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THE CHRISTIAN
ENTIRELY THE PROPERTY OF CHRIST, IN LIFE
AND DEATH:
EXHIBITED IN FIFTY-THREE
SERMONS
ON THE
HEIDELBERGH CATECHISM.

WHEREIN THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH, RECEIVED IN THE RE-
FORMED CHURCH, IS DEFENDED AGAINST THE PRINCIPAL
OPONENTS, AND THE PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT AND DI-
RECTION OF IT TO EVANGELICAL PIETY, ENFORCED.

BY THE REV. JOHN VANDERKEMP,
Late Minister of the Gospel, in the Church of Dirksland, Holland.

TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH

BY THE REV. JOHN M. VAN HARLINGEN.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

SEVERAL years have elapsed since the various symbolical books of our Reformed Dutch church were first translated and published in the English language. The principal design of publishing them in English was to instruct persons of this country, who adhered to our church, and were ignorant of the Dutch language. The greatest part of those who belong to our communion in America are such. It hath appeared by the event that this was a useful and laudable undertaking, and indeed absolutely necessary. It occurred to me some years since, that it would be serviceable to translate also some valuable exposition of one or other of our symbolical books into English; and as no book of this kind is of greater authority, or more general utility than the Heidelbergh catechism, I conceived that it would be proper, and particularly useful to translate some approved exposition of the catechism. I knew of none that was either better, or more generally approved, than that of the Rev. JOHN VANDERKEMP; and I entertained a desire to attempt a translation of that. I mentioned my inclination to several friends, who forthwith approved of the motion, and encouraged me to begin. Several ministers especially urged me to it. Indeed it appeared both to them and to me, that a work of such a nature was necessary, and that not only for the laity, but also for the clergy of our church, because they are obliged to expound the catechism in order every sabbath, when they preach twice, which is done in cities during the whole year, and in the country at least during half the year. Many of our younger ministers understand not the Dutch language, and they have no other assistance in preparing discourses on the catechism, than what they can derive from Latin expositions, which are exceedingly scarce in this country, so that but few can obtain them.

I have endeavoured to make it my first object in translating this book, to be faithful, studying to give what I judged to be the true sense of the author, and not adding or omitting a single sentence wilfully or wittingly. I have also endeavoured to preserve the proper

English idiom, which is much more difficult in translating than in composing. I have purposely avoided hard and unusual words. In several quotations from scripture I have followed the Dutch translation instead of the English, but only where the foregoing and following context of the author required it. I have also added a few notes to explain certain particulars.

The work which we now offer to the public hath been highly esteemed in the original, having been often reprinted since its first publication, although there were many other books of the same kind in Dutch. It is the sincere and earnest prayer of the translator, that as it hath been acceptable and useful to the fathers in the original, it may be so likewise to the children in a translation, and to all who may favour it with a perusal.

THE AUTHOR'S

P R E F A C E

TO THE CANDID READER.

CANDID READER,

BEFORE I inform thee of the purport of this my book, I must briefly discourse with thee on two momentous matters, which are of the greatest concern to thee and every other person. And in the first place, that it behoves thee to inquire whether thou art in the true church, in which God, with whom we have to do, is sought, worshipped and glorified in a pure and acceptable manner, to salvation. It is a dictate of human nature, that man ought not only to worship and glorify God, but that he ought also to do this in connection with others. But man having sinned, and come short of the glory of God, knows not in what manner he ought to worship and glorify him; and nevertheless, as the idea, that he ought to worship God, abides with him, he will, according to his confused and singular conceptions, endeavour to worship him in an erroneous manner. And since being puffed up by his fleshly understanding, he delights in himself, and in his peculiar opinions, he therefore seeks to render them agreeable to others also, and thus to create a party, even in religion. But the Lord God, having appointed for himself an everlasting people, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that they might shew forth his praise, hath made his will known to them, and thus also the proper method of glorify-

ing him. This hath produced two kinds of churches and religions, a false, and a true or pure one. The false is that of the heathens, the modern Jews, the Mahometans, and the erroneous Christians.

The heathens have ordered their religion according to the twilight of nature, which they have exceedingly darkened by numerous fables, tricked up from certain obscure traditions of the fathers. For as the apostle of the heathens saith, Rom. i. 21, 22, 23. "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools: and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."

The modern Jews, who have apostatised from the faith of their fathers, make use of the scriptures of the Old Testament, but disguise and obscure them exceedingly by the traditions of the elders, which they dress up with a number of profane and old wives fables: whereby "their minds are blinded; for until this day there remaineth a vail on their hearts in the reading of the Old Testament, 2. Cor. iii. 14, 15.

The Mahometans regulate themselves by their Alcoran, as they call it, a book patched up of heathenish, Jewish, and Nestorian errors.

The Christians are either Romanists or Pelagians, (to whom the Socinians, the Jesuits, Arminians, and certain Mennonites join themselves more or less) or Enthusiasts, or Protestants, to wit, the Reformed and those who embrace the Augsburg confession.

All these cannot be each the true church, nor have the true form of religious worship. For there is but "one body, and one spirit, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all," Eph. iv. 5, 6. The doctrines of so many societies must clash with one another, must undermine and overthrow each other: such a Babel and confusion of articles of faith and ceremonies must loosen the bond of union, the essential qualification of the church, must scatter the members and displease God; "For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace," 1 Cor. xiv. 33. "This surely is not the wisdom that is from above, but it is earthly, sensual and devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work," James iii. 15, 16, 17.

Therefore it concerns thee greatly, worthy reader, to know with what people the true church of God and the pure religion is. The true church alone is the household of God, his city, the holy Jerusa-

lem, mount Zion, the Daughter of God, the darling, spouse, and body of Jesus, his dove, his fair one and undefiled : she alone is the object and end of all the blessed favours of God :” The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost is with her,” 2 Cor. xiii. 13. God elected her from eternity, and gives her his Son and Spirit. He enters into an everlasting covenant of grace with her, and gives her all the sure mercies of that covenant : he regenerates, calls, justifies, sanctifies, seals, preserves, leads, comforts and saves her. We may see what glorious things are spoken of this city of God, Psalm xli. xlviii. lxxxvii. cxxii. cxxxiii. and in the Song of Solomon. We must join ourselves to the true church, if we will be saved, Acts ii. 47. All who are called Christians confess one holy, catholic, Christian church : we must therefore inquire where the true church is to be found. So the spouse did, when she said to her bridegroom, Song i. 7. “ Tell me where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon : for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions ?

It is therefore a soul ruining madness to hold with the atheists, that all the glorious things which are spoken of the church of God are trifles ; or, from selfwill, or because we are offended at the multitude of differences, to remain in a state of separation from others, as if we could serve God alone and apart from others, as well as with and in society : for “ he who is not with Jesus” and his people, “ is against him ; and he who gathereth not with him scattereth abroad,” Math. zii. 30. It is also folly to run after every leader, and to think that we can serve God sincerely, and so be saved in every denomination ; for there is neither holiness nor salvation out of the true church of God, and he who is out of the church of God must be considered as “ a heathen man, and a publican,” Math. xviii. 16. We must disapprove also of the conduct of those, who only suppose, without inquiry, and without an actual persuasion of their minds, that they are in the true church and have the pure doctrine of faith. The common people among the papists act thus by the advice of their teachers, when they assent to the doctrine of the Romish church with an implicit faith, and do not examine the matter itself ; they may not indeed read the divine revelation, the priest becomes surety for the souls of his people, and he swears that he teaches the truth. But the papists are not the only persons who act thus, but I conceive that many, who recede from the papists do also conduct in this manner, when they say that religion consists only in two articles, to wit, a belief of the promises, and obedience to the commands, to which

others for decency's sake, add a becoming reverence for the holy scriptures: and they can therefore tolerate every error: when a person only holds that Jesus is the Messiah, and is no idolator, they will salute him as their brother.

But the Reformed teach altogether differently from this: they require that all men should, like the Bereans, search the scripture daily, whether the things, which their pastors teach them, be agreeable to the word of God; they enjoin upon every one to live by his own faith, and not by the faith of his teachers; and therefore certain marks, which are taken only from the Bible, are proposed to him by our people, that he may see for himself, whether he be in that church, which is described in the book of God, as his beloved people. But what a listlessness hath seized even upon many of God's people, that they do not so much as inquire, but suppose in a careless manner; that they are in the true church: this matter, they think, is too high for them; they conceive that their parents, who procured their incorporation into this church and educated them in it, knew what they were about, and they think that their ministers are too wise, and too pious to mislead them. Is this thy conduct also, reader? hast thou then a better proof and ground for thy faith than a heathen, Jew, Turk or Papist, and wouldest thou not be one of them, as thou art now one of us, if thou wert only educated among them? and if a persecution should arise against us, and thou shouldest be obliged to suffer reproach, pain, and shame for the doctrine of our church, wouldest thou then indeed have a single reason, why thou wouldest not forsake us, and join thyself to our adversaries?

Perhaps thou art amazed at these expressions, and thinkest, ought I then to doubt whether I am in the true church, and whether thou teachest me the truth? what will I then do with this book of thine? But hold, my friend, compose thyself a little. Art thou persuaded in thy mind, and assured upon good grounds, that the doctrine of our church is the pure doctrine of God's word, far be it from me, that I should lend my tongue and pen to the devil, to rob thee of thy sure foundation, and cause thee to stagger in thy faith. But dost thou barely suppose this by an implicit faith, I would then only convince thee of thy vanity and carelessness with respect to this matter, which is of so great consequence, that thou mayest be earnestly desirous to seek for solid grounds and certain evidences for thyself, upon which thou mayest settle thy soul in peace. The righteous only is of the household of God, and he must live by his own faith. The lame and the blind are hated by the soul of the true David; the lame and the blind shall not come into his house. We wish not that thou

shouldest suspect our church and doctrine of falsehood and impurity; for we are perfectly persuaded of her truth and purity; but we only condemn thine implicit faith, by which thou simply supposest, without evidence, that thou art in the true church: and we endeavour to urge thee to seek a well grounded faith; for an implicit faith is no faith, but only a vague and idle supposition, which hath no influence at all upon the mind.

But what proof can there be offered, by which we may learn what people are the church of God, and profess his truth, and worship him in a manner that is acceptable to him? We judge in the first place that the heathens manifest that God doth not acknowledge them to be his people. Their erroneous opinions concerning the God-head, their inventing of abominable gods, who were the offspring of whoredom, and practised the most shameful lewdness, envy, and revenge; yea, even such to whom the most vicious, filthy and hateful passions were dedicated: the inhuman barbarities, unnatural practices, and other wicked works of the heathens, (see Rom. i. 22, 23.) evidence that they suppress the truth in unrighteousness, that they extinguish the light of nature, and have forsaken the pure tradition of their father Noah. It was thus with the heathens of old, and it is thus still with those, who have either never heard of the gospel, or reject it.

Are not the heathens the people of God, some may perhaps think that the Jews are. It is true, the Lord God formerly established his covenant with Abraham and his seed, and promised that he would be a God to them, and that they should be his people, Gen. xvii. 78. "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, then Judah became his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion." Psalm cxiv. 1, 2. see Exod. xix. and xx. But we inquire not concerning the ancient Jews, but the modern. For although they are Abraham's seed after the flesh, they are nevertheless not after the promise; for they have rejected and corrupted the oracles of God, which were committed to them. It is true, the modern Jews are very attentive to letters, they have preserved the ancient book of God faithfully, and have transmitted it to us entire: but they gnaw only the outward shell of it, and they reject the kernel, the pith, the marrow, and true sense of it. They have darkened the sense of the divine word by their oral law, the traditions of the elders, the commandments and fables of men, see Isaiah xxix. 10—13. The promised Messiah, the expectation of their fathers, they have rejected and slain: they have set up their own righteousness in opposition to the righteousness of God. see Rom.

ix. 31, 32, 33. x. 2, 3. And how do they perform their religious service? is it not only a profane and idle bawling? we perceive not the least reverence, attention, or devotion among them in their synagogues. Their eyes declare their blindness, and hardness, they are famous throughout the world for their injustice, their griping usury and deceit, and yet they will not return. They deceive themselves with vain imaginations, thinking and resting on it, that Abraham is their father; but as they have apostatised from his faith, and do not perform his works, they manifest that they are born after the flesh, and that they are children of the servile covenant of works, and have therefore been cast out of the family of Abraham, like children of Hagar and Ishmael. See Gal. iv. 21—30. compared with Gen. xxi. 9, 10. It is therefore evident, that the present Jews are not the people of God, but are rejected by the God of their fathers: “Ye are not my people, neither will I be your God,” thus the Lord spake of old to this people, Hosea. i. 9. “He hath cut his staff beauty asunder, that he might break his covenant, which he had made with all this people,” Zech. xi. 10. And they will remain in their forsaken condition, until the Lord fulfil his good word, which he hath spoken concerning them, and receive them again. See Hosea. iii. 4, 5. Rom. xi. 25, 32. They cannot endure that the heathen should inherit their promises. Hear what Paul saith of them with truth, 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. “They have killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”

Are not the Jews the people of God, much less are the Mahometans; for their Alcoran, (or religious and canonical book) composed by Mahomet, assisted by a Nestorian monk, with others of his party, and certain Jews, was carelessly compiled from certain doctrines of the Bible, inserted without order and method, and from certain heathenish traditions, and many trifles, invented by the compilers. Many of their doctrines are ridiculous; their ceremonies are superstitious; many of those among them, whom they call spiritual, live like beasts, and the whole is calculated to flatter the lusts of the flesh: and they have but few things that can satisfy the reasonable soul. The nations were compelled by violence to accept of their religion, it is propagated by cruelty, and maintained by the sword. How can this people be the people of God? They are also selfcondemned; for they will not be questioned concerning their doctrines; whoever disputes about them must be put to death: “For every one that doth

evil hateth the light, neither cometh he to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd," John iii. 20.

Doth not the church of God exist among the heathens, nor among the Jews, nor Mahometans, we must then seek her among the Christians, with whom we shall also find her. In order to prove this, it would be necessary to demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion, especially with respect to those common doctrines, which are received, by all who are called Christians: for instance, this one article, to wit, that Jesus, the son of Mary, is the true Messiah. We might demonstrate this either *a priori*, from Moses and the prophets, to whom Jesus and the apostles appealed; or *a posteriori*, from Jesus and his apostles, who confirmed the doctrine of Moses and of the prophets. We could prove this abundantly from the resurrection of Jesus, as we have shewn on the seventeenth Lord's Day. After we had thus established the truth of the Christian religion, we might also demonstrate the divinity of it by many arguments, but especially by the numerous prophecies, which have been fulfilled in all their circumstances, and by the many miracles, with which the Lord hath sealed and confirmed the word, as his own. But it will not be proper to enlarge much on these particulars, lest we should extend our address to too great a length. We may find these things sufficiently treated of by many of our divines.

Although this general acknowledgement of the Messiahship of Jesus is true and divine, nevertheless the Christian world is divided into so many churches and different denominations, that they cannot all and each of them in particular be the true church of God. For all the members of the true church must, with respect to the fundamental points of the faith, "avoid schisms, and they must be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; they must be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind," 1 Cor. i. 10. Philip. ii. 2. But the Christian world is at present so divided, as it was also anciently, with respect to the fundamental points of doctrine and practice, that what is denied and condemned by one, is affirmed by another: what one thinks he ought to confess, another will oppose and overthrow with much bitterness and passion: yea, if it were in the power of some, who will also be called Christians, they would destroy others with fire and sword, with the rack and gibbet, although they should unpeople and devastate the greatest part of the world: for one endeavours to persuade another to embrace his opinion, and when he cannot succeed, he will not maintain any fellowship with him. The apostles, and the Jewish or Pharisaical Christians opposed each other vehemently

in the primitive church. John would have that "if any did not bring his doctrine with him, they should not receive him into their house, nor bid him God speed," 2 John, vs. 10, 11. Jesus himself, commends the Ephesians, because "they hated the works of the Nicolaitans, and saith that he hated them also," Rev. ii. 6. It is sufficiently known from ecclesiastical history, how the Arians, Pelagians, Nestorians, Eutychians, and others were condemned and rejected by those who taught a different doctrine, and how these were in their turn reprobated by their opponents. Matters are conducted in the same manner even now. The Quakers or enthusiasts, the Socinians, Arminians, Mennonites, Papists, Lutherans and Reformed cannot endure each other. It is true, the Arminians and Socinians pretend that they could exercise brotherly fellowship with all, they tolerate also one another; nevertheless they will not maintain fellowship with the idolatrous papists: they say that they would unite with the reformed if they would receive them into fellowship with them. But if these men should once prevail, we should then see how moderate and tolerant they would be toward us. Their fore-runners, the Arians, Pelagians and Semipelagians showed sufficiently what bitter enemies they were of the orthodox. The Remonstrants bestirred themselves vigorously against us in the last century, when they saw their help in the gates. Since then there are so many different opinions, which overthrow each other, it follows that all these denominations cannot be the true church and peculiar people of God; there is then only one among all these, which hath the true nature of the church.

But how shall we find the pure and true church of God among all these different denominations? Every one thinks that we must seek and find her among his people, with whom he converses. Surely there must be a possibility of knowing the true church, if we must join ourselves to her, that we may partake of her privileges and saving benefits; she is indeed "a city upon a hill, which cannot be hid." Matt. v. 14. But what is the mark whereby we may know her? Shall we ask the church of Rome which is the true church and the right mark, by which she may be known? She weens indeed that she hath a better right to this than all besides. She pretends that she hath the highest claim, and the oldest title: she saith that her high priest, the pope, is the supreme judge in disputes, to whom we must submit our faith in this great controversy. But others, who belong to the Romish society, think that the pope is not the supreme judge in disputes, but the council, to whom the pope must submit himself. How then shall we get right in the church of

Rome? cannot she decide her own controversies, how will she then those which she hath with others? and although she should be of one mind, and say that she hath a supreme right to pronounce sentence, those who are not of her communion will dispute that right, and assert that she hath no such right at all, and that she can not prove it, which we may justly demand of her. The Romish church is party concerned, every one will condemn her: shall she now be both party and judge, and pronounce sentence in her own case? who would not condemn this, as a most unfair and most unreasonable proceeding? and who would submit to such a sentence? It will therefore be most proper to consult the mouth and the word of the Lord: so the spouse acted, Song i. 7. The Son of God is indeed the Head, the Shepherd, the Prophet, the Priest and King of his church; he is the word and the wisdom of his Father: the word of God was written by the inspiration of the infallible Spirit, and the Lord speaks to every one in his word: "The scripture saith," Rom. iii. 4. ix. 17. x. 11. To that the Saviour appealed in his disputes with the Jews, John v. 39, so also the apostle, Rom. iii. 19. iv. 3. xxi. 4. Gal. iv. 21, 22, 27, 30. God commands every one to conduct himself according to his word, and to speak according to it, and denounceth a severe threatening against those who do not. Isaiah viii. 20. Therefore soundness of doctrine according to the written word of God is the right mark of the true church. Jesus himself gives us this mark, John viii. 31, 32, 47. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God." See this also, John x. 27. xiv. 21, 23. They who abide not by this word are condemned and accursed, how great soever their authority may be, yea, though they were angels from heaven, Gal. i. 8, 9. The word is also that by which a person is called to the church, and is born in the church, 2 Thess. ii. 14. James i. 18. 1 Peter i. 23. The doctrine according to the word of God is also the privilege of the church only, to the exclusion of all others. Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20. The priests of the Old Testament, who were ordained by God himself, might judge only "according to the sentence of the law," Deut. xvii. 8, 9, 10. And truly every one must and will admit, either wittingly and willingly, or unwittingly and unwillingly, that the pure doctrine of the church is the right mark of the true church. For what person is there of all the different denominations, who, when he is urged to prove his opinion, will not forthwith alledge one

or other passage of scripture? Doth he not show thereby, that his faith must be tried by the word of God, as the proper touchstone.

Say not worthy reader, that the matter which we would explain, remains thus as obscure as ever, and that we cannot know by the agreement of any person's doctrine with the word of God, with what people we may find the church of God; because every one makes use of this word to answer his purpose, and saith that his opinion agreeth with the word of God; yea, that he will submit himself to the word only. For when this matter is properly considered, we shall perceive clearly and presently, that all who are without the Reformed, or permit me to say, the Protestant church, avoid the decision of the holy scripture, and set up another judge above, and in opposition to the holy book of God, because they perceive that they are condemned by that book.

In order to illustrate and confirm this assertion, thou must, reader, allow, and thou wilt do it, if thou wilt examine this matter thoroughly, and without prejudice, that he who foundeth all, at least all his capital doctrines upon a principle different from the word of God, and who models and fashions the whole word of God according to that principle, I say, thou must allow that such a person doth not submit himself to the word of God and that he doth not regulate his opinions according to it, but subjects himself to a different judge, whom he sets up, to wit, that principle of his; yea, that he subjects even the word of the Lord of hosts to that principle. If thou, reader, wilt now duly attend to the conduct of those who oppose us, thou wilt perceive that they build and suspend all their doctrinal tenets either upon enthusiasm, as those who are called Quakers do; or upon natural reason and free will, as the Pelagians and Semipelagians, who were condemned of old, did, and as those still do, who extoll their reason so much, as sound, though somewhat weakened, and their indifferent free will, to wit, the Socinians, Jesuits, Remonstrants, and many Mennonites, who collude with them; or upon lordship, which is introduced by the Papists.

We say the Quakers build and suspend the articles of their faith upon enthusiasm; for they will not receive any part of the word of God, but what is suggested to them by an immediate revelation of the Spirit of God, whereby they are then, as they pretend, in a manner deified, imagining that they are above the holy word of God, which they subject to their accidental notions; and therefore they utter the most absurd and fantastical doctrines of faith, and use unseemly and offensive gestures. What thinkest thou, candid reader, can this people appeal to the word of God, as the only judge,

and the perfect standard of faith; do they not reject, yea, do they not reproach this judge, when they decry the written word of God, as "a mere paper word, a book for children, milk for babes, an ambiguous scripture, which hath neither meaning nor force, unless it be inspired and animated by an inward word?"

The Socinians establish their doctrine upon a different principle, to wit, natural reason and free will. Natural reason, they think, is still sound and unimpaired; men can perceive all things clearly by reason; "We do not by any means assent to things, which we clearly perceive to be impossible," saith Socinus *de Servatore, part. 3. cap. 6. page 282.* They think therefore that reason is the rule and expositor of the scripture, and that all the controversies, that relate to the scripture, ought and can be determined by the voice of reason. They deny for the sake of their sound reason the simplicity of God, his essential omnipresence, his foreknowledge, his free and unchangeable decrees, the divine Trinity, the personal union of the two natures in Christ, and his satisfaction to the justice of God, &c. They cannot comprehend these things, nor reconcile them to their reason, and therefore they reject them, though they are plainly set forth in the word of God. Ostorod saith that he would not believe the incarnation, (that is, Christ's taking upon himself the human nature, or the personal union of a divine and human nature in Christ,) although it should seem to be clearly asserted in the scripture, because it is contrary to reason, which judgeth it to be false. Another champion of the Socinians, namely, Samalcius saith, "There is not the least tittle of the Christian religion, which doth not agree with reason; and if any opinion agree not with reason, it is not admissible in theology; and it must necessarily be exceedingly pernicious and false. *In refut. thes. Franc. page 137. et in prefut.* Socinus himself saith, *de Servatore, part. 3. cap. 6. pag. 282.* "With respect to myself, although the scripture said not once, but often," (to wit, that Christ hath satisfied God for our sins) "I should nevertheless not believe that it was altogether so. It cannot by any means be so," according to the judgment of his reason. What thinkest thou, reader, can we believe that these men receive the scripture only for their judge and rule, and that they submit themselves to it, and prove from it that they have the right mark of the church and people of God? I judge not. In the same manner do they make free will a foundation, upon which they build many other opinions. They think that free will is indifferent, and not so exceedingly corrupt, as the Reformed pretend, and therefore they do not believe the inability of the sinner to do good, they deny the necessity

of a heart changing regeneration, God's effectual grace in working faith and conversion, &c. And why, because these things agree not with the word of God? no, but because they can not be reconciled to their indifferent free will. Doth it not then plainly appear, that the word of God is not the foundation of their faith, but their own vain glorious free will?

The Jesuits and Remonstrants will not indeed speak so harshly, nevertheless free will is the hinge upon which most of their doctrines, which they hold in common with each other, turn. They believe that man is not so good as Adam was before the fall: he hath lost the image of God, his supernatural grace, his golden bridle; the inbred lusts of his flesh have bewildered him, and he is thus become weak; but he is not therefore so dead, so dark, corrupt and incapable of doing good; but he can still by the help of grace discern the things of God, desire and dispose himself for conversion. He would otherwise be deprived of his free and indifferent will, and they think that this is impossible, unless he should cease to be man. And therefore we must not hold an absolutely free, and eternally unchangeable decree, but a conditional one, that is a decree suspended upon the condition of foreseen faith, good works and perseverance. And on this account they believe that Christ died for all men, that God hath entered into a general covenant of grace with all men, that he bestows a general and sufficient, but not a particular, effectual, and irresistible grace upon all men, and that the saints may apostatize from the faith. If this were not so, free will would be forced, and God could not with any equity demand of man what he was unable to perform. Do we not then see that these men make free will, by them considered as indifferent, and not the word of God, the foundation of their doctrine of faith? How dare they then pretend that they make the word of God their foundation?

The Papists exalt their sovereign lordship to the throne, that they may subject the word of God, its mysteries, and all that is sacred and profane to themselves. They have therefore introduced the ruling power of a pope, of cardinals, bishops and other lords. They teach that their church is superior to the scripture, that we cannot derive the authority and sense of scripture from the scripture itself, but we must derive it from the Romish sovereignty. They introduce traditions, many articles of faith, and ceremonies without, above, yea, contrary to the word of God: they say, the church of Rome hath a right to do this, and men ought to obey her implicitly. The common people must depend only upon the words of their teachers; they may not read the word of God, nor search it, they would become too

conceited, and contradict their superiors: whoever attempts to do this is a heretic, and deserves the stake: therefore they choose not that the scripture should be translated into the vulgar language of the people, and they enjoin that the public service of the church should be performed only in a foreign language: the people have enough to do with hearing masses, counting and muttering a great number of prayers to God, abstaining from particular meats during certain seasons, shriving; all their sins, and performing well and carefully the penances imposed upon them by the priest to whom they have shriven: men must by all means establish their own righteousness, and merit heaven by their good works in that Romish communion: they make indeed a great noise and ado about the name Jesus, they must bow themselves when they hear it mentioned, they must mention it often, it must be engraven by all means in churches, in houses, upon walls, yea, upon dishes; but what doth Jesus do for all this honour? he obtains for them that their good works can merit. In this manner do they keep the people who know little or nothing, in bondage and slavery, so that they submit themselves readily to those Romish lords, without even muttering against them. But this sovereign authority and power cannot be maintained without money. What do they do? They introduce shriving to the priest, they sell spiritual offices, indulgences, masses for souls, and require satisfaction of men in their own persons in and after this life, which can be considerably moderated with money: indeed, all things are saleable at Rome, even whoredom; by which means those great merchants become exceedingly rich, and maintain themselves. Must thou not therefore, observing reader, judge that the Romish lordship and not the word of God is the principle from which all the Popish doctrines and institutions are derived? If the Romish synagogue could find herself in the word of God, would she sport in this manner with the souls, with the bodies, with the goods of men, with the faith and with the word of God? We may see how little these men regard the book of God as their rule by the reproaches, which they belch out against it; for they say that it is an imperfect, dark, and double meaning book. I have no inclination to repeat all the reproachful expressions which many of the leaders of the Romanists have vomited out against this book. It will suffice us to see, that the Papists perceive that they are condemned by the word, and that they therefore hate it as adversaries of the light.

Hath the Lord now a true church on the earth, as he certainly hath, and as every one steadfastly believes, and is she not to be found among those who are without us, she must then surely be found with

us. Nor is our boasting vain; for why do we teach the abominable and guilty depravity and impotency of the sinner? why do we believe in the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier? why do we hold that the only begotten and proper Son of God took upon himself a true human nature, continuing one person, and that he truly and fully satisfied the justice of God by his sufferings? whence is it, that we confess a divine, effectual and heart changing grace, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, is not the word of God the only book that prescribes and enforceth these things? the book of God is our only principle; from that alone have we derived all our doctrines; by that we will be tried, and to that book alone do we submit our whole doctrine. If we err, we must err, because we exalt the holy book of God too high, and humble the sinner too low by it, that we commend the grace of God too much, and thus comfort the delivered sinner too much, and excite him too powerfully to holiness and to glorify God. O happy and blessed error! by which, sinking down in our own sinful nothingness, and swallowed up in the sea of God's all sufficient grace, we lose ourselves altogether in his honour, that we may be nothing at all, and he alone may be all in all to eternity.

If we will not be enthusiasts, who teach indifferently whatever occurs to their minds, (as they pretend) through the Spirit, without above and contrary to the word of God, we need not, however, be natural men, who have not the Spirit, as if we would banish the Spirit out of the church. For we know very well from the word of God that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; that they are foolishness to him, and that he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. We teach a saving, effectual enlightening, regeneration, repentance, faith, sanctification, consolation, leading and preservation by the Holy Spirit. But we deny that the Holy Spirit takes the word out of our hands, when he leads us: for he influenceth the minds of those whom he favours with, and according to his word: with, by and in subservience to the word he enlightens and persuades the understanding, so that it contemplates the mysteries of God with a persuasion of mind: "we see the light in God's light," Psalm xxxvi. 9. "He shines into the heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6. and thus "the gospel comes not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," 1 Thess. i. 5. so that "we receive the word preached, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, as the word of God; which effectually worketh in them that believe," 1 Thess. ii. 13.

Whereby the will is also sweetly and heartily persuaded, and thus powerfully moved by the Spirit to cleave to the Lord, and to fulfill his will, in obedience to him. See Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. Yea, the believer "is changed by the Spirit after the glory of Christ," which is exhibited by the word, 2 Cor. iii. 18. And he is "made free by knowing the truth," John viii. 32.

When we will not allow reason a higher authority than the word, or an equal authority with the word, nor say that free will consists in indifference, but that it is in bondage to sin, and a servant of it, do we then deny our reason and will, and declare our reason and will to be useless? By no means. We think that we cannot apprehend the divine mysteries, except by, and with our reason, and that we cannot be converted and wrought upon, unless with our will. But we say that reason hath not an equal authority with the word of God, much less a higher authority than the word, obliging us to believe it: yea, that reason, as it exists at present in every sinner without the actual enlightening of the Holy Spirit, is dark, foolish, and confused: see 1 Cor. ii. 14, and that the will is "a will of the flesh, and of the mind," Eph. ii. 3. yea, that it neither can, nor will, nor can be willing to love that which is good in a saving manner, nor convert itself: although the sinner, in consequence of his reasonable nature, always remains capable of conversion, and when God converts him, is wrought upon in a reasonable manner, his understanding and reason are enlightened, and he thereby becomes capable of apprehending spiritual things with his reason, according to the measure of their revelation; and he thus becomes willing, when he was before unwilling, and cries of his own accord, uncompelled, and willingly to the Lord, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned," Jer. xxxi. 18. for "God takes the stony heart from him and gives him a heart of flesh." Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

As we do not deny the efficacious working of the Holy Spirit, although we are not enthusiasts; nor that men possess reason and a will, though we are not Pelagians; so also we will not deny that the Lord hath given a certain power to his church, and ordered that she should be governed by overseers, although we will not submit to the Popish yoke, because it is too Antichristian. We know that we ought to "acknowledge them who labour in the church, are over her in the Lord, and admonish her; and that we ought to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake," 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. See also Matt. xvi. 19. xviii. 17, 18, 2 Cor. x. 8. xiii. 10. Heb. xiii. 17. and what we have said on the thirty first Lords day. But this power is only ministerial, and not superior to the word, much less contrary

to it, taking it from the members of the church, and rendering it useless to them. This power must be merely subservient to the word; subduing, and rendering the mind of every person obedient to it. See 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, 6 But we ought not, in matters of faith, to "call any man our master or father, because Christ only is a master, and God only a father" in this respect, Matt. xxiii. 8, 9, 10.

And therefore we think that we may, without any offence, esteem the Reformed or Protestant church to be the true church, and her doctrine to be pure, according to, and on account of the word of God.

The other matter, reader, which so greatly concerns thee and every other person, is, that it becometh thee to inquire whether thou art in a state of grace, a child of God, the property of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, and so a true member of the church of God. It will not suffice to render thee eternally happy here and hereafter, that thou conversest in the true church, as an outward member, and that thy name is enrolled in the register of the church: many such "children of the kingdom shall be cast into utter darkness," Matt. viii. 12. We may be in the true church, and be without grace. See Matt. xxii. 11, 14. There is chaff as well as wheat in the threshing-floor of the church. There are vessels of dishonour, as well as of honour in the house of God. There are more evil than good hearers of the word. There were many in the church of Sardis, who were dead, while they had the name, that they were alive, and there were but few, who had not defiled their garments. In the family of Noah there was also a wicked Ham, and in that of Abraham there was an Ishmael: Esau was a son of Isaac and Rebekah, as well as Jacob. The carnal Israelites ate and drank also of the spiritual meat and drink, 1 Cor. x. 1, 5. Among the companions of Jesus there were some who forsook him, and Judas, one of the apostles, was a devil, John vi. 66, 70, 71. It is no sign that a person is in a good state, when he enjoys the outward privileges of the church. See Luke xiii. 24, 27. Although thou wert a teacher of the church, thine office would not make thee a christian inwardly, nor preserve thee from perdition. See Matt. vii. 22, 23. A person may "be enlightened, taste the heavenly gift, be made a partaker of the Holy Ghost, taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," and nevertheless be destitute of those "better things which accompany salvation, and so fall away," Heb. iv. 4, 9. Therefore inquire with concern how it is with thee in this respect, whether thou be a christian in the letter, or in the spirit: whether thy work be in appearance only, or in truth; whether the root of the matter be in thee, or not. God desireth truth in the inward parts: thou

hast the greatest concern in this affair; it is a matter, upon which thy salvation and damnation depends. Therefore "examine thyself" again and again, "whether thou be in the faith, prove thine ownself," 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Zeph. ii. 1, 2. Dost thou obtain the Spirit, who causeth thee to know the things which are freely given thee of God, rejoice, thank him, and conduct thyself worthy of his wonderful and free grace, and endeavour to render others partakers of it, and to allure them to communion with God. and comfort his people with the consolation, wherewith God hath comforted thee. Dost thou perceive that thou art yet destitute of the essentials of Christianity, give thyself no rest, but earnestly endeavour to partake of the Redeemer Christ entirely, and to become his property.

These two important matters are also seriously urged by the Heidelberg catechism. For in the first place it forbids us to teach and believe any thing, which the gospel doth not teach us, and which God hath not revealed to us in his word. See questions 19, 21, 22. It instructs us in the great mystery of the divine Trinity, and the blessed dispensation of the Triune God, only because God hath revealed himself thus in his word, questions 24, 25. When it treats of the nature, kind, and efficacy of the sacraments, it appeals only to the word of God, Questions 71, 77, and it humbleth the sinner to the lowest degree according to that word: it exalts the grace of God to the highest, in order to comfort and quiet the humbled sinner in a clear and effectual manner, and upon certain grounds: and it urges in the most forcible manner the delivered sinner to a holy gratitude, and to glorify the infinitely gracious God. On the other hand it shows for examination how a person, who becomes the entire property of Christ, and therefore a partaker of the only comfort and the supreme good, is led and influenced by God, and how one, who is destitute of this, may attain to it by humiliation, a true faith in the only and perfect Saviour, and an evangelical holiness, and gratitude. We have endeavoured to follow our instructor in this path, when "we have frequently shown from the doctrines which we have explained according to the word of God, both the falsehood of the doctrine of our adversaries, and the purity and truth of the doctrine of our reformed church. After treating of an important benefit, we have shown by certain marks, which are found in every believer, and in believers only, who are the real partakers of such a great benefit. We conceive indeed that no man can improve a benefit to his spiritual advantage and comfort, unless he be conscious, that he hath an indisputable right to that benefit: and that even the favourites of God are often exceedingly uncertain, perplexed, and doubtful whether

they have truth in their inward parts. It was necessary then, in order that we might speak comfortably to the children of God, that we should exhibit the work of God, which he had wrought in their souls, plainly by evidences, that they might behold it on every side, and as it were near at hand, and thus obtain assurance of heart before the Lord. We thought also that it was our duty to separate the vile from the precious, and that we ought therefore to show by evidences who also deceived themselves with false imaginations, that they might recover themselves out of the snare of the devil in which they are taken captive at his will, and might thus flee from the wrath to come. We are the less scrupulous about treating souls in this detecting manner, because we observe that the word of God precedes us in this method; for it calleth the sinner again and again to himself, and admonisheth him seriously to examine and prove himself: the holy prophets and apostles often proposed to the people, and earnestly insisted upon certain evidences of a person's good and evil condition. See only at present the eighth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans, and the epistles of John, which contain many evidences of this kind. We are not apprehensive that sinners will be driven by this method of instruction to an irrecoverable despair, like Cain and Judas, who after all did not arrive to that phrensy through a particular discovery of their graceless condition by evidences, but through their own enormous abominations, which rendered their consciences outrageous. Hast thou, reader, ever observed that any person was brought to such a total despair through a serious discovery of his condition to him. I ask not, whether thou hast ever seen any person, who attained to a conviction, that he was yet graceless, and was exceedingly troubled on account of this; for such trouble is salutary, and renders the sinner susceptible of the divine grace. See Matt. v. 3, 6, ix. 12, 13. It is also produced by the Holy Spirit, John xvi. 8, 9. and it rendered Peter's sermon profitable, Acts ii. 37. But I ask whether thou hast ever seen any person, who was reduced to an irrecoverable despair of the grace of God by such a serious discovery, and by exhibiting certain evidences to him? I have not: I have indeed seen only one person in all my life, who truly and entirely despaired of the grace of God, and that out of my congregation: which person did not arrive to that despair by a serious and soul alarming sermon, and by an exhibition of evidences, but by his own wilful ungodliness. Truly we need not be afraid that we will render any person too uneasy by a frequent proposing of evidences, and by a particular address to him, in the second person; our people are indeed too insensible, they are not so easily influenc-

ed to repentance. The prophets and apostles did not speak so generally to the people, and inform them that there were such and such wicked persons in the world, and in the church: but they used to address the guilty in a direct manner, and say, "Thou art the man." 1 Sam. xii. 7. "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter," Acts viii. 21. "Thou child of the devil." &c. Acts xiii. 10, 11. "O foolish Galatians," &c. Gal. iii. 1, 3, 4. v. 2, 7. This is also required by the national synod of Wesel, holden in the year 1568, when it saith, "They shall direct all that they say to these two principal points of the gospel, to wit, faith and conversion: and the preachers, in doing this, shall aim at, as their only mark, and inculcate the true mortification and quickening of man: they shall endeavour to penetrate with their sermons, as much as possible, through all the secret veils, and into all the hiding places of the souls of their hearers; and not only dwell upon gross acts of iniquity, and public sins, but also expose the hidden hypocrisy of the heart, and bring forth thence to light, and remove in the most convenient manner, that seed-plot and sink of all manner of ungodliness, pride, unthankfulness," &c. In this manner have we also endeavoured not only to lop off certain unfruitful branches, which bear gall and wormwood, but also to penetrate, as much as we were able to the bottom of the heart, and so to the root of iniquity, and to lay it bare, that this evil tree might fall and die of its own accord.

Suffer me, my worthy reader, to detain thee yet a little, while I say something to thee concerning our excellent Heidelberg catechism. When, being yet a young man, I entertained a desire, and being doubtful of myself, I had a serious disposition to work out my salvation with fear and trembling, I presently set a high value upon this little book, because I perceived that it would contribute to the attainment of my object. I observed that it proposed in a very perspicuous manner the method in which God conducted sinners to salvation by discovering to them their misery, deliverance and gratitude: it shewed me the true nature of the exercises of miserable souls, of those who were seeking to be saved, and of those who were thankful; and what seemed exceedingly striking and beautiful to me was, that the instructor introduced his pupil, as speaking concerning the exercises of a convinced, believing, and holy person, as his own, and not proposing the heads of doctrine only as positive truths. The more I saw these things in this little book, the more I was enamoured with it. I was exceedingly grieved, when I heard Papists, Socinians, and Remonstrants, with whom I conversed much in my youth, speak reproachfully of it. But I do not regret it, it hath been of so

much the more service to me. I was also induced thereby to publish this treatise of mine upon that little book, that I might, if possible, edify others by it, heartily wishing that they may derive the same, yea, greater advantage from it, than I have derived. Let no man nevertheless be so ill natured, as to think that I, or any other of our denomination, look upon the catechism as a little bible. We would rather see it and all other good books banished out of the world, than that it should be equalled with the word of God, which was immediately and infallibly inspired by him. We believe the doctrines of the catechism, not on account of the catechism, but only on account of the word of God, out of, and according to which the catechism was composed. Do we esteem this little book, we nevertheless love the word of God still more. We commend this treatise, only because it explains the book of God clearly to us, and recommends it to us. They who report of us that we consider the catechism as our little bible, know better; at least they would know better, if they did not foster bitter envy and strife in their hearts. No man will speak disparagingly of the catechism, who knows how it was introduced into the world, for what purpose it was composed, in what manner it was received, combatted and established, and of how great advantage it hath been to the church.

It is known, that it was composed by Zacharias Ursinus and Casparus Olevianus, both exceedingly famous divines and professors in the university of Heidelberg, at the command of Frederick the third, prince Palatine, surnamed the pious. The occasion of composing it, was, that the Ubiquitists, a sect of Lutherans, who held that the body of Christ was omnipresent, being desirous of introducing their opinion in a violent and furious manner, opposed the orthodox by every method: "The schools," says that famous prince Palatine, in the preface to the catechism, "were fallen into contempt, the tender youth were neglected, there was no steady nor uniform method of teaching the doctrines of christianity. Hence it came to pass, that the unskillful youth were not rightly instructed, or according to any certain rule; but just as every teacher fancied; or they were not instructed at all, but remained entirely stupid and ignorant," &c. It was the design of that excellent prince to establish by this catechism a general form of harmonious doctrines for the churches and schools. Thus he speaks in his preface, "Therefore we ordered our divines, and the pastors of the churches in our electoral principality to compose a catechism, that is, a brief oral instruction in the principal doctrines of the christian religion, in German and Latin, from the word of God; that the preachers and schoolmasters might have a certain

and fixed form, according to which they might instruct the tender youth in the churches and schools, to the end that they might not bring in new doctrines, according to their own fancies, or propose such as agreed not with the word of God." See also Melchior Adams in the life of Ursinus, pag. mihi, 534.

Thus was this catechism composed, revised, and, as agreeable to the word of God, approved by the principal divines of the Palatinate, assembled for that purpose. It was printed first at Heidelberg, in the year 1563, and recommended to the churches and schools of the Palatinate, that it might serve for the maintenance of an uniform method of instruction, in order to prevent divisions and schisms, and to avert the reproaches, that were cast upon the doctrine of the Palatine churches. Moreover, the pious Prince Palatine sent this catechism to all the Reformed churches, in every part of Christendom, who approved of it, as appears from the answers of those churches, deposited in the archives of the Palatinate. See the ecclesiastical history of James Trigland, page 360. The light of evangelical truth, beaming forth with so much splendor in the Palatinate, shone too bright to remain within the limits of that country, it broke presently through to our dear Netherlands, where this catechism was also soon known, translated and printed, and, as agreeable to the word of God, adopted in the synod of Embden, in the year 1571 where it was also thought necessary, that we should use it in the churches of the Netherlands; this was further renewed, and enjoined in the national synod of Dordrecht in the year 1578. And once more in the national synod of Dordrecht, in the year 1618 and 1619, where it was revised, approved, and established, and highly commended by the foreign divines, who were invited to the synod, and especially by the divines of Great Britain. Hear what Trigland saith of this in his history of the church, page 1145. "I well remember," saith that learned man, "what I have also frequently, and upon different occasions related, that the divines of Great Britain highly extolled that little book, and said that neither their churches, nor the French had such a suitable catechism: that the men who had composed it, had been unusually assisted by the Spirit of God at the time, that they had in sundry other matters excelled several divines, but in composing that catechism, they had excelled themselves."

He who doth evil hateth the light: that which is opposed by none but evil men must be good: and we ought to have a higher opinion of this catechism as orthodox, because so many men of a corrupt mind have withstood and combatted it with all their might, that

they might, if possible, banish it out of the church, as though it were erroneous. This book was no sooner published, than it was fiercely attacked by the Ubiquitists: see what Melchior Adams relates concerning this matter in the life of Zacharias Ursinus, page 534, 535, and not by those only, but also by the Papists. These stirred up the emperor against it, so that he ordered the pious Prince Palatine, without hearing him, to suppress his catechism, and threatened that if he refused, he should not be acknowledged an evangelical prince but should be excluded from the religious peace and from the empire. But this gallant hero, laying his catechism beside his bible, declared that he would defend that little book against any one, who would dispute with him which so affected the emperor, that he said to him, "Frederick, thou art the most pious of us all;" upon which he suspended, and annulled his decree, and tolerated the catechism: yea, some of the states, who were present, also subscribed it: and this opposition added new lustre to the catechism. The Papists, thwarted in this manner, ceased not however to attack the catechism again and again, in order to extirpate it. A certain John Andrews Koppenstein, a Dominican monk and parish priest at Heidelberg, laboured in particular more than any of his party, to alienate the church of Heidelberg from her catechism, and seduce her unawares to follow the beast, and to worship him: he showed for this purpose horns like those of the Lamb, but he spoke like the dragon, when he wrote against this catechism his "Uncalvinized calvinistic Heidelberg catechism." He was wonderfully skillful in showing the horns of the Lamb, while he spoke like the dragon, and in changing the language of the church in our catechism into the language of the whore of Rome, almost in every question; observe for instance our fifth question; "Canst thou keep all these things perfectly." He answers, "*maxime*," certainly, or exceedingly, or "very well with God." For I am by nature, although corrupt, "inclined with the help of grace, to love" God and my neighbour: And in this manner doth he sport with almost every question of our catechism. But he hath been completely answered by many, and particularly by Theodorus Strakkius

The Remonstrants opposed the catechism no less than these. When they proposed to introduce a new doctrine into the church, they fell presently upon this book; for they saw that they were condemned in it. They lay hid, and concealed themselves with secrecy: when they were asked what fault they found with the doctrine of the church, they would not declare it, except in a national synod. and they laboured in the mean while by every contrivance in

their power to hinder the calling of a free synod. If a synod should be called, it ought, as they fancied, to revise the Netherland confession, and the Heidelberg catechism, and we ought to discharge the members of the synod from their obligation to that catechism and confession. What artifices! their design was soon detected by the orthodox, which was only to beget a suspicion, that these formulas agreed not in every respect with the word of God. Truly with no other design but to expose the reformed church to contempt, as though she had adopted them without having carefully examined them, or without having deliberately considered them, and as if she were not sufficiently established and assured of her own faith expressed in those writings. And about what things in those books were they scrupulous? they did not alledge aught but trifles; if they had any thing that was weighty, they durst not mention it, lest they should expose themselves too much, and afford more reason to suspect that they colluded with the Socinians, as the event hath also sufficiently shown. See what they alledged in Tringland's history of the church, page 373, 378. See also how Henry Alting hath defended the catechism against all their cavils, and against the Socinian heresies, *Explic. et vindic. catcch. Pal.*

But the catechism was never more shamefully abused than by Pontian Van Hattem, with his party, for a cloak of his shame, in order to conceal his Spinosism and atheism, and introduce them covertly into the church. He thought that Spinoza had a good cause, but that he would have succeeded better, if he had disguised his intentions with the catechism. Is it matter of wonder, that this man, and those of his party sport so with this book? he sports in the same manner with the bible also: these men conceal all their profane phrases with the language of the word of God, and of his church: therefore they speak highly of regeneration, of the old and new man, of the flesh and Spirit, &c. See what Mr. John Van der Waaijen hath observed on this subject in his letter to Pontian Van Hattem, and how Mr. Charles Tuinman hath exposed those men in his writings against them.

The great advantages, that the churches, in which this catechism hath been used, have reaped from it, ought also to uphold its credit among us. For it hath not only afforded a great knowledge of the divine mysteries to those, who have used it diligently, and have exercised themselves well in it, but it hath also induced preachers, who might otherwise have become backward to cultivate the divine truths, to persevere in their labours, and it hath repeatedly animated them to exercise themselves more and more in these mysteries, since

they are obliged to pursue the thread of this catechism weekly in their sermons. We may also ascribe it in some measure to the catechism, as a mean, that the Netherlands have cleaved so long to the pure doctrine of the truth, since it restrains such as have itching ears within a certain bond, out of which they cannot easily break loose, without being speedily detected. I will adopt here the words of Peter De Wit, in his dedication, prefixed to his explanation of the catechism, "Blessed be that divine work, the catechism; blessed be the hearts that first conceived it, the mouths that first contained it, the hands and pens that laboured at it, and brought it to such a desirable issue. The churches have reaped the wished for benefits from it by the blessing of God. The catechism hath been the deathwound of those who were given to change." The Lord, who hath so long preserved his church in the Netherlands in his truth, set forth in the catechism, agreeably to his written word, grant that this truth may be more and more illustrated, and confirmed, and that every one, delivered from his misapprehension, may cleave to the truth in love, may be made free by it, sanctified in it, and changed according to it!

I will add only one word more, before I conclude. As it doth not befit me highly to extol this work of mine on the catechism, that "I may not become a fool in glorying," so it would also be unseemly in me to ask pardon of my reader for many things, and thus cry, before I am beaten. Dost thou find aught in it that deserves censure, I trust that thou wilt also find something in it that will edify thee. Dost thou observe here and there a grammatical or rhetorical error, remember that there hath never been a book printed yet, without some error of this kind.

To conclude, I exhort thee, my worthy reader, that thou endeavour to contemplate the truth in its efficacy, to obtain an assurance of it, through the word and Spirit of the Lord, and to penetrate through it to the things which it proposeth to thee, to wit, God and Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the grace of the Lord, that, irradiated with the light of God, thou mayest contemplate the efficacy and splendid lustre of them, to the end that thou mayest be enlightened, warmed, and enlivened by the truth, and changed by it from glory to glory. If thou derive such advantage from this work of mine, thou wilt not regret that thou hast made use of it, I will obtain mine end, and God will be glorified by it. This is the sincere desire and prayer of

Thine affectionate and loving friend and servant in
the work of the Lord,

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THE CHRISTIAN ENTIRELY THE PROPERTY OF CHRIST.

I. LORD'S DAY.

THE ONLY COMFORT OF BELIEVERS.

Romans xiv. 7, 8. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.

Q. 1. **W**HAT *is thy only comfort in life and death?*

A. That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ, who with his precious blood hath fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me, that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore by his holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him.

Q. 2. *How many things are necessary for thee to know, that thou, enjoying this comfort, mayest live and die happily?*

A. Three; the 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.

No man will pursue any work freely, unless he propose to himself some honourable, pleasant, or profitable end. The end renders the worker active. If this were not so, the most useful occupations would be relinquished, and a man would become more sluggish than the most stupid animal. Who would have any inclination to exercise himself in a fatiguing employment, or to expose his life to the

inclemency of a boisterous sea, or to undergo the dangers of a hazardous war, or to practise any art or science, or to employ himself in any mercantile business, if the hope of honour, pleasure, or profit did not urge him on? Reward certainly sweetens and excites to labour: God himself, willing that man should work out his salvation with fear and trembling, encourageth him by rewards. "Your work shall be rewarded," said the prophet to Asa, that he might incite him to proceed with the reformation which he had begun, 2 Chron. xv. 7. Therefore salvation is likened to a crown, which was wont to be hung up at the end of the race, that the runners, fixing their eyes upon it, might be encouraged to press on for it with the greater eagerness. Paul hath an eye to this custom, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. Philip. iii. 12, 13, 14. "Moses had respect unto the recompence of the reward." And this caused him to despise every other consideration, that he might obtain it, Heb. ix. 24, 25, 26. What is the end of the Christian religion, and of the Christian doctrine? Is it not to make the sinner everlastingly happy? "The knowledge of the truth, which is according to godliness, is also in and unto the hope of eternal life." Titus i. 1, 2. A man must indeed propose the glory of God to himself for his chief end: but the glory of God doth not oppose the happiness of man, but is promoted by it: yea, the glory of God is the salvation of man, and the salvation of man is God's glory. Therefore the apostle saith that "God will recompence rest to those who are troubled, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints," 2 Thess. i. 6, 10. But in order to succour the weakness of man, who can not form such a perfect idea of the divine glory, as of his own welfare, and is therefore more influenced by his own welfare, the Lord will encourage him more by salvation, than by his own glory.

It is therefore commendable in the teacher of the Christian doctrine, that he sets before his pupil, first of all, his chief good and his only comfort in the first question, that he may incite him to a more earnest inquiry and pursuit after the means to obtain that comfort, in the second question; which are afterwards more fully explained and enforced throughout the whole catechism.

Two particulars are therefore here inquired into and explained.

I. What is the only comfort of a Christian?

II. The means by which that comfort is to be obtained.

1. The instructor speaks of "comfort," of comfort "in life and in death," of an "only" comfort, and particularly of "thy" comfort. Comfort denotes sometimes that cheerful frame of mind, whereby a person is well disposed under any pressing, or apprehended evil, and when the evil is removed, is greatly rejoiced, as we see in Paul, who

was "filled with comfort, and was exceedingly joyful in all his tribulation," 2 Cor. vii. 4. But sometimes the word comfort signifies any good word or work, whereby such an agreeable frame is produced. In this sense is the word used, Zech. i. 13. "And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me, with good words, and with comfortable words." In this last sense must the word comfort be understood here, as the instructor shows in the answer.

Although life is precious to a man, ("skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life:" this the devil himself knew, Job i. 4.) nevertheless it is better to die than to live without comfort. God hath created man so, that he can not live without refreshment. But he hath nothing in himself that can comfort him; he must seek all, even the least, out of himself; and therefore as he is empty and void in himself, he pants and longs for that which can afford him satisfaction, and cries out, "Who will show us any good?" Psalm iv. 7.

If we contemplate man as a sinner, we see that innumerable evils compass him about. "He is of few days, and full of trouble," Job xiv. 1. He hath forfeited all that would be good for him, and he hath deserved all that is destructive to him. He is too impotent and too wicked to be able or willing to seek his restoration. He hath reason to fear every moment, that the anger of God will take him away by a dreadful death, and summon him before his inexorable tribunal. As a sinner, he is "Magormissabib, a terrour round about, a terrour to himself, and to all his friends," Jer. xx. 3, 4. Let him strive ever so much to be cheerful, and labour to banish all fear out of his heart, he hath notwithstanding many severe twinges in his soul, and "even in laughter his heart is sorrowful," Prov. xiv. 13.

Is he a believer, and therefore beloved by the Lord, he hath still need of comfort; for "his afflictions are many," Psalm. xxxi. 19. They are brought to him in "full cups," Psalm lxxiii. 10. All that is without him sets itself against him: the world is against him, even those of his own household will be his foes: the devil is enraged at him, and "like a roaring lion, seeketh to devour him," 1 Pet. v. 8. The power of his corruptions is a body of death to him: the Lord his God "hides his countenance," sometimes "from him, deals with him as an enemy, and writes sometimes bitter things against him," Job xiii. 24, 26. And he is often afraid, that his expectation which he hath of the life to come, will forsake him in his death. May not the instructor then ask, what can comfort him in his life?

Although a person could subsist without comfort, in his life, yet he can not be without it in his death. For that which still refresheth

a man during his life, becomes a burthen to him in his death : pain and anguish will then cause him to lament bitterly ; he beholds death as a king of terrors ; his long smothered sins and hushed conscience begin to bestir themselves, and fill the soul with terrour, and the fear of eternal destruction causeth him to cry out for anguish of heart. And how many fears possess even believers on their death beds is known to those, whose office it is to visit the sick.* And therefore the instructor hath weighty reasons to inquire concerning our comfort in death.

What shall quiet a person amidst so many distresses ? It must be an only comfort. The heart of man hath many and insatiable desires, and his evils are manifold : and therefore he hath need of many consolations. There is nothing in the world that can fully satisfy him : though he should have ever so much, there will always be something besides what he hath already, after which he will pant. The round world can not fill the triangular heart : there is surely nothing of all that he seeth, that can support and quiet him against the fear of death and God's insupportable wrath. Therefore he must endeavour to obtain an only comfort, which alone is sufficient for the mind under every affliction, and at all times, and which will thus be "a strong consolation," Heb. vi. 18. This is called but "one thing" by David and Christ, Psalm xxvii. 4. Luke x. 41, 42.

The instructor doth not choose to fight at random, and merely to beat the air, but he asks with application to the man himself, what is "thy" only comfort ? and he asks the believer in particular this question, that he may learn of him, for the information of others, what is the true comfort : the believer knows it best : "Evil men understand not judgment ; but they that seek the Lord understand all things," Prov. xxviii. 5. We must not therefore ask simply with the captious Papists and Remonstrants, what is the only comfort, or what is the only comfort of a believer ; for every man must believe for himself : "the righteous must live by his faith," Hab. ii. 4. Every man must be examined with respect to what he himself believes, and whether "he is faithful to the Lord," Acts xvi. 15. Of what profit is it to know what the comfort of others is, if we ourselves do not partake of it ?

What account doth the believer now give of this comfort of his ? doth he say with the men of this world, and with the old philoso-

* The author hath respect to a custom of the Dutch Church in Holland, of appointing a certain person in the congregation a stated visitor of the sick, whose business it is to instruct, admonish and comfort the sick, as their case may require.

phers, "who became evain in their imaginations, and whose foolish hearts were darkened, and who, professing themselves to be wise, became fools," Rom. i. 21, 22. that I possess great riches, that I take my fill of the pleasures of this world, that I am laden with honours, that I harden myself against adverse occurrences, or that I delight myself with contemplating the mysteries of nature? No; all this is too low for such an elevated mind: he knows that the least blast of adversity can dissipate such idle consolations. He hath a higher revelation, accompanied with a heart ravishing experience, which teacheth him that his "only comfort in life and death is. that he is with body and soul, not his own, but belongs to his faithful Saviour Jesus Christ."

