, and involves endless difficulties in details, so that premillennialists differ widely in their interpretations.

The basis of the premillennial view is Rev. 20:1-7, which is interpreted literally. But evidently a spiritual being as the devil cannot be bound with a literal "chain," nor does the pericope speak of the resurrected saints but of the "souls" of those beheaded for the witness of Jesus.

The most acceptable interpretation of Rev. 20 evidently is that the binding of Satan involves great curtailment of his powers during a definite complete period (10 x 10 x 10) toward the end of the ages, notably great restriction of his influence upon "the nations in the four quarters (corners) of the earth," the non-christian peoples who formerly tried to ruin God's people but who during this period are kept from overwhelming the Church, although they outnumber it vastly.

The "reign" of the saints with Christ denotes the triumph of the principles for which they lived and died, even as John the Baptist went before Christ "in the spirit and power of Elijah," Luke 1:17.

6) **The Judgment.** After the general resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous comes the **general judgment** of the quick and the dead. Some pre-millennialists speak of as many as four different judgments. But the uniform doctrine of the orthodox Church has always been that there will be **one final judgment** at the end of this dispensation, at the appointed day when God, through Christ, will judge the world in righteousness, Acts 17:30, 31. The Son of man will be the **judge**, John 5:27, before whom the ungodly will quail, Rev. 6:15-17. The angels will be helpers in this judgment, Matt. 13:30. The believers also will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, 2 Cor. 5:10, but

evidently before the rest, since the saints are said to judge the world, 1 Cor. 6: 2, 3, and to the apostles was promised the judging of the twelve tribes of Israel, Matt. 19: 30.

In the judgment we distinguish: 1) the **examination**, at the opening of the books, Rev. 20: 12; 2) the **giving of an account**, even of idle words spoken, Matt. 12: 36; 3) the **pronouncing of judgment**, "according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. 5: 10, but the sins of the believers outweighed by the merits of their Savior. The final stage is 4) the **execution of sentence**, the just being bidden welcome to the glory of Christ, the unjust consigned to unending misery, Matt. 25: 31-46.

The fallen angels also are to be judged, unto condemnation, to be cast into the lake of fire with all whose names are not found written in the Lamb's book of life, Rev. 20: 15.

Art. XXXVII. of the Confession contains the following solemn description of the **Last Judgment**:

"Finally we believe, according to the Word of God, when the time appointed by the Lord (which is unknown to all creatures) is come, and the number of elect complete, that our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven, corporally and visibly, as he ascended, with great glory and majesty to declare himself judge of the quick and the dead; burning this old world with fire and flame, to cleanse it. And then all men will personally appear before this great judge, both men and women and children, that have been from the beginning of the world to the end thereof, being summoned by the voice of the archangel, and by the sound of the trumpet of God. For all the dead shall be raised out of the earth, and their souls joined and united with their proper bodies, in which they formerly lived. As for those who shall then be living, they shall not die as the others, but be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and from corruptible, become incorruptible. Then the books (that is to say the consciences) shall be opened, and the dead judged according to what they shall have done in this world, whether it be good or evil. Nay, all men shall give an account of every idle word they have spoken, which the world only counts amusement and jest: and then the secrets and hypocrisy of men shall be disclosed and laid open before all. And therefore the consideration of this judgment, is justly terrible and dreadful to the wicked and the ungodly, but most desirable and comfortable to the righteous and elect: because then their full deliverance shall be perfected, and there they shall receive the fruits of their labor and trouble, which they have borne. Their innocence shall be known to

all, and they shall see the terrible vengeance which God shall execute on the wicked, who most cruelly persecuted, oppressed and tormented them in this world; and who shall be convicted by the testimony of their own consciences, and being immortal, shall be tormented in that everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels. But on the contrary, the faithful and elect shall be crowned with glory and honor; and the Son of God will confess their names before God his Father, and his elect angels; all tears shall be wiped from their eyes; and their cause which is now condemned by many judges and magistrates, as heretical and impious, will then be known to be the cause of the Son of God. And for a gracious reward, the Lord will cause them to possess such a glory, as never entered into the heart of man to conceive. Therefore we expect that great day with a most ardent desire, to the end that we may fully enjoy the promises of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

‘Even so, come, Lord Jesus.’—Rev. 22: 20.”

7) **Eternal Life and Eternal Death.** That the wicked shall be punished was shown in Chapter V. The punishment of eternal death **begins** already when one dies impenitently.

We do not believe in **Soul-sleep** during the interval between death and resurrection as Adventists and Russellites teach. The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus teaches us, “the rich man died, and in hell **lifted up his eyes, being in torment.**” That teaches both, consciousness and pain.

That death is sometimes called sleep in the Bible is because it **appears** to be a sleeping. But even while asleep our brain is often active. Compare Phil. 1: 23, Rev. 6: 9.

We also reject the doctrine of **Second Probation** which teaches that men will have another opportunity to repent. “Behold **now** is the accepted time, behold **now** is the day of salvation.” 2 Cor. 6: 2. Compare Rom. 1: 20, 32; 2: 12; and Rev. 21: 8.

Fearful will be the condition of the lost. (Chapter VI.)

It will be in an awful place, hell; a lake of fire, Rev. 21: 8; a bottomless pit, Rev. 9: 2, etc. It will be in terrible **society**, that of the devils and the damned, **deprived** of every blessing, subjected to the feeling of God’s unbearable **wrath**, with **conscience** gnawing as a worm that never dies, and without **hope!**

And that forever and ever! May God keep us from it!

See Chapter V. about the everlasting character of this



punishment and Chapter XI. on the Immortality of the soul, denied by Adventists and others who teach "Conditional Immortality."

The Roman Catholics claim that there is a special part of hell set aside for unbaptized children, called "**Limbus Infantum**," but we reject this doctrine as without biblical foundation. We also refuse to accept, on the same ground, their teaching about the "**Limbus Patrum**," or region wherein the believers of the Old Testament were until Christ descended thither after his death. (Chapter XIV.)

The Roman Catholic teaching about **Purgatory** as a place in which imperfect believers are **purged** from their sin, helped by the masses for the dead, we consider **unbiblical** as we infer from Jesus' promise to the dying thief: "today thou shalt be with me in Paradise," etc. That **Paradise** signifies **heaven** is plain from 2 Cor. 12: 4, compared with 2 Cor. 12: 2, and from Rev. 2: 7, compared with Rev. 22: 2.

A literal view of some of the details of the parable of Dives and Lazarus, and a literal interpretation of some Old Testament texts, has led old Church fathers and newer theologians to represent **Hades** (the New Testament word for the Old Testament **Sheol**) as a place where both the righteous and the unrighteous dwell together till the Judgment Day, as a common Realm of the Dead. (Doodenrijk.)

The uniform faith of the Christian Church, however, is, that a separation takes place at death between the ungodly and the godly. The ungodly, like Judas, go to their "own place," Acts 1: 25, to lift up their eyes in hell, Luke 16: 23; being in anguish, Luke 16: 24, 25; "in prison," 1 Peter 3: 19; "suffering the punishment of eternal fire," Jude 7.

On the other hand, the Church of Christ teaches that the soul of a true believer "after this life shall be immediately taken up to Christ, its head," (Heidelberg Cat., Q. 57), on the ground of Phil. 1: 23 and Ps. 73: 24, and as stated in the case of Lazarus, Luke 16: 22. Paul spoke of being "absent from the body" as being "at home with the Lord," 2 Cor. 5: 8. Rev. 6: 9-11 represents the souls under the altar as both in heaven and conscious.

On account of the absence of the body, however, and the

incompleteness of the victory of their Lord over sin and Satan, the joy of the salvation of the redeemed in heaven during the "intermediate state" will not be as complete as later on.

The full enjoyment of eternal life will be granted after the Resurrection and the Judgment, when Christ fulfils his promise of **Matt. 25:34**: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

**Eternal Life** will be the everlasting portion of the redeemed. It will be spent in a glorious place, heaven, the City of the King, the Father's House with many mansions, Paradise. It will be spent in the best society, the angels and the redeemed. It will consist in enjoying God, knowing God, being glorified, sanctified, perfect, and sharing in the glory and Kingdom of Him who loved them with an everlasting love, who redeemed them with his blood, who cleansed them from every blemish, and in whose glorification and service they will find unspeakable and complete satisfaction, thus reaching the purpose of their creation and redemption. Neither will a glorious reward be lacking. (Chapter XVIII.)

May God in sovereign mercy grant to all who read this a portion with the saints in the light!

Then we will not be troubled though the heavens and the earth that now exist, shall pass away, with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth also and all the works that are therein shall be burned up, for according to His promise we look for a new, that is, a renewed heaven and earth, in which righteousness shall dwell. 2 Peter 3: 7-13.

"Before me place, in bright array  
The pomp of that tremendous day  
When thou with clouds shalt come,  
To judge the nations at thy bar;  
And tell me, Lord, shall I be there  
To meet a joyful doom?"

"Be this my one great business here,  
With holy trembling, holy fear,  
To make my calling sure!  
Thine utmost counsel to fulfill,  
And suffer all thy righteous will  
And to the end endure."

“Then Savior, then my soul receive,  
Transported from this vale, to live  
And reign with thee above;  
Where faith is sweetly lost in sight,  
And hope in full supreme delight  
And everlasting love.”

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### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Can you prove that the Church of God is ‘‘chosen to eternal life’’?
- 2 Which are the two parts of predestination?
- 3 What was the cause of the election to life?
- 4 Prove that election is personal.
- 5 What place does Christ occupy in this election?
- 6 Which is the purpose of both election and reprobation?
- 7 What is the difference between Infra Lapsarism and Supra Lapsarism?
- 8 Show the importance of maintaining the doctrine of election.
- 9 Are there reasons to encourage us in making sure our personal election?
- 10 What is embraced in the external calling?
- 11 What is included in the internal calling?
- 12 What is the effect of the internal calling?
- 13 What is meant by the Communion of Saints?
- 14 Describe the character of Christ’s Second Coming.
- 15 Which signs will precede the Second Coming?
- 16 What do you think of Antichrist?
- 17 What can you say about the resurrection of the body?
- 18 What is the most acceptable view about the Millennium?
- 19 What can you tell about the Last Judgment?
- 20 Describe eternal life and eternal death.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

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### JUSTIFICATION, THE PROFIT OF FAITH, AND THE ORIGIN OF FAITH.

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- Q. 43 What doth it profit thee now that thou believest all this?  
A. That I am righteous in Christ before God. Rom. 5: 10.
- Q. 44 How art thou righteous before God?  
A. Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ.
- Q. 45 How is it to be understood that thou art justified by faith only?  
A. Thus: that the perfect satisfaction and righteousness of Christ alone are imputed to me of God by which my sins are forgiven me, and I become an heir of everlasting life; and that I cannot receive that righteousness by any other means than by faith.
- Q. 46 Why cannot our good works be our righteousness before God or some part thereof?  
A. Because even our best works, in this life, are imperfect, and polluted with sins.
- Q. 47 Do our good works then merit nothing, which yet God will reward in this, and in a future life?  
A. This reward is not given out of merit, but of grace.
- Q. 48 Who worketh that faith in thee?  
A. The Holy Ghost.
- Q. 49 By what means?  
A. By the hearing of the word preached. Rom. 10: 14-17.
- Q. 50 How does he strengthen that faith?  
A. By the same Word preached, and by the use of the holy sacraments.

In Chapter VII. we discussed the Nature of Faith. The Chapters VIII. to XVII. were devoted to the Object of Faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed, treated in Q. 21 to 42 of the Compendium. With Q. 43 the Compendium returns to this starting point, by inquiring: "What doth it profit thee now that thou believest all this?" In other words, it inquires about the profit or fruit of Faith, (Q. 43-47), while Q. 48-50 are occupied with the origin and the strengthening of Faith.

Accordingly, in this Chapter, we shall discuss (1) the Profit or Fruit of Faith; (2) Faith's Origin; and (3) its Strengthening.

I. The **Profit or Fruit of Faith** is usually called **Justification**, a very important part of christian truth. It was one of the great doctrines of grace around which the Reformation struggle centered.

The Roman Catholic Church **identified** Sanctification (Chapter XXV.) and Justification. It stated that Justification included (1) Cleansing from all grievous sins together with the remission of eternal punishment; and (2) Sanctification or renewal of the inner man.

The Council of Trent asserted that the sinner in receiving the sacrament of Baptism or Penance receives sanctifying grace and remission of sin, as well as interior sanctification, and that **thus** he is really made just, acceptable to God, a child of God, and heir of heaven.

The contention of the Reformation leaders was that Sanctification and Justification are entirely separate, and widely different blessings. The following are the main distinctions:

- 1) In Justification God **imputes** the righteousness of Christ, in Sanctification the Spirit **infuses** grace;
- 2) In Justification the guilt of sin is removed, and in Sanctification its pollution; (Compare Chapter V.)
- 3) Justification takes place without us; Sanctification within us;
- 4) Justification is instantaneous and complete; Sanctification a slow process throughout the life of the believer;
- 5) Justification equally frees all believers before God, but Sanctification is not equal in all.

Besides differing in the conception of Justification and Sanctification, there is a radical difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants as to the **means** of Justification. Romanists hold that we are justified partly by faith and partly by works, while the great contention of Luther and all the Reformed was and is that we are justified by faith only, without works.

To get a proper view of this important doctrine, let us discuss Justification in: (1) its Nature; (2) its Ground; (3) its Means; (4) its Stages.

1) **The Nature of Justification.** "Justification," says the Shorter Catechism, "is an act of God's free grace, wherein he

pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone."

Answer 45 of the Compendium enumerates two blessings as the two parts of Justification: forgiving of sin, and becoming an heir of everlasting life. The first part is frequently called **remission of sin**; the second, **adoption**. Both of these favors are mentioned by Paul, Gal. 4:5: "That he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

The **Author** of Justification is God, particularly God the Father. Rom. 8:32, 33: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that shall condemn?"

The word "justify" signifies to **declare** or **reckon** just. Its direct opposite is to condemn. This is shown by the text just quoted as well as by Prov. 17:15, etc.

This distinction we hold over against the Roman Catholics who take the word in the sense of **making** righteous.

We insist that it means to **declare** righteous. Justification is an act of God as our Judge, and consequently called a forensic or judicial act of God. By nature we stand before God as our Judge, as guilty in Adam, as breakers of his law, and under condemnation. The Bible tells us we are by nature children of wrath, Eph. 2:3, with the wrath of God upon us, John 3:36. But when we are justified, God pronounces us cleared from the guilt of sin, released from its condemning power, and accepted in Christ. Ps. 32:1, 2: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." This act of our gracious God covers all our sin, past, present, original, and actual. It also covers the sins of the future in the sense that they shall not be charged to the believer, and this is equivalent to a forgiveness. Coll. 2:13: "having forgiven us all our trespasses." Isa. 1:18; Ps. 103:3, 12.

The forgiveness mentioned in the Lord's Prayer is not to be taken in the sense of judicial pardon, but as fatherly forgiveness, whereby the Lord assures his child anew of his

pardon in Christ. This has been called **passive** Justification, in distinction from the **active** Justification by faith. In it God from time to time applies to the heart of the believer the forgiveness he has in the blood of the Redeemer in whom he trusts. Blessed the man whose sin has been covered!

And whatever affliction is sent to the believers in this life as a consequence of sin, is not sent as **punishment** to satisfy the claims of justice, (which Christ satisfied), but as **chastisement**, to correct and improve. Ps. 89: 30-33; Heb. 12: 6-10.

It is a great privilege, therefore, to be justified in the sense of having our sins pardoned and accounted righteous before God. But this is not the whole of the great blessing. As stated above, it contains not alone **Remission** of sin, but also **Adoption**, which may be defined as an act of God's free grace whereby we, for Christ's sake, are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the children of God. This also is a great favor, since it is an act of free grace, bringing a new name, making us a part of God's family, and assuring us of fatherly preservation, fatherly love, fatherly provision, fatherly answers to our prayers and a filial spirit.

It also guarantees us fatherly correction, that we may be trained in our christian character, Heb. 12: 5, 6, and finally, it includes a glorious inheritance, as joint-heirs with Christ, Rom. 8: 17. The following texts plainly show various features involved in Adoption. Let us ponder them and not rest till we know that we are accepted in the Beloved!

Eph. 1: 5: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

1 John. 13: 1: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

John 1: 12: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

2 Cor. 6: 18: "And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

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

Rom. 8: 17: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God,

and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

2) The **Ground of Justification** is exclusively the perfect satisfaction and righteousness of Christ which is imputed to the believer. This is expressed very strongly in Art. XXIII. of the Confession:

"We believe that our salvation consists in the remission of our sins for Jesus Christ's sake, and that therein our righteousness before God is implied: as David and Paul teaches us, declaring this to be the happiness of man, that God imputes righteousness to him without works. And the same apostle saith, that we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ. And therefore we always hold fast this foundation, ascribing all the glory to God, humbling ourselves before him, and acknowledging ourselves to be such as we really are, without presuming to trust in any thing in ourselves, or in any merit of ours, relying and resting upon the obedience of Christ crucified alone, which becomes ours, when we believe in him. This is sufficient to cover all our iniquities, and to give us confidence in approaching to God; freeing the conscience of fear, terror and dread, without following the example of our first father, Adam, who, trembling, attempted to cover himself with fig-leaves. And verily if we should appear before God, relying on ourselves, or on any other creature, though ever so little, we should, alas! be consumed. And therefore every one must pray with David: **O Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.**"

That our **good works** cannot be our righteousness before God, in part nor as a whole, is very plain if we consider that even our best works in this life are imperfect, and polluted with sin. Rev. 3:2 tells the church in Sardis, "I have not found thy works perfect before God," and Paul assures us in Galatians, "that no man is justified by the law before God is evident, for: the righteous shall live by faith." Moreover, the "good" in them is wrought not by men but by the Holy Spirit, so that the credit for it belongs not to us but to God. Eph. 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." And again, Eph. 2:8, 9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

The **reward** which believers get for their good works will be beyond compare. Matt. 19:29 speaks of receiving "an



hundredfold." But it will not be as the merit of servants who **earned** their wages, but of grace, as children of the gracious Father in heaven who will reward even for a cup of cold water given to a disciple, in a disciple's name. Matt. 10: 42. When it comes to wages for our good works, we should always bear in mind the Savior's statement, Luke 17: 10, "So likewise, ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." (Cf. Chap. XXIII.).

When the charge is made that this doctrine of Justification through Christ makes men careless and profane, we answer in the words of the Heidelberg Catechism: "By no means, for it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by a true faith, should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness." (Q. 64.) (Compare Art. XXIV. of the Confession, given in Chapter XXIII, on Good Works, § III).

3) **The Means of Justification.** The Compendium answers the question: "How art thou righteous before God?" by stating: "Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ." This does not mean that faith **merits** justification, as some have claimed. It simply is the **instrument** to receive the righteousness of the Savior. Our faith is no more a part of the justifying righteousness than the hand or mouth by which we take food is a part of the food. That faith alone is the instrument to justify, although without merit of its own, is brought out clearly by Art. XXII of the Confession of Faith:

"We believe that, to attain the true knowledge of this great mystery, the Holy Ghost kindleth in our hearts an upright faith, which embraces Jesus Christ, with all his merits, appropriates him, and seeks nothing more besides him. For it must needs follow, either that all things, which are requisite to our salvation, are not in Jesus Christ, or if all things are in him, that then those, who possess Jesus Christ through faith, have complete salvation in him. Therefore, for any to assert, that Christ is not sufficient, but that something more is required besides him, would be too gross a blasphemy; for hence it would follow, that Christ was but half a Savior. Therefore we justly say with Paul, that we are **justified by faith alone, or by faith without works.** However, to speak more clearly, we do not mean, that faith itself justifies us, for it is only an instrument with which we embrace Christ our Righteousness. But Jesus Christ, imputing to us all his merits, and so many holy works which he hath

done for us, and in our stead, is our Righteousness. And faith is an instrument that keeps us in communion with him in all his benefits, which, when become ours, are more than sufficient to acquit us of our sins."

4) **The Stages of Justification.** Several Reformed theologians speak of different Stages or Steps in Justification. The following are usually mentioned: 1) In the Covenant of Redemption. Rev. 13:8; 17:8. 2) In the Resurrection of Christ. Rom. 4:25. This has been called **collective** justification of the entire mystical body of Christ, as a whole—the body of which Christ is the Head. 3) In effectual Calling. (Chapter XVII.) This may be termed **objective** justification, in the court of God. Rom. 8:30. It involves and concerns the individual. 4) **Subjective** justification, by faith. Rom. 5:1. This justification takes place in the court of our conscience. Phil. 3:9. 5) **Public** justification in the Judgment Day. 2 Tim. 4:8. Some have spoken of Sanctification (Chapter XXV), as Justification **before men**. Compare James 2:21-25.