"To be ones own with body and soul, both in life and death," is the condition of one, who is not subject to, nor a slave of another; but who is his own lord and master, as the Jews pretended that they were, when they said to our Saviour, John viii. 33. "We are Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou then, Ye shall be made free?" Man was, in consequence of his creation, the property of God, and was his servant; but by means of sin he hath broken the yoke and bursten the bonds: he hath apostatized from God to himself, and hath thus set himself free from his Maker, and is become a servant to himself; he is a man of Belial, without yoke, "sliding back, as a backsliding heifer," Hosea iv. 16. Therefore his heart and actions proclaim, if he do not say it with his mouth, "Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?" Psalm xii. 4. "He strengthens himself against the Almighty," and speaks proudly with the Jews, Jer. ii. 31. "We are lords, we will not come unto thee." He aims at and pursues also solely that which is his own, and not that which is the Lord's, Philip. ii. 21. "His belly is his God," Philip. iii. 19. Yea, he is so proud, and so puffed up with a conceit of himself, that he admires none so much as himself, and with the prince of Tyre, "he sets his heart as God's heart." Ezek. xxviii. 1, 6.

But though this freedom, that a person is his own, may appear exceedingly pleasant and agreeable to the sinner, it doth not nevertheless contain a sufficient consolation. For he hath nothing in and of himself, that can afford him satisfaction. He cannot expect it neither of God, against whom he hath rebelled. He is obnoxious also to the most grievous judgment of God, of being abandoned to himself, to every abomination, and to every distress, with the Israelites and with the Gentiles, Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12. Rom. i. 26, 27, 28. There is not a more arrant slave than he, who belongs to himself,

for he is "a servant of sin." John viii. 3, 4, Rom. vi. 20, "a child of the devil," John viii. 44, and "a captive in his snare at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26. Filled with self love, he doth not perceive this, but slights and disregards it; yet in the hour of his death, he will experience it to his terrour, and with the rich man he will not obtain even "a drop of water to cool his scorching tongue," Luke xvi. 24.

The true Christian conducts therefore more prudently, inasmuch as he seeks his comfort "in belonging to Christ Jesus, his faithful Saviour, with body and soul, both in life and death," like an entire servant and bondman, who is not his own, but belongs wholly to his master. "He that is called, being free, is Christ's servant," saith Paul, 1 Cor. vii. 22. Jesus claims him for "his inheritance and possession," Psalm ii. 8. He is "the peculiar treasure" of the Lord above other men. Exod. xix. 5. his *segullah*, "property," which word is also translated "the peculiar treasure of kings," Eccl. ii. 8. Bondservants were in ancient times deemed a person's riches, see Gen. xxiv. 35. Thus also the Christian is the riches, "the portion and the lot of the inheritance" of Christ. Deut. xxxii. 9. and that not in part, but entirely "with body and soul, with which he must glorify God," because "he is not his own, but bought with a price," 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. Yea, he belongs to Christ for ever, both in life and death, as the apostle also teacheth in the text. His Lord Jesus Christ is his faithful Saviour, "a God of perfect salvation, and to whom belong the issues from death," Psalm lxxviii. 20.

As this is truly an excellent condition, of which glorious things are spoken, therefore our catechism explains it at large in four particulars, showing, first, how a believer is made the property of Christ, secondly, how he is preserved as his property, thirdly, how assured, and fourthly, sanctified.

1. The believing Christian was God's property formerly, but by sin he withdrew himself in a treacherous manner from God; and rendered himself his own property; but by grace he is become the property of Jesus Christ, his faithful Saviour: for the Father, who had chosen him for himself, gave him to his Son in the eternal covenant of redemption: "They were thine, and thou gavest them me," saith the Saviour to his Father, John xvii. 6. The Son also owns and claims the elect sinner as his by a marriage covenant, Ezek. xvi. 8. Hosea ii. 18, 19. Whereby, being "brought under the bond of the covenant, he joins himself to him to be his servant," Isaiah lvi. 6, and "says and subscribes with his hand, I am the Lord's," Isaiah xlv. 5. But to abide with the instructor by the expression of belonging to a person, we must say that the believer belongs to

Christ by virtue of a purchase. Among Abraham's servants, who belonged to him, there were those also, whom he had "bought with money," Gen. xvii. 12. Therefore the believer saith, that "his faithful Saviour hath perfectly satisfied with his precious blood for all his sins." He had rendered himself guilty before God by his sins, and was therefore, as God's prisoner, kept and shut up under the law, that he might, when the Judge saw fit, be led forth to punishment, and satisfy for his guilt; but the Saviour his surety took his guilt upon him, and satisfied for it by his suffering and obedience, that he might claim the elect sinner for himself, according to the prophecy, Isaiah liii. 10. "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed." Therefore his satisfaction is also considered as "the ransom" and price of redemption, Matt. xx. 28. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Whereby the elect sinner is also delivered from his guilt: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins," saith Paul, Eph. i. 7. For he paid, not the half, or a part, but the whole price for all the sins of his people: "The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sins," 1 John i. 7. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14. Which blood, or bloody suffering is "precious," according to the declaration of the catechism from 1 Peter i. 18, 19. For the Person, his suffering, the deliverance from evil, and the purchase of good by his blood, manifest that it is exceedingly precious. Therefore he, for whom the Son of God paid the price of redemption, doth properly belong to his Redeemer. "He hath purchased his church with his own blood," Acts xx. 28. and he hath "bought her with a price," 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

Moreover, the believer is Christ's property by conquest. It was a custom in ancient times, as it is still among many nations, to reduce conquered enemies to servitude. The faithful Saviour delivers the elect sinner from the power of the devil, who held him "a captive in his snare at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 20. The righteous judgment of God subjects the sinner, as a capital offender, to the power of the devil: "The devil had the power of death," Heb. ii. 14. And therefore the devil, according to the opinion of some expositors, is called "a lawful possessor, whose captives should be taken away from him and escape," Isaiah xlix. 24, 25. Inasmuch now as the faithful Saviour hath paid the full price of redemption, the devil ought to release and discharge the sinner; but the tyrant refuseth: therefore the Saviour employs strength and power, in order to wrest his purchased property by his Spirit from him through an effectual calling and conversion: "He binds the strong man, and spoils his

goods," Mark iii. 27. The sinner himself resists, he delights in his cruel bondage : " he will not come to Jesus, that he may have life everlasting," John v. 40. But this great and mighty Hero " girds his sword on his thigh, and he makes his arrows sharp, so that people fall under him," Psalm xlv. 3, 4, 5. For this " he ascended on high, and led captivity captive : he received gifts for men ; yea, for the rebellious also that he might dwell among them," Psalm lxxviii. 18. And thus he appropriates to himself those whom he hath delivered : " Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not : for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine," Isaiah xliii. 1.

2. If the person who is delivered were left to his own care, he would soon, (yea, sooner than Adam before the fall) be over-mastered by the devil, who seeks continually to wrest him from his Lord : but his " faithful Lord establishes and keeps him from the evil one," 2 Thess. iii. 3. " He is kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," 1 Peter 1, 5. " Having loved his own, he loveth them unto the end," John xiii. 1." For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance," Psalm xlv. 14. He could not shed his precious blood in vain. Yea, " he preserves him so, that without the will of his heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from his head," according to his promise, Matt. x. 30. Luke xxi. 18. How then should he suffer the body and soul of him whom he hath purchased, delivered and owns, to be subject to the power of his principal enemy, the devil ?

The believer, oppressed by many afflictions, saith indeed sometimes with Gideon, " If the Lord be with us, why then hath all this evil befallen us ?" Judges vi. 13. But he considers not that " all things must work together for good to him," according to the apostle, Rom. viii. 28. For his adversities are only " chastisements for his profit, that he may be a partaker of God's holiness," Heb. xii. 10. Yea, God preserves him by this discipline, " that his soul may not depart from him, and that he may not be condemned with the world," Jer. vi. 8. 1 Cor. xi. 32 It is true, sin is the most grievous of all evils, to the people of God, and causeth them to fear that they will one day fall by the hand of the infernal Saul : but their wise and faithful Saviour knows how to direct sin contrary to its nature, for the good of the believer, in order that he may humble his soul by it, render him more earnest, watchful and dependent upon him ; that his wonderful wisdom, faithfulness, unchangeable love and power may be glorified the more, in the admirable way, in which he

leads those who belong to him to glory. See this in Peter, Matt. xxvi. 31, 35. John xxi. 15. 2 Cor. xii 7, 8, 9, 10.

3. But this doth not afford him a sufficient consolation, nor quiet him fully, unless he be also assured of it. "Therefore his faithful Saviour assures him by his Holy Spirit of eternal life." Since he is become the property of Jesus, who delivers and preserves him, he may also expect an everlasting and happy life: and that not, as an uncertainty; for he is assured of it by the Holy Ghost, whom Jesus gives him to be a "comforter" to him, John xiv. 16, 26. xv. 26. and an "earnest and seal of his inheritance," 2 Cor. i. 20, 21, 22, 23. Eph. i. 13, 14. iv. 30. And thus, like the servants of old, he is marked with his Lord's seal, to assure him that he is his property, and that he will be "kept to everlasting life." See Rev. viii. 3, 8. And how doth he attain to this assurance? Is he permitted to look into the book of life? or doth he hear a voice from heaven? or doth he obtain it by an imagination of his own spirit? No, but by a secret persuasion of the Spirit of God, according to his word. (a) Sometimes the Holy Spirit enables him to form a believing syllogism, by which he sets before him from the word, the true marks of those who belong to Christ. For "we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren," 1 John iii. 4. He convinceth him of this truth: "For the Spirit bears witness, that the Spirit" (who speaks in the word) "is the truth," 1 John v. 6. He enlightens the soul, "that she may know the things that are freely given her of God," 1 Cor. ii. 12. And he teaches the believer to conclude, and "bears witness with his spirit that he is a child of God." (b) Sometimes the Spirit gives him, upon the outgoings of his soul to the Lord for reconciliation and grace, an undisturbed peace and tranquility of mind, by which the former fear and perturbation of the soul is hushed. "He speaks peace to his people and to his saints." Psalm lxxxv. 8. (c) Sometimes the Holy Spirit speaks comfortably to his people, and saith, "I am thy salvation," Psalm xxxv. 3. "Thy sins are forgiven thee," Mark ii. 5. "I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight." Exod. xxxiii. 12. This ravishes the soul with a wonderful joy, and is accompanied with so much secret light and power, that she doubts not that it is the voice of the Holy Spirit, which suggests it to her, and so the Spirit causeth the believer to feel the beginnings of eternal joy in his heart, "embracing his soul in love," Isaiah xxxviii. 17, and "shedding the love of God abroad in his heart," by which he is then most powerfully assured, that his "hope will not make him ashamed," Rom. v. 5.

4. May a believer live then as he lists? We say, he may, for he will live holy. Jesus his faithful Saviour "makes him" by his Spirit "sincerely willing and ready to live henceforth" not to himself, but "unto him." To live unto Jesus is to surrender oneself to him, as his property, and to deny oneself, in order to live only to the service of Jesus, and according to his will. See this in the text, and Titus ii. 14. The believer is willing and ready to live such a life; for he is one of that "most willing people," Psalm cx. 3. He hath "a willing mind," 1 Cor. viii. 12. "He makes haste, and doth not delay to keep God's commandments," Psalm cxix. 60. And he "follows after perfection," Philip. iii. 12, 13, 14. For "the love of Christ constraineth him," 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. But he attains not to this by his own spirit but by the "Spirit of his Lord, whom he puts into the midst of him, and who causes him to walk in his statutes, and keep his judgments, and do them," Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

Who can doubt now that the only comfort of a sinner in life and death is, that he belongs with body and soul both in life and death to Christ, For

1. Is he the Lord's, the Lord is then also his, and that entirely, and in whatsoever he is, hath and doth. "Blessed is the nation, whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance," saith David, Psalm xxxiii. 12. "The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance; the Lord of hosts is his name," Jer. x. 16. Esau may say, "I have much;" but Jacob can say, "I have all," Gen. xxxiii. 9, 11. Inasmuch as the believer belongs to Christ, therefore what ever exists, belongs to the believer, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23.

2. There is nothing that deprives believers of their comfort so much as their guilt, and the power of the devil. But Jesus Christ hath fully satisfied for all their sins, and "hath delivered them from all the power of the devil, and from the fear of death by his death," Heb. ii. 14, 15. Thus "Joshua the high-priest was comforted, when he stood with filthy garments and Satan at his right hand to resist him, before the angel of the Lord. For the Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: and to Joshua he said, Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment," Zech. iii. 1, 5.

3. The fear of evil to come cannot deprive a Christian of his comfort, since his faithful Saviour watches over him, and preserves him so carefully, that without the will of his Heavenly Father not a hair

can fall from his head. "He keeps him as the apple of his eye, and hides him under the shadow of his wings," Psalm xvii. 8. "He is a wall of fire round about him, and he that toucheth him toucheth the apple of his eye," Zech. ii. 5. 8. Doth any evil befall him, through the wise ordination of his Saviour, it may afford him consolation, that it will work together for his good, and he may, "glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope." Rom. v. 3, 4.

4. "If in this life only he had hope in Christ, he would of all men be the most miserable," as Paul speaks, 1 Cor. xv. 19. But it can afford him a full consolation, that he hath an expectation of an everlasting life, founded not upon an uncertainty, but upon the plainest and most certifying grounds: for God gives him his word, his Spirit, his covenant seals, yea, his "oath, to show the immutability of his counsel, that he may by these immutable things, in which it is impossible that God should lie, have strong consolation," Heb. xi. 17, 18.

5. There is nothing that disturbs his comfort more than the natural sluggishness and backwardness of his heart to live entirely to him only: but his Lord undertakes to render him willing and ready to this, "to run without being weary and faint; for he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no strength," Isaiah xl. 29, 30. "He enlargeth his heart, that he may run the way of his commandments," Psalm cxix. 32, and "rejoice in the way of God's testimonies, as much as in all riches," vs 14.

We may not doubt that believers under the old testament did also belong to their faithful Saviour Jesus Christ, both in life and death. They were also on this account "comforted on every side, and gloried therein," Psalm lxxi. 21. cvi. 4, 5. cxix. 57, 94. Jer. x. 16. They were confident that he had, as their surety, taken their sins upon him, and would certainly satisfy for them, and that they were therefore already delivered from all the power of the devil, carefully preserved, and assured, and sanctified by his Spirit. And therefore we cannot believe that God did still demand satisfaction of them for their guilt, and that they were still under the law, under wrath, the curse, under bondage to fear, and under the fear of death. The surety had not indeed paid fully for their sins, but they were, notwithstanding fully forgiven, on account of the future satisfaction of the surety, of whom alone the Father demanded it. The Spirit of consolation was not indeed poured out in such an abundant measure as under the New Testament; but more and less alters not the nature of things.

II. But how shall a sinner, who is still his own, obtain this comfort, and how shall he preserve it, after he hath obtained it? "It is necessary that he should know three things, First, how great his sins and misery are." This he is taught in the second, third, and fourth Lord's day. He knows this, not by a bare literal understanding of it, and by being able to give a proper account of it to others, but by seeing and feeling the greatness of his sins and misery in himself with pain and concern, and having an earnest desire to be delivered from his sins and misery, like Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19., and David, Psalm li. 3, 4, 5. and like the Corinthians, 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10, 11.

"Secondly, He must know how he may be delivered from all his sins and misery." The instructor showeth the manner in which the sinner is delivered, from the fifth to the thirty-second Lord's day. We know this deliverance by faith, whereby, understanding the sufficiency and willingness of the Deliverer, through the Spirit, with persuasion of mind, we flee to him, choose him, embrace him, and own him upon his invitation and call. And so this knowledge is faith. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many," saith the Father, Isaiah lii. 2

Finally, "he must know how he shall express his gratitude to God for such deliverance," whereby, from a view of his unworthiness, and the greatness of this benefit, he doth with joy, and surrendering himself to the Lord, to serve him, glorify, and praise him with his heart, his mouth, and whole conversation. See this in David, Psalm ciii, civ. Of this doctrine of gratitude the catechism treats from the thirty-second to the last Lord's day.

That these three things are necessary, in order to live and die happily in this comfort, appears (a) Because no man is capable of this comfort, unless he be heartily sorry for his sins and misery. For "blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted," Matt. v. 4. (b) But though a person be ever so sorry for his sins and misery, he cannot and will not obtain deliverance, but will with Cain and Judas fall into despair, unless he have a knowledge of the deliverance. (c) Doth he possess a knowledge of the deliverance, and is he not thankful for it, his soul will still not enjoy, or be refreshed with comfort. It is in proportion to "the fear of the Lord, that the comfort of the Holy Ghost is multiplied," Acts ix. 31.

The Christian doctrine is therefore very properly comprehended in these three particulars, as especially calculated to obtain the only comfort. The compilers of the catechism were induced to adopt this method by the example of Paul, in his epistle to the Romans. For that highly enlightened man speaks there first of the misery of the

sinner, from chapter i. 18, to chap. iii. 21. At which place he begins the doctrine of the deliverance, which he concludes with chap. xi. 36. And to this he annexes the doctrine of gratitude, in the five last chapters. In this excellent way doth the Lord God also conduct the sinner to the only comfort: We see it in the Jailer, Acts xvi. 19, 34. And believers will improve these three particulars every day after their repeated discomfoting backslidings, as we see in the examples of David and Paul, Psalm xxxii, and li. Rom. vii. 24, 25.

APPLICATION.

See now, hearers, the truth of the doctrine of our Reformed Church. Surely that doctrine is true, and according to the word of God, which proposes a perfect and steadfast consolation to the sinner in all his afflictions by proper means. For to this end was the whole word of God written, as Paul testifieth, Rom. xv. 4. "Whatsoever things were written afore time were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope." Who can now suspect our doctrine of falsehood, and who may be compared to us, when we discover the most proper method to obtain a sufficient comfort, to the glory of God's free grace." Verily neither the Papists, nor the Socinians, nor the Remonstrants, nor any who favour them. The vain-glorious, free, and indifferent will of the sinner is their only aim, and only comfort, to which they accommodate every doctrine of the Christian religion. For on account of this indifferent will, they will deny either the reality or the perfection of the Saviour's satisfaction. They do not know how to reconcile an effectual deliverance from the power of the devil to the freedom of the will, nor yet the particular care and regard of the Lord, to his people, nor his wonderful direction of evil to the good of those whom he owns for his. That believers should have an assurance of eternal life, and should be made by the Holy Spirit in an effectual manner willing and ready to live to their Lord, these men will not believe, because this would be a forcing of the will. Rather than this idol should be cast down from its throne, they will reject all these comfortable doctrines, and seek their comfort in being their own by this free will. The true Christian is therefore more considerate, since he places his supreme good and comfort in being delivered from himself, and in belonging entirely and for ever to his Lord.

But, hearers, is this also your only comfort? I ask not what ought to be your comfort, or wherein it consists, but what is your comfort, and what is your chief and only solace and satisfaction? Truly the most of you neither have nor seek comfort in belonging to Christ. For

1. Ye seek your satisfaction in being esteemed and beloved by men, in getting and handling many goods, elegant houses, delightful gardens, beautiful clothes, precious jewels, and delicious meats and drinks captivate you so, that ye indulge yourselves in them without restraint, and do, as it were, lose yourselves in them.

2. Ye certainly aim at being entirely your own in all that ye do. What is it that influences you in all that ye do and forbear? is it not merely your own honour, profit and pleasure? do ye not live entirely according to your own fancy? Is not your will your law? can ye endure to serve God so strictly, as not to will, do, or forbear aught, but what he will? Ye will not suffer any one to reprove you; that he may not interrupt you in your dissolute career: and doth your conscience convince and check you, ye stifle it, and will not indeed suffer yourselves to be disquieted.

3. It is surely iniquity in which ye rejoice. Through the vanity of your minds ye amuse yourselves with idle speculations: ye can ponder with delight on abominable and malicious sins, which your corrupt hearts continually suggest: musing on wine, revenge, lasciviousness, iniquity, jesting and foolish talking is as agreeable to you, as if it were your salvation: "Ye rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked," Prov. ii. 14.

Alas friends! is this your comfort, ye are then yet your own, and are therefore, "without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12. What evidence have ye then that your sins do not stand uncanceled in God's book of accounts? ye are surely yet under the power of the devil: and what will preserve you from destruction? God will not, for he is not your God, since ye are rebellious against him: Satan will not, for he seeks your eternal misery: neither will those things in which ye delight: for "even in your laughter your hearts will be sorrowful," Prov. xiv. 13. Though your hearts rejoice, and ye are not afraid, these things will forsake you in death: and how will your conscience, which ye have soothed so long, and all your evil iniquities then fly in your face, and summon you before the dreadful tribunal of God, to which death will hurry you, that ye may receive the reward of your works in the comfortless lake of fire, where, with the rich man, ye will not obtain a drop of water from a poor Lazarus to cool your tongues.

Let this affect you with concern, that ye may "recover out of the snare of the devil, in which ye are taken captive at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26. Come with the prodigal son to yourselves, that ye may learn the greatness of your sins and misery, and may "repent of your

wickedness, saying, what have I done?" Jer. viii. 6. for this would drive you out of yourselves, to seek and to find deliverance in the Son of God.

Doth any one say, it is my comfort, that I belong to Jesus Christ? But hast thou sufficient evidences of this? for a person may think that he is in this happy condition, and deceive himself with vain imaginations. A man may also suppose that he is his own, when he truly belongs to Christ: "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: and there is that maketh himself poor, and yet hath great riches," saith the wisest of kings, Prov. xiii. 7. It is therefore necessary, that every one should examine himself, with respect to this important matter, seriously and strictly. "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove yourselves," as Paul admonisheth, 2 Cor. xiii. 6. and attend to these true evidences, that a person belongs to Christ.

1. He who is not his own, but belongs to Christ Jesus, hath surrendered himself entirely to him and that for ever, and willingly, in order that he may be his: "He saith and subscribes with his hand, I am the Lord's," Isaiah xlii. 5. and that not only to be saved by him, but also to serve him. For "he joins himself to the Lord to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servant," Isaiah lvi. 6.

2. Such a person will not rest, nor receive comfort, until he hath manifest evidences that the Lord Jesus hath accepted of him as his property, satisfied for all his sins, and delivered him from all the power of the devil. He must be clearly and effectually assured by the Spirit of eternal life from his own experience, before he will rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, Rom. v. 5. A single mark, a single gleam of hope is not sufficient for him, he wishes that, "God would say to his soul, I am thy salvation," Psalm xxxv. 3. He knows how many deceive themselves in this weighty matter, he knows the deceitfulness of his own heart, and how dangerous deceit is here: and therefore he seeks for palpable, and as it were sensible evidences.

3. This person hath as great a delight in living willingly to the Lord, as in sensible comfort: "It is joy to the just to do judgment," saith Solomon, Prov. xxi. 15. Therefore he sighs and cries to the Lord, "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight," Psalm cxix. 5, 35. Doth he perceive that he is sluggish and heartless, and that iniquities prevail over him, it is to him, as it was to the apostle, Rom. vii. 24. "a body of death."

4. Such an one hath not attained to this comfort like others by a

strong imagination, or by his birth among Christians, or by a civil and externally religious behaviour, or by enjoying the church privileges of baptism and the Lord's supper, with which those who are Christians only for fashion sake content themselves; but by an affecting discovery of the greatness of his sins and misery; by an earnest seeking and wrestling to obtain Christ, and his righteousness, and by striving to lead a thankful life. This is his manner at the beginning of his conversion, and this is also his daily work; and he obtains hereupon comfort of God repeatedly.

Are these things to be found in you, be assured then of your great salvation, and conduct yourselves worthily of it.

1. By heartily praising and exalting the Lord on account of it in all your conversation: For "ye are not your own, but are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's," 1 Cor. vi. 18, 19. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy," Psalm cvii. 1, 2. Contemplate a while your salvation, endeavour to understand the excellence of it, until you are filled with comfort, and transported to praise the Lord. When the soul is satisfied with marrow and fatness, the mouth will utter praises with joyful lips, Psalm lxiii. 5.

2. Are ye not your own, but Christ's, deny then also yourselves. Ye must be nothing, and he must be your all, ye must be servants, and he your Lord. Ye must empty yourselves of your own wisdom, will, honour, profit and pleasure, that his wisdom will, honour, profit and pleasure may possess and govern your souls: yea, ye must esteem shame, loss and pain, if he should inflict them upon you, for his sake, your honour, profit and pleasure. He saith, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." Matt. xvi. 24. He even requires, Luke xiv. 26, that the person who will be his disciple, should hate father, mother, wife, children, brethren, and sisters, yea his own life also," to wit, when any of these beloved objects comes in competition with him.

3. "Moreover, brethren, be joyful, be of good comfort," as Paul admonisheth, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. This will be the life of your life:" Be not sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength," Neh. viii. 11. Ye have abundant reason: see only what your faithful Saviour hath done for you, and will yet do. Will ye suffer your heads to hang down as a bulrush? it doth not become you: ye will bring up an evil report upon your faithful Saviour. Let those who are still under the power of the devil, sorrow, mourn and weep: but as for

you, lift up your heads, and let not "the consolations of God be small with you," Job xv. 11. But take good heed also that your consolation do not issue in vain dissoluteness, that it may not be im-bittered to you, but "rejoice with trembling," Psalm ii. 11.

4. Are your adversities many, are there fightings without, and fears within, are ye afraid that ye will one time or other be destroyed by the power of your indwelling corruption, by the mighty pressure of the wicked world, and by the powerful temptations of the devil, know that your faithful Saviour will deliver you out of all these dangers. Psalm xxxiv. 19. His tender care over you is so great, and he preserves so, that not a hair can fall from your heads, without the will of your Heavenly Father: "He gives his sheep eternal life, they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand: his Father, who gave them him, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of his Father's hand," John x. 28, 29. It is true, your difficulties beset you a long time; yet be not discouraged on this account, as though the Lord did not regard you, nor your sorrows, like Asaph, Psalm lxxiii. 10, 14. and the church, Isaiah xl. 27. For adversities are not evidences that the Lord hates you; "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and he will cause all this evil to work for your good, therefore be patient and submit to him, as Paul speaks, Heb. xii. 6, 12. and resign yourselves to his care with a holy carelessness: "Commit your way unto the Lord: trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass," Psalm xxxvii. 5. 1 Peter iv. 19. v. 7.

5. Establish your assurance upon the witnessing of the Holy Spirit in his word, and in your hearts; for ye will otherwise, with all your advantages, labour in vain for comfort: "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure," 2 Peter i. 10. Are ye shaken, examine yourselves, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Can ye deny the marks that have been exhibited? hath not God at sundry times assured you in the clearest and most powerful manner by his Spirit, yea so, that ye thought ye could never doubt again, that ye were the Lord's? Well then, judge that it is even so, Rom. vi. 11. 2 Cor. v. 15.

6. Shew yourselves also willing and ready to live henceforth to him. Ye are not your own lords, but he is your Lord, and ye belong to him, that ye may be only for his service. Let none of you then live to himself, but to him, to whom he belongs. See the text, and 2 Cor. v. 15. But shew yourselves to be his by an earnest and fervent zeal to do his will, and to serve him. "For he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Titus ii. 14. Are

ye in the mean time overtaken in a fault, and thereby subjected to darkness, know then also this part of your misery, humble yourselves on account of it, embrace your Deliverer for reconciliation and sanctification: for "he is made this to you," 1 Cor. i. 30. and arise with Hezekiah again, Isaiah xxxviii. 15. "to go softly all your days, on account of the bitterness of your soul."

7. Doth it please the Lord to lead you a long time in an uncomfortable way, do not dispute the propriety of his conduct: "God is greater than man. Wherefore shouldst thou then strive with him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters," Job xxxiii. 12, 13. Let it suffice you, that the Son of God hath done so much, and will do so much to make you his own. Remember that he hath his eye upon you to comfort you as much as is needful for you, in his own time. Hear how he himself speaks, Isaiah lvii. 18. "I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts to him, and to his mourners." When others shall have no more comfort, then shall ye enjoy your full share of it; for as Paul foretells, 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18. "We shall be taken up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Amen.

THE
KNOWLEDGE OF MISERY
OUT OF THE LAW.

II LORD'S DAY.

Rom. iii. 20. By the law is the knowledge of sin.

Q. 3. *Whence knowest thou thy misery ?*

A. Out of the law of God.

Q. 4. *What doth the law of God require of us ?*

A. Christ teaches us that briefly, Matt. xxii. 37—40. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and the great command, and the second is like to this. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commands hang the whole law and the prophets."

Q. 5. *Canst thou keep all these things perfectly ?*

A. In no wise ; for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbour.

"**B**LESSED are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted," saith the Consolation of Israel, Matt. v. 4. Although the sinner is so exceedingly miserable, he will not mourn: mourning would indeed disturb his sinful joy. Doth his conscience reprove him at times, he stifles it, and blesses himself in his heart, saying that he shall have peace, although he walks in the imagination of his heart. But his comfort is vain, and will forsake him, when death seizeth on him. True and godly comfort belongs to none but those who mourn for their misery: for they only are capable of comfort: "The Messiah was sent to comfort those only who mourn," Isaiah lxi. 2. Therefore the Lord requires first and chiefly of his people, that they should acknowledge their iniquity, in order that he may restrain his anger which is kindled against them, and favour them with his loving kindness, Jer. iii. 11, 13. It is the first work of the Comforter, the Holy

Ghost, when he is about to dispose the sinner for comfort, to "convince him of his sins." The men at the feast of Pentecost, the jailer, and Paul, did not obtain comfort, before they knew their misery, and cried out with concern, "What shall we do?" Acts ii. 37. ix. 6. xvi. 30.

Our instructor proceeds also in this manner, in order to comfort the sinner. He had set before his pupil the only comfort in all its lustre, in the first question. The pupil, eager to obtain this comfort, asks his teacher, what he must know, and therefore do, that he may live and die happily in this comfort. Hereupon he is taught that he must know, first, how great his sins and miseries are, in the second question. But inasmuch as the sinner cannot learn his sins and misery of himself, therefore he inquires, 1. Whence he shall learn his misery in the third and fourth question, 2. Wherein it consists, from the fifth to the eleventh question.

In this Lord's day we are taught,

I. In general that we know our misery out of the law, in the third question.

II. And it is then explained in particular, how we are convinced out of the law of our misery, in the fourth and fifth questions.

I. Truly the angels, who apostatized from God, are also exceedingly miserable: their sins have made them devils, and subjected them to eternal damnation. For "God spared not the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," 2 Peter ii. 4. Jude vs. 6. "Everlasting fire is prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. xxv. 41. "The whole creation also is become subject to vanity, and to the bondage of corruption: it groaneth and travaileth in pain until now," Rom. viii. 20, 21, 22. But the instructor speaks not of the misery of the angels, nor of the misery of the whole creation, but only of man's misery: because we have the greatest concern in the knowledge of our own misery, and we are thereby led to seek for deliverance: but there is no hope of deliverance for the angels: "For verily the Saviour took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." Heb. ii. 16. Is the whole creation miserable, it is on account of, and to aggravate the misery of man, which he ought to know.

That man is miserable, and that his misery consists in sin, in punishment, and in an inability to deliver himself, this the instructor will show in the sequel, out of the law. He teaches us now only how we attain to a knowledge of our misery by the law. There is none so near to a man, as the man himself: "The spirit of man

which is in him, knoweth the things of a man," saith the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 11. And yet we must shew him his misery, which cleaveth to him, and the means, whereby he may attain to the knowledge of it. This appears strange; but his misery is natural to him, and he is so accustomed to it, that he doth not consider it as misery: he thinks that it ought to be with him as it is. But sin hath so bewildered him: he is, as it were, through the bewitching power of iniquity, beside himself, and bereaved of his reason, and he busies himself only with things, which do not concern him. If he shall be healed, he must, with "the prodigal son, come to himself," Luke xv. 17, and like "Ephraim, become acquainted with himself," Jer. xxxi. 19.

But what shall discover the sinner's misery to him? The law of God is the best mean; "by the law is the knowledge of sin," saith the text. We read of a ceremonial law, by which God prescribed to Israel the manner of the external worship. Paul calls it, "the law of commandments, contained in ordinances," Eph. ii. 15. God gave also a civil law, by which the civil state of Israel was to be regulated. Of this law Nichodemus spoke, when he said, John vii. 51. "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doth?" The word of God speaks also of a moral law, expressed in ten commandments. Israel could learn their misery in some measure from the ceremonial law, because all the blood-sheddings and washings, which were enjoined on them, showed them their capital uncleanness, and that they could not look for salvation, except through the perfect sacrifice of the Messiah, who was to come, as Paul teacheth, Heb. x. 1, 10. The civil law discovered also after a certain manner the sins of Israel: for when the judges punished the outward abominations of the people, often with great severity, the people of the Lord might conclude thence, with the greatest propriety, that he, who was a righteous, all-knowing, and almighty judge, would much more, and with much greater severity, mark and punish sins, yea, even those of the soul. But the moral law is much better calculated to convince the sinner of his misery. The law of ceremonies, and the civil law were given to Israel only, and determined merely the outward worship, and the outward righteousness among men: but the moral law was given, not to Israel only, but to all the posterity of Adam: "it proves both Jews and Gentiles to be all under sin; it stops every mouth, and declares the whole world to be guilty before God," Rom. iii. 9, 19. and it discovers the inmost and most hidden corruption and sinful lusting of the heart: "I had not known lust to be sin," saith Paul, "if the law had not said, Thou shalt not covet," Rom. vii. 7. Of this law the text also speaks, as

appears from what the apostle had said before, that he had "proved according to this law that both Jews and Gentiles were all under sin," and particularly that they were guilty of the sins, which are condemned in this law, and were therefore "all guilty before God," vrs. 9, 19. And to this law the instructor also hath respect here, as he shows from the demand of the law in the fourth question.

II. But how shall we be convinced of our misery out of the law? We must in the first place know what God requires in his law, and then compare ourselves therewith. The instructor asks, with respect to the first particular, "What doth the law of God require of us?" and he answers, that "Christ teacheth us that briefly, Matt. xxii. 37, 38, 39, 40" where the Saviour reduces the whole sum of the law to the love of God and our neighbour, and so to two commandments, or tables, according to Deut. vi. 5, and Lev. xix. 18. The first table, or first commandment saith, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," who is the self-existent, and the only existing God, and who promised himself as such by his covenant to his people, and is therefore worthy to be loved. "To love him" is to have a high esteem of him; to desire him, in order to be most intimately united to him and to enjoy him, to be satisfied and rejoice in him, and to conduct in all things according to his mind. I may not expatiate here: see only Song v. 8—16. vii. 6. John xiv. 21, 23. We must love God "with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind," and according to Luke x. 27, "with all our strength," and so, "with all our might," Deut. vi. 5. These several words betoken all the faculties of the soul; if we will distinguish them, the heart will then denote the inmost desire and inclination of the mind; the soul will be the will; the mind expresseth the apprehension, judgment, and all the thoughts; and the strength and might represent in what manner the soul and body should contribute all that they have, and exert themselves to love God: and thus the Saviour would show by this accumulation of words, that we ought to love God perfectly, and without any defect. For it will soon appear, that the perfect demand of the covenant of works is exhibited in this passage; yea, in whatever condition man may be, he is, and remains obligated by nature to love God perfectly, on account of his loveliness: and if there be any defect in his love, he sins, and must humble himself, and seek reconciliation. 'To love God thus is "the first commandment," because it is commanded before the love of our neighbour, and because love to God is the source, from which love to our neighbour must flow: "Beloved," saith the disciple, whom Jesus loved, "let us love one another, for love is of God," 1 John iv. 7. This is also the first commandment,

because the second commandment of loving our neighbour must yield to this; "We ought to obey God rather than men," Acts v. 29. This was nobly exemplified by Levi, Exod. xxxii. 27, 28. Deut. xxxiii. 9. See also Matt. x. 37. This first is also "the great commandment." The second commandment is also called great. Mark xii. 31. and therefore great must denote in Matthew the greatest: God is indeed the greatest and most worthy object, whom we must love with the greatest and the strongest affection, with the whole heart, &c. as he is worthy. But we must love our neighbour as ourselves. Our neighbour is here not only our kinsman and friend, but even our enemy: the Egyptians, the enemies of the Israelites were also their neighbours, Exod. xi. 2. The Samaritans, who were enemies of the Jews, were their neighbours, according to the doctrine of Jesus, Luke x. 29—37. "We must indeed love enemies," Matt. v. 44. For that which constitutes one man a neighbour of another is, that "God hath made all the nations of men of one blood," Acts xvii. 31. and because one man is the brother and "flesh" of another, Isaiah lvii. 7. since we have all proceeded from one father and mother, Adam and Eve. Therefore we must love our neighbour, and so esteem him highly, as the most glorious creature of God on earth, and as our brother: we must cleave to him with a tender affection, and do well to him. But must I "love him with my whole heart, soul," &c. as I must love God? No, but as myself. The love which a man beareth to himself is the pattern, but not the rule of love to his neighbour: the law of God alone is the rule; yea, a man may not even propose himself in all things, as a pattern of his love to his neighbour: for he loves himself with such a sottish self-love, that "he sets his heart as God's heart," Ezek. xxxviii. 2. All that he should do for God's sake, he doth for his own sake: he may not love his neighbour so: but as he ought to love himself sincerely, heartily, and steadfastly in God, and for God's sake, so he ought to love his neighbour also in this manner, and therefore perfectly. For it is the nature of a man to love himself perfectly; for "no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it," Eph. v. 29. But although I ought to love my neighbour perfectly, it must nevertheless be with a certain distinction: one is nearer to me than another. We ought to love the godly more than others: "we must do good to all men, but especially to them who are of the household of faith," Gal. vi. 10. "This second commandment is like the first," because it proceeds from the same Lawgiver, and commands one and the same act of love, although toward different objects, and love to our neighbour always accompanies love to God. "If any man

say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also," 1 John iv. 20, 21. These two commandments are exceedingly weighty; for "on them hang the whole law and the prophets." The law and the prophets denote here the scriptures of the Old Testament, Luke xvi. 29. xxiv. 27. And all these scriptures urge men to love. For all the histories, commandments, doctrines, and prophecies that have been written, serve to excite man to love God and his neighbour. For "the end of the commandments is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. i. 5.

If this law of love shall conduct the sinner to a knowledge of his misery, he must then know that it hath a relation to the covenant of grace, as a rule of gratitude. Paul views it thus, Rom. xii. and xiii. and the instructor, in the doctrine of gratitude. This law hath a respect also to the covenant of works, as the condition of it, which God demanded of man, with a promise of life, and a threatening of death. In this manner is the law exhibited in the text, as appears from the connexion: and it is thus also proposed by the instructor in our present Lord's day, in order to convince and humble the sinner. It is necessary to explain here in some measure the covenant of works. The good, holy, and righteous Creator, and Supreme Ruler established this covenant before the fall with Adam, who was holy and able to fulfil the condition of it, and it was established in him, as the head, with the whole human race. The Lord demanded that Adam should obey him perfectly, and thus love God and his neighbour. This demand was co-natural to him and all his posterity with the image of God; which appears from the remains of this law in the heathens. Rom. ii. 14, 15. It is true, we read only of "the covenant of eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil," Gen. ii. 17. but this can be considered only as a probationary command, whereby Adam was to be proved for some time, whether he would continue good, or become evil, and whether he would love God more than the creature, or the creature more than God; as the Saviour commanded that presumptuous young man "to sell all his goods, and give to the poor," that he might prove him, whether he had, as he pretended, truly "kept the whole law from his youth up," Matt. xix. 17, 22. This demand God enforced with the promise of life, that he might encourage Adam to observe it perfectly: "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man who doth those things shall live by them," as Paul explains it, Rom.

x. 5. Which life was sealed to him by the tree of life. By this life we must understand not only corporal and spiritual, but also eternal life : and that not only in Paradise, but also in heaven itself, into which he should be admitted after the time of his probation. For whatever the elect sinner obtains by Christ, he lost in Adam, and therefore also everlasting life in heaven. This is shown with the utmost evidence by the apostle, Rom. v. 12, 19. viii. 3, 4. God enforced his command also with a threatening, that "he should surely die," if he transgressed. See Gen. ii. 17. By which we must necessarily understand corporal, spiritual and eternal death ; which threatening is otherwise called the curse : "For it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. Neither our time nor method will permit us to enter largely upon this subject, in order to prove the reality of this covenant. We say briefly, that the constituent parts of the covenant, to wit, the covenanting parties, the condition, promise, threatening, and the seal of the covenant, or the tree of life, occur in many passages of scripture, particularly Gen. ii. 17. Certainly Hosea vi. 7, compared with Job xxxi. 33, supposeth that Adam stood in a covenant relation with God. Paul teacheth Rom. vii. 1, 2, 3. that the sinner is bound to the law, as the woman is to her husband by a marriage covenant. All the parts of the covenant of works are opposed to all the parts of the covenant of grace, as "Adam and Christ," Rom. v. 1 Cor. xv. "Works and grace," Rom. vi. 14. xi. 6. "The law of works and the law of faith," Rom. iii. 27, 28. See also Rom. viii. 3, 4.

Inasmuch now as Adam, and in him all his posterity, have broken this covenant, as will appear upon the seventh question, therefore the law that promised life to them upon their keeping of it, could not adjudge them to life. For "the law cannot do this, because it is weak through the flesh," Rom. viii. 3. The law condemns them, "it worketh wrath," Rom. iv. 15. it declares to them that "they are under the curse," Gal. iii. 10. and discovereth to them that they are wretched and miserable ; for "we know" as Paul declares, Rom. iii. 19, 20. "that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law : that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight : for by the law is the knowledge of sin." And for this end, namely, that the law may convince man of his misery, it still remains in "the heathens, who do by nature the things contained in the law, accusing or else excusing themselves," Rom. ii. 14, 15. But the law is become so

obscure, that it is scarcely legible any more, and it is therefore not sufficient to discover the sinner's misery to him. God nevertheless willing through his free mercy to prepare sinners for salvation, and for this end to humble them by the knowledge of their misery, re-published his law in the clearest, and most solemn manner from mount Horeb, with exceedingly dreadful tokens, that he might by that law convince the breakers of the covenant of their damnable condition. Therefore the apostle saith, Rom. v. 20. "The law entered, that the offence might abound." God did indeed give his law that it might be a rule of gratitude for those who were in the covenant of grace, Exod. xx. which he had established with Israel, Exod. xix. but also that he might teach the sinner his misery. All the Israelites were not the true covenant people of God: many entered only outwardly into the covenant, and viewed it simply as a covenant of works, which they were bound to observe by their own strength as they said, "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do," Exod. xix. 8. xxiv. 3. And in the same manner have the latter Jews also conducted toward the law, as Paul accuseth them, Rom. ix. 31, 32. x. 2, 3. "They will be under the law, and in bondage," to it, Gal iv. 21, 25. And so the law serveth only to convince them of their misery, and to condemn them, and is "a ministration of death and condemnation" to them, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9. God gave the law even to the believing Israelites under the Old Testament, to humble them, by discovering their imperfection to them, and that he might cause them to seek their salvation in the Messiah, who was to come. For "the law was added to the promise," to discover "transgressions:" the church was "kept under the law, shut up, and the law was her school master, to bring her to Christ," Gal. iii. 19, 23, 24. And the law serveth still to convince Jews and Gentiles of their misery: as Paul intimates in the text, and in what he had said before, vrs. 9, 20. The law is also exceedingly well calculated to teach the sinner his misery: for it is like a glass, to show him his spots and deformity; and like a right rule, to show him his declinations, crooked ways, and unrighteousness, 1 John iii. 4.

If the sinner shall learn his misery from the law, he must come to himself, compare, and examine himself by the law. Therefore the instructor brings him to himself, and asks him, "Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?" and he, surveying himself and his actions, saith, "In no wise: for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbour." It is supposed here, that we must keep the law perfectly, according to the covenant of works, if we shall enter into life. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," saith

Christ to the young man, who sought his righteousness by the law, Matt. xix. 17. See also Luke x. 25, 26, 27, 28. It is shown in the exposition of the seventh question, that man was once able to keep the law, and in the exposition of the eighth, that he cannot keep it now, and of the ninth, that he is still obligated to keep it. We will therefore not busy ourselves at present with proving, that man is without strength for that which is good, because we must do this in order upon the eighth and ninth questions. It will suffice at present, to know that the sinner hath not kept the law, "but is prone by nature to hate God and his neighbour." This answer is an occasion of great offence to the Pelagians: they imagine that human nature hath not been violated, or that it hath been at most only weakened, and that the will of man is free, and that he can keep the law perfectly; but they add for decency's sake, "with the help of God," and they say "that nature, although corrupt, is inclined with the help of grace to love God and our neighbour." But the grace of God doth not help, but it changes nature: "We must be changed by the renewing of our mind," Rom. xii. 2, and "become new creatures." 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. ii. 10. Nature is indeed wholly degenerate, men are "a crooked and perverse generation," Deut. xxxii. 5.

But it behooves us, lest we should be misconstrued, to inquire what we are to understand here by nature, and how it is prone to hate God and our neighbour. By nature we do not understand here the upright, or the new created nature of man; for this is inclined to love God and our neighbour: but the corruption of man, which is become as it were, his nature, so that "he is a natural man, not having the Spirit," Jude vrs. 19. 2 Cor. ii. 14. and thus nature is "the old man, and the body of sin," Rom. vi. 6, which remains still in part in the regenerate, as Paul complains, Rom. vii. This is the sense in which the catechism useth the word nature here; for it speaks of a man who lives yet under the broken covenant of works, who is "a child of wrath by nature," Eph. ii. 3, and who is not yet delivered, but must be dealt with, in order to his deliverance.

This corrupt "nature is prone to hate God and our neighbour." Thus speaks the instructor according to the word of God: If we should cite every passage of scripture, which declares this expressly, we should extend our discourse to an undue length, and weary both you and ourselves. See what is said on this subject, Exod. xx. 5. Numb. x. 35. Deut. vii. 10. xxxii. 41. Job. xv. 25, 26. Psalm xxi. 3. lxxviii. 1. lxxxix. 15. cxxxix. 20. Prov. viii. 36. John xv. 18, 23, 24. Rom. i. 30. viii. 7. And not only the nature of some abominable wretches, who sin against God with a high hand, but the nature

of every individual, is so degenerate. Paul "proves that Jews and Gentiles are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no not one: they are all gone out of the way," Rom. iii. 9, 18, and although the word of God did not assert this, experience would still teach it. He who attends to the emotions, issues, and inclinations of the heart in himself, and in others, will be convinced by experience, that what the instructor saith here is the truth. For (1) all the thoughts, considerations, and imaginations of sinful nature concerning what God hath revealed or commanded, are wholly "contrary to God's thoughts," Isaiah lv. 8. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be," saith the apostle, Rom. viii. 7. There are "imaginations and high things, that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God," 2 Cor. x. 5. For whence else proceed so many evil and hateful opinions and iniquities, that do, as it were, deluge the world? (2) Sinful nature doth not surely love God; for where, and in what man, who hath no more than nature, do we see that high estimation of the Lord, that ardent desire of union with him, and of enjoying him, that cheerful satisfaction in God, and that steadfast inclination to do his will, and that of none other, heartily? It is certain, that where there is no love, there must be hatred: and that where there is hatred, there is no love: See this, Judges xiv. 16. xvi. 15. (3) The sinner loves nothing by nature but sin. This appears from all those evil emotions of the sinful nature, and from the sinners cherishing of those emotions. He seeks his honour, pleasure and profit in sin, he is so closely wedded to it, that "though such a fool should be brayed in a mortar with a pestil among wheat, yet would not his foolishness depart from him," Prov. xxvii. 22. Now he who so loves that which the Lord hates, doth not he hate the Lord? surely the Lord judges so: "He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me love death," saith he by the mouth of Solomon, Prov. viii. 36. (4) The sinner ends with all that he hath in himself. It is the nature of love to God to do all things for the Lord's sake, even "eating and drinking," 1 Cor. x. 31, but the sinner is prone by nature to do all things for his own sake: he imagines "that he is something, and some great one," with Theudas and Simon the sorcerer, Acts v. 36. viii. 9, and he therefore wishes that all things should issue for him, and so "he sets his heart as God's heart," Ezek. xxviii. 2. He aims even at the throne and crown of God: for "he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty; he runneth upon him, even upon his neck, upon the thick bosses of his buckler," saith Eliphaz, Job xv. 25, 26. And this

is natural to the sinner, he hath inherited it with his nature from his parents, who, while they were in Paradise, wished to "be like God," Gen. iii. 5, 6, 22. And what think ye? is not this hating God? (5) How doth the nature of man act, when God walketh contrary to man! How fretful and sullen is nature! how doth she censure the dealings of God, and complain with great discontentment, as though God afflicted her wrongfully! When the sinner is hardly bestead and hungry, he then frets, curses his God and king, and looks upward," Isaiah viii. 21. Even when the wind and weather are not as he wishes, he murmurs, and requires that God should wait on him as his slave with all his elements; and when he doth not, he censures the government of the Lord. What an abominable monster is man! and into what a bottomless pit of horrible wickedness is he fallen headlong! (6) Further, doth God attempt to excite the sinner to obey and love him, by convincing him sensibly of his hateful heart, and of his abominable condition, and by drawing him from his sweet sins, that he may bring him under his yoke, how doth he struggle against it, "like a heifer unaccustomed to the yoke, that he may break those bands, and cast away those cords from him!" Psalm ii. 3. He will not bow and yield to such strait bonds: "He is stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, he resists the Holy Ghost," Acts vii. 51. Yea, he is unwilling to do the least thing, by which he may serve God: "he says, Behold what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts," Mal. i. 13. Once more, (7) The natural man hates his neighbour, and therefore he doth not love God, but hates him. This the beloved disciple of Christ teacheth us, 1 John iv. 20.

Sinful man is prone by nature not only to hate God, but "his neighbour also," We were sometimes hateful and hating one another," saith Paul, Tit. iii. 3. Do we not see this daily in ourselves and in others? (a) For nothing is more evident, than that one man despises another: every one thinks that he is the best, and the worthiest, and he therefore esteems his neighbour less than himself, and he cannot endure it, that he is honoured and loved more than himself: he will be angry with him, and will not be able to "speak peaceably to him," as Joseph's brethren manifested their hatred to him, "when they saw that his father loved him more than all his brethren," Gen. xxxvii. 4. (b) It is certain, and daily experience sheweth it, that the natural man hath but little inclination to do good to his neighbour, when he cannot gain aught by it himself. When his neighbour hath need of him, and desires aught of him, he will behave himself proudly and despitefully toward him, because he will

not spare aught of what he hath, as Nabal showed his hatred to David, 1 Sam. xxv. 10, 11. (c) Who knows not that the sinner cannot endure to see the welfare of his neighbour? will not the honour, profit or pleasure of another, fill him with envy, and cause him to persecute his neighbour even to death? The Pharisees had no other reason for opposing Jesus and his apostles with such a great malignity, Matt. xxvii. 18. Acts v. 14—18. (d) How often do we see the sinner start up, inflamed with intense hatred and violent anger, on account of the smallest injury, which he suffers, or only imagines that he suffers: he is forthwith ready with wicked Lamech to revenge it sevenfold," Gen. iv. 23, 24. (e) How can any one undertake to vindicate the wicked inclinations of sinful nature," it surely manifests its wickedness, when it hates even those who endeavour to amend and save it by faithful reproofs and admonitions: the sinner cannot indeed brook that his sins and eternal misery should be so plainly and nakedly discovered to him. "He hates him who rebukes in the gate, and he abhors him who speaks uprightly," Amos v. 10. See also Isaiah xxix. 21. 1 Kings xxii 8.

But with what cloaks of shame will men hide this filth of sin? (1) Will it be said, that the person who speaks here is a believer, who professed in the first question that he belonged to Christ, and who is truly inclined to love God and his neighbour? This would appear somewhat plausible, if the catechism were a confession, which every believer made upon each question concerning himself and the temper of his mind, and not an instruction in the Christian doctrine, which introduceth one while a believer as speaking, and then an unconverted person, and thus here a sinner, who is subject to a broken covenant of works. And admit that a believer speaks here, it is nevertheless with respect to his former condition, when he had such a wicked nature, and with respect to the old man and nature, which still remains in him in a great measure, as Paul speaks of himself, Rom. vii. (c) Doth this answer disturb the weak too much, we may not therefore reject any necessary article of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. The weak must be instructed, and convinced of their corrupt nature: but I do not believe that weak believers are offended at this; for they see, and are too much grieved on account of their evil nature. They are the Pelagians who are offended here, for they will not be discovered to themselves that they may seek their whole salvation in Christ alone. (3) If we do not see such depravity in all men, it is either because we have not eyes to see it, because many have not an opportunity to exert their hateful nature. Peter could say from his love to Christ, "I will in no wise deny

thee;" but not when he was in the hall of Caiaphas: others are prevented by restraining grace from sinning against the Lord, as Abimelech, Gen. xx. 6: and some are converted and strive against themselves. (4) If men cannot hate God as the supreme good, they can hate him as the supreme evil. The sinner is blind, and the loveliness of God is hidden from him: the opinions that he forms of God are hateful: "The way of the Lord is not equal," saith the sinner, Ezek. xxxiii. 20, and "it is vain to serve God," &c. Mal. iii. 14, 15, and therefore he hates God.

If we now compare our evil nature with the commands of God, we will see clearly and plainly, that we are miserable and abominable. For it appears hence, (a) that we are altogether different from what we ought to be. We ought to love God and our neighbour perfectly, and this ought to be natural to us. But instead of this we are prone by nature to hate God and our neighbour, and we are thus "a crooked and perverse generation," Deut. xxxii. 5. Philip. ii. 15. (b) It appears hence also, that we have no portion in the life which was promised upon the perfect love of God and our neighbour: but that we deserve death and the curse, and are already condemned thereto. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for 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. iii. 10. (c) It is also evident, that as long as we are thus disposed, we cannot amend our conduct, and therefore cannot surmount our misery. For our nature is wholly degenerate, we cannot do any thing but sin and transgress the law of God by hating him and our neighbour; this is indeed become our nature; and who can alter his nature and natural disposition? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then ye also may do good, that are accustomed to do evil," saith the Lord to his own people, Jer. xiii. 23.

And thus the law teacheth the sinner his misery, (1) As a rule, which showeth him that he was obliged under the sanction of a promise of life, and a threatening of death, to love God and his neighbour perfectly. The conscience, enlightened and informed by the law, acknowledges and approves of this obligation, and saith with Paul, Rom. vii. 12. "The law is holy; and the commandment is holy, and just, and good."

2. The law is also an accuser, and witness to him, and as such awakens his sleeping conscience, and calls him to himself, and before the tribunal of God, to behold there with shame his hateful and evil nature, and his abominable conduct. "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses," saith the Saviour, John v. 45. And thus

"the word" of the law "is a judge of the thoughts and intents of the hearts," Heb. iv. 12 See also Rom. ii. 14, 15.

3. The law teacheth him his misery also as a judge, who upon comparing the duty of man with his irregular conduct, pronounces the dreadful sentence of eternal condemnation on him: "For the law worketh wrath," Rom. iv. 5. "It stops the mouth" of the transgressor, Rom. iii. 19, renders him anxious, ashamed, humble, concerned, and tender, 1 Kings xxii. 11, 19, and causes him to confess his sins, and to justify God, Psalm li. 4.

But as no word of God, nor any use which man can make of it will affect the mind, unless the Spirit of the Lord himself influence the heart, so neither can the law of God, nor a man's meditations, teach him his misery, unless the Spirit of the Lord accompany them, and "convince him of sin, of righteousness and judgment," John xvii. 8, cause him to "mourn and lament bitterly," Zech. xii. 10, and thus become to him "a Spirit of bondage to fear," Rom. viii. 15.

APPLICATION.

If time would permit, we might easily show from what hath been said, (a) in opposition to the Socinians, that the love of our enemies was commanded under the Old Testament also, inasmuch as our enemies are also our neighbours, and the love of our neighbour is enjoined by the law and the prophets: (b) in opposition to the Papists, that a sinner is not justified before God by the law, because "by the law is the knowledge of sin." Paul teacheth us this, Rom. iii. 19, 20. (c) and in opposition to the Antinomians, or adversaries of the law, that the law must still be preached strictly: for we learn thus to know our misery, which is certainly necessary. But we may not busy ourselves with these, though otherwise exceedingly weighty matters. We hasten to conclude, and have still many important matters to lay before you for your profit.

Behold, friends, how we learn our misery from the law, and how we are conducted by it to deliverance, and to a blessed consolation. What think ye? have ye, (I speak to you all, and to each of you in particular) have ye I say already seen in the law your misery with sorrow, shame, and concern? Is it evident to you, and do ye know experimentally, and with anxiety, that ye have such an evil disposition, and are therefore hateful, and deserve condemnation? Ye have been now so long instructed in the law, Sabbath after Sabbath it hath been read in your hearing; * if ye have had any decent education,

* This refers to a custom of the Dutch church in Holland, of reading the ten commandments every sabbath, at the beginning of publick worship, which custom is still retained in some of the Dutch churches in America. It is the practice to read also the creed, and a chapter from either the Old or New Testament, at the beginning of worship.

ye have been made to learn and say it by heart; and how often hath the law been explained to you fully, and in order. But who, yea who hath learned his misery out of it, so that it hath humbled him? surely very few. With the church of Laodicea, our present Christians imagine that "they are become rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing: and they know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," Rev. iii. 17. Is not this true, is it not a glaring truth? For,

1. The most of you have never yet "come to yourselves" with the prodigal son, Luke xv. 17. Ye concern yourselves with every thing that doth not belong to you, but with respect to yourselves, ye are never at home, and always strangers; the honours, pleasures and profits of the world do so influence your whole heart, your whole soul, your whole understanding, and your whole strength, and do so captivate your affections, that those visible things "have shut your eyes, that ye cannot see; and your heart that ye cannot understand; ye feed upon ashes; a deceived heart hath turned you aside, so that ye cannot deliver your souls, nor say, is there not a lie in our right hand?" Isaiah xlv. 18, 20. And therefore "ye do not repent of your wickedness, saying, what have I done?" Jer. viii. 6.

2. Many of you think that your heart is good: ye depend upon it and "trust in it, like the fool," Prov. xxviii. 26. Because ye are not guilty of any public and scandalous enormities, which are cognisable by the magistrate, but are decent and devout, therefore ye are ready to say with that presumptuous young man, Matt. xix. "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" Sometimes ye survey yourselves with pleasure and admiration, because ye are so wise, diligent, good natured, exceedingly virtuous, and not so wicked and abominable as this and that person: and ye are even ready to thank God for it with the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11, 12. Ye will never believe that ye hate God, and your neighbour, and no man is able to convince you of it. Ye may believe, and be able to demonstrate from the word of God against the adversaries, that man is prone by nature to hate God and his neighbour; but that ye in particular are so evil and perverse, ye cannot either see or believe.

3. It is true, ye all know that ye are great sinners: but how do ye know this? out of the law, and by comparing yourselves with it? No, but only from report and heresay. For how many sins have ye? ye say indeed that your sins are more in number than the hairs of your head; this ye have heard from others, and ye only repeat it without thought after them: for ye cannot mention six sins, of which

ye are guilty. For ye are not, as ye imagine, idolaters, profaners of God's name and day: ye have always been, (according to your opinion) even during your childhood, obedient to your parents: ye are strangers to murder, whoredom, theft, lying, and coveting your neighbour's goods, and have an aversion from such abominations. Where then are all your sins, about which ye make such an ado, as if ye knew them all exceedingly well? But ye know neither the spirituality of the law, nor the hateful sink of your own hearts.

4. And, friends, if ye knew your misery, would ye have so many cloaks of shame at hand to excuse your sins, when they are discovered to you, and also "flatter yourselves so in your own eyes, when your iniquity is found to be hateful?" Psalm xxxvi. 2. Would it indeed displease you so, when your abominable and miserable condition was clearly discovered to you, and when we would awaken you out of your beloved carelessness? would ye take it so ill, when men did not honour nor love you, but exposed you to shame, loss and pain? If ye knew your hateful and damnable character, ye would certainly see that ye deserved every reproach and vexation; yea, ye would be amazed, that such monsters as ye are, should enjoy any good.

5. It is true, some of you know their misery, they see without searching that they are abominable: for their sins are manifest, and every one sees them; or do they commit sins privately, conscience accuseth them, and tells them that while they conduct in this manner, they cannot be saved. But I pray you who are thus, tell us, have your sins and misery ever affected your hearts, and rendered you concerned and anxious, so that they caused you to cry out earnestly, "What must we do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 30. Others are seized like "Felix, with fear," Acts xxiv. 25. but they soon recover from their seasick qualms: when your hearts are wounded in this manner with a sharp arrow, what is it that relieves you so soon? ye cannot retain those grievous thoughts with you, but endeavour to divert, or banish them by doing this or that: or ye suppress them by some duty, by breaking off this or that sin, by reading your bible, saying a prayer, weeping heartily, until your mind be somewhat eased, and upon this all your distress, and according to your imagination, all your misery is at an end: or ye dispel your concern by vain imaginations, that it is your duty to believe in Christ, that your gloomy thoughts proceed only from the devil and from your unbelief: and thus ye deceive yourselves with vain imaginations, and "say not, there is no hope; for ye have found the life of your hands; therefore ye are not grieved," Isaiah lvii. 10. Or ye become des-

perate, and think it is so now : if I must perish, how can I help it ? as well I as another : and so ye indulge a pernicious discouragement and carelessness, saying with your heart and actions, like the impenitent Jews, Ezek. xxxiii. 10. " If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live ? "

But, hearers, ye who are thus disposed, this aggravates your misery, that ye do not yet know it. To hate so, and to be so hateful, and not to know it, or not to know it rightly, how dreadful is it ! How shall ye be delivered ? " Are we blind also ? " said the Pharisees. Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye would have no sin ; but now ye say, we see, therefore your sin remaineth," John ix. 40, 41. If ye knew your misery out of the law, as ye ought, ye would flee to the Mediator and be delivered : but now ye remain in yourselves, and so under the curse of the broken covenant of works, as Paul speaks, Gal. iii. 10. And ye do not yet possess " Christ for justification, which is the end of the law," Rom. x. 4. What hath bewitched you ? what do ye imagine ? Have ye nothing to do with God ? Is he not holy and just ? do ye think that it is a matter of indifference to him, whether ye love or hate him and your neighbour ? He will most surely and most severely recompense and punish the abominations of your hearts and actions. Do ye not believe it, hear then the man after God's own heart say, Psalm xxi 8—12. " Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies ; thy right hand shall find out all them that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger : the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them," &c.

What say ye ? Are ye desirous to be delivered from your misery, and to become other persons, than ye are, or are ye not ? Will ye remain as ye are, and suffer your hearts to wander after the world and sin without concern ? Go on then, but know that your end will be bitterness. But are ye desirous to obtain grace and salvation, and will ye earnestly endeavour henceforth to save your souls in God's way.

1. Believe then that ye are so abominable, that ye hate God and your neighbour, and are therefore in the highest degree punishable before that dreadful judge, that ye may begin to suspect yourselves, and to be afraid. Whether ye see it or not, it is nevertheless the truth, that ye are hateful, and hate one another. God saith it in his word ; the reformed church, with which ye hold, teaches it from the scripture, and there is not one of those who are delivered, but he sees it experimentally in himself, and it would lead you also into

the way of deliverance, if ye saw it. "Only acknowledge thine iniquity," saith the Lord, Jer. iii. 3.

2. Know that ye are still bound to the law of works in order, under the sanction of a promise of life, and a threatening of death, to love God and your neighbour perfectly : and that since ye have not done this, and because of your wicked nature, cannot do it, ye are still under the curse. For as long as the sinner is and abides in his misery, and hath not been convinced, truly regenerated, and converted, and hath not saving faith in Christ, so long he is and abides under the law of works, and therefore "under the curse," Gal. iii. 10.

3. Examine yourselves with a full purpose of heart by the law, and see how far ye have declined from the demands of it. Read the catechism once and again from the thirty third to the forty fifth Lord's day, and see what virtues are commanded and what vices are forbidden in the law : and consider thoroughly your heart and actions, that ye may see by the law how crooked and perverse ye are. "Examine yourselves strictly, yea examine yourselves strictly, O ye listless people," Zeph. ii. 1.

4. Is there any one, who beholds with shame, concern and distress, his hating, hateful and punishable nature, let him flee to "Christ, the end of the law," Rom. x. 4. Sinner, thou who art concerned ; he calls to thee, and invites thee, "Look unto me, and be saved," saith he, Isaiah xlv. 22. "Come, he will not cast thee out," as he saith, John vi 37 Do not stand still and ponder on the abominableness and greatness of thy sins, nor on the small measure of thy sorrow ; it is great enough, if it render thee distressed, and drive thee out of thyself : our concern is not our Saviour, nor is it in itself agreeable to the Lord ; but it must serve merely to cause the sinner to seek his salvation out of himself in the Son of God.

But with respect to you, O believers, (a) See from what, and how ye are delivered : that hateful sin of yours, with which ye formerly hated God and your neighbour, is through the love of God to mankind forgiven : ye are renewed after the image and love of God, and have obtained a new, yea, "a divine nature," Titus iii. 3, 6. 2 Peter i. 4. The law cannot condemn you any longer : "for ye are dead to the law through the body of Christ," Rom. vii. 4. "Sin," even your wicked nature, "shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace," Rom. vi. 14. Christ, the Son of God hath borne for you the curse, to which ye had exposed yourselves by your wicked hatred, and "hath delivered you from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for you," Gal. iii. 13. Yea, the Lord God hath made that law which condemned you, serve you, that ye might be delivered

from it by Christ, when he convinced you by the law, that he might drive you out of yourselves, and cause you to seek life with him: "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God," saith the apostle, Gal. ii. 19. Behold this is what we say, observe God's great and free grace and love in this, admire it, and praise the Lord, with Paul, 1 Tim. i. 13, 14, 15. (b) Love now the Lord your God with all your might and most heartily. "I will love thee heartily, O Lord my strength," said David, when the Lord had delivered him from all his enemies, Psalm xviii. 1. And love, for the Lord's sake, your neighbour as yourselves. "For this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also," 1 John iv. 21. Ye are indeed dead to the law, and it is not given to you, as a condition of the covenant of works, to seek life by it, and to be condemned by it; but it is given to you as a rule of gratitude: it is indeed an expression of the image of God. Ye are and always remain bound to the Lord, to love him and your neighbour: he is worthy to be loved and obeyed on his own account; he hath imprinted the law of love on your hearts; yea his great love to you hath bound your natural obligation to love him, more strongly on you, and the love of Christ should constrain you," 2 Cor. v. 14. (c) Exercise yourselves yet daily in seeking a knowledge of your miseries through the law, with Paul, Rom. vii. Is it become your nature to love God and your neighbour, your nature is nevertheless not perfect: there are still many wicked humours in it, which oppose God and your neighbour: "Ye know," with the apostle, Rom. vii. 18, "that in you, that is, in your flesh, there dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with you; but how to perform that which is good, ye find not." This would conduce to your happiness, it would humble your souls, cause you to make use of Christ more, and to be more watchful. (d) Humble and abase yourselves in secret before the Lord, and before your neighbour. Will ye exalt yourselves on account of the excellency of the revelation, that God hath delivered you out of your hateful and miserable condition? We cannot boast of aught but what we have of ourselves, and what is worthy to be boasted of. But what is it that ye have of and in yourselves? is it not that ye hate God and your neighbour, and have rendered yourselves damnable and detestable? are ye not so hateful now? Is there not now yet wickedness enough in your nature to make you repeatedly ashamed? Is there aught that is good in your soul? "Who maketh you to differ? and what have ye that ye have not received? and if ye have received it, why do ye glory, as if ye had not received it?" 1 Cor. iv. 7. And why have ye received it? because ye were so

virtuous and amiable, or should become so of yourselves? Ye know what ye have been, and still would be, if God should leave you to yourselves; "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," Eph. ii. 8, 9. Therefore acknowledge your unworthiness, and shrink into nothing in your own eyes on account of this divine grace, with Paul 1 Cor. xv. 8, 9, 10. Do ye stand in need of any thing, ask it of the Lord with humility. Doth he chastise you, justify him, and submit to his hand; for though it should lie ever so heavy on you, "he doth still not deal with you after your sins, nor reward you according to your iniquities," Psalm ciii. 10. If he should afflict you more grievously than he doth, it would be only according to the demerit of your wickedness. Do evil men trample upon you, and tread you under foot, ye ought not to be so angry: can any man wrong you, who have so often, and in the highest degree wronged and hated both God and man? lay your hand then upon your mouth, with David, who said, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. "Let him curse: for the Lord hath said to him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?" Hear how Paul enjoins on believers, Titus iii. 2-7, "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness to all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, he saved us," &c. Do ye see any one fall into a hateful iniquity, do not wonder at it, and do not despise him; that root of wickedness exists in you also; and God restrains it, that it doth not spring up, and bring forth still more abominable fruits: "but restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourselves, lest ye also be tempted," Gal. vi. 1.

Thus ye will "use the law lawfully, and it will be good for you," agreeably to 1 Tim. i. 8. For according to the words of the apostle, Gal. vi. 16. "As many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy shall be upon them." Amen.

THE
FIRST CAUSE OF
GOOD AND EVIL.

III LORD'S DAY.

Eccl. vii. 29. Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright ; but they have sought out many inventions.

Q. 6. Did God then create man so evil and perverse ?

A. By no means ; but God created man good, and after his own image, in righteousness and true holiness, that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love him, and live with him in eternal happiness to glorify and praise him.

Q. 7. Whence then proceeds this depravity of human nature ?

A. From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise ; hence our nature is become so corrupt, that we are all conceived and born in sin.

HAPPY is the man who knoweth the cause of things ; for having such an insight into the nature of matters, he hath a wonderful delight in his contemplations. It tends more especially to render a person happy, that he knows the first cause of good and evil ; since he learns thus to avoid the evil, and pursue the good, to praise the first cause of the good, and to detest the evil. If I know not the first cause of the good that I enjoy, I shall foolishly kiss my own hands : and if I understand not the origin of the evil that befalls me, I shall soon with the wicked Jews say, " The way of the Lord is not equal," Ezek. xxxiii. 17, 20. The foul head spring of all the errors, that have deluged the heathen, Jewish and Christian world hath bubbled up only from an ignorance of the true causes of good and evil. Many of the ancient heathens imagined that there were two God's, a good God, who was the cause of all that was good, and an evil God, who was the author of all that was shameful, hurtful and painful ; and in this they were followed by the Manichees, otherwise called Chris-

tians. Others thought that the cause of good and evil in man was the contrariety of his soul and body, two principles, or parts of man, which were opposed one to another. The ancient and modern Pelagians have adopted this opinion, and they say that the soul is created with a free will, and the body with a certain carnal concupiscence, and that the former is the cause of good, and the latter of evil. It is also natural to the sinner, through self love, to excuse himself, and to accuse his Maker of the evil. It is an evil disposition, which he hath inherited of his father Adam, who said to the Lord, "The woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat," Gen. iii. 12. Therefore if the foolish sinner shall become wise and happy, he must learn to ascribe righteousness to his Maker, and accuse himself to his own shame, that he is himself the cause of his destruction, like Daniel, who said, "O Lord, righteousness belongeth to thee, but to us, confusion of faces," Dan. ix. 7. Indeed nothing is more certain, than that God alone is the author of all happiness, and man the author of all his misery. Therefore the wisest of kings saith, Eccl. vii. 29. "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."

It is therefore the glory, the wisdom and happiness of the reformed church, that she teaches more than all others who are out of her pale, that the Lord God alone is the source of all good, and the sinner the cause of all his evil, that she may thus humble miserable man by the knowledge of his misery, which he hath procured to himself, and may induce him to seek deliverance, and a happy consolation of the Lord. For to this end doth the instructor show him how evil and perverse he is, in the fifth question; and that God is not the cause thereof, in the sixth question; but he himself through his parents, in the seventh question.

There are therefore two particulars here, that require our illustration.

I. That the wickedness of man doth not proceed from God, Question six.

II. But from man himself, Question seven.

I. We have taught in the foregoing discourse, that "we are by nature prone to hate God and our neighbour." Nearly all those who are out of our church take occasion hence to slander us, as though we taught that God was the author of sin, and of our wickedness and perverseness, because we receive our nature from God. But we protest against this in the strongest terms, and say that God neither is, nor can be the author of sin. We proclaim to the whole world with Elihu, "Far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and

from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity," Job xxxiv. 16. Sin is more contrary to the nature of God, than darkness to light, and hell to heaven: "He is not a God who hath pleasure in wickedness," Psalm v. 4. "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and he cannot look upon iniquity." Hab. i. 13. "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man," James i. 13. Neither can any one infer from our doctrine by a just consequence, that we represent God as the author of our wickedness and perverseness; for although our nature is of God, it was not created by God so wicked; for "God made man good:" so our church teaches with the catechism from the word of God, which saith, Gen. i. 31. "God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

And wherein doth that goodness consist? The Socinians say, in the essence and in the essential parts of man, without any original righteousness, and only in *juris naturalibus*, or that man was neither good nor evil, when he was created: they even maintain that man was created as ignorant as a child, not knowing that he was naked. And the Jesuits and Remonstrants proceed so far, that they dare maintain that there was a certain carnal lusting in man immediately after his creation, and that his flesh and lusts strove and rebelled against his reason and spirit. If this were so, man would have come out of his Maker's hands a sinful, ignorant and unholy creature. And this reproach ought therefore not to be cast upon us, but upon our adversaries; for it will naturally follow from these heterodox assertions, that God made man evil and perverse. But it will appear more clearly anon.

We teach better things concerning the innate goodness of man. We say that it consists in a moral and virtuous goodness whereby man is qualified, as a reasonable creature, to glorify his Maker; for the goodness of every creature consists in its possessing such perfections, as belong to the nature of that creature, that it may express and declare, in a manner agreeable to its nature, the glorious perfections of its Creator. Man being a reasonable creature, and therefore much more excellent than other creatures, ought to glorify God in a reasonable manner, and thus more than other creatures. But how could he glorify his Maker in a reasonable manner, if he were created without original righteousness, in such ignorance, and with a certain lusting against his spirit? The reasonable creature cannot exist in a state of indifference, or be neither good nor evil, any more than he can be neither alive nor dead: he must necessarily be one or the other, either good or evil: and he cannot be good, unless

he have a moral goodness, and be endued with a pure apprehension of God's perfections, and a sincere love to God, so as to know, love, enjoy and praise him. Solomon saith also, "that God made man upright," and he opposes that uprightness to "man's inventions which he hath sought out," and to his perverseness, Eccl. vii. 29. And therefore the instructor saith, "that God did not create man so wicked and perverse, but good, and thus after his image."

The Lord God having created the heaven, the earth and the sea, with all that in them is, "did last of all form man out of the dust of the earth, and he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; thus man became a living soul," Gen. ii. 7. "But as it was not good that man should be alone, God made Adam an help meet for him," even his wife, "out of one of his ribs," and brought her to him for his lawful wife. Adam also owned, took, and loved her as such, Gen. ii. 18—25. God gave them both also the law of marriage, that they should cleave to one another," Gen. ii. 24, 25, "and be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth," Gen. i. 28, and thus "hath God made of one blood all the nations of men, to dwell upon the face of all the earth," Acts xvii. 26. That man might be the chief ornament of all God's works, God created him after his image. Therefore the Father, acting after the manner of men, excited, as it were, the Son and the Holy Ghost, to perform some great work in the creation of man, saying, Gen. i. 26. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." It is absurd in the Papists to distinguish these two words so, as if "image" related to natural endowments, and likeness to graces and supernatural endowments, as though the image of God were not natural to man. Image and likeness denote the selfsame thing, and are joined together to express it with greater emphasis and force, and to show that the image was exceedingly like God, and a likeness that expressed and depicted God in man: one thing can be like another, as one egg may be like another, but it is not therefore an image of that other. But an image is something, which is fashioned after something else, and is therefore like it. Man was then made in the image of God, because God was the pattern after which he was made; and if I may so speak, because God depicted himself in man, and made man like himself. Not that God gave his essence and life, as he hath it in himself, to man; for in this manner "hath he given only to his Son to have life in himself," John v. 26. The Son of God alone is "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person," Heb. i. 3. Neither is God a body after which the body of man was

formed, as the ancient Anthropomorphists imagined; for "God is a spirit," John iv. 24. But God made man so after his image, that he expressed a certain likeness of his communicable attributes in him, whereby he became "a partaker of the divine nature," 2 Peter i. 4. Not that God transferred his attributes to man, for he would then have made him a God: but that man was made after them, so as to possess a certain likeness to them, and that he obtained a certain sketch of those divine perfections.

We must inquire more particularly wherein that image and likeness, in which man was made, consists. The soul, the spirit of man, which hath in itself an ability to act from itself, though in dependence on God, with understanding and will, is an image of God, and exhibits a certain likeness of God. Some maintain that the image of God doth not consist in the essence of the soul, but that the soul is only the panel, on which the image is expressed: we may assert that the soul is the panel of the moral and virtuous goodness of man. But that the soul itself is not the image of God, but only the panel and subject of God's image, this we do not assert, because the nature of the thing and the word of God forbid it. For the essence and the spirituality of the soul are matters, in which it is like God, "who is a spirit," John iv. 24. Are not the heathens, who are destitute of the moral and virtuous goodness of God's image, still "the offspring of God," so far as he is a spirit, which cannot be expressed by an image? Acts xvii. 28, 29. We may "not curse, nor kill any man, because he is made in the image and likeness of God," Gen. ix. 6. James iii. 9. Not because he was once made in the image of God; but because he is still God's image: for otherwise the reason why we may not kill or curse any man ceaseth. Doth the sinner now "come short of" the image and "glory of God," according to Rom. iii. 23, it is with respect to the virtuous goodness, in which he was created.

This moral and virtuous goodness is indeed the principal and most glorious part of God's image. It is also called original righteousness, and consists (1) in the knowledge of God, and of divine things. We must now "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him," according to Paul, Coll. iii. 10. He hath certainly respect to the image in which man was created in the beginning: he saith that it consisted in knowledge: he supposeth that this knowledge is obscured, and that the image of God is now become old, and that we must be again renewed after that same image. The first man was therefore not so simple and ignorant: for we must be renewed in knowledge after the image of that man: if he had been created in a childish ignorance,

he would have been ridiculously foolish ; for a full grown man, as Adam was when he came out of his Maker's hands, who is childish, is contemptible : surely "the soul without knowledge is not good," Prov. xix. 2. If Adam were created in such ignorance, how did he know the nature of the animals, and of his wife ? Gen. ii. 19—23. He certainly knew God, he was accustomed to his visits, Gen. iii. 8, and was acquainted with his law, Gen. ii. 16, 17. iii. 2, 5, surely not only by divine revelation, but also by creation ; for if that law be still written in the hearts of his posterity ; according to Rom. ii. 14, 15, how much more was it then written in his heart, when he came new and pure out of the hands of his Maker. After the fall, his eyes were indeed opened, and he knew that he was naked," Gen. iii. 7, but this doth not imply that he knew not before that he was without any clothing ; for otherwise sin would have made him wiser, and the lying promises of Satan, "that his eyes should be opened, and that he should like God know both good and evil," Gen. iii. 5. would not then have been detestable. It remains therefore certain that Adam knew God, and his obligation to him, by the image of God, by which he knew, as by a beam from God's own light, what God knew, and what he would reveal to him. For the knowledge that depicts God, is not barely a common and literal apprehension of divine things, but "a seeing of the light in God's light," Psalm xxxvi. 9, and "an in-shining of God into the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God," 2 Cor. iv. 6. Now such a knowledge and seeing of God must necessarily produce a divine holiness in the soul ; for "we, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory," 2 Cor. iii. 18. And therefore the moral goodness of God's image consists also (2) "in true righteousness and holiness," by which man surrendered himself with a perfect heart to the Lord, to do his will, according to that law and truth of God, which his understanding represented to him to be holy, just and good. That the image of God consisted in this also, the apostle teacheth us when he saith, Eph. iv. 24. "And put on the new man, which after God is created in true righteousness, and holiness." So our translators render the Greek words, according to the usual style of the scriptures : but others, following more the order of the Greek words read, "in righteousness and holiness of truth." The sense is the same : righteousness and holiness are two words, which design one and the same thing, but with great beauty, and with a strong emphasis, as if we should say, a righteous holiness, and a holy righteousness. But if we will distinguish the words, and consider each as signifying something different from the other, we must then refer

righteousness, not to a right to demand life, inasmuch as Adam had not that right, and it moreover doth not now flow from the image of God, but from the imputed righteousness of Christ; but we must refer the righteousness of the image of God to our neighbour, and the holiness to God: and so these two words express the whole sum of the law, which was innate to man with the image of God.

Man being endowed with such a rational and virtuous soul, was also created lord of all the creatures, that he might govern and make use of them, as the vicegerent of God, under him, and to his service: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea," &c. saith the Lord, Gen. i. 26, 29. The Socinians, who will not allow that man had any original righteousness before the fall, and are nevertheless forced to believe that man was created after the image of God, say that the image of God consisted only in dominion. But how could man govern the creatures according to the will of God, if he had no virtuous goodness? The creature would have groaned against him, as it doth now against its sinful and rigorous lord, Rom. viii. 19—22. That the image of God consists nevertheless partly in dominion, and that this dominion is not only a consequence of the image, this Paul teacheth us, when he saith that "the man," on account of his dominion over the woman, "is the image and glory of God;" and that "the woman, on account of her dominion under and by reason of the man, "is the glory of the man," 1 Cor. xi. 7. Inasmuch as this excellency of the soul presently extended itself to the body, and the image of God pertaineth to the whole man, therefore man was immortal, not only according to the soul, but also according to the body, which being created of the dust of the earth, and consisting of flesh and blood, could die; but would, through the sustaining power of God, have continued alive for ever, if man had not sinned. For how could such a destructive and horrible evil as death befall man, while he was not guilty of any iniquity? Death was threatened only in consequence of sin, Gen. i. 17, and "the wages of sin is death," Rom. vi. 23. God did not, moreover, pronounce the sentence of death upon Adam, until he had sinned, Gen. iii. 13. That the image of God consists in immortality, this Paul saith, 1 Cor. xv. 49, where he teaches that when we shall receive our immortality again, "we shall bear the image of the heavenly."

The image of God, in which man was created, had its ends, and served (1) "That man might rightly know his Creator." For to this end was his understanding filled with such a clear light, that he might behold God in his glory and loveliness: (2) "That he might

love him heartily." For God's law of love was innate to him with the image of God through that righteousness and holiness. When he pursued this through the image of God, it served also, that he might (3) "live with God in eternal happiness." For when he knew and loved God so, the Lord could not but manifest his pleasure in him by a reciprocal love, and this would render him happy. By such a conduct, so worthy of God, he fulfilled the law of the covenant, which promised him eternal happiness; for which end he had also the tree of life, in order to seal that happy life to him by a sacrament, Gen. ii. 9. But the chief end of the divine image was, (4) "that he might glorify and praise God;" for since he knew that God was the most worthy, and since he loved and enjoyed him as such, he could not but exalt him in the highest degree.

The Remonstrants imagine that these things could not be the ends of God's image, no, not according to our opinion, because God would then have failed of his end by the fall of Adam, and of all mankind in him, and because we teach that God created the greatest part of mankind to be damned; but this is a horrible calumny: we do not teach that God created man to be damned, as if the creation of man were a cause of his damnation: sin alone is the cause of his damnation, on account of which God punisheth him, as he threatened according to his eternal decree, in which he purposed to pass by certain persons with his grace, and to punish them justly: but besides this, we say, that when God created man in his image, he did not intend to effect that all men should live with him in eternal happiness: for this would then undoubtedly be accomplished; since he always obtains his end by his almighty power, on account of the unchangeableness of his counsel: for "he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," Eph. i. 11. We must also distinguish between the end of the worker and of the work. The end of God's work, to wit, the creation of man in his image, was indeed, that he might, by knowing and loving God, live with him in eternal happiness: for the image of God qualified him for this end, and urged him to pursue it: but this was not the end of the Worker, even of God: for he intended to render the glory of his justice, mercy and grace, wonderful in fallen men, and for this end he suffered them to fall. See Rom. xi. 32. And God hath also obtained this end.

The Jesuites assert that this image was a supernatural gift, bestowed upon man in order to restrain the furious lusts of the flesh, as it were, with a golden bridle: and therefore that man, having lost that image, is now indeed without that supernatural gift; but that

his nature is not therefore so corrupt, as we teach. In opposition to which we say, that the image of God, and particularly that virtuous goodness, or original righteousness, did not constitute any essential part of man, by which he was made man, as his soul and body do; but it is evident that this righteousness, and permit me to say in a good sense, supernatural grace was nevertheless natural to man, that is, his nature could not have been good, if he had not been created in the image of God. For (a) the image of God was innate to man with his nature, Gen. i. 26, 27. (b) His nature would not otherwise have been created good, since a man without knowledge, righteousness and holiness is sinful and hateful to God. See this Eph. iv. 13. (c) Man could not then have pursued nor obtained the end of his creation; for how can he, who is naturally without knowledge, and filled with fleshly lusts, warring against his spirit, know, love and praise God aright? (d) Adam, though fallen, hath transmitted the remains of God's image with his nature, to his posterity; for "the Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law," Rom. ii. 14, 15. How much more would he then, if he had continued to stand, have transmitted the divine image itself to his seed? but this would not have been possible, if the image of God had not been natural to him. What our adversaries object here, that man could not then have fallen, is of no force, because Adam, although naturally good, was nevertheless created changeable, and was capable of being seduced. Were not the angels created naturally good and holy? and some of them nevertheless fell.

How dare our adversaries then reproach us in such a shameful manner, and say that we teach that man was created by God so wicked and perverse? They give us reason to suspect them of such a wicked opinion. For if man were created so ignorant, and with a certain evil lusting, then God created him wicked and perverse, inasmuch as ignorance, and lusting after evil is wicked and perverse. They will doubtless allow that man fell through his natural inclinations to evil, (admitting that these inclinations were not sinful in themselves.) Ought not man then to be excused, since he only followed his natural and innate inclination? yea, ought not God to be accused, since he created man with such an inclination, and no better? but our adversaries have need of such cloaks of shame, if they will defend with any plausibility their unviolated reason, and indifferent freewill.

Is man nevertheless so wicked and perverse, and did not God create him so, but good and in his image, "whence then proceeds this depravity of human nature?" We ought to know this, it

concerns us, that knowing the ground of our disease, we may seek in a right manner to be healed. The wisest of kings had found that "man himself had sought out many inventions," Eccl. vii. 29. And the instructor, explaining this more particularly from the word of God, leads us to "the fall of our first parents, whereby our nature is become so corrupt."

If we will form proper conceptions of our corruption through the fall of Adam, we must know that God entered into a covenant of works with Adam, and that Adam was able to keep the covenant. We have shown before on the second Lord's Day the nature and reality of this covenant. We must now see that he could keep the covenant. For God would not otherwise have made a covenant with him, it would indeed have been to no purpose. Adam's understanding and will being endued with original righteousness, he was able to know and love God perfectly, and thus to fulfil the condition of the covenant. He needed without doubt, God's preventing influence: but we may nevertheless say, that he had an ability to continue in the covenant, on account of his habitual virtuousness, in consequence of his having been created in the image of God, as a man in health hath an ability to do his daily work, although he needeth the ordinary influence of God for that also, according to Acts xvii. 28. For that God created man independent in his actions, so that, when left to himself, he could do his duty without the preventing influence of God, is a most absurd imagination: for man would then have been made a God, who could govern himself, of and by himself.

We must also know that Adam and Eve, the first human couple, were our parents, of whom God hath made the whole race of men, as we have shown before. Now when God entered into a covenant with Adam, he established it with Eve also, yet so that she was reckoned in her husband. And therefore the misery of their posterity is generally referred more to Adam than to Eve. But God did not enter into a covenant with Adam, as a private person, who should stand or fall only for himself, but also as the father, and as the head of all mankind, who should descend from him, and for whom he should stand and fall: as kings and princes enter into covenants with one another, not only for themselves, but also for their children and subjects, who exist now, and will exist hereafter. And in this manner did God establish the covenant of works with Adam, and in him, as the head, with the whole human race. For the appendix of the covenant of works, to wit, the law of marriage, Gen. i. 28. ii. 24, 25, was given to Adam, and in him to all his posterity. See this Matt. xix. 3, 4, 5, 6, Eph. v. 31. All Adam's posterity were crea-

ted in him after the image of God, as the remains of that image in the Gentiles still manifest, Rom. ii. 14, 15. Paul requireth, Rom. v. 14—19, that we should consider Christ as the head of believers in the covenant of grace, after the example of Adam: but how shall we understand this, unless Adam be also the head of his posterity in the covenant of works.

But although Adam possessed such a glory and excellency, he nevertheless fell into a deep abyss of horrible misery through his disobedience, by which, contrary to the command of God, enforced with the promise of life, and the threatening of death, he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, by which he also broke the covenant, as the Lord saith, Hosea vi. 7: for that tree was prohibited to him, as a trial of his obedience.

But how could these exceedingly wise and holy persons, who had such an ability, be guilty of such a base conduct. The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, saith Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 3. from Gen. iii. 1—6. "The serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field," saith Moses, Gen. iii. 1. But although he were ever so subtil, and more so than any beast of the field, he could nevertheless not perform such an evil and subtil work of himself, for he was irrational and speechless: but the devil having apostatized from God, and being subjected by him to eternal punishment, without any hope of mercy, inflamed with hatred against God, and envy against the happy man, and with an ambitious desire to rule over him, made use of, and possessed this beast for that purpose, and so enticed man by means of it. For "the devil was a murderer of man from the beginning," John viii. 44, and he is on this account himself called "the great dragon, and the old serpent," Rev. xii. 9. It is therefore detestable in a certain person * to say that the devil was the first author of sin, according to the declaration of scripture, and nevertheless to teach that neither the serpent, nor the devil could deceive man, and thus to deride the whole account of Moses. Perhaps he could not speak otherwise, after he had once determined that the essence of a spirit was simply thought, and that it hath no power at all to act upon that which is bodily.

* The author hath respect here to Dr. Balthazer Becker, a pastor of the reformed church of Amsterdam. He was a great admirer of the Cartesian philosophy, and was so far misled by it, as to deny all the accounts, which the scripture gives of the power of the devil, and evil spirits: as also the existence of ghosts and wizards. He published these sentiments in a book, which he intitled, *The world bewitched*. He was deposed from his pastoral office on account of these opinions: but persevered in them until his death.

The devil being exceedingly subtil, and abusing also the subtil nature of the serpent, conducted his temptation in a most subtil manner. For (1) it was subtil in him, that he did not tempt man from within, by acting upon his imagination, with wicked injections: for he would then have met with an immediate repulse: there were no traitors as yet in the mind of man, with whom he could correspond and conspire to destroy him. But he attacked man from without, that he might penetrate into his soul by means of his sight and hearing, and effect a total confusion there. (2) He appears not to man in a terrifying form, but conceals his hideousness under the serpent, which was not a disagreeable object to upright man; by which he might induce him to think that he was favoured with a message from God by an angel of light through the means of this serpent, in an extraordinary manner; for the wise man knew that the serpent was not endued with reason, and that he had not a man's voice. (3) He doth not tempt him in opposition to any command of the moral law of love, which was written upon his heart; for he knew very well that his soul would be immediately seized with horror, and would forthwith resist such an attack; but he assails him with the positive and probationary command, that he should not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, because man might be more easily brought to this, since there was neither good nor evil in eating or not eating of that tree, considered in itself and without respect to the divine prohibition. (4) It was also exceedingly crafty in the devil, that he did not attack the man first, but the woman, who was the weakest, and that when she was in her weakest condition and alone, that he might by her seduce the man. (5) He doth not tempt her to sin forthwith, and like an open enemy; for he would then have been soon resisted; but he tempts in a very gradual manner, and with subtil reasons, that he may conceal his deceit. He doth it (a) by asking a question. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" He speaks not of the tree of knowledge, but of every tree of the garden, in general: he feigns as though he were a stranger who knew of nothing; and that he may not create suspicion, he asks as one who was ignorant, and wished for information, that he may thus obtain an opportunity of entering into a discourse with her, and of causing her to stagger, and doubt whether God, when he permitted her to eat of every tree, forbade her to eat just of that one tree. He offers to her for consideration hereby, whether she had not misunderstood, or whether she rightly remembered the words of God. (b) The woman not thinking that it was her enemy,

who was before her, enters into a discourse with him, and declares to him how kindly God had permitted them to eat of every tree, but that he had forbidden them to eat of the tree of knowledge, and had threatened them with death in the severest terms, if they did eat. The subtil serpent, the father of lies, that he may rid her of the fear of the danger, which attended her eating of the forbidden tree, denies the threatening and saith, "Ye shall not surely die," and perhaps he feigns as though he were a good angel, who was sent by God to inform her that her time of probation was at an end, that God had therefore revoked that command and his threatening, and that she had consequently no reason to fear death, inasmuch as God did now freely permit them to eat of that tree, as well as of the rest. (c) But God had nevertheless forbidden them to eat of that tree, and those holy persons did not wish to act contrary to the divine prohibition, although it were not dangerous; and why then should they eat of the tree? was there no danger in eating, there was no advantage neither. Therefore the subtil deceiver saith, that they should derive a great advantage from eating: "In the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil." He endeavours to persuade them that they were yet very simple persons, who knew but little; but that by eating of that tree they should attain to a great, yea, to a godlike knowledge, which was exceedingly desirable for man: yea, he endeavours to insinuate to the woman that the tree was on this account called the tree of knowledge. And that she may believe him, and eat of the fruit without scruple, he swears, and appeals to the allknowingness of God, to satisfy her, "God doth know" saith he.

The woman having entered into such a discourse with her enemy, listened attentively to his false sophistry, doubted whether God had so strictly forbidden her to eat, or whether she had rightly understood him, believed the devil, dismissed her fear of death, coveted the good which he had falsely promised her, and stirred up her desire by "seeing that the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eye, and desirable to make one wise: and she took of the fruit, and ate, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat." Thus the woman was deceived by the devil, and she, perhaps solicited by the devil, deceives her husband: in what manner Moses relates not: but we may reasonably suppose that she proposed the arguments of the serpent to him with a womanly and sweet voice, by which Adam suffered himself to be enticed, and thus imitated the sin of his wife. Therefore when it is said, 1 Tim. ii. 14, "Adam was not deceived; but the woman being deceived was in the trans-

gression," we must understand it so that he was not deceived first, nor immediately by the devil, but by the woman.

We cannot believe that our parents fell on the same day, on which they were created. For the many events which happened on that day left no time for the fall, which is related briefly, but happened more circumstantially; since on that day the beasts of the field were created, Adam was made, Eve formed of one of his ribs, while Adam was in a deep sleep, marriage, and the law of marriage instituted, and the covenant of works established. Besides this, God pronounced all things good at the end of the sixth day, Gen. i. 31. Add to this, that "God rested on the seventh day from all his works, and was refreshed," Exod. xxxi. 17, which God would not have done, if man had fallen on the sixth day, for "that grieved him at his heart," Gen. vi. 6. It is also improbable that man continued not a certain space of time, and at least not a few days or weeks in his happy state, that he might employ himself in contemplating God, loving him, and delighting himself in glorifying him. He was undoubtedly accustomed to God's drawing near to him, since he knew it by "the cool" or wind "of the day." Gen. iii. 8.

Let none of us think that our first parents were guilty of a small sin in eating of the forbidden tree; for it was an exceedingly great and dreadful sin. Paul calls it "a sin, transgression, offence, disobedience," Rom. v. They transgressed by this sin the whole law of love, loving the creature more than the Creator: they broke God's covenant of friendship: they despised his threatening of death, and contemned the promised life: they believed the devil more than their gracious Creator: they refused the blessed enjoyment of God, and sought their pleasure in the forbidden creature: they fell from God to his malicious enemy, the devil; yea, they wished to be Gods, and like God, for which they are derided, Gen. iii. 22, and that at the suggestion of the wicked spirit, who hid himself in a beast. All this was so much the more aggravated, because God had created them exceedingly glorious, and had given them a noble, wise and holy soul, which could govern all the other creatures; they were able to abstain from the forbidden tree, the command was not difficult to observe, nothing compelled them to eat of it, they had all things richly in the garden to enjoy. But that which causes this sin to appear still more detestable, is the misery which they procured by it, not only to themselves, but also to all their posterity.

But although this sin was so detestable, it did nevertheless not happen without the providence of God. If "even a sparrow fall not to the ground without the will of God," how much less then could man, who was created perfect, and all mankind fall into such a griev-

ous sin and misery? God did not compel man to sin, nor move him to it, yea, he did not deprive him of his natural abilities, and habitual powers: but it is certain that God decreed to permit his fall. How could the Mediator otherwise have been "foreordained, and slain from the foundation of the world," 1 Peter i. 20. Rev. xiii. 8. Further, we cannot doubt but that God suffered the devil to tempt him; for even "the Spirit of God led Jesus into the wilderness, that he might be tempted by the devil," Matt. iv. 1. We must also allow that God did not powerfully influence man, to preserve him from falling, but that he left him to himself; for he should otherwise not have fallen: God was also not obliged to bestow such a powerful influence upon man. It is true, man fell necessarily, but not by a necessity of compulsion, but of consequence: since neither the decree of God, nor his permission of Satan, nor his withholding of his active influence either moved or compelled him inwardly; but he fell by himself, and by his own free choice, and by seeking out many inventions. We know that many inexplicable difficulties occur here: but we also know that not only the word of God, but reason also teacheth us that God is an independent sovereign, that nothing happens without his will, that man depends upon God in all that he doth, and that there cannot be any religion that doth not contain unsearchable mysteries, and that if we exempt this fall from the providence and government of God, we will deprive him of his sovereign jurisdiction, and introduce the fortune of the Epicureans, or the fate of the Stoics.

The Lord also remembered this sin, by punishing it severely: not only the devil was cursed in his instrument; but our first parents also were punished with death, according to the divine threatening, Gen. ii. 17. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." There is no reason why we should not understand death here in its greatest extent, of temporal, spiritual and eternal death: they did not indeed die temporally on the day on which they sinned: but the Lord may, consistently with his justice and truth, moderate and defer punishment: the sentence of death was pronounced upon them that same day: yea, on that very day they began to die by all the evil occurrences, which were presently denounced and inflicted upon them, Gen. iii. 16—24. They died also spiritually; for they were instantly deprived of the image of God, "their understanding was darkened, and they were alienated from the life of God." Eph. iv. 18. This soon appeared, since they knew not that God was allknowing and every where present, when "they thought to hide themselves from him among the trees of the garden, and Adam covered his

transgression, and hid his iniquity in his bosom," Job xxxi. 33. The man excused himself, and blamed his wife, who had deceived him, yea, blamed God, who had given him such a deceiving wife: and the woman shifted the blame from herself upon the serpent; Gen. iii. 12, 13. Let us not ask here, how a single action could do all this, since a wise man doth not lose all his wisdom by one foolish action: for this sin of Adam was a bond of iniquity, which disordered the whole human constitution. They deserved by this one sin to be deprived of the divine image, since they did not make a good use of it. When man withdrew from his obedience to his Creator and Lawgiver, and apostatized to the creature, to sin and Satan, he was then justly condemned to become a slave of the creature and of Satan. "For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage," 2 Peter ii. 19. Our first parents undoubtedly deserved eternal death: and they soon experienced the bitter beginnings of it; "they hid themselves for fear of the Lord among the trees of the garden," Gen. iii. 8, 9, 10. They endeavoured, though in vain, to escape from the wrath of God, which was kindled against them on account of their sin: they felt indeed that they deserved "to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, and that he would take vengeance in flaming fire," 2 Thess. i. 8, 9; for they were forthwith driven from his presence and "from the tree of life, out of Paradise, the entrance of which was guarded by Cherubims with a flaming sword," Gen. iii. 22, 23, 24. Since it was now "impossible for the law" to justify them, because "it was become weak through the flesh," they should not have escaped the wrath to come, if God had not, according to his inconceivable grace, entertained thoughts of peace toward them, and promised them the seed of the woman, the Mediator, in his humiliation and exaltation, in order to conquer Satan, and to procure them regeneration, justification, sanctification, perseverance and salvation. And therefore we must believe that they were delivered from the curse of the law, and were rendered partakers of all the benefits of the Mediator with eternal salvation.

"By this fall and disobedience our nature is become so corrupt, that we are all conceived and born in sin," saith the instructor. This corruption of our nature is usually called by divines "Original (or hereditary) sin, because we inherit it of our parents by our conception and birth. Hear what David saith, Psalm li. 5 "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." We do not inherit the sin of our immediate parents, but of Adam, and we inherit particularly his first sin by our birth of our parents: for

it was only that first sin, by which he broke the covenant of God for himself and his posterity. See Rom. v. 12, 18.

Original sin is either our natural guilt, or our natural pollution, flowing from our natural guilt. Our natural guilt is called imputed original sin, and our natural pollution is called inherent original sin. Imputed original sin is Adam's first sin, which is imputed by God to every individual of his posterity in consequence of the broken covenant of works, on account of which every individual is declared guilty. The most of those who are out of our church, as the Pelagians, Socinians, Mennonites and Remonstrants, deny this imputed original sin; yea, the Jansenists also oppose it, although they admit inherent original sin. But the word of God teacheth us this imputed original sin: for the covenant of works, which we have explained and proved before, was made not only with Adam, but in him, as the head of the covenant, with all man'kind also, who should descend from him, from which it necessarily follows that Adam did not break that covenant only for himself, but also for all his posterity, and that he rendered both himself and us guilty. Further, "we are children of wrath by nature," Eph. ii. 3. Children, who have not yet any actual sin, are subject to every kind of misery, and to death. How can God conduct toward them with so much severity, if they have no sin? is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid: it must then be on account of Adam's sin. Paul explains this at large, Rom. v. 12—22. His design is to show that believers obtain reconciliation and righteousness by one Christ, vrs. 8—11. He explains this by the connexion between Adam and us his members in his first sin, and the manner in which we become guilty by that sin; therefore he saith, vrs. 14, that "Adam was a figure of him who was to come." In what wanner was he a figure? "as by the disobedience of that one man many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous," vrs. 17, 18, 19. From which it therefore evidently appears, that the sin of Adam was reckoned our sin, as the righteousness of Christ is reckoned the righteousness of believers. He saith also to the same purpose, vrs. 12. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death pssed upon all men." Therefore the sin of Adam is the cause of the death of all men, yea, even of the death of children, who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, vrs. 14. How is this possible if Adam's sin be not imputed to all? The apostle saith also, vrs. 12. "in whom," namely Adam, "all have sinned:" surely not actually, but in him, considered as their head. And if we translate the words *eph hoo fiantes eemarton*, not "in whom," but "because all have sin-

ned," as many do, the sense will be the same, and teach us that all have sinned by Adam's sin, and are therefore worthy of death. He illustrates this further, when he saith vrs. 15—19, "Through the offence of one, many be dead. The judgment is by one who sinned. The judgment was by one to condemnation. By the offence of one man death reigned by one. By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Who can preserve the force of these words without admitting such an imputed guilt? It is not just, say our adversaries, that another man's sin, which we ourselves have neither committed, nor consented to beforehand, should be imputed to us, and that we should be reckoned guilty on account of that sin. But how will it consist with the justice of God, that he inflicts so many, and such grievous judgments, yea, death itself upon children, if they inherit not the guilt of Adam's sin, and have not themselves any actual sin? Moreover, we must not consider Adam's sin, as the sin of any other private man, but as the sin of all mankind in Adam, as their covenant head.

Inasmuch as the sin of Adam corrupted his nature, therefore our nature is also become corrupt through his sin imputed to us: which corrupt nature constitutes our inherent original sin, whereby all the children of Adam being deprived from their birth of the image of God, having their understanding darkened, their conscience defiled, being disinclined to that which is good and prone to evil, possess a wicked disposition of heart, the active source of every wicked desire, and of every sinful action: Surely this inherent original sin consists not in a mere deprivation of the divine image, but also in a wicked disposition of the heart: therefore it is called "the old man, the body of sin, flesh, the law of sin," Rom. vi. and vii. The Pelagians, Socinians, Remonstrants and Mennonites, deny also this inherent original sin. The Jansenists, who deny imputed original sin, confess nevertheless the inherent; but the Jesuits, who acknowledge imputed original sin, deny the inherent: they will indeed allow that man is now destitute of the divine image, which was given to him before the fall, as a golden bridle, to restrain the lusts of the flesh: but they believe not that he hath such a wicked disposition. But all this is (a) directly contrary to the word of God, which teacheth us this inherent original sin: Adam, created at first in the image of God, which he lost by sin, "begat a son in his own likeness, after his image," Gen. v. 1, 3. Adam was sinful, and his son was born after that sinful image of him. "Every imagination of the thoughts of men's heart is only evil, and that continually," Gen. vi. 5, and indeed

“from his youth,” Gen. viii. 21. Man is called “a transgressor from the womb,” Isaiah xlviii. 8. And it is thus with all men, who proceed from Adam by ordinary generation, Mary, the mother of the Lord not excepted. Job asserts it: “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” Job xiv. 4. The Saviour also saith, John iii. 6. “That which is born of flesh is flesh.” (b) The general prevalence of ignorance and concupiscence manifests also our inherent original sin; for if it were not natural to man, and innate to him, it would not be so general, and cleave so fast to him; at least his unviolated freewill, of which our adversaries boast so much, would subdue it at last, and the world would become better. (c) The necessity of the new birth, the circumcision and baptism of children manifests the depravity and impurity of the first birth. (d) Let the actions of children speak, their wicked humors soon show the depravity of their nature. They do not surely derive this depravity from evil examples, which they imitate, for they are often guilty of sins which they do not observe in others: why do they not imitate good examples as well as evil, if their nature do not cleave to sin? Though godly parents educate their children ever so carefully by good examples, admonitions and chastisements, they experience nevertheless to their sorrow that their depravity still cleaves to their children. The children are indeed called holy, 1 Cor. vii. 14. but not with respect to the covenant of works but of grace, into which they are admitted with their believing parents: for they are otherwise unclean, as Paul saith in the same text, who doth not therefore deny inherent original sin, but confirms it.

But a greater difficulty occurs here, to wit, in what manner the soul which is created immediately by God becomes so sinful. It is absurd to say, that the soul is propagated by the parents: for the soul is created immediately by God in the body, Eccl. vii. 7. Zech. xii. 1. It is also a spirit, which cannot be produced by a bodily generation: and although the parents produce the body only, and not the soul, they can nevertheless with great propriety be said to produce a man into the world, as well as those who kill the body only, and not the soul, may be said to kill a man. I declare that I cannot comprehend how the soul is created holy in a sinful body, and becomes polluted by the sinful body, nor how the corruption of the soul proceeds from a polluted seed, or from a sinful and irregular conduct of the parents in generation: for we should not then inherit so much the sin of Adam, as the sin of our immediate parents, and their irregular conduct, which is contrary to the word of God; for that saith that we inherit the sin of Adam, and particularly his first

sin, and that "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father," Ezek. xviii. 20. Neither may it be said, that the essence of the soul consists in thought, that it had evil thoughts in its mother's womb, and polluted itself in that manner: for this is contrary to Rom. ix. 11. and it would still remain a difficulty, whence such a sinful thinking should proceed. Such an assertion is also dangerous, as appears in the Pelagians, who, while they maintained this opinion, denied original sin, and were therefore condemned in the council of Milevum. But we must look higher here, and consider God as a judge, who imputing the sin of Adam justly to his posterity, and pronouncing them guilty in consequence thereof, withholds his image from them, and surrenders them to the power of sin and Satan, as God often punisheth one sin with another, Psalm lxxxvi. 11, 12. Rom. i. 21—32. But how do we then inherit the sin of our parents by our birth? according to Psalm li. 5. We will understand this, when we consider that our parents propagate us under a broken covenant of works, and so as children of our sinful father Adam, who begat a son after his own disposition, and "after his image and likeness," Gen. i. 3. We are born of our parents not simply in a natural, but also in a moral state under Adam, not only as our natural, but also as our moral head in the covenant of works. The marriage law, Gen. i. 28. "Be fruitful and multiply," was added to the covenant of works, that children might be born under that covenant of works. If Adam had continued to stand, the image of God would have been transmitted to us, his posterity by our birth; but now the sinful image of Adam is transmitted to all who proceed from his loins, by their birth under the broken covenant of works. And thus our parents serve as instruments of God's justice to "conclude all under the disobedience of Adam," Rom. xi. 32. If we understand the matter thus, we shall presently see that Mary also was born with original sin, and not her Son the Lord Jesus; inasmuch as he was not born in consequence of the law, "Be fruitful and multiply," and so not under the covenant of works, and cannot be reckoned in Adam as the head of the covenant, although he may, as his natural head: and therefore he is opposed to Adam in a moral and covenant relation, Rom. v. 14—19. 1 Cor. xv. 22—47, 48, 49, although he is referred to Adam, as his first father in a natural relation, Luke iii. 23—38. God saith, Ezek. xviii. 20. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father." From this passage our adversaries conclude, that the children of Adam do not inherit his sin by their birth, and that they cannot be punished on account of it. But we cannot conclude this from that text: for our fathers besides Adam do not stand nor fall

for us, as covenant heads in the covenant of works. It is not a general case, that the son doth not bear the iniquity of the father, since God sometimes "visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children," Exod. xx. 5. But in Ezek. xviii. 20, there is a mitigation of that righteous vengeance, on account of the covenant of grace. The son bears the iniquity of the father by virtue of the covenant of works, but not on account of the covenant of grace. See this Jer. xxxi. 28—31.

APPLICATION.

Behold, hearers, so glorious were ye created, and after the image of God, and so wretched and abominable are ye become through your birth ! Do ye see it in yourselves ? doth it affect you with grief ? do ye humble and abase yourselves on account of it, as the matter requires ? Surely ye do not, who are still such as ye were at your birth, and who have never yet departed out of Adam, and out of the covenant of works, and entered into Christ, the second Adam, and into the covenant of grace. For,

1. Ye have never yet come to yourselves, so as to see your natural guilt and abominable corruption, to bewail it, and to humble yourselves on account of it. Yea, as miserable and hatefully wicked as ye have been from your birth, ye are nevertheless proud and haughty on account of it. Ye know wonderfully well how to boast of your noble parentage, to relate from what family ye have sprung, this and that great personage was your kinsman ; and ye consider not that your first father sinned, and was a covenant breaker, and that ye are by your natural birth "of your father the devil." John viii. 44. Ye boast of your good heart, of your great understanding, and your noble virtues, and require that every one should esteem and love you, and when they do not, ye are angry : do ye perceive that any one hath an esteem for you, your heart is immediately tickled, and swells with pride, as a bladder with wind, and ye speak, with a lofty air. Your foolish imagination, that ye are something, emboldens you to draw near to God, like the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11, 12, in an arrogant manner, and to display your specious virtues before him : and ye doubt not but that God will be favourable to you, yea, ye think that if he did not bestow heaven upon you, he would deal unjustly by you ; and so ye possess your father's disposition, who "would be like God," Gen. iii. 3, 22. Do ye once see your damnable sins, it doth not however render you concerned, but ye presently turn away from beholding them, and excuse them as weaknesses, which ye ought not much to regard.

2. Ye know indeed that ye are not as ye ought to be, and as your father Adam was before the fall : but ye never inquire by what means ye have become so miserable : ye do not concern yourselves therewith, but regard it as a matter, which hath happened long since, and which is far off, and doth not relate to you. Yea, many of you are still so ignorant, that they know not even from the word of God, and as a truth, that man is so miserable on account of Adam's sin through his birth : how should they then know from a thorough contemplation of themselves, their own misery and the causes of it ?

3. Are ye ever led to a fair view of your iniquity, either by a wise reprover, or by the conviction of your own consciences, ye seek presently for the cause of the sin, which is discovered to you, yet ye do not find the true cause, but a false one, which ye do then pretend, in order to excuse yourselves : one thinks, or says, the flesh is weak, and he doth not see the wickedness of his flesh ; another alledges, the devil is busy, and he says with Eve, " the serpent deceived me," Gen. ii. 13. It is as though the devil did every sin through the sinner, as he deceived the woman through the serpent, and as though the sinner himself were not abominable, and did not commit sin : a third pretends custom, he knows not that he doth it, as if custom would excuse him, and as if it did not greatly aggravate his iniquity, that he was accustomed to sin, and it was become, as it were, his nature : a fourth will lay the blame upon his calling, that it is difficult and that it cannot be followed without a profanation of the name and day of God, or without cheating and wronging others : but such a calling is not lawful and is itself sinful ; he will then also accuse his neighbour, he brought me to it, saith the sinner, when his iniquity is found, which is hateful : or his parents have done it by an evil example, or a careless education : they have eaten sour grapes : or he excuses himself with the conduct of the man or the woman, yea, what is still more abominable, the sinner is so wicked, that he dares with Adam blame his Maker for his sin, and say that he is the cause of it, Gen. iii. 13. A man hath not made himself, saith he often O wicked monster, that thou wilt excuse thine own hateful heart and conduct, and accuse others, yea, even thy pure Maker.

4. Do ye know that the sinner is become so evil and perverse through the fall of Adam, ye know it only as a truth, which occurs in the word, but ye do not see it in yourselves ; for ye have never yet looked into yourselves, in order to condemn yourselves with detestation and concern. All men are considered by you as abominable, according to the word of God : but when ye come to yourselves, ye then think that ye are not so wicked as this and that one, but

rather somewhat better. Ye are perhaps so expert in the word of righteousness, that ye are able to refute all the objections of the adversaries: but when ye are only a little concerned about your evil character, and fearful of eternal perdition, how do your hearts rise up in displeasure against the Lord, and say within you, with the wicked Jews "The way of the Lord is not equal," Ezek. xviii. 25, 29, and "why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?" Rom. ix. 19. This is not a subtle injection of Satan into you, but it is a dictate of your own evil hearts, and ye cherish that wicked thought; yea, rise up against the Lord and seek to disengage yourselves from him and his service.

Is it not thus with you? attend only to the workings, the thoughts and imaginations of your hearts, to the words of your mouths, and your whole conversation, and ye will see it. Do not make light of it by thinking, I know that it is sad enough, and not meddling any further with it: but stand still a while by it, and see your great misery, that ye come short of the image and glory of God, Rom. iii. 23. Ye have the sinful image of your father Adam, Gen. v. 3, whereby ye have apostatized from God to yourselves, yea, to his enemy: "your actions and birth are of the land of Canaan, your father was an Ammonite, and your mother a Hitlute:" your birth is hateful and loathsome, Ezek. xvi. 3, 4, 5. Ye are "a seed of evildoers, and transgressors from the womb," Isaiah i. 4. xlviii. 8. Your hearts work up nothing "but mire and dirt," Isaiah lvii. 20. Ye are "by nature children of wrath," Eph. ii. 3. And know that if ye remain as ye are, heaven will be shut against you, as Paradise was against your parents: for "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie," Rev. xxi. 27.

Alas! friends, endeavour to escape from your destruction, and to surmount your miserable condition and situation. And for this purpose.

1. Look upon Adam's condition as yours. Ye were indeed contained in his loins, ye have sprung from him, and were born under his covenant, and the covenant of works was established with you in him, and ye do yet daily enter into that covenant, when ye say inconsiderately with the carnal Israelites, Exod. xix. 8. "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do:" and when ye rest and seek your life in your doings. Yea, ye have broken the covenant in Adam, and ye break it daily, when ye commit the same sin that Adam committed by transgressing the law of God, aiming at high things, seeking the creature more than God, listening to the suggestions of Satan, and following them. Do not all the judgments which were threatened

and inflicted by God on account of the sin of Adam, lie also upon you, as they respect the man, the woman and the earth ?

2. Compare your condition before the fall with your condition since. How glorious was it before the fall ! Ye were, like the image of God, perfectly wise, holy, without any sinful emotions, lords of all things, immortal, provided in the perfect garden of pleasure with an abundance of all things, created to know, to love your Creator, and to live with him in eternal happiness, to glorify and praise him. But ye are now foolish, abominable, slaves of the creatures and of sin, ye must seek your bread with much anxiety, and must every moment expect and fear death, yea, everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Be grieved and lament on account of your fathers, yea, on account of your own sins, which have procured all these things to you. Ye have more reason than the church had to complain, Lam. v. 16. "The crown is fallen from our head : wo unto us that we have sinned."

3. Endeavour to obtain a thorough knowledge of your sinfulness, and woful misery. Attend not only to your evil actions, but descend to the bottom of your hearts, which are indeed more abominable than your sinful actions : behold there the headspring of all your abominable deeds. Observe all the workings, motions, and inclinations of your hearts, whence they arise, and whither they would lead you. So David acted, when he confessed his heinous sins. He considered his iniquity and sin in which he was conceived and brought forth," as the cause of those sins, and he humbled himself on account of it, Psalm li. 5. And beware of "covering your transgressions like Adam, by hiding your iniquity in your bosom," Job xxxi. 33. Do not esteem any sin small : the least, like Adam's eating of the fruit, is a bond of iniquity : every sin, yea, even the least deserves death and the curse ; for "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. Do but see this, subdue your pride, bemoan and humble yourselves.

4. Flee to the second Adam, the Son of God, that he may take away your evil iniquities. God, willing to manifest kindness to sinners, and to glorify himself as a gracious God ; and this being impossible by the law of the covenant of works "gave his Son to be a covenant to the people, a light to the Gentiles," Isaiah xlix. 6. He took sin on him, satisfied for the guilt of it, and obtained the righteousness of God : "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and that for sin, condemned sin in the flesh ; that the

righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," Rom. viii. 3, 4. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," Rom. v. 19. "God sets him forth to you," that ye may seek "reconciliation in him through faith," Rom. iii. 25. He calls to you, that ye may "come to him, and that he may make an everlasting covenant with you, and give you all the sure mercies of David," the Messiah, Isaiah lv. 1, 2, 3. Do not refuse, but betake yourselves to Christ, cast yourselves upon him, accept of him, and endeavour to "receive of his fullness, and grace for grace." John i. 16.