On this subject of Justification the **Conclusions of Utrecht** (compare Chapter XV), state:

"It is incorrect to say that our Confessional Standards only mention a Justification out of and by faith, since both the Word of God in Rom. 4:25, and our Confession in Art. XX speak expressly of an objective Justification sealed by the Resurrection of Christ, which in order of time precedes the subjective Justification. . . . All our churches heartily believe and confess that Christ in the Counsel of Peace (Covenant of Redemption), from eternity gave himself as Surety of his people, taking their guilt upon Himself, even as He later, by his suffering and death upon Golgotha actually paid the ransom for us, reconciling us to God while we were enemies; but it should be maintained equally strong, as based upon the Word of God, and in harmony with our Confession, that we personally partake of this favor only through a sincere faith; therefore the Synod warns earnestly against every proposition curtailing either the eternal Suretyship of Christ for his elect, or the demand of a sincere faith, to be justified before God in the tribunal of the conscience."

II. **Faith's Origin.** The Compendium in Q. 48-50 discusses the origin of the faith whereby we are justified. "Who worketh this faith in thee?" is asked. And the answer is: "The Holy Ghost." This is stated in opposition to the Pelagians who ascribe faith to the exercise of the human will. That the Holy Spirit is author of saving faith is very

plain from the following texts: Eph. 2: 8, "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, that no man should glory." Eph. 6: 23, "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Phil. 1: 29, "Because to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf."

It is also evident that it is the Holy Spirit who works in the heart of God's people the knowledge of faith by enlightening their mind, and the assent and confidence by influencing their will, since the Bible assures us of this, in the above mentioned texts. Moreover, the biblical doctrine of our total depravity (Ch. VI), plainly involves our inability to receive Jesus Christ as our Lord, except by the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. 12: 3; John 6: 44. This truth, however, should not lead us to inactive waiting for this gift of grace, for the Lord grants it to his people in the way of using means of grace.

The Holy Spirit uses as an instrument to work faith in us, "the hearing of the Word preached." Ans. 49. This is in harmony with Rom. 10: 14-17, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written: How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

The Word preached is mentioned particularly. This does not mean that God does not also make use of books, tracts and conversation, to work in people. But the Bible message proclaimed by God's servants is the usual means to bring men to Christ. This includes catechetical instruction as well as the reading of the Word of our Lord. May we make use of this all prayerfully and regularly!

In what manner the Word of God is made effectual as a

means of grace is expressed beautifully in the Westminster Catechism, Q. 155.

“The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ; of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.”

III. Faith is strengthened, the Compendium states, “by the same Word preached, and by the use of the Holy Sacraments.”

The Word strengthens faith by giving us a clearer insight into the promises of God, so that we find more liberty to accept them believingly. Because of this function of the divine Word we are admonished by Peter: “As newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby.”

“May this blessed volume ever lie  
Close to my heart, and near my eye,  
Till life’s last hour my soul engage,  
And be my chosen heritage.”

How the Sacraments as means of grace strengthen faith will be brought out in Chapter XX.

#### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 What is the difference between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics on the subject of Justification?
- 2 In which respects do justification and sanctification differ?
- 3 What is the nature of justification?
- 4 How many parts belong to it?
- 5 Which sins are pardoned in justification?
- 6 What is meant by adoption?
- 7 Which is the ground of justification?
- 8 Why cannot our good works justify us?
- 9 What can you tell about the gracious reward of good works?
- 10 How do you answer the charge that the Reformed doctrine of justification is apt to make men careless and profane?
- 11 In which sense is faith a means of justification?
- 12 Which stages or steps in justification have been mentioned?
- 13 What can you say about the origin of our faith?
- 14 In which way is the Word used in regard to our faith?
- 15 Which is the great personal lesson to be drawn from the doctrine of justification?

## CHAPTER XIX.

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### THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

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The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace should be discussed before the Sacraments are explained, because they are signs and seals of the Covenant and cannot be understood properly without the right conception of what the Covenant really is. Let us study: (1) the **Names and Nature** of the Covenant of Grace; (2) its **Basis, the Covenant of Redemption**; (3) its **Establishment and Dispensations**; (4) its **Oneness** throughout its Dispensations; (5) its **Members**; (6) its **Mediator and Surety**; (7) why it is called a **Testament**; and (8) its **Promises and Obligations**.

1) **Names and Natures of the Covenant of Grace.** It is called Covenant of **Grace** because it was given of grace, brings grace to its members and can only be accepted in the way of grace, and through grace. The name "of grace" is also given it in distinction of the Covenant of Works (Chapter IV.), whose place it took.

The Hebrew word for Covenant, "B'rith," occurs two hundred and eighty times in the Old Testament, and is usually translated as Covenant, though at times rendered "league" (Joshua 9: 15, etc.), and "confederacy," Obadiah 7. The meaning of "B'rith" is given variously as "determine," "cut," "choose," "enactment," etc.

The Greek word for Covenant used in the New Testament is "Diatheke," which is said to mean: "disposal by testament," "arrangement," etc. It occurs thirty-three times.

The English word Covenant comes from two Latin words, **con**, meaning with, and **venire**, signifying: to come, so that the full meaning is: to come together, viz., to fellowship.

The Dutch and German words, (Verbond, Bund), indicate the Covenant as the **bond** whereby God binds himself to his people, akin in meaning to the word religion. (Chapter I.)

But, while these root-meanings throw some light on the

character of the Covenant, different data in the Bible show its nature to be still richer and fuller.

The Bible plainly teaches that the Covenant is a manifestation of God's condescending love and seeking grace. Deut. 26: 5; Jer. 14: 7; Ez. 36:32; Ps. 23: 3; 31: 3. It may be defined as "the gracious agreement between God and his, people whereby the Triune God promises them complete salvation in the way of faith."

This word agreement must not be taken, however, in the sense that it is not established as long as it is not accepted from the side of the individual believer. The Covenant has truly been called "one-sided" in the sense that the first party, God, proposes it according to his own good pleasure, and the only thing to do for the second party is to accept it, on God's own terms. God stated: "I will put enmity"; "I establish," etc.

However, insofar the word "agreement" is chosen properly as its full transaction requires believing acceptance, in the way of faith, from the side of its members.

The Covenant of Grace brings out two great ideas underlying true religion, viz.:

1) Salvation is a gift of God. All the work of men in it, is built upon God's work preceding it.

2) Man must come to choose and serve God consciously and willingly, and not merely as a machine wound up. We are God's image-bearers originally and those in whom the image is being restored are expected to act as such.

This Covenant is the grand complement of the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God which the Bible teaches. (Chapter IX.) As Sovereign He is unspeakably high above us. As Covenant God He graciously draws nigh to us.

The Covenant is the way and means whereby God carries out his decree of Election. (Chapter XVII.) Those whom He chose as individuals He saves in organic connection with Christ and his people.

It is also connected with the **Covenant of Redemption**.

2) The **Covenant of Redemption** is the eternal Basis of the Covenant of Grace. This is sometimes called "Counsel of Peace," a name taken from Zech. 6: 13: "And the counsel of peace shall be between them both." This may be defined as an eternal compact or agreement of the Godhead regarding

the redemption of God's people. In this Covenant the Father ordained the Son to be the Redeemer of his chosen people, demanding of Him satisfaction of his divine justice, and promising Him as a reward a special glory as Mediator, the Son accepting this task and its reward. The Holy Spirit also is involved in this insofar as He took upon himself the application of the redemption.

That there is such a Covenant is plain from the Word of God. Repeatedly Christ speaks of a task given to Him by the Father, a Kingdom ordained him, a people given him as his own. (John 17: 14; Luke 22: 29; John 6: 39.) Ps. 2: 8 informs us that the uttermost parts of the earth were given to him, and Heb. 12: 2 mentions a "joy" set before him.

The demands of the Father have been enumerated as follows:

1) That the Son should become flesh, incarnate, made of a woman, placed under the Law. Gal. 4: 4, 5.

2) That He should assume and fully discharge, in behalf of his people, all violated conditions and incurred liabilities of the Covenant of Works, Matt. 5: 17, 18, which he was to render by perfect **active obedience**, keeping the Law perfectly, and by **passive obedience**, in suffering the full penalty incurred by the sins of his people, Isa. 53: 2; 2 Cor. 5: 21; Gal. 3: 13; Eph. 5: 2.

The **promises** of the Father were:

1) All needful preparation, Heb. 10: 5; Isa. 42: 1-7.

2) Support in all his work, Luke 22: 43.

3) A glorious reward, **first**, in the exaltation of his divine-human person, "above every name that is named," Phil. 2: 6-11, universal dominion committed to him as Mediator, John 5: 22; Ps. 110: 1, and committing to him the administration of all the provisions of the Covenant of Grace in behalf of his people, Matt. 28: 18; John 1: 12; 17: 2; 7: 39; Acts 2: 33; and **secondly**, in the actual salvation of all those for whom he acted, including the provision of calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, sanctification, and glorification. Titus 1: 2; Jer. 31: 33; 32: 40; Isa. 35: 10; 53: 10, 11.

The relation between this Covenant of Redemption and Election is that the latter determined **who** should be saved, and the former in what **manner** this was to be accomplished.

3) **Establishment and Dispensations of the Covenant of Grace.** The Covenant of Grace was revealed immediately after the fall. When God took the side of fallen man and declared that he would put enmity between the woman and her seed, and the Serpent and his seed, and promised a Redeemer to bruise the head of Satan, this was a plain manifestation of his thoughts of grace toward mankind. Gen. 3: 15.

God's Covenant with Noah, Gen. 9, insofar is connected with the Covenant of Grace that it confirmed the order of nature, formally established human government, and created the proper surroundings for the continuation of covenant relations.

With Abraham the Covenant was established in a formal way. Gen. 17: 1-7: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am God Almighty, walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for the father of a multitude of nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

This Covenant was confirmed, Gen. 22: 15-18: "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

This was believingly accepted by Abraham. Rom. 4: 3: "For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and



it was counted unto him for righteousness." This plainly shows that the "great **promise** of the Covenant of Grace is: "I will be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee," and its **condition** faith in God, to be accompanied by a walk before God in harmony with the calling as members of the gracious Covenant given by a Sovereign God of mercy.

The covenanting transactions at Sinai, (Ex. 20 ff.) were evidently related to the Covenant of Grace.

The Ten Commandments are prefaced with the formula of the Covenant: "I am the LORD thy God."

But the various laws and ceremonies there given were meant to be a schoolmaster unto Christ, to convict of sin, teaching the people their inability of saving themselves, and the absolute need of a God-given Redeemer, as promised to Adam and Eve, and confirmed to Abraham. (Gal. 3: 6-25.)

Agreeable to these well defined steps in the Covenant revelation, we speak of **three periods** as making up the Old Testament **Dispensation** or Form of the Covenant: (1) from Adam to Abraham, when there was no sacrament to confirm the promises of the Covenant; (2) from Abraham to Moses, when there was one sacrament, Circumcision; and (3) from Moses to Christ, when there were two covenant-seals or sacraments, the Passover as well as Circumcision.

With Christ the New Testament **Dispensation** of the Covenant was ushered in. It also has two sacraments, as the next Chapter will show. It is called the "gospel" Dispensation, and sometimes a new and better covenant, because it is superior to the Old in four respects at least: it is more catholic or general, it is more spiritual, it is more evangelical, and it is final.

It will last till the Second Coming of our Lord, its Mediator and Surety. (Chapter XVII., §4.)

4) **Oneness of the Covenant.** Throughout these various periods the Covenant of Grace is essentially one and the same Covenant of Grace. This is denied by some Baptists and others, but is plainly evident from the Word of God.

1) Paul asserted this over against his opponents, Gal. 3: 7-9: "Know therefore that they which be of faith, the same are sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel be-

forehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham."

2) In both the Old and New Testament we read of the same formula of the Covenant, "I am thy God," Gen. 17: 7 and 2 Cor. 6: 16.

3) The same gospel reveals the contents of the Covenant, Gal. 3: 8.

4) The same Mediator serves in both. Acts 4: 2; Gal. 3:16; Heb. 13: 8.

5) The same acceptance in faith is required. Rom. 4: 3; 5: 1.

6) The same blessings or pardon, joy and grace are enjoyed.

7) Matt. 21: 31-41 speaks of the Covenant people as the same vineyard, although given to different laborers, and Rom. 11: 17 represents it as the same olive tree in both Dispensations, although during the New Testament new branches were engrafted.

8) Acts 15: 11: "But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they." (viz. the fathers.)

5) **Members of the Covenant of Grace** are all those who believe, like Abraham, and their seed. Gal. 3: 7-9: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

That the seed of believers is also included, is evident from various texts. Gen. 17: 7: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Acts 2: 38, 39: "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even

as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him." Acts 3: 25: "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." Rom. 9: 4: "Who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." 1 Cor. 7: 14: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."

The parable of the Vine, John 15: 2, and of the Olive tree, Rom. 11: 17, also suggests that the seed of God's believing people is included in the Covenant. So does the oft-used figure of speech, in the books of the prophets, about the Covenant relationship as a marriage, to which our Savior evidently alluded when he spoke about the unbelieving Jews of his days as an "adulterous generation." Matt. 26: 28.

This is assumed also in the Form of Baptism used in the Reformed Churches, especially as brought out in the thanksgiving prayer at its conclusion, while in the Canons of Dordrecht, it is stated: (I., 17):

"Since we must judge the will of God from his Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but in virtue of the Covenant of Grace, in which they are included together with their parents, pious parents must not doubt the election and salvation of children that are taken from them in their childhood."

In another Standard of the Reformed Churches, the Heidelberg Catechism, Answer 74, the statement is made that infants "as well as the adult, are included in the Covenant and Church of God."

"Because the Covenant, historically and originally enters the human race, it cannot, on earth, appear in a form wholly identical with its essence. Not alone that several things in the life of the believer are not in harmony with the Covenant demand: 'walk before me and be perfect,' 'be holy for I am holy,' but there may also be persons, who are received in the Covenant as it appears to us, and who, notwithstanding this, because of their unbelieving and impenitent heart, are destitute of all the spiritual blessings of the Covenant. Such is not the case at present alone, but such a condition has existed throughout the ages. In the days of the Old Testament not nearly all were Israel who were of Israel, Rom. 9: 6, for, not

the children of the flesh, but the children of the promise, are counted for the seed, Rom. 9: 8; 2: 29; and in the New Testament Church there is chaff among the wheat, there are unfruitful branches of the vine, there are not alone golden, but also earthen vessels. Matt. 3: 12; 13: 29; John 15:2; 2 Tim. 2:20. There are people who have the form of godliness but deny the power thereof. 2 Tim. 3: 5.

"On the ground of this contradiction between being and appearing, some have distinguished and separated between an **internal** Covenant, established exclusively with believers, and an **external** Covenant, which included only those who confess with their mouth. But such a distinction is not consistent with the doctrine of the Scripture: what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Nothing may be dropped from the demand that essence and appearance must correspond, that confessing with the mouth and believing with the heart must agree. Rom. 10: 9.

"But although there are not two Covenants, one independent from the other, there are, in the one Covenant, two sides, of which only one is visible to us, but both to God.

"We adhere to the rule that we cannot judge the heart, but only the outward walk, and that only imperfectly so. Those, who, before the eyes of men, walk in the way of the Covenant, we must, according to the judgment of charity, consider and treat as belonging to the Covenant. But after all, not our, but God's judgment determines the case. He knows the hearts and tries the reins; and God is no respecter of persons, 'for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart.' 1 Sam. 16: 7. So then, 'try yourselves whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves.' 2 Cor. 13: 5." (Bavinck.)

6) **Mediator** and **Surety** of the **Covenant of Grace** is our Savior Jesus Christ. 1 Tim. 2: 5: "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." In Hebrews our Lord is called mediator three times, viz., "Mediator of a better covenant," 8: 6, "of the New Testament," 9: 15, and of "the New Covenant," 12: 24.

A mediator, as explained in Chapter VI., is one who interposes between parties at variance. The distance between God and us is so great that we need one to be as it were the bridge across the chasm which separates us from the Almighty.

From the nature of the Covenant of Grace outlined above, we may infer that the Mediator between God and his people had to be in one person God and man, in order to unite both parties.

**Passive** obedience was to be required of him to remove

the results of the sin of Adam, the head of the Covenant of Works, and **active** obedience to perform for us what Adam failed to do, to keep the law perfectly and merit eternal life in that manner for all included and reckoned in him. In order to bring this about the Mediator had to humble himself in meriting salvation, and had to be exalted to apply to his people the salvation purchased.

To be equipped for this manifold work he had to be prophet, priest and king. See Chapter XIII.

The name **Surety** occurs in Heb. 7:22: "Jesus was made surety of a better Testament." The difference between the two names is mainly this, that Mediator lays stress on bringing parties at variance together, while Surety emphasizes that certain obligations are guaranteed or assumed by the one who interposes. The two terms complete the fullness of meaning involved in what the Savior undertook for his people in the Covenant of Grace.

Some have spoken of Christ as **Head** of the Covenant of Grace, appealing for proofs to Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:4, 22, 23; 4:15, 16; 5:23; 1 Cor. 12:12.

7) The Covenant of Grace is frequently called a **Testament**. This usage, influenced by the Vulgate or old Latin Bible, which translated Diatheke or Covenant as "Testamentum," duly lays stress on the fact that the Covenant is a gift of grace, as a heritage willed in a testament is. It also suggests that the New Testament Dispensation of it was secured by the death of Christ, and that it is firm and sure. Heb. 9:16, 17.

It also brings the blessed and encouraging promises that our sin does not make God's promises of none effect, Rom. 3:3, but on the other hand presupposes that the heirs shall claim their share in the blessings of the Testament humbly and believingly.

Blessed indeed are we if we in faith receive what the Lord of sovereign grace has promised! Have we already done so?

8) The **Promises and Obligations of the Covenant**. The **promises** of the Covenant of Grace are all involved in God's declaration of being our God. Gen. 17:7 and 2 Cor. 6:16.

This includes complete salvation here, and glory hereafter. Ps. 84: 11; Ps. 73: 23-26; Jer. 31: 33; Ez. 11: 19, 20.

These **Promises** have been tersely and biblically enumerated in the first part of the Form of Baptism of the Reformed Churches:

“When we are baptized in the name of the **Father**, God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us, that he doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for his children and heirs, and therefore will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil, or turn it to our profit. And when we are baptized in the name of the **Son**, the Son sealeth unto us, that he doth wash us in his blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of his death and resurrection, so that we are freed from all our sins, and accounted righteous before God. In like manner, when we are baptized in the name of the **Holy Ghost**, the Holy Ghost assures us, by this holy sacrament, that he will dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ, applying unto us, that which we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins, and the daily renewing of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal.”

The **Obligations** are set forth in the following statements of the Form:

“Whereas in all covenants, there are contained two parts: therefore are we by God through baptism, admonished of, and obliged unto new obedience, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; that we trust in him, and love him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life.” (Compare Art. XXVIII. of the Confession, in Chapter XVI., §7.)

In the promises just enumerated all the grace is involved which is needed to meet the obligations. For this is the glory of the Covenant dealings of God with his people, that while He requires certain things of them, as of his image bearers and rational creatures, He meets them with all they are in need of to accept the Covenant penitently and believingly. In Is. 55:1 and Rev. 21:6 it is stated specifically that the blessings of the Covenant are offered without money and without price. In Ez. 11 and Jer. 31 the new heart and new spirit are promised to Israel. And Ps. 81: 10 assures us: “I am the Lord thy God . . . open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.” God grant us daily to wait as beggars at the Throne of Grace to obtain the blessings of the Covenant of Grace!

“God’s promise shall forever stand  
He cares for those who trust his Word;  
Upon his saints his mighty hand  
The wealth of nations has conferred.”

“From him his saints’ redemption came;  
His covenant sure no change can know;  
Let all revere his holy name  
In heaven above and earth below.”

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### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Which names of the Covenant of Grace can you mention?
- 2 Which is the nature of the Covenant of Grace?
- 3 In how far is the Covenant of Grace one-sided?
- 4 Which two great ideas of the true religion underlie the Covenant?
- 5 Which is the relation of the Covenant of Grace to Election?
- 6 Describe the basis of the Covenant of Grace, the Covenant of Redemption.
- 7 Mention some of the demands and promises of God the Father in the Covenant of Redemption.
- 8 When and how was the Covenant of Grace established?
- 9 In which relation does the Covenant of Grace stand to God’s Covenant with Israel at Sinai?
- 10 Mention the Dispensations of the Covenant and their periods.
- 11 Prove the ONENESS of the Covenant throughout the Dispensations.
- 12 Who are members of the Covenant of Grace?
- 13 Have we grounds to speak of an EXTERNAL and an INTERNAL Covenant of Grace?
- 14 What can you say about the Mediator of the Covenant?
- 15 Why is Christ called the Surety of the Covenant?
- 16 Why is the Covenant of Grace called a Testament?
- 17 Which are the promises of the Covenant?
- 18 Which are the obligations of the Covenant?
- 19 Of what must we make sure as to the Covenant regarding us personally?