5. Take good heed that ye do not destroy nor deface the image of God still more with respect to that which remains of it. Do not injure your neighbour, who is made after the image of God: for ye should violate the image of God in him, Gen ix. 6, James iii. 8, 9. Beware that ye do not, by hardening yourselves, and accustoming yourselves to sin, lay waste your conscience, (in which there is still something of the image of God left, and which reminds you of your duty, and convinceth you of sin and the wrath of God), but stir up, and animate your conscience continually, endeavour to be renewed again after the image of God. "Make yourselves a new heart, and a new spirit," Ezek. xviii. 31. Cast yourselves upon Christ, the image of the invisible God, that he may be formed in you; for "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 17. Look steadfastly at his holy and beaming glory, that ye may be "changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18.

6. Lest ye should be insnared again, beware of the wiles of the devil: "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," 1 Peter v. 8. "He beguiled Eve," as wise and holy as she was, "through his subtilty," 2 Cor. xi. 3, it will not then be difficult for him to seduce you, who harbour his abettors, your corruptions in you: endeavour therefore to learn his devices. Suspect such questions as, should this and that be true, or a sin? representations of the creatures of God, and of sins, calculated to allure the mind, excitations to aim at high things, unfavourable thoughts of God, as if he had no inclination to do you good, and particularly blasphemous, and unnatural injections; I say, suspect all these, as proceeding from the devil, and resist them at the first attack, and repel them from you, as ye would shake fire from your clothes. If ye enter into a conversation with him, he will insnare you, before ye are aware, as he did Eve: reject him again and again, like the Saviour,

Matt. iv. 11. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," James iv. 7.

7. Parents, who are favoured by God with children, oppose sometimes the corruption of your children: inform them of their corruption and damnable condition, and how they must be delivered by Christ. Ye have connected them by their birth with Adam, endeavour therefore to connect them also with Christ: "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," saith Paul, Eph. vi. 4. So Abraham conducted, Gen. xviii. 17, 18. David, Prov. iv. 3, 4, 5, 6, and the mother and grandmother of Timothy, 2 Tim. i. 5 . iii. 15.

How happy are they who have fled to the second Adam, and sheltered themselves under the shadow of his wings! Whatsoever they had lost in the first Adam they obtain again in him: "Of God they are in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30. Adam was seduced by the wicked one, but, partakers of Christ, "the Lord will establish and keep you from the wicked one," 2 Thess. iii. 3. Adam, and ye in Adam, broke the covenant of God: but "the Lord hath now made another," and better "covenant with you, which cannot be broken," and which is everlasting, that he will not turn away from you, to do you good; he hath put his fear into your hearts, so that ye shall not depart from him," Jer. xxxii. 40. Ye lost the image of God in Adam, but in the Son of God ye are "again become partakers of the divine nature," 2 Peter i. 4. And how will his image be glorified in your immortality, and eternal happiness! For "as ye have borne the image of the earthly, ye shall also bear the image of the heavenly," 1 Cor. xv. 49. Yea, "ye shall behold the face of God in righteousness; ye shall be satisfied, when ye awake, with his likeness," Psalm xvii 15. Adam was dismissed out of Paradise, but the second Adam, Jesus the King will call you into the Paradise of God, the third heaven; and how happy will ye be, when he will say, according to Matt. xxv. 34. "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world!" Amen.

THE
INABILITY OF THE SINNER
TO DO GOOD.

SEQUEL OF THE III. LORD'S DAY.

Rom. viii. 7. The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Q. 8. *Are we then so corrupt, that we are wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness?*

A. Indeed we are, except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God.

IV. LORD'S DAY.

Q. 9. *Doth not God then do injustice to man, by requiring from him in his law, that which he cannot perform?*

A. Not at all: for God made man capable of performing it: but man, by the instigation of the devil, and his own wilful disobedience, deprived himself and all his posterity of those divine gifts.

TO be miserable, and to be unable to help one's self, renders one doubly miserable. When a person falls into the fire or water, and cannot deliver himself, he must perish, unless another, moved to compassion by his misery and crying, help him. The sinner is become both abominable and miserable by his sins; for he hates the most lovely God and his neighbour, who is made after the image of God; "We were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice, and envy, hateful and hating one another," saith the apostle, Tit. iii. 3. God had created him in the beginning after his image, he was a partaker of the divine nature; but he hath sinned, hath defaced that image, and "comes short of the glory of God," Rom. iii. 23, and he hath now an abominable

disposition of heart, the image of Satan, for "he is his father," John viii. 44. He is "cursed, because he hath not continued in all things which are written in the book of the law," Gal. iii. 10. God hath withdrawn his love and his kindness from him, he is angry with him, and "will take vengeance on him in flaming fire, and punish him with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. If the sinner could deliver himself, he would surmount his wretchedness: but that which aggravates his misery to the uttermost is, that he cannot recover himself: he cannot disengage himself from sin, and the sinfulness of his nature, he is too effectually intangled in it, "his iniquities compass him about, and he is holden with the cords of his sins," Prov. v. 22. It is impossible for him to convert, to regenerate himself, and to keep the law of God; for "the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," saith Paul in the text. The instructor also teacheth us this in these two questions, that he may humble the sinner, and prepare him for deliverance.

The instructor, that he may lead the sinner to his Deliverer, teacheth him his misery out of the law, and particularly that he is prone to hate God and his neighbour, Questions 3, 4, 5, and that though he was created at first in the image of God, he hath lost that image by sin, and is now born in sin, Questions 6, 7. What must he do now? he ought to reform and restore himself; but he is unable to do this; for he is so corrupt, that he is wholly incapable of doing any good, and is inclined to all wickedness.

The instructor, that he may exhibit the doctrine of the sinner's inability, proposes,

I. The doctrine, Question 8, and then refutes,

II. An objection against it, Question 9.

I. We teach with the catechism according to the word of God, that "man is so corrupt, that he is wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness." This was gain-said of old by the Pelagians, and Semipelagians, and is still by the Socinians, Remonstrants, Jesuits and many Mennonites. Although they allow that man is become somewhat weak by sin, as a sick man, and cannot do that which is good without difficulty, they nevertheless hold that he hath still an ability to understand clearly all that is necessary for him to believe, hope and do, in order to obtain salvation: yea, also to desire, to hunger, to thirst, and pray for grace, to purpose and resolve to do good: yea, the Socinians think that man is still able to perform that which is good, and obey the will of God, and that he needs only to exert himself for this purpose. They talk

indeed of God's assisting grace, but they do not mean any thing by it, but the nature of the free and indifferent will, or a general and sufficient grace, which God bestows, according to the new covenant, on every man, but which doth not effect any thing, until our good free will first seek, and render it effectual. The reason why they entertain this opinion is, their idea that "God created man only with natural endowments, or neither good nor evil; that the image of God is not natural to man, but supernatural; that therefore the sinner hath not lost any natural but only supernatural gifts and powers: that original sin consists not in a sinful, but only in the want of a holy disposition, and that the freedom of the will consists in indifference, whereby a person can incline himself to good as well as evil." And if we will examine the foundation of this erroneous conception somewhat more thoroughly, we shall perceive that the fundamental cause of it is pride, self-love, ignorance of the nature of sin and holiness. For why else do these men plead so much in favour of sinful nature, and teach that the first motions of lust are not sinful, and that the virtuous actions of the heathens are pleasing to God?

That we may not merely beat the air, we must also explain our opinion, and therefore the state of this controversy, and to this end observe, (a) that man as man depends in all his natural actions and motions upon God. God hath indeed given him, as a rational and living creature, a natural ability and habit to do whatever is human, but he is determined by God's eternal decree, and hath need of the preventing, co-operating and determining influence of God's ordinary providence for each action, and is unable to do aught without it. See Isaiah x. 15. Acts xvii. 28. But we do not treat of this inability here, but on the tenth Lord's day. (b) The sinner, being guilty, is unable to satisfy for himself, Matt. xvi. 26. We do not treat of this inability neither here, but on the fifth Lord's Day. (c) Moreover, the dispute is not concerning the state of integrity, of grace, or of glory; for man hath power in these conditions to do that which is good. But the dispute relates to the state of nature and of sin, after the fall, before regeneration, in which the sinner is wholly unable to do that which is good. (d) When we say that man is unable to do that which is good, we do not speak then of natural good, as eating, drinking, working; nor of civil good, as honesty and justice in our dealings with others; nor of ecclesiastical good, as performing ecclesiastical duties; for we allow that an unregenerate sinner can do very much, in his endeavours to perform these good things, Mark vi. 20. Luke xviii. 11, 12. But we speak here of the true saving good, "those better things that accompany salvation," Heb. vi. 9, which

are good by their own nature, as conversion, faith, hope and love with respect to God ; or that are indifferent in themselves, neither good nor evil, but which become good and agreeable to God, by certain good qualifications, to wit, that they are done in faith, to the glory of God, and according to his law : these qualifications render all ecclesiastical, civil and natural good pleasing to God, and without them the Lord detests it, Prov. xv. 8. See this demonstrated more at large upon the ninety first question. (e) Inasmuch as we say that the sinner is unable to do good, and our adversaries also acknowledge that man is in some measure not able, it therefore behooves us to inquire wherein we differ from them with respect to their inability. They assert that the inability consists only in the loss of the supernatural gift of God's image, whereby the sinner is indeed destitute of that good, but is not wholly corrupt, and is only as it were half dead, as though a person could exist in an intermediate state, or be neither alive nor dead. They liken impotent man also to a blind, deaf and dumb person, who is indeed unable to see, hear and speak, but nevertheless still desires and endeavours to be healed : and they say, that God, seeing this desire and endeavour, assists him by his grace, which heals him, when he only makes a proper use of it. But we assert with the word of God. (1) that the inability of the sinner to do good consisteth in the loss and want of spiritual life, that "he is dead in trespasses and sins," Eph. ii. 1. He is separated from God, the life of the soul, "alienated from the life of God," Eph. iv. 18, without either smell or taste : he hath no spiritual judgment to discern spiritual things, 1 Cor. ii. 14. "He calls evil good, and good evil," Isaiah v. 20. He hath no relish nor delight in good, Isaiah vi. 10, "evil is sweet in his mouth," Job xx. 12, 13. Yea, "he is past feeling," Eph. iv. 10. And it is thus not only with the Gentiles, but also with the Jews, Rom. iii. 9—18, and with nominal Christians, to whom the gospel is preached : "they have the name that they live, but are dead," Rev. iii. 1. (2) This inability to do good consists not only in the loss of good, but also in a willing subjection and bondage to, and under the dominion of sin and Satan. The sinner is not free, but "a servant of sin," he must "be made free," John viii. 32—36. Rom. vi. 17. He is overcome by corruption, and is thus a servant of it, 2 Peter ii. 19. He is "taken captive in the snare of the devil," 2 Tim. ii. 26. And that willingly : for "he walketh according to the course of this world, according the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," Eph. ii. 2. This inability to do good consists also in the natural aversion of the sinner from good, and in his natural inclination to evil, in

which he hath a wonderful delight and pleasure. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Rom. viii. 7. Yea, the sinner "hath pleasure in unrighteousness," 2 Thess. ii. 12. Therefore

The question and the state of this controversy is, whether the sinner hath any capacity at present for true saving good, which our adversaries assert, but we deny: also whether he is wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness. This the Pelagians and Semipelagians deny: but we affirm, according to the word of God. For,

1. That saith expressly, that man is incapable in this respect: "When we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly," saith Paul, Rom. v. 6. What ability or inclination to do that which is good can he have, whose "carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be," Rom. viii. 7. Believers themselves are in a great measure unable, according to their sinful part: "they are ready to halt," Psalm xxxviii. 17. "In their flesh there dwelleth no good thing," Rom. vii. 18. "Of themselves they are not sufficient to think any thing, as of themselves: but their sufficiency is of God," 2 Cor. iii. 5. "Without Christ they can do nothing," John xv. 5. How then shall the sinner, who is yet left to himself, be capable of doing that which is good?

2. It hath been shown before from the word of God, that the sinner is spiritually dead, a slave of sin and of Satan, backward to good, and inclined to evil; how then can he heartily pursue that which is good? is it not contrary to his nature? a dead man surely cannot stir: a slave who is fast bound with cords, must not he do the will of his lord? If he were not a willing slave, we should then observe certain virtuous essays in him, in order to be delivered: but no, he struggles against his deliverance, he is pleased with the shackles of his sins. And can he then either desire or perform any good thing, that is pleasing to God? it would be contrary to his nature. "He counts the excellent things of God's law strange," Hosea viii. 12. He is like "a withered branch, which cannot bear fruit of itself," John xv. 4. 5, 6, like "a corrupt tree, that cannot bring forth good fruit," Matt. vii. 16, 17, 18, like "an offspring of vipers: how can he speak good things, when he is evil, and when his mouth speaketh out of the abundance of his evil heart," Matt. xvii. 34, 35, and, "like an Ethiopian, who cannot change his skin, and a leopard, who cannot change his spots, so the sinner who is accustomed to do evil, cannot do good," Jer. xiii. 23. "He is hard, his neck is an iron

sinew, and his brow brass," Isaiah xlvi. 4. So immovable is he, what then can he do of himself?

3. The corruption of the sinner hath taken entire possession of him: he is altogether "flesh," John iii. 3. "In which there dwelleth no good thing," Rom. vii. 18. "His mind is fleshly," Coll. ii. 18. It is not only "darkened," Eph. iv. 18. but "darkness" itself, Eph. v. 8. "It receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: they are foolishness to it, neither can it know them," 1 Cor. ii. 14. "The conscience of the sinner is also evil," Heb. x. 22. "Deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," Jer. xvii. 9. "defiled," Titus i. 15, and it hath "dead works," Heb. ix. 14. The will is wholly corrupt, it is "a will of the flesh," Eph. ii. 3. It suggesteth every abomination, as "evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies," Matt. xv. 19. It rebels against God; "resists his holy Spirit," Acts vii. 51. It pursues after iniquity, and delights therein, Prov. ii. 14. The greedy desire of the sinner cannot be bridled, but is like a furious horse; it is eager and pants like insatiable dogs only after the things that are visible, and that are abominable, Isaiah lvi. 11. 12. Doth any one endeavour to restrain it, it becomes more eager and vehement. "Sin takes occasion by the commandment, and works all manner of concupiscence" in man, Rom. vii. 5, and all his motions are crooked and perverse, he is "disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, &c." Titus iii. 3. Yea, the whole body, and all the members of it are "instruments of unrighteousness, servants of uncleanness and of iniquity to iniquity," Rom. vi. 18, 19. "The eyes have their lust," 1 John ii. 16. Behold the abomination of the tongue, "it is a world of iniquity," James iii. 6, 7, 8. The ears are uncircumcised and heavy, they cannot hear," Jer. vi. 10. Matt. xiii. 15. "The throat is an open sepulchre, the tongue useth deceit, the poison of asps is under the lips, the mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, and the feet are swift to shed blood," Bom. iii. 13, 14, 15. How can such a disordered creature either conceive, desire or do aught that is good, when all that is in him is corrupt?

4. This corruption is natural to man, and is become proper to him by his birth: "The imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are only evil continually from his youth," Gen. vi. 5. viii. 21. Sin cleaves to him most intimately, defiles and poisons all the good that he endeavours to do: "nothing is pure to him," Titus i. 15. "His sacrifice is an abomination to the Lord," Prov. xv. 8. Sin is become necessary to the sinner, on account of his sinful nature: he cannot, yea, he will not do aught but sin, Rom. viii. 7. What ability can he then have to do that which is good?

5. The sinner must be regenerated, "whereby he is renewed after the image of God through the Holy Ghost, of the seed of the word, and obtains a new divine light and life, the power of sin is broken in him, and he thus receives a new ability to do the will of God." See Titus iii. 5. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Eph. ii. 5, 10. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. xxxii. 40. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. It will not be proper to say more of regeneration here, for we have introduced it only to explain the misery and inability of man. Must the sinner be regenerated, as Jesus saith, John iii. 3, 5, he is then, without regeneration, incapable of doing good; for he should not otherwise have need of it. Regeneration furnisheth him with new powers, which would not be necessary, if he had them before regeneration. The sinner would also be able to regenerate himself, for regeneration is the principle of every good, that is acceptable to God; but man cannot effect his regeneration: for regeneration is a "renewing by the Holy Ghost," Titus iii. 5. "a new creation," 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. ii. 10, "a resurrection from the dead," Eph. ii. 5. 6, "a taking away the stony heart, and giving an heart of flesh," Ezek. xxxvi. 26, and "a drawing," John vi. 44. Coll. i. 13.

II. The creature, though ever so corrupt, will through his pride not know it, will not see his abominableness, nor be ashamed of it: but seeks every cloak of shame, and saith therefore by the mouth of our adversaries, that "God would do injustice to man, if he required of him in his law, that which he could not perform." The adversaries of the light think that God ought to establish a new covenant with the sinner, and grant him a sufficient grace, that he may be able to incline his will to keep the law of God, before he requires aught of him in his law. (a) But this mind of the flesh is enmity against God, it disputes unrighteously against God's right with respect to man, and accuseth him falsely of iniquity. For God's right is not founded upon man's ability, but upon his own incomparable glory and absolute sovereignty over all; "Forasmuch as there is none like unto the Lord, therefore he is great, and his name is great in might, and therefore it appertaineth to him that men should fear him," Jer. x. 6, 7. Man could not deprive him of that right by his sinful inability; for if he could, he would be able by his sin to dissolve his obligation to obey God, to set himself free from his Maker, and to excuse his impenitent and obstinate rebellion. (b) God doth not demand in his law of the impotent sinner that which is absolutely and always impossible for him; for instance, that he should "measure the waters in the hollow of his hand, and mete out the heavens with a span," &c. Isaiah xl. 12. This would be unjust, since God

hath not given him power to do it; but God demands in his law of the sinner that which was once possible for him, and for which he gave him an ability, when he created him after his image: "God made man capable of performing it," saith the instructor. This hath been shown before; now God may surely demand that of man with usury, which he had given him, that he might gain by it for his Lord. See Matt. xxiv. 19, 30. (c) Is the sinner now unable, he is himself the cause of it: "Man by the instigation of the devil, and his own wilful disobedience, deprived himself and all his posterity of those divine gifts." It is not therefore unrighteous in God to demand of the waster of his gifts that which through his own default he can now neither give nor do. "The master justly demands of his servant the ten thousand talents, which he oweth him, although he hath not wherewith to pay," Matt. xviii. 24, 25. See also Luke xvi. 1, 2.

It is not proper to object here, that it was sinful in man to deprive himself of that gift, even the image of God, and an ability to do good, but that God deprived him of it as a punishment: for God deprived him of it on account of his sin, in order to punish him, and man deprived himself of it, because he deserved such a punishment by his sin, and also actually defaced and destroyed the image of God in himself by his sin. It happens in other cases, as well as in this, that a man's sin is also a punishment inflicted by God, who often punisheth one sin with another, Rom. i. 21—28.

Doth the instructor say, that man deprived himself of those gifts "by his wilful disobedience," we need not say instead of this by "his voluntary apostacy," in order to gratify the Remonstrants; seeing Paul calls Adam's sin "his disobedience." Was it not sufficiently great? was it not committed without necessity? had man need of aught, that he was forced to eat of the forbidden tree? did he not commit that sin against his better knowledge? Eve certainly knew that God had forbidden her to eat of that tree, Gen. iii. 3. Why should we not then call that sin, wilful disobedience?

God, say they, did not give Adam power to believe in Christ, and so he could not deprive himself and his posterity of that gift; therefore God cannot demand faith in Christ of the sinner, unless he give him power to exercise that faith. But this is a vain objection: for Adam was able to believe all that God declared and revealed to him: but inasmuch as the Son of God had no manner of relation to Adam, as Mediator and Saviour, before the fall, and was therefore not revealed to him as such, we may therefore say, that Adam had no revelation nor opportunity to believe in Christ, but not that he had

no power to believe in him. Our adversaries, not satisfied yet, conceive that it would not become God, and that it would not be wise in him to demand of man that which he cannot perform, because it would be to no purpose.

But although the sinner be ever so impotent, God's demand in his law is not to no purpose : the forty fourth Lord's day will inform us of what service the strict preaching of the law is to the regenerate, although they cannot keep the law perfectly. But we speak here of unregenerate sinners, who are either elect sinners, or reprobates. God's demand in his law is not to no purpose with respect to reprobates, inasmuch as that demand restrains them from enormous out-breakings in wickedness, which would destroy human society. God's demand serves also to condemn them, and teach them to justify God, when he destroys them. God's demand would appear to be to no purpose, if he could not indemnify himself upon them : but God can now punish them for the satisfaction of his justice, according to his demand, enforced by threatenings : as "the lord demanded payment of his servant, who owed him ten thousand talents : and when he had nothing wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made," Matt. xviii. 24, 25. With regard to the elect, the demand of God serves to convince them, and drive them to the Mediator, that they may be regenerated and converted ; "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 4. Therefore God accompanieth his demand in the law with the offer and promise of the gospel, which is "the power of God to salvation," Rom. i. 16, yea, also with his Spirit, John xvi. 8—11. 1 Thess. i. 5. Dead Lazarus was unable to arise from the dead, but the command of Christ was not therefore to no purpose, since his calling with a loud voice was the mean of raising Lazarus from the dead, when he added his lifegiving power to his voice, John xi. 41, 42, 43, 44.

The total inability of the sinner to do good doth not however destroy the freedom of his will. The freedom of the will is essential to man, and belongs to the essence of the will, therefore he cannot lose his freedom, unless he also lose his humanity : but he hath by sin lost the virtuousness and holiness of his will ; and hence he wills nothing but evil, and is unable to will that which is good. Our adversaries hold that the freedom of the will consists in indifference, or an ability to incline, like a balance, to good or evil : but if the freedom of the will consists therein, we will then confess that the inability of the sinner destroys the freedom of his will ; for the will

is in this respect a slave, "a servant of sin," and must "be made free," John viii. 34, 36. But the freedom of the will consists not in indifference; for it is certain, that the will cannot will aught, but what the understanding representeth to it as good, and that which is represented to it by the understanding as evil, it cannot embrace. Since now the understanding is darkened, and "calls evil good, and good evil," Isaiah v. 20, how can the will then be indifferent, and desire the good, as well as the evil? God, the angels and glorified men have a perfect free will, and yet they are not indifferent, nor can they will evil as well as good: but the freedom of the will consists in being able to will something with inclination and pleasure, in a reasonable manner, after a previous consideration, and without constraint; and in this manner the sinner wills evil freely, and not good: "He hath pleasure in unrighteousness," 2 Thess. ii. 12. Have not the devils a free will? do they not delight in every kind of wickedness? surely they do: and they are still unable to do good. See John viii. 44. Free will consists not therefore in indifference, but in doing something with inclination and pleasure; and so it is not destroyed by an inability to do good.

Is man then like a stock or a stone, with respect to that which is good? thus ask our adversaries. We answer that the sinner, though wholly unable to do good, is not so unfit and incapable of being converted and regenerated as a stock or stone: for as a stock or stone are wholly incapable of forming an image of themselves, and are nevertheless more capable of being formed into an image than water, so impotent man is more capable of being renewed after the image of God, of being converted and regenerated, than a stock or a stone; as dead Lazarus was more capable and fit to be raised to life by the voice of the Saviour, than the grave-stone, John xi. 43, 44. The sinner, though dead in trespasses and sins, retains still his natural powers of understanding and will, which are capable of being endued with light and life; he hath also certain remains of God's image, (although he hath lost the holy and virtuous part of it) and he hath thus also a certain obscure knowledge of God and his law, Rom. i. 32. ii. 14, 15, and this renders him fit to be influenced to conversion. Paul endeavoured to convince the Athenians by their natural knowledge and service of God, Acts xvii. 22—29.

APPLICATION.

The doctrine of human inability remains then irrefragable. And therefore those do exceedingly ill, who say that man retains yet in his fallen condition an ability to preserve himself continually from errors. This according to our opinion cannot and ought not to be said: it is indeed contrary to the word of God, which saith that "the carnal mind is enmity against God," Rom. viii. 7, and that "we are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves," 2 Cor. iii. 5. This assertion seems also to contradict the fourteenth article of our Netherland confession, which saith that, "the light which is in us is changed into darkness," &c. yea, it is meeting our adversaries half way.

The instructor saith "that we are wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness, except we be regenerated by the Spirit of God." Is the regenerated man then perfectly restored, and hath he a perfect ability to do that which is good? no, but he is still in a great measure unable, as Jesus and Paul say, John vi. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5. This will also be shown more fully on the forty fourth Lord's day. There is nevertheless a great difference between the inability of a regenerate, and an unregenerate man. For (a) the natural man is altogether dead in sins, and must be made alive, if he shall be capable of receiving the influence of God, in order to perform living actions: but the regenerate hath only need that his habitual life should be awakened, enkindled and promoted by the influence of God in order that he may do that which is pleasing to God. (b) A regenerate man is workingly and actively employed with and on account of the influence of God in endeavouring to do that which is good: "He can do all things through Christ strengthening him," Philip. iv. 13, and he is thus himself a secondary cause of his good actions: but an unregenerate man is altogether passive in receiving the grace of regeneration and conversion, as a dead man, who doth not co-operate to his resurrection. (c) A believer enjoys always a greater or less influence of divine grace, and doth good in proportion to it: "The Lord doth not turn away from him to do him good, but puts his fear into his heart, that he may not depart from him," Jer. xxxii. 40. But the unregenerate is wholly left to himself, and is without the influence of divine grace," like a branch, which is separated from the vine, and is withered," Jo: n xv. 6.

What think ye now, hearers? are ye also so incapable of doing good, and inclined to all wickedness? do ye see it experimentally

and with concern in yourselves? or are ye regenerated by the Spirit of God? have ye learned your inability thereby, and hath your soul obtained a desire and a power to conduct acceptably to God? Surely ye have not.

1. Who are indifferent and unconcerned, whether ye must, or can do good, and whether ye must be regenerated. Your thoughts extend not so far, ye think that ye must provide for something else, even your bodily welfare, as if ye had nothing to do with God, and were not under any obligations to him. "Ye slide back, like a backsliding heifer," Hosea, iv. 16.

2. Nor ye neither, who with "Herod do many things," Mark vi. 20, and with the Jews "have a zeal for God," Rom. x. 2. But are these good things better than heathenish, or Socinian, civil and externally religious virtues, consisting in a forsaking of evil, and doing good externally, without any change or regeneration of the heart? things which do not accompany salvation, which men can do from a natural conscience, and by common grace, like Abimelech, Gen. xx. 4, 5, 6. But ye do not perform them from a principle of the life of regeneration, nor from an union of your souls with Jesus, as the true vine: "to be dead to yourselves, and to live in God with Christ is hidden from you," Coll. iii. 3. If ye knew this, and endeavoured to practise it, ye would see experimentally your inability to do good, and your inclination to all wickedness, and would be concerned.

3. And ye do not know your inability, and are not regenerated, who, when ye have once discovered your duty, and are convinced of your abominable conduct, defer your conversion until this or that opportunity, and so think that ye are able to convert yourselves at any time. Or if ye do not defer your conversion, ye are however not so convinced of your inability, that ye are concerned; for ye are presently ready to purpose and promise idly that ye will not commit this or that sin any more, and that ye will now live better lives than heretofore, which commonly ends in a certain outward morality, or not even in that, as Israel promised inconsiderately, that "whatsoever the Lord had spoken they would do," Exod. xix. 8. xxiv. 3. But what became of their promise? they violated it in a shameful manner, when they made a molten calf for themselves, and worshipped it, Exod. xxxii.

4. Do ye say, we know that we cannot do any good of ourselves, but only by the grace of God? Do ye then do all things, not of yourselves, but by the grace of God? or doth the knowledge of our inability, of regeneration, and doing all things by the grace of God

consist in a bare understanding of these things, or in empty words? hath not the grace of God only the name, and your natural endeavours the deed? And how do ye know this? only from hearsay? Ye do not then know your inability, as ye ought, to your salvation. "The Spirit of God alone convinceth the world of sin," and of inability, by means of the word, John xvi. 8. He causeth a person to see the strength of his corruption, and his wicked inclinations, he teaches him the spirituality of the law, and he sets him to work, and so he sees his frequent deviations from his duty, and consequently his inability also with concern and grief, and he cries for help. See this in Paul, Rom. vii. Have ye not learned your inability in this manner, ye do not then know it as ye ought, and your knowledge of your misery doth not yet conduce to your deliverance.

5. Perhaps one or another of you will say, I see indeed, and that experimentally, that I have no strength; for I have indeed purposed in my mind to forsake this and that sin, and lead a better life, but I have learned by the event that I am unable to accomplish my purpose: but what effect hath such a discovery upon you? doth it produce distress of mind, and an earnest desire to be regenerated? it doth not in many: but it renders them careless, they seek to excuse themselves of doing their duty, and think, if God do not grant me his grace, how can I help it, that I do not perform that which is good: in the mean while they do inwardly and secretly rejoice that they have found such a cloak for their shame, and they indulge their depravity: and when they are exhorted to do their duty, and are reproved on account of their sins, they think or say, what can I do, when God doth not give me what he commands? and so with our adversaries they accuse God of "doing them injustice, by requiring of them what they cannot perform," and they cry out with the Jews, "If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?" Ezek. xxxiii. 10.

Is it thus with you, know then that ye are still under the broken covenant of works: and therefore the whole law, and the curse of it are against you: for ye have done nothing hitherto but break the law by sinning, and the curse is denounced against him, who "continueth not in all things that the law commands," Gal. iii. 10. Ye have yet your evil nature, which is "wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness," ye are not yet "born again, and cannot therefore enter into the kingdom of God," John iii. 5. And how shall ye, continuing thus, be delivered? for ye cannot do aught else but sin, ye cannot regenerate yourselves, nor pay your debt, nor escape from the hands of your Judge.

Are ye in some measure concerned about your salvation, behold then your desperate misery, be anxious, cry out, "there is no hope," Isaiah lvii. 10, and ask with solicitude, "What shall we do to be saved?" Acts ii. 37. xvi. 30. Abide under the ministrations of the gospel, if it may please God to beget you with the word of truth," James i. 18, and cry unto God that he would exert his power upon you, to convert you, like the church, Lam. v. 20. "Turn us O Lord, unto thee, and we shall be turned."

But, believers, who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God, and favoured by the free grace of the Lord with a new light and life :

1. Consider yourselves as obligated to observe and keep all God's commandments, and to be a praise in the earth. For ye are not only his creatures, connected with him by nature, to do his will but also "his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that ye should walk in them," Eph. ii. 10. Ye have the beginnings of the new life, new powers, and "help is laid for you upon one who is mighty," Psalm lxxxix. 19, "and ye receive of his fulness, and grace for grace," John i. 16, Are ye still subject to a great impotency, as well as to other corruptions, this doth not discharge you from your duty ; but the Lord reveals this to you, not to discharge you from your duty but that he may induce you to depend on him and his power, to strengthen yourselves in him, that "his power may be perfected in your weakness," and that ye may thus "be strong, when ye are weak," 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

2. Beware that ye never begin, nor endeavour to perform your duty in your own strength. The regenerate often act in this manner, and particularly (a) when they set about a duty, which they judge to be necessary, rashly, with might and main, without serious consideration, and without humbly looking up to the Lord for his influence. (b) When they expect so much good from their own resolutions : they have a great desire to do the will of God in all things, and they measure their ability by their desire, therefore they form great resolutions, and they are confident that they will accomplish those resolutions ; but they are ashamed of the event : for God willing to acquaint them with themselves, suffers them to fall into grievous sins. See this in Peter, Matt. xxvi. 33, 34, 35. xxvii. 69—70. (c) Then also, when they endeavour to effect, and to force themselves into a good frame by their natural meditations, by their efforts in their own strength, and their bodily exertions. (d) They work also in their own strength, when they endeavour to work above their state,

to wit, when a child attempts to do the work of a young man, or of a father in Christ. He sees with how much assurance, light purity, holiness and strength, this and the other advanced Christian works, and he hath a mind to do the same after him; but he doth not succeed, it is above the power, and beyond the attainment of a child.

(d) Also when they work above their frame. We are sometimes in a dark and in a dull frame, and far from the Lord: but if we will do our duty then in such a clear, lively and hearty manner, as when we are in the light, and enlivened, and near to God, we go in our own might, and not "in the strength of the Lord God." Psalm lxxi. 16 (f) Once more, we work in our own strength, when we become fretful and are discouraged, because we have not done our duty as we wished and hoped to do it, we show by this conduct that we looked for much good from our own exertions: whereas whatever we do but sin, we do only by the free grace of God.

The Christian, we say, ought to beware of working in his own strength: he cannot of himself do aught that is pleasing to God; "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts," Zech. iv. 6. Works done in our own strength are strange fire, and they will exceedingly darken, perplex and disturb the soul.

3. Learn by all means to perform your duty in a manner that is suitable to your state and frame. By a state we must understand that measure of advancement in the spiritual life, which one hath above another. One is a child, and another is a youth and a man in Christ, according to 1 John ii. 12, 13, 14. A child hath not that steadfast assurance of the love of God, which a youth and a man have. A youth and a man are more intent upon a knowledge of divine mysteries, that they may govern themselves wisely, and according to the word of God in all their conversation, and a child is more taken with pleasant and agreeable feelings, and delightful experiences of grace. A youth and a man pursue holiness more, and more singly and steadfastly than a child, who is chiefly intent upon assurance and comfort. A youth and a man are more workingly and actively engaged in their pious exercises, but a child is more passively, and looks out only for immediate influences.

A person ought to be active in his holy exercises in proportion to his advancement in his state, that he may not by exerting himself above his ability, fatigue himself too much, and overweary himself: "as the man is, so is his strength," Judges viii. 21. "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule," Philip. iii. 16.

By a frame we understand that particular situation and disposition of mind, whereby a Christian is one while in darkness, and another

while in the light, one while dull and another lively, one while sorrowful and another joyful. When a Christian is in darkness, when he is dull and sorrowful, he cannot work as he can, when he is in the light, when he is lively, and when he rejoiceth, or he will overwork and fatigue himself to no purpose. If he shall then work according to his ability, he must observe and inquire where, and in what manner God worketh in him; say not, when I am barren, dark, dull and sorrowful, the Lord doth not then work in me, and I cannot then effect any thing: for in whatsoever evil frame the soul may be, the Lord doth still work in her in one way or another; for "the Spirit abideth in and with you for ever," John xiv. 16. And he is never inactive in you. When the mind is in an evil frame, we see it with more or less compunction, and this proceeds from the Holy Spirit, who convinceth of sins. We ought to begin our work here by looking into our sinful frame, which would excite in us shame and sorrow, would cause us to inhale the influence of "the north and south wind" of the Spirit, Song iv. 16, and in all our exercises "run after the Lord, when he draweth" us, Song i. 4.

4. Stir up the divine gift of regeneration, "which is in you," 2 Tim. i. 6, that it may increase, be improved and confirmed in you; we must "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," according to 2 Peter iii. 18, and we must "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," Eph. vi. 10. Therefore abide under the dispensation of the means of grace, for they are the nourishment of our spiritual life: As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby," 1 Peter ii. 2. converse much with the most zealous and lively of the godly: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise," saith the wisest of kings, Prov. xiii. 30, and "iron sharpeneth iron: so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend," Prov. xxvii. 17. When we observe our neighbour's improvement in wisdom, his weanedness from the world, his heavenly-mindedness and zealousness in that which is good, we are then seized with a holy emulation to imitate his noble example, as "the zeal of the Corinthians provoked very many," 2 Cor. ix. 2. Engage also much in acts of communion with God: "Acquaint now yourselves with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto you," Job xxii. 21. Yea, stir up yourselves daily, "lift up your hearts in the ways of the Lord," with Jehoshaphat 2 Chron. xvii. 6. Indulge not any manner of slackness, looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God," Heb. xii. 15. Are ye sometimes seized with spiritual sluggishness and drowsiness, like the spouse, Song v. 2, 3, do not nourish it, but rouse,

bestir yourselves, and "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight path for your feet," &c. Heb. xii. 12, 13, 14. Look up to the Lord Jesus, "who is become all things to you, yea, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption," Coll. iii. 11. 1 Cor. i. 30. Go to him, open your hearts to him. employ your faith, that it may "receive" of all his influences, and "grace for grace of his fulness," John i. 16, and seek through the conduits of the promises; yea, let your operative faith employ him, and improve him with respect to his office, in order to live by him and by his power, like Paul, who saith, "I am crucified with Christ; and I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. ii. 20. We must enter into the strictest union with him, if we will perform aught that is acceptable to God: "I am the vine," saith he, John xv. 5. "and ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." In every condition wait for the inbreathings of the Holy Spirit, and conduct according to it, like the apostles, who being "filled with the Holy Ghost, spake as the Spirit gave them utterance," Acts ii. 4. And therefore turn the sails of your understanding and will toward him with hearty desires, sighings and prayers, and catch the wind of his grace, that it may drive you on with a full gale in all your exercises, like "Jesus, who returned in the power of the Spirit unto Galilee," Luke iv. 14.

5. Are ye regenerated, behold your happiness and salvation. "Ye who were dead, have been made alive, are risen with Christ, and set with him in heavenly places," Eph. ii. 5, 6. Give him also the honour of it: "he hath formed you, that ye should show forth his praise," Isaiah xliii. 21. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," saith Peter "who according to his great mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope," 1 Peter i. 3. "Is it given you to grow in the courts of our God, to be fat and flourishing in old age, it is that ye may show that the Lord is upright," Psalm xcii. 13—16. Have ye the power and the ability to perform any good work, "do not say in your heart, My strength and the might of my hand hath gotten me this power: but ye shall remember the Lord your God; for it is he that giveth you power," Deut. viii. 17, 18. "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. iv. 7. "I have laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace

of God, which was with me," saith Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 10. Whatever ye have, bring it to the source from which it hath flowed to you, like David, who considered his own, and his people's willingness to contribute abundantly for the building of the temple, as wrought in them by the Lord, and glorified the Lord on account of it, saying, 1 Chron. xxix. 14. "Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee."

Doth it afflict you, that there remains so great a force, and often such an overbearing power of corruption in you, "sin shall nevertheless not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace," Rom. vi. 14. Doth it grieve you, that ye have so little strength to walk in a manner, that is acceptable to God, remember that ye have to do with a most gracious Lord, who accepteth of our sincere endeavours; "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not," 2 Cor. viii. 12. Your God, who hath given you the life of regeneration, and "hath begun the good work in you, will perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ," Philip. i. 6, "and he will fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thess. i. 11, 12. He will waft your souls on by his power, until he shall bring them to those regions, where no sin, nor any inclination to iniquity shall be found, and where ye shall with perfect ability follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. How "blessed is the man, whose strength is in God, in whose heart are the ways of them, who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well: the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength: every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." Amen.

THE
PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

SEQUEL OF THE IV. LORD'S DAY.

Romans i. 18. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men.

Q. 10. Will God suffer such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished ?

A. By no means ; but is terribly displeased with our original as well as actual sins ; and will punish them in his just judgment, temporally and eternally, as he hath declared, " Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them."

Q. 11. Is not God then also merciful ?

A. God is indeed merciful, but also just ; therefore his justice requires, that sin, which is committed against the most high majesty of God, be also punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment, both of body and soul.

"**T**HINE own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee : know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts," Jer. ii. 19. The sinner delights and rejoices in the evil of sin, as though it were exceedingly good and pleasant : for " he calls good evil, and evil good," Isaiah v. 20. " His taste is corrupt, and therefore evil is sweet in his mouth : he spares it, and forsakes it not ; but keeps it still within his mouth." Yet how bitter will it prove to him ! " His meat in his bowels shall be turned, it shall be the gall of asps within him," Job xx. 12, 13, 14. Sin is in itself exceedingly evil and bitter :

for thereby we forsake the Lord, the rock of salvation : we deny his holiness, righteousness, and supreme authority, we "stretch out our hands against God, and strengthen ourselves against the Almighty : we run upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his buckler," as Elphas speaks, Job xv. 25, 26. Godly persons, seeing their sins, and the abominable disposition of their mind are exceedingly sorry for their sins, the abominable nature of sin, more than the punishment of it, causeth them with Job to "abhor themselves, and to repent in dust and ashes." But that which renders sin, so exceedingly evil and bitter in itself, still more evil and bitter, is the evil consequence of it : for sin not only blinds a person, renders him a slave of himself, averse from God, and unable to do good ; but it renders him also guilty, and subjects him to the most bitter punishment. "Thy way," saith the Lord to Judah, who had been so severely punished, Jer. iv. 18, "and thy doings have procured these things unto thee, this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thy heart." God requireth that the sinner should "know and see this," that he may lay it to heart, Jer. ii. 19. Wherefore? will the Lord torment him before the time? No, but he chooseth that the sinner should humble himself, should look out for deliverance, and become capable of it. The Lord God would "remember his covenant" for the salvation of his people, who had been grievously punished," if their uncircumcised hearts should be humbled, and they should accept of the punishment of their iniquity," Lev. xxvi. 41, 42. Behold how the rod of God's chastisement humbled Ephraim, and conduced to his deliverance, Jer. xxxi. 19, 20.

This is the design of our instructor, when he teacheth the sinner the knowledge of his misery, as the first mean of obtaining deliverance, Question 2, for which purpose he shows him in the first place whence he must learn to know his misery, Question 3, 4, and then wherein it consists, namely (a) in sin, the abominable nature and cause of which are shown, Question 5, 6, 7. (b) In the evil consequences of it, as an inability to do good, Question 8, 9, and the grievous punishment which God inflicts upon the sinner, Question 10, 11. We have seen formerly, to wit, Question 6, 7, in what manner the sin of Adam is punished ; we must now attend to the manner in which God is displeased with sins in general.

The instructor doth two things here :

I. He declares the punishment of sin, Question 10.

II. He refutes an argument against the punishment of sin, Question 11.

I. The deserving cause of the evil of punishment is the evil of sin

for "God is displeased both with our original and actual sins." Original sin is that which we have inherited by our birth, and hath been exhibited in the foregoing 7th question. Actual sin is that which we ourselves commit and act in thought, word and deed, by omitting to do that which is commanded us, and by doing that which is forbidden us, whether against the first or second table of the law, with respect to God, ourselves, and our neighbour. These several sins are either reigning in the unregenerate, who are willing slaves of sin: "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin," John viii. 3, 4, or sins which do not reign, to wit, in the regenerate, who are often "brought into captivity to the law of sin, which is in their members," contrary to their will and inclination, by the power of corruption, Rom. vii. 23. Every sin deserves death by its own nature: "The wages of sin is death," saith Paul, Rom. vi. 23. And therefore the Papists contradict the word of God, when they distinguish sins into venial, which do not deserve death, and mortal, which deserve death by their abominable nature more than other sins. One sin is indeed greater, and is punished with greater severity than another. See John xix. 11. Matt. xi. 21—24 but the least sin deserves death, inasmuch as it is committed against the most high majesty of God, and against his law, which threatens the transgressor with death. John speaks indeed of "a sin unto death, and of a sin, which is not unto death," 1 John v. 16, 17, but a sin which is not unto death, doth not mean a sin which by its own nature doth not deserve death, and is pardonable, but only a sin which God doth not punish with death in all who are guilty of it, and of which many obtain forgiveness, which cannot be said of the sin unto death, since that is the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, "whereby a person maliciously rejects and opposes, without a powerful temptation of endangering his life, or other temptations of such a nature, the truth of the gospel, which is according to godliness, of which he hath been assured by an inward enlightening and conviction of the Holy Spirit." See concerning this sin, Matt. xii. 31, 32. Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. x. 26—29. Because this sin is unpardonable, therefore John calls it "a sin unto death, for which a person may not pray, and which they who are born of God cannot commit," 1 John v. 16, 17, 18. God could indeed forgive that sin, but it doth not please him to forgive it, because it obstinately, and with a final and persevering impenitence, rejects the conviction of the Holy Ghost, and so the last mean of conversion: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, &c. if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance," Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

God inflicts punishment on account of all these sins in his displeasure, or anger. Anger in man is a vehement and vexatious perturbation of his mind, whereby he is urged to avenge himself of his neighbour, on account of some real, or supposed injury done to him. But the Lord God being simple, independent, and unchangeably and perfectly happy, cannot suffer such a painful agitation of mind. When nevertheless anger is ascribed to him, we must understand it in a sense which is worthy of him, and by way of analogy, agreeably to his word, which designs by the anger of God, (a) his holy aversion and dislike to the sinner and his sin, by which he is injured in the highest degree; as a man, who is angry, is averse from the person, who hath injured him. And so it is said of God, that "he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that he cannot look upon iniquity," Hab. i. 13. "Jesus looked round about upon the Jews with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts," Mark iii. 5. Therefore the anger of God is called also, after the manner of men, "the grief of his heart," Gen. vi. 6. Isaiah lxiii. 10, "his hatred," Psalm v. 5, 6, and "his vexation," Psalm xc. 10. (b) His holy and righteous will and purpose to punish the sinner. "God will punish sin," saith the instructor, in order to explain the anger of God. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John iii. 36. That is, the will of God to punish him in due time, although his long suffering spare him yet. Therefore the anger of God is also called "his desire," Hosea x. 10. (c) Finally, the anger of God denotes also the punishments and judgments, which he inflicts on the sinner, upon account of his sins: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," saith our text. See this signification also, Matt. iii. 7. Rom. iii. 5. Thus the catechism also explains the anger of God by "his just judgment, by which he punisheth sins temporally and eternally." Since now God, when he punisheth, takes vengeance of sin, obtains satisfaction, and glorifies his holiness, justice and power, therefore he is said "to rejoice," Deut. xxviii. 63, "to comfort himself," Isaiah i. 24, and "to be refreshed," Amos v. 9, when he punishes sin.

"God punishes sin then by his just judgment, temporally and eternally." Temporally in this life, both with bodily and spiritual plagues. Bodily punishments are all that is shameful, hurtful, and painful to the sinner. "God poureth contempt upon him, even upon princes," Psalm cvii. 40, which is the most intolerable evil, that can befall the proud sinner: Saul and Ahithophel slew themselves, because they could not endure contempt, 1 Sam. xxxi. 4, 5. 2 Sam. xviii. 23.

The Lord plagues the transgressor also sometimes with poverty: "he becomes as a moth and rottenness unto him," Hosea v. 12, and "curses his blessings," Mal. ii 2, so that the sinner must cry out with distress, "What shall I eat? what shall I drink? and wherewithal shall I be clothed?" Matt. vi. 25. And as if this were not grievous enough, "God distributeth sorrows to him in his anger," Job xxi. 17. "He is also chastened with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were not seen stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers," Job xxxiii. 19—22. God visits the sinner with fevers, consumptions, pestilence, biles, wounds, and other plagues of that kind, which "bring him to the king of terrors, drive him out of light into darkness, and chase him out of the world," Job xviii. 14, 18. He is attacked with all these evil plagues immediately by God himself, and by his evil enemies in his own person, in his household, and in the land in which he dwells. See how all this and still more is threatened, Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii.

But man sins chiefly with his soul, and therefore his soul also is attacked with the most grievous spiritual judgments. (a) God smites the soul with blindness and darkness of understanding. Man is by nature spiritually blind: nevertheless he hath still some natural knowledge of divine things; but even "that which he still hath is justly taken away from him," Matt. xiii. 12. "His foolish heart is still more darkened," Rom. ii 21, and so he deceives himself: "he saith, I am rich, and increased in goods, and he knows not that he is wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," Rev. iii. 17. God, in whom he hath the greatest concern, is hidden from him: "the gospel of salvation is hidden from him," 2 Cor. iv. 3, and "God sends him a strong delusion, so that he believes a lie;" 2 Thess ii. 11. (b) To this is added hardness of heart, so that he becomes like a stone, insensible and impenitent. Before this he could sometimes relent on account of his sins, and be afraid of destruction; but God, being greatly displeased with him, suffers "his heart to wax gross, makes his ears heavy, and shuts his eyes, lest he should see with his eyes, and hear with his ears, and understand with his heart, and be converted and healed," Isaiah vi. 9, 10. (c) God also abandons him to the thralldom of his sins, so that "his own iniquities take him, and he is holden with the cords of his sins," Rev. v. 22. Yea, the Lord lets his lusts loose on him, which seize him and drive him forward, and so he is given over to a reprobate mind,

to do those things which are not convenient," Rom. i. 28. (d) He is also punished by God with the overlording of Satan. "The God of this world blinds his mind, that the light of the gospel may not shine unto him," 2 Cor. iv. 4. That potent ruler drives him from sin to sin, "he works in the children of disobedience," Eph. ii. 2, 3, and "takes them captive in his snare at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26. Yea, he will sometimes "terrify" them, as he did Saul, 1 Sam. xvi. 14. (e) God's spiritual judgment sometimes proceeds so far with the sinner, that he gives him up to a restless conscience, which torments him continually. That will upbraid him continually with his improper conduct, will present God to him with terror, as a righteous judge, and will even in laughter afflict his heart with sorrow; and that gnawing worm will cause him to choose with Judas even strangling, Matt. xxvii. 5.

But what danger would there be, if the sinner were punished only in this life, his end draws near, and after death he will not suffer any more: but that which must cause him to cry out for grief of heart is, that God will plague him for ever with "the punishment of everlasting fire," Jude vs. 7, and with "the damnation of hell," Matt. xxiii. 33. By which, (1) he will be deprived of all that was honourable, pleasant and profitable to him in this life, and that did in some measure divert and moderate his distress: he may not have "a moistened finger to cool his tongue:" and nothing but a painful remembrance of "the good things, which he had received in his lifetime," will remain with him, and afflict him grievously, Luke xvi. 24, 25. Yea, what will distress him most, he will be excluded from the enjoyment of the only blessed God; for "he will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," 2 Thess. i. 9. He is now indeed alienated from the life of God; but he doth not know God, nor the happiness of communion with him, and he doth not concern himself with these things; and therefore his separation from God doth not grieve him, or he flatters himself with a vain hope, that God will yet be favourable to him: but when a dreadful eternity shall surprize him, he will then know experimentally, and with anguish of soul what God is, what it is to enjoy him, what to be separated and estranged from him; how his vain hope will abhor him, and leave him to the greatest distress, without any relief. (2) He will not only miss all that is good, but he will also be subjected to a painful feeling of all that is evil: for (a) "God will not meet him as a man," Isaiah xlvii. 3, but "he will stir up all his wrath," Psalm lxxviii. 38, and cause the sinner to "drink of the wrath of the Almighty," Job xxi. 20. Can

a man not endure that his neighbour, whose good will he seeks and needeth, should behold him in wrath, how insupportable then will "the power of God's anger and indignation be to him!" Psalm xc. ii. The damned will cry out more than the heathen and Roman persecutors, when they were defeated at the opening of the sixth seal, Rev. vi. 16, 17. "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (b) The sinner's conscience will also rage terribly against him, and gnaw and sting him like a "worm," Mark ix. 44, 46, 48. It will continually upbraid him with all his iniquities, in their aggravating circumstances: that he hath sinned dreadfully against such an exalted Majesty, against so many obligations and faithful warnings, and that he hath in such a senseless manner lost his invaluable salvation for a few insignificant trifles. (c) And what will afflict him equally with this is, that he will always persist in sinning, that he will, in the most horrible manner curse himself and his neighbour, with whom he had sinned during his life, yea, that he will "blaspheme God because of his pains," like the worshipers of the beast, when "the fifth viol shall be poured out upon his seat," Rev. xvi. 10, 11. Sin is now indeed the element of the sinner, but it will then be to him like seething water to aliving fish, although it cannot live out of the water, which is its element.

This misery will be aggravated by the circumstances of place, of society, and duration. The transgressor will be cast and shut up in a most dreary place, as "in a prison," 1 Peter iii. 19, "in hell," Luke xvi. 23. "the deep," Luke viii. 31. "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." Rev. xxi. 8. "the outer darkness," Matt. viii. 11. All these terrifying descriptions of the place of the damned ought to affect the sinner with the greatest horror, and cause him to flee from the wrath to come.

There the wicked wight will also be with the most horrible sinners, with whom no person of the least morality could converse here. For "the lake of fire is the portion of the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars," Rev. xxi. 8. There is no person who is more hated than a hypocrite; but hell is the proper abode of such, Matt. xxiv. 51. And surely those monsters will not be there to practise their enormities for sport, but to torment one another, when they will upbraid one another with a hellish malignity, that they have occasioned each others' perdition. The devils will also be there, as

in their inheritance, Matt. xxv. 41, and will serve as "tormentors" of the guilty sinner, Matt. xviii. 34.

If the season of punishment continued thousands of years, there would still be an end of it; but that which will be insupportable to the damned person, and which will sink him into the lowest depth of despair is, that his pains will be eternal, eternal beyond the utmost reach of thought. For there will be "an everlasting fire, and everlasting punishment," Matt. xxv. 41, 46. "He may seek death, but it will flee from him: his worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

The soul of the sinner must undergo this, as soon as in death it departs from the body. For we consider it as an opinion, to which we ought not to assent, because it is too dangerous, that the essence of the soul consists only in thought, and that it is not therefore capable of residing in any place: for thought being an act must therefore proceed from a being, which actually thinketh, and besides this, we must say, that the soul being in no place, and therefore no where, doth really not exist at all: and what becomes of the soul, when it departs from the body? is it no where? how is the believer then blessed, when he dies? according to Rev. xiv. 13, and how are the ungodly punished? "do not the spirits go into prison then?" 1 Peter iii. 19. And how do those of Sodom and Gomorrah suffer the vengeance of eternal fire?" Jude vs. 7, according to the body? No, the fire by which their cities and bodies were burned, hath been quenched long since.

The body is indeed freed from the condemnation of hell sometime, but it will be raised up again, and united to the soul, which it had served as an instrument in sinning, in order to be punished likewise: for "many shall arise to shame and everlasting contempt," Dan. xii. 2, to be cast with body and soul into hell," where they will weep with their eyes, and gnash their teeth," Matt. xiii. 42, and gnaw their tongues for pain," Rev. xvi. 10.

But how do the Socinians strengthen the hands of the ungodly, when they teach that the heathens, who have not had the gospel, will be annihilated, and suffer only a painless punishment of loss and deprivation, that they shall not see the face of God: but that those who have had the gospel, and nevertheless slighted and rejected it, shall be consumed by a dreadful fire at the last day, with great torment, and then be annihilated. If an ungodly man can believe this, he will become still more ungodly. Such a doctrine supposes that the soul is mortal, contrary to the nature of it, and to the word of God. The word of God testifieth also, that all the ungodly "shall

depart into everlasting fire, and into everlasting torment," Matt. xxv. 41, 46, and that "their worm shall not die, and that their fire shall not be quenched," Mark ix. 44. "The heathens do not know God," saith Paul, 1 Thess. iv. 5. Now "God will take vengeance in flaming fire on them who do not know him, as well as on them, who do not obey the gospel," 2 Thess. i. 8. The men of Sodom and Gomorrah, who were heathens, and not of the family of Abraham, nor in the covenant, "suffer even until this day the vengeance of eternal fire," Jude vrs. 7. Surely the apostle doth not mean the fire by which they were consumed, since that was not the eternal fire, for it doth not burn any more.

Behold in this manner doth God punish sins; but doth he punish only actual sins thus? and not original sin also? surely he is displeased with that also, and will punish it with temporal and eternal judgments; for must not young children, who have only original, and not actual sins, suffer many sorrows, yea, death itself? and are not these miseries a punishment of their original sin? we may not think that these miseries are not inflicted upon them by God, nor that God visits them therewith, without regard to any sinfulness or punishment; for we should then deny either the providence of God, or his mercy; but may we think that children who die without committing any actual sins are punished for ever and damned? We must speak cautiously here. It is certain, that the children of believing parents are received with their parents into covenant with God, according to Gen. xvii. 7. Acts ii. 39, and are therefore called "holy" 1 Cor. vi. 14, and "the kingdom of God is promised to them," Matt. xix. 13, 14, 15. See our exposition of infant baptism, Lord's Day 27. But this is not the subject of inquiry here, but whether God is displeased with the original sin of children, and whether he will punish it, as the instructor speaks? and truly the word of God teaches us this, when it saith that "the whole world," and therefore children also "are guilty before God," Rom. iii. 19. We are also "children of wrath by nature," Eph. ii. 3. Children are sometimes punished with their parents, who are punished eternally, as we see in the children of the first world, who perished in the flood with their parents, "who are in prison," 1 Peter iii. 19, and this grievous judgment befell them on account of original sin also, according to Gen. vi. 5, 6, 7. Were not children punished in the fire of Sodom and Gomorrah? and do not these suffer even until this day "the punishment of eternal fire?" Jude vrs. 7. *

* Our author doth not assert here absolutely, that any infants are actually lost, but he only argues from certain passages of scripture, with respect to

Because original sin is a punishment of Adam's sin, therefore the Remonstrants assert that God doth not punish original sin in this manner; since one punishment would then be unjustly punished with another. But original sin is not only a punishment by a righteous imputation of Adam's guilt, but it is also an inherent depravity, rendering man liable to punishment from his birth: he is called indeed "a transgressor from the womb," Isaiah xlvi. 5. We must humble ourselves on account of it, with David, Psalm li. 5, and with him seek for the pardon of it, and God punisheth one sin in other instances with another, which sin is then again justly punished.

It is contrary to the word of God, as we will show on the seventh Lord's Day, that God hath received all mankind, who fell in Adam, and therefore children also into favour, and that he doth not consequently punish original sin. We do not speak here of the covenant of grace, into which some children are received, but of the covenant of works, and of the manner in which God punisheth the posterity of Adam on account of the breach of this covenant. Doth God receive all men graciously into a general covenant of grace, he will nevertheless, even according to the opinion of the Remonstrants, punish many of them; for they teach that every individual of mankind will not be eternally happy.

It is true God forgave the sin of Adam, when he promised him the seed of the woman. but it doth not follow therefrom, that he forgave the whole human race, who had sinned in him, that sin, and

this matter, in such a manner, as to show, that we must not presume to decide positively, that all infants are saved; neither doth the catechism, or any other standard of our church declare absolutely, that any infants, who die before they have committed actual sins, are damned, but only with the word of God, that we are by nature children of wrath, and that unless a person be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God and that those who die in their natural, or unregenerate state suffer not only for actual sins, but also for their original, or birth sin. We cannot indeed tell, but that it may please God, of his infinite compassion, to regenerate all those children, whom he takes out of the world before they have committed actual sins. Leading divines have differed in their opinions concerning the future condition of infants. But although we cannot decide positively what the actual state of infants may be after this life, nevertheless Christians in general have always conceived, that we have greater encouragement from scripture to hope well of infants, who die within the pale of the church, than of those who die without that pale, since the former are entitled to the promises, and therefore may be baptized, but the latter have no express promise, and therefore may not be baptized. Those Christians who have conceived that any children were lost, have always holden that there was a great difference between the unhappiness of such, and of persons who have committed actual sins.

that he doth not punish them for it ; for if God forgave him his personal sin, he did not therefore forgive the whole human race that sin, unless Adam were the head of the whole human race in the covenant of grace, as well as in the covenant of works, which no man can say, who holds that Christ is the head of the covenant of grace, according to Rom. v. 15—19. 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 49.

But how is God displeas'd with sin? "terribly," saith the instructor. Therefore the anger of God is likened to the most terrible things, to wit, to "a fire which burns to the lowest hell," Deut. xxxii. 22. to "instruments of death, a sharp sword, a bent bow and arrows," Psalm vii. 11, 12, 13, to "a grievous whirlwind from the Lord." Jer. xxiii. 19, to the "dregs" of a poisonous cup, Psalm lxxv. 8. Jer. xxv. 15, 16, and to the raging of a "fierce lion, leopard and bear," Hosea xiii. 7. 8. There are also many examples of God's terrible anger. We will not speak now of the dreadful judgments that befell the old world. Sodom and the seditious company of Korah, see only how even the most holy men have roared under a sense of God's anger. How was Job forced to complain of "the arrows of the Almighty," chap. vi. 4. Heman was "afflicted and ready to die from his youth up," &c. Psalm lxxxviii. 15—19. How grievously the Son of God himself was oppressed by the wrath of God we may see from his bitter complaints in the garden, and on the cross, and the distress of heaven and earth, which seemed to suffer with him, and on account of him. Matt. xxvi. 37—44. chap. xxvii. 45—54. And when God attacks impenitent sinners, how doth it affright them, and what trembling siezes on them, saying, "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Isaiah xxxiii. 14. Only represent to yourselves how sadly the damned weep with their eyes, how they gnash their teeth, how they gnaw their tongues, wring their hands, how they seek for death in vain, and blaspheme the God of heaven. We can also conceive that God is terribly displeas'd, when we consider that he is not deficient in wisdom to contrive terrible punishments, nor in power to execute them upon those who reproach his name. He denounceth his curse against the least sin, Gal. iii. 10. Many Bethshemites were punished with death, because they looked inquisitively into the ark, and Uzza, because he laid hold of it in an indiscreet manner, 1 Sam. vi. 19, 20. 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7. When we add to this that God will punish sin eternally. we may then also imagine how terribly God is displeas'd with sin.

Since God is so terribly displeas'd with sin, he will also "certainly" punish it, as he hath spoken, Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10.

“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.” This is the threatening of the covenant of works: for Paul proves from this sentence of cursing, that “as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse,” Gal. iii. 10; to which curse pertain likewise all the threatenings denounced in the word of God against the unconverted sinner; for it is “the law only that worketh wrath,” Rom. iv. 15, and therefore this sentence of the curse is very properly referred by the instructor to original, as well as to actual sin, inasmuch as both belong to the covenant of works. When this curse was announced to the Israelites, with whom God had already established his covenant of grace, Deut. xxxvi. 16, it was not, because he entered into a covenant of works with them, but because he chose to exhibit the broken covenant of works to them by the legal administration of the covenant of grace, in order that he might convince them, and urge them to the Messiah, who was to come. See Gal. iii. 10—24. When God saith this, we must also believe it, and be assured that he will certainly punish sin; for he is true in his threatenings as well as in his promises; therefore Samuel said with respect to the judgment denounced against Saul, “He who is the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man that he should repent,” 1 Sam. xv. 29. When the curses were denounced from mount Ebal, “all the people should say Amen,” Deut. xxvii. 13—26.

It is also “necessary,” that God should punish sin, not only on account of his truth, since he hath said it, but also because it is natural to him; for it doth not proceed merely from his free good pleasure, but also from his nature, that he doth punish sin. For (1) “sin is committed against the most high majesty of God,” his glory and sovereignty, which we must acknowledge, and also that we have to do with him. All this is denied and rejected by the sinner, when he sinneth, as though God were not worthy to be feared, loved and served; and so his most high majesty is dishonoured. Since now God loves himself, and therefore also his glorious majesty, with the greatest love, he cannot but be jealous of sin; and what is the jealousy of God, but an avenging punishment, whereby he restores his injured majesty to its proper lustre? “He will by no means clear the guilty. His name is jealous, and he is a jealous God,” Exod. xxxiv. 7, 14. Nahum i. 1, 2. Therefore it is said, that he is glorified, when he punishes sin, Numb. xiv. 21, 22, 23, and that he “comforts” himself, when he taketh vengeance, Isaiah i. 24. (2) The holiness of God hath a natural aversion from the sinner on account of his sin, and it is natural to God to hate sin: “He is of purer eyes,

than to behold evil," Hab. i. 13 Can he therefore, who is holiness itself, exercise communion with the sinner, as he would do, if he did not punish him, but showed him favour? If it were possible for him not to hate sin, it would be possible for him to love it. How contrary this is to the holy nature of God, how averse he is from sin, and on account of it from the sinner, is known to all. What is God's hatred and aversion from sin and the sinner? is it not the greatest punishment? see Psalm v. 5, 6, 7. 2 Thess. i. 9. If God did not punish sin, he would then seem to be "like the sinner," Psalm l 21, but when he punishes sin, he then shows that he is holy, Lev. x 1, 2, 3. Ezek. xxviii. 22. (3) The justice of God, as judge of the whole earth requires also, that he should punish sin, surely the judiciary punishment of sin is an act not only of anger, but also of justice, "God is indeed a righteous judge, and a God who is angry every day," Psalm vii. 12. cxxix. 4. Rom. ii. 5. Is not this punitive justice of God as judge, natural to him, as well as his other natural perfections, which he cannot deny? can we indeed conceive of God, as contrary to this judiciary justice, and as a judge, who is not righteous? "The Gentiles know the judgment of God; that they who commit such things are worthy of death," Rom. i. 32. How do the Gentiles know this? by a revelation? no, but by the light of nature, and by their own consciences, whereby "they do by nature the things contained in the law," Rom. ii. 14, 15. Now it is certain that they cannot know this judgment of God by the light of nature, if the punitive justice of God be not natural to him: for that which depends upon the free good pleasure of God, and upon his government no man can know by the light of nature, but only by revelation. If God did not punish sin, he would not do right, as a judge, either to himself or to the sinful creature, and therefore God is said to declare his righteousness when he punishes sin, Rom. iii. 25, 26. (4) The authority of God as a lawgiver, by which he requireth obedience of his rational creatures is natural to him: he cannot discharge man of his duty and obligation to keep his commands: "On account of his incomparable glory he may justly require that every one should fear him," Jer. x. 6, 7 If God can suffer the sinner to remain unpunished, he can then also discharge him of his obligation to obedience; for when he did not punish the sinner, he would say that he could endure that man should not obey him, which surely cannot be.

Let no man say that punishment is a strange work of God, and is not natural to him, because it is said, Isaiah xxviii. 21. "The Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring

to pass his act, his strange act ;” for the Socinians and others, who object this to us, must answer this objection themselves, inasmuch as they say that it is natural to God to punish the impenitent sinner, who persists in sinning without reformation ; yet they will not allow this with regard to every sin, as they do with regard to impenitence, when nevertheless impenitence is punishable only on account of its sinfulness, and not on account of its duration ; for duration is of itself not sinful, but in several instances commendable. With regard to *Isaiah xxviii 21*, we do not read there, that God’s work and act of punishing is strange to God, but only that it is strange : and to whom should it be strange ? to God ? no : but to the transgressors, on whom God would inflict a strange and unusual punishment.

As God punishes sin terribly, certainly, and necessarily, so he punishes it “justly.” In order that the punishment may be just, it must be equal to the sin, and not exceed it : and so a just punishment is that “recompence of an error which is meet,” *Rom. i. 27 ii. 6*. Now sin is committed against the most high majesty of God : but sin is grievous in proportion to the dignity of the person, against whom it is committed. See *Job xxxiv. 18, 19. 1 Sam ii. 25*. Since now sin is committed against the infinite God, and his most high majesty, therefore sin is also, in a certain respect, infinite, to wit, with respect to the infinite object of sin : “and therefore the justice of God requireth that sin, which is committed against the most high majesty of God, be punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment, both of body and soul.” Since now it doth not please God to annihilate the sinner, but to suffer him to exist for ever, therefore it is also an act of justice to punish him for ever with a sensible punishment, because he hath sinned against God, who will exist for ever, and because he will continue to sin, on account of his abominableness, which will cleave to him for ever.

II. The careless sinner, unwilling to be disturbed by the terrible-ness and justice of the punishment, soothes and hardens himself with the mercy of God, as if that would overcome and swallow up his justice ; in which he is strengthened by the Socinians, when they alledge the mercy of God against the doctrine of his punishing justice, asking, “Is not God then also merciful ?” We allow that God is indeed merciful, as well as just ; but God will not exercise mercy to the disparagement of his justice. To illustrate this we will explain wherein the mercy of God consists, and in what manner it is exercised, and we will then show that it doth not militate against his strict justice.

Mercy in man is a sorrowful perturbation of mind, on account of

the suffering of another, disposing him to rescue the sufferer. But the Lord God being independent, simple, unchangeable, and perfectly happy, cannot be affected with such an agitation and perturbation of mind: therefore, when it is said of him, after the manner of men, that he is merciful, it must be understood in a sense which is worthy of the nature of God; and so the mercy of God is only his goodness to the miserable, which he exerciseth, either by bestowing common benefits even upon the vilest sinners, as Jesus saith, Luke vi. 35, &c. "He is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil. Be ye, therefore, merciful, as your Father also is merciful." Or God exercises his mercy by conferring special and saving benefits in Christ upon the elect. Hear what Paul saith of this, Eph. ii. 45. "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ."

But although God is so merciful, he is also just: and, he requires that sin should be punished, and his mercy doth not abolish his vindictive justice; for the attributes of God cannot militate, one against another, whereby one would detract from the lustre of another; but one must increase the lustre of the other: therefore, the justice and mercy of God are joined together to his praise. See Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Psalm cxi. 3, 4. cxii. 4. cxvi. 5.

When this is rightly considered, we will see, (a) that there is no force in this objection to deny the vindictive justice of God: for although God is merciful to the unthankful and evil, bestowing common benefits on them, he will nevertheless punish them severely, if not in this life, yet after this life. Common mercy is not shown to them in order to exempt them from eternal punishment, but it only moderates their punishment for a season, in order to afford them a testimony of the divine goodness, and invite them to repentance. 2 Peter, iii. 9. "that they may be without excuse." Rom. i. 19, 20. "Do they despise the riches of the goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering of God, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth them to repentance, they do after their hardness and impenitent hearts, treasure up wrath to themselves against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Rom. ii. 4, 5. Doth he show his special mercy to the salvation of the elect, this supposeth the satisfaction of his justice by Christ, whereby he hath borne their punishment. Isaiah liii. 4, 5. Rom. iii. 25, 26. (b) We may also learn from what hath been said before, that this objection proceeds from a mistaken notion of the divine mercy, and of man's sinful misery. The Socinians imagine that God, as well as man, is subject to the passions of anger, sorrow, and so also of mercy; and

that he is moved by the misery of men, to abstain from punishing him, and to deliver him. But such agitations of mind militate against the independence, simplicity, unchangableness, and happiness of God; and besides this, the sinful misery of man is not adapted to excite mercy and compassion, whereby God should be moved to deliver him; but it is a misery which excites hatred and detestation, and thus calls for the righteous anger of God. Psalm v. 4, 5, 6. Hab. i. 13. See how loathsome the sinner is described, Ezek. xvi. 1. 5. How can God be moved by such a misery to compassion? Must he not remove the worker of iniquity from his presence? "The way of the sinner is before God like the uncleanness of a menstruous woman; therefore he pours his fury out upon him." Ezek. xxxvi. 17, 18. Can any man from pity take up a toad that hath been trodden under foot, and that wallows in its blood and poisonous spittle, lick it, or kiss it, in order to heal it? surely no: he cannot look upon it, but must remove it from his sight. Much less can the holy God, who is holiness itself, embrace in his special kindness and love, the hateful sinner, without a satisfaction to his justice. (e) We add also, that this objection is out of its place. God is merciful in the covenant of grace, but not in the covenant of works, which the sinner hath broken. Mercy hath no place in the broken covenant of works, but only justice; "The law worketh wrath." Rom. iv. 15. All the mercy whereby God honours his people with saving grace, proceeds from the covenant of grace which supposeth the death of the Mediator, and therefore God's vindictive justice. Heb. ix. 15. Since now this Lord's day treats of the righteous judgment of God, on account of our breach of the covenant of works, therefore the objection from the mercy of God in the covenant of Grace is out of its proper place here.

APPLICATION.

In this manner do the Socinians deny by their doctrine the terrible displeasure of God, by which he punisheth sin, temporally and eternally, certainly and justly: but this is denied by you also, who have not yet fled to Christ by faith and conversion, in order to obtain his righteousness. For,

1. Ye do not yet know the demerit of your sins. If ye knew it, and believed the terrible displeasure of God on account of your sins, would ye not then fear and tremble more because of your sins, and those terrible punishments, which ye must expect? would ye be so careless, and "when ye do evil, skip for joy?" Jer. xi. 15.

2. When God punishes you in this life with many and grievous calamities, ye do not then perceive that God doth this on account of your sins and impenitence : ye look not at him who smites you, but think that time and chance bring these things forth : ye think that they come to pass, as though "afflictions came forth out of the earth, and trouble sprang up out of the ground," Job v. 6. And so ye say with your deeds, "The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil," Zeph. i. 12.

3. How often do ye harden yourselves against God's terrible judgments! for when he smites you, ye do not relent ; and it doth not induce you to break off your iniquities : but ye start up against his procedure, and add to your abominable sins, like "Ahaz, who in the time of his trouble, trespassed still more against the Lord," 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. "Doth God smite you, ye are not grieved ; doth he consume you, ye refuse to receive correction ; ye make your faces harder than a rock, and refuse to return," Jer. v. 3. Doth a fear for the wrath to come ever take hold of you, it is irksome to you, ye endeavour to stifle your consciences, and to "cover your transgressions like Adam, by hiding your iniquity in your bosom," Job xxxi. 33. Gen. iii. 12.

4. Ye flatter and deceive yourselves, thinking that ye will not be punished so severely : "When ye hear the words of this curse, ye do then bless yourselves in your hearts, saying, We shall have peace, though we walk in the imagination of our hearts," Deut. xxix. 19. Ye think these threatenings have been denounced so long, nothing will come of them, like "the scoffers in the last days," 2 Peter iii. 4. If ye dare not be so wicked, ye put the evil day far off, and think, the vision is yet for many days, and a man will not be miserable before the time ; but, friends, when God defers, he doth not then desert, and when he defers, it ought not to render you more careless and wicked, but it ought to "lead you to repentance," Rom. ii. 4. 2 Peter iii. 9. Doth fear beset you, ye banish it, and flatter yourselves with the mercy of God, and with the sufferings of Christ for sin. But is God merciful to you with his saving favour ? and hath Jesus suffered for your sins ? he hath surely suffered for none but those "who turn from transgression," Isaiah lix. 20. Do ye hope that ye will turn yet ? when ? when this or that opportunity occurs ? but perhaps ere such an opportunity occurs, "the decree of God will bring forth, the day will pass as the chaff, the fierce anger of the Lord will come upon you," Zeph. ii. 2. Ye say, We hope not ; but your hope is vain and ungrounded, it will forsake you. Do ye suffer many afflictions, and do ye comfort yourselves with a hope, that

these will be the full measure of your sufferings, and that ye will not be obliged to suffer hereafter? this is nothing but deceit; your sufferings in this world will not diminish aught from your eternal punishment: they are only the beginnings of eternal sorrows. Or do ye imagine, that ye are delivered from the wrath of God, because ye are not so wicked as this or that person, but are civil and devout? But was not the Pharisee so virtuous as this, and did not "he go down to his house unjustified?" Luke xviii. 10—14. When ye have no more cloaks for your shame, when they have all been taken from you, and your abominableness and misery have been discovered to you, ye then think, it would be truly sad, that ye should be abandoned to wretchedness; and because your self-love will not suffer you to think the worst of yourselves, ye imagine that this will not befall you. But how exceedingly will ye be disappointed, when God will attack you, while ye do not expect it, with his almighty anger, and not as a man, when ye will bewail yourselves too late, and "mourn at the last, saying, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof? and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers. nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me? Prov. v. 11, 12, 13. Do ye ask, What shall we nevertheless do? will ye indeed do aught? if ye will, come then hither, and I will instruct you. (1) Behold your utter abominableness and woful misery: ye have original and actual sins: the terrible wrath of God lieth upon you, and ye have reason to expect that God will attack you shortly with his fiery indignation. Because ye do not attend to this, therefore ye remain hardened, careless, and do not seek for any real recovery. That ye may therefore awake, behold the greatness of your misery, pause, and endeavour to understand it, that ye may be penetrated with grief and concern, "Examine yourselves strictly, yea, examine yourselves strictly, O ye listless people." Zeph. ii. 1. See Jer. ii. 19, 23.

2. Beware of accusing the Lord of excessive severity, or of injustice: "Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?" Rom. iii. 5, 6. Not only David said, Psalm cxix. 37. "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments;" but even the hardened Pharaoh cried out, Exod. ix. 27. "The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked." Do not do less than this, that the Lord may not compel you by his mighty displeasure to such an acknowledgment.

3. Earnestly endeavour to be delivered from your great misery. To be unconcerned whether we shall be saved or damned, to do nothing in order to escape damnation, and obtain salvation, is certainly the greatest madness, of which a human being is capable:

"Be zealous therefore and repent," Rev. iii. 19. Do not imagine that a few ceremonies, or a mere heartless sigh will save a sinner: no, he must strive earnestly: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able," saith the Saviour, Luke xiii. 24. "The violent only take the kingdom of heaven by force," Matt. xi. 12. We must, like one who is pursued and afraid, "flee from the wrath to come," Matt. iii. 7.

4. Do not seek any happiness or deliverance by your own doings, but only by fleeing to the Mediator Jesus, that "ye may be found in him, and obtain his righteousness," with Paul, Philip. iii. 7, 8, 9, for "there is salvation in none other," Acts iv. 12. Jesus alone is "set forth of God to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness," Rom. iii. 25. Therefore look unto him and be saved," Thus he calls to you, Isaiah xlv. 22.

5. Be afraid of the least sin; for it is committed against the most high majesty of God, and he punishes it terribly. This should render every one fearful of sinning, like Job, who said—"Destruction from God was a terrour to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure." Job xxxi. 23. He who persists in sinning wilfully and wittingly, cannot expect any mercy; "but he who confesseth and forsaketh sin, shall obtain mercy" Prov. xxviii. 13. "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah i. 16, 18.

But permit me to address you also, O believers, who, from a painful and distressing view of your sins and demerits, have fled to the Mediator, and reject, with a holy displeasure, your indwelling corruptions (i) see from what ye are delivered. God, the Lord, was terribly displeas'd with you also, on account of your original and actual sins: but "Jesus hath delivered you from the wrath to come." 1 Thes. i. 10. "The Lord hath sworn, that he will not be any more wroth with you, nor rebuke you." Isaiah liv. 9. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Rom. viii. 1. "To you also," who have considered yourselves as "the greatest sinners, hath mercy been shown." 1 Tim. i. 13, 16.

2. Behold now, also, what the Son of God hath done for you. From pure and inconceivable love, he took all your original and actual sins upon himself, in order to deliver you: on account of them he subjected himself to the terrible displeasure of God, he suffered it in its utmost extent, and thus satisfied the justice of God for you. "To redeem you from the curse of the law, he became a curse for you."

Gal. iii. 15. With what an ardent love did he love you, and how did the zeal of God's house eat him up, when your reproaches, wherewith ye had reproached the Lord, fell on him!" Psalm lxi. 9. Attend a while to this matter, endeavour to look deep into it, that ye may be filled with wonder, with abasing thoughts of yourselves, with joy and praise, and so may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God." Eph. iii. 18, 19.

Conduct yourselves worthily of the inexpressible love and mercy that hath been shown to you. How great an aversion ought ye to manifest in all your behaviour to your original and actual sins! Low ought ye to strive against them, and mortify them! and how to exert yourselves to conduct in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord! for what end did "Jesus give himself for you?" was it not, "that he might redeem you from all iniquity, and purify you to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works?" Titus ii. 14. Let then "the love of Christ constrain you to live no more unto yourselves, but to him who died for you, and rose again." 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

4. Have compassion and take pity on those poor and miserable persons, who manifest by all their conversation, that they lie yet under the terrible wrath of God, and do all that in you lies to save them: "Of some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire," saith holy Jude in his epistle, verse 22, 23.

Are ye yet often afraid of the displeasure of God, because ye have still so great a power of inbred corruption in yourselves, and commit so many actual sins? Well, the terrible displeasure, and vindictive justice of God cannot assail you on account of these things; Christ hath borne them, and delivered you therefrom. It is true, the law worketh wrath, and denounceth the curse against the sinner; but your "sin was condemned in the flesh of Christ, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in you." Rom. viii. 3, 4. Doth the Lord render your condition unhappy by visiting you with many spiritual and bodily afflictions? Those do not, however, proceed from the wrath of God, but from his fatherly love and care; "that ye may be partakers of his holiness." Heb. xii. 5, 11. Ye shall one day be perfectly and for ever delivered from all your calamities, and be instated in the full enjoyment of God's blissful mercy and love: "For," as the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iv. 17, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Amen.

THE
NECESSITY OF A SATISFACTION.

V. LORD'S DAY.

Romans viii. 3, 4. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Q. 13. *Since then by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, is there no way by which we may escape that punishment, and be again received into favour?*

A. God will have his justice satisfied; and therefore we must make this full satisfaction either by ourselves or by another.

Q. 13. *Can we ourselves, then, make this satisfaction?*

A. By no means; But on the contrary, we daily increase our debt.

Q. 14. *Can there, then, be found any where, one who is a mere creature, able to satisfy for us?*

None: for first, God will not punish any other creature for the sin which man hath committed; and further, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin, so as to deliver others from it,

Q. 15. *What sort of a Mediator and deliverer must we then seek for?*

A. For one who is very man, and perfectly righteous; and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is also very God.

“**A**LTHOUGH angels and men are the most glorious of all the creatures of God, nevertheless, many of the angels, and all men, have become the most miserable creatures, since they have revolted from

their Maker, and have rebelled against him ; and are therefore condemned by him to eternal punishment : " God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell." 2 Peter ii. 4. Thus, also, all men, " the whole world is become guilty before God ; for they have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. iii. 19, 23. Although the nature of angels, yea, of the fallen angels, is much more excellent than that of men, nevertheless, fallen men have this eminent privilege above fallen angels, that God hath revealed a deliverance for fallen men, but not for fallen angels. The fallen angels have no hope of deliverance from their misery ; for " God hath reserved them in everlasting chains, under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Jude, verse 6. He hath not appointed a mediator and deliverer for them, as he hath given the man Christ Jesus to be a mediator between God and men, 1 Tim. ii. 5. who did not therefore unite the nature of angels to his Godhead, but that of men : for " he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham," Heb. ii. 16. Therefore Paul extols so highly the love of God to man, when he saith, Titus iii, 4, 5. " After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, he saved us," &c. In order now that the miserable sinner may become capable of the deliverance, he teaches him his misery, that he may humble him, and he reveals to him the deliverance in his Son. The Holy Spirit, who is sent by Jesus " convinceth the world of sin, and of righteousness," John xvi. 8. For " they who are whole need not a physician. but they who are sick : and the Deliverer came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," Matt. ix. 12, 13.

This the instructor also teacheth us, when he speaks in his second part concerning the deliverance of man, for which he had prepared him in his first part, by teaching him his misery. The catechism instructs us in three things with respect to the deliverance : (1) the conditions which are required to the deliverance, Question 12—17. (2) The person who delivers, Question 18. 19. (3) The manner in which we become partakers of him by faith, Lord's day vii.—xxxii.

In this Lord's day we see,

I. That a satisfaction to the justice of God is necessary, in order that we may be delivered, Question 12.

II. By whom the satisfaction cannot, and by whom it can be made, Questions 13, 14, 15.

I. The instructor saith that a satisfaction to the justice of God is necessary, in order to our deliverance. The sinner hath by his sins deserved, according to the righteous judgment of God, temporal and eternal punishment. Therefore it belongs to his deliverance,

(a) "that he should escape from that punishment" by a forgiveness of his sins, whereby he is discharged from his guilt, so that God is no more wroth with him, nor rebukes him, and there is no condemnation to him. In this manner doth the apostle describe the deliverance, saying, "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins," Eph. i. 7. (b) "That he should be again received into favour," whereby he is restored to the kindness and love of God, and obtains grace and glory. The same apostle teacheth us this, when he saith, "The Holy Ghost is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession," Eph. i. 14.

Concerning, and with respect to such a deliverance, a distressed sinner, whom the catechism introduceth here as speaking, asks, Whether there be any way to obtain a deliverance? For in this manner is the elect sinner affected, when God disposes him for a deliverance: for (a) he is convinced of his abominable temper and conduct; he sees that he is guilty in the highest degree, according to the righteous judgment of God, and that not only with a bare contemplation, and with his judgment, but so that he lays it to heart: he sees with shame and aversion from himself his horrible deformity; this distresses and afflicts him, so that he cries out, "Wo unto me that I have sinned," Lam v. 16. With Ephraim "he bemoans himself, repents, is instructed, smites upon his thigh, is ashamed, yea, even confounded," Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. (b) He is also desirous to be delivered; as he is at first exceedingly dark and confused, and doth not rightly know the true way to escape punishment, and to be again received into favour, therefore he begins to exert himself, in order that he may do all that he can devise, and that his confused apprehensions suggest, as conducive to his deliverance: one while he resolves that he will not sin any more, and then that he will serve God better: but he cannot advance, the power of his corruptions forces him repeatedly out of his way, and when he expects enlargement under his distress, he is afflicted still more than he was before, because he sees by experience that matters become worse with him instead of better. What shall he do? he will pray most earnestly to God, that he would be gracious to him: but as soon as he begins, he finds his access unto God so barred up, that he cannot approach to him, and he becomes so confused that he cannot utter in an orderly manner a single sentence, capable of moving God. He begins anew, but it doth not avail; this disturbs and perplexes him so, that he is ready to despair of himself, and of all that he doth, and "he saith, There is no hope; for he doth not find the life of his hand; and he is grieved," Isaiah lvii. 10. Yea, he is afraid that there is no

help for him, and that he is perhaps a reprobate ; and therefore he sometimes resolves that he will not endeavour any more to be saved. But his distress and fear of perdition will not suffer him to rest, until, being wholly stripped and bare, he asks the word and servants of God, " what he must do to be saved ? " like the jailer, Acts xvi. 30.

What doth the instructor now do with such a person ? doth he say, like physicians of no value, Thou must not be so sad, this sorrowfulness proceeds from Satan, thou must banish it, God is merciful, Christ hath died for us, thou must believe this firmly, forsake evil, and do good, and pray to God ? no : for this is only daubing with untempered mortar, it neither heals, nor relieves the soul. But the instructor, desirous that a godly sorrow should penetrate the sinner, that the tranquillity of his mind may be perfect and established by a perfect righteousness of an all-sufficient Mediator, detains him a while under his concern, yea, he increaseth it by showing him, that there is no way to obtain deliverance, as long as the justice of God is not satisfied : he saith, God will have his justice satisfied," &c.

The justice of God denotes here his natural right, by which he is entitled, on account of his glory and sovereignty, to require a perfect obedience of man. Therefore the prophet saith, " Who would not fear thee, thou King of nations ? for to thee doth it appertain," Jer. x. 7, and when man doth not obey him, to punish him temporally and eternally. Even " the Gentiles know the judgment (or right) of God, that they who do such things are worthy of death," Rom. i. 32. This right God hath expressed in his law, and it is therefore called, " the righteousness of the law," Rom. viii. 4. " For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man who doth these things shall live by them," Rom. x. 5, and " cursed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10.

This is satisfied, (1) by suffering fully and completely the punishment threatened in consequence of sin : thus " God made his Son, who knew no sin, to be sin," 2 Cor. v. 21, to wit, by inflicting the punishment of sin upon him. This is indeed sufficient to deliver the sinner from punishment, but it doth not give him a right to life ; and therefore a satisfaction requires also, (2) a perfect obedience, which the law of God demands in order to life : " By the obedience of one many shall be made righteous," Rom. v. 19.

God " will " have his justice satisfied. The Socinians deny that God will have this, and they conceive that such a satisfaction is not necessary ; yea, that God can recede from his right, and that he hath actually receded from it, and hath therefore abolished the law of

Moses, and established a better law by Christ, as a new lawgiver, instead of the old law. The Remonstrants will indeed admit, that satisfaction must be made to God, in order to our deliverance; but not that the justice of God must be perfectly satisfied: but that nothing more is necessary, than that the will of God should be satisfied, which doth not demand all that the sinner hath forfeited; and that God, by a gracious estimation accepts of this, instead of a perfect satisfaction. And they must speak thus, if they will maintain their doctrine, that Christ suffered for all men; for if he satisfied the justice of God for all men, then all men must be saved. Now all men are not saved, even according to the opinion of our adversaries, and so Christ could not have satisfied the justice of God for them. And therefore they say, that he hath by his death satisfied the will of God, and that God was moved thereby to establish a covenant of grace with all men, and to require of them, as the condition of that covenant, faith, obedience and perseverance, and that he gives them a sufficient grace to fulfil those conditions.

This doctrine is opposed by all the orthodox, who say that "God will have his justice satisfied." But how doth God will this? only by his decree, and mere good pleasure, by which he could even have willed to forgive sin without a satisfaction, as he wills many things by his decree, which he might have willed otherwise, as that there should be more or fewer men than there are? Thus some divines think on this subject. Or doth God will that there should be a satisfaction, on account of his holy and righteous nature, whereby he cannot be willing to forgive sin without a satisfaction: for instance, God will be obeyed by his reasonable creatures, and it is his will that what is reasonable should be holy, and he cannot will otherwise? This we maintain with the most divines, and this is the doctrine of the catechism also, as appears from the words, "The justice of God requires that sin, which is committed against the most high majesty of God, be punished with extreme punishment," *Questisn 2.* "God will have his justice satisfied," *Question 12.* "With respect to the justice and truth of God, satisfaction can be made for our sins no otherwise than by the death of the Son of God," *Question 40.* And we do not teach without reason, that God cannot, without a satisfaction to his justice, suffer the sinner to escape punishment, and receive him again into favour: for, (besides what we have said on the foregoing Lord's day, that sin must necessarily be punished) Paul saith.

1. Heb. ii. 10. "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the

Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." To make this Captain perfect through sufferings, signifies to make him a sacrifice by his sufferings, and thereby to bring the children of God to salvation. This now became the high God, of, and through whom, are all things; and it would not have become him, either to bring his children to glory without such a satisfying sacrifice, or if he could have done it without that suffering, to subject his Son, nevertheless to such a painful suffering. The sufferings of Christ were certainly unnecessary, and to no purpose, if God could forgive sin of his mere good pleasure and free will, without satisfaction.

2. It was surely an evidence of the greatest love, that God gave his Son to be a propitiation, and punished him for the sinner. See Rom. v. 8. 1 John iv. 10. But there would not have been such an illustrious display of love in this, if God could have received the sinner into favour without a satisfaction; since it would be a great instance of love to the Son of God, and to the sinner, if he did not demand a satisfaction, and forgive him his sin for nought.

3. The apostle saith also, that "God hath set Christ Jesus forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past during the forbearance of God."* Rom. iii. 25. During the forbearance of God, that is, during the time of the Old Testament, many sins were committed, and many of them forgiven, while there was yet no satisfaction made for sin, and it appeared thus, that God was merciful and forbearing, but not that he was righteous (or just). God then, that he might declare his righteousness in the forgiveness of sins, set his Son forth in his sufferings for that purpose; but why was this necessary? the sins were already forgiven, if the satisfaction were not so necessary.

4. Add to this what the apostle saith, Heb. x. 4, "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." Why is this impossible? Only because it did not please God to take away sins by the blood of beasts? No: but also because the blood of irrational creatures bears no proportion to the sins of rational creatures, which are too abominable and filthy to be washen away by such irrational blood. If God could then take away sins without a satisfaction, why could they not be taken away by the blood of beasts offered up in sacrifice? Since this, according to Heb. x. 1, 4, 11, is impossible, it is also impossible that God should forgive sin without a satisfac-

* In rendering this passage, we have followed the Dutch translation; the reason for which here, as well as elsewhere, we have mentioned in our advertisement.

tion. If any wish to see these reasons enlarged, and^d enforced with others, we refer them to Witsius's Economy of the covenants book I. chapter 5, and book II. chapter 8.

It is needless to object here, (a) that God may recede from his strict right, since man can do this, and that it is an eminent virtue to forgive injuries with a noble greatness of mind; for though this is true with respect to private injuries, which one man doth to another; and although man is bound to do this, because one man is a neighbour of another, and the law of God obligeth him to it; nevertheless, God cannot therefore recede from his right, since he is not bound by any law to exercise such a virtue toward his creatures; and since he cannot recede from his right as a Judge in punishing sins, who must do right. (b) Were the sins under the Old Testament forgiven, without a foregoing satisfaction of the divine justice, they were, nevertheless, not forgiven, except on account of the satisfaction of the Surety who was to come. See this Rom. iii. 25. Heb. ix. 15. In order that the ancient believers might look steadfastly to the future satisfaction of the Messiah, God described him, promised, and shadowed him forth to them in the ancient sacrifices. See Isaiah liii. Acts x. 43. Coll. ii. 17. Heb. x. 1, 14. (c) God could not, as the Socinians conceive, graciously abolish the law, which threatens the curse in consequence of the least transgression; and establish another, which should require nothing but faith; for the law is the transcript of God's holiness, which cannot be expressed by any other law, unless the divine holiness can have another form than it had before. God would then also deny his truth: for he hath said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" and he would now say, thou shalt not die according to my threatening, although my justice is not satisfied for thy sin. Doth the sinner not die now, it is not in consequence of a new law, but of a satisfaction for the establishment of the law, Rom. iii. 21, 31. Rom. viii. 3, 4. (d) They think that God could bestow his Spirit, as well as his Son, to affect the sinner with sorrow for his sin, and induce him to confess that he had dishonoured God, that he might thus sanctify the name of God; and that therefore a satisfaction was not necessary for this purpose. But this is an idle pretence; for this would be an act of kindness; and not of justice. See Zech. xii. 10. Now God must surely be glorified in his justice, as well as in his kindness, as he is by the satisfaction, Eph. i. 7. (e) They say further to no purpose, that if we hold a satisfaction to be necessary from the nature of God, we do then limit God too much with respect to his power and liberty; but can we indeed say that Paul limits the Lord too much, when he teacheth that "God cannot lie." Titus i. 2. Heb. vi, 18.

It is no impotency nor imperfection in God, that he cannot forgive sin without a satisfaction, any more than that "he cannot be tempted of evil," James iii. 13. (f) Finalty. some say that God might, in the work of redemption, have willed something different from what he hath willed. For instance, God willed that Christ should satisfy for some sinners; but he might have willed that he should satisfy for all. And so they conceive that God, who hath now willed that satisfaction should be made for sin, might have willed to forgive sin without a satisfaction. But a satisfaction for some, or for all, affects not the divine holiness and justice, and so not the nature of the satisfaction, but only the objects of the satisfaction. God might have decreed from all eternity that his Son should suffer for all men, but not that some, or many sinners, should escape punishment, and be again received into favour without a satisfaction.

Since now a satisfaction to the justice of God is necessary, we therefore conclude "that we must make this satisfaction, either by ourselves, or by another."

"We must make full satisfaction then, either by ourselves or by another." We should satisfy by ourselves, if we suffered and fulfilled in our own persons the selfsame things, which are required by the law, in its strictest demands, and if this should deliver us without any intervening grace, or forgiveness: for it is the judgment of God that they who do evil things are worthy of death." Rom. i. 32. This is called by lawyers *solutio*, payment, and by divines, "the righteousness of the law," according Rom. x 5. And we should satisfy by another, if some other should take our place, as a surety, to satisfy for us, and in our stead. This would, nevertheless, not effect our deliverance by itself, but only by a favourable permission of the divine Judge, who should admit the surety, impute our debt to him, and his righteousness to us. And we should thus satisfy by another, not actively and indeed, but passively; inasmuch as the satisfaction is made by another in our stead, and by imputation. And therefore we cannot say that believers satisfy properly by the surety, as if the Son of God were not an absolute surety, *ex-promissor*, under the Old Testament, who did not take the debt upon himself absolutely, but conditionally, to wit, if the elect should not make satisfaction themselves, and that he left it on them, and that God did on this account continually charge and upbraid them with their sins; for then they must have proffered the surety themselves, and God would not have trusted that his Son would certainly satisfy; neither would he then have been "slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8. Neither would the sacrifices of the Old Tes-

tament have been shadows, which certified, like sacraments, the old believers, that he would truly take away sins; and they would not have been admitted into heaven, inasmuch as they were still subject to guilt. Therefore we must say that we satisfy passively by another, and through the gracious imputation of God; and this is called by lawyers, *satisfactio*, satisfaction; and by divines, "the righteousness of the gospel, and of faith," according to Rom. i. 16, 17—x. 6, 11; because the law knoweth nothing of such a satisfaction, and it is revealed only in the gospel, and received by faith, although the law cannot disapprove of it, if the Lawgiver will admit and accept it; for "the law is not made void by faith, but established." Rom. iii. 31.

This satisfaction, whether it be made by ourselves, or by another, must be a "full" satisfaction. All that the law threatens must be suffered, and all that it commands must be obeyed: for otherwise God will still be "wroth" with the sinner, "and deliver him to the tormentors, till he shall pay all that is due to him," Matt. xviii. 34. And therefore the *acceptilatis*, or gracious estimation of the Remonstrants, by which God would accept of a part of the satisfaction, instead of the whole, cannot be admitted here: for "the judgment of God is according to truth," Rom. ii. 2.

But can a satisfaction for a guilty person by another be admitted before the divine tribunal? The Socinians say, nay, because human tribunals will not permit an innocent person to be punished, and to make satisfaction, as a surety for another who is guilty; but we conceive that this may very properly be admitted before the divine tribunal, if the supreme Judge will graciously permit it; for (a) a surety is admitted in cases of debt by a secular judge. We may derive a proof from this, because the Socinians themselves infer from suretiship for debts, that grace and pardon cannot be exercised, if Christ made a perfect satisfaction. (b) One man hath also frequently been permitted to become a surety for another in cases of guilt, as Reuben and Judah became sureties for Benjamin, Gen. xlii. 37. xliii. 9. xliv. 32, 33. See also Rom. v. 7. (c) It hath appeared from the seventh question, that the sin of Adam, whereby he became guilty, was imputed to us: why then cannot our guilt also be imputed to a proper surety? (d) It will appear moreover hereafter that Christ became a surety, and that he satisfied; and was therefore admitted before the divine tribunal. (e) Cannot one be admitted as a surety for another before a human tribunal in case of guilt, it is because no human judge is lord of the life of another, as neither is any man lord of his own life. so as to become a surety for another: it would also

be an injury to the community, if a good citizen should perish in making satisfaction for another, and the evil citizen should remain alive; but we must consider matters otherwise before the divine tribunal, since God is lord of every man's life, and the surety, who is required here, is lord of his own life, according to the fifteenth question: he can also deliver himself from death, and can reform and sanctify the abominable sinner, and so the kingdom of God will not be injured, but profited by his death.

But would not God then recede from his right, contrary to what hath been taught before? no, for God's right would be satisfied, and there would only be a gracious translation, by which God's right, and the guilt of the sinner would be transferred from the sinner to the surety, which was also done, according to Rom. iii. 20, 21. viii. 3, 4. 2 Cor. v. 21.

If the sinner could now make full satisfaction by himself, or by another he would be delivered; but it is certain, that he cannot satisfy by himself. The Papists imagine, "that we can make a partial satisfaction by ourselves, if we do not daily increase our debt by adding sin to sin." They distinguish between an equivalent satisfaction, which we cannot make by ourselves, and between an imperfect satisfaction, which should nevertheless be sufficient, because God should forgive sins in consequence of it with a certain fitness. We can effect this imperfect satisfaction by many good works and sufferings, in and after this life, according to the Romanists; but the word of God doth not acknowledge an imperfect satisfaction, but only a perfect one, and "man cannot answer God one a thousand, when he contends with him," and demands satisfaction, according to Job x. 2, 3, Psalm cxxx. 3. and besides this we say, (a) that the price of the redemption necessary for a satisfaction is too precious for a man to pay it; "he owes ten thousand talents," perfect obedience and eternal punishment, and "he hath nothing wherewith to pay," Matt. xvi. 24, 25. (b) "We also increase our debt daily." This is done not only by those, who are uncommonly wicked, as the spiritual "Babylon, whose sins," heaped one upon another, "reach unto heaven," Rev. xviii. 5, but by all other men, who are still under a broken covenant of works. of which the instructor speaks here, "having, according to the righteous judgment of God, deserved temporal and eternal punishments." See how they are exhibited in their complicated iniquities, Rom. iii. 9—19. Believers themselves do all offend in many instances, James iii. 2. See also 1 Kings viii. 46. Rev. xx. 9. Eccl. vii. 20. (c) Let us admit, that we should henceforward be perfectly holy and sinless, we could not thereby atone for our past guilt, because we owe this both at present and in future,

and are thus unprofitable servants, Luke xviii. 10, and therefore our former debt would remain unpaid, and we have nothing wherewith to satisfy for it.

But "can there not be found any where one, who is a mere creature, able to satisfy for us?" If a mere creature should satisfy for us, he behooved to be either a rational, or an irrational creature. A rational creature is either a mere man, or an angel; but no mere man, who is not more than a man, can satisfy the justice of God for another. For, (1) no man is lord of his own life, and hath therefore no right to become a surety for another, in order to bear his guilt: therefore God also rejected the proffer of Moses, "that he would be blotted out of the book of God for the people," Exod. xxxii. 30—35. (2) That which a man would be willing to do for another, he oweth for himself; for "every man shall bear his own burden," Gal. vi. 5. (3) A man cannot satisfy for himself, as we have shown before; how shall he then satisfy for another? (4) He who should satisfy for another, would be obliged to render that other, by an almighty and heart-changing grace, a partaker of his satisfaction and righteousness, if it should be profitable to him. Now no mere man can do this: he can at most only "plant and water; but God giveth the increase," 1 Cor. iii. 4, 5. (5) Yea, if a mere man were even able to do this, he would not be deemed worthy to do it, because those who were delivered by him, would be obliged to offer him the divine honours of faith, love, hope, fear and worship, since he would truly have merited such honours of them: but no mere man may be honoured thus. See Isaiah xlv. 21—25. Jer. xvii. 5—8. (6) Add to this, that "no mere man can sustain the burden of God's wrath, so as to deliver others from it." Truly the wrath of God is dreadful and insupportable: hear what an eminently holy man saith of it, "Thou, even thou art to be feared, and who may stand in thy sight, when once thou art angry?" Psalm lxxvi. 7. xc. 11. And therefore "none can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever," Psalm xlix. 7, 8.

Say not, could not God create a new man, who should be perfectly holy, and endue him with such strength, that he would be able to satisfy, to sustain his wrath, and effectually apply his righteousness to another: for thou shouldest not inquire wisely concerning this, since no such man can proceed from the corrupt posterity of Adam, nor love the sinner as his neighbour, and thus satisfy the demand of the law: moreover no man is capable of such power, inasmuch as

it is an almighty power, since he would then be God, and no longer a creature, which is impossible.

An angel, although he excells in strength, and can slay a whole army of a hundred fourscore and five thousand men, cannot satisfy for a sinner; for an angel hath no right to become a surety for the sinner, and he would not be able to apply the righteousness procured by him, and would not be worthy to be admitted to such an honourable work; and besides this. "God will not punish any other creature" but man, "for the sin which man hath committed," because no angel can suffer the human punishment of death, so as to satisfy the demand of the law, nor love his neighbour as himself, since he is not a neighbour of man. "Moreover, no mere creature" (as an angel is) "can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath, so as to deliver others therefrom." The glorious angels cannot endure even the bright lustre of the most holy countenance of God: they must hide and cover themselves before it, Isaiah vi. 2, 3 "The devils," though exceedingly mighty and dreadful, "tremble before the one only God," James iii. 19. How earnestly "do they pray, that they may not be tormented before the time, and be sent away into the deep!" Luke viii. 27—31.

Cannot a satisfaction be made by any rational creature, perhaps irrational creatures, either living or dead, may effect something, if we offer them up to God for an atonement. This was the opinion, not only of the blind heathens, but also of the carnal Jews, who sought their righteousness by keeping the moral law, and when they were guilty of sinning in one instance or another, imagined that they should be able to atone for their sins by bringing this or that gift for a sacrifice. This notion was also somewhat specious, since God himself had enjoined by the ceremonial law, the sacrificial service of sin offerings, trespass offerings, and sacrifices of atonement; but this is a false pretence. The justice of God cannot be satisfied by any sacrificial service: "for it is impossible, that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin," Heb. x. 4. There is no proportion between irrational or inanimate sacrifices, and the guilt of the soul: God doth not eat the flesh of bulls, nor drink the blood of goats," Psalm, l. 13. When the Jews would appease God by their sacrificing, he then said, that "he had not required this at their hands," Jer. vii. 21, 22, and he rejected it, Isaiah i. 13. Jer. vi. 20. Micha vi. 6, 7, 8. When he demands a satisfaction, he then refuseth the sacrificial service, and he substitutes a more perfect service in the stead of it. See Heb. x. 1—9. Did God himself enjoin sacrifices for atonement, it was however not done in the broken covenant of works, in

order that men might escape punishment, and be again received into favour; but in the covenant of grace, which was established with Israel, Exod. xix. which supposeth a satisfaction by a sufficient surety. And thus, all those offerings, enjoined by the church-law of Israel, did not serve to effect a real satisfaction and atonement; but to shadow forth and to prefigure the Surety, and his satisfying sacrifice, that the covenant people of the Old Testament might look through all that outward service to him, and seek in his perfect sacrifice, the real atonement. And thus, "the law of sacrifices had a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things," Heb. x. 1.

Therefore the sinner cannot have a hope of effecting a satisfaction either by himself, or by any mere creature, in order that he may escape punishment, and be again received into favour. Is there then no door of hope open for him? There is none, unless he can find a sufficient mediator and deliverer. He must indeed have a mediator between God and himself, to deliver him; not only a mediator of advocacy and intercession, for a mere creature could be such a mediator: Moses was such a mediator and deliverer, Exod. xxxii. Deut. v. 5, but the sinner must have a mediator and deliverer, who can deliver him from his guilt, and satisfy the justice of God for him by a sufficient ransom; and therefore he must have "a mediator for the redemption of transgressions." Heb. ix. 15. But who, who in heaven or on earth is worthy or able to be such a mediator? The instructor saith, he must have four great qualifications. Question 15. (a) "That he must be very man," who hath a human soul with a human body, and particularly of a human being, and so he must be man of man. (b) "That he must be a righteous man," one who is perfectly righteous and holy, agreeably to the demand of the law. (c) "And, nevertheless, more perfect than all creatures; that is, one who is very God." (d) He must also be God and man in one person; therefore our catechism saith, who is "also" very God; and in the Latin catechism we read, *qui simul etiam sit verus Deus*, "who is withal, or at the same time also very God." Why the mediator must have these four qualifications, the instructor will teach us hereafter, Question 16, 17; and so the sinner is still kept under his concern to know how he shall escape punishment, and be again received into favour, that his distress may be perfect, and he may be the more capable of a complete consolation.

APPLICATION.

But, hearers, how shall ye escape temporal and eternal punishment, which ye have deserved according to the righteous judgment of God, and be again received into favour? Many do not even think of this, at least many of you are not concerned about it; "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, whoredom, wine and new wine take away their hearts," 1 John ii. 16. Hosea iv. 11. Or the cares and business of this life, render them careless and unconcerned about their eternal welfare, and suffer them not to ponder seriously upon their eternal salvation. But hear, voluptuous and poor worldling, whose "end is destruction? is not thine, whose God is thy belly, whose glory is in thy shame, and who mindest earthly things," Phil. iii. 19.

Some think it is unnecessary to be solicitous about their eternal salvation. Is there any person who is afraid of eternal perdition, presently another will scoff at him, as if such a fearful person were silly and disordered in his understanding. Hath such a reviler of good things any compassion with such a sorrowful person: how will he bestir himself to discourse with him, in order to dispel his anxiety! he will at least take care that he doth not himself become so melancholic; he thinks that if he should, he would despair, and he doth not intend to listen so much to the devil, as if that conviction were a work of the devil, and not of "the Holy Spirit, who convinceth the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," John xvi. 8. Christ, he thinks, hath died for our sins, and this he will believe firmly, without doubting; and he imagineth that such sorrow doth not agree with the joyful season of the New Testament. But, friends, ye who harden and deceive your hearts in this careless manner, how can ye so rely upon, and be so assured of an interest in the satisfaction of Christ, which he hath accomplished? Doth it belong to all men? to you also? must, and can ye believe this without ever having been concerned about your woful misery? and do ye think, that under the New Testament we must not have any "godly sorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of," contrary to 2 Cor. vii. 8—11. Surely none but "those who mourn, are comforted and blessed," Mat. v. 4. Do ye say, we repent indeed of our sins? is it indeed true, and not merely a vain assertion? are ye ever affected with concern, distress, and a restless, earnest desire to escape the deserved punishment, and to be again received into favour? Saul and Judas said also, "I have sinned," 1 Sam.

xxvi. 24—Matt. xxvii. 3, 4; but they both “died in their iniquity,” yea, they murdered themselves. 1 Chron. x. 13—1 Sam. xxxi. 4. —Matt. xxvii. 5.

Others experience severe twinges of conscience, and are accordingly fearful, when with “Felix, they hear of righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come;” Acts xxiv. 25; but they do not earnestly inquire after the way which is above, to depart from hell beneath; for one endeavours to divert his anxiety by business or amusement, or by hardening and barring up his heart, that the anguish of his heart may not be too much enlarged, or by turning away his ear from hearing severe preaching, which would convince him. Paul, who preaches so severely, and who goads so sharply, must then “go his way.” Acts xxiv. 25. Another gives up all hope, and thinks, how can I help it, if God will not receive me graciously? and he abandons himself to his careless sinfulness, or sinful carelessness. “This evil,” saith he, “is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?” 2 Kings vi. 33. A third will convert himself, he intends and promises it, he will not commit this and that sin any more; he will serve God better, and attend public worship more diligently than he used; and he will offer this to God as a payment, at least in part; and he hopes that God will remit the rest of what he oweth: but his promise is generally empty words, without effect: when his distress is over, his promise is also puffed away by the least blast of concupiscence. Doth he conduct in some measure as he proposed, by forsaking a few sins, and doing a little good, he is then perfectly easy, and trows that he is already a great saint, and a dearly beloved child of God. And a fourth quiets himself with the calamities which he suffers in this world; he hopes, and it is his comfort in his sorrow, that his present misery will constitute the full measure of his sufferings, and that he will not be obliged to suffer any more hereafter; as if his sufferings were a satisfaction to the justice of God, and not the beginning of his sorrows, and so “he doth not say, there is no hope: he finds the life of his hand, and is not grieved.” Isaiah lvii. 10.

“Hear this, O foolish people, and without understanding, who have eyes, but see not; who have ears, but hear not.” Jer. v. 21. I speak to you, who have not the least concern about your eternal welfare, and to you also, who consider all distress on account of your wicked condition to be unnecessary: to you also, who deceive yourselves with vain and false imaginations, and hush in such a careless manner, your awakened conscience. Know that ye will not by these means escape temporal and eternal punishment, nor return again

into favour, for "God will by no means clear the guilty." Exod. xxxiv. 7. Do you think to harden your hearts against the Lord, and to have peace? God is able to trouble you. See how he dashed in pieces the hardened Israelites: "Therefore," saith he, Hosea xiii. 7, 8, "I will be unto them as a lion; as a leopard by the way will I observe them. I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion; the wild beast shall tear them." Observe how he troubled the proud Belshazzar, "his countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him; the joints of his loins were loosed, and his kness smote one against another" Dan. v. 6. Ye know how Cain fared, when he would conceal his brother-slaughter. Gen. iv. 9—13. Judas sought to hide his abominable deed with a kiss; but how did his conscience awake and terrify him, and with what fury did it attack him! Matt. xxvii. 3, 4, 5, 6; do ye hope that ye will not fare so ill, because ye are not the worst sinners; because ye intend to conduct better hereafter than ye have heretofore; because ye must suffer so much at present? Do ye think then with the Papists, that your doings and sufferings will cancel your debt, and merit the grace of God? doth not God require that his justice should be satisfied? and must ye not pay fully, either by yourselves, or by another? Do ye know how to deliver yourselves by a few outward ceremonies, and by suffering a few afflictions, and then "exacting all your labours" Isaiah lviii. 2, 3. Therefore, "awake ye who sleep, and arise from the dead." Eph. v. 14. "God will punish the men who are settled on their lees" Zeph. i. 12. "Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters, give ear unto my speech. Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones; strip ye, make ye bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins." Isaiah xxxvii. 9. Or do ye think it is needless for you to be concerned and distressed about your eternal condition? Doth not God then threaten "a wo to those who are at ease in Zion, and careless in the mountains of Samaria?" Amos vi. 1. Is not your misery, your temporal and eternal punishment, which ye have deserved, according to the righteous judgment of God, grievous enough to affect you with the greatest concern? can ye deliver yourselves, and satisfy the justice of God, either by your own sufferings and doings, or by those of another creature? will ye not be wholly at a loss here? How will a sinner deny all his own righteousness, and seek the righteousness of another, unless he be perfectly stripped and bare?

Will ye therefore escape punishment, and be again received into

favour: (1). Entertain a greater concern about your salvation and damnation than ye have had heretofore. Will ye value and bestir yourselves so for your body, your food and clothing, and neglect from mere listlessness, your noble souls, and be so careless of them? Oh detestable madness! ye will strive to pass with honour through the world, but are unconcerned how it will fare with you, after ye are through the world! How will ye bemoan yourselves, and say when it is too late, "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me?" Prov. v. 12, 13. What will ye then have of all these earthly goods, for which ye consume both your bodies and souls in so many difficult occupations? "for what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. xvi. 26. Therefore value, and bestir yourselves more for the welfare of your souls, and "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you," Matt. vi. 33 (2) Impress it upon your minds, that all your own doings, as long as ye are not received into favour, will not avail to escape punishment, that ye may look off from them altogether, and may be wholly at a loss and confounded in yourselves. All your own works, how much soever ye bestir yourselves, are but "a vain oblation," Isaiah i. 13. Ye must be first received into favour through the perfect satisfaction of another, if what ye do shall be acceptable to God. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight," Prov. xv. 8. "The Lord had respect first to Abel and then to his offering; but when he hath no respect unto Cain, he is not pleased with his offering neither," Gen. iv. 3, 4, 5. (3) Is there any one among us, who is thoroughly anxious, and desirous of escaping the punishment, which he hath deserved, and of being again received into favour, and doth he cry out with the gaoler, "What shall I do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 30, let him know, that God hath demanded the satisfaction at the hands of his Son, and that he hath satisfied the justice of God for our guilt, even to the uttermost farthing, that God proffereth his Son to him, and that he must accept of him upon this offer, and choose him for himself: for "God hath set his Son forth to be a propitiation through faith, in his blood, to declare his righteousness," Rom. iii. 25. See also Isaiah xxvii. 4, 5, and chap. xlv. 22, 24, and what will be said upon the sixth and seventh Lord's day. (4) Believers, who have betaken yourselves to the Mediator and Deliverer, and have denied all, yea, even your best performances and all your outward privileges, and "count-

ed them but loss and dung, that ye might be found in Christ, and have his righteousness through faith," with Paul, Philip. iii. 4—10, behold your happiness, wonder and rejoice, yea, praise the Lord, that ye have escaped punishment, and are again received into favour, and that through the suffering and obedience of the great Mediator and Deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ. The following Lord's days will urge you to this more particularly. (5) Let all those, who have the care of souls, take heed that they lead sinners in, and according to this sure way to Christ. To comfort sinners in general, while they are unconcerned, and do not mourn, and to apply the promises to them without distinction, and without taking the precious from the vile; or to direct poor and concerned souls only to certain legal observances; or to deal harshly with them, and oppose them, this is "making the heart of the righteous sad with lies, and strengthening the hands of the wicked, that he should not turn from his wicked way and live;" which God will punish with severity, according to Ezek. xiii. Spiritual guides must endeavour to convince sinners of their guilt, and awaken them to concern, they ought not to comfort them hastily, but should urge them to "the Lord our righteousness," that they may escape the deserved punishment, and be again received into favour. This is the way, in which the instructor leads souls, and he doth it after the example of Paul and his fellow labourers: "We knowing," saith he, 2 Cor. v. 11. "the terrour of the Lord, persuade men." Thus we should deliver our own souls, "save ourselves, and them that hear us," 1 Tim. iv. 16. "We should justify many," afford a well-grounded consolation to souls, their sanctification would be real and evangelical, and "we should shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever." Amen.

CHRIST REVEALED IN THE GOSPEL.

VI. LORD'S DAY.

Heb. vii. 25—28. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for ever more.

Q. 16. Why must he be very man, and also perfectly righteous?

A. Because the justice of God requires that the same human nature, which hath sinned, should likewise make satisfaction for sin; and one who is himself a sinner cannot satisfy for others.

Q. 17. Why must he in one person be also very God?

A. That he might, by the power of his Godhead, sustain in his human nature, the burthen of God's wrath; and might obtain for, and restore to us, righteousness and life.

Q. 18. Who then is that mediator, who is in one person both very God, and a real righteous man?

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Q. 19. Whence knowest thou this?

A. From the holy gospel, which God himself revealed first in Paradise; and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and was pleased to represent it, by the shadows of sacrifices and the other ceremonies of the law; and lastly, has accomplished it by his only begotten Son.