## CHAPTER XX.

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### THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL, AND BAPTISM.

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- Q. 51 What are the sacraments?  
A. They are holy signs and seals instituted by God, thereby to assure us, that he of grace grants us remission of sins, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ finished on the cross.
- Q. 52 How many sacraments hath Christ instituted in the New Testament?  
A. Two: holy baptism, and the holy supper.
- Q. 53 Which is the outward sign in baptism?  
A. The water, with which we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
- Q. 54 What doth that signify and seal?  
A. The washing away of sins by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ.
- Q. 55 Where hath Christ promised and assured us of this?  
A. In the institution of baptism, which is as follows: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

God has instituted means to confirm the promises of the covenant of grace to his people. They are called, **Means of Grace**, and consist of the **Word of God** and the **Sacraments**. This chapter is devoted to a discussion of the **Word** as a means of Grace, and of the **Sacraments** in general, and **Baptism**.

1) The Word of God is such a means. This is plain from such passages as Mark 4:26-29, Rom. 10:17, James 1:18, and 1 Peter 2:2.

In the Word of God we possess the **chief** means of grace. (Cf. Prayer as a Means of Grace, Ch. XXVII). The introductory chapter showed us that the Bible is the great fountain of our knowledge of things divine. Chapter XVII told us how it is used in Calling, to bring the heirs of salvation out of darkness into God's marvelous light, and from estrangement from God to fellowship with him. But it serves a far wider purpose. This is so because the Church of God is not



simply a gathering of individual believers. The Church is also a Mother of believers, a mother who brings forth and nourishes believers, so that they may become well equipped for the calling wherewith they are called, to become the army of the living God, to proclaim his glory and to render him loyal service. In this equipping the Word of God is instrumental constantly, as applied by the Spirit of God. This Word is therefore to be read diligently, to be meditated on prayerfully. It is to be explained, defended, preached, to be used as milk for babes, and strong meat for those more advanced in grace, that the Church may become strong, united, valiant, and built up in the knowledge of all things divine, that each believer may become a prophet, priest and king, and that all together may increase unto the fulness of the Body of Christ. It is because of this præminent place which the Word of God occupies, that it is justly termed the chief means of grace. Without it the sacraments are without meaning and contents.

In this respect the Protestant Church entertains a different view than the Roman and Greek Catholic Churches, which place the sacraments above the Bible, and consequently make much more of the administration of Baptism and Communion than of preaching.

2) But while this præminence of the Word as the most important means of grace should be maintained, nevertheless the Reformed Churches believe that besides the Word of God, the sacraments are likewise valuable as means of grace. It is declared in Article XXXII. of the Confession of Faith:

“We believe, that our gracious God, on account of our weakness and infirmities hath ordained the sacraments for us, thereby to seal unto us his promises, and to be pledges of the good will and grace of God towards us, and also to nourish and strengthen our faith; which he hath joined to the word of the gospel, the better to present to our senses, both that which he signifies to us by his Word, and that which he works inwardly in our hearts, thereby assuring and confirming in us the salvation which he imparts to us. For they are visible signs and seals of an inward and invisible thing, by means whereof, God worketh in us by the power of the Holy Ghost. Therefore the signs are not in vain or insignificant, so as to deceive us. For Jesus Christ is the true object presented by them, without whom they would be of no moment. Moreover, we are satisfied with the number of sacraments which

Christ our Lord hath instituted, which are two only, namely, the sacrament of baptism and the holy supper of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The word "Sacrament" is not found in the Bible. It is a Latin word which in olden times signified the oath which a soldier took at enlisting, and also the pledge given as a lawsuit was started. It came into use among Christians as a translation of the word "mystery" in Eph. 5: 32, as well as because christian life was often represented as a warfare.

The term "sign and seal" as indicating a means of grace, is more biblical, since it is found in Rom. 4: 11, and therefore it has been preferred by the Reformed.

During the Old Testament dispensation of the covenant of grace, two sacraments were instituted by the Lord.

(a) The first one is **Circumcision**. Rom. 4: 11: "And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision: that he might be the father of all them that believe." (Gen. 17: 11.) Compare Rom. 2: 28, 29; and Col. 2: 11 for its central evangelical meaning.

(b) The second Old Testament Sacrament is **Passover**, described in Ex. 12: 1-8 ff.: "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for an household: and if the household be too little for a lamb, then shall he and his neighbor next unto his house take one according to the number of the souls; according to every man's eating ye shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats: and ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at even. And they shall take of the blood, and put it on the two side posts and on the lintel, upon the houses wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; with bitter herbs they shall eat it."

The Passover was **discriminative** in separating Israel from

the world, **commemorative** of the deliverance from Egypt, and **typical** and **prophetical** of the coming of Christ the true Passover, 1 Cor. 5: 7, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," John 1: 29; the Lamb without blemish, slain, whose blood must be applied and appropriated, affording complete protection from judgment. (Ex. 12: 5, 6; Heb. 9: 22; John 3: 36; Heb. 10: 10, 14.)

In the New Testament Dispensation there are likewise two Sacraments: **Baptism** and **Communion**. Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics claim that there are seven Sacraments, viz., Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. Some American sects (River Brethren and Dunkers), add Foot-washing as a Sacrament to Baptism and Communion. The Quakers reject outward observance of the Sacraments, claiming that internal baptism, (regeneration), and heart communion with Christ take their place. The Reformed Churches hold that only such religious ceremonies can be called sacraments which are: (1) instituted by Christ; (2) visible signs; and (3) have some special grace to be signified and sealed. It is clear that only Baptism and Communion can stand this three-fold test. Matt. 28: 19; 26: 26; Gal. 3: 26; John 6: 56; 1 Cor. 11: 24.

A Sacrament may be defined as "an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his Church, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those within the Covenant of Grace the benefits of his mediation; to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces; to oblige them to obedience; to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another, and to distinguish them from those which are without." (Larger Catechism.)

Two things are included in every sacrament: an **outward visible sign**, and **inward spiritual grace**, the outward sign having some natural connection with the inward significance of the sacrament, such as water as naturally suggesting cleansing, and bread and wine significant of nourishment.

The sacraments are called **signs** because they picture or signify to us the invisible grace of God just mentioned.

They are called **seals** because they seal to us the promises of God concerning the benefits of the Covenant.

And they **exhibit** or **apply** to us the blessings of the Covenant insofar it pleases God to actually use them as "means of Grace."

Roman Catholics believe that the Sacraments work "ex opere operato," by which they mean that the Sacraments always effect and produce in all recipients the grace which they signify, unless they put obstacles in the way. They therefore call them **efficacious** signs.

But the Reformed believe that the Sacraments become effectual means of grace not from any virtue inherent in them, but only by the gracious blessing of Christ and the working of the Holy Spirit in them who by faith receive them. Compare Acts 8: 14-25 with Acts 8: 37.

3) "**Baptism**, the first N. T. sacrament, is the divine ordinance wherein the washing with water in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, signifies and seals to us the partaking of the benefits of the Covenant of Grace, and our engagement to the Lord." (Sh. Gat.)

The Form of administration of Baptism of the Reformed Churches states:

"The principal parts of the doctrine of Holy Baptism are these three:

**First.** That we with our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are children of wrath, in so much that we cannot enter into the kingdom of God, except we are born again. This, the dipping in, or sprinkling with water teaches us, whereby the impurity of our souls is signified, and we admonished to loathe and humble ourselves before God, and seek for our purification and salvation without ourselves.

**Secondly.** Holy baptism witnesseth and sealeth unto us the washing away of sins through Jesus Christ. Therefore we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For when we are baptized in the name of the Father, God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us, that he doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for his children and heirs, and therefore will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil, or turn it to our profit. And when we are baptized in the name of the Son, the Son sealeth unto us, that he doth wash us in his blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of his death and resurrection, so that we are freed from all our sins, and accounted righteous before God. In like manner, when we are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost assures us, by this holy sacrament, that he will dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ, applying unto us, that which we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins, and the daily renewing of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal.

**“Thirdly.** Whereas in all covenants there are contained two parts: therefore are we by God through baptism, admonished of, and obliged unto new obedience, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that we trust in him, and love him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life.

“And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sin, we must not therefore despair of God’s mercy, nor continue in sin, since baptism is a seal and undoubted testimony, that we have an eternal covenant of grace with God.”

The **outward sign** of Holy Baptism is water, pure water, without any such additions thereto as the Roman Church makes. The Reformed Churches believe that its sacramental use signifies and seals the washing away of our sins by the blood and Spirit of Christ, reminds us of the impurity of our souls, and the need of a new birth, and admonishes us, as the Form of Baptism states, “to loathe and humble ourselves before God, and seek for our purification and salvation without ourselves.”

According to the Reformed the main idea in Baptism is **washing**, even as in John 3:22 and 4:1-3, the question of baptizing is called the question of **purification**. The Baptists insist on the ground of Romans 6:4 that the chief idea in baptism is burial with Christ and rising with him, and therefore insist on immersion or dipping in water. It cannot be denied that the Apostle in Romans 6 makes use of this mode of baptism as an illustration of what believers must undergo spiritually, but this does not alter the fact that throughout the New Testament it is not burial and resurrection that is emphasized as symbolical of Baptism, but **washing**, (Acts 22:16; 1 Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5). Much less does Paul’s illusion to immersion involve that this should constitute the only valid mode of baptizing. For that matter, examples of early christian art, preserved in the Catacombs of Rome, show that in the first centuries of our era pouring or affusion was in use. The Reformed Churches condemn neither immersion nor pouring, but hold that, since **washing** is the main idea symbolized in Baptism, sprinkling is perfectly proper, and likewise is an ancient mode of administering the sacrament, as shown by writings of the Church fathers, and by ancient baptism fonts.

The following arguments have been mentioned in favor of sprinkling:

1) The Greek word "baptizo," from which our word "baptize" is derived, does not exclusively mean to immerse, but is also used to signify washing, purifying, as shown by Mark 7: 48, speaking of the washing of couches, while in the Old Testament in the Greek translation, the word is also employed for the washing of Naaman in Jordan, 2 Kings 5: 14. Dan. 4 states in the Greek Old Testament, that Nebuchadnezzar was wet (baptein) with the dew of heaven, which also shows that the word baptizo does not exclusively signify immersion.

2) The blood of the Old Testament sacrifices, which typified the blood of Christ, was sprinkled on the objects which received it, but these were not immersed in it. Heb. 9:10; 12:24.

3) The Spirit who came down on Pentecost, and who is also symbolized in Baptism, did not come down to immerse his recipients.

4) Where Paul states in I Cor. 10: 2 that Israel was "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," it is evident that no immersion is meant, yet the Apostle considers it baptizing.

5) In Isa. 52: 15 the prophet foretold that the coming Messiah would "sprinkle many nations," in the sense of applying his merits to them, which is also the idea underlying Baptism, showing that sprinkling suffices.

6) In Ez. 36: 25 we are assured: "Then (in the N. T.) I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean," again indicating the fact that sprinkling sufficiently symbolizes the washing it stands for.

7) David's prayer in Ps. 51 about cleansing with hyssop also suggests the idea of sprinkling, since in the Old Testament the hyssop plant was used as a brush to apply the cleansing element.

8) From the washing of the feet and Jesus' explanation of it in John 13: 9, 10, it is evident that in symbolical actions such as baptizing, a part can take the place of the whole, even as the administration of Communion is based on that same principle.

We therefore have ample reasons to hold that sprinkling, whereby but little water is used, is as valid as a mode of .bap-

tizing as immersion or pouring. The Roman Catholic Church uniformly uses sprinkling, as well as the Reformed. The Greek Catholics immerse.

The Reformed Churches insist on having the trinitarian formula of Matt. 28:19 employed at the administration of Baptism because the Savior himself gave it, and also because in Baptism it is the triune God who engages himself to the proper recipients of the sacrament, as strikingly brought out in the opening part of the Form of Baptism printed above.

"In the Name," in the Baptism formula is to be taken in the sense of "in fellowship with," and not simply "by order of."

Roman Catholics and Lutherans claim that in case of necessity, when death seems imminent and no ordained minister is at hand, any person may administer the sacrament of Baptism. This is called "**Baptism of Necessity.**" The Reformed Churches, however, hold that only ordained men may officiate, since Christ in his parting command joined baptizing to teaching.

The **baptism of John**, although not a sacrament of the Covenant of Grace, since Circumcision was still in force, was the same as christian Baptism, insofar as it sealed the same promises and blessings as our New Testament Baptism, though it differed in emphasizing repentance, in harmony with the legal character of the Old Testament Dispensation. Besides this, it was national in its scope, being confined to the Jews, whereas Baptism is designed for universal use. Moreover, the measure of grace accompanying John's baptism was not as large as that exhibited by New Testament Baptism. John 7:39; Mark 1:4; John 1:33.

Baptism is to be **administered but once** because it signifies the new birth, "the washing of regeneration," Titus 3:5, and we are born again but once, therein differing from Communion which signifies the strengthening of our new life and therefore is used often.

**Subjects of Baptism** are believers and their children. This excludes the christening or baptizing of clocks and other inanimate things used in religious worship as practised by Roman Catholics and others. And we also protest against the Mormon custom of **baptizing for the dead**, i.e. having living

persons baptized in the hope that the blessings of Baptism may, vicariously, be applied for the benefit of some already dead. We consider this an unwarranted use of 1 Cor. 15:29 since Paul does not in that text **approve** of the custom referred to, but merely mentions it as an illustrative argument.

The Confession of Faith of the Reformed Churches gives the following on Holy Baptism, (Art. XXXIV.):

“We believe and confess that Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law, hath made an end, by the shedding of his blood, of all other sheddings of blood which men could or would make as a propitiation or satisfaction for sin: and that he, having abolished circumcision, which was done with blood, hath instituted the sacrament of Baptism instead thereof; by which we are received into the Church of God, and separated from all other people and strange religions, that we may wholly belong to him, whose ensign and banner we bear: and which serves as a testimony to us, that he will forever be our gracious God and Father. Therefore he has commanded all those, who are his, to be baptized with pure water, “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:” thereby signifying to us, that as water washeth away the filth of the body, when poured upon it, and is seen on the body of the baptized, when sprinkled upon him; so doth the blood of Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, internally sprinkle the soul, cleanse it from its sins, and regenerate us from children of wrath, unto children of God. Not that this is effected by the external water, but by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God; who is our Red Sea, through which we must pass, to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, that is, the devil, and to enter into the spiritual land of Canaan. Therefore the ministers, on their part, administer the sacrament, and that which is visible, but our Lord giveth that which is signified by the sacrament, namely, the gifts of invisible grace; washing, cleansing and purging our souls of all filth and unrighteousness; renewing our hearts, and filling them with all comfort; giving unto us a true assurance of his fatherly goodness; putting on us the new man, and putting off the old man with all his deeds. Therefore we believe, that every man, who is earnestly studious of obtaining life eternal, ought to be but once baptized with this only baptism, without ever repeating the same: since we cannot be born twice. Neither doth this baptism only avail us, at the time when the water is poured upon us, and received by us, but also through the whole course of our life.”

How greatly ought we to appreciate that God the Father indeed witnesses and seals to us in Baptism that He makes an eternal covenant of Grace with us, that the Son washes us in his blood, and that the Holy Spirit will dwell in us to sanctify



us as members of Christ, applying what we have in Christ namely the washing away of our sins and the daily renewing of our lives! These wonderful blessings are all involved in the great promise of the Covenant of Grace that God is our God. Gen. 17: 7; 2 Cor. 6: 16. May we ever accept and claim them in the way of faith!

“My Savior God, my sovereign Prince  
Reigns far above the skies;  
But brings his graces down to sense,  
And helps my faith to rise.”

“Mine eyes and ears shall bless his Name:  
They read and hear his Word;  
My touch and taste shall do the same  
When they receive the Lord.”

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#### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 What do we understand by “means of grace”?
- 2 Which is the chief “means of grace”?
- 3 What is our duty regarding the Word of God?
- 4 Why has God given SACRAMENTS as means of grace?
- 5 Describe the names given to the sacraments?
- 6 Which were the O. T. sacraments?
- 7 How many and which are the N. T. sacraments?
- 8 How many and which sacraments do the Roman Catholics believe in?
- 9 Define what a sacrament is.
- 10 Define Baptism.
- 11 Which are the principal parts of Baptism according to the Form of the Reformed Churches?
- 12 Which is the main idea in baptism?
- 13 Prove that washing is the main idea in baptism and not burial and raising with Christ as some claim.
- 14 What grounds have we for our practice of sprinkling?
- 15 Which formula is to be used in baptizing?
- 16 Which view should we take of John's baptism?
- 17 How often must baptism be administered?
- 18 Which are the subjects of baptism?
- 19 Why is it our duty to seek baptism if we are unbaptized?
- 20 Should we appreciate baptism? Why?

## CHAPTER XXI.

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### INFANT BAPTISM.

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Q. 56 Are infants also to be baptized?

A. Yes, for they, as well as the adult are comprehended in the Covenant of God, and in his Church.

In the closing part of Art. XXXIV. of the Belgic Confession (see preceding Chapter), it is stated that the Reformed Churches not only "detest the error of the Anabaptists who are not content with the one only baptism they have once received," but "moreover condemn the baptism of the infants of believers, whom we believe ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the Covenant, as the children in Israel formerly were circumcised, upon the same promises which are made unto our children. And indeed Christ shed his blood no less for the washing of the children of the faithful, than for adult persons; and therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of that, which Christ hath done for them; as the Lord commanded in the law, that they should be made partakers of the sacrament of Christ's suffering and death, shortly after they were born, by offering for them a lamb, which was a sacrament of Jesus Christ. Moreover, what circumcision was to the Jews, that baptism is to our children. And for this reason Paul calls baptism the **circumcision of Christ.**"

The Anabaptists referred to formed a sect which arose during the Reformation. Besides rejecting the practice of baptizing infants, they fell into all manner of excesses. Menno Simons, a Dutch preacher, succeeded in bringing them to more sober views. It is after him that the Mennonites call themselves. In the United States there are 13 different bodies of Mennonites, totalling some 50,000 communicants, and all opposed to infant baptism.

The Anabaptists were forerunners of the Baptists, who originated in England in the seventeenth century and of whom there are over five million communicants in the United States, divided into 15 different bodies. They also reject infant baptism as it is practised by practically the entire Chris-

tian Church, Greek and Roman Catholic as well as Protestant. They ground their dissent mainly upon two grounds: 1) upon the absence of a positive command of Christ, or apostolic example in favor of the practice; and 2) they consider infant baptism to be a violation of the very idea of baptism, since, as they claim, Baptism presupposes conversion and intelligent profession of faith, which cannot be expected from infants.

Now, as to the first argument, the answer will be found below, in our reasons for holding to the practise of baptizing children. As to the second, the objection could be applied just as well to Circumcision, which nevertheless was especially instituted by God as a sacrament for infants.

3) A third objection is made sometimes that in Mark 16:16 teaching is mentioned **before** baptizing. This, however, cannot be a valid proof, since our Lord there referred to the bringing in of those outside of the Church, in whose case baptism always **follows** teaching. No reference is there made to those already within Covenant circles, believers who **with their children** possessed the promise of the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:28 and 3:25. Moreover, the order of words is an unstable basis for a doctrine. In John 3:5 the Savior in describing the new birth, mentioned "water" before Spirit, but no one would dare to claim that one must first be born of water, and **then** of the Holy Ghost. Baptists have also made an objection on the ground of Matt. 28:19, 20, which in the King James' Version reads: "Go ye therefore, and **teach** all nations, baptizing them," etc., pointing out that **here likewise** teaching precedes administration of the Sacrament. But the Revised Version translates it: "Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching **them** to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." That reading is more in harmony with the methods of those who believe in infant baptism, since they make disciples, in the case of children of believers, **first** by baptizing and **then** by teaching.

But, which are the **grounds** alluded to above, upon which those who administer Baptism to the seed of believers do this? Are they simply following tradition, or have they not been delivered from all the leaven of Romanism, as those who op-

pose infant baptism often assert? Thank God, we have sufficient reasons to adhere to the old practice, and are fully assured that we are not following cunningly devised fables!

1) The Compendium mentions first that children as well as adults are comprehended in the **Covenant of Grace**. That is plain from what the Bible relates about the establishing of the Covenant of Grace with Abraham, (Chap. XIX.). The seed is mentioned especially, even as in all the other covenants mentioned in the Word of God, with Adam, Noah, and David, (2 Sam. 7:16), children were reckoned with. Now, if children belong to the Covenant as well as the adults, it is plain that they should receive a sign and a seal of it, in other words, a Sacrament, such as God gave to Abraham in Circumcision, in the place of which Baptism has come, as shown by Col. 2:11: "In whom (Christ) ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ." Very naturally, in the early Christian Church, Baptism, by Paul called Circumcision, took the place of the Old Testament rite, since the same Apostle in Gal. 5:2 forbade the use of Circumcision. Since Christ shed his blood to atone for sin, the Old Testament form of the Sacrament had to pass away. And nothing so similar to it in deep spiritual import could take the place of Circumcision as Baptism, for both were emblematical of the removal of the pollution of sin. Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Lev. 26:41; Acts 7:51; Rom. 2:28, 29; Coll. 2:11; Gal. 3:27-29.

2) As a second argument in favor of infant Baptism the Compendium states that children as well as adults belong to the **Church**. Since the Church is the realization of the Covenant, the children who belong to it, as argued above, are also connected with God's Church. This thought underlies all admonitions to children in Paul's epistles. Joel 2:6 specifically mentions babes as belonging to the congregation. Now, if this is the case, then it follows naturally that the little ones who belong to the Church of God should bear its ensign and banner as well as the adults, to mark them as separated from other people and strange religions and to serve as a testimony to them of God's Covenant mercies for them.

3) The Confession of Faith mentions as an argument in favor of infant Baptism that the children of ancient Israel

were circumcised upon the same promises made to our children. This is true, because, as we have seen in the Chapter on the Covenant of Grace (XIX.), the Covenant is essentially the same in all Dispensations. Why then should the seed of the Church in the spiritually richer New Testament Dispensation be deprived of that which the children of the Covenant in the spiritually poorer Old Testament possessed?

4) The Confession also mentions that Christ shed his blood no less for the washing of the children of the faithful than for adult persons, "and therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of that which Christ has done for them." That Christ also atoned for the sins of the lambs of the flock is evident from Mark 10:13 and Luke 18:15 containing our Lord's declarations concerning children: "of such is the Kingdom of heaven." That also entitles them to a token of the Shepherd's dying love toward them.

5) From Lev. 12:6 the Confession derives as a ground for infant baptism: "the Lord commanded in the Law that they (children) should be made partakers of the Lord's suffering and death, shortly after they were born, by offering for them a lamb, which was a sacrament of Jesus Christ." That the sacrificial lambs of the Old Testament were typical of Christ, the true Lamb of God, is undeniable. 1 Cor. 5:7. And that God provided the offering mentioned in Lev. 12 proves plainly that in the atoning work of our Savior, the little ones were thought of as well as the adults. Consequently they are entitled to a Sacrament as a token of their share in the atonement.

6) Children should be distinguished from the offspring of unbelievers by some visible token. Circumcision served as such in the Old Testament times. Naturally Baptism is designed for this in the New Testament, for it cannot be assumed that the children of the highly favored Church of the latter days should be less blessed with a sign of distinction than the seed of the people of God in former centuries.

7) Paul in 1 Cor. 7:14 calls the children of believers holy. This also is justly considered a proof in favor of infant Baptism, for it shows that the seed of believers stands in a different relation to God than the children of the world. Of this they should have a sign and seal.

8) Children possess the **Holy Spirit**, no less than adults. There are several instances and proofs of this in history as well as in the Bible. Matt. 18: 6. As such they show that they belong to Christ's mystical body, the Church, and in common with its other members, are entitled to a token of their part in Jesus.

9) Our Lord ordered in his baptism command that **nations**, when instructed in the way of salvation, should be baptized, Matt. 28: 19; Luke 24: 47. And a "nation" includes children as well as adults. This has been considered a specific command concerning the administration of the sacrament here under discussion.

10) The Lord, in Jer. 31: 1, promised that He would be the God of all the families of Israel. In harmony with this we find the apostles baptizing entire households, Acts 10: 48; 16: 15, 34, 35; 1 Cor. 1: 16; 16: 15. And while we have no data to determine the age of the members of the families mentioned, we have every reason to assume that in these households children as well as adults were found.

11) The Lord never told his New Testament Church to cease giving to the seed of the Church an outward token of its covenant relation to God, as He himself had so plainly revealed and so strongly enjoined in Circumcision, the natural successor of which, as we showed above (p. 192), is the sacrament of Baptism. Christ's treatment of children whom he blessed and pronounced to be members of his Kingdom, and the analogy of Circumcision, which began with adult Abraham and then extended to his children, naturally favored infant baptism as the initiatory rite of introduction into the Church and a signifying and sealing of the covenant promises. The blessing of the Covenant of olden days was to the seed as well as to the parent; the blessing of that same Covenant in the New Testament days could not be less comprehensive. This evidently is the main reason why no more specific command to baptize infants was given by our Lord. It was unnecessary. If the children of the New Testament Church had been deprived of a suitable sacrament, the Master would have told us about it. Instead of this, his inspired apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 7: 14, in speaking of the fact that the children of believers were holy and not unclean, even though

but one of the parents were a believer, plainly indicated that an organic relation exists between parents and children in our days as well as when faithful Abraham lived. Surely, we may conclude that the absence of a command forbidding the giving of a covenant token to the seed of the Church stamps the baptism of the little ones as pleasing to the great Bishop of our souls.

12) The above leads to what is termed the **historical argument** in favor of infant baptism. The famous Church father Origen, who was born in 185 A. D., was himself baptized as an infant and states: "The Church has received the tradition from the apostles to give baptism to the little children." Irenaeus, born about 120 A. D., a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John, also refers to it, and even though the Church father Tertullian opposed it, neither he nor any of the fathers of the Church ever condemned it as an innovation, which would naturally have been the case if it had been such. This shows once more that infant Baptism, in a natural way, took the place of Circumcision after Paul had ordered that rite abolished since Christ atoned with his life-blood.

"The requirement of repentance and faith which the apostles made a condition of Baptism, was to be expected when it is borne in mind that they addressed adults outside of the New Testament Church. This must ever be the mode of procedure when the gospel is first preached to a people. Adult baptism always comes first in every missionary church. Infant Baptism, it is reasonable to assume, arose very naturally from the very beginning, as christianity took hold of family life and training." (Schaff.)

Of course, it follows from what has already been said about the Covenant of Grace and Baptism that this Sacrament **signifies** and **seals** to the children of believers the great covenant promise of Gen. 17:7 that the Lord is a God unto the seed of faithful Abraham, even as Paul puts it in 2 Cor. 6:17, 18: "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Almighty." That includes complete salvation, in the way of faith. It **entitles** the children of believers to look upon God as their God, and to expect the fulfilment of his Covenant promises. But it also **requires** something of them, viz., as stated in the Form of Baptism of the Reformed Churches: to cleave to

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to trust in him, and to love him, to forsake the world, crucify our old nature and walk in a new and holy life. "And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sin, we must not despair of God's mercy, nor continue in sin, since baptism is a seal and undoubted testimony that we have an eternal covenant of grace with God."

May we all claim these favors in humble faith, and as little children. May we come, insofar as we have not yet done so, to accept God's promises, and after having given ourselves to God, to make known our faith and acceptance of our Covenant obligations by public confession before the Church. Our Savior promised to confess before his heavenly Father those who confess him before men, but he also told us that he would deny them who denied him. Matt. 10: 32, 33.

If we are parents, let us bear in mind from day to day that we who claim the covenant blessings for our children, solemnly bind ourselves to sacred obligations when we offer them in baptism to God. We pledge ourselves openly to bring up our children in the fear of God, and to instruct them in the doctrine of salvation, even as that is declared in the Exhortation to the parents in the Form of Baptism:

"Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have heard that baptism is an ordinance of God, to seal unto us and to our seed his Covenant; therefore it must be used for that end, and not out of custom or superstition. That it may then be manifest that you are thus minded, you are to answer sincerely to these questions:

"**First.** Whether you acknowledge, that although our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are subject to all miseries, yea, to condemnation itself; yet that they are sanctified in Christ, and therefore, as members of his Church, ought to be baptized?

"**Secondly.** Whether you acknowledge the doctrine which is contained in the Old and New Testament, and in the articles of the Christian faith, and which is taught here in this Christian Church, to be the true and perfect doctrine of salvation?

"**Thirdly.** Whether you promise and intend to see these children, when come to the years of discretion, instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine, or help or cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your power?

"**Answer.** Yes."

God still requires from every parent what he said concerning Abraham, Gen. 15: 19: "For I have known him to the end that he may command his children and his household



after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice." (Eph. 6: 4.)

May he enable old and young to be faithful to covenant obligations! And may we appreciate it more and more that God engaged himself to be our Covenant Jehovah.

"Our God, how faithful are his ways!  
His love endures the same:  
Nor from the promise of his grace  
Blots out his children's name."

### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Who were the Anabaptists mentioned in Art. XXXIV of the Confession (closing part)?
- 2 Who are the Baptists?
- 3 On which four grounds do Baptists reject infant baptism?
- 4 Which replies can you make concerning these four arguments?
- 5 Which is the first argument, mentioned in the Compendium, in favor of infant Baptism?
- 6 Which is the second argument of the Compendium?
- 7 What does the Confession say about the PROMISES as a grounds for infant Baptism?
- 8 What can you say about the Confession's reference to the offering of a LAMB for children?
- 9 Which argument is based on the fact that children should have a distinguishing sign?
- 10 Which argument is inferred from 1 Cor. 7: 14?
- 11 Is there any proof for Infant Baptism in the fact that some infants possess the Holy Spirit?
- 12 Which argument is involved in the mention made of NATIONS in Matt. 28: 19?
- 13 Which is the argument involved in Jer. 31: 1, Acts 10: 48 etc.?
- 14 What should be argued from the fact that the Lord never forbade the giving of a covenant sign and seal to children of believers?
- 15 State the historical argument in favor of infant Baptism.
- 16 What does Baptism signify as seal to the children of the Church?
- 17 What does God in Baptism require of children of the Covenant?
- 18 In which way must the seed of the Church make known its acceptance of the Covenant and its promises signified and sealed in its baptism?
- 19 To what are parents of baptized children solemnly bound in baptism?
- 20 Why should we appreciate Infant Baptism?

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE LORD'S SUPPER AND CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

- Q. 57 What is the outward sign in the Lord's supper?  
A. The broken bread that we eat, and the poured out wine which we drink, in remembrance of the sufferings and death of Christ.
- Q. 58 What is thereby signified and sealed?  
A. That Christ, with his crucified body and shed blood, feeds and nourishes our souls to everlasting life.
- Q. 59 Where hath Christ promised such things to us?  
A. In the institution of the Lord's supper, which is thus expressed, by St. Paul, 1 Cor. 11: 23, 24, 25, 26: 'For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, brake it, and said: take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For so often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.'
- Q. 60 Is the bread changed into the body of Christ, and the wine into his blood?  
A. No: no more than the water in baptism is changed into the blood of Christ.
- Q. 61 After what manner must you examine yourself before you come to the Lord's supper?  
A. 1) I must examine whether I abhor myself for my sins, and humble myself before God on account of them.  
2) Whether I believe and trust that all my sins are forgiven me for Christ's sake. 3) Whether I also have a sincere resolution henceforward, to walk in all good works.
- Q. 62 May those be admitted to the Lord's supper, who teach false doctrines, or lead offensive lives?  
A. No: lest the covenant of God be profaned, and his wrath kindled against the whole church.
- Q. 63 How must we then deal with such persons?  
A. According to the appointment given us by Christ, Matt. 18: 15, 16, 17: 'If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him also: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother: but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established: and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.'

Besides Baptism, the New Testament Church possesses a second sacrament as a means of grace, Communion, which takes the place of passover as a bloodless sacrament, as Baptism succeeded Circumcision. In this Chapter we shall discuss: (1) its names and institution; (2) its nature; (3) its elements; (4) erroneous views of it; (5) what it requires of us. Church discipline will be discussed in its closing part.

1) Different names are given in Holy Writ to this second sacrament of the New Testament. It is called Communion in 1 Cor. 10: 16; Lord's Supper in 1 Cor. 11: 20; Cup of blessing in 1 Cor. 10: 16; the Lord's table in 1 Cor. 10: 21; and the "Breaking of Bread" in Acts 2: 42. The word Eucharist comes from a Greek word signifying "to give thanks." Matt. 26: 27. Roman Catholics and Lutherans often call it "the sacrament of the altar."

In the church at Corinth, and no doubt elsewhere, the administration of Communion was preceded by Agapae or love feasts, meals at which all communicants were assembled, but which soon after degenerated in character, as shown by 1 Cor. 11: 20-34. Communion was instituted by our Savior, as recorded in Matt. 26: 26-28; Mark 14: 22-24; Luke 22: 17-20; 1 Cor. 10: 16, 17; and in 1 Cor. 11: 23-26, printed above under Q. 59.

2) The nature of this sacrament:

"The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporeal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace." (Shorter Catechism.)

The outward sign in the Lord's Supper is bread which is broken, and wine which is poured forth in remembrance of the suffering and death of Jesus, according to 1 Cor. 11: 24: "This do in remembrance of me." As such it is to be observed "till he come."

Communion signifies and seals that Christ with his crucified body and shed blood feeds and nourishes the souls of his believing people to everlasting life. It shows that our Redeemer, through his obedience unto death, became the meriting cause of our salvation. It is meant not only as a sign of

spiritual good, but also as a seal of the love of Christ toward his own. It is a **covenanting ordinance**, since God by it confirms his covenant of grace with all of its promises to us.

From the side of the believers it is meant as a **witnessing ordinance** professing our trust in Christ and in his sacrifice as the only ground of our acceptance with the Father, so that the world may take knowledge of our appreciation and acceptance of the Savior and his work. Besides this, our communing with our fellow-believers is a manifestation of the **Communion of Saints**, which we profess in the Apostle's Creed.

Communion is also a **commemorative ordinance**. This, as well as other features, is beautifully brought out in the Form of the administration of the Lord's Supper in the Liturgy of the Reformed Churches, which declares the following concerning the end or **purpose** of the sacrament:

"Now after this manner are we to remember him by it:

"**First.** That we are confidently persuaded in our hearts, that our Lord Jesus Christ (according to the promises made to our forefathers in the Old Testament) was sent of the Father into the world; that he assumed our flesh and blood; that he bore for us the wrath of God (under which we should have perished everlastingly) from the beginning of his incarnation, to the end of his life upon earth; and that he hath fulfilled, for us, all obedience to the divine law, and righteousness: especially, when the weight of our sins and the wrath of God pressed out of him the bloody sweat in the garden, where he was bound that we might be freed from our sins: that he afterwards suffered innumerable reproaches, that we might never be confounded. That he was innocently condemned to death, that we might be acquitted at the judgment-seat of God: yea, that he suffered his blessed body to be nailed on the cross—that he might fix thereon the handwriting of our sins; and hath also taken upon himself the curse due to us, that he might fill us with his blessings; and hath humbled himself unto the deepest reproach and pains of hell, both in body and soul, on the tree of the cross, when he cried out with a loud voice, **My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?** that we might be accepted of God, and never be forsaken of him: and finally confirmed with his death and shedding of his blood, the new and eternal testament, that covenant of grace and reconciliation when he said, **It is finished.**

"**Secondly.** And that we might firmly believe that we belong to this covenant of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ, in his last Supper, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, **Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance**

of me; in like manner also after supper he took the cup, gave thanks and said, Drink ye all of it; this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins; this do ye as often as ye drink it in remembrance of me: that is, as often as ye eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you shall thereby as by a sure remembrance and pledge, be admonished and assured of this my hearty love and faithfulness towards you; that, whereas you should otherwise have suffered eternal death, I have given my body to the death of the cross, and shed my blood for you; and as certainly feed and nourish your hungry and thirsty souls with my crucified body, and shed blood, to everlasting life, as this bread is broken before your eyes, and this cup is given to you, and you eat and drink the same with your mouth, in remembrance of me.

“From this institution of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, we see that he directs our faith and trust to his perfect sacrifice (once offered on the cross) as to the only ground and foundation of our salvation, wherein he is become to our hungry and thirsty souls, the true meat and drink of life eternal. For by his death he hath taken away the cause of our eternal death and misery, namely, sin: and obtained for us the quickening Spirit, that we by the same (which dwelleth in Christ as in the head, and in us as his members) might have true communion with him, and be made partakers of all his blessings, of life eternal, righteousness and glory.

“Besides, that we by the same Spirit may also be united as members of one body in true brotherly love, as the holy Apostle saith, **For we, being many, are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.** For as out of many grains one meal is ground, and one bread baked, and out of many berries being pressed together, one wine floweth, and mixeth itself together; so shall we all, who by a true faith are ingrafted into Christ, be altogether one body, through brotherly love, for Christ's sake, our beloved Savior, who hath so exceedingly loved us; and not only show this in word, but also in very deed towards one another.”

3) The elements or material signs of Communion are bread and wine. The Reformed Churches use ordinary bread since the essential point in the sacrament is that of nourishing our souls as outward bread strengthens our body. At the institution of the Lord's Supper, no doubt, unleavened bread was used, since this was the kind prescribed for Passover use, according to Ex. 12: 18, 19. The Greek or Eastern Church, insists on the bread being leavened, by way of antagonism to the Jews. The Roman and Lutheran Churches make use of unleavened bread, in the shape of wafers. Calvinistic Churches

deem it immaterial whether the bread is leavened or unleavened, but employ only the ordinary kind of bread, since that is used among us to feed our bodies, and can most properly symbolize what communion represents. For the same reason the ordinary kind of wine is also used.

4) **Erroneous views of Communion.** They are manifold:

(a) The one is the Roman Catholic view that Communion should be served to the "laity" only in its one form: bread, while the priests alone use both bread and wine. The Hussites of the early part of the fifteenth century warred on account of this and all the Churches of the Reformation emphatically protest against this mutilation of the administration of the sacrament. They claim, and properly so, that to the whole Church, represented by the disciples, and not simply to them in their official function, the command was plainly given, Matt. 26:27: "Drink ye all of it," while Mark 14:23 records that they all drank. This is also assumed plainly in the account of Communion given by Paul in 1 Cor. 11.

(b) Question 60 of our Compendium and its answer remind us of another controversy with Rome concerning the Lord's Supper. "Is the bread changed into the body of Christ, and the wine into his blood?" "No; no more than the water of baptism is changed into the blood of Christ." The Roman Catholic as well as the Greek Church believes in what is called **transubstantiation**, which word denotes a real change of the whole substance of the bread into the real body of Christ, and of the substance of the wine into the real blood of Christ. After the words of consecration are spoken by the priest: "this is my body, this is my blood," it is held that there is present on the altar the true body and blood of the Savior, even though the sense perceives exactly the same color, form, taste and smell of the elements, which were present before the consecration. The power to bring this transubstantiation about was given to the apostles, it is claimed, when the Lord told them to do this in commemoration of him, and this power was passed on from the apostles to the bishops and priests, and by them exercised in what is called **Mass**, which is considered a "perpetual sacrifice," essentially the same as that of the cross, except its bloodlessness. Mass is followed by communion, both actions together being called Holy Eucharist. The doctrine of tran-

substantiation is claimed to be based on the literal words of Christ when communion was instituted, "this is my body, this is my blood," with reference to John 6: 52: "my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." It is also asserted that Mass fulfills the prophecy of Mal. 1: 11, "for from the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is a sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation.

The Protestant Churches reject this transubstantiation doctrine on the following grounds:

1) Transubstantiation is flatly contradictory to the testimony of our God-given senses, which testify that the elements after the so-called consecration are exactly the same as beforehand.

2) It is against sound reason to hold that the material body of our Lord may, without division, be present in heaven, and still, at the very same time, be in all kinds of places on earth.

3) It is contrary to the understanding the disciples had of the matter when Communion was instituted, for they expressed no horror when Christ addressed them, as they certainly would have done so if they had supposed that Christ's body was in their mouths literally, while He was sitting with them at the table.

4) The doctrine is also derogatory to the power of the atonement of our Lord, since it is stated plainly that with one offering, "once for all," he procured salvation for his people. Rom. 8: 32; Heb. 7: 27; 9: 12.

5) It is contrary to Jesus' own statement that he would leave the world, John 16: 28, so that the very purpose of Communion was to **remember** him.

The text above alluded to, John 6: 52, is by the Reformed taken in a figurative sense, since it is plain from the analogy of faith, as contained in the Word of God, that not participation of Eucharist is essential to our having spiritual life, but our reception of Christ by faith, as the bread of life, as the one who gave his body and blood unto the satisfaction for our sin and the meriting of life for all who believe in him.