“**W**HAT the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.” Thus speaks Paul, Rom. viii. 3, 4. The law cannot justify the sinner. God did indeed give the law to mankind before the fall, that they might obtain righteousness and life by keeping it perfectly, and it would thus have been possible for the law to justify man: “For Moses, describing the righteousness which is of the law, saith, The man which doth these things shall live by them,” Rom. x. 5. But the law cannot do this now, since it is become weak through sin and the flesh; it hath now only a power to curse and condemn the sinner, according to the divine threatening, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;” and therefore “they who are of the works of the law, are under the curse,” Gal. iii. 10, and so “the law worketh wrath,” Rom. iv. 15, and declareth that “the whole world is guilty before God,” Rom. iii. 19. If the sinner shall then be justified, the righteousness of the law must be fulfilled in him by a sufficient satisfaction to the justice of God, expressed in the law; for “Zion must be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness,” Isaiah v. 27, and “the Lord of hosts must be exalted in judgment, and God, who is holy, must be sanctified in righteousness,” Isaiah v. 16. The demand, which the law of God makes against the sinner, requiring that he should be punished, cannot be refused, inasmuch as the law contains the sentence of cursing, denounced by God. But who, yea, who is able to satisfy this righteous demand of the law? the sinner himself cannot; for he increaseth his debt daily; no other creature can, because he cannot sustain the burthen of God’s eternal wrath. If any one shall be worthy and able to do this, he must be very man and righteous, and also God and man in one person, according to what the foregoing Lord’s day hath taught us from the word of God, and for which solid reasons are given in this Lord’s day. Question 16, 17, and in which it is shown, that the Lord Jesus Christ is such a mediator and deliverer, Question 18, and that this is made known in the gospel, Question 19, that the sinner, being concerned, and desirous of deliverance, may obtain perfect satisfaction and comfort.

There are three particulars in this Lord’s day, which require our consideration:

I. Why the mediator must be a real and righteous man and God in one person, Question 16, 17.

II. That the Lord Jesus Christ is the mediator and deliverer, Question 18.

III. And that we know this from the gospel, Question 19.

I. The person who shall be the mediator and deliverer, ought, in the first place, to be very man; "because the justice of God requires that the human nature, which hath sinned, should likewise make satisfaction for sin;" or, as the Latin catechism expresseth it, *Ut eadem natura humana, quæ peccavit, ipsa pro peccato defendat*; "that the same human nature, which hath sinned, should make satisfaction for sin." The justice of God requires satisfaction of the sinner himself; but if God will, by a special kindness, transfer his demand to a surety, that surety must be of the same nature with the sinner, in order to become his surety. Therefore Paul saith, Heb. ii. 11, "For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." And the righteousness of God, which he hath expressed in his law, demands this; for it demands that "man should love his neighbour as himself." Luke x. 27, 28, And if he do not, "that he should die." Rom. i. 32. If the mediator should then satisfy the justice of God, according to the demand of the law, he must be "made under the law," which was given to man; "that he may redeem him who was under the law," Gal. iv. 4, 5. He must then also be the neighbour of man, and so "of one blood with him," Acts xvii, 26. And "by the grace of God must taste death," (or the separation of soul and body) "for every man," Heb. ii. 9.

For this reason, God also foretold that the Mediator and Deliverer should be very man; for he promised him formerly, as "the seed of the woman;" Gen. iii. 15: and as "the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;" Gen. xxii. 18, xxvi. 4, xxviii. 14; and that "he should be the fruit of the body of David," Psalm cxxxii. 11. This was also typified under the Old Testament by the redeemers, and by the high priests: the Lord had enjoined, that he who was the nearest kinsman, the *Goel*, should be the person, who should redeem the mortgaged inheritance of another, or his person, if he were imprisoned for debt, or sold for a slave, and that he should be the avenger of his blood. Lev. xxv. 25: Ruth ii. 20, iii. 12, 13. iv. 1—10 Numb. xxxv. 19, 21, 24, 25, 27. He then, who shall be the sinner's redeemer, must also be his kinsman, and therefore the Mediator is called the *Goel*, the kinsman and "Redeemer, who should come to Zion," Isaiah lix. 20. Paul, having respect to this, saith of the Mediator and Deliverer, Heb. ii. 14, 15, 16." For as much then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself like-

wise took part of the same ; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels ; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." This was also typified by the high priests "For every high priest, taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins : who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way ; for that he himself is also compassed with infirmity," Heb. v. 1, 2. Therefore the true High Priest behoved also to be very man, in order that he might offer a perfect sacrifice for sins, and have suitable compassion. Let us hear the same apostle again ; he saith, Heb. ii. 17, 18, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like his brethren ; that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining unto God, to make reconciliation for the sin of the people : for in that himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. The mediator and deliverer must not only be very man, but also a perfectly holy man ; "because man being himself a sinner, cannot satisfy for others ;" for he would then be obliged to satisfy for himself, and nevertheless not be able, much less then for another, as hath been shown on a foregoing Lord's day. He must then be a "holy, harmless, and undefiled high priest, who needeth not to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's," as the text speaks. This was also foretold of old ; the Mediator and Deliverer should be "the Holy One." Psalm xvi. 10. "He should delight to do the will of God ; and his law should be within his heart," Psalm xl. 8 ; and "wickedness should be an abomination to his lips," Prov. viii. 7, 8 ; as this was also typified by the priests, who might not be defiled, when they approached to God, the Holy One ; for "God would be sanctified in them that came nigh him ;" or he would sanctify himself, by consuming them. Lev. x. 1, 2, 3. Now the mediator and deliverer ought to be also the surety and high priest, and therefore also holy, "that he might draw near to God in those things which pertained to God, in order to make reconciliation." Jer. xxx. 21. Heb. ii. 17. The sacrificial gifts also typified this ; for they were to be holy and without blemish, according to Lev. xxii. 22, 25. Mal. i. 7, 8. And therefore the true sacrifice, with which God should be well pleased, behoved also to be holy, and without blemish ; "a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter i. 19. See also 2 Cor. v. 21. Eph. v. 2. We may add to this that the mediator and deliverer, ought to be

noly, because it was necessary that his human nature should be personally united to his Godhead, and therefore, also holy; for "that holy thing, which should be born, should be called the Son of God," Luke i. 35.

It was necessary that the mediator and deliverer should then, also, be very God.(1) "That he might by the power of his Godhead, sustain in his human nature the burthen of God's wrath." How heavy the burthen of God's wrath is, that it must be sustained, in order to effect a satisfaction, and that no mere creature could sustain it, hath been shown on the fourth and fifth Lord's days. He then who shall sustain it, so as to effect a satisfaction, must be more powerful than all the creatures, and so very God, that he may support his human nature, while he suffers, and sustains the divine wrath that "his own arm may bring him salvation, and his fury may uphold him," Isaiah lxiii. 5.(2) The mediator and deliverer must also be God, "that he may obtain for us righteousness and life." The sinner, if he shall stand before God, and live, must have an infinite righteousness, that all his sins committed against the most high majesty of God, may be forgiven him, and that he may be delivered from everlasting death, and obtain everlasting life, in the everlasting favour of God; as it was also foretold, that "the Messiah should bring in an everlasting righteousness." Dan. ix. 24. Now it is impossible, that the righteousness of a mere creature should be of infinite dignity. he ought then himself to be the infinite God, if his righteousness shall have such a divine dignity (3) It behoved the mediator and deliverer to restore this righteousness and life to us, to apply and communicate them to us. It was not enough to obtain the righteousness and life, but it was necessary to impart them also to the sinner, if he should be delivered. "The shepherd who giveth his life for the sheep," must also, "give them eternal life, and keep them so, that they do never perish, and that none pluck them out of his hand." John x. 11, 28. And therefore the mediator and deliverer must be God; for a man could not appropriate to himself the righteousness, which the mediator obtains, and the life which he merits. There is need here of an "exceeding greatness of God's power, according to the working of his mighty power," Eph. i. 19.(4) Moreover, the mediator, who should surrender his life to death, behoved to be the lord of his own life, and thus to "have power to lay his life down, and to take it again." John x. 18. Now no mere man hath such power, but he only, who is also very God,(5) Add to this, that he who shall deliver sinners, ought also to be capable of being an object of all religious homage.

faith, love and gratitude ; for those whom he delivers from temporal and eternal punishments, whom he reinstates into favour, and for whom he obtains, and to whom he restores righteousness and life, owe him such service. See Titus ii. 14. Now such honour cannot surely be offered to one who is no more than a man, but he must be " God also, who is over all, blessed for ever," if he shall be honoured thus, Rom. ix. 5. See Isaiah xlv. 21, 25.(6) Finally, we say also, that it was foretold, that the mediator and deliverer should be " Jehovah, the Lord our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6. Hosea, i. 7.

It was necessary that the mediator and deliverer should be not only very man, and holy, and very God, but also, " at the same time God and man in one person." For (a) since the human nature cannot of itself sustain the wrath of God, and its sufferings cannot be of an infinite dignity, and since the incorruptible Godhead cannot suffer, therefore his Godhead must have its proper human nature, in order to suffer therein ; and the human nature and the Godhead must be united, that the Godhead may support the human nature under its grievous sufferings, and that its sufferings may be of infinite dignity, being " the proper blood of God," Acts. xx. 28 ; and " the blood of the Son of God," 1 John i. 7. We cannot say that there could be two mediators, one of whom should be man, that he might suffer, and the other God, in order to add an infinite dignity to the human sufferings of the other ; for no human sufferings can ever be of infinite dignity, unless the suffering person himself be also very God, and suffer in his own human nature.(b) We may also say, that it behooved him to be God and man in one person, because he who shall be the mediator, must be equally near to both parties, even to God and the sinner, that he may unite and appease both in himself ; and he must thus be a " mediator between God and man, that he may give himself a ransom for many, and thus bring them to God," 1 Tim. ii. 5. 6. 1 Peter iii. 18.

II. Must the sinner now have such a mediator and deliverer, in order that he may escape temporal and eternal punishment, and be again received into favour, he must then be exceedingly distressed ; for he himself cannot find such a mediator, much less procure him ; neither can any creature, angel, or man, do this : but the door of hope, which was hitherto shut to the concerned sinner, is opened to him by the instructor, when, upon this question of the distressed person, " Who then is that mediator, who is in one person both very God, and a real righteous man ?" He answers, Our Lord Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto us, &c. He doth not say, nor prove now, that he is very God, and real righteous man in one person, because

he will do this hereafter; but he only shows that he is a sufficient mediator and deliverer, through whom the sinner can escape punishment, and be again received into favour, since "he is made of God to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," according to 1 Cor. i. 30.

He is given to be (1) "wisdom." The sinner is blind and foolish, and he knoweth nothing of his spiritual and eternal happiness, "his understanding is darkened, he is alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in him," Eph. iv. 18, but our Lord Jesus Christ is "the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. i. 24. "In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Coll. ii. 3. As the great prophet he makes known by his word, and by his Spirit to the elect sinner, "all that he hath heard of the Father," John xv. 15, and thus "he leads the blind by a way which they have not known," &c. Isaiah xlii. 16. See Luke xxiv. 44, 46. Acts xv. i. 14. xxvi. 18.

2 That it may not seem unjust, that the guilty sinner finds favor, therefore he becomes also "righteousness" to him, since he procures and restores to him an infinite righteousness by his sufferings and obedience, whereby, being justified before God, he is delivered from his guilt, and obtains a right to life: "For him who knew no sin hath God made to be sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21.

3. Doth he leave the sinner in and under the filth and dominion of sin? No; but he becomes also "sanctification" to him, by which he cleanses him from his loathsome impurity, subdues the power of his corruption, transforms him into the image of God, and renders him a partaker of the holy nature of God, which he doth first by the new birth, and then by an increase of God, "changing him from glory to glory," 2 Cor. iii. 18. Which sanctification he procures by his blood, and communicates by his Spirit; "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," saith the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 1 Peter i. 2.

4. And since sinful man is holden captive in the snare of the devil with the cords of his sins and misery, on account of the justice of God, therefore Christ becomes also redemption to him, by which he delivers him from all that renders, or can render him miserable, and bestows all kinds of happiness upon him, partly in, and perfectly after this life: for when "the Son makes him free, then he is free indeed," John viii. 36.

He "is made" such great benefits to us "of God," saith the apostle, 1 Cor. i. 30. He was not this, by the nature of his essence, but

by the free and gracious constitution of God his Father, who in the œconomy and dispensation of grace, took upon himself the person of judge, whom the Son should satisfy, as mediator, while the Holy Ghost should convey all grace from the Father through the Son to the sinner. See Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. 2 Cor. xiii. 13. John xvi. 13, 14, 15. And thus was Christ made of God wisdom, &c. (1) In the council of peace from eternity, which we call a covenant of redemption, because the redemption of the sinner was demanded and promised in that council. God did from eternity elect some to everlasting life, and appoint them to be vessels of mercy; but as they could not obtain salvation, except the justice of God were satisfied, therefore God enters into a covenant with his Son, and requires that he should make satisfaction by his suffering and obedience, promising him that he would prepare a body for him, give him his Spirit, uphold him in his suffering, that he should see his seed, and obtain the highest glory. The Son consents to all this, engages to become his Father's servant, and declares it to be his delight to do his Father's will: whereupon his Father gives him his elect, and he claims them as his own, that he may fulfil the stipulated conditions for them; and thus they are, as it were, transferred from the book of life, to wit, the Father's election, into the book of life of the Lamb. See this covenant, Psalm ii. 7, 8, 9. xl. 6, 7, 8. lxxxix. 28. Isaiah xlii. 1. xlix. 4. liii. 10. John xvii. 6. Eph i. 4, 5. iii. 10, 11. Rev. xvi. 8. xxi. 27, which covenant, confirmed "with the word of the oath, makes the Son wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption," Heb. viii. 28. The Lord Jesus Christ is also made of God wisdom, &c. by the covenant of grace, which God established with the elect sinner, whereby the allsufficient, the only wise, righteous and merciful God promiseth the foolish, guilty, filthy and impotent sinner, that he will be a God to him, and will thus bestow all conceivable bliss on him, and the sinner accepts of this upon God's proffer, assents to it, and resigns himself to the Lord, in order to be his, Gen. xvii. 7. Isaiah xlix. 5. lv. 3. But as God cannot enter into a covenant with the guilty and filthy sinner immediately, therefore he gives him his Son to be a mediator, that he, by satisfying his justice, may bring the sinner to God, and obtain for him all the promises of the covenant of grace: "Therefore he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance," Heb. ix. 15. And so he is made of God by the covenant of grace wisdom, &c. For "the Lord gives him for a covenant of the people, a light of the Gentiles," Isaiah xlii. 6.

That the covenant of redemption might now be executed, the covenant of grace perfected, and the sinner rendered complete in wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. God (a) sent his Son into the world to be a mediator, caused him to assume the human nature, to satisfy his vindictive justice, and procure wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption for his people: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," Rom. viij. 3, 4. (b) "God also exalted him by his right hand for elect men," gave him the promise of the Holy Ghost, to shed him forth" for his covenant people, "and made him thus Lord and Christ," Acts ii. 33, 36. And by that exaltation he is made of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption: "for God hath exalted him with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sin," Acts v. 31 (c) In order that these benefits may be communicated to the sinner, the Lord God makes his Son, with all his fulness known to the world by the gospel, and proffers him to men, that they may receive and embrace him; he calls to them with a voice from heaven. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him," Matt. iii. 17. xvii. 5. He sends "his ambassadours to pray them in his," and in his Son's "name, to be reconciled to God," 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20, and so "the Saviour Jesus Christ brings life and immortality to light through the gospel," 2 Tim. i. 20. (d) Yet all this would be to no purpose, if God did not actually and effectually by his Son render the sinner a partaker of this grace, by enlightening, justifying, sanctifying and redeeming him; for which purpose he gives the sinner faith, that he may thereby receive the Mediator with all his fulness, and may improve him in all his needs: for "faith is the gift of God," Eph. ii. 8. Philip. i. 29, which "God works" effectually in the soul, according to "the greatness of his power," Eph. i. 19, and it is faith, which receives the Son of God and his fulness, John i. 12, 16. Eph. iii. 17. What think ye, hearers, had not Paul sufficient reason to say, 1 Cor. i. 30, that "Christ is made of God to us wisdom," &c.? and may not this be called by the instructor a giving? * for there is not a greater, nor a more gracious gift, than the Son of God, with all his benefits. See John iii. 16, Rom. viii. 32. 1 John iv. 9, 10.

* This is the English of the word used in the Dutch catechism, and in the German original.

But for whom was Christ made and given to be this? "For us," saith the apostle, 1 Cor. i. 30, "for them who are called to be saints," vrs. 2. "not many wise men, mighty or noble after the flesh, but the foolish, weak, ignoble and despised of the world, hath God chosen and called, that they may glory in the Lord," vrs. 26, 31. "Therefore all men without exception who perished in Adam, are not saved by Christ, but only those who are ingrafted into him, and receive all his benefits by a true faith," as the following Lord's day will inform us.

III. But who will dare to believe this great matter? what account have we of it? will the light of nature discover it to us? No; the creatures of God, contemplated in the most exact manner, will not teach us aught of this: we can learn from them only "God's eternal power and Godhead, that we may be without excuse," Rom. i. 20. The innate principles of knowledge, and our conscience may teach us, that there is an almighty, righteous, wise and good God, and that we have to do with him, according to Rom. i. 19. ii. 14, but they cannot afford us the least intimation, nor excite in us the least apprehension, whereby we may be induced to think, that God will deliver sinners by a covenant of grace, and by his Son. And therefore a person who doth not possess more than the mere light of nature, "is without Christ, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12. Can this then be learned from the law? not from the law neither: "For the promise was not to Abraham, or to his seed by the law," Rom. iv. 13. The law cannot show the sinner the means of deliverance, but can only discover his misery to him, and condemn him: "for the law worketh wrath," Rom. iv. 15. See Rom. iii. 19, 20. Gal. iii. 10, 11, 12.

Whence then do we know that the Lord Jesus Christ is the mediator and deliverer, made of God, wisdom, &c.? The instructor answereth according to the word of God, "From the holy gospel." The Greek word *Euangelion*, signifies joyful and good tidings, or tidings of good: "I bring you good tidings, *euangelizomai*, or "evangelize you great joy," saith the angel who brought the first joyful news of the Saviour's birth, Luke ii. 10 11. The writers of the New Testament adopted this word, and learned the ordinary use of it from the seventy Greek translators of the Old Testament, who made use of the word *euangelion*, when they found the word *Bisser* in the Hebrew. See Isaiah x. 4, 9. li. 7. lxi. 1. There cannot, indeed, be more joyful news to a sinner under concern, than that Christ is a mediator and deliverer, and is made so great a salvation

to him of God. By this gospel we are not here to understand so much the history of the birth, life, doctrine, miracles, humiliation, and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ, but we must understand by it particularly, "the whole doctrine of salvation, by which God makes the Mediator and Deliverer, Jesus Christ known to the sinner, offers him to him, commands him to believe in him, and that through this mediator he shall escape punishment, and be again received into favour." The gospel is the doctrine of salvation, by which a person is conducted to salvation, according to the covenant of grace, described in the books of the Old and New Testament: for "the word of truth is the gospel of salvation," Eph. i. 3. Since now Christ with his benefits is the sum of the gospel, therefore it is called the gospel of Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 4. See also Rom. i. 1—4, 16, 17. Wherever then we read in the holy scripture of Christ and his benefits, there we have the gospel by which (a) God makes Christ known to the sinner, as mediator and deliverer, and that in him only the sinner must seek, and shall find all salvation: for "by the gospel is preached the unsearchable riches of Christ." &c. Eph. iii. 8—11. (b) By the gospel the Mediator, and all salvation in and through him, is also offered to the sinner, and he is invited and called to him, that he may "turn to him and be saved." Isaiah xlv. 22. lv. 1, 2, 5. "He hath called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ," saith the apostle, 2. Thes. ii. 14. (c) By the gospel the sinner is also commanded to believe in the Mediator to salvation: "Jesus, preaching the gospel, said, believe the gospel," Mark. i. 14, 15. On which account it is sometimes called "a law." Isaiah ii. 3. And also "the law of faith," Rom. iii. 27, since it obligeth every one, to whom it is brought, and denounces a severe threatening against those, who "draw back" from it, Heb. x. 38. (d) Further, the gospel engages and promises to the believer, that he shall certainly escape punishment, and be again received into favour, by faith in Christ, Mark xvi. 15, 16. John iii. 16, 36. Acts x. 43; and so the gospel "comforts the believing people of God, and speaks comfortably to them," Isaiah xl. 1, 2. lxi. 1, 2, 3.

This gospel must be distinguished into the gospel of promise and of fulfilment. The gospel of promise is that which foretold and promised the Mediator, who was to come, with his saving benefits. The gospel of fulfilment, is the actual execution and fulfilment of the gospel of promise: therefore Paul saith, Rom. i. 1—4, "That God hath promised the gospel before by his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh," &c.

This gospel of promise "God spake in times past, and in divers manners to the fathers," Heb. i. i. For (1) God himself revealed it first of all in Paradise, when "he said to the serpent, because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," Gen. iii. 14, 18. We suppose that the Lord God spake these words, when our first parents were present, not so much to the material serpent, as to the devil, who abused the serpent, because many things are mentioned here, which are natural to the serpent, and which it hath in common with other hurtful animals: and the rather, because "the devil and Satan is called the old serpent." Rev. xii. 13. Our Saviour teacheth us that the seed of the serpent signifies the ungodly, when he calls them "a generation of serpents and vipers." Matt. xxiii. 33, and saith that they are of their father the devil," John viii. 44. We suppose also, that these words were spoken, in order to comfort our parents, as their malicious foe was condemned by these words; therefore it is also evident, that the seed of the woman signifies in the first place the Mediator, who should be "the seed of Abraham," and thus, also "the seed of the woman;" Gen. xxii. 18. Gal. iii. 16. iv. 4, and it signifies in the next place, elect believers with the Mediator, and in him; for these "are reckoned the seed," through the promise. Gen. xvii. 7. Rom. ix. 7, 8. And therefore the words, Gen. iii. 14, 15, promise (a) that the Mediator should be man of men, to wit, of a woman. (b) That he should be holy, an enemy to the devil, and to his seed. (c) That he should be God; for he should be able to bruise (or crush) the head of the devil, or his power. (d) That he should destroy the works of the devil. 1 John iii. 8. (e) That he should suffer in his human nature; for the serpent should bruise his heel. (f) That the serpent should not conquer him, but that he should be exalted above the serpent, whose head he should bruise. (g) That believers, being united to him, should be made like him, as the seed, and should therefore be made wise, be justified, sanctified and delivered; but still by a conflict with the serpent and with his seed. These things, and such like, are contained in the promises. Our first parents no doubt understood these things more or less, and were more fully instructed in them by God, believed and embraced them to salvation, and delivered them also to their children by tradition. (2) God published this gospel afterwards by the holy patriarchs and prophets. The patriarchs

were the first fathers of great families in the holy line, before and after the flood; to wit, from Adam to Noah, before the flood, Gen. v. after the flood, from Noah to the twelve sons of Jacob, Gen. x. 1. Chron. i. who, as also Abraham, Heb. vii. 4, are called patriarchs, Acts vii. 8. And since the promise of the coming of the Messiah, and the setting up of the new church was attached to the family of David, 2 Sam. vii. therefore David is also called a Patriarch, Acts ii. 29. God published his gospel in divers ways to these patriarchs, and by them to their posterity. How could Abel otherwise "offer in faith?" Gen. iv. 4. Heb. xi. 4. Did not Cain and Abel, as also the sons of God, and the daughters of men soon manifest who were the true partakers of the Mediator? Gen. iv. and vi. When Enos was born, the people of God assembled to confess the Lord in a public manner, according to the gospel, iv. 26. Enoch spake of his coming to judgment, Jude, verse 14, 15. Noah preached even then by the Spirit, the righteousness of the Redeemer, and prepared the ark, as a figure of his grace, which is now sealed by baptism, according to 1 Peter, iii, 19, 20, 21. But the gospel was published much more clearly in the household of Abraham and of his sons, Gen. xviii. 17; when God entered into a covenant with them, and promised them the Messiah, as the seed in whom men should be blessed, and particularly as a seed, which should proceed from them; as the Messiah also appeared sometimes to them, as the angel of the covenant. They also believed the gospel, embraced the Mediator, and obtained thus the imputation of his righteousness. See Gen. xv. 6. Heb. xi. 13.

To these patriarchs we may add also those great and holy men, who were not of the holy line, as Melchizedek and Job. Melchizedek prefigured that the Mediator should have a priesthood and kingdom, which should not be transferable to others, Gen. iv. Heb. vii. And Job spake of the Messiah, as his "*Goel* and Redeemer," both in this life, and that to come, Job. xix. 25, 26, 27.

But the gospel was published with much greater clearness by the prophets: men chosen by God out of all the tribes of Israel, and endued with his Spirit, that they might foretell the future things of the Messiah, his benefits, and the New Testament church; for they foreshowed that the Messiah should be Mediator, God and man in one person, and "Immanuel," God with us, and that "he should be born of a virgin," Isaiah vii. 14. ix. 5, that "he should be a prophet, like Moses," Deut. xviii. 15, "a priest after the order of Melchizedek," Psalm cx. 4. 4. and "a king of Zion," Psalm ii. 6, that he should be humbled and exalted," Isaiah liii. that he should descend

from the tribe of Judah and the impoverished family of Jesse, Gen. xlix. 10, Isaiah vi. 1, and be born at Bethlehem, Micha v. 1, and appear in the second temple, Haggai ii. 8. 10. Mal. iii. 1, and that after the end of seventy weeks of years, Dan. ix. 24, 27. That he should be made of God to his people wisdom, "to lead the blind," Isaiah xlii. 16, righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 6, sanctification, Isaiah lix. 20. That he should bring the Gentiles to fellowship with God, Isaiah xlix. 6. That he should abolish the ecclesiastical laws of the Jews, and that Jerusalem should be laid waste, Dan. ix. 27. And so "all the prophets give witness that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins," Acts x. 43.

3. God published this gospel of promise not only verbally, but also really : he prefigured it "by the sacrifices and other ceremonies, or ecclesiastical observances of the law. The ceremonies of the law were either (1) the holy things, as all the different offerings, meats, drinks, washings, sprinklings, incense, anointing oil, first fruits and tithes ; or (2) the holy persons, who celebrated the publick worship, as the high priest, the common priests, and the Levites ; or (3) the holy places, as the land of Canaan, Jerusalem, the tabernacle and temple with their apartments, as the holy of holies with the ark of the covenant, the holy place with the golden altar, the table and candlestick, also the porch with the brazen altar, the laver, and all the instruments, which were used in the holy service in the porch ; or (4) the holy seasons, as all the festivals.

Truly a most costly, obscure, and burthensome worship, "a yoke which the fathers could not bear," Acts xv. 10. Why did God lay this yoke upon them ? he did not borrow it from the Egyptians, and correcting it somewhat, give it to them, in order to detach them by the use of it from affecting the customs of the heathens : for "the laws of Israel were different from those of all other people," Esther iii. 9. God detested the laws and religion of the heathens, Deut. xii. 30. When Israel made a calf after the manner of the Egyptians, they broke the covenant of God, Deut. xxxii. Neither do we think that God gave them this law, in order to punish them for their sin with the golden calf ; for he had given them many parts of it before that sin, and he broke off giving it to them on account of that sin, and he began, presently after he was reconciled to the people, to perfect it. It is therefore better to say, that this law was given to Israel for "a wall of partition," to separate them from other nations, Eph. ii. 14, 15, also to convince them of their uncleanness, and guilt, and induce them to seek their perfection in the Mediator, who was to come. See Coll. ii. 17. Heb. viii. 5. ix. 9, 10, 11. x. 1. The Old

Testament church was in a state of imperfect freedom, and of childhood, and was instructed in higher and better things by these difficult rudiments. If time would permit, we would show that all these ceremonial observances typified that the Mediator should perfect his people by his only offering, and with his blood and Spirit, that he should be the true high priest, and should enter into the holy of holies, even heaven itself, with his own blood, and that he should procure a joyful festival for his New Testament church, during her whole continuance on earth, and should at length introduce her into the heavenly Canaan, and into the holy Jerusalem, the rest which remaineth for the people of God. See only the epistle to the Hebrews; for we cannot speak of these things in order now.

Not only were the ceremonies of that law types, but also many other things and persons of that time. If any wish to see a more particular account of them, we refer him to our "Sketch of the structure of the types, exhibited with respect to its established fundamental rules, and agreeably to proper standards," in which work he may also see that the types were not mere shadows and sketches, but also sacraments and seals, by which God certified and sealed to his ancient people the Messiah who was to come, and his saving benefits. Therefore we believe that the Mediator was an *Expromissor* for the Old Testament church, or such a surety, as had taken the debt on himself absolutely, and not merely a *fidejussor*, who had undertaken indeed to satisfy for her debt, but nevertheless suffered it to remain on her, and to be demanded of her, until she should satisfy in him, and if he should fail, that then she should be obliged to satisfy for herself, and atone for her debt by eternal misery: for if he had not taken the debt on himself absolutely, but left it on her, and suffered it thus to be demanded of her, believers would not then have triumphed, as they did, on account of the forgiveness of their sins, Psalm xxxii. ciii. Isaiah xxxviii. 17. Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8, neither would that burthensome worship of the church have typified, shadowed forth and sealed the Mediator to them, and they would not have been able to enter into the everlasting rest, so long as he had not satisfied for their debt.

Behold, in this manner did God make known the gospel of promise, and "he hath also lastly accomplished it by his only begotten Son," and so hath revealed it to us by the gospel of fulfilment in the scriptures of the New Testament; for we find in them, that our Lord Jesus Christ, God co-essential with the Father and the Holy Ghost, took upon himself the human nature, continuing one person, of the virgin Mary, in the proper time and place: that he is the supreme

Prophet, Priest and King; that he was humbled and exalted, and was thus made to his people of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, which we will illustrate and prove in order, when we speak of God the Son and our redemption.

APPLICATION.

What think ye, beloved hearers, ought not we to be fully persuaded in our minds, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, according to the scriptures? May we not indeed cry out with Andrew and Philip. "We have found the Messiah, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph?" John i. 42, 45 For all that was foretold and prefigured of the Messiah is perfectly fulfilled in him: he also fully proved this from the scriptures from his miracles and from his resurrection, so as to silence the Jews: and his apostles, who were ear and eye-witnesses of these things, testified of them with so much power, that those who lived both in and after their time received their testimony with a full persuasion of mind. It is indeed truly astonishing, that the Jews, to whom were committed the oracles of God, denied our Saviour, as they do even until this day. How was this possible, might we ask? But the word of God will inform us that God hath forsaken that generation in his wrath, and hath abandoned them to blindness and hardness of heart. They know neither their misery, nor the proper method of deliverance: they seek their own righteousness, and are offended at the humble birth, and at the ignominious crucifixion of Christ. All this was likewise foretold concerning this people. See Isaiah xi. 9, 10. viii. 14, 15, 16. xxix. 9—15. lviii. 2—5. There is nothing that they can endure with less patience than that Jesus hath abolished and abrogated their ceremonial law, as though it were not foretold, that the Messiah, when "he had made an end of sins, had made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, should then also cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." Dan. ix. 24—27. See also Jer. iii. 15, 16, 17.

But who will not detest the opinion of the Socinians, that the Mediator is not God and man in one person, and that he did not by satisfying the justice of God, become wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to his people? They say that he is not more than a mere man, or only a great prophet on account of his heavenly doctrine, great miracles, and exemplary conversation and death. But what wonder is it, that they degrade Christians in this manner.

they have conducted thus also with the believing Jews, upon whose faith Christianity is founded; for "the law went forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem." Isaiah ii. 3, and "salvation is of the Jews." John iv. 22. For they assert that the fathers of the Old Testament had no promises concerning the forgiveness of sins, or of eternal life in the Messiah, who was to come; that he was not typified by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law, and that the sacrifices, which were then offered up for sins, reconciled the sins for which they were offered, and that therefore the believers of that time did not seek their reconciliation in Christ, when they offered. Do they not represent the fathers as Epicureans, who cared only for their bellies? do they not deny the whole gospel, which teaches nothing different nor less of the Mediator, than we have exhibited? Doth not the word of God say plainly and frequently, that the Lord established his covenant of grace with the fathers, that he was their God? Gen. xvii. 7. Psalm xxxiii. 12. Matt. xxii. 32, that he forgave their sins, Gen. xv. 6. Psalm xxxii. 1, 2. ciii. 3, 4. They had spiritual peace and joy. Isaiah xxxviii. 17. To them belonged the adoption, Rom. ix. 4, sanctification, preservation, and glorification, Psalm xlviii. 14, Psalm xvii. 15. They had "the same Spirit of faith" with us, Psalm cxvi. 10. 2 Cor. iv. 13. Heb. xi, and indeed faith in the Messiah, in whom, and for whose sake they desired and obtained all things of God, Psalm lxxx. 17. Dan. ix. 17. Heb. xi. 27, and this was sealed to them by the sacraments, which were of the same efficacy with ours, 1 Cor. x. 1—4. What think ye, hearers, may we look upon these men, who deny all this, either as true Israelites, or as believing Christians?

But how forcible are the right words of our instructor, to show the concerned sinner the good way, according to the gospel, to escape punishment, and to be again received into favour. The distressed sinner asks how he may obtain the favour of God; and he shows him not only the necessity of a satisfaction, and that there was no possibility, that either he himself, or any other mere creature should satisfy, but that this could be accomplished only by one, who was a real and holy man, and very God and man in one person, in order that the sinner may not rest upon false grounds, but may be more deeply humbled. And that he may not however through despair wholly neglect to seek his salvation, he shows him that the Lord Jesus Christ is such a proper mediator and deliverer, and that he may be fully persuaded and assured of this by the gospel, and become a partaker of him and his fulness by faith. Therefore this information is perfectly satisfactory to a perplexed mind. For (a)

hath the Lord Jesus Christ been made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, then he hath satisfied the justice of God, and procured a deliverance from guilt for the humble sinner, by which means he escapes punishment. For there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, because he hath fulfilled the righteousness of the law in us," Rom. viii. 1, 3, 4. (b) The sinner is thus also again received into favour, since he is brought by the righteousness of Christ into God's covenant of grace; for "the Lord causes him to pass under the rod, and brings him into the bond of the covenant," Ezek. xx. 37. (c) And Christ doth thus also remedy all his grievous calamities. Is he foolish, doth he not know God's way of life; Jesus is wisdom to him. Is he guilty; the Mediator is righteousness to him. Is he too abominable, and hateful to receive any favour; Christ is sanctification to him. Is he still too much fettered and bound with the cords of misery; the Saviour is the Redeemer, and is redemption to him. (d) The sinner needs not fear that God the judge will not be pleased with the Surety, and with his satisfaction. Our Lord Jesus Christ is made this of God to him: the Judge himself appointed him to be a surety, sent him into the world, demanded the debt of him, and showed that he was satisfied with him, when he raised him from the dead, exalted him at his own right hand, and thus "justified him," 1 Tim. iii. 16. And therefore he swears that "he will not be wroth with the believing sinner, nor rebuke him," Isaiah liv. 9. (e) Is the sinner anxious to know how he shall obtain this Mediator for himself; this Saviour is offered to him in the gospel, and he hath only to choose him for himself upon that offer; yea, God commands him to do this, and promi-eth him that "he will not reject him," but will receive and save him, John vi. 37. Isaiah xlv. 22.

May and must we not then say, that the doctrine of our reformed church is pure and evangelical, according to the word of God? For it is one of the best evidences of the truth of a doctrine, that it calms and comforts the troubled mind of a distressed sinner perfectly: For "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope," Rom. xv. 4. And who of those who are not of our communion are comparable to us in this respect? the Romanists require that the distressed sinner should satisfy for his temporal and eternal punishment, by various bodily exercises and penances of hearing masses for souls' abstaining from particular meats during certain seasons, saying and muttering many prayers, going upon pilgrimages to this and that holy place, so called, and celebrating many holy

days. Will this not suffice, he must then seek indulgences, and the supererogatory works of saints, who were more than perfect. Doth he come short still, he must then believe and be assured, that he will be obliged to satisfy for what remains in an exceedingly hot and burning purgatory, where he will be most severely tormented a long time, and that he cannot be delivered out of it, unless many prayers be offered up for him, and many masses for the dead be provided for him by the living. The Socinians do indeed detest these trifles, but neither do they heal the breach in the spirit; for they do not speak of a satisfying Mediator but only say, that the mourning sinner must believe the promises of God, that he who doth good shall receive a good reward. Doth the sinner say, that he hath not done any good work, and that the promises do not therefore belong to him, they will then endeavour to soothe him with an external conversion, telling him that he must lead a better life for the time to come, that he must keep the easy commandments of Christ, and that God will then forgive his former sins. The Remonstrants do not conduct much better, when they meet with a sorrowful sinner; for they presently quiet him with vain consolations, and say that he must not be so sorrowful, that his case is certainly not so lamentable, that he repents of his sins, that God is merciful, that Christ hath died for every sinner, and merited a sufficient grace: that he must promise to lead a better life, and to make a better use of the powers of his free will, and that God will then grant him his grace. O vain and miserable comforters of sick souls! they show that they have not yet any experimental knowledge of the abominable nature of sin, nor of a true humiliation, nor of the satisfaction nor fulness of Christ, nor of a perfect consolation; and therefore they feed the poor soul with ashes, and put a lie in her right hand.

But if our doctrine were ever so efficacious and sufficient to quiet a troubled mind, it will nevertheless, not administer the smallest relief unless we know that Christ with all his fulness is also given to us of God: that he is not given to all men, will appear on the following Lord's day. To force ourselves into a steadfast persuasion, in a careless manner, without any foundation, and without a strict examination of ourselves, that Christ is given to us, is building the hope of our salvation upon a foundation of sand, and it will sink the sinner into the lake; and therefore it behooves every one to examine himself in the strictest manner, and to inquire thoroughly "whether Christ be in him," and be given to him. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Is it your desire, friends, to know how the person is disposed, to whom the Mediator is given, that ye may liken and compare yourselves to him?

observe, (a) such a person beholds with grief and detestation his blindness, guilt, filthiness, impotence, and abominable sins, and that not only others, but also he himself, hath deserved, according to the righteous judgment of God, temporal and eternal punishment: he is concerned and distressed on this account; he sees not how he shall be delivered; all his own endeavours and exertions, from which he formerly derived hope, fail him; he views them as "loss and dung," Phil. ii. 4—8; and he cries out "there is no hope, he doth not find any more the life of his hand, and therefore he is grieved." Isaiah lvii. 10. He doth not, however, wholly abandon himself to an entire despair; but having an earnest desire to escape punishment, and to be again received into favour, he looks about that he may find some means to obtain that end; and therefore he asks others, "what he must do to be saved." Acts ii. 37. xvi. 30. "He fasts and prays" with Saul, Acts ix. 11, and he strives earnestly "to work out his salvation with fear and trembling; for God worketh in him both to will and to do." Phil. ii. 12, 12. He will also not desist nor rest, until he hath some evidences, and until "God saith to his soul, I am thy salvation." Psalm xxxv. 3; for God will "look" with favour only "on him, who is poor and of a contrite spirit," Isaiah lxvi. 2, and "the Redeemer should come to Zion for them who turned from iniquity." Isaiah, lix. 20.(b) Such a person hath also a high estimation of the Lord Jesus Christ: "To you who believe, he is precious," saith the apostle. 1 Peter, ii 17. He considers him as so capable, sufficient, and adapted to all his necessities, that his soul becomes exceedingly eager and desirous to possess him: he betakes himself, therefore to praying and wrestling for him, that he may impart himself to him; he surrenders himself to him, and casts himself upon him; he calls and fetches him in, and he ceases not to wrestle thus in faith, until he reveals and imparts himself to the soul. Thus the Canaanitish woman acted, Matt. xv. 22—28, and Saul, Philip. iii 7—10.(c) Such an one doth also desire him with all his benefits, he wishes not only that Christ should make him wise, bestow his righteousness upon him, deliver him from his misery, and save him, but also that he should be sanctification to him, that he should take all his sins from him, and slay them; those also, which appear to him, as far as he is carnal, honourable, profitable and agreeable; that he should even take entire possession of his whole heart, and fashion it according to his will; he considers holiness, as being dead to himself, being resigned to God, and doing the will of God in all things, as the most glorious and most happy portion that a person can enjoy; therefore he de-

lights in it, and cries out with David to God, Psalm cxix. 45. "Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes.(d) Christ and his gospel are revealed to such a person inwardly and effectually by the holy Spirit, to whom belongs the dispensation of the gospel; he not only reads and hears out of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not only apprehends by his contemplations who and what he is to a sinner, but Christ himself is also discovered by the light of his Spirit to the soul, by which his heart is warmed, captivated, and drawn forth toward him in faith and love. "The Lord opens his heart, and causes him to give heed to the things that are spoken by Paul," or others from the gospel, Acts xvi. 14. He obtains "the mind of Christ," 1 Cor. ii. 16. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6.

Have ye no knowledge of these things, have ye never attended to them, nor experienced them, can ye then indeed think that this great Mediator, with his great benefits, is given of God to you? surely no: but it behooves you to know that ye are yet "without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12. It is true, ye have and hear the gospel, but "it doth not profit you, not being mixed with faith," Heb. iv. 2. "It is hidden from you and ye perish, the god of this world hath blinded your minds, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto you," 2 Cor. iv. 4. How grievous will it be to you to perish under the precious dispensation of the gospel! Will not the Ninevites, the queen of Sheba, Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, yea, all the nations who have not heard the gospel, rise up in judgment against you, because ye have neglected such a favourable opportunity to be saved, which they never enjoyed? Friends, it will be a hell in the midst of hell to you, that ye have not improved such an acceptable time and such a day of salvation. "Or do ye despise the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth you to repentance? Ye do then, after your hardness and impenitent hearts, treasure up for yourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. ii. 4, 5.

Awake, awake therefore, and flee from the wrath to come. Accept, and lay hold on the Mediator, and "kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but

a little," Psalm ii. 12. For (a) do ye not stand in need of him? have ye not deserved temporal and eternal punishment, according to the righteous judgment of God? how shall ye escape and be again received into favour? or do ye know how ye can by wearying yourselves with certain devoirs? are ye not foolish, worthy of condemnation, abominable, and altogether miserable? is not he alone sufficient to fill you with all the fulness of God? "He can save to the uttermost them that come unto God through him," saith the text. O do not then despise him. (b) Ye can obtain him and all his fulness; for he calls and invites you to him: "Turn unto me, and be saved all the ends of the earth;" thus he saith to you also, who are altogether miserable, Isaiah xlv. 22. "God himself sets him forth to you, to be a propitiation through faith in his blood," Rom. iii. 25. "Ho, every one that thirsteth;" thus he crieth, Isaiah lv. 1, 2, 3, "come ye to the waters, and ye who have no money, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." &c. Yea, he saith, Rev. xxii. 17, "Let whosoever will take the waters of life freely." He invites even all those who live under the gospel, yea, those also who are lukewarm, and those who are puffed up with a proud conceit of themselves like the Laodiceans, for he saith, Rev. iii. 18. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and annoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." For what purpose have ye preachers? and why do they publish the gospel to you? is it not that they may persuade you to believe, and that they may allure you to this sufficient Deliverer, and induce you to lay hold on him? "Now then, we are ambassadours for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God," 2 Cor. v. 20. (c) May ye indeed neglect to receive him, when he is offered to you? is not this enjoined on you? may ye continue unbelieving? is it left to your choice, to embrace the Son of God or not? surely no: will ye then be wilfully and knowingly disobedient, and perish? Who, who is there of you who will with such a wicked heart of unbelief, depart from the living God? Is there any one who is so wicked, do thou, and thou nevertheless "save thyself from this untoward generation," Acts ii. 40. "Take hold of the strength of God, that thou mayest make peace with him," Isaiah xxxvii. 4. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," Acts xvi. 31. (d) Well, sinner, wilt thou not flee to him? shouldst thou go to him, and receive him in vain? No: "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast

out," saith he, John vi. 37. Thou wilt not fail of salvation, if thou wilt only receive him, and surrender thyself to him with a perfect heart. "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved," saith the mouth of truth again and again, Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 16, 17, 36. He confirms it with a double "verily," John v. 14, yea, as it were with an oath, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. (e) Will ye not come, but remain in yourselves, know then that ye are guilty of a most heinous sin; ye despise him, his fulness and love, which the devils cannot do, since he is not offered to them; "Ye make God a liar," 1 John v. 10. He upbraids you with it in anger, "that ye will not come to him, that ye may have life," John v. 40. "His wrath lieth and abideth on you," John iii. 36. "When distress and anguish cometh upon you, and ye call upon him, then he will not answer; but he will laugh at your calamity," Prov. i. 20—33. "To-day then, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," Psalm xc. 7, 8. "For how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?" Heb. ii. 3.

But, believers, ye who have chosen and received him alone, wholly and frequently for yours, in truth, and with a perfect heart, because the Lord God hath offered him to you in the gospel, and captivated your hearts thereby:

1. Believe, and be assured that God hath given him to you with all his fulness, and that he is yours, and ye are his; like the spouse who said without doubting, "My beloved is mine, and I am his," Song ii. 16. "Do ye not know your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you," 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Do ye not know with Paul, "that ye have believed in him?" 2 Tim. i. 12. Can ye deny your sorrow and concern for your miserable condition, the continual outgoings of your hearts toward him in desires and longings, your hearty surrendering of yourselves to him, and receiving of him, as well to be sanctified by him, as to be saved; can ye, we say, deny these things? and are they not considered by you as evidences of your saving interest in him? Well, let your hearts then be perfectly assured before him of his love to you:

2. Live much in the contemplation of his excellency. May ye not with Stephen, "see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," Acts vii. 56; endeavour to contemplate him in his glorious gospel, and led up by it, to enter with Moses into the clouds, and with open face to behold the glory of the Lord, as in a glass, and thus to see this King in his beauty in a far country. He is certainly worthy of your whole understanding; all that was ever foresaid and foreshown of him, as fair and glorious

exists in him in the most perfect manner: whatever is lacking in you, can be found in him. He hath a fulness of grace to supply all your deficiencies: he is perfectly adapted to all your necessities: "in him, and in his love, there is a breadth, length, depth, and height, and to know this fills us with all the fulness of God," Eph. iii. 18, 19. It affords a wonderful joy to the soul to contemplate him, "she walks in the light of his countenance, and rejoices in his name all the day long," Psalm lxxxix. 15, 16. Yea, "she is changed after the glorious image of the Lord, which she beholds with open face, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18.

3. Behold now your happiness, and the great kindness, that hath been shown to you: what hath God the Lord done for you, that he might deliver you from punishment, and restore you to favour? He doth not merely admit a surety, but he appoints his Son, in his everlasting counsel to be one; he sends him in the likeness of sinful flesh, inflicts on him the punishment of your sins, in your stead, receives you into his covenant, gives you this Mediator and Deliverer to be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption to you, causes you to embrace him, and publishes the gospel, even the gospel of fulfilment to you. How obscurely was it published to the fathers! but it is announced with exceeding clearness to you. What a burthensome service did he impose on the fathers! but he hath freed you therefrom. How earnestly did they desire these days, that they might see Christ in the flesh! but they might not live until these days, and God hath provided some better thing for you: "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them: and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them," saith the Redeemer of Israel, Matt. xiii. 16, 17. Rejoice then exceedingly on account of this salvation, which hath been accomplished: "It should be said in this day, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation," Isaiah xxv. 9. "Rejoice then greatly in the Lord, let your souls be joyful in their God, for he hath clothed you with the garments of salvation, he hath covered you with the robe of righteousness," Isaiah lxi. 10. Yea, "let all the seed of Israel glory in the Lord," Isaiah xlv. 25.

4. Improve therefore your Mediator and all his fulness, as your necessities require," receiving of his fulness, and grace for grace,"

John i. 15. "That he may supply all your needs according to his riches, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power," Philip. iv. 19. 8 Thes. i. 11. Behold continually your wants, your darkness, guilt, sinfulness, and other miseries; and see that there is a fulness of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption in him against all this, particularly for you; go to him with your distresses, receive of his fulness against them, and suck therefrom, through the conduits of the promises, whatever ye need; suffer him to execute his office upon you, for "he is all, and in all," Coll. iii. 11, and "is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 31.

3. Finally, to conclude, "Only walk worthily of the gospel of Christ," Phil. i. 27, that is humbly, believingly, joyfully, holily, circumspectly, and with self-denial toward all things out of him. "For," as the apostle saith, Titus ii. 11, 12, 13, "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world: looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ," Amen.

SAVING FAITH.

VII. LORD'S DAY.

John iii 36. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life : and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Q. 20. *Are all men then, as they perish in Adam, saved by Christ ?*

A. No ; only those who are ingrafted into him, and receive all his benefits, by a true faith.

Q. 21. *What is true faith ?*

A. True faith is not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his word, but also an assured confidence, which the Holy Ghost works by the gospel in my heart ; that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits.

Q. 22. *What is then necessary for a Christian to believe ?*

A. All things promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our undoubted catholic Christian faith briefly teach us.

Q. 23. *What are those articles ?*

A. I. " I believe in God the Father, Almighty Maker of heaven and earth.

I. And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord.

III. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary.

IV. Suffered under Pontius Pilate ; was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell :

V. The third day he rose again from the dead :

VI. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty :

VII. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

VIII. I believe in the Holy Ghost :

- IX. I believe an holy catholic church : the communion of saints :
 X. The forgiveness of sins :
 XI. The resurrection of the body :
 XII. And the life everlasting, Amen."

"**T**HE word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith." Thus speaks Paul of the disobedient Israelites, "to whom the gospel was preached, as well as to us," Heb iv. 2. The gospel is more profitable to man than aught besides ; for it reveals Christ and all his benefits to him, it offers all grace and salvation to him, it orders him to receive the Saviour for himself. it promiseth him all salvation in the Saviour, and "he is saved only by the gospel," 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2. This salutary gospel was preached to the disobedient Israelites also in the wilderness. when God established his covenant of grace with them on Sinai, although with a legal administration, when "he sent" his Son, "the angel in whom his name was, before them," Exod. xxiii. 20—23. "promised him to them, as a prophet, like Moses," Deut. xviii. 16—19, and when he typified him "by the manna, by the rock," 1 Cor. x. 3, 4, and by all the ordinances of the ceremonial law, Coll. ii. 17. Heb viii. 5. x. 5, but although the gospel is so exceedingly profitable, "it did not profit them, because it was not mixed with faith ; for they had not an heart to understand," Deut. xxix. 4. "They did not look to the end of that which is abolished ; but their minds were blinded." 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14. "When they heard the voice of the gospel they hardened their hearts, and they could not enter in. because of unbelief," Psalm xcv. 7—11. Heb. iii. 14—19. For it is faith which renders the gospel profitable to man ; for by faith a person not only acknowledges it to be true and divine, and is moved and influenced by it, 1 Thess. i. 15, but he doth also by faith receive the Saviour, and all his saving benefits for himself, according to the offer of the gospel, which saith, "He who believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, &c. John iii. 36.

This the instructor also teacheth us. He had taught in the foregoing Lord's day, that our Lord Jesus Christ was the perfect Saviour of sinners and he had proved this from the gospel ; but now he shows that Christ is nevertheless not a "Saviour, and that the gospel is not profitable to all who have perished in Adam, but only to those, who, according to the gospel, are ingrafted into him. and receive all his benefits by a true faith. In order that he may give us a proper account of this faith, he speaks of it at large, showing (1) how

necessary it is, Question 20. (2) Wherein it consists, Question 21. (3) What is the object of it, Question 22—58. (4) In what respect it is profitable, Question 59—64 (5) How it is wrought and confirmed, Question 65—85.

We must at present explain only three particulars with respect to faith.

I. The necessity of it, Q. 20.

II. The brief representation of the object of it, Q. 22, 23.

III. The nature of faith, Q. 21.

I. It is taken for granted here, that "all men are cursed," that is, condemnably "in Adam," because this is taught in the seventh question. It is asked now, whether "all men, as they have perished in Adam, are also saved by Christ?" This question appears strange, since it is universally acknowledged, that all men are not saved by Christ. There have indeed been certain persons, who have taught that all men were saved; but they have been few, and their erroneous opinion hath long since been dead with them. The instructor intends therefore something else by this question, and indeed whether men be saved from their birth by Christ, without any intervening act of the soul, as they perish in Adam by their birth, without any act of the person who is born. For there are many careless persons, who fondly imagine that they shall be saved by Christ, although they do nothing to obtain him for salvation. The catechism, in order to root out such a false imagination, shows that we cannot be saved by Christ from our birth, without any act of our own, as we have perished in Adam: but that, in order to be saved, we must be incorporated into Christ by faith, since we are not in Christ by nature, nor proceed from him by our birth, as we are by nature in Adam, and proceed from him by our birth. And therefore some act must be done, whereby we are ingrafted into him supernaturally, which act is faith; but we would rather say that this question is asked, because there have been certain persons of old, to wit, the Pelagians and Semipelagians, and because there are still certain persons, to wit, the Jesuits and Remonstrants, and many who collude with them, who conceive that, as all men were brought into a state of perdition by Adam, so all men are brought into a state of salvation by Christ, that Christ died for all men, and merited salvation for all, as Adam, according to our doctrine, deserved perdition by his sin for all. This error proceeds from another erroneous opinion. These men hold that Christ did not satisfy the justice of God for all the sins of his people, but only the will of God, which did not demand all, but only a small part; that Christ having obeyed this will, God,

by a gracious estimation, accepted of that small part, instead of a full satisfaction for all men, and was moved thereby to establish a general covenant of grace with all men, and to bestow a sufficient grace upon them all, whereby they should be enabled to make a proper use of their free will; for God requires of them, as a condition, in the covenant, that they should exert their free will, in order to believe, obey and persevere. The reason why all men are nevertheless not saved, though Christ died for all, is that they do not make a right use of this free will. There are indeed some of the Reformed, who also imagine that Christ died for all men; but they add, that saving faith in Christ depends not upon free will, as those who are out of the Reformed church assert, but only upon the decree of God and effectual grace.* The instructor opposeth this, and teaches that all men are not saved by Christ, and therefore that he did not bring them all by his death into a state of salvation. And he doth not teach this without a reason: for,

1. Christ's death and merits, whereby man is saved, belong not to all men, but are restrained to a certain number. He saves none but "his people," Matt. i. 21, "his body, of which he is the Saviour, and his church, for which he gave himself," Eph. v. 23, 25. "He is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him," Heb v. 9, "He gives eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him," John xvii. 2. "He lays his life down for his sheep," John x. 11, 15. Now all men are not his people, his body, his church, those who obey him, who are given to him, his sheep: "Ye are not of my sheep," saith he to the Jews, John x. 26.

2. We suppose that the Mediator was obliged to satisfy the justice of God fully, as we have proved already upon the fifth Lord's day: we also suppose that he hath satisfied fully, which we will show on the fifteenth Lord's day. If now Christ satisfied the justice of God for all, it must follow, either that all men will certainly be saved, and cannot be punished with perdition for any sin, which none will assert; or that God is not just, since he would punish guilt twice, once in his Son, and once in the sinner, who perisheth. Since we may not think thus of the righteous God, therefore it is also certain, that the Surety did not die for all.

3. Add to this, that the Saviour actually communicates, and effec-

* By these the author means the Amyraldists, or followers of Moses Amyraldus or Amyraut, a professor of theology in the university of Saumur in France, about the middle of the seventeenth century. They are also called Universalists, although they do not hold with our modern sect of that name, that all men shall be saved.

ually applies salvation to them, for whom he purchased it : for " he gives eternal life to his sheep, for whom he laid down his life," John x. 15, 28. As he merited salvation by his humiliation, so he also applies it by his exaltation : " he was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," Rom. iv. 25, " For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son : much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life," Rom. v. 10. As he was not humbled for himself, but for his people, so he was also exalted for them, that he might be a " Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts x. 34.

5. He saith himself, John xvii. 9. " I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me." Would he not pray for the world, and would he die for it? Our adversaries say, Christ applies salvation by his intercession, but he obtained it by his death, and they think that he was willing to obtain salvation for all, but not willing to apply it to all. But he communicates salvation to all, for whom he merited it, as we have just now seen, and besides this, he prays also, for all for whom he died ; for his death and intercession always accompany each other : " He bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors," Isaiah liii. 12. We see this also, Rom. viii. 34. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

5. " Christ did not die in vain," as Paul supposeth, Gal. ii. 21 ; but if he died for all men, then he died in vain for those who are not saved : for they miss both the virtue and fruit of Christ's death. If not one man had made a good use of his free will, so called, as might have happened, if the will be absolutely free, as the Pelagians say, then not one man would have obtained salvation, although Christ had died for him. And so his death would have been altogether in vain.

6. The doctrine, that Christ died for all men, is replete with absurdities : for (a) if he died for all men, then he died for those who were already damned, as Cain and others ; for " his death was for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament," Heb. ix. 15. (b) He died then also for those who never hear of him, nor can believe in him, and who cannot thus become partakers of him, nor make use of their free will for that purpose, as the heathens, who have never heard of the gospel, and whom God suffers to walk in their own ways (c) We are not then saved on account of, and by the death of Jesus, but on account of, and by our good use of our free will ; for upon that alone depends the efficacy and fruit of his death. (d) The sinner would then also have a good free will, and an ability to make a profitable and saving use of the

death of Christ; but this we have found on the eighth and ninth questions to be false.

If we will collect all these reasons, and attend to each of them in particular, we shall necessarily conclude that Christ did not die for all men, nor merit salvation for all.

Let none object here the words, "God will have all men to be saved," and "the Mediator gave himself a ransom for all," 1 Tim. ii. 4, 6. for this doth not mean every individual man, since it is added, "God will have all men to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Now God doth not will this concerning every individual, for he doth not reveal the truth to every individual; but all men are here all sorts of men, as "kings, and those who are in authority," vrs. 1, 2, who were at that time heathens, for whom the Christians were nevertheless bounden to pray, because God would have such also to be saved.

Doth John say, that "Jesus Christ is a propitiation, not only for our sins, but also for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii. 2, he doth not mean by the whole world all men, and every individual in particular; for the words world, and the whole world denote often only a great number of men. See Luke ii. 1. 1 John xii. 19. But by the whole world he means all kinds of men in the world, and particularly the heathens in opposition to the Jews, who were the only persons to whom salvation pertained under the Old Testament, John xi. 51, 52. For the heathens are called the world in this sense, Rom. xi. 12. "Abraham should be an heir of the world," Rom. iv. 13, not of every man, but of "every family and people, who should be blessed in his seed," Gen. xii. 3. xxii. 17, 18, "and who should believe, to whom the righteousness of faith should be imputed," according to Rom. iv. 11, 12, 13.