Mal. 1: 11 is explained in the sense that during the New Testament, not alone in the land of the Jews, but throughout

the world, God's people will bring true spiritual sacrifices, as these were symbolized by the offerings of the Old Testament. In contradiction of the literal way in which the words, "this is my body, this is my blood, are taken, attention may well be called to it that the verb "to be" in Scripture as well as in common speech, is used to express resemblance or representation, as, for instance in "I am the door," John 10:9; "I am the true vine," John 15:1; and in 1 Cor. 11:25, "this cup is the New covenant in my blood."

(c) This reasonable conception of the word "is" in the institution of Communion, is also the main reason for our rejection of the Lutheran view of the Lord's Supper, which involves that Christ "in, with and under the bread, gives us his true body, and in, with and under the wine, his true blood." This view is sometimes called "con-substantiation."

(d) Over against Luther's literalism in this regard, the Reformer Zwingli asserted the opposite extreme view, viz., that the Lord's Supper was a bare memorial. But this is likewise rejected by Calvinists, for, while it is true that Communion was designed as such, in a way, (1 Cor. 11:24, 25), it is evident that this is not the complete view of the sacrament. The self-examination before the partaking of Communion, on which the Bible lays stress, shows that it is a sealing as well as a signifying or memorial ordinance. What the official Reformed or Calvinistic conception of the Lord's Supper is, is expressed in Art. XXXV. of the Confession:

"We believe and confess, that our Savior Jesus Christ did ordain and institute the sacrament of the holy supper, to nourish and support those whom he hath already regenerated and incorporated into his family, which is his Church. Now those, who are regenerated, have in them a twofold life, the one corporal and temporal, which they have from the first birth, and is common to all men: the other spiritual and heavenly, which is given them in their second birth, which is effected by the word of the gospel, in the communion of the body of Christ; and this life is not common, but is peculiar to God's elect. In like manner God hath given us, for the support of the bodily and earthly life, earthly and common bread, which is subservient thereto, and is common to all men, even as life itself. But for the support of the spiritual and heavenly life, which believers have, he hath sent a living bread, which descended from heaven, namely, Jesus Christ, who nourishes and strengthens the spiritual life of believers, when they eat him, that is to say, when they apply and receive him by faith



in the spirit. Christ, that he might represent unto us this spiritual and heavenly bread, hath instituted an earthly and visible bread, as a sacrament of his body, and wine as a sacrament of his blood, to testify by them unto us, that, as certainly as we receive and hold this sacrament in our hands, and eat and drink the same with our mouths, by which our life is afterwards nourished, we also do as certainly receive by faith (which is the hand and mouth of our soul) the true body and blood of Christ our only Savior in our souls, for the support of our spiritual life. Now, as it is certain and beyond all doubt, that Jesus Christ hath not enjoined to us the use of his sacraments in vain, so he works in us all that he represents to us by these holy signs, though the manner surpasses our understanding, and cannot be comprehended by us, as the operations of the Holy Ghost are hidden and incomprehensible. In the meantime we err not, when we say, that what is eaten and drunk by us is the proper and natural body, and the proper blood of Christ. But the manner of our partaking of the same, is not by the mouth, but by the spirit through faith. Thus then, though Christ always sits at the right hand of his Father in the heavens, yet doth he not therefore cease to make us partakers of himself by faith. This feast is a spiritual table, at which Christ communicates himself with all his benefits to us, and gives us there to enjoy both himself, and the merits of his sufferings and death, nourishing, strengthening and comforting our poor comfortless souls by the eating of his flesh, quickening and refreshing them by the drinking of his blood. Further, though the sacraments are connected with the thing signified, nevertheless both are not received by all men: the ungodly indeed receives the sacrament to his condemnation, but he doth not receive the truth of the sacrament. As Judas, and Simon the sorcerer, both indeed received the sacrament, but not Christ, who was signified by it, of whom believers only are made partakers. Lastly, we receive this holy sacrament in the assembly of the people of God, with humility and reverence, keeping up amongst us a holy remembrance of the death of Christ our Savior, with thanksgiving; making there confession of our faith, and of the Christian religion. Therefore no one ought to come to this table without having previously rightly examined himself; lest by eating of this bread and drinking of this cup, he eat and drink judgment to himself. In a word, we are excited by the use of this holy sacrament, to a fervent love towards God and our neighbor. Therefore we reject all mixtures and damnable inventions, which men have added unto, and blended with the sacraments, as profanations of them: and affirm that we ought to rest satisfied with the ordinance which Christ and his apostles have taught us, and that we must speak of them in the same manner as they have spoken."

5) It is plain from the above statements that what is required of us to obtain the blessed benefits of this sacrament

is that we by faith appropriate Christ to ourselves as he gives himself to us.

As members of the Church of God through Baptism, we may not rest until we, when come to years of discretion, are enabled by grace, to properly partake of Communion, in obedience to the command of the Savior, "this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19 and 1 Cor. 11:25). Before these years of discretion we are not allowed to partake, since we as a rule, are unable to rightly, that is spiritually, to discern the Lord's body, as Paul mentions in 1 Cor. 11:29 as a requisite, and in which statement we find our ground for opposing the giving of the sacrament to infants, as done in the Greek Church.

What is just mentioned shows that each one who intends to partake of this solemn ordinance, is duty bound to examine himself. The Compendium gives the following essential and weighty points in answer to the question (61): "After what manner must you examine yourself before you come to the Lord's Supper?":

1) I must examine whether I abhor myself for my sins, and humble myself before God on account of them. 2) Whether I believe and trust that all my sins are forgiven me for Christ's sake. 3) Whether I also have a sincere resolution henceforward, to walk in all good works.

It is in harmony with this that the Form of the administration of the Lord's Supper tells us:

"The true examination of ourselves consists of these three parts:

"First. That every one consider by himself, his sins and the curse due to him for them, to the end that he may abhor and humble himself before God: considering that the wrath of God against sin is so great, that (rather than it should go unpunished) he hath punished the same in his beloved Son Jesus Christ, with the bitter and shameful death of the cross.

"Secondly. That every one examine his own heart whether he doth believe this faithful promise of God, that all his sins are forgiven him only for the sake of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, and that the perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed and freely given him as his own, yea, so perfectly, as if he had satisfied in his own person for all his sins, and fulfilled all righteousness.

"Thirdly. That every one examine his own conscience, whether he purposeth henceforth to show true thankfulness to God in his whole life, and to walk uprightly before him;

as also, whether he hath laid aside unfeignedly all enmity, hatred, and envy, and doth firmly resolve henceforward to walk in true love and peace with his neighbor."

These three parts agree with the three mentioned in the opening words of the Form of Baptism, page 184. Since Communion is a covenanting and witnessing ordinance, in which we declare our love toward Christ and his people as well as our faith in the Redeemer, it goes without saying that only those are welcome and worthy communicants whose life and heart is in agreement with the character of the sacrament, and who accept the doctrines of grace involved in the sacrament.

Therefore the Compendium asks: "May those be admitted to the Lord's Supper who teach false doctrines or lead offensive lives?", and the answer sounds plain and strong: "No; lest the covenant of God be profaned and his wrath kindled against the whole Church."

The Old Testament gives an abundance of warnings about the profaning of God's ordinances and its evil results upon the whole people, considered jointly responsible. Lev. 10: 6; Num. 16: 22; Jos. 22: 18, 20. Paul assures us in 1 Cor. 11: 30, with reference to wrong use of Communion in the Corinthian church, "for this cause many are weak and sickly among you," and in that same chapter, verses 28 and 29, he commands and declares: "But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

Our Lord himself, in the parable of the Guest without the wedding garment, Matt. 22: 1-14, suggests the great need of due preparation before we partake of solemn ordinances of the Kingdom, and the woeful results if we neglect it. (Compare 1 Cor. 10: 21; Matt. 7: 6; Ps. 50: 16, 17; Ez. 44: 7-9.)

The Form of Communion states:

"Therefore, we also, according to the command of Christ and the Apostle Paul, admonish all those who are defiled with the following sins, to keep themselves from the table of the Lord, and declare to them that they have no part in the kingdom of Christ; such as all idolaters, all those who invoke deceased saints, angels or other creatures; all those who worship images; all encanters, diviners, charmners, and those who confide in such enchantments; all despisers of God, and of his

Word, and of the holy sacraments; all blasphemers; all those who are given to raise discord, sects and mutiny in Church or State; all perjured persons; all those who are disobedient to their parents and superiors; all murderers, contentious persons, and those who live in hatred and envy against their neighbors; all adulterers, whoremongers, drunkards, thieves, usurers, robbers, gamesters, covetous, and all who lead offensive lives.

"All these, while they continue in such sins, shall abstain from this meat (which Christ hath ordained only for the faithful), lest their judgment and condemnation be made the heavier."

### CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

6) Questions 62 and 63 of the Compendium treat of what is usually called **Church Discipline**, by which we understand certain rules and regulations to keep the Church of God pure from error in doctrine and irregularity in life. The word Discipline comes from the word disciple, or learner, since it contains the rules to keep us, in doctrine and in conduct, in the way of a true follower of the Lord.

Every christian is to exercise discipline in a certain sense, in wisdom and charity. For we are told in Heb. 10: 24: "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." How we as individual believers are to deal with fellow-believers who need this **private discipline**, is told in detail in Matt. 18: 16-18: "And if thy brother sin against thee, go, shew him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican."

These words show plainly that we are first of all to admonish in private, then with two or three witnesses, and in last instance, when all this is in vain, we are to inform the church, that is, those who represent it, for it would be uncharitable to forthwith acquaint the whole congregation with the matter. The consistory is duty bound to investigate the case, carefully and impartially, and if guilt is proven and all warnings are in vain, the guilty party is placed under what is called **minor excommunication**, i.e. suspension of the rights

of church membership insofar as partaking of the sacraments and voting at congregational meetings is concerned. If this also is without the proper results, the aid of the whole congregation is invoked in what is called **major excommunication** or public discipline, of which the **first** step is the announcing of the sin of the guilty party, but not the name, with an exhortation to pray for the offender. If this has not the desired effect, the **second** step of public discipline is taken, after obtaining the advice of the Classis. This second step involves that the name of the erring party is mentioned from the pulpit, as well as his sin, with the request that all believers try to labor with the offender to bring him to repentance. In case all these efforts prove to be in vain, the **third** step of discipline is resorted to, the announcement of the purpose of the consistory to excommunicate the impenitent church member. Formal **excommunication** is carried out by means of the Form for this sad part of the labors of the office-bearers of the Church of Christ. Should, in course of time, repentance be seen, the Church gladly welcomes the return of such, and officially reinstates the brother or sister, by means of the Form of Re-admitting Excommunicated Persons, which also is a part of the Liturgy of the Reformed Churches.

If sins are of a public character, i.e. giving public and general offense, the consistory's duty is to take such a matter up without waiting for a formal charge.

That the Head of his Church will honor faithful exercise of Church discipline is assured by his statement in Matt. 18: 18: "Verily, I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

In Matt. 16: 19 the Savior spoke of "the keys of the Kingdom of heaven," when he assured his disciples that whatsoever they should bind or loose on earth should be bound or loosed in heaven. (Compare John 20: 23.) From this expression Church discipline has been called the "power of the keys," which term is explained in Q. 83 of the Heidelberg Catechism as signifying: "The preaching of the holy gospel, and christian discipline, or excommunication out of the christian church; by these two the Kingdom is opened to believers, and shut to unbelievers." Compare Isa. 22: 22; Luke 11: 52; Rev. 1: 18.

Article XXXII. of the Confession contains the following of the Order and Discipline of the Church:

“In the meantime we believe, though it is useful and beneficial, that those, who are rulers of the Church, institute and establish certain ordinances among themselves for maintaining the body of the Church; yet they ought studiously to take care, that they do not depart from those things which Christ, our only master, hath introduced. And therefore, we reject all human inventions, and all laws, which man would introduce into the worship of God, thereby to bind and compel the conscience in any manner whatever. Therefore we admit only of that which tends to nourish and preserve concord, and unity, and to keep all men in obedience to God. For this purpose, excommunication or church discipline is requisite, with the several circumstances belonging to it, according to the Word of God.”

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#### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Mention various names given to the Lord's Supper.
- 2 What is the nature of this sacrament?
- 3 Why is it called a covenanting ordinance?
- 4 What is the connection between the sacrament and the communion of the saints?
- 5 How must Christ be remembered in communion?
- 6 What can you say about the elements of communion?
- 7 What is meant by communion under both kinds?
- 8 Why do we reject the transubstantiation doctrine?
- 9 Which is the Lutheran view of the Lord's Supper?
- 10 Which is the Zwinglian view?
- 11 Describe the Reformed or Calvinistic view of communion.
- 12 What is required of us in order to partake aright of communion?
- 13 Wherein does the proper self-examination consist?
- 14 What is meant by church discipline?
- 15 What does private discipline consist of?
- 16 Mention the steps of public discipline.
- 17 What is meant by the keys of the kingdom?

## THE THIRD PART.

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### Of the Gratitude we owe to God for Redemption.

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#### CHAPTER XXIII.

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##### GOOD WORKS.

- Q. 64 Since we are saved merely of grace through Christ, why must we then yet do good works?
- A. Not to merit heaven thereby (which Christ hath done); but because this is commanded me of God.
- Q. 65 What purpose then do your good works answer?
- A. That I may thereby testify my thankfulness to God for all his benefits, and that he may be glorified by me; and that also I may be assured of the sincerity of my faith, by good works, as the fruits thereof, and that my neighbors may be edified thereby and gained to Christ.
- Q. 66 Shall they also be saved who do no good works?
- A. No; for the Scripture saith, that neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor whoremongers, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers, nor such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. 6: 9, 10, unless they turn to the Lord.

With Question 64 the third part of the Compendium begins. Following its first part, about our Misery, came its second part about **Redemption**, the several main doctrines of which were taken up, guided by the articles of the Apostles' Creed.

Now comes the third part, about the Thankfulness or Gratitude which ought to be shown by those who are delivered from their sin and misery through the Mediator.

This third part has in turn been overvalued by some and undervalued by others.

People of Pelagian views have overvalued it. Such people are found not only in the Church of Rome, but among Protestants as well. Good works, character-building, christian activity, social service, occupies such a large place in their thought, that they care very little for the doctrines involved

in our Misery, and sometimes equally little for what pertains to our Redemption. It is to be feared that many in our days make a fearful mistake in this regard, for without a true insight into our sinfulness and need of redeeming grace, and without a hearty and daily surrender to the Christ of God, our good works are hollow, our character-building is devoid of true solidity, and our christian activity and social service lacks the proper motive and sustaining power.

But there also have been and are people who sadly **undervalue** the Gratitude required from christians. They are known as **Antinomians**, which term signifies opposition to the Law, from the words **anti** (against), and **nomos**, (law). They hold that the grace of God has annulled the law of God, so that they as believers are no longer bound to live according to the statutes of Jehovah. Theirs is the liberty with which Christ has set them free, as they claim. Some Antinomians dared to claim that good works were hurtful to salvation, although most of them, of course, did not have the boldness to make such a statement. Neither are many, who are practical Antinomians, willing to go by that name.

In France and in the Netherlands and Germany the Libertines of Reformation days were Antinomians. In England the Ranters of the time of Bunyan were of this class, and in New England, during the seventeenth century, Mrs. Hutchinson led in proclaiming antinomian views. Antinomian Baptist parties are still extant in the United States.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century Antinomians were also found among the Dutch people in the eastern part of the United States, who held that sanctification darkened our justification, that saints could do no wrong, that sin could not hurt them, that God beheld no sin in them, and that they could sin with a free conscience. They also asserted that saints were not to question whether or not they actually believed in Christ, and frequently claimed that they could **infallibly** know themselves and others to be saints.

May the Lord keep us from such God-dishonoring views and practices!

The Reformed Churches have taken a stand between these two extremes of over- and undervaluing Gratitude. On the one hand they assert that experimental knowledge of sin



and of redemption is not a thing of minor importance for a christian but of supreme import, and fundamental in essence. On the other hand they hold that Gratitude as shown in Good Works, is not fruitless and vain, but the natural and proper result of genuine redeeming work of grace in our hearts, in agreement with Christ's own statement that a good tree bears good fruit. The remaining part of the Compendium is devoted to this third part of what a believer is to know in order to live and to die in true comfort. Why Gratitude must be shown is discussed in Q. 64 and 65; wherein it consists, viz. true Conversion, is explained in Q. 67 and 68; its Rule, the Law of God, is taken up in Q. 68 and 69; and finally its most important part, Prayer, in Q. 70-74.

The present Chapter concerns itself with **Good Works**: (1) their Nature; (2) their Purpose; (3) their Necessity.

I. The Nature of Good Works is described in Q. 68 as acts "which proceed from a true faith, are done according to the law of God, and to his glory; and not those which are founded on human institutions, or on our own imaginations." As good works we may enumerate meditation on God's Word, prayer and praise, faithfulness in our calling, feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, harboring the harborless, visiting the sick and the imprisoned, admonishing sinners, instructing the spiritually ignorant, counseling the doubting, comforting the sorrowful, bearing wrongs patiently, praying for and loving even our enemies and persecutors, and in general a life of daily and hearty consecration to God and his Kingdom. Matt. 25: 41-46; 5: 3-16; 18: 23-35; Rom. 12: 17-19; James 5: 19, 20; Gal. 6: 1.

As Christians we are to engage diligently in performing these works. Not, however, as Q. 64 reminds us, to merit heaven thereby. That would be useless, since Christ has done this for his people, as confessed in the articles of the Apostles' Creed, based on abundant Bible testimony. Acts 4: 12; Heb. 7: 25; 10: 14. (Cf. Chap. XVIII, I., §2.)

Neither could we perform really "good" works, since sin has disabled us thoroughly, so that those in the flesh cannot please God, Rom. 8: 8, and even those who are converted defile even the best of their efforts with so much sin, that they have reasons to be ashamed before a holy God, and say of

themselves, "we are unprofitable servants." Luke 17:10. Nevertheless good works are to be rendered, even though we are saved merely of grace, "because this is commanded me of God." Col. 1:10-12: "Walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to the might of his glory, unto all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Eph. 2:10; Phil. 4:8; Tit. 2:11-14; Matt. 5:20.

Our duty is based upon God's ordinance. Our works are deeds of child-like obedience, of loving service, inspired by a sense of gratitude. Involuntarily the question arises in the soul of the redeemed: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" And the renewed soul replies willingly, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord; I will pay my vows unto the Lord," etc. Ps. 116:12-19.

This grateful performance of good works is not done to recompense the great Giver of all, as if we try to return to him an equivalent for what He gave us. We cannot render such an equivalent to God. The believer knows his imperfections and the imperfections of his efforts well enough to banish from his mind the thought of retribution, equal for equal. He considers his works only as slight tokens of affection, as those of a child toward a generous father.

II. The Compendium mentions four things as constituting the Purpose of Good Works.

1) To testify thankfulness to God for all his benefits, that He may be glorified. God's glory is the ultimate and highest purpose of all the work of redemption. This should be aimed at by a redeemed people. And it becomes the aim of all those who are truly called out of darkness to God's marvelous light. They believe the Master's word, John 15:8: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit," and in dependence of Him, the true Vine, they endeavor to bear fruit, as shown in Chapter XXV. on Sanctification.

2) The second purpose of good works is that we may be assured of the sincerity of our faith by good works as the fruit thereof. In Matt. 7:20 the Lord told his disciples:

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Good works proceed from faith. If true, living faith is within us it will inevitably reveal itself in deeds of faith. If we produce no good works, we have reasons to fear that our faith is dead, as James brought out so strikingly in his Epistle (2: 20). We are not to assume, however, that our good works in themselves have the power to assure us of our calling and election. (2 Peter 1: 9, 10), and to bear witness to the genuineness of our faith. It is true, only the Holy Spirit of God is the Spirit of true assurance. Rom. 8: 16 informs us: "the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." But the Holy Ghost bears this witness in our heart by means of the fruits of good works which we bear, even as these works themselves are wrought through him. Gal. 5: 22; Eph. 2: 10; Rom. 5: 5.

3) The third purpose of good works is that our neighbors may be won for Christ. Matt. 5: 16: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." "Men should know we have been with Jesus, they should feel his presence near, as with them we joy and labor, as with them we journey here." Men should know this by word and action, in the small things of this life, as well as in the large ones, for not by word of lip is the world convinced as much as by the loving deeds of service of those who claim the Lord as their Master.

The Bible speaks of wives winning their husbands for the Lord, without the word, by godly walk, 1 Peter 2: 1, 2, and elsewhere Peter writes: "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter 2: 11, 12.)

God grant us that so our lips and lives express the holy gospel we profess and so our works and virtues shine, that they may prove the doctrine of free grace as divine, by producing works which will appeal to the ungodly and by the Holy Spirit may be employed to startle and arouse them, to make them realize that there is something divine in religion,

something the world does not have and cannot give, so that it may lead them to seek their all at the feet of Him who, and who alone, is able to make them fellow-saints. Stephen's example at death no doubt made impression on Paul when he was still Saul, and we know from the history of the Church, especially in times of persecution, that the christian way of living and dying displayed by the martyrs has had wonderful effects. That in this a missionary motive is involved goes without saying.

III. **The Necessity of Good Works** is involved in what may be called the fourth purpose of good works. This is mentioned in Q. 66. "Shall they also be saved, who do no good works?" "No: for the Scripture saith, that neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor whoremongers, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers, nor such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God, (1 Cor. 6: 9, 10), unless they turn to the Lord." This, indeed, is true. Although our good works will not open heaven for us, the pearly gates will not receive us without them. Matt. 3: 10; Rom. 2: 6-11; Rev. 21: 8, 27. One who on earth took no delight in deeds pleasing to the Lord would not fit in the surroundings of heaven. Nor will such a one ever enter in. Heaven is only for the ones who feared God and began to give glory to Him. Rev. 14: 7; Isa. 43: 21; 1 Cor. 6: 20.

There is a close connection between justification and sanctification, "because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by his blood, also renews us by his Holy Spirit, after his own image," as the Heidelberg Catechism states. (Q. 86.)

Enemies to the doctrine of free grace have often charged us with inconsistency because we disclaim the meriting power of good works and still insist upon their necessity. Nevertheless we maintain both. Because the Word of God teaches both: salvation by grace, and good works as fruits and proofs of a change of heart. The Confession of Faith states the following on the subject in Art. XXIV.:

"We believe that this true faith being wrought in man by hearing of the Word of God, and the operation of the Holy Ghost, doth regenerate and make him a new man, causing him to live a new life, and freeing him from the bondage of sin. Therefore it is so far from being true, that this justifying faith makes men remiss in a pious and holy life, that on the con-

trary without it they would never do any thing out of love to God, but only out of self-love or fear of damnation. Therefore it is impossible that this holy faith can be unfruitful in man: for we do not speak of a vain faith, but of such a faith, which is called in Scripture, a faith that **worketh by love**, which excites man to the practice of those works, which God has commanded in his Word. Which works, as they proceed from the good root of faith, are good and acceptable in the sight of God, forasmuch as they are all sanctified by his grace: howbeit they are of no account towards our justification. For it is by faith in Christ that we are justified, even before we do good works; otherwise they could not be good works, any more than the fruit of a tree can be good, before the tree itself is good. Therefore we do good works, but not to merit by them, (for what can we merit?) nay, we are beholden to God for the good works we do, and not he to us, since it is he that **worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure**. Let us therefore attend to what is written, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do. In the meantime, we do not deny that God rewards our good works, but it is through his grace that he crowns his gifts. Moreover, though we do good works, we do not found our salvation upon them; for we can do no work but what is polluted by our flesh, and also punishable; and although we could perform such works, still the remembrance of one sin is sufficient to make God reject them. Thus then we should always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences continually vexed, if they relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior."

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### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 About which part of the Christian truth does the third part of the Compendium speak?
- 2 Who overvalue the doctrine of good works?
- 3 Which people have undervalued good works?
- 4 Which is the Reformed view of good works?
- 5 Describe the nature of good works.
- 6 Mention various kinds of good works.
- 7 Why do we not consider good works as a sort of a recompense to God?
- 8 Which is the first purpose of good works?
- 9 Which is their second purpose?
- 10 Which is their third purpose?
- 11 What can you say about the NECESSITY of good works?
- 12 What does the Confession (Art. XXIV.) say of the root of good works?
- 13 Why can we not build our salvation on good works?

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### CONVERSION.

Q. 67 Wherein doth the conversion of man consist?

A. In a hearty repentance, and avoiding of sin, and in earnest desire after, and doing of all good works.

Q. 68 What are good works?

A. Only those which proceed from a true faith, are done according to the law of God, and to his glory, and not those which are founded on human institutions, or on our own imaginations.

The closing words of the Answer to Q. 66 (at the head of Chapter XXIII.) declared that turning to the Lord was necessary to inherit the Kingdom of God. That brings us to the subject of **Conversion**, or turning, so prominently standing forth in the Bible and in all faithful preaching. We shall notice: (1) Its Nature; (2) its two parts, repentance and faith; (3) kinds of conversion; (4) the good works of conversion and their rule.

1) The Compendium describes it as consisting "In a hearty repentance, and avoiding of sin, and in an earnest desire after, and doing all good works."

In the Authorized Version of the Bible the word conversion is used only once, viz. in Acts 15: 3, speaking of Paul and Barnabas, "declaring the conversion of the Gentiles."

Here the word *epi-strophe* is used which means literally: to turn about, and from this word most of the New Testament terms indicating conversion are derived. To "turn about" is also the meaning of corresponding words employed in the Old Testament.

In former days the term conversion was used in the wide sense of indicating the entire renewal of a person, the "mortification of the old and the quickening of the old man," as the Heidelberg Catechism puts it in Lord's Day XXXIII. This is now usually called **Sanctification**, to be explained in the next Chapter.

At present the term conversion is usually employed in the sense of our first turning from sin, with hearty repent-

ance, and our first turning to Christ in faith. In that sense we wish to speak of it here.

Conversion is an outgrowth of Regeneration explained in Chapter XV. It is the regenerated soul's response to the Internal Calling spoken of in Chapter XVII. From God's side it is the act of the Lord whereby He incites the regenerated sinner to a conscious repenting of sin and turning to him in faith. This is usually called **active conversion**. From the sinner's side it is the conscious act of the regenerated person, through God's grace, turning from sin, unto God. (**Passive conversion**.)

Conversion is **demanded** of us by God. Acts 11: 21; 2 Cor. 12: 21. We should realize that God justly demands of us to turn from sin unto him, so that the sense of our obligation, coupled to the sense of our inability to carry it out, may drive us to the Throne of grace with the prayer, "Turn us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned," Lam. 5: 21.

2) It has already been suggested by what we said about its **nature**, that Conversion consists of two parts: **Repentance** and **Faith**. Mark 1: 15: "Repent ye, and believe in the gospel." Acts 20: 21: "Testifying . . . repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

(a) **Repentance** is heartfelt sorrow for sin, with self-condemnation, and turning from sin. The primary thought of the Hebrew word in the Old Testament translated repent is to pant, to sigh; to groan, and to grieve about one's doings. The Greek word in the New Testament usually translated as repent, indicates changing the mind. (Meta-noia.) It was as it were the keynote of the preaching of John the Baptist, and our Savior himself and his apostles repeatedly proclaimed: "repent!" Matt. 3: 2; 4: 17; Mark 6: 12; Acts 2: 28.

Repentance is **necessary** to salvation. Luke 13: 3, 5: "I tell you nay, but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

It is **manifested** in deep sorrow for sin, in self-humiliation, yea self-abhorrence, as exemplified by the Publican, Luke 18: 13, and by Job 42: 6, and foretold and promised in Ez. 36: 31: "Then shall ye remember your evil ways . . . . and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight."

Repentance is also manifested in **confession** of sin and

prayer to God for mercy as shown by David in Psalm 51. It likewise involves turning away from the evil ways. "Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him, Isa. 55:7. Naturally it will lead to "doing works worthy of repentance," Acts 26:20, that is, a truly christian life, wherein one endeavors in the strength of God, to "bring forth fruit worthy of repentance," Matt. 3:8. If unbaptized, the repenting sinner will seek baptism, Acts 2:38; if not confessing the Lord, he will be prompted to come to public acceptance of his covenant obligations. Jer. 31:18. In connection with faith repentance brings pardon in the blood of Christ. That is the reason why the Bible often connects repentance with remission of sin. Luke 24:47; Mark 1:4; Acts 3:19: "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Repentance is God's gift, Acts 11:18. "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

Jesus, once humbled but now exalted, gives repentance. Acts 5:30, 31: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus . . . . for to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins."

Repentance is effected through the preaching of the Word, applied by the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:37-41: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts." Rom. 2:4 tells us that the goodness of God leads men to repentance. In some cases this is very evident. In many instances God's rebukes bring about the turning from sin and to God, which constitutes repentance. Ps. 119:67: "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy Word." Rev. 3:19: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore and repent."

The realization, too, of what the LORD is, has effected repentance. Job 42:5, 6: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

May God in his mercy also grant unto us repentance unto life. May we seek it with weeping and supplication. Jer. 31:9.

Of course, the sorrow for sin does not manifest itself in the same manner in all the regenerated who come to repentance. A great deal depends upon God's dealings with us, whether along deep ways or not. Our temperament has some-



thing to do with it also. Those of a sanguine, impulsive nature, as Peter, will have a different way of manifesting their sorrow for sin than those whose temperament is phlegmatic, or choleric or melancholic.

Even national characteristics will reveal themselves in the mode of our repenting. We should be careful not to measure our way of sorrowing for sin with any human standard. The Word of God is our guide in this respect also.

b) **Faith** is the second part of conversion. True repentance always leads to this, particularly to faith in Christ as the Savior. 2 Cor. 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation," and since salvation is obtained only through Christ, it inevitably brings to his feet. Since saving faith was described in detail in Chapter VII., it is needless to discuss it here, except to say that this faith involves sincere acceptance of the gospel offer, and of the Savior, the heart of the gospel, with cordial and repeated surrender to him as our prophet, priest and king.

God grant us to exercise ourselves in this daily!

3) **Kinds of Conversions.** This repenting of sin and turning to Christ in faith is not alike in all cases. We therefore speak of different kinds of conversions.

We speak of **legal conversions** in the case of sharply outlined experiences, in which a **crisis** takes place, definite and plain, so that as a rule the exact time of repenting and turning to Christ can be determined. This frequently takes place in those who walked on ways of ungodliness. The "terror of the Law" has a good deal to do with such experiences, hence the name legal or law-like conversion. Paul may be considered an example of this, and Bunyan, as he describes his turning in his "Grace Abounding."

The counterpart of legal conversion is **evangelical** or **covenant-like conversion**, which signifies a very gradual change in the religious life of the soul. This is often found in the case of children of the Covenant who walked in the ways of the Covenant from infancy, without noticeably departing from them.

In regard to conversion we should be less anxious about its **mode** than about possessing its **elements**: sincere sorrow for sin, and fleeing from it, with self-condemnation, and flee-

ing to Christ. We ought to carefully **examine** ourselves whether or not we know something of these elements in our own experience. For there is not alone a **genuine** and **inward** conversion, such as outlined above, but also an **outward** one caused by the temporal loss, and fear of punishment.

Esau has been considered one in whom there was only this outward conversion. Judas' grief and Cain's sorrow were evidently also of this sort.

In case a large number of people turn to God at one time, as in the instance of the Ninevites, Jonah 3, we speak of **national** conversion.

In the history of Missions we meet with examples of **tribal** or **village** conversion. Naturally not all of these are of the true kind.

We may also distinguish between **first** and **daily** conversion, by the first meaning the **beginning** of our turning to God in repentance and faith, and by the latter a **daily returning** to the Lord, with sorrow for sin, even as our Savior taught us to pray daily for forgiveness of our trespasses.

In the Canons of Dordrecht, III., IV., Art. 11, we are told regarding conversion:

"But when God accomplishes his good pleasure in his elect, or works in them true conversion, he not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates the minds by the Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit, pervades the inmost recesses of the man; he opens the closed, and softens the hardened heart, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised; infuses new qualities into the will, which though heretofore dead, he quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, he renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruit of good actions."

Do we know something of this experimentally?

Let our daily prayer be that of Jeremiah 31:18: "Turn thou me and I shall be turned, for 'Thou art the LORD my God."

4) If we know really what conversion means, then we shall also delight in the **good works** which Q. 68 mentions. They are the fruits or manifestations of heart conversion. Since we have repeatedly spoken of them, in the preceding Chapter as well as in the one on Justification, it will suffice

here to just state that "good works," according to the Bible, must indeed have the threefold mark mentioned in Q. 68, as to their **principle**, their **rule**, and their **aim**.

Faith must be their **principle**, since Paul assures us, Rom. 14:23: "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Their **rule** must be the law of God, for: "in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of man." Matt. 15:9. This is also shown by Isa, 8:20; Ez. 36:27; James 2:8; Coll. 2:23.

About the only acceptable **aim** or purpose of good works, we are told in 1 Cor. 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Rom. 11:36.

The reference of the Compendium to works founded on human institutions and imaginations, refers principally to the Roman Catholic Church, which places next to the Ten Commandments of God the "Six Commandments of the Church," viz., hearing Mass, fasting, confessing sin at least once a year, receiving Eucharist at Easter, contributing to the support of pastors, and not marrying within forbidden degrees of kindred or at the forbidden times. Voluntary poverty and abstaining from marriage are also considered good and meritorious by the Roman Church.

#### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Which words are used in the Bible to describe conversion?
- 2 Which meaning was attached formerly to the term conversion?
- 3 What is understood by it at present?
- 4 Describe the difference between active and passive conversion.
- 5 Prove that there are two parts to conversion.
- 6 What is meant by repentance, the first part of conversion?
- 7 Why is repentance necessary?
- 8 How does repentance manifest itself?
- 9 How is repentance brought about or effected?
- 10 Does repentance manifest itself alike in all persons?
- 11 Which is the second part of conversion?
- 12 What is the action of faith in conversion?
- 13 Mention the various kinds of conversion.
- 14 Which are the essential elements of conversion?
- 15 What is meant by outward conversion?
- 16 What is meant by national conversion?
- 17 What are good works in connection with conversion?
- 18 Which is the principle of good works?
- 19 What is the rule of good works?
- 20 What should be the aim of good works?

## CHAPTER XXV.

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### SANCTIFICATION.

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- Q. 69 Can they, who are converted to God, perfectly keep the law?  
A. Not at all; but even the most holy men, as long as they are in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience; yet so, that they with a sincere resolution begin to live not only according to some, but according to all the commandments of God, as they also constantly pray to God that they may daily increase therein.

In the preceding lesson it was stated that the term conversion was formerly taken in the wide sense of the entire renewal of a person, the "mortification of the old and the quickening of the new man," as the Catechism expresses it in Lord's Day 33. We said that this is at present called **sanctification**, thereby distinguished from **conversion**, which term is employed in our days, to indicate our **first** turning from sin in repentance, and our **first** turning to the Lord in faith. It is to sanctification that this present Chapter is devoted. We shall notice: (1) its names and nature; (2) its two sides, active and passive; (3) perfectionism; (4) perseverance; (5) the means; and (6) the necessity of sanctification.

1) **Names and Nature of Sanctification.** The word comes from two Latin words and means literally: "to make holy." The corresponding Old Testament words used signify: to cut off in order to separate for holy purposes. The Bible uses the word "holy" to express three ideas: separation from evil, devotion to God and his service, and becoming "whole," i.e. sound and pure. 2 Chron. 5:29: "Sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord, . . . and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy places." Compare 1 Thess. 4:3; Heb. 9:3. God himself is called the Holy One to show that he is absolutely removed from what is sinful and unholy, devoted to himself as the highest good, and absolutely pure. Different things connected with God are called holy for the same reason, such as his Name, Lev. 20:3; his arm, Ps. 98:1; his covenant, Dan. 11:28. Priests and Levites were

also called holy in the sense of being separated and devoted to his service, as was also the case with places, times and instruments of the sanctuary. Lev. 19:6; 29:43-46; Ex. 29.

Lev. 27:14 speaks of sanctifying one's house to the Lord, in the sense of solemnly devoting it to God.

Sanctification may be defined as "the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and enabled more and more to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness." (Shorter Catechism.)

Sanctification is not instantaneous in character, as regeneration and justification, but a progressive work, a process. The Bible speaks of growing in grace, abounding in love, increasing in love, perfecting our holiness. 1 Thess. 3:12; 2 Peter 3:18; Eph. 4:11-15.

2) **The two sides of Sanctification.** There are two sides to sanctification, i.e. a divine and a human. Therefore, for the same reason as we spoke of active and passive conversion, so we distinguish between active and passive sanctification.

(a) By active sanctification we understand the work of grace which God does in his regenerated and converted people, to renew his image in them and to enable them to die to sin and live for him. The Bible ascribes it to each of the three divine persons, though particularly to the third Person.

It is ascribed to God the Father. 1 Thess. 5:23, 24: "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly. . . . faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it." In John 17:17 Jesus prayed to the Father: "sanctify them through thy truth."

It is ascribed to God the Son. Heb. 10:10: "By the which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all." And Paul assures us that Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, "that he might sanctify it," Eph. 5:25, 27, while in 1 Cor. 1:30 it is stated that the Mediator was "made unto us . . . sanctification."

But particularly is sanctification ascribed to the Holy Spirit. 1 Peter 1:2: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit." 2 Thess. 2:13: "Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." The third Person is called Holy not simply because he is absolutely free from sin. Such is also the

case with the other divine Persons. But also because he **produces holiness** in the believers, setting them aside and purifying them.

The triune God in working sanctification not only works in the **conscious** life of the believer, but also in the **unconscious** life, in the root of regeneration which was implanted in the new birth, (Chapter XV.), and in all the faculties of the human soul, (Chapter XI., I., p. 87). Blessed operation this activity of God in our hearts! Let us pray for it, in daily supplication.

(b) But there is also a human side to sanctification. This we call the **passive sanctification**. The Bible presents it as something which we must pursue, or seek earnestly. Rom. 6: 19, 22: "Present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification." 2 Cor. 6: 17: "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." "Having therefore those 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 believer is enabled to obey these divine exhortations because of: (1) his **regeneration**, whereby he was created in Christ Jesus unto good works, Eph. 2: 10; (2) his **incorporation** into Christ as the true Vine, John 15: 1-7; and (3) the **indwelling** of the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 6: 19.

It is very important to hold to both sides of this work of grace. Failure to acknowledge God's part in it will lead to a going about to establish our own righteousness that will involve endless discouragement in christian life. And failure to acknowledge man's part in it will lead to antinomian errors of doctrine and laxness in life.

3) **Perfectionism**. The Reformed Churches do not hold the doctrine of **Perfectionism**, which teaches that believers can become entirely holy in this life. Perfectionists are found among Romanists, who teach that in some cases, by a special privilege of God, one who is justified may avoid all sins and even offer an obedience beyond the demands of the Law.

The Wesleyan Arminians, the Friends, or Quakers, the followers of the Oberlin School in America, and scattered

groups of christians in the United States, teach perfection in a relative sense.

One of their fundamental mistakes is that they identify the **beginning and principle** of the mortifying of our old nature with the complete uprooting of sin. Moreover, a good many things which the Bible condemns as sin, such as sinful thoughts and inclinations, are not acknowledged as sinful by the perfectionists. Ps. 51:5, 6; Matt. 5:28. If we bear these two errors in the conception of these people in mind, the texts which they usually quote in proof of their claim will explain themselves. For that matter, the Word of God is very plain on the subject mentioned in Q. 69 of the Compendium: "Can they who are converted to God, **perfectly** keep the law?" Answer: "Not at all, but even the most holy men, as long as they are in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience." That is clear from the exclamations of the most advanced saints themselves, such as Abraham, in Gen. 12:12; Isaac, in Gen. 26:5; Isaiah, in Isa. 6:5; Daniel, in Dan. 9:4; and Paul, in Rom. 7:7-26. Moreover, the Bible teaches: "in many things we offend all," James 3:2; "for there is no man that sinneth not," I Kings 8:46; "for there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." Eccl. 7:20.

4) **Perseverance.** But while it is denied by the Reformed Churches that sanctification can be obtained fully in this life, they maintain over against Arminians and Pelagians of all sorts, that the true work of sanctifying grace in God's regenerated people is **never totally lost**. In other words, they believe in the **perseverance of the saints**, in opposition to those who claim that one may "fall from grace."

In Canon V. it is stated that, although true believers may at times be overcome by sin and lose the sense of God's favor for a time, until they return into the right way by serious repentance, yet that "God who is rich in mercy, according to his unchangeable purpose of election, does not wholly withdraw the Holy Spirit from his own people, even in their melancholy falls; nor suffers them to proceed so far as to lose the grace of adoption, and forfeit the state of justification, or to commit the sin unto death; nor does he permit them to be totally deserted, and to plunge themselves into everlasting destruction.