Paul saith indeed, Rom. v. 18. "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." But he doth not intimate by these words, that all men, who have perished in Adam, are brought into a state of salvation by the death of Christ: for he would then assert that they would all be saved, since he saith "that the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," which justification pertains to the application of the purchased salvation, according to Rom. iv. 25. "Grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life," as he saith vrs. 21. And therefore all men are here, not all who have perished in Adam, but all who belong by the covenant of grace to Christ, as their head and "receive through him abundance of grace, and of the gift of right-

eousness, and reign in life," vrs. 17. Therefore the apostle designs^d by the words, vrs 18, which are objected, that as Adam subjected all those, who were his, and who were reckoned under him in the covenant of works, to guilt and condemnation, so Christ hath delivered all the elect, who are reckoned under him in the covenant of grace, from condemnation, and hath brought them into a state of salvation: for Adam and Christ are set forth in this chapter, as two distinct heads, who govern each a distinct people, according to a distinct covenant: and Christ is represented, as bringing those who are his, into a state of salvation, in the same manner in which Adam brings those who are his into a state of condemnation. See vrs. 14—21.

Therefore whoever examines the word of God without prejudice, will be obliged to admit, that Christ did not purchase salvation for all men, and that all men are therefore not saved by him. But since the careless sinner "feeds himself without fear," therefore he imagines that many will notwithstanding be saved by Christ, and he supposes that he will be one of that great number; for he will not think the worst of himself, and he deceives himself thus with vain imaginations: for very few are saved by Christ: "the gate is strait, and the way is narrow that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," saith the Saviour, Matt. vii. 14. "The Father giveth his kingdom only to a little flock," Luke xii. 32. In the old world "all flesh had corrupted its way," Gen. vi. 12, and only "eight souls were saved in the ark," 1 Peter iii. 20, and among them there was a Ham, who was cursed on account of his wickedness, Gen. ix. 22—25. There were not ten righteous persons in Sodom, Gen. xviii. 22. We read of only one Melchizedek in Canaan: we find only the family of Abraham in Ur, of the Chaldees, and there were but few godly persons with Job in Syria. The posterity of Abraham multiplied indeed exceedingly, but God suffered other nations to walk in their own ways. Salvation came indeed afterwards to the Gentiles, but how many have remained blind and hardened! How few are there of those called Christians, who have not declined to Mahometan, Antichristian and Pelagian errors! "Many are" indeed outwardly "called" to fellowship with God, "but few are chosen," Matt. xxii. 14. And if we had no other proof, it would still be sufficiently evident, that few will be saved, from the general ignorance, earthly-mindedness, irreligiousness and ungodliness of those who profess the truth. The number of those who are saved is in itself indeed "a multitude which no man can number," Rev. vii. 9, but compared with those who are lost, the number of those who are saved is exceedingly small.

But how are they saved? without any act of their own, as they perished in Adam? No: for although Christ purchased salvation for them without any act of their own, nevertheless they do not become partakers of the purchased salvation, except by faith: the word of God teacheth us this every where. See only at present, Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 16, 26. Acts x 43. xvi. 31. Not that faith is an act of such great dignity, but (a) because the elect "are ingrafted into Christ," by faith. Without faith a man is without Christ, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel," &c. Ephes. ii, 12, and thus like "a branch separated from the vine, and cast forth," John xv. 6. But faith unites a person to Christ, and "Christ dwells in the heart by faith," Eph. iii. 17, and we become one plant and one body with him, obtain his saving influences, and are reckoned, as though we had been humbled and exalted with him. See this Rom. vi. 4, 5. 2 Cor. v 15. Gal. ii. 20. Eph. ii 5, 6. (b) Because by faith we receive Christ, and all his benefits, as will appear hereafter. And thus we appropriate the Saviour and his purchased salvation to ourselves, and therefore we possess him, and thus also salvation in him.

II. It would naturally follow now, that we should inquire what is the proper nature of faith; but as this is out of order, unless we understand what is the object of faith, we will therefore inquire first, what is necessary for a Christian to believe. The instructor saith, "All things promised us in the gospel," Question 22. "All that God hath revealed to us in his word," Question 21. God hath revealed also his law with its threatenings in his word; but the law is not so much the object of faith, as of obedience. We must believe the threatenings, but a belief of the threatenings cannot save a person, but condemn him: it renders the sinner concerned, but it doth not show him the way to flee from the wrath to come. A belief therefore of the promises of the gospel is necessary to salvation; for they show the sinner that he may obtain grace and salvation in the Son of God: they offer the Saviour to him for salvation, yea, they promise the believer perfect salvation in him, as we have taught on the nineteenth question.

"All the things promised in the gospel are briefly taught us in the articles of our catholic undoubted Christian faith." For all the promises of the gospel must be referred to God the Father, and our creation, to God the Son and our redemption, and to God the Holy Ghost and our sanctification. This is the way in which Paul proceeds, 2 Cor. xiii. 13. Thus also the Lord Jesus doth, when he commands us to baptize those who confess him, in the name of the Trinity, and seal to them in this manner the promises of the gospel, Matt. xxviii-

19. For which reason the ancient Christians adopted this form of baptism for their first creed, and afterwards they composed their other summary confessions according to the tenor of this. And we may see in what manner all the promises of the gospel are contained in the doctrine of the Trinity, in the exposition of Matt. xxviii. 19, by our church, for the instruction of those who offer their children for baptism, which is also read to them.* The instructor doth therefore undertake to explain these articles according to the doctrine of the Trinity, because they comprehend all the promises of the gospel, and must be believed to salvation.

It doth not appear at all probable that these articles of faith were composed by the apostles, and that each apostle dictated his particular article, when they were about to separate from one another at Jerusalem: for Luke mentions nothing of this in the acts of the apostles. They are indeed called *Symbolum Apostolorum*, the apostles' creed; but not because they were composed by the apostles, but rather because they contain a brief compend of the doctrine of the apostles.

We must therefore not look upon them as the infallible word of God, but only a brief compend of the doctrine of faith, believed and professed by the catholic church, gathered from the Jews and Gentiles, since they were composed according to the word of God, and particularly by the ancient Christian church, while she was not yet infected with many errors, which sprang up afterwards. This creed, or confession of faith, and likewise all others, composed and explained according to the word of God, serve for symbols of the agreement of the church in the doctrine of the truth; they are also means to preserve purity of doctrine, and to detect and restrain erroneous persons, who may arise in the church. But it is not sufficient to constitute a person a believer, and qualify him to be admitted to membership in the church, that he makes a verbal confession of this creed; for there is no heretic, however erroneous, who will not confess it verbally, and if he should be admitted into the church upon such a pretence, would he not excite much confusion and disturbance in the church? And therefore this creed must be received and confessed according to the exposition of the word of God, for it is only on account of the word of God that it is worthy to be believed and received.

It is not only the promise of the gospel, that is the object of faith, but also the Lord Jesus Christ himself proposed in the gospel; for

* The author means the exposition of the passage alledged in the form for the administration of baptism to infants.

“we believe in and on him,” Acts xvi. 31, Eph. iii. 12, and “receive him by faith,” John i. 12, and he dwells in our hearts by faith,” Eph. iii. 17, and faith rests not in him, but passeth through him to the Father, and thus “we believe by him in God,” 1 Peter i. 21.

III. We may now easily comprehend “what true faith is.” Faith in general is a holding of the word or testimony of a person to be true; and when he saith something, in which we are interested, a depending on his words. In this sense is faith used here also: for by faith a person holds the testimony of God, that he will save sinners, who flee to Christ, to be true, and he depends upon it. The word faith denotes sometimes indeed the doctrine of faith: “Paul preached the faith which he once destroyed,” Gal. i. 23. See also Acts vi. 7. Jude vrs. 3, but it commonly signifies a working act of the soul with respect to God, and Christ, and the word of promise, and in this sense do we speak of faith here.

The reason why the instructor asks just concerning “a true,” or a saving and justifying faith, called also “an unfeigned faith,” 1 Tim. i. 5, and “the faith of God’s elect,” Titus i. 1, is because some have only a pretended faith, and all faith is not saving; for there is a bare historical faith, by which a person acknowledgeth the divine truths, with a certain persuasion of mind, to be true and divine, without being influenced thereby to an earnest endeavour after salvation, according to those truths. In this manner “Agrippa believed the prophets,” Acts xxvi. 27. This is called a historical faith, because it is a holding of what is related in the bible to be true, as well with respect to that which hath happened, as to that which is promised concerning present and future matters. If any one will rather call this historical faith a speculative faith, or a faith of bare assent, we will not object to it. There are some, who, besides this historical faith, possess a temporary faith, by which they are exceedingly pleased with the divine mysteries, which they believe, are ravished with them, and have sometimes an unusual relish in them: “They receive the word anon with joy,” Matt. xiii. 20. “They taste the heavenly gift,” &c. Heb. vi. 4, 5. “They escape for a while the pollutions of the world,” 2 Peter ii. 20 Heb. x. 29. This is called a temporary faith, not only because it usually endures but for a time, at most only while it fares well with the church, and the temporary believer can maintain a good name; but also because it is promoted and supported by the temporary things of honour, pleasure, and profit. And therefore we must not think with the Remonstrants, in order that they may defend their doctrine of the apostacy

of the saints, that a temporary faith is of the same nature with a saving faith, as though there were no other difference between a temporary and a saving faith, than that the one ceaseth after a time, but the other endureth to the end: for a temporary faith is essentially different from a saving faith, in as much as it remains "without root in a stony heart, and doth not bring forth good fruits;" but it is altogether different with a saving faith. See Mal. xiii. 23. Luke viii. 15. The true believer "hath better things, and such as accompany salvation," Heb. vi. 9. Some have besides this also a faith of miracles, by which they trust, in consequence of some special promise of God, or some extraordinary impulse of the Holy Spirit, that some miracle will be performed, either by them, or upon them. See Mat. xviii. 20. Mark ix. 22, 23, 24. A person may have such a faith, and not possess a saving faith, as we may see Mat. vii. 22. 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

This saving faith consists in three acts of the soul, which it exerts.

1. "In a knowledge of what God hath revealed to us in his word. It is scarcely possible that every believer should know all things; the best "knows but in part," 1 Cor. xiii. 9. But if a person shall believe, it is necessary that he should know the fundamental truths. These are those (a) which the Holy Ghost himself calls the foundation; (b) with the knowledge and belief of which salvation is inseparably connected; (c) which are the foundation and support of other revealed doctrines, and (d) which teach the true practice of piety. We shall not explain these marks of the fundamental truths at present, for we have done this in our "mystery of God's covenants," page 5, 6, 7. We say now only, that in order to believe to salvation, we must know how great our sins and misery are, how we may be delivered from our misery, and how we shall express our gratitude to God for such deliverance.

Every believer knows and understands these things more or less, not only with a literal knowledge, but irradiated with the light of God; he sees into the things themselves, he beholds God and Christ and not only his word, although by the word, by which his mind is drawn forth toward the Lord, is united to him, changed into conformity to him, and warmed with love to him: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines in his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6. See also Psalm xxxvi. 9. 2 Cor. iii. 18. Heb. xi. 27.

We will not determine precisely whether this knowledge be a proper act of faith. It is certain, that the soul, when she exerciseth faith, exerts a certain activity in knowing and contemplating her objects, as well as in any other act of faith. It is also abundantly evident, that no man can believe while he doth not know the object of his faith. We must therefore detest popery, which asserts that an implicit faith is sufficient, to wit, when a person only believes as the church believes, without knowing what the church believes, or whether her faith be good; yea, the papists conceive that faith can be described better by ignorance, than knowledge, and that ignorance is the mother of devotion. Arrant folly! but in this manner do they retain souls in blindness and in bondage. How can we believe a person, when we do not understand what he saith? "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom. x. 17. Must we not then understand what we hear? Justifying and saving faith is called knowledge, Isaiah liii. 11. John xvii. 3. "The soul without knowledge is not good," Prov. xix. 2. Ignorance is the cause of every evil action. Because "the princes of this world knew not the wisdom of God, therefore they crucified the Lord of glory," 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. "Ignorance alienates the sinner from the life of God," Eph. iv. 18. "God will punish ignorance with flaming fire," 2 Thes. i. 8, and "he will not have mercy on a people of no understanding, nor show them any favour," Isaiah xxvii. 11.

2. The second act of faith is assent, or "a certain knowledge whereby a person holds for truth all that God reveals to him in his word." This assent we may also call a historical faith, (although it is wholly different from the historical faith of the unconverted, as we will see more particularly in the sequel). By which a person receives upon certain evidences, and upon the testimony of God, as a real, divine, and acceptable truth, that which is revealed to him in the word of God. "This is called "receiving the testimony of God, and setting to our seal that God is true," John iii. 33. "a full assurance of understanding," Coll. ii. 2, "an acknowledging of the truth," 2 Tim. ii. 35. Whereby the soul entertains such an assurance of the invisible things, discovered in the word of God, as if she saw them with her eyes, and heard with her ears God speak of them to her with his own mouth; in consequence of which she can depend upon the promises of God as upon firm and immovable foundations, and expect happiness of every kind from him: for "this faith is a sure foundation of things hoped for, and an evidence of things not seen. By this faith Moses had respect unto the recompence of the reward, and endured as seeing him who is invisible,"

Heb. xi. 1, 26, 27. And therefore this faith is opposed to "doubting concerning the promises of God," Rom. iv. 18, 21.

The reason why our mind receives as true and divine all that God hath revealed to us in his word, is not because the church, or our own human reason teaches and commands it; for then our belief of the divine truth would not depend upon a divine authority, but upon men, and upon our own imagination. It is indeed true, that the church showeth us the truth and divinity of the scriptures, and that reason is the mean by which we apprehend it: but nothing that is human can persuade and oblige us to believe the truth and divinity of the scriptures: but the believer holds all this to be true and divine, on account of the evidences of the truth and divinity which appear in the word itself, and offer themselves to the attentive inquirer. Therefore we are directed, in order that we may believe, not to the church, or to our own reason, but only to the word of God. See Isaiah xxxiv 16. John v. 39. Acts xvii 11. The evidences of the truth of scripture are particularly the credibility of the prophets and apostles, who testified, without regard to their private interest, "that which they had seen with their eyes, and handled with their hands," 1 John i. 1, 2, 3, and they confirmed their testimony by every mean, yea, by suffering the most painful death. The evidences of the divinity of the holy scriptures are the prophecies of future events, which have been fulfilled in their proper time; and also the miracles, by which God confirmed his doctrine. To all this we must add a powerful conviction of the Holy Spirit, by which he illustrates those evidences, so that we can understand them, and by which he conveys and works the grace and truth which the scripture proposeth, in our hearts, and produces thus a perfect assurance. See how Paul teaches this, 1 Thess. i. 5, "Our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," 1 Thess. ii. 13. "Ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." And so "the Spirit beareth witness that the Spirit is the truth." 1 John v. 6. It is indeed true, that the mind suffers grievous assaults, when it exerciseth this faith, that the flesh and the devil attack one sometimes with horrible, yea, blasphemous injections, by which the faith of the soul is exceedingly shaken; but we must know that a historical faith hath also its imperfections, yea, that these shakings tend, by the wise and powerful ordination of God, to inroot this faith more firmly and deeply in the soul; since the soul, shaken in this manner, endeavours so much the more to surmount

these doubtings, to look about for solid grounds, and to settle herself upon them.

3. The mind assured in this manner of the divine revelation, exercises also confidence in acting faith. The instructor, in order to teach the assurance of believers concerning their salvation, in opposition to the Papists, describes their confidence in its highest degree, and in its most improved condition, (as we are used to do, when we describe things in their greatest perfection) saying "An assured confidence, that not only to others, but also to me, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God," &c. Now since such a confidence doth not consist in an imagination, by which, with the Remonstrants, we hold it for a certain truth, that Christ hath died for me and all men, because we should then work by our faith only with ourselves, and not with Christ, and through him with God, contrary to what we have taught and proved before; therefore it follows that something else must precede this confidence, by which we obtain such a happy interest in Christ, and from which we may conclude upon sufficient foundations, that remission of sins, &c. is freely given, not only to others, but also to us. That which then constitutes the proper act of a confiding faith, is that confidential assent to the proffer of the crucified Mediator, by which the believing soul doth with the highest satisfaction approve of God's method of saving the sinner through the sufferings of his Son, chooses the Saviour for herself, owns him, and rests wholly upon him for salvation.

In order to explain this somewhat more fully, we will eye the soul in her acts of faith. The soul being so concerned, perplexed, and anxious, as we have seen, in explaining the twelfth question, hears indeed of an allsufficient Saviour; but it doth not relieve her, because she is too much distressed, and fears that he is not for her. Is she informed that he offers himself to her, and that he calls and invites her to him, she dares not however believe it, on account of her unworthiness. But the Lord penetrating effectually into the soul, persuades her by a historical faith, and by working an assent in her through his word and Spirit, and he assures her that he intends her also in his call and invitation. She believes this, and is thus persuaded in a powerful manner, to comply with this method of salvation, and is willing that the Lord God, since he manifests himself so favourable to her, should fulfil in her all the good pleasure of his goodness, she surrenders herself to him for this purpose, and saith with Mary, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it

unto me according to thy word," Luke i. 38. And she thus "submits herself to the righteousness of God" in Christ, Rom. x. 3. She conducts in this transaction, as a maid, who being kindly addressed by a young man, and persuaded by him, cheerfully consents to his proposal, owns and accepts of him as her husband, and enters into an engagement to be his wife during her life. Jesus allures the soul, and speaks kindly to her, the soul, believing by her act of consent, that he means what he saith to her, yields herself up to him by her faith of confidence, owns and chooses him for her bridegroom and husband, and surrenders herself to him to be his bride and spouse for ever, and "she is thus betrothed to him in faith," Hosea ii. 13, 20. By faith "she says and subscribes, I am the Lord's," Isaiah xlv. 5. Yea, her faith is as it were a giving of her hand to the Lord, an espousing of herself to the Lord, as it were, by a solemn taking of his hand, and by an oath, 2 Chron. xxx. 8, by which "the Lord brings her into the bond of covenant," Ezek. xx. 37.

We cannot contemplate the power of this act of faith, unless we attend to several things, which are contained in it, and to the emphasis of the expressions in the word of God that relate to it. And therefore we will busy ourselves a little with eyeing the soul in the active exercise of her faith and confidence, and exhibit in the meantime the emphasis of the phrases used in the word of God, both in Hebrew and Greek.

1. Previous to this act of faith, there is a general confidence and assurance of this evangelical truth, that he who believes in Christ shall surely be saved; yea, the soul confides in this for herself, that if she believe she shall certainly be saved; by which she is also encouraged to come to Christ. See this in Bartimeus, Mark x. 49, 50, 51. Many believe this indeed as a general truth, but they do not regard it to their salvation; but the believer is affected with it in such a manner, that he seeks and finds the favour of his Saviour for himself. The sinner hath sometimes such a sight and sense of his misery, that he fears there will be no mercy for him, and the reprobate sinks under it into despair, and doth not attend to the proffered grace: "He makes God a liar, because he believes not the record which God hath given of his Son," 1 John v. 10. But the elect, who have the spirit of faith, struggle against these discouragements, and surmount them, and they attend to this truth, until they obtain an assured interest in Christ.

2. To this is added a strong, active, and restless desire for the Mediator and his salvation, in order that we may partake of him and

his benefits. Therefore the Lord Jesus saith, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," John vii 37, 38. The soul sees indeed a sufficiency in Jesus, and that he is able to remove all her sinful misery, and hence she vehemently thirsts for him, sighs and cries to him, that he may be gracious to her, and receive her. See this Psalm xlii. 1, 2, Matt. xxv. 21, 29.

3. Add to this, that there is in this exercise an actual turning of ourselves to him. "This is called "a coming to him," Isaiah xlv. 24. By which (a) a person, like one who is without strength, and unable to break through to him, and draw near to him, only looks to him from afar, and shows himself to him, that he may have mercy on such a miserable wretch, who cries to him out of the depths," Psalm cxxx. 1. Or (b) as one, who is wholly wretched, he casts himself into his hands, that he may execute his office of Saviour upon the soul; and he thus suffers himself to be saved, as the Saviour admonisheth, Isaiah xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be saved," which implies, suffer yourselves to be saved and reconciled. See also 2 Cor. v. 20. Or (c) as one who is pursued and urged by fear, he flees to him, that he may shelter himself with him, and be hidden from destruction: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Prov. xviii. 10. The Hebrews to denote this, make use of the word *chazah*, which is rendered sometimes "taking refuge," and at other times "trusting." We meet with both expressions, Psalm lviii. 1, for we find here a secure shelter and a quiet confidence. Or (d) a person, after proper deliberation, actually enters in and through him into the covenant, in order to become his property, that he may rest only in him, and live to him, Isaiah lv. 3. Thus "he saith and subscribes with his hand, I am the Lord's," Isaiah xlv. 5. And "he enters into the covenant," Deut. xxix. 12. 2 Chron. xv. 12.

4. There is also in this exercise of faith, a receiving of the promises, which a person apprehends, appropriates to himself, depends upon, and improves, in order to exhibit his claims to the Lord, like David, Psalm cxix. 49. "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope," and also a receiving of the Mediator himself, of whom he "takes hold, as the strength of God," Isaiah xxvii. 5, "receives," John i. 12, and owns for his, Song ii. 16. A person unites himself to him, and admits him to "dwell in his heart by faith," Eph. iii. 17.

5. Finally, there is also a committing of ourselves to the Lord, and

a relying upon him in every condition. This is signified by the Greek word *πιστεω*, "I believe," which is often translated a committing of aught to a person. See Rom. iii. 2. 1 Cor. ix. 17. Thus also the Hebrew word *batach* signifieth a resting and settling of ourselves on the Lord, as a steadfast foundation stone, in seasons of danger, and when we might easily be shaken and despond. It is said of the righteous, Psalm cxii. 7, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord," and Isaiah xxvi. 4. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength." The soul who confides, remains quiet, and rests in the Lord under trouble, Isaiah xxx. 15. Of no less emphasis is the word *heemin*, which signifies a suffering of one's self to be carried and fed like a child, that rests upon the arms, and in the bosom of a nurse, and trusts and commits itself to her without concern. This word is translated "trusting," Job. xv. 31, but most commonly "believing." See Gen. xv. 6, and it is opposed to an anxious and concerned hastening, Isaiah xxviii. 16, "He that believeth shall not make haste." The believer will be more or less employed in one or another act of faith, according as he is disposed in this or that manner, is more or less advanced or influenced by the Spirit of faith.

From this exercise of faith and confidence follows also assurance, and "an assured confidence, that not only to others, but also to myself, remission of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation are freely given by God merely of grace, for the sake of Christ's merits." Every believer is not always assured, neither is faith assurance itself; but assurance floweth in a greater or less proportion from the exercise of faith. For, (a) not only have eminent believers possessed assurance, but also ordinary believers, as is testified, Job. xix. 25, 26, 27. 1 Cor. i. 30. 2 Cor. v. 1. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God," &c. The exercise of faith is also a rational act of the soul, which is conscious of her operations, knowing what she doth, and being able to say, "I know in whom I have believed," 1 Tim. i. 12.(c) It is indeed true, that unexperienced believers dare not entertain assurance through their prejudice against God's work of grace, and their inattention, as they do not give sufficient heed to the work of the Lord in the soul, or because they are young, and do not yet know the voice of the Lord. The Holy Spirit will nevertheless sometimes, and at least finally, afford them a steadfast assurance by enabling them to form a believing syllogism; for he assures them from the word, that "he who believeth on Jesus shall be sa-

ved ;” for “the Spirit beareth witness that the Spirit is the truth.” 1 John v. 6. He enables them also to perceive in their hearts that they do truly believe ; for “they receive the Spirit which is of God, that they may know the things that are freely given them of God.” He causeth them to infer therefrom that they shall also be saved : for “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God,” Rom. viii. 16.

The Papists imagine that such an assurance is only a presumptuous conceit, because we cannot find any where such a special promise to this or that person, as Peter and Paul had, that he shall be saved ; but the promises are made to them who believe ; when therefore any person, upon looking into himself, is conscious that he believes, he should undoubtedly assure himself that he shall also be saved, and that with as much certainty, as if he were addressed by name in the word of God.

We must distinguish the exercise of a believer's faith, according to the degree of his assurance. And so we contemplate it as an exercise of faith “unto” justification, and to the obtaining of salvation, and “from” justification and salvation already obtained. “The exercise of faith to justification,” is that which an unexperienced and weak believer, who hath not yet a perfect and steadfast assurance, exerts, in order that he may be justified and saved, Gal. ii. 16. “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ ; that we might be justified.” Doth the believer once attain to assurance, he is however frequently unsettled by his improper behaviour, his darkness, and his poring on his misery, and he thinks that his former assurance was only a conceit : and therefore he will continually endeavour to exercise faith anew, he hungers and thirsts, he runs and flies to Jesus, he surrenders himself to him, and accepts of him until his soul is reduced to her sweet rest again ; and he doth this so often, and so long a time, that he attains unto a settled assurance. “The exercise of faith from justification,” is that which is exerted by a person, who is further advanced, and who possesses a steadfast assurance, that he is truly justified and saved by God, and hath an interest in the Lord Jesus, and in all his saving benefits : whereby he exerciseth faith in him, as one who is entitled to all his salvation, and who hath therefore “in him boldness and access, with confidence by the faith of him,” Eph. iii. 12. This exercise of faith is otherwise called “a living and walking by faith,” in opposition to “sight,” Hab. ii. 4. 2 Cor. v. 7. And it is performed,

1. By a repeated re-establishing of the interrupted reconciliation

and peace of mind by laying hold on the Mediator, and pleading him and his whole salvation before the Father, with "the answer of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," 1 Peter iii 21.

2. By mixing faith with the word, and making use of it in all cases, as our food, feeding at it were upon it, Jer. xv. 16. Heb. iv. 2.

3. By a frequent exercise of either a stronger or weaker act of faith on Christ, as the breathing of the soul, and thus "from faith to faith," Rom i. 17.

4. By continually uniting ourselves to him, sucking from his fulness through the conduits of the promises against every calamity. Gal. ii. 20 John i. 16.

5. By rejoicing through faith in our happy interest in God, 1 Peter i. 8, like the Ethiopian, Acts viii. 39. and the gaoler, Acts xv. 34.

6. By ordering our whole conversation, what we do, and what we forbear, in faith, from a persuasion of the will of God, and with a dependence on his "help, which he hath laid upon one who is mighty," Rom. iv. 23. Eph. vi 10.

7. By relying through faith on his promises, and expecting all the promised salvation with patience and moderation, though it appear ever so dark, Psalm xxvii. 13, 14. Rom. iv. 18. Heb. x. 36, 37 38.

8. By conducting ourselves courageously through faith in the greatest dangers, and submitting willingly to every suffering for the Lord's sake, 1 Sam xxx. 6 Psalm xxiii. 4. Heb. xi. 24—27.

When we consider all these particulars, we cannot doubt that faith is an act, not only of the understanding and judgment, but also of the will. For it is active, not only with respect to its object, as a truth, as the word is, but also as a benefit, to wit, Christ and all his benefits: faith is not only an immanent act of the soul, but a transient act, which goeth out toward Christ and his Father, and so far faith is an act of the will; and truly faith is like the yeaword of a maid, who hath been persuaded and consents willingly to her marriage.

APPLICATION.

How happy are they who possess this faith! they are pronounced blessed, Psalm ii. 12. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" It is "a precious faith," 2 Peter i. 1. We are delivered by it from condemnation, John v. 24. Rom viii. 1. We obtain a happy interest in the Son of God and all his benefits, we become children of God, are justified, sanctified, saved, how abominable soever we

are in ourselves, John i. 12. Rom iv. 5, 8. Acts xv. 9. John iii. 16, 36. It renders all our actions good and acceptable to God, though they are abominable and loathsome "without faith," Rom. xiv. 23. Heb. xi. 6. There is a wonderful power in faith to effect great things. See this Heb. xi. "It can do all things," Philip iv. 13. Mark ix. 13. It causeth Christ to "dwell in the heart," Eph. iii. 17. It appropriates every promise, it claims for its own whatsoever it lays hold on, and it obtains an answer to our prayers; "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them," Mark xi. 24. "It overcometh the world," John v. 4. "Every man," said Cyprian, "obtains, according to the promises of the Lord, as much help of God, as he believes that he will obtain."

Since then salvation, and all kinds of happiness are annexed to faith, ought not every one to consider his ways, and with the greatest attention examine himself, and inquire "whether he be in the faith, and whether Jesus Christ be in him," 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Therefore impress it upon your minds, that every baptized professor of the truth doth not possess faith; for "all men have not faith," 2 Thess. iii. 2, "but only the elect of God," Titus i. 1. Therefore "examine yourselves strictly, ye listless people; before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you," Zeph. ii. 1, 2.

Do ye ask, How shall we know whether we have this faith or not? it is evident that those have not faith, (a) who are ignorant; for faith implies knowledge. (b) Who remain in themselves, and are never concerned how they shall be saved, and in this respect are neither "cold nor hot, but lukewarm," Rev. iii. 15. (c) Who are ungodly, and filled with all unrighteousness, "The abominable and disobedient are unbelievers," Titus i. 15, 16. (d) Who are indeed not so abominable, and would fain enter into heaven, but do not do the least thing for that purpose, as if they were to be saved by Christ as they perished in Adam, and therefore they venture upon a general grace of God, and death of Christ. Doth any one convince them that they will be lost, if they act thus, they comfort themselves, because they are not so ungodly as this and that person, but are civil and religious, like the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11, 12. "But without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. xi. (e) Those who have an erroneous notion of faith. One thinks because he is not a Jew, heathen, or Mahometan, that he is therefore a believer; another, because he doubts not concerning the word of God, but believes it

firmly, imagines that he hath a saving faith ; a third fondly conceits and forces himself to believe that he will be saved, and this will then be his faith ; but “ he feedeth upon ashes ; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, so that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand ? ” Isaiah xlv. 20.

These things are so plain and palpable, that they who are such persons, as we have described, may find without labour that they have not this faith. But it is more difficult to convince a temporary believer of this, since he may have very many good things, which greatly resemble the work of sincere believers : for he may be exceedingly sorry for his sins with Cain, Esau, Saul, Ahab and Judas ; he may “ gladly hear ” a zealous preacher, and be moved to “ do many things ” with Herod, Mark vi. 20. He may have a great knowledge and belief of the truth, yea, receive Jesus after his manner : “ He may be enlightened, taste the heavenly gift, be made a partaker of the Holy Ghost, taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and yet fall away,” Heb. vi. 4, 5. He may also be unblamable, join himself to the society of the godly, like Judas and Demas, and “ give his body to be burned ” for the truth, and yet not do his work in truth, and not possess “ a faith that worketh by love,” 1 Cor. xiii. 3, by which means he attains to a fond imagination, that he is already a most eminent believer.

But that he may yet be convinced, at least, that true believers may see the reality of this work, we will exhibit certain evidences of a sincere work of faith, in opposition to the work of temporary believers ; which evidences we will not derive from any circumstances, nor from the degrees of faith, but from the nature of the work of grace and of faith, as it is found in every believer, and in believers only.

1. The true believer hath a spiritual knowledge, whereby he not only apprehends the words and mysteries of scripture, as they occur therein, but also contemplates the things themselves, God, Christ and the life hidden with God : “ he sees the light in God’s light,” Psalm xxxvi. 9, although his knowledge be ever so small. We have shown this before ; but the knowledge of the temporary believer proceeds not beyond the word, it leaves his soul without God, and he obtains it only by human instruction, by his own barren, carnal reasonings and speculations, and hence he is filled with an admiration of himself, and while he teaches others in an imperious manner, he desires that they also should admire him and be astonished at his wisdom. See how Balaam boasted concerning his wisdom and raptures, Numbers xxiv. 3, 4. And thus “ knowledge puffeth up, but

charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet, as he ought to know," 1 Cor. viii. 2, 3.

2. The historical faith of true believers is wrought in them by the Holy Spirit, who not only explains the evidences of truth and divinity to them, but also impresses the truths of God upon their hearts, and causes them to see those truths, as we have proved before from 1 Thess. i. 5, and ii. 13, so that they are moved and persuaded to believe in, and to love God, Christ, and his service, and they do not attain to this without striving, and suffering many vexations from their unbelieving hearts and Satan. See Mark ix. 23, 24. But the temporary believer hath no true historical faith; it is commonly only a historical knowledge, and a supposing that the word of God is the truth; and when he even believes it, it is not more than a persuasion, proceeding from the exercise of his own judgment, and it hath no other effect on him, than to induce him to imagine that he is now some extraordinary person, and so "he receiveth the word anon with joy; yet he hath no root in himself," Matt. xiii. 20, 21.

3. The believer is employed in the confiding act of faith "with his heart," Rom. x. 9, and that with respect to God and Christ, whom he receives, and unites to himself, John i. 12. Eph. iii. 17. With his whole heart he consents to the proffer of grace, hungers and thirsts after Christ, surrenders himself to him, and casts himself upon him. A temporary believer is employed only with his judgment, with respect to the apprehensions, which he forms of faith, and he urges with his thoughts, which are void of the Spirit, his exercises according to those apprehensions, and claims faith thus without the Spirit of faith. He imagines then that he hath a true faith, and he rejoices greatly: "And thus he kindles a fire himself, compasses himself about with sparks, walks in the light of his fire, and in the sparks that he hath kindled," Isaiah l. 11.

4. A true and sincere faith sanctifieth the soul, not only outwardly, but "it purifieth" also "the heart," Acts xv. 9. It begets a wonderful love to God, to his service, and to our neighbour; "Faith worketh by love," Gal. v. 6. It renders a person humble, lowly, self-denying, heavenly-minded, and joyful in God, 1 Tim. i. 15. 1 Peter i. 8. But the temporary believer retains his rotten and abominable heart; it is enough for him, that others cannot point out any great fault in him, that he can talk wonderfully well of holiness, and he wishes that all men should consider him as a zealous Christian, like Jehu. 2 Kings x. 16

A true believer engages frequently in self-examination: he would not willingly deceive himself in a matter of such great consequence.

he descends a thousand times into his mind, that he may know whether his heart do not deceive him ; he often lays his soul open to God, that he may discover to him whether he deceives himself, like David, Psalm cxxxix 23, 24, yea, he doth this sometimes to a judicious minister, or to a private Christian, that he may "judge whether he be faithful to the Lord," like Lydia, Acts xvi. 17. Doth another suspect him, he is willing to be detected, and saith, "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness," Psalm cxli. 5. But a temporary believer, as he will not readily descend into himself, and only contemplates what he apprehends, so he will not be examined by another : doth any one suspect him, he is angry, and will depart from such a person, as Judas departed from Christ, when he detected him, John xiii 20, 26, 27, 30.

Examine yourselves by what hath been said, and see whether ye have faith or not, and deal carefully and honestly with yourselves. If ye have not faith, consider in what a deplorable condition ye are : "Ye are without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12. The word, and all things "are unprofitable to you," Heb. iv. 2, "the wrath of God lieth on you," John iii. 36, and "ye shall be damned," Mark xvi. 16. Alas ! lay this to heart, and let "the terrour of the Lord persuade you to believe," 2 Cor. v. 11. The Son of God calls yet to you, "O harden not your hearts, while to-day ye hear his voice," Psalm xcv. 7, 8. Heb. iii. 7, 8. No sin, though ever so great, ought to keep you from him : "he will in no wise cast any one out, who comes to him," John vi. 37. He receives the vilest sinner, 1 Tim. i. 13, 14, 15.

But with respect to you who have these evidences, permit me to say briefly for your direction, 1. Be assured, that not only to others, but to you also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation are freely given of God ; ye have the evidences of it, and know now "in whom ye have believed," 2 Tim. i. 12

2. Rejoice with the gaoler, that ye believe, Acts xvi 34. Yea, praise the Lord on this account ; for it is your great happiness, and "he hath given it to you of his grace," Philip. i. 29. Eph. ii. 8, 9.

3. Endeavour to increase in faith, for which the apostle prayed, Luke xvii 5. Unbelief is exceedingly hurtful to you in every respect, Matt. xvii. 20. Isaiah vii. 9. Heb. iv. 2. Yea, it is a sin which ought to be reprov'd. See Mark ix. 19.

4. Live now by faith, by a frequent exercise of it, as we have said before. for it is the breathing of the soul.

5. Cherish industriously your historical faith ; for that alone gives

vigour to all the exercises of the soul : " It is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1.

6. Confess also the doctrine of faith, though it should be with the hazard of your lives : " For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," Rom. x. 10. See also 1 Peter iii. 5 Matt. x. 32, 33.

7. Comfort yourselves also with your faith, knowing " that he who believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," 1 John iii. 36. Is your faith weak, salvation depends not on the degree, but on the essence of faith ; " The bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench," Matt. xii. 28. Yea, he will one day change faith into vision, 1 Cor. xiii. 12 " We see now through a glass darkly ; but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known." Amen.

THE
 CHRISTIAN'S FAITH
 IN THE DIVINE TRINITY.

VIII. LORD'S DAY.

2^d Cor. xiii. 14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all, Amen.

Q. 24. *How are these articles divided?*

A. Into three parts; the first is of God the Father, and our creation; the second of God the Son, and our redemption; the third of God the Holy Ghost, and our sanctification.

Q. 25. *Since there is only but one divine essence, why speakest thou of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?*

A. Because God hath so revealed himself in his word, that these three distinct Persons are the one only true and eternal God.

A PERSON who is desirous to learn any art, is not presently able to comprehend and exercise it perfectly: but he must begin with the first principles of it, must by them be led up to more perfect conceptions, and must by frequent exercises render the art familiar to himself. Let us instance in the art of reading: no man is able to attain by a single exertion to the highest degree of skill in it, but he must in the first place endeavour to learn the letters, then syllables, and afterwards words and sentences. Thus it is also with

knowing God: it doth not please God, to reveal himself in the clearest and highest manner to the elect sinner at the beginning. No man, who is yet in a state of mortality is presently able to receive such a revelation. "No man shall see God and live;" he may "see only his backparts," No man is able to understand the language of God, by which he would reveal himself in the clearest manner: therefore it is necessary that God should adopt the language of men, and stammer with them as children, on account of the nothingness and darkness of the sinner. Thus he conducted, when the church was in a state of childhood: "he subjected her to the elements of the world," Gal. iv. 3. The Son of God, manifested in the flesh," spake the word with many parables to the Jews, as they were able to hear it," Mark iv. 23. Paul requireth that we should "go on from first principles to perfection. Heb. v. 12, 13, 14. vi. 1. The primitive Christians had also their brief compends, that they might be led up, as it were, from first principles, to higher conceptions: at first they adopted the institution of baptism, in the name of the Trinity, Matt. xxviii. 19, as a summary of the whole doctrine of Christianity; on which account, when in aftertimes they composed their brief creeds. They arranged them according to that short system of the doctrine of the Trinity, which is professed and sealed in baptism: we see this in the Nicene creed, and in that of Athanasius, and thus also in the creed, which is the subject of our present consideration.

The instructor having explained saving faith, and taught that a Christian must believe all that is promised to us in the gospel, and knowing that a beginner is not able to comprehend forthwith all those promises, he therefore conducts him to the compendious creed of Christians, which he divides according to the order of the three Persons. This method is so ancient, and so useful to the church, and is therefore so proper, that we do not deem it necessary to seek any other.

Three particulars are exhibited to us in this Lord's day.

I. The division of the articles of faith, Question 24.

II. An objection against the doctrine of the Trinity, Question 25.

III. In what manner we believe in the Triune God.

I. With respect to the first part we will endeavour to illustrate three particulars. 1. That there is a God, 2. What he is, and 3. Who he is.

A. That there is a God is self-evident. When we speak of God, we and all others mean an infinitely perfect being, who is the cause of all things, and to whom all men are subject, as their Lawgiver. The scripture doth not attempt to prove that there is such a being

as God, but only that the Creator of all things and the God of Israel is the only true God. God the Lord supposeth that he hath to do with reasonable men, who know of themselves that there is a God; "because that which may be known of God is manifest in them," Rom. i. 29. And it is indeed self-evident from the light of nature, that God is (a) an infinitely perfect being. The word God is understood in this sense by every person, even when he denies the existence of God. Now it belongs to infinite perfection to exist necessarily; for it is a greater perfection to exist, than not, to exist necessarily, than to exist accidentally. When any one speaks of God, he speaks of a being, who is necessary: and when any one saith, there is no God, he saith, that a being who exists necessarily, doth not exist, and so he contradicts himself, and shows that he is "a fool, who saith in his heart, There is no God," Psalm xiv. 1. (b) It is also self-evident, that God is the first cause of all things. Nothing, that is not God, can be the cause of itself: that is, by the nature of its essence; when we therefore contemplate the universe with respect to its variety, beauty, order and stability, we become conscious of ourselves, that there is a first cause of all these things: "for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power, and Godhead," Rom. i. 20. See Job xii 7, 8, 9 (c) It is also self-evident, that God is a lawgiver. It is a dictate of our nature, that we ought to honour our parents, and rear up our children, and that we ought not to injure any person. According as we do, or neglect these things, we shall accuse or excuse ourselves, adjudge ourselves to deserved punishment, or acquit ourselves. Paul also teacheth us this, Rom. ii. 14, 15. And surely this teaches men, that there is a sovereign Lawgiver, and that they are subject to him; for they would otherwise discharge themselves from such an obligation to a law, and from those compunctions on account of their improper behaviour; which they have nevertheless not been able to do, how much soever certain individuals have endeavoured to do it. This is the cause why the sense of a Godhead is universal in all nations, who would rather accept of the vilest object for a God, than deny the Godhead.

Are there any nations, who discover few or no traces of religious worship, they exhibit also but few traces of humanity. And therefore we cannot say that the knowledge of God is not natural to man, any more than we can say that humanity and rationality are not natural to him; thus we cannot say neither that it is not natural to parents to love their children, because there are degenerate parents, who are "without natural affection," Rom. i. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 3.

“Doth the fool say in his heart, there is no God,” Psalm xiv. 1, this only intimates that he endeavours to erase every idea of a Godhead out of his heart, and not that he effects so much, that he removes every idea of a Godhead out of his mind; which is so much the more evident, because that psalm speaks of the Jews in general, as well as of the Gentiles, inasmuch as the first three verses are quoted by Paul to prove that Jews, as well as Gentiles, “are all under sin,” Rom. iii. 9—12. Now certainly all the Jews do not deny, and are not without some idea of a Godhead.

Therefore we cannot allow the assertion, that a person ought to doubt of, or to suspend his judgment concerning all things, yea, even of the existence of a God; * for this is abominable. Doubting of the testimony of God entered into the world first from the devil, Gen. iii. 1. It is also exceedingly dangerous, and scarcely possible.

Although we may know of ourselves that there is a God, nevertheless such a natural knowledge is not sufficient to salvation; for it doth not teach us the Author of salvation, the doctrine of the Trinity, the Mediator, nor the covenant of grace, and it leaves the heathens, who have no more than such a natural light, estranged from God and the Mediator, under the covenant of works, and therefore under the curse, Eph. ii. 12. iv. 18. Gal. iii. 10. Rom. iii. 19.

3. Since now we have to do with God, therefore it concerns us to know what God is. We learn this from his names and attributes, of both which we will speak briefly and cursorily. God the Lord being but one only God, needeth no names to distinguish him from any who are like him, nevertheless as it pleases him to distinguish himself from idols, and to make himself known to men, therefore he hath expressed himself also by names. These names of God are in the Hebrew, *Jehovah*, that is the self-existent, and alone existing God, Exod. iii. 14, which name cannot be ascribed to any creature, Isaiah xlii. 8. We find also the name *Jah*, which as well as the name *Jehovah*, is rendered by our translators, Lord, with capital letters Isaiah xxvi. 4. And this name is either a contraction of *Jehovah*, or denotes the God of propriety, and is therefore frequently used in ascriptions of praise. See psalm cl. 6. To this we add *idnai*, which our translators render Lord, with small letters, and which denotes that God is a sovereign Lord, who beareth and upholdeth all things by his provi-

* This was the opinion of the Cartesians, a sect of philosophers founded by Des Cartes, a French philosopher, who flourished toward the middle of the seventeenth century.

dence. *El* signifies the strong God: and lastly we find the name *Elohim*, signifying the God of the oath, or of the covenant, and it intimates also, as some think, the plurality of the divine Persons. All these Hebrew names, the writers of the New Testament translate in Greek by *Kurios*, Lord, and *Theos*, God. These are not names of office, as the Socinians assert, but names of nature, as appears from Gal. iv. 8. Rom. i. 20. Coll. ii. 9.

We learn what God is also from his attributes: these are the perfections of God, which are so proper to him, that they represent his essence to us in the most striking manner. Although they are the most simple essence itself, without any composition, they are nevertheless proposed and divided as many, because we are incapable of comprehending God perfectly by any single act of our understanding. The attributes of God are with propriety distinguished into incommunicable, of which there is not the least resemblance in any creature, and communicable, which doth not imply that there are any attributes of God, which are communicated to a creature, as they are in God; but that God hath expressed in his image a certain likeness to himself in the reasonable creature, and that it thus becomes "a partaker of the divine nature." See Gen. i. 26. 2 Peter i. 4. We reduce the incommunicable attributes to three, to wit,

1. The independence of God, which is his all-sufficiency, whereby, through the perfection of his essence, he is, hath, and doth all things, See Gen. xvii. 1. Acts xvii. 25.

2. The simplicity of God, which excludes all diversity and composition of parts, and whereby all that is in God is God himself. And so the attributes are not accidents of the divine essence, nor something different from the essence, as one attribute is not something different from the other; but God is in all things the same. Thus we find that the life and holiness of God are God himself; for when God is said to swear by his life, Deut. xxxii. 40, and by his holiness, Amos iv. 2, he is also said to swear by himself, Amos vi. 8. Heb. vi. 1, 3, 13. From which simplicity of God it also follows, (a) that "he is a Spirit," John iv. 24, and therefore an immaterial being, who acts from, and in himself, by his understanding and will. (b) That "the Lord our God is one Lord," Deut. vi. 4. (c) That he is unchangeable, "with whom there is neither changing, nor shadow of turning," James i. 17. (d) That he is also invisible. "He dwelleth in the light to which no man can approach; and no man hath seen, nor can see him," 1 Tim. vi. 16. (e) That he cannot be represented by any image, we cannot express God by any image. "To

whom will ye liken God, and what likeness will ye compare unto him?" Isaiah xi. 8. We are also forbidden to make an image of him, Exod. xx. 4.

3. The third incommunicable attribute of God is his infinity, by which he infinitely exceeds every limited perfection, and this may be considered with respect to his essence, to time, place, and our conception. God is infinite (a) with respect to his essence, which is in itself as perfectly glorious, as it can be, so that nothing can be added to, or taken from his perfect glory. "For who in the heaven can be compared to the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty may be likened to the Lord?" Psalm lxxxix. 6. (b) With respect to time, the infinity of God is his eternity, by which he is from everlasting to everlasting, without succession of time, Psalm xc. 1, 2. 2 Pet. iii. 8. (c) With respect to place, the infinity of God is his omnipresence or immensity, his essence being neither included nor excluded any where, nor bounded by any conceivable place; "He filleth the heaven and the earth," Jer. xxiii. 24. 1 Kings viii. 27. (d) With respect to our conception, the infinity of God is his incomprehensibility; we cannot form any perfect, although we may form a true idea of him; for "his greatness is unsearchable," Psalm cxlv. 3.

The communicable attributes of God are his knowledge, will, and power.

1. The knowledge of God is that perfection of his, whereby he knows from and of himself, in an independent, simple and infinite manner all things, even those which are future, voluntary, and accidental: "for there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked, and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do," Heb. iv. 13. God knows some things necessarily without respect to any decree. After this manner he knows himself in his essence and Persons, and all possible things, Matt. xi. 27. He knows other things freely by his decree, which renders them future, and "according to which he worketh all things," Eph. i. 11: But God hath no middle knowledge,* whereby he knows what the reasonable creature will do in this or that situation, according to its innate liberty; for this militates against the independence, simplicity, and infinity of God: neither is any thing future or knowable, independent of the decree of God.

2. The will of God is his complacency, which he hath in himself,

* The middle knowledge of God, or the *scientia media*, was invented by the Jesuits, in order to reconcile the divine fore-knowledge with their doctrine concerning freewill.

and in all those things, in which he findeth himself. This will of God is considered, with respect to its objects, (1) As the will of the decree, whereby he hath wisely, freely, independently, and unchangeably determined from eternity what he would do or permit in future: "He worketh all things after the council of his own will," Eph. i. 11. (2) As the will of his command, whereby he declares what he will have his creatures to do or forbear, 1 Thess. iv. 3. We will not busy ourselves with showing that these are not different wills in God, and in what manner others erroneously divide the will of God: for our time will not permit. But we must briefly inquire further what virtues are attributed to the will of God: these are, (a) the holiness of God, which is the brightness of all his perfections, whereby the greatest becomingness shines forth from his essence and works, Isaiah vi. 3. (b) His righteousness which is ascribed to him. (1) As God, being the rectitude of his essence, and therefore his holiness, Psalm xcii. 15. (2) As Rule, and which he manifests in his words and works; and so the righteousness of God is his truth, faithfulness and steadfastness in his words, so that he doth not repent, 1 John i. 9, and a supreme fitness in his works, Deut. xxxi. 4. (3) As Judge of his rational creatures, giving them his righteous law, and judging them according to it, whether he reward them for that which is good with his kindness, or punish them for that which is evil, righteously and equitably, Rom. ii. 6. James iv. 12. (c) The third virtue of God's will is his goodness, which is either the virtuousness of God's nature, in which respect "there is none good but one, that is, God," Matt. xix. 17, or his beneficence to his creatures; for "he is good and doth good," Psalm cxix. 68. In which goodness of God we must also include his love, grace, mercy, longsuffering and forbearance. God's love is either his inclination to do good to his creatures, Rom. v. 8, or the complacency which he hath in the good of those whom he favours, John xvi. 27. His grace is his kindness to the unworthy, Rom. iii. 23, 24, his mercy is his goodness to the miserable, Psalm lxix. 16, his longsuffering and forbearance is his kindness, which he shows in deferring the deserved punishment, Rom. ii. 4, 5.

3. The third communicable attribute of God is his power, by which he can effect with an unfailing might whatever he will and can will, consistently with his holy nature, Jer. xxxii. 17. Matt. iii. 9.

From what hath been said it follows, that God alone is incomparably glorious, blessed, sovereign, and therefore worthy of all honour, fear, love and worship: "The blessed and only Potentate, the

King of kings, and Lord of lords : who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light unto which no man can approach, whom no man hath seen, nor can see : to whom be honour and power everlasting." 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

C. But who is this infinitely glorious God ! If nature be blind any where, she is here : God remains unknown to man, until he reveals himself, which he doth when he declares himself to be Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This implies not that there are three Gods, for there cannot be more than one God, who nevertheless reveals himself as three, to wit, one in essence, and three in Persons. This we must first explain, and then prove.

We observe, in order to explain this doctrine, [A] that the words essence and persons may with the greatest propriety, yea, ought to be used in the church, although these words were even not used in the holy scripture, which the Socinians however deny ; for we must explain the word and mysteries of God to the people by such words as are best understood, and most in use among them ; moreover, the holy scripture is not an entire stranger to these words ; for it speaks of the essence of God, when it describes God by his-existence and essence, *Exod. ii. 14*, " God said unto Moses, I am that I am. And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you. See also *Prov. viii. 14*. *Rev. i. 8*. The scripture speaks also of " the nature of God," *Gal. iv. 8*, " his form," *Philip. ii. 6*, " Godhead," *Acts xvii. 29*. *Coll. ii. 9*, " divinity," *Rom. i. 20*. All these words denote only the essence of God. Thus we find also the word Person. The Son of God is " the express image of his Person," saith Paul, *Heb. i. 3*.

B. It serves also to explain this doctrine, to know what these words signify. By the essence of God we must understand the infinitely perfect nature of God, which is common to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as the words nature, form, Godhead, and divinity of God, do of themselves show. By a divine Person we cannot understand a bare and mere negation of composition with something else, so that a divine Person should not be something positive ; for then the three Persons would be a mere nothing, as also their personal properties and works, of which, presently ; yea, then the personality of the Son would have been annihilated, when he united himself to the human nature ; but by a divine Person we must understand an intelligent substance in the divine essence, whereby that Person is individually what he is, without being a component part of the divine essence, or of another divine Person ; as angels and men are persons, but not the soul of man, separated from the body ; for

though it remains alive after death, it is nevertheless a component part of man, and is disposed to an union with the body.

C. To this we also add, that there are three Persons in the divine essence, to wit, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. These are not merely three names, in such a sense, that the essence of God is now called Father, then Son, and then Holy Ghost, as Sabelius fancied in the ancient church; for there are different individuals in the divine essence, not different Gods, as the ancient Trinitrists taught; for then there would be three Gods, but there are different Persons, and each Person is individually what he is, and is distinguished from the others by his peculiar manner of existence. Thus the Son said, John xiv. 16, "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter." The Persons are distinguished from each other by their personal properties. These are (1) That the Father, as Father, is of himself, and that he is not begotten, and doth not proceed from another Person, but that he hath begotten the Son, and that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from him: that the Son, as Son, is begotten by the Father, and that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. This we are taught, John v. 26; xv. 26. (2) That the Father is the first, the Son the second, and the Holy Ghost the third Person, both in the order of subsistence and of working. See Matt. xxviii. 19. (3) That the Father worketh from himself through the Son and the Holy Ghost; that the Son worketh from the Father through the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. This is illustrated to us, John xvi. 13, 14, 15. "When he the Spirit of truth is come he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." The works of God without himself are indeed common to the three Persons, and therefore creation, which is otherwise the work of the Father, is also ascribed to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, John i. 1, 2, 3, Gen. i. 2. Thus also the work of redemption, which is especially the work of the Son, and the work of sanctification, which is the proper work of the Holy Ghost, is ascribed to the Father, Hosea i. 7. Titus iii. 4, 5, 6. Jude vrs. 1. Nevertheless the divine Persons observe in these works a certain order and manner of working, which follows the order and manner of their subsistence, by which the Father works from himself through the Son and the Holy Ghost, as hath been shown above, agreeably to John

xvi. 13, 14, 15. And therefore when creation is ascribed to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, it is said that the Father created by them: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth," Psalm xxxiii. 6. Thus also the redemption of the Son was the work of the Father, Rom. iii. 25, 26, 2 Cor. i. 30, and so likewise the sanctification of the Holy Ghost is a work of the Father and the Son, Titus iii. 4, 5, 6.

Inasmuch as a right knowledge of this mystery conduceth much to an explanation of the emphasis of the phrases in the word of God, to an illustration of the great mysteries of God, to the confutation of errors, which proceed especially from an ignorance of this mystery, and to the direction of the people of God in all their communications and intercourses with and relative to God; we shall therefore insist somewhat longer on this subject. We must know then, that God purposing to glorify himself by exhibiting the lustre of his wisdom, justice, godness and power, resolved to save certain persons of mankind, and to appoint others objects of his wrath; and that in order to accomplish this great purpose, he decreed to create mankind, to enter into a covenant of works with them, to permit them to fall, and to send his Son to be a Saviour of some of them, and to give them his Spirit, in order to prepare them for an inheritance with the saints in light: "All this God worketh after the council of his own will." Eph. i. 11. It is also accordingly evident, that the three divine Persons have, according to an eternal appointment in the council of peace, distributed this whole work among themselves, and that each Person hath taken a particular work to himself, in order to contribute his part to perfect the salvation of the sinner; this appears from the event, inasmuch as grace is attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ, as love is to God the Father, and the communion of the sinner with the Father and the Son in their love and grace to the Holy Spirit. We see this in our text, and in our baptism, Matt. xxviii. 19. And therefore the ancients were not to be blamed for reducing all the articles of faith to the doctrine of the Trinity; for which reason our form of baptism also refers God's whole work of grace with the elect sinner to each divine Person, showing what each Person signifieth and sealet to the person who is baptized; and thus in the 24th question, creation is ascribed to the Father, redemption to the Son, and sanctification to the Holy Ghost. It ought to be particularly noted, that as the Father is the first in the order of subsistence, so he is also the first in the order of working, and that the Father therefore undertook to display in his Person the majesty of the Godhead of the Trinity, and that the Son

submitted to conceal his divinity under his humanity in his humiliation, and the Holy Ghost consented to act as the ambassadour of the Father and of the Son. This is the reason why the Father is more frequently called God than the Son and the Holy Ghost ; therefore the Father is considered as the beginning and end of all things, as creation and all that pertaineth to it, is also on this account ascribed to him See Rom. xi. 36. 1 Cor. viii. 6. For this reason also the Son is the mediator and the servant of the Father, that he may by redemption bring the sinner to God, Isaiah xlix. 3. 1 Pet. iii. 18. And the Holy Ghost conveys the great work of the Father, and of the Son to the sinner by an effectual application and sanctification. See this John xviii. 13, 14, 15. We shall see the economy or work of each Person, when we contemplate each Person in particular.

D. Finally, it tends to explain this doctrine, that these three Persons are one. They are not one in the same respect, in which they are three, as if three persons were one person, or three essences one essence ; for this is a contradiction. Neither are these three Persons one with respect to generation or kind, as Peter, John, and James are of one human generation or kind ; for they would then have each his particular essence, and there would then be three divine essences : neither are they one by composition, as though each Person were a third part of the divine essence ; for this is contrary to the simplicity of the divine essence. Finally, we may not say, that these three Persons are one only in will, because in this sense, all the saints may be said to be one with God ; but they are one in essence, inasmuch as each Person hath his peculiar manner of subsistence in one and the same simple essence, by which means the Persons subsist through, and on account of the essence, in each other. This the Saviour declares, when he saith, ‘ He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father ; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father ? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself : but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me,’ John xiv. 9, 10, 11. See also John x. 30, and xvii. 21.

It was necessary that we should say so much in order to explain this great mystery ; but we must also prove it, that our minds may be established in the belief of this capital article of the divine mysteries, and that we may confute the Jews and the Socinians, who blaspheme this mystery in the most horrible manner. This cannot be done by the light of reason, as the schoolmen and others, who follow them, pretend, imagining that the Father, by understanding

himself, produced a living image of himself which was his Son, and that the Father and the Son by loving themselves, caused a love to proceed and issue from themselves, which was the Holy Ghost. But what likeness hath this to the mystery under consideration? and where doth the word of God speak thus? There is nothing innate in man, no not in his state of integrity, that can induce him to think of a plurality of divine persons; neither will a contemplation of the created universe suggest this to him. God's understanding and loving of himself are not personal acts, as the generation of the Son, and the proceeding of the Holy Ghost are; but they are essential acts of God, and so God would not thereby produce another Person, but another essence. Yea, if God's understanding and loving of himself did produce a Person, the Persons might be infinitely multiplied, since each Person understands and loves himself, and the other Persons.