"For in the first place, in these falls he preserves in them the incorruptible seed of regeneration from perishing

or being totally lost; and again, by his Word and Spirit, certainly and effectually renews them to repentance, to a sincere and godly sorrow for their sins, that they may seek and obtain remission in the blood of the Mediator, may again experience the favor of a reconciled God, through faith adore his mercies, and henceforward more diligently work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

“Thus, it is not in consequence of their own merits, or strength, but of God’s free mercy, that they do not totally fall from faith and grace, nor continue and perish finally in their backslidings; which, with respect to themselves, is not only possible, but would undoubtedly happen; but with respect to God, it is utterly impossible, since his counsel cannot be changed, nor his promise fail, neither can the call according to his purpose be revoked, nor the merit, intercession and preservation of Christ be rendered ineffectual nor the sealing of the Holy Spirit be frustrated or obliterated.

“And as it hath pleased God, by the preaching of the gospel, to begin this work of grace in us, so he preserves, continues and perfects it by the hearing and reading of his Word, by meditation thereon, and by the exhortations, threatenings, and promises thereof, as well as by the use of the sacraments.”

5) As mentioned in the last paragraph printed above (Art. 14), the Lord employs means to preserve, continue and perfect the work of sanctification in his people. That the sacraments are blessed to this effect is shown in Chapter XX.

The use of the Bible, in hearing it preached, in reading it and meditating on it is plainly taught by the Savior in John 15:3, and 17:17: “Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken to you; sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth.”

Fellowshipping with God’s people, and above all learning the secret of abiding in Christ, John 15:4-7, is of prime importance for growth in sanctification.

God also employs chastisements “to make us partakers of his holiness,” Heb. 12:10, 11. Thereto belong all matters of afflictions in body and soul, in our beloved and in our earthly affairs, so that the saints often “enter through many tribulations.” But in Christ they are more than conquerors. And, moreover, their “chastisements,” as “light afflictions,” sent by a Father’s hand, with a Father’s heart back of it, are essentially different from the “punishments” meted out by a just God, as spoken of in Chapter V.



6) **The Necessity of Sanctification.** Answer 69 of the Compendium states, that although those who are converted, even the most holy of God's children, have only a small beginning of this obedience, "yet so that they, with a sincere resolution, begin to live not only according to some, but according to all the commandments of God, as they also constantly pray to God that they may daily increase therein." That shows the **necessity** of sanctification.

We are assured by Acts 20: 32 that God gives "an inheritance among all them **who are sanctified.**" In Matt. 5:8 Christ promised to the pure in heart: "they shall see God." Heb. 12:14 tells us emphatically: "Without sanctification no man shall see the Lord," while it is stated in 1 Thess. 4:3 that the will of God is: our sanctification. And no wonder, since God chose and saved his people to become holy as He is holy, and our Lord even placed the ideal before us to become perfect as our heavenly Father, Matt. 5: 48. A holy God can demand nothing less from those who are adopted into his family.

God grant us to die daily to sin and to live unto God in newness of life!

While there are **degrees** in sanctification, so that there is difference between sheep and between lambs in this regard, Isa. 40: 11; 61: 1-3, between the weak and the strong. Rom. 14:1, between children in grace and adults, 1 Cor. 3: 2; between young men and fathers, 1 John 2: 12-14; and while the surroundings of some are much less favorable than those of others in regard to an advance in the process of sanctification, yet we must all come to engage in this striving after renewal in the image of Christ, which marks the genuine followers of the Lamb, the true soldiers of Jesus, who shall obtain the crown of life only in the way of honorable striving after holiness. By their "fruit" they must be known. Matt. 12: 33; 7: 21; Rom. 10: 5.

(An explanation of the **Commandments**, mentioned in Ans. 68, will be given in the next Chapter, and **Prayer** will be discussed in the closing Lesson of this book.)

"O For a closer walk with God,  
A calm and heavenly frame;  
And light to shine upon the road  
That leads me to the Lamb!"

"The dearest idol I have known  
Whate'er that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from its throne  
And worship only Thee!"

"So shall my walk be close with God  
Calm and serene my frame;  
So faith and light shall mark the road  
That leads me to the Lamb."

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### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 What is meant in our days by "sanctification"?
- 2 What do you understand by its ACTIVE side?
- 3 Who is chiefly the Author of sanctification?
- 4 What do you understand by PASSIVE sanctification?
- 5 What enables believers to sanctify themselves?
- 6 Is it important to hold to both sides of sanctification?
- 7 Which people hold the doctrine of Perfectionism?
- 8 Which are the fundamental mistakes of Perfectionists?
- 9 Prove from the Bible that no believer is wholly "perfect" in this life.
- 10 Which people believe in the possibility of "falling from grace"?
- 11 Why do we maintain the "perseverance of the saints"?
- 12 Which means of grace does the Lord employ to work sanctification in the believers?
- 13 Which is the great secret of growth in sanctification?
- 14 What use does God make of chastisements?
- 15 Which is the difference between chastisements and punishment?
- 16 Is sanctification a necessity? If so, why?

## CHAPTER XXVI.

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### THE LAW AS RULE OF LIFE.

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In the first part of the Compendium the Moral Law of the Ten Commandments was discussed as a means to teach us how great our sin and misery is. As such the Law has been called a schoolmaster or pedagogue, to lead us to Christ. But there is also a second use of the Moral Law. It is to be a rule of life to the christians to express their gratitude to God for their deliverance from sin through the Mediator to whom their sense of sin and misery led them. As such it belongs to the third part of the Compendium, treating of christian gratitude. The Compendium, however, does not take up the various commandments the way the Heidelberg Catechism does it. This has been considered a lack, and it is to make up for this omission that we insert a chapter here on the Law as a Rule of Life for christians.

Conformable to the plan of this book to quote as much as possible the official standards of the Reformed Churches, we shall follow closely the explanation of the Decalogue, as given in the Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 92-115, taking the comandments in their biblical order, and discussing such doctrinal and practical questions as may be connected with them, such as the Sunday question, tithing, etc.

1) The first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," is explained to mean:

"That I, as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my own soul, avoid and flee from all idolatry, sorcery, soothsaying, superstition, invocation of saints, or any other creatures; and learn rightly to know the only true God; trust in him alone, with humility and patience submit to him; expect all good things from him only; love, fear, and glorify him with my whole heart; so that I renounce and forsake all creatures, rather than commit even the least thing contrary to his will." 1 Cor. 6: 9, 10; Lev. 18: 21; Matt. 4: 10; John 17: 3; Jer. 17: 5, 7; Heb. 10: 36; 1 Peter 5: 5, 6; Ps. 104: 27.

This explanation brings out that our fathers accepted certain **Rules** in interpreting the Moral Law, which we should also bear in mind as the various Commandments are reviewed.

The **first rule** is that a **negative** command, as the first one, telling what **not** to do, viz. commit idolatry, implies a **positive** command, viz. to know, to trust and to serve the true God above everything else. The reverse is also true, as we find in the fifth command, which is positive, but forbids all that is contrary to it.

The **second rule** is that under one sin forbidden all sins of the same nature are prohibited, and reversely, under one duty enjoined, all duties of a similar nature are commanded. And not only these sins or duties are involved, but all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and the provocations thereunto.

The **third rule** is that the Law is to be considered **spiritual**, in the sense that it is intended to regulate the thoughts and affections of the soul, as well as the outward conduct. Rom. 7:14. Jesus brought this out plainly in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5 ff.)

2) The **second Command** is: "Thou shalt not make any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." Deut. 4:15; Isa. 40:18.

The difference between this second command and the first is briefly this, that while the first one forbids idolatry and polytheism, the second one lays down the **regulative principle of worship**: we may serve God only in the way he has commanded us. It is opposed to all self-chosen methods of serving our God. The Heidelberg Catechism informs us that what God requires in the second command is "that we in no wise represent God by images, **nor worship him in any other way than he has commanded in his Word.**" This answer brings out the Calvinistic or Puritan view enunciated by

Calvin, Knox and other Reformers that we must have divine warrant for our modes of worship. We are to serve God only in the way he has **positively commanded** us. The view of the Lutherans and Episcopalians is that any mode of worship **not forbidden** in the Bible is lawful. This explains the soberness in the arrangements of the churches and in the ceremonies of the Reformed, compared to those of the Lutherans and others. We base this Calvinistic view of the matter on Deut. 12: 32, where God expressly forbids adding to or taking from his enactments as to worship. The punishment meted out to Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10: 1-3; to Uzza, 1 Chron. 13: 7-10; to Saul, 1 Sam. 13: 5-14; and to Uzziah, 2 Chron. 26: 16-21, exemplifies this, as well as the charge in the Old Testament against Jeroboam in his daring to change the date of the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles, 1 Kings 12: 32, 33. It may be added that this rigorous view keeps us from all sorts of innovations in our worship, with all their deplorable results, as seen in the history of other churches.

Of course, the exercise and cultivation of the art of sculptors, founders and painters is not forbidden by the second command, but it does prohibit all attempts to represent the Persons of the Godhead in figures and colors. The Catechism even condemns the use of images, "as books for the laity," (the excuse of the Church of Rome for using pictures and statues in their churches), "for we must not pretend to be wiser than God who will have his people taught, not by dumb images, but by the lively preaching of his Word."

3) The **third command** prescribes the proper spirit of worship, forbidding profanity: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." The Catechism states it requires: "That we, not only by cursing or perjury, but also by rash swearing, must not profane or abuse the name of God; nor by silence or connivance be partakers of these horrible sins in others: and, briefly, that we use the holy name of God no otherwise than with fear and reverence; so that he may be rightly confessed and worshipped by us, and be glorified in all our words and works." Lev. 24: 11; 19: 12; Matt. 5: 37; Is. 45: 23, 24; Matt. 10: 32.

It further states that the profaning of God's name by

swearing and cursing is so heinous a sin that his wrath is kindled against all those who do not endeavor as much as in them lies, to prevent and forbid such cursing and swearing, "for there is no sin greater, or more provoking to God, than the profaning of his name; and therefore he has commanded this sin to be punished with death." Lev. 5:1; Lev. 24:15.

Over against Anabaptists and Quakers, however, we hold that this third command does not forbid **swearing religiously** by the name of God, "either when the magistrates demand it of the subjects; or when necessity requires us thereby to confirm fidelity and truth to the glory of God, and the safety of our neighbor: for such an oath is founded on God's Word, and therefore was justly used by the saints, both in the Old and New Testament." Ex. 22:11; Neh. 13:25; Deut. 6:13; Heb. 6:16; Gen. 21:24; Jos. 9:15, 19; 1 Sam. 24:22; 2 Cor. 1:23; Rom. 1:9.

Naturally, swearing by saints or any other creatures is also held to be prohibited, "for a lawful oath is calling upon God as the only one who knows the heart, that he will bear witness to the truth and punish me if I swear falsely, which honor is due to no creature." II Cor. 1:23; Matt. 5:34, 35.

It goes without saying that this command is directly contrary to a great deal in our American civil life which needlessly demands oaths at various occasions, and, moreover, has them exacted by men who in no way are the lawful "magistrates" appointed by God. Rom. 13:1.

Herein lies one of the main reasons for opposing so-called "Secret Societies."

The irreverent, hasty, indistinct numbling of oaths in our courts is also condemned by this commandment. Moreover, it forbids unmeaning, needless repetitions in divine worship, or using Scripture or sacred things for the purpose of merriment, as such abuse is found sometimes even in christian circles.

Heedlessness or irreverence when God's Word is preached, read or sung, is also condemned by the third commandment. Alas, that we so often forget this!

4) The **fourth commandment** contains God's appointment about **special time of worship**, and enjoins the ob-

servance of stated seasons of worship: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

The Heidelberg Catechism explains it to require:

**First**, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained; and that I, especially on the Sabbath, that is, on the day of rest, diligently frequent the church of God, to hear his word, to use the sacraments, publicly to call upon the Lord, and contribute to the relief of the poor, as becomes a Christian. **Secondly**, that all the days of my life I cease from my evil works, and yield myself to the Lord, to work by his Holy Spirit in me; and thus begin in this life the eternal Sabbath." Deut. 12: 19; 1 Cor. 9: 11; 2 Tim. 2: 2, and 1 Tim. 3: 15; Lev. 23: 3; Acts 2: 42, 46; 1 Cor. 14: 19, 29, 31; 1 Cor. 11: 33; 1 Tim. 2: 1; 1 Cor. 16: 2; Isa. 66: 23.

The great truths underlying this commandment are that our Creator allots us our time in this world, that it belongs to him, and that he has the right to dictate how we shall spend it: in six days of honorable labor, reserving the seventh part of the week for his special, stated worship. We are to spend this seventh part not merely in resting from our customary secular pursuits, but spend it in **holy** resting, such as the Lord did when he had finished the work of creation, i. e., not ceasing all activity, for the "Father worketh hitherto," John 5: 17, but in delighting himself in his handiwork. The Sabbath command includes employment of our time in sacred thoughts and exercises, and in public as well as in private worship. Is. 58: 13, 14. Prayer, sacred song, the hearing of God's Word, and reading of it, as well as the observance of the sacraments, belong to proper obedience rendered to this command. Meditation on the Scriptures and reading books of a religious nature, and conversation about things divine, together with family instruction, are included. The only exception to this are: works of necessity, and works of **mercy**. The former include such things which cannot be omitted without doing violence to God's law: such as caring

for our cattle, the preparation of the necessary food, the travel necessary for attendance on public worship, and provisions concerning the cold or the heat, or darkness.

The latter, works of **mercy**, comprise caring for the sick, lending aid to the distressed, and all labor necessary to bring and break the bread of life to the perishing.

But these exceptions do not include worldly or idle conversation, reading secular papers or books, attending parties, writing letters of a worldly nature, or walking or riding for mere pleasure. Lev. 23: 3; Neh. 13: 15; Is. 58: 13, 14.

May we also bear in mind, throughout each week, the beautiful closing words of our Catechism in its explanation of the fourth command: "That all the days of my life I cease from my evil works, and yield myself to the Lord, to work by his Holy Spirit in me: and thus begin in this life the eternal Sabbath." Is. 66: 23.

With Seventh Day Adventists and Seventh Day Baptists, often called "Sabbatarians," all the other Churches of Christendom differ as to the **day to be observed** as our Christian day of rest, viz., Saturday, the seventh day of the week, or Sunday, the first day. Sabbatarians claim that our day of rest is the Jewish day, Saturday. Many of them celebrate the day in true Jewish style from sunset Friday till sunset Saturday. They appeal for their way of doing to the letter of the fourth command as well as to various other texts of the Old Testament.

Have we and the other Churches, throughout the world, the right to depart from the letter of the Law in this regard? And if so, on what grounds?

The following are the main arguments:

a) In the Sabbath command we must distinguish between the **moral** part and the **ceremonial** part. The moral part is that one-seventh portion of our weeks must be devoted to sacred duties. This part is abiding. It dates from the creation. Therefore the command is introduced by: "Remember." But the ceremonial part is that the **seventh day** and no other of the weekdays, should be devoted to this purpose. This was ceremonial, since it symbolized the character of the O. T. dispensation, a legal character. One was first to work diligently, and then, and then only, to rest. It



was a reflection as it were of the Covenant of Works. But this ceremonial feature passed away when our Lord ushered in the N. T. dispensation with its more gracious character. Now we are to rest at Jesus' feet first of all and then serve him in a life of gratitude. This feature is symbolized by our keeping of Sabbath on the first day of the week.

b) The O. T. Sabbath commemorated the creation of the material universe by the Father. But since then the Son has begun his no less stupendous work of a new spiritual creation, and since he rose on Easter Sunday to begin this in the full sense, the Christian Church commemorates this second creation in the days of the New Testament.

c) The O. T. Sabbath commemorated deliverance from Egypt, and its bondage. The christian day of rest proclaims: Christ rose on Sunday to deliver us from greater bondage than the land of the Pharaohs ever brought.

d) In Coll. 2: 16, 17 the sabbathdays are called a "shadow of things to come," "but the body is of Christ." As such a shadow it gradually passed away after Christ had come to fulfill the law and all the types. Therefore Paul says: "Let no man therefore judge you . . . . in respect . . . . of the sabbath days." The Sunday, hallowed by the resurrection of Christ, was to take its place.

e) The change had been foretold. Ps. 118:24, after speaking of the stone rejected by the builders, but having become the chief corner-stone at the resurrection (on Sunday), tells us: "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it," even as Ez. 43: 27 foretold that the law of the New Dispensation should require religious services upon the eighth day and so forward: "And when they have accomplished the days, it shall be that upon the eighth day, and forward, the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord God."

f) The change was made because the Savior arose on Sunday, and repeatedly met with his disciples on Sunday, an example followed by the Church from its earliest period, as we learn from Acts 20:7; Matt. 28:1; John 20:26, and as stated in the Epistle of Barnabas, one of the oldest christian

books after the Bible: "We keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also in which Jesus arose from the dead."

g) Pentecost Sunday with its outpouring of the Holy Spirit plainly showed that God had changed the day of granting spiritual favors and of meeting with his people in solemn concourse, even as we read in Matt. 12: 8 that the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath day.

h) The expression "Lord's Day," which occurs in Rev. 1: 10, seems to indicate some day peculiarly related to Christ, as in the term "Lord's Supper," and fits no day as well as our christian holy day.

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The four commandments discussed hitherto belong to the **first table** of the Decalogue, embracing our duties toward God. In their structure they resemble that of the Lord's Prayer: things pertaining to the glory of God occupy the foreground. Love to God is their essence. The remaining six commandments belong to the **second table** of the Law. They concern our duties toward all sentient beings, particularly toward human beings: ourselves and others. By mentioning sentient beings we have reference toward all created beings capable of pleasure and pain. The Law of the Lord being perfect, not alone comprehends all our moral relations and obligations towards ourselves and our fellow-beings among humanity, but toward all the world of God's handiwork related to us. Love to our neighbor is the essence of the commandments of the second table.

5) **The fifth commandment** is: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The Heidelberg Catechism explains it to mean: "That I show all honor, love and fidelity, to my father and mother, and all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction, with due obedience; and also patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand." Eph. 6: 1, 2, etc.; Col. 3: 18, 20; Eph. 5: 22; Rom. 1: 31; Prov. 23: 22; Eph. 6: 5, 6; Col. 3: 19, 21; Rom. 13: 1-8; Matt. 22: 21.

This commandment plainly forbids, as the Shorter Catechism puts it: "the neglecting of, or doing anything against,

the honor and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations." "The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity, as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good, to all such as keep the commandment."

6) **The sixth commandment:** "Thou shalt not kill," requires, (Cat., Q. 105): "That neither in thoughts, nor words, nor gestures, much less in deeds, I dishonor, hate, wound, or kill my neighbor, by myself or by another; but that I lay aside all desire of revenge: also, that I hurt not myself, nor wilfully expose myself to any danger. Wherefore also the magistrate is armed with the sword, to prevent murder."

In answer to the remark that this commandment seems to speak only of murder, the Catechism replies: "In forbidding murder, God teaches us, that he abhors the causes thereof; such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge; and that he accounts all these as murder." James 1: 20; Gal. 5: 20; Rom. 1: 29; 1 John 2: 9; 1 John 3: 15.

The positive side of this commandment is expressed in the answer to Q. 107: "But is it enough that we do not kill any man in the manner mentioned?" Answer: "No; for when God forbids envy, hatred, and anger, he commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves; to show patience, peace and meekness, mercy, and all kindness, towards him, and prevent his hurt as much as in us lies: and that we do good, even to our enemies." Matt. 22: 39; 7: 12; Rom. 12: 10; Eph. 4: 2; Gal. 6: 1, 2; Matt. 5: 5; Rom. 12: 18; Ex. 23: 5; Matt. 5: 45; Rom. 12: 20.

7) **The seventh commandment:** "Thou shalt not commit adultery," teaches: "That all uncleanness is accursed of God: and that therefore we must with all our hearts detest the same, and live chastely and temperately, whether in holy wedlock, or in single life." Lev. 18: 27; Deut. 29: 20-23; 1 Thess. 4: 3, 4; Heb. 13: 4; 1 Cor. 7: 4-9.

Of course, God does not only forbid in this adultery and such like gross sins, but: "Since both our body and soul are temples of the Holy Ghost, he commands us to preserve them pure and holy: therefore he forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever can entice men thereto." Eph. 5: 3; 1 Cor. 6: 18; Matt. 5: 28; Eph. 5: 18; 1 Cor. 15: 33.

The performances of the theatre, the circus and the dance hall are against the spirit of this commandment of God.

8) **The eighth commandment:** "thou shalt not steal," concerns itself with our **property** or possessions, as **the seventh one** had reference to our **body** and the sixth to our **life**. God is the absolute owner of all things. Ps. 24: 1; Hag. 2: 9. In that sense we are only stewards. It is upon this principle that our duty of giving **tithes**, or a tenth of our income to the Kingdom is based. - Tithing acknowledges God as our Lord and Master, as the renter of houses or lands acknowledges the rights of the earthly owner by paying him his dues. Therefore we find it practised from the earliest times by Abram, (Gen. 14: 20, compared with Heb. 7: 2-6); promised by Jacob, Gen. 28: 22; required of Israel, Lev. 27: 30-33; and approved by Christ, Matt. 23: 23. Malachi called the withholding of the tithe a robbing of God. (3: 8.)

But while we maintain that God is the absolute owner of all, and that we, in regard to him are only stewards, with reference to men there is real proprietorship. Deut. 32: 8; Acts 17: 26; Prov. 22: 2.

This we assert against **anarchists** and others, who claim that private ownership is theft.

The Catechism states that in this eighth commandment "God forbids not only those thefts, and robberies, which are punishable by the magistrate; but he comprehends under the name of theft all wicked tricks and devices, whereby we design to appropriate to ourselves the goods which belong to our neighbor: whether it be by force, or under the appearance of right, as by unjust weights, ells, measures, **fraudulent merchandise**, false coins, usury, or by any other way forbidden by God; as also all covetousness, all abuse and waste of his gifts." 1 Cor. 6: 10; 1 Cor. 5: 10; Luke 3: 14; Prov. 11: 1; Ezek. 45: 9, 10, 11; Ps. 15: 5; Luke 6: 35.

Of course **gambling** in all its forms is also forbidden here.

The **positive side** of the commandment is expressed thus: "That I promote the advantage of my neighbor in every instance I can or may; and deal with him as I desire to be dealt with by others: further **also** that I faithfully labor, so that I may be able to relieve the needy." Matt. 7: 12; Prov. 5: 16; Eph. 4: 28.

9) The **ninth commandment**: "thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," requires: "That I bear false witness against no man, nor falsify any man's words; that I be no backbiter, nor slanderer; that I do not judge, nor join in condemning any man rashly, or unheard; but that I avoid all sorts of lies and deceit, as the proper works of the devil, unless I would bring down upon me the heavy wrath of God: likewise, that in judgment and all other dealings I love the truth, speak it uprightly and confess it; also that I defend and promote, as much as I am able, the honor and good character of my neighbor." Prov. 19: 5, 9; 21: 28; Ps. 15: 3; Rom. 1: 29, 30; Matt. 7: 1, etc.; Luke 6: 37; Lev. 19: 11; Prov. 12: 22; 13: 5; 1 Cor. 13: 6; Eph. 4: 25; 1 Peter 4: 8.

This commandment goes still farther than the sixth, seventh and eighth which primarily covered our actions, since it embraces our sinful thoughts and words as well.

10) But deeper than all the preceding parts of the second table goes the **tenth commandment** which concerns itself principally with our heart. In fact it does not mention a new class of sins, but points out the evil **root** of all transgressions. It reads thus: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's."

It is not simply one of the commandments but the explanation of them all, indicating that the Decalogue must be taken in a deep spiritual sense. The Heidelberg Catechism explains it to require: "That even the smallest inclination or thought, contrary to any of God's commands, never rise in our hearts; but that at all times we hate all sin with our whole heart, and delight in all righteousness." Rom. 7: 7.

The **Shorter Catechism**, somewhat more fully, tells us it **requires**: "full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor and all that is his," while it **forbids**: "all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions or affections to anything that is his."

This closing commandment should lead us to pray: "create in me a clean heart, o God; and renew a right spirit within

me." Ps. 51:10. The entire Decalogue shows the truth of Ps. 119:96: "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." May this fact deeply humble us before God, so that we despair of going about to establish a righteousness of our own, since attempts to keep the Law and obtain eternal life by good works will certainly end in dismal failure.

But if we are christians, saved by grace, in the way of repentance and faith, may God teach and enable us daily to show our gratitude to God for our deliverance, so that we, "With a sincere resolution begin to live not only according to some, but according to all the commandments of God."

### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Which is the difference in the use made of the Decalogue in the first part of the Compendium and in the third?
- 2 What is required of us in the first commandment?
- 3 Which RULES for explaining the Decalogue are suggested by the way the Heidelberg Catechism expounds the first commandment?
- 4 What is contained in the second command?
- 5 Which principle as to our MODE OF WORSHIP is embodied in the second commandment?
- 6 What is covered by the third commandment?
- 7 Does the third commandment forbid all swearing? If not, why not?
- 8 What does this third commandment condemn in much of our daily life in America?
- 9 What does the fourth commandment cover?
- 10 What is meant by works of necessity?
- 11 What is meant by works of mercy?
- 12 On which grounds do we consider the Sunday to be the day of rest in the N. T.?
- 13 What is the difference between the first and the second table of the commandments?
- 14 What does the fifth commandment contain?
- 15 What is covered by the sixth commandment?
- 16 State the chief contents of the seventh commandment.
- 17 What is covered by the eighth commandment?
- 18 What can you say about the subject of tithing?
- 19 What are the main contents of the ninth commandment?
- 20 State the meaning of the tenth commandment.
- 21 What should be our prayer and endeavor concerning all the commandments of the Decalogue?

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### PRAYER IN GENERAL, AND THE LORD'S PRAYER.

- Q. 70. To whom must we pray for this?  
A. Not to any creature, but to God alone, who can help us, and will hear us for Jesus Christ's sake.
- Q. 71. In whose name must we pray to God?  
A. Only in the name of Christ, John 16: 23, and not in the name of any saints.
- Q. 72. What must we pray to God for?  
A. For all things necessary for soul and body, which Christ our Lord has comprised in that prayer, he himself has taught us.
- Q. 73. What are the words of that prayer?  
A. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.
- Q. 74. What do you desire of God in this prayer?  
A. 1) That all things which tend to the glory of God, may be promoted, and whatsoever is repugnant thereto, or contrary to his will, may be prevented. 2) That he may provide me with all things necessary for the body, and as to my soul, preserve me from all evil, which might in any wise be detrimental to my salvation. Amen.

Closely connected with our faith, as expressed in the second part of the Compendium, and the commandments of God, just discussed, is **prayer**. We shall discuss: (1) its **importance**; (2) its **essence and elements**; (3) **to whom to be addressed**; (4) its **requisites**; (5) **time and place of prayer**; (6) **for whom to pray**; (7) **explanation of the Lord's Prayer**.

1) **The Importance of Prayer**. In the Law, God speaks to us. In prayer we address him. Our faith makes us love God and his commandments. Prayer leads us to the Throne of grace to obtain strength to show that love in a life of gratitude. The **importance** of prayer is therefore very great. In the Heidelberg Catechism it is called the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us, and we are told that "God

will give his grace and Holy Spirit to those only who with sincere desires continually ask them of him, and are thankful for them," (Q. 116.) Because of this importance and necessity of prayer it has been called a **Means of Grace**, (Chapter XX.). This name is indeed suitable since God has appointed it as a means to procure blessings from him, Jas. 1:5; Phil. 4:6, 7; Luke 11:9-13. Prayer has been called "appointed links in the plan of God," and truly so. Moreover, the very exercise of praying holds us in converse with God and calls various holy affections into operation.

2) The essence and elements of prayer may be described as "the offering of reverent petitions to God, accompanied with thanksgiving, confession and adoration." The posture of the body should be in harmony with this. The Bible gives us examples of kneeling, (2 Chron. 6:13; Ps. 95:6); of standing, (Luke 18:11, 13); of prostration, (Luke 5:8, 12); of bowing, (Gen. 24:26). The closing of the eyes, as if to shut out the world, and the folding of the hands as a symbol of our helplessness, are in keeping with the sacred nature of petitioning the Most High.

3) **Whom must we address in prayers?** The Compendium mentions God, and God only as the proper One to whom our spiritual homage is to be addressed. Matt. 4:10; Rev. 22:9.

Essentially viewed we pray to all the Persons of the Holy Trinity, for the three are one in essence. But most of the Bible prayers are evidently addressed to the Father as the first Person of the Holy Trinity and its representative, although we also find prayers to the Son recorded in Holy Writ. Acts 7:59, 60; 2 Cor. 12:8, 9; Eph. 1:17; 3:14. There is no clear example in the Bible of prayer to the Holy Spirit personally, but the benedictions of 2 Cor. 13:14 and Rev. 1:4, 5, mention him.

The reason that no direct prayers to the Holy Spirit are recorded in the Bible has been sought in the fact that in the divine economy the Holy Spirit carries into effect the will of the Father and the Son, and as such acts as the means to have our prayers offered and answered, but not as their **object**. Of course, spiritual homage and praise may be directly and personally rendered to the Holy Ghost. Matt. 28:20; 2 Cor. 13:14.



Acceptable prayer must be offered in the Name of Christ, our Mediator. We are commanded this in John 16: 23 and in other places. Eph 2: 18; Rev. 8: 3, 4; 1 Tim. 2: 5. Praying in Jesus' name means that we offer our petitions and request the granting thereof in consideration or on account of the atoning work of the Savior. Implicitly this was done even by the true believers of the O. T., for from the date of the first announcement of a Deliverer the minds of the faithful were turned in hope to the Coming One. John 8: 56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad." The sacrificial system of the O. T. of course encouraged this expectation. Gal. 3: 8; Heb. 11: 13.

4) The requisites of true prayer are sincerity, reverence, importunity, submission and faith.

This sincerity is mentioned in Ps. 17: 1: "Hear the right, o LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer that goeth not out of feigned lips."

That reverence is one of its requisites is plain from the fact that the Being addressed is worthy of reverence. Rev. 15: 4: "Who shall not fear thee, o Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou art holy."

Importunity is exemplified by the parable of the importunate widow, Luke 18: 3-5, while submission is suggested by our Lord's example in Gethsemane. Luke 22: 42.

That faith is likewise a requisite is plain from Matt. 21: 22, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Of ourselves we are unable to meet these requirements, but Christians have an invaluable aid in prayer in the Holy Spirit, who prays with them and for them. Rom. 8: 26: "For we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us."

The Holy Spirit aids in prayer, by prompting us to pray, and by directing us in prayer. He graciously intercedes for us, on earth, by giving us a sense of our need, exciting in us suitable desires, and producing in us faith whereby we lay hold of Christ and plead for the fulfilment of the promises which are yea and amen in Christ. Rom. 8: 26, 27; Jude: 20; Zech. 12: 10. Let us appreciate this, even as it belongs to the

promises of the Covenant of Grace that "He will dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ."

While unconverted persons are not able to pray acceptably, it is nevertheless their duty to pray, as shown by Is. 55: 6, Joel 1: 14, Ps. 14: 4, Jer. 10: 25. While the Bible informs us that the prayer of the wicked, i.e. the openly and purposely wicked, is an abomination to the Lord, Prov. 28: 9, prayerlessness is a still greater abomination, Jer. 10: 25. Those who name the name of Christ must depart from iniquity, 2 Tim. 2: 19, and the sense of our obligation to pray on the one hand, and of our inability to do so on the other hand, must lead us to pray and sigh: "Lord, teach us to pray!" Luke 11: 2. Compare 1 Cor. 14: 15.

5) **When and where are we to pray?** Throughout our life, and wherever we be, but especially at stated times, in our closet, at family worship, and in the house of God. The O. T. saints prayed three times each day in a special manner. Dan. 6: 10; Ps. 55: 16, 17. Compare Acts 10: 9, 30. The morning especially is suitable for personal prayers. Ps. 119: 146, 147; Mark 1: 35. Prayers at meals are suggested and exemplified by Matt. 14: 19; Acts 27: 35; 1 Tim. 4: 4, 5.

May God give us grace to abound always in prayer.

"More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain, night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep and goats,  
That nourish a blind life within the brain  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend!  
For so the whole round world is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

(Tennyson.)

6) **For whom are we to pray?** For ourselves, Matt. 6: 9-13, and for our fellowmen of all classes, including our rulers, 1 Tim. 2: 2, for ministers and missionaries, and all the saints, Eph. 6: 18, 19, and for our enemies as well as for our friends, Matt. 5: 44. The Bible excepts only two classes: the dead and those who committed the unpardonable sin. We are not to pray for the dead because their state is fixed and irreversible. Prov. 14: 32; Luke 16: 26; Rev. 22: 11. Prayer

for those guilty of the unpardonable sin is especially forbidden in 1 John 5:16. (Compare on this sin Ch. V., p. 37).

7) **The Lord's Prayer Explained.** "What must we pray to God for?" the Compendium asks in Q. 72. And the reply is: "For all things necessary for body and soul, which Christ our Lord has comprised in that prayer he himself has taught us." This prayer is usually called the "**Lord's Prayer**," although it would be fully as appropriate to call it the **Disciples' Prayer**, since it was meant for them and given at their request. Luke 11:2. The **Lord's Prayer** in the strict sense is what we find in John 17. But since centuries the name "**Lord's Prayer**" has obtained, and properly so if we understand by it the Prayer which is of the Lord in the sense of having been given by him, for our use. It is a fit prayer for Christians and only fits in their mouth with its "**Our Father**," and the willingness it expresses about forgiving others their sins. It evidently is not meant for worldly persons, nor for mixed assemblies, although alas it has been abused oftentimes in this regard, so that already Luther in his time called it "**the greatest martyr**." It was not given as a **form** to be used without variation, but rather as a **model**, or guide, in formulating our own prayers. This is plain if we consider that the Bible itself gives two separate versions of the prayer in Matt. 6:9 and Luke 11:2-4, and in the prayers recorded in the N. T., as offered by the followers of Jesus after his ascension, it is not included. Moreover, this is shown by the fact that it omits closing with any phrase mentioning the Savior's Name, although Jesus commanded us to do so in John 16:23, 24.

This prayer is sometimes called the "**perfect prayer**" because it comprehends all our real needs for soul and body, in life and in death. All this is expressed by or inferred in the **preface**, the **six petitions**, and the **doxology** which make up the prayer. The Heidelberg Catechism gives their explanation in full in Q. 120-129.

The meaning of the **address**: "**Our Father**," is given in these words: "That immediately, in the very beginning of our prayer, he might excite in us a childlike reverence for, and confidence in God, which are the foundation of our prayer: namely, that God is become our Father in Christ, and will

much less deny us what we ask of him in true faith, than our parents will refuse us earthly things." Matt. 6: 9; Matt. 7: 9, 10, 11; Luke 11: 11; Isa. 49: 15.

The reason for adding "**who art in heaven**" is stated to be: "Lest we should form any earthly conceptions of God's heavenly majesty, and that we may expect from his almighty power all things necessary for soul and body." Jer. 23: 24; Acts 17: 24; Rom. 10: 12.

The **first petition**, "hallowed be thy name" includes: "grant us, first, rightly to know thee, and to sanctify, glorify and praise thee, in all thy works, in which thy power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy and truth, are clearly displayed; and further also, that we may so order and direct our whole lives, our thoughts, words and actions, that thy name may never be blasphemed, but rather honored and praised on our account." Matt. 6: 9; John 17: 3; Jer. 9: 23, 24; Matt. 16: 17; Ps. 119: 137, 138; Luke 1: 46; Ps. 145: 8, 9; Ps. 115: 1, and 71: 8.

The **second petition**, "thy kingdom come," is explained to signify: "rule us so by thy word and Spirit, that we may submit ourselves more and more to thee; preserve and increase thy church; destroy the works of the devil, and all violence which would exalt itself against thee; and also, all wicked counsels devised against thy holy word; till the full perfection of thy kingdom take place, wherein thou shalt be all in all." Ps. 119: 5; Ps. 51: 18; 1 John 3: 8; Rom. 16: 20; Rev. 22: 17, 20; 1 Cor. 15: 28. Compare Chapter XIII., p. 113, and XVI., p. 134, on the Kingdom of God.

The **third petition**, "thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" involves: "grant us that we and all men may renounce our own will, and without murmuring obey thy will, which is only good; that so every one may attend to, and perform the duties of his station and calling, as willingly and faithfully as the angels do in heaven." Matt. 6: 10; Matt. 16: 24; Tit. 2: 12; Luke 22: 42; 1 Cor. 7: 24; Eph. 4: 1; Ps. 103: 20.

About the Will of God, see Chapter IX., p. 68.

The **fourth petition** is: "Give us this day our daily bread," that is, be pleased to provide us with all things necessary for the body, that we may thereby acknowledge thee to be the only fountain of all good, and that neither our care nor in-

dustry, nor even thy gifts, can profit us without thy blessing; and therefore that we may withdraw our trust from all creatures, and place it alone in thee." Matt. 6: 11; Ps. 145: 15; Matt. 6: 25; Acts 17: 25, and 14: 17; 1 Cor. 15: 58; Deut. 8: 3; Ps. 127: 1, 2; Ps. 62: 11, and 55: 22.

The fifth petition, "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," includes: "be pleased for the sake of Christ's blood, not to impute to us poor sinners, our transgressions, nor that depravity, which always cleaves to us; even as we feel this evidence of thy grace in us, that it is our firm resolution from the heart to forgive our neighbor." Matt. 6: 12; Ps. 51: 1; 1 John 2: 1, 2; Matt. 6: 14, 15.

The sixth petition is: "and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

This sixth petition contains both a positive and a negative part, something in which Roman Catholics and Lutherans have found a reason for dividing it into two petitions, thus making the total of petitions in the Lord's Prayer seven instead of six. The Reformed, however, regard it as one because the positive part and the negative form one whole. The Catechism explains it to signify: "since we are so weak in ourselves, that we cannot stand a moment; and besides this, since our mortal enemies, the devil, the world, and our own flesh, cease not to assault us; do thou therefore preserve and strengthen us by the power of thy Holy Spirit, that we may not be overcome in this spiritual warfare, but constantly and strenuously may resist our foes, till at last we obtain a complete victory." Matt. 6: 13; Rom. 8: 26; Ps. 103: 14; 1 Pet. 5: 8; Eph. 6: 12; John 15: 19; Rom. 7: 23; Gal. 5: 17; Matt. 26: 41; Mark 13: 33; 1 Thes. 3: 13 and 5: 23.

The **doxology** of the Lord's Prayer: "For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever," involves the confession: "all these (favours) we ask of thee because thou, being our king, and almighty, art willing and able to give us all good; and all this we pray for that thereby not we but thy holy name may be glorified forever, while "Amen" is said to signify: "it shall truly and certainly be; for my prayer is more assuredly heard of God than I feel in my heart that I desire these things of him." 2 Cor. 1: 20; 2 Tim. 2: 13.

The entire Lord's Prayer has been beautifully paraphrased as follows:

**Our Father—**

by right of creation  
by bountiful provision,  
by gracious adoption;

**Which art in heaven—**

the throne of thy glory,  
the home of thy children,  
the temple of thy angels;

**Hallowed be thy name—**

by the thoughts of our hearts,  
by the words of our lips,  
by the work of our hands;

**Thy kingdom come—**

of providence to defend us,  
of grace to refine us,  
of glory to crown us;

**Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven—**

towards us without resistance,  
by us without compulsion,  
universally without exception,  
eternally without declension;

**Give us this day our daily bread—**

of necessity for our bodies,  
of eternal life for our souls;

**And forgive us our tresspasses—**

against the commands of thy law,  
against the grace of thy gospel;

**As we forgive those that trespass against us—**

by defaming our character,  
by embezzling our property,  
by abusing our person;

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil—  
of overwhelming afflictions,  
of worldly enticements,  
of Satan's devices,  
of error's seductions,  
of sinful affections;

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever—  
Thy kingdom governs all,  
Thy power subdues all,  
Thy glory is above all;

Amen—

as it is in thy purpose,  
so it is in thy promises,  
so it be in our prayers,  
so it shall be to thy praise.

By this prayer of our Lord  
the Father bless,  
the Son adore,  
the Spirit praise,  
Forever more. Amen.

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### QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK.

- 1 Why is prayer important?
- 2 What is the essence of prayer?
- 3 Whom must we address in our prayers?
- 4 In whose Name ought we to pray?
- 5 Which are the requisites of prayer?
- 6 Who is our great Helper for acceptable prayer?
- 7 Is it the duty of the unconverted to pray?
- 8 When and where are we to pray?
- 9 For whom should we pray?
- 10 What can you say about the Lord's Prayer?
- 11 Should all sorts of people use it?
- 12 What does the preface of the Lord's Prayer mean?
- 13 Give the main contents of each of the six petitions of the Lord's Prayer.
- 14 What does the Doxology involve?
- 15 What does "Amen" signify?

THE END.

## COMPARATIVE TABLE.

Those who desire to use the "Compendium Explained"  
in studying the Heidelberg Catechism, will find  
the following table useful.

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