Neither need we betake ourselves, in order to prove this mystery of the Trinity, to the tradition and authority of the church, as the Papists do, that they may accuse the scripture of imperfection. The purified tradition and doctrine of the church can indeed propose and illustrate this truth to us; but her authority and doctrine cannot oblige us to believe it, any further than they prove it to us from the word of God: "That our faith may not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." 1 Cor. ii. 5. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom x 17. Therefore the twenty-fifth question saith, "that God hath revealed himself thus in his word."

And verily the word of God proves this truth abundantly; for (a) God speaks in his word of himself in the plural number: "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," Gen. i. 26. This we find also, Gen. iii. 22. xi 7. Isaiah vi. 8. We cannot say that God speaks here of the angels, since man was not made in the image of the angels; neither may we say that God speaks here after the manner of kings, who say in their behests, "We" command this or that, this or that pleaseth "us;" for this is a later usage, and we do not find that any king is introduced in scripture speaking in this manner.(b) We also find that one Person is distinguished from another, as God and Lord, Psalm xlv. 7.* "O God, thy God hath anointed thee," Psalm cx. 1. "The Lord said unto my Lord." This silenced the unbelieving Jews, Matt. xxii. 42—46. Many cite here also the passage, Gen. xix 24 (c) Add to this,

* We have rendered this passage according to the Dutch translation.

that God speaks of himself as three. In the Old testament we find, Isaiah lxi. 1, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me." This we see also Psalm xxxiii. 6. Isaiah lxiii. 9. 10. Haggai ii. 5, 6. We shall not speak now of the priestly blessing, Num. vi. 24, 25, 26, nor of the churches reciting the name of the Lord three several times in her celebration of him, Isaiah xxxiii. 22. Attend only to Isaiah vi. 3, where God is celebrated thrice as "the Holy Lord. That the Father alone is not praised there as holy appears, because more than one person is spoken of in that passage; "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" vrs. 8. Therefore John also saith, that "the glory of Jesus also was seen" there, John xii. 41, and Paul applies that vision to the Holy Ghost also, Acts xxviii. 25. In the New Testament we find these three Persons in the baptism of Christ, Matt. iii. 16, 17, in our baptism, Matt. xxviii. 19, in the blessing of Paul, 2 Cor. xiii. 13. And that these three are one, is shown by John, 2 John v. 7. All these passages serve to prove that there are three divine Persons, because they are associated in them, as participating in the execution of some divine work.(d) Finally, the word of God teacheth us, that the salvation of sinners is ascribed unto three Persons; that the Son saves by his grace, the Father by his love, and the Holy Ghost by his communion, 2 Cor. xii. 13. which the three Persons also seal to us in baptism, Mat xxviii. and believers also experience, that they are brought by the Holy Spirit through the Son to the Father, Eph. ii. 18. Therefore our Netherland confession also saith, Article 9, "All this we know, as well from the testimonies of holy writ, as from their operations; and chiefly by those we feel in ourselves." Now it is certain, that it is a divine work to save sinners. See this, Isaiah xlv. 21—24. Hosea i. 7. Titus iii. 4. Consequently there are three, who are God. We could now furthermore prove, that divine names, attributes, works, and worship are ascribed to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, as well as to the Father: but since we must treat formally of the Godhead of the Son and of the Holy Ghost hereafter, we shall therefore defer these proofs for the present.

In order to form now a conclusion from what hath been said, we know, and it is evident of itself, that there is only one God; and since we have now proved that there are three, who are God, it follows that these three are the one God in essence, agreeably to our explanation. And therefore we say from 1 John v. 7. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." The brevity of our method

will not permit us to enlarge here, in order to rescue this passage from the cavils of the Socinians.

II. "Since there is but one divine essence, why speakest thou of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?" thus asks the instructor. The force of this objection consists herein, that three cannot be one, nor one three. But we satisfy it fully by saying, that God hath revealed himself as three and one in his word. To this we must submit, and bring our thoughts, which cannot fully comprehend it, into captivity. Should it be said that there cannot be any contradictions in God, and that the word of God cannot reveal contradictions; we say, that this is true, and that there are no contradictions in this mystery, as there would be, if God were one and three in the same respect; but God is one in respect of his essence, and in another respect, to wit, in respect of his Persons, he is three; which is by no means a contradiction.

They object also, John xviii. 3. "This is eternal life, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Hence, say they, the Father alone is called God, and the only God, and therefore the Son and the Holy Ghost cannot be God. We say, the Father is only, that is, nothing but God, as the words only and alone are used. See Jer. xxxii. 30. But the Son is something besides God, he is man also; and therefore we must connect the word "only" with "God," and not with "thou."

We shall not attend here to other objections, since they must be referred to the thirteenth, and to the twentieth Lord's days; on which we must prove the Godhead of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

But there are still two things, which require our consideration; (a) First, whether the doctrine of the Trinity be a fundamental article of the faith, upon which our salvation depends? or whether it be only a scholastic question, which we may believe, or not believe, without injury to our salvation? This is the opinion of the Remonstrants, which they entertain to gratify the Socinians, although in other respects they maintain this doctrine: but we reckon this to be a fundamental doctrine of the faith, upon which our everlasting life depends, according to John xvii. 3. It is the first principle of Christianity, which is proposed before all others to those who are to be baptised, as the foundation of their salvation, and which they are obliged to believe. If we believe not this doctrine, we deny then other fundamental articles also, as the union of the two natures in Christ, his satisfaction and effectual grace, as appears in the Socinians.

(b) The second subject of consideration is, whether this doctrine be advantageous and necessary to godliness. The Remonstrants deny this also: but we say there is no real godliness, which flows not from the grace of the Son, from the love of the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghos; for why else doth the apostle so earnestly desire these blessings for believers? 2 Cor. xiii. 13. The power of godliness consists particularly in exercising communion with God, in being dead to all besides, and in having "our life hidden with Christ in God." Coll. iii. 3. Now this godliness cannot be exercised, except through the Son and the Holy Ghost, "by whom we have access to the Father." Eph. ii. 18. And what is the Socinian godliness, which denies this mystery, but a heathenish morality?

III. But how do we believe in the Triune God? for this we profess when we say, "I believe in God the Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ; I believe in the Holy Ghost." Therefore Christ also said, John xiv. 1, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." According to our explanation of the nature of faith on the foregoing Lord's day this faith in the Triune God will consist, (a) in the knowledge of Him as Triune, according to the word of God; see John xvii. 3. (b) In an assent to the witness of God concerning himself in his word, as Triune, although we cannot fathom the mystery with our senses or reason; and thus "faith is an evidence of the things which are not seen." Heb. xi. 1. (c) In embracing and trusting in the Persons, with respect to their saving dispensations and works, as the apostle requireth, 2 Cor. xiii. 13, that believers should place all their salvation in this only.

APPLICATION.

Although these several particulars are truths, which none who are of our communion will deny, and although they are also of the greatest importance, it is nevertheless plain, that they either are not, or are scarcely believed. For,

I. Ye certainly do not believe them, who have not any knowledge of them; for a person cannot believe without knowledge. Ye will know all things, but do not endeavour to know God: ye never retire into your minds, nor attempt to search the word of God, and seriously learn what God hath revealed concerning himself. Would ye be able to offer a single proof for yourselves, or others, that there is a God? or even to declare what or who he is? ye

Strope here like the blind, and stumble as those who walk in darkness. Your understanding is darkened, and ye are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in you." Eph. iv. 18. Do ye worship him, it is but "an unknown God whom ye worship," Acts xvii. 23. What a horrid state is this! It is the black mark of the heathens, that "they know not God," Gal. iv. 8. 1 Thess. iv. 5, and they are not excusable, because God hath revealed himself to them in their minds, and in the creatures. Rom. i. 19. 20. But that a person, who lives under the gospel, to whom God discovers himself in the face of Jesus Christ, should not know God, this is abominable, a diabolical disposition, and a palpable evidence of your undone condition: "for if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them," 2 Cor. iv. 3. 4. Be concerned on account of this, and be ashamed: this Paul requireth, 1 Cor. xv. 34 "Some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame."

2. It is certain, that we have the greatest concern in the Lord God, and that "we have to do with him, before whose eyes all things are naked, and opened," Heb. iv. 13. Every one is of, by, to, and for him. If ye believed this, would ye not regard it? would not his omnipresence and omniscience render you circumspect? would not his truth induce you to believe? his goodness to seek and love him? his allsufficiency satisfy you, and persuade you to exert all your faculties in his service? certainly yes. It is then surely evident, that ye do not believe in God: for "ye do not regard him, and do not fear him," Isaiah lvii. 11. He is not the only object of all your actions: but the things that ye see, your money and goods, after these things ye pant and long with eager desires, and commit idolatry with them, Eph. v. 5. Coll. iii. 5. Ye are proud and haughty on account of them. Job xxxi. 24. Are they taken from you, it is as though your Gods, your all were taken from you, Judges xviii. 24. Or ye take your fill of pleasure, and make "your belly your God," Philip. iii. 19. Yea, "ye set your hearts as God's heart," like the prince of Tyre. Ezek. xxviii. 2—5. Ye imagine that ye are great ones, and make yourselves the only objects of all your actions, and set yourselves thus in the room of God, and, as much as in you lieth, thrust him from his throne. And ye show thus that ye have chosen "the God of this world" for your God, "walking according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the

mind," Eph. ii. 2, 3. Alas! how far have ye departed from God! how do ye come short of his glory, how are ye become as it were monsters! and walk in the way to destruction! and how will God once avenge himself of you!

3. It is true, many have still a certain sense of God, and of their obligation to him, yea, so far, that they have a lively conscience, which convinceth them of their duty, reproves them for their evil conduct, and excites in them a fear of avenging punishment. But do ye encourage and stir up your conscience, in order that it may lead you to repentance? or do ye endeavour to silence it, and to thwart it, by seeking to stifle it? Alas! how many are there, who cannot endure the twinges of their conscience! they rush headlong against warnings, and "suppress the truth in unrighteousness," Rom. i. 18. Yea, many will seek for reasons to persuade themselves "that there is no God," Psalm xiv. 1, that they may break the yoke and burst the bonds: and they show that they are children of Belial, without yoke, and that they are like "an unruly heifer," Jer. v. 5. Hosea iv. 16. And hence the Lord God will sometimes "give such persons up to a reprobate mind," to the most dreadful atheism, and "to do those things that are not convenient," Rom. i. 28. Our own days show to what a dreadful ungodliness a person may be abandoned, when we observe so many Spinozists, Bekkerists, Leenhofists, Hattemists, Brillists, and others, who have settled in whole swarms here and there, and conceal themselves under the names of God, Christ, the Word, Patience, Selfdenial, but all in the Spirit, that is, according to the real opinion of those Libertines, all things are God, and the creatures are different modifications of that God. Doth any one desire to see this mystery of iniquity unfolded, let him read, I. Calvins instruction against the Libertines, and their agreement with the modern Libertines by C. Tuinman.

4. Perhaps ye may think, all this doth not concern us, for we know God: we could prove by passages from the word of God that he exists, and show what and who he is, and we endeavour to live according to our knowledge, by forsaking evil, and doing good. It is well; but doth your knowledge warm your hearts, unite you to God and Christ? and are your works "done in God," as the Lord Jesus saith? John iii. 21. But how few are there, who know God thus? there are many who have not been taught so by God; they have only a literal knowledge of the word, which leaves their souls alienated from God, and doth not influence and urge them to do all things in union with the Triune God. Their knowledge puffs them

up, and "their zeal for God is not according to knowledge, leading them to establish their own righteousness," Rom. xi. 2, 3.

Whoever ye are, apply your hearts to this, and see whether ye be not in one or other respect thus disposed. And is it still thus with you? hear then what God saith to you, Titus i. 16. "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate," Eph. ii. 12. "Without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Know that each Person will employ his wisdom, will, power and work to destroy you: the Father is your "righteous judge, and a God who is angry every day," Psalm vii. 11. The Son "will not pardon your transgressions; for the name of God is in him," Exod. xxiii. 21. The Holy Spirit is "turned to be your enemy," Isaiah lxiii. 10. "Can your heart then endure, or your hands be strong in the day when God shall deal with you?" Ezek. xxii. 14. Hear what he saith, Isaiah xlvii. 3. "I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man."

Therefore be concerned and solicitous to flee from the wrath to come. Regard God and his favour more; the Lord is yet willing to become your God, and offers you for that purpose his free grace. Therefore refuse not, accept of it, and lay hold on his Son, that ye may be hidden from his indignation. Behold, now is the accepted time, the day of salvation: "To day then if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," Psalm xc. 7, 8. Isaiah lv. 6, 7.

But ye, who know God, yea, rather are known of him, who hath also given you an understanding, that ye should know him who is true, conduct by all means worthily of this allworthy Lord, and therefore,

1. Believe with a strong faith, and impress it deeply on your minds, that he is, and especially that he is infinitely perfect, and Triune, and that ye have to do with him: "He who cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," Heb. xi. 6. Ye have as many proofs of this within and without you, as of any other thing in the world, and more: ye need only attend, and the Lord God will "beset you behind and before, and lay his hand upon you," Psalm cxxxix. 5. Doth Satan assault you with wicked injections and fiery darts, maintain a composed mind, and suffer them not to disturb you too much, yea, do not argue against them, in order to refute them, but repel them from you, as ye would shake fire from your clothes, that the enemy may be discouraged, when he perceives that ye do not greatly regard his

assaults. Do not endeavour neither to penetrate with your understanding too far into this mystery, but believe it solely upon the testimony of God; the first apprehensions which we form of God are generally the purest; but when we will find out the Almighty to perfection, we then become dull and perplexed: every one must confess here "that he is more brutish than any man, and that he hath not the understanding of a man, that he hath neither learned wisdom, nor hath the knowledge of the holy," Prov. xxx. 2, 3. See also 2 Cor. x. 5.

2. Let the Lord God also be the object of all your observances; for he is the most worthy object, in whom the reasonable creature can obtain complete satisfaction in all that he doth. Therefore contemplate him alone in his excellencies, "beholding as in a glass, with open face, the glory of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18. "Let your meditation of him be sweet," Psalm civ. 34. "Let him be your fear and dread," Isaiah viii. 13, the object of your faith, hope and love, 1 Thess. i. 3, of your joy, Phil. iv. 4, praise, Neh. ix. 5, service, Psalm ii. 11, aims, 1 Cor. x. 31, and imitation, Eph. v. 1. 1 Peter i. 15, 16.

3. Praise and glorify the Triune God on account of his wonderful counsel of grace: O that noble device, so wisely contrived and executed, to save sinners by a crucified Mediator, to the glory of the divine justice and mercy! "angels desire to look into these things," 1 Peter i. 11. How do they praise the Lord on account of them! Luke ii. 13, 14. That the Lord may be glorified for them by angels and men, "the church must make known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God, according to his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," Eph. iii. 10, 11. Here we "acknowledge the breadth and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and are filled with all the fulness of God," Eph. iii. 18, 19. All God's works praise him, but in this way all his praiseworthy glory appears, as it were, united. The creature loses himself, when he is led into it, and must cry out enraptured, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable his judgments, and his ways past finding out! for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever, Amen," Rom. xi. 33—36.

4. Lay the whole burthen of your salvation upon the divine Trinity, committing the accomplishment of it entirely to the Triune God: "For God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work," 2 Cor. ix. 8. Each Person in the divine essence hath en-

gaged to effect your salvation through grace, love, and communion, and will confirm it: "The Father will perfect it for you, his mercy endureth for ever; he will not forsake the works of his hands," Psalm cxxxviii. 8. The Son will "daily load you with benefits; for this God is our salvation, Selah, this God is a God of perfect salvation to us; and to God the Lord belong the issues from death," Psalm lxviii. 19, 20. The Holy Ghost is "our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death," Psalm xlvi. 14. Rev. xiv. 13. For these reasons we ought to deny all our own works, devices, and contrivances, with respect to this matter, to cast all our care upon him, and depend in a holy manner on him, Psalm xxxviii. 5.

5. Improve each Person distinctly with respect to his special work of grace. Do ye need justification, and all that pertains to it, let the love of the Father be your refuge. Do ye find yourselves empty and destitute of necessary grace, betake yourselves to the Son; for "of his fulness we all receive, and grace for grace," John i. 16. Do ye perceive that ye are estranged from the Lord, have recourse to the Holy Spirit, whose proper work it is to introduce to communion with God, by teaching the soul, by leading, and bringing her to God, and by comforting her; but beware of ending or resting in the Son or Holy Spirit, but end and rest through them in the Father; for "by the Son we have an access through the Spirit unto the Father," Eph. ii. 8. That we may receive all things again of the Father through the Son and Holy Ghost; therefore the Lord Jesus said, xvi. 13, 14, 15. "The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, he shall take of mine, and show it unto you." See also John xiv. 16.

6. Live and converse much in union and communion with the divine Trinity, "that your fellowship may be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3. This was the petition of the Son for you to the Father, John xvii. 21. Therefore it bebooves you to present the Lord before your eyes, and to "set him always before you," Psalm, xvi. 8, "to follow hard after him," Psalm lxiii. 8, to "be near him, and to draw nigh to him," Psalm lxxiii. 28. James iv. 8, yea, "to walk" and converse "with him, and before him," Gen. v. 22, 24, 27.

7. Be also, according to this great pattern, most closely united to one another, and exercise frequently, the communion of saints.

How greatly did it redound to the glory of the first Christians, that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul," Acts iv. 32. We must "all be one in the Father and in the Son, as the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father, are one," John xvii 21. "Be like-minded, have the same love, being of one accord, of one mind," Philip. ii. 2 1 Cor. i. 10. "The Lord hath given you all one heart and one way, that ye may fear him," Jer. xxxii. 39. "Therefore endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling One Lord, one faith, and one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all," Eph. iv. 3—6.

8. Behold now also your great portion and possession, since this infinitely glorious God is yours. By your entrance into the proffered covenant of grace, "ye have avouched the Lord to be your God," Deut. xxvi 17. How great then is your portion ! yea, the Lord cannot bestow aught upon you greater or worthier than himself ; ye may indeed challenge the world to show you a portion better than yours. See Deut. xxxii. 31. Jer. x. Yea, all that the Lord hath is also yours, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23. Doth it not please him to communicate much of himself to you at present, ye will hereafter be so much the more filled and satisfied with him : for according to Psalm xvii. 15. "Ye shall behold his face in righteousness : ye shall be satisfied, when ye awake, with his likeness," Amen.

FAITH IN GOD THE FATHER.

IX. LORD'S DAY.

Psalm cxlvi. 5, 6. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God : which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is : which keepeth truth for ever.

Q. 26. 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, with all that in them is ; who likewise upholds and governs the same by his eternal counsel and providence,) is for the sake of Christ his Son, my God, and my Father ; on whom I rely so entirely, that I have no doubt but he will provide me with all things necessary for soul and body : and further, that he will make whatever evils he sends upon me, in this valley of tears, turn out to my advantage ; for he is able to do it, being Almighty God, and willing ; being a faithful Father.

GOD, the Lord, willing to reveal himself unto Moses, as far as his capacity would admit, promiseth him that "he should see his back-parts," Exod. xxxiii. 23. Moses had prayed to the Lord to "show him his glory," vrs. 18, wishing to see his face in a posture in which his fore-parts were toward him ; but the Lord informs him that no mortal was capable of seeing him thus, "Thou canst not see my face ; for there shall no man see me and live ; my face shall not be seen," vrs. 23. The Lord was nevertheless too kind to deny him his request altogether, but granted it fully, when he said, "Thou

shalt see my back-parts." The Lord God, being a spirit, hath neither fore-parts nor back-parts : but this is a figurative manner of speaking, taken from men, whom we behold in a posture in which their back-parts are toward us, and thus know imperfectly, by their erect and well-formed bodies, their shape and ordinary gait. Thus also the Lord God, who is one in essence and three in Persons, cannot be seen in a posture wherein his fore-parts are toward us, and face to face, but is perceived in a posture wherein his back-parts are toward us. But what are the back-parts of the Lord? in the first place, the divine virtues and perfections, which Moses saw, "when the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth," &c. Exod. xxxiv. 6. And also the works of the Lord which are, as it were, his gait, and goings, particularly in the sanctuary, Psalm lxxviii. 24. The Lord reveals himself by his works even to the heathens : "For his invisible things from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead," Rom. i. 20. This was sufficient indeed to render them inexcusable, but it could not conduct them to salvation : it taught them indeed the eternal power and Godhead of God, but not the manner in which the sinner must be reconciled to him : God is not only one in essence, but also three in Persons : we must also know him as such, if we shall be saved : "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," saith the Saviour, John xvii. 3. But who is able to behold this in a posture in which the fore-parts of it are toward him? no mortal ; he becomes blind, when he gazes at this sun : he must therefore endeavour to survey this God in a posture wherein his back-parts are toward him, to wit, in the saving operations of the three Persons. It hath indeed seemed good to the divine Persons to contrive unitedly a council of grace, and that each Person should contribute his part, in order to effect the salvation of the sinner : the Father should love the sinner with a saving love, the Son should purchase grace, and the Holy Ghost should render the sinner a partaker of the love of the Father, and the grace of the Son. This Paul teacheth us, 2 Cor. xiii. 13. Therefore the catechism proposing to exhibit God to us as Triune, discovers him to us in a posture, wherein his back-parts are toward us, to wit, by his works in the division of the articles of the creed, speaking in the eighth Lord's day, of God the Father and our creation, of God the Son and our redemption, and of God the Holy Ghost, and our sanctification. This being thus briefly proposed, each Person is exhibited

to us with respect to his particular works in order. Since now the Father is the first in the order of subsistence and working, therefore faith in God the Father, Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, is first treated of.

Two particulars require our further consideration here :

I. The object of the Christian's regard, "God the Father, Almighty Maker of heaven and earth."

II. The Christian's believing exercise relative to that object, "I believe."

I. When mention is made here of God the Father, Almighty Maker, &c. it is evident, that this relates not to God considered essentially, but personally, and indeed to the first Person, whose personal property it is, that he is the Father, as will appear more fully hereafter ; and therefore he is distinguished here from the Son, the Redeemer, and from the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier. Wherefore we shall inquire, 1, why he is called "God," 2, why "Father," and 3, why "Almighty Maker."

It is known that the Father is called God more frequently than the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We see this John xvii. 3. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." See also Rom. iii. 25. 1 Cor. xiii. 13. Gal. iv. 6. This is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to the Socinians, as though the Father were God rather than the Son and the Holy Ghost, while nevertheless the Son and the Holy Ghost are God coessential with the Father. But this mystery contains another, to wit, that the Father, according to the distribution of the work of grace among the divine Persons, undertook to display in his Person the majesty of the Godhead, and to reveal it in its glory, as the Son undertook to make himself of no reputation, and the Holy Ghost to act as the ambassadour of the Father and of the Son. See John vi. 13, 14, 15. For this reason he is to be considered as the first cause of all things : "We have but one God, the Father, of whom are all things," 1 Cor. viii. 6, as the all-sufficient, "who is able to make all grace abound," 2 Cor. ix. 8, whose also the wisdom, to contrive a way of reconciliation, 1 Cor. i. 24, the holiness to reveal it in purity, to the salvation of sinners, John xvii. 11, the justice to avenge himself of sin, and to forgive it, Rom. iii. 25, 26, the love for the manifestation of all grace, 2 Cor. xiii. 13. Yea, the Father is considered as the end, to whose praise we must refer the whole work of grace, Rom. xi. 33—36. Therefore the favoured people of God must not end in the Son and Holy Ghost, but must, through them end in the Father, with all their exercises

of faith, love, hope, fear, and praise, Eph. ii. 13. 1 Peter i. 12. Col. iii. 17. And when the salvation of the sinner shall be completed, "then shall the Son deliver up the kingdom unto God, even the Father, and be subject to him, who put all things under him," 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.

Considering all these particulars, we are naturally led to the contemplation of the œconomical dispensation of grace appertaining to the Father.

1. First with respect to the eternal counsel of peace, which we also call a covenant of redemption, because the redemption of the sinner was contrived in it. This covenant of redemption is the dispensation of the Father, and it is ascribed to his " manifold wisdom, according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Eph. iii. 11. Therein he appointed his Son to be a surety, and delivered the elect to him, that he might redeem them, Jer. xxx. 21. John xvii. 6.

2. Further creation is also the work of the Father, as the mean of executing his counsel: for it was necessary that he should produce the elect into being, if he should render them partakers of his grace. See Isaiah xlv. 17, 18. Eph. iii. 19. and also that he should reveal the covenant of works, which the Father established with mankind, and that he should suffer it to be broken by sin, to the end that he might glorify his justice and inconceivable grace, Rom. xi. 32.

3. In the third place, it belongs to the dispensation of the Father to establish the covenant of grace with the elect sinner, to whom he promises himself, and that he will be his God, in which every great and precious promise is implied, Jer. 33, 34. 2 Cor. vi. 16—18, as the administration of that covenant under the Old Testament also belongs to the dispensation of the Father.

4. Add to this, that the Father exerciseth an œconomical dispensation with respect to the Son and the Holy Ghost. It was the work of the Father to send the Son, made of a woman, and under the law, Gal. iv. 4, to lay iniquity upon him, to demand the debt of him, and therefore to bruise him, Isaiah liii. And thus " God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself," 2 Cor. v. 19. And in order to bestow on him the reward of his arduous labour, he raised him from the dead, Acts ii. 24, set him in heaven at his own right hand, and made him Judge of the quick and dead, Acts x. 42. Eph. i. 10—23. Philip. ii. 10. 11. 1 Peter iii. 22. The Father performs also a certain work with respect to the Holy Spirit; for he gave him without measure to his Son, in order to qualify him for the media-

torship, and also that he might communicate the Spirit by him to his church, John iii. 34. Isaiah lxi. i. Acts. ii. 33. And the Holy Spirit is sent likewise by God the Father into the hearts of believers; to influence them, Gal. iv. 6

5. Finally, the Father hath his special dispensation with respect to the elect. to wit, that he bestows his Son and all his sovereign benefits upon them, 1 Cor. i. 30. Therefore "he calls them to the fellowship of his Son," 1 Cor. i. 9. "justifies them," Rom. viii. 33. "adopts them," 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18, and brings them into a state of peace with him, Rom. v. 1.

It is necessary and profitable to view the different dispensations of the Father in this manner, since this removes the offence, which the Socinians take at the Godhead of the Father, the humiliation of the Son, and the sending of the Holy Spirit. We may thus clearly comprehend in what manner the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are consubstantial with the Father, can be sent, and in what manner the Son, who is himself God. is the servant of God, and satisfied the justice of God; it also teaches believers how they receive all things of the Father through the Son and the Holy Ghost; how they draw near to him, and refer all back to him.

We must now inquire why the first Person is called Father: a person is a father, in consequence of his having a child or children, and so God is a Father.

First, of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose eternal Father the first Person is, by an eternal and inconceivable generation, Psalm ii. 7. "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he also given to the Son to have life in himself, John v. 26. But of this we must speak more particularly on the thirteenth Lord's day.

In the second place, God is the Father of true believers for the sake of his Son Christ, who is, as it were, their brother; and therefore "his God and Father, is also their God and Father," as he himself declares, John xx. 17. The reason of this is, (1) their new birth, by which they partake, like children, of the life and image of God; for "they are not born of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 12, 13. (2) Their spiritual marriage with the Son of God, "who hath betrothed them to himself in faithfulness," Hosea ii. 19. Therefore he is, "the husband" of believers, Isaiah liv. 5, and they are "the bride and wife of the Lamb," Rev. xxi. 9. And therefore God, the Father of the Son, is also the Father of his bride and wife, who is therefore called "the daughter" of the Father, Psalm xlv. 16. (3) The adoption of grace by which the Lord translates them out of the kingdom of Satan into his family, furnisheth

them with a plentiful support, and renders them heirs of all his saving benefits, yea, of himself, and of his Son; and thus they are not strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God," Eph. ii. 19. "Being children, they are also heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17.

In the third place, God is also a Father of all his creatures, and particularly of all mankind; inasmuch as they have received life of him by creation: therefore it is said, Mal. ii. 10. "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?"

And so this God and Father is also the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth. To create, is expressed in the Hebrew by the word *bara*, which signifies to make a new thing, as we see, Numb. xvi. 30, "If the Lord make a new thing." See also Jer. xxxi. 22. With this agrees also nearly the Greek word *ktizo*, which words, as also the word create, are commonly used by divines to denote the making of something out of nothing. Whether the word *bara* signify to give any thing its beginning, and the word *jatzar* to give that which is begun, its proper form and shape, and the word *gnasah*, to perfect any thing, this may admit of much disputation. some think thus, because we find these words together, Isaiah xlii. 7, "I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him." However this be, the work of creation is "a transient act of God's almighty power, by which he produced the whole universe, without any previous matter, only by his powerful word, in the space of six successive days, to the glory of his name."

In order to explain the work of creation we must consider, (1) what was created, (2) Of what it was created, (3) By whom, and by what power, (4) The act of creating, (5) The time, and (6) The end or design of the creation.

1. We must inquire in the first place what was created. It was "the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that therein is," according to our text. "Things visible and invisible," Coll. i. 16. Indeed there is not any thing that exists without God of itself, and that was not created: all these things are called with one word, the world, and the universe. Although this world is exceedingly great, and we, on account of our weakness, do not know the bounds of it, nevertheless we may not say that the world is infinite; for we should then be obliged to say also that it could not have been made greater by God, inasmuch as nothing can be added to that which is infinite: moreover, the world cannot be infinite, because it consists of finite parts, which cannot have place in that which is infinite: infinity is a perfection that belongs to God only, and it cannot be communicated

to any creature. It is also exceedingly absurd to say that there could not be more worlds made than this, because we cannot conceive or imagine any space beyond this world, in which other worlds might be placed : for as it was no contradiction, that God created this world, where there was no space before, so it is no contradiction, that God, agreeably to his inexhaustible omnipotence, should produce other worlds, where there is no space at present. *

2. But of what was this beautiful world created ? we must say that all things were created out of nothing, by which we do not mean that "nothing was a certain matter, out of which all things were produced : but that all things were created by God's powerful Word, without any previous matter : " God calleth the things which be not, as though they were," Rom. iv. 17. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were formed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear," Heb. xi. 3. Therefore it is detestable in Vorstius and the Socinians, to conceive that the earth was made of that unshapely mass, "which was without form and void," Gen. i. 2, when nevertheless Moses had said before he mentioned that, "God created the heaven and the earth in the beginning," vrs. 1. heaven perfect at its first production; but the earth without form and void. Others fancy that the world was created of some unsightly matter, which had neither form nor any sightly appearance, and that this is called, by Paul *me phainomena*, "the things which are not seen," Heb. xi. 3. but that text doth not say, *ek me phainomena*, of things which are not seen ; but *me ek phainomena*, not of things that are seen, which is very different. Let us allow that he speaks of things, which are not seen ; but things which are not seen, are things which do not exist : "It was never so seen in Israel," said the multitude wondering at Christ, when he cast the devil out of the dumb man, and caused the dumb man to speak, Matt. ix. 33. And what would the multitude say. but that it had never been so in Israel. The apostle showeth that "the worlds were framed by the word of God ;" but what doth this mean but by his power, without any previous matter ; but to such sentiments must these men decline, that they may unsinew, with a certain appearance of reason, our argument for the Godhead of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost from their eternity. Even the smallest atoms of the world had their beginning, and were created by God, Prov. viii. 26.

* The author opposes here the opinions of the Cartesians, who deny that there is any void space in nature, or that there ever hath been ; and assert that the world is infinite in extension, and was nevertheless created. He argues against them upon their own principles.

otherwise the world would have existed from eternity, and thus also be God. When we say that the world was created out of nothing, we mean that the work of the first day was absolutely out of nothing, without the least previous matter; but the work of the following days of a matter altogether unfit, which was as unfit as nothing to make such a beautiful world of it.

3. We can now see by whom, and by what power all things were created: "He that built all things is God," saith Paul, Heb. iii. 4. It is a silly opinion of the Jews, that the angels were fellow-workers with God. The Arians held that Christ was an organ and instrument of God in creation, and the Socinians pretend that God could produce a creature, which would be so powerful, that he could create the world by it, that they may thus evade our argument for the Godhead of the Son and Holy Ghost from their work of creation: but it is most detestable in the mass-priests, to imagine that they can create their Creator of bread and wine, and that only by muttering five words. No, the Lord God alone is the Creator, and he glories in it, Isaiah xlv. 24. "I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, and that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself." Therefore the Lord God is distinguished from the idols by creation, and it is proved therefrom, that they are not Gods, Psalm xcvi. 5, Jer. x. 11. To create is a work of almighty power; therefore we must all confess that he is an almighty Maker, as "God's eternal power and Godhead are also understood by the things that he hath made," Rom. i. 20. He who shall create must possess in himself eminently and actually all the perfections of all the creatures: and who is able to remove the infinite distance between something and nothing, but he who possesseth an infinite power? No creature can be even an instrument of God in creating, since an instrument must have a fit matter for its work, and this cannot exist in creating. Although creation is ascribed also to the Son and the Holy Ghost, yet it is particularly the work of the Father, as we have shown above, and on the foregoing Lord's day.

4. The act of God, whereby he created was not, that he impressed a certain physical motion upon matter, which did then produce such a world, agreeably to the laws of motion, and God's ordinary co-operation: but the work of creation was performed, (1) by God's powerful and effectual word, whereby he commanded the creature to exist, and so gave it existence: "God said, Let there be light, and there was light," Gen. i. 3. See also Psalm xxxiii. 9. (2) By giving such an order and disposition to the creatures, that each creature should, in consequence thereof, be and work according to its nature

and disposition: thus the earth should be disposed to fruitfulness, Gen. i. 11, and the lights to distinguish the times, and to give light upon the earth, Gen. i. 14--18. (3) By establishing all things in such a manner, that they should remain fixed and steadfast: thus "God hath established the earth, and it abideth: all things continue this day according to his ordinances, for all are his servants," Psalm cxix. 90, 91. See also Gen. viii. 22. Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. xxxiii. 20. (4) By God's approbation and blessing, by which he blessed the creatures, that they might be useful to the generations following: thus God blessed the earth, beasts and men, so that they became fruitful, Gen. i. 11, 12, 22, 28.

5. But when did God create the world? Moses saith, "In the beginning," Gen. i. 1, namely, in the beginning of time, which was when the creatures began, so that we find an earlier or later date only in the first existence and continuance of the creatures; for we cannot conceive of any time before the beginning of the creatures, but only an unbounded eternity. We leave it to others to inquire how long it is since the world was created, in what season of the year, whether in the spring or autumn, how long God was engaged each day, a moment, or longer, or a whole day: there are many who enlarge much on these things; we only say, that although God the Lord was able to produce the whole world in a moment, in a perfect state, it nevertheless pleased him to employ six days upon it, that we might contemplate his several works with the greater attention. On the first day God created the heaven, the earth, and light, Gen. i. 1--5, and undoubtedly the angels also in heaven, Job xxxviii. 6, 7. On the second day he created the firmament, and divided the waters, which were above the firmament, from the waters which were below the firmament, Gen. 6, 7, 8. God did not bless the second day, but he bestowed a double blessing on the third day, because the work of the second day was completed by the work of the third day, *to wit, the sea, the herbs and plants, ch. i. 9--13. On the fourth day, God created the sun, moon and stars, ch. i. 14--19; on the fifth day, the fishes and fowls, ch. i. 20--23; and on the sixth day he created the beasts of the earth, and last of all man, because the Lord would introduce him into a plentiful habitation, and thus manifest that he had created all things for the good of man, ch. i. 24--31. On the seventh day God rested, ch. ii. 2; not because he was weary: "The Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is he weary," Isaiah xl. 28. But it is said that God rested, because he ceased to produce new kinds of creatures, and solaced himself in his works, inasmuch as they displayed his glory in its proper lustre, Exod. xxxi.

17. This rest God prescribed as a pattern to man, requiring that he should rest every seventh day from his daily labour, after the example of his Creator; and thus, separating himself from all besides, solace himself in God. See Gen. ii. 2, 3. Exod xx. 8—11. Isaiah lviii. 13, 13.

6. Finally, we must know that God the Lord, who is perfectly wise, did not create all these things without a holy and great end. Solomon saith, Prov. xvi. 4. "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." This doth not imply that God had need of the creatures, in order to perfect his glory: for "he is not worshipped by men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and all things;" Acts xvii. 25. No creature can be profitable to God; it is no advantage to the Almighty, that any one is righteous, neither is it gain to him, that he maketh his ways perfect: our goodness extendeth not to him; he is exalted above all honour and praise, but because he is good, therefore he would communicate himself, that his eternal power, Godhead and glory might be seen and acknowledged; God hath therefore impressed his glory upon all the inanimate and irrational creatures, and endowed rational men with his image, that all might thank and glorify the Creator, according to their nature. See this Psalm xix 1—6, and Psalm viii. Have mankind departed from God, and honoured and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for evermore, the Lord hath nevertheless not failed of his end, inasmuch as he manifests his power, justice and longsuffering in the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction; and displays the riches of his glory in his power, wisdom, and inconceivable grace in the vessels of mercy, which he had before prepared for glory: for surely God hath filled the world with men, that he may gather a people out of them, in whom he will be glorified; for it would otherwise appear as if "God had created all the children of men in vain," Psalm lxxxix. 48. Isaiah xlv. 17, 18. Eph. iii. 9. And verily if God had not intended this, the world would long ere now have been destroyed in a dreadful manner; but the Lord is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," 2 Peter iii. 9. God the Father doth also "uphold and govern the world, which he hath created, by his eternal counsel and providence," as the instructor saith here; but of this he treats more particularly in the following Lord's day.

II. The believing exercise of a Christian with respect to the object proposed, God the Father, Almighty Maker, is that he believes in him. He doth not say, "we" believe, as he saith, when he prays,

"our" Father; but "I" believe, because we can indeed pray for another, but we cannot believe for another: "The righteous shall live by his faith," Hab. ii. 4. To believe in God the Father, the Almighty Maker is.

1. Seriously to hold upon the declaration of God, all the foregoing particulars to be true. It is indeed manifest from reason, that God created the world out of nothing, inasmuch as it cannot exist of itself, but must have an allsufficient cause, as "the heathens also understood and clearly saw the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, by the things that are made," Rom. i. 20. Nevertheless we obtain a clearer knowledge of this by the testimony of God, that he created all these things out of nothing, and in such a manner: for "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear," Heb. xi. 3. Verily reason cannot teach us that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath such an inconceivable purpose to save sinners, is the Creator; this is "hidden from the wise and prudent, and is revealed unto babes, according to the sovereign good pleasure of God," Matt. xi. 25, 26. See also John i. 18. And our holding that this revelation is truth, is believing in God the Father, Almighty Maker in the sense of the Creed; for thus we "receive the testimony of God, and set to our seal that he is true," John iii. 33. But do not the devils also believe this and tremble? yes, according to the divine declaration, James iii. 9. For this reason the Christian's faith proceedeth further; yea, he believes that God the Father, Almighty Maker is also his God and Father for Christ his Son's sake. It is true, it is nowhere said to this and that person in particular, that God is his Father in Christ: nevertheless God testifieth in his word, that "to as many as receive his Son, he gives power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," John i. 12. When a believer examines his actions, and the Holy Ghost enables him to "know the things that are freely given him of God," according to 1 Cor. ii. 12, he then perceives that he hath truly received the Son of God by faith, from which he safely concludes that he is a child of God, and "the Spirit of God also beareth witness to this with his spirit," Rom. viii. 16. And his faith depends thus upon the witness of God, he admires and rejoices in "the great love of the Father," manifested to him, that he is called "a child of God," 1 John iii. 1.

2. To believe, denotes here to commit and confide our whole condition in every circumstance to God our Father, Almighty Maker, as David exhorteth, Psalm xxxvii. 5. "Commit thy way unto the

Lord ; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass," See 1 Peter iv. 19. v. 7. Is the believer in want of any thing with respect to soul, or body, he is not anxiously careful, and he doth not say, "What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithall shall we be clothed?" Matt. vi. 31, for he doubts not but that his Father will provide him with all that he needs: "at destruction and famine he laughs," Job v. 22. This confidence causes him sometimes to say, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation," Hab. iii. 17, 18. Yea, he confides and doubts not but that his Father will cause all the evils, which he sends upon him in this valley of tears, to turn out to his advantage: for "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God," Rom. viii. 28. "The Lord chastens them who are his for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness," Heb. xii. 10. And therefore "they glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed," &c. Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. This confidence is not a sinful indifference, nor a secure imagination, but an active reposing on the Lord upon certain grounds, which are, in the first place, that the Lord "can" do this, being almighty God." However unlikely it may appear to him, that he should be delivered, nevertheless he will not be afraid of evil tidings, because he hath a lively apprehension of God's almighty power, by which he created all things, and "for whom nothing is too hard," as God's almighty creating power supported Jeremiah, Jer. xxxii. 17. See this also in Abraham, Rom. iv. 17, 21. But inasmuch as we cannot infer from God's almighty power that he will do any thing, so long as we are not assured that he is willing, therefore the true Christian assumes, as his second ground of confidence, that "God is willing, being a faithful Father." He knows that God is his Father, that he hath taken upon him to provide for his children, and hath promised them all things; the Christian having a clear conviction of these things, cannot doubt but that his Father will keep truth for ever, and provide for, and protect him sufficiently. Our Lord Jesus recommends this ground to the children of God, when he saith, Matt. vii. 11. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?" Matt. vii. 11.

APPLICATION.

May not the believer now speak of his happiness, and glory in it, that he may thus believe in God the Father, Almighty Maker? Had not the holy Psalmist sufficient reason to say, "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God: which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever." Psalm cxlvi. 5, 6. Such an Almighty Maker is his God: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord: the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance," Psalm xxxiii. 12. Because the Lord had nothing more precious than himself, therefore he hath given himself to him, saying in his covenant, "I will be a God to thee;" on this account he hath made him a vessel of honour, and an object of all his kindness, hath given his Son to be his surety, hath established a covenant of grace with him, and bestowed on him from that covenant all the sure mercies of David. And as if this were yet too little, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is his God and Father, "of whose nature he is become a partaker: his Maker is his husband, whose name is the Lord of hosts; he is of the household of God, and an heir of God: behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," 1 John iii. 1. Yea, believers, whatever belongs to your Father belongs also to you; for "all is yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's," 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23. Will ye now still be concerned about what ye shall eat or drink? "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32. Will ye now yet let your heads hang down on account of the evils that befall you? no; they are your Father's gracious chastisements for your good, and he will deliver you out of them: "He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee," Job v. 19. How safely may ye rely on your Father's power, will and faithfulness, and indulge a sweet and quiet confidence, like David! Psalm xxiii. 4. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

But dost thou and thou believe that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Maker of heaven and earth is also thy God and Father? or do thy thoughts not ascend so high as this? or dost

thou hope that this is so, because it is so desirable a case? or dost thou not doubt of it, because thou hast forced thyself by a strong imagination to believe it? But hast thou any ground for this belief of thine? or dost thou believe only because thou thinkest that thou oughtest not to doubt? but ought not a person to doubt when in an affair of so great importance, he hath no ground for his faith, and when so many deceive themselves, and when deceiving ourselves is so dangerous here? Or dost thou say, I have a ground? but what is thy ground? that thou art a member of the church of God, that thou art devout, not so wicked as this or that person, and that thou hast many virtues? But did not the Pharisee proceed so far; Luke xviii. 10, 11, and was he a child of God? surely no; for he went down to his house unjustified. Or is it thy ground, that God blesseth and provideth for thee more than for others? But how doth Asaph complain, Psalm lxxiii. 12. "Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, they increase in riches." The wisest of the sons of men said, Prov. i. 32. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them." Or dost thou think the Lord visits me with so many evils in this valley of tears, and I must suffer so much here, that I shall not need to suffer hereafter, "For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," according to Heb. xii. 6, but "the wicked have also many sorrows," as the man after God's own heart saith, Psalm xxxii. 10. And what thinkest thou, would not one, who is a child of God, have striven more to become such an one, than thou perhaps hast done? wouldest thou, if thou wert a child of God, content thyself so with the creatures, and pursue after them more than after the Creator, yea, employ the creatures of God against him, as instruments of unrighteousness?

All ye then, who neither are, nor do aught else than thus, "ye are not his children, but a crooked and perverse generation," as Moses said to the carnal Israelites, Deut. xxxii. 5. Is God your Maker and Father by creation, it doth not profit you, because ye do not know, seek, nor love him; yea, if ye remain as ye are, he will not regard the misery that will betide you. Hear what the Lord himself saith, and regard it, that ye may flee from the wrath to come, Isaiah xxvii. 11. "It is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favour."

Therefore be more earnestly desirous to have God for your Father; "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little," as the Psalmist cries to you, Psalm ii. 12.

I know exceedingly well that many sincere believers, though they have even the truest grounds of confidence, do still doubt, and dare not firmly believe for themselves, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Almighty Maker, is also their God and Father. But what is the reason, ye weak believers, that ye dare not hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of your hope firm unto the end? is this privilege too great for you, that so great and worthy a God, Father, and Maker, is your God and Father? Well, the Lord God doth only great things, and that to the most unworthy; if this be not too great for God to give, let it not be too great for you to receive. Or is it your thought, that if the Lord God were your Father, he would not inflict so many evils on you? that ye should not lack so many things, which ye need for your soul and body? but is not the gate straight, and the way narrow that leadeth unto life? read the book of God from the beginning to the end, and see whether there ever hath been a child of God, to whom the waters of affliction have not been wrung out in full cups. To experience no affliction, is rather an evidence that a person is a bastard than a son.

Come hither then, and behold near at hand the true grounds upon which a person may believe that he is a child of God, and examine yourselves by them, and see whether ye have no foundation to believe that this is your great privilege.

1. He who is a child of God, hath chosen the Lord God alone, and above all others for his God and Father, and is satisfied with him alone, as that afflicted person declared of himself, Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." Can ye deny that ye have done this sincerely and heartily; yea, frequently, and that ye still do it? can your souls find satisfaction, rest and tranquility out of the Lord?

2. He who is a child of God hath detached himself from all things, yea, from himself, and hath surrendered himself to the Lord, to be his property, and to be wholly at his service. This was foretold concerning these days, Isaiah xlv. 5. "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Ye cannot surely deny this, ye are conscious that ye have, with the strangers, "joined yourselves to the Lord," not only to be saved, but also "to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants." "Now to these the Lord would

give a name better than that of sons and of daughters." See Isaiah lvi. 5, 6.

3. He who is a child of God hath also received the Son of God by faith, John i. 12, "As many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." See also Gal. iii. 26. Is any thing indeed more evident to you, than (when ye were concerned about your damnable condition, were bowed down to the dust, and did not find the life of your hand, and said, there is no hope,) that ye were then truly urged to him by an insatiable desire, that ye cast yourselves upon him, received him, and united yourselves to him, that ye might be found in him only and might have his righteousness. Let your souls then be at length established, and cast not away your confidence, which hath a great recompence of reward.

Is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who made heaven and earth, and all that in them is out of nothing, your God and Father? conduct yourselves then worthily of him, and therefore,

1. See what he hath done for you, that ye may perceive to your joy and satisfaction, and with admiration, his transcendent wisdom, power, goodness, love and free grace, in all his doings, and especially in creating and furnishing such a glorious and illustrious world: So the sweet Psalmist acted; "How great are thy works, O Lord! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches; my meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord," Psalm civ. 24. 34. Therefore he also cried out with a heart filled with the praises of God, "Thou, O Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep," Psalm xcii. 5, 6. We ought certainly not to be worse than the heathens, "who understood and saw clearly by the creatures, the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead," Rom. i. 20. Even "the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib;" how shameful would it be then, that "Israel should not know, and that the people of God should not consider." See Isaiah i. 5. Yea, the inanimate "heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work," Psalm xix. 1. And shall ye, who are the children of God, be dumb here? the Lord hath formed you, that ye should show forth his praise; let your souls then awake up, and endeavour to know and to praise the Lord, in all your, yea, also in all his ways. Ye are certainly bound and obliged to him by a thousand bonds.

2. Penetrate also to the eternal counsel of grace, that ye may see the Father's wisdom, holiness, righteousness and love in it. It be-
hooves you to stand still a while here, that ye may behold it in order,
and may look into it ; by this ye have become children of God, are
called to glory, and virtue, and are made " a chosen generation, a
royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should
show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness
into his marvellous light," 1 Peter ii. 9. We may see more of
the divine glory in this, even in this, than in all things beside ; but
since we have urged you to this duty on the former Lord's day, we
will not enlarge on it further at present.

3. Rely and doubt not but that he will provide you with all things
necessary for soul and body ; and that he will make whatever evils
he sends upon you, in this valley of tears, turn out to your advan-
tage. How, he who hath provided you with great things, will he
withhold small things from you ? Who dares suspect him of un-
faithfulness, or indifference ? do evils innumerable compass you
about, is it without his appointment or ordination ? and when he
sends these evils upon you, doth he then forsake you ? By no
means. Hear what he commands us to proclaim to you from Isaiah
xliii. 1, 2, " Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he
that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not ; for I have redeemed thee, I
have called thee by thy name, thou art mine ; when thou passest
through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers,
they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire,
thou shalt not be burnt ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Let
not the heart of any one of you fail, his God and Father is al-
mighty and willing to deliver him ; " His hand is not shortened,
that it cannot save ; neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear ;"
this is his own declaration, Isaiah lix. 1. Are your adversities so
grievous, and have they continued so long, that ye are weary of
them, he who intends to come, will come, and he will show you that
your miseries are only the corrections of a loving Father, and his
chastisement will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them
who are exercised thereby.

4. Devote yourselves now wholly to his service. This David
purposed when he said, Psalm cxvi. 16, " O Lord, truly I am thy
servant, I am thy servant." What a noble and exceedingly glori-
ous testimony was that, which was given of those, who were sent by
the worthy ecclesiastical council of Jerusalem, that they were " men
who had hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,"
Acts xv. 26. Whatever ye are, O believers, ye are of your God

and Father ; ye are his creatures, yea, his children ; and for what end ? is it not that ye may be wholly for him, and for his service ?" Is not he thy Father, who hath bought thee ? hath he not made thee, and established thee ?" Deut. xxxii. 6. "Ye are his workmanship, created in Chirſt Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that ye should walk in them," Eph. ii. 10. Ye stand, as it were, in a direct subordination to him, that ye should be for him only, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Rom. xii. 1.

5. Let me stir you up, finally, to conduct yourselves as creatures and children worthy of such a God and Father, Almighty Maker. As his creatures and children, it behooves you to fear him, and to tremble in a holy manner before him : "Fear ye not me, saith the Lord ? will ye not tremble at my presence, who have placed the sand for a bound of the sea by a perpetual decree ?" Jer. v. 22. If ye call on him as a Father, who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." Thus ye are admonished, 1 Peter i. 17. It behooves you, as creatures and children, to conduct yourselves patiently under his rod of correction. "We have had fathers of our flesh, who corrected us, and we gave them reverence : shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live ?" Heb. xii. 9. As creatures and children we must also be obedient to him in all things which he commands us : "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance," as ye are exhorted, 1 Peter i. 14. As creatures and children, ye must be like your Lord and God : ye are created and newmade after his image : therefore, "as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye also holy in all manner of conversation : because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy," 1 Peter i. 15, 16. Are ye his creatures and children, live then without care, and only for his hand. It is the temper of children to be without concern, and to seek all things of their father, being assured, that he will not refuse them what is necessary for them. This our Lord Jesus teacheth us, when he directs us to pray, "Our Father, give us this day our daily bread." Creatures and children ought also to glory in their God and Father : children are used to glory in their father's wisdom, power, riches and goodness : but ye, believers, have the greatest reason to glory on their account : "The portion of Jacob is not like them ; for he is the former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance : the Lord of hosts is his name," Jer. x. 16. May not believers challenge

any one to show them a portion equal to theirs? Moses did thus, Deut. xxxii. 31. "For their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." Once more; creatures and children, who have such a God and Father, need not fear any danger, or the malice of any creature: your God and Father is above them; therefore do not fear, or ye will deny the supreme power and goodness of your God and Father. Hear what he saith to you, Isaiah li. 12, 13. "I, even I am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man, that shall die, and of the son of man, who shall be made as grass? and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?" Are ye despised in the world, let it suffice you, that ye are precious in the eyes of your God and Father, the Almighty Maker. He commands the angels, his most worthy creatures, to serve you: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" thus asks Paul, Heb. i. 14. Are ye chased from your dwelling, country and people, ye are every where on your God and Father's ground: for "the earth is the Lord's," Psalm xxiv. 1. And though ye were chased even out of the world, your Father and God will provide for you a better, a more spacious and happy dwellingplace: for, according to Heb. xi. 10, 16. "He will not be ashamed to be called your God; for he hath prepared a city for you: and that city hath foundations, and the builder and maker thereof is God himself." Amen.

THE

DOCTRINE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

X. LORD'S DAY.

Acts xvii. 28. For in him we live, and move, and have our being.

Q. 27. *What dost thou mean by the providence of God?*

A. The Almighty and every where present power of God; whereby, as it were by his hand he upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, all things come not by chance, but by his fatherly hand.

Q. 28. *What advantage is it to us to know that God hath 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.

DAVID, having experienced the loving-kindness of the Lord with respect to his soul and body, did not only trust that he would perform that which concerned him, because his mercy endured for ever, but prayed also for it, when he said, "Forsake not the works of thine own hands," Psalm cxxxviii. 8. The Lord God, being unchangeable in his goodness to his people, as well as in his nature, is not like a workman, who having finished his work, withdraws his

hand from it, and surrenders it to the care of others. No, he continueth to attend to his work; the Lord conducts thus with respect to the work of grace in the souls of his people: "Having loved his own, he loveth them to the end," John xiii. 1. "His gifts and calling are without repentance," Rom. xi. 29. "God, who had begun a good work in the believing Philippians, would also finish it until the day of Jesus Christ," Philip. i. 6. But the Lord doth not only continue to attend to the work of grace in his people, but also to the whole universe, which he hath created. It was not indeed the design of the Lord first to make the world, and presently after to destroy it; where and by whom should his glory then be acknowledged, which was the great end that he proposed to himself in making the world? It was his intention to uphold it, and also to provide for it, that it might not perish: therefore he is also called "a faithful Creator," 1 Peter iv. 19, which he manifests himself to be by his providence, by which "we live, move, and have our being in him," as Paul teacheth in our text, Acts xvii. 28. He, wishing to lead the Athenians to the knowledge of the God, who was unknown to them, shows that he is that God, who made the world, and all the nations of men, that they might all seek him; but had that God now withdrawn from the world, and its inhabitants, and had he left them to provide for themselves? No, he manifested himself near at hand, by providing for them; for, saith the apostle, "in him we live," &c. The instructor conducts also in this manner; for having taught in the foregoing Lord's day the doctrine of creation, he informs us now also in this Lor's day, that God doth not suffer the created universe to proceed at random, but that he upholds and governs it by his fatherly hand.

There are therefore two general heads here, which require our consideration:

I. The exposition of the doctrine of providence, Question 27.

II. The advantage of the knowledge of creation and providence, Question 28.

I. With respect to the first general head we must attend, 1. to the signification of the word providence, what it signifieth here, 2. to whom providence is ascribed, 3. to what providence extends, 4. the various acts which constitute the work of providence, 5. the several methods of providence, 6. the difficulties that are objected to the efficacy of providence, and then we will, 7. prove in general the truth of the doctrine of providence. We propose so many particulars for our consideration, that we may avoid a great number of subdivisions, which sometimes render subjects obscure.

1. The words providence and provide signify literally foreseeing and foreknowing a matter, and thus the word providence signifies also God's foreknowledge: "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world," saith James, Acts xv. 18. And no marvel; for God decreed from eternity that he would work, and hence he foreknows his work, and he "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," Eph. i. 11. Therefore the instructor had also said in the foregoing Lord's day, that "God upholds and governs all things, which he hath made, by his eternal counsel and providence;" for all God's works are performed according to that eternal counsel, which may also be called a providence, according to Heb. xi. 40. "God having provided some better things for us." But we must not understand the word providence in the present Lord's day of God's knowledge and counsel; for God also created the world according to that foreknowledge and counsel; now, as creating is distinct from God's foreknowledge and counsel, so providence is also distinct therefrom. We must therefore understand this word here in a different sense, as the word providence denotes also to provide for, and to take care of any thing: "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you," 1 Peter v. 7. Thus also the Hebrew word *Raah*, to see, to behold, denotes to take care of, to provide: "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering. And Abraham called the name of that place *Jehovah-Jireh*," (the Lord will provide) "as it is said to this day. In the mount of the Lord it shall be provided," Gen. xxii. 8, 14. Thus also the Greek word *pronoao*, which signifies in the first place to foresee and foreknow something with our understanding, is used for "providing for our own," 1 Tim. v. 8.

2. No creature can provide for itself, much less for the universe. Providing for the universe must be ascribed to God only; for it is a work of almighty power, as David saith of it, 1 Chron. xxix. 12. "Thou reignest over all, and in thy hand is power and might: and in thy hand it is to make great and give strength to all." See also Isaiah xl. 26. Which is not to be understood in such a sense as though God exerted force upon his creatures, compelled and thwarted them: no, God, who is the supreme reason itself, regulates his almighty power by his wisdom, according to the nature of his creatures; "He is the only wise God, to whom belongeth dominion and power," as holy Jude speaks in his epistle, vrs. 25. Moreover, providence is a work not only of the almighty, but also of the every where present power of God, who is, and works immediately with all his creatures; "He is not far from every one of us; for in him

we live, and move, and have our being," Acts xvii. 27, 28. And it is the work of the Father through the Son and the Holy Ghost, since it is referred to creation, as it was said in the foregoing Lord's day, that "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who made all things, doth still uphold and govern them by his eternal counsel and providence," Providence is a continual creation, as the Lord Jesus also refers providence to his Father, Matt. vi. 26—34. And this work is thus ascribed to the Father, because he is the Father of all the creatures, but especially of believers, for the sake of his Son Christ, as was also said in the 26th question, and therefore the Father's work here is to be considered as the execution of his dispensation of grace; and whatsoever he bestows upon believers in his providence, comes to them by his fatherly hand, and is bestowed from special love with Christ, Rom. viii. 32.

3. The providence of God extends to all things that he hath created: to "the heaven, the earth, together with all the creatures" in general, and to "the herbs, and grass, rain and drought, &c. in particular. That we may apprehend all this in a proper and orderly manner, we will proceed according to the method which God observed in the six days creation; and so we must say that the providence of God extends (a) to the works of the first day, the heaven, the angels, and the light: "The Lord covereth himself with light as with a garment, he stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain, he maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire," Psalm civ. 2 4. The earth: "He shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble," Job ix. 6. (b) The providence of God extends also to the works of the second day, as the waters above and below: "When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens: he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with the rain: he bringeth the wind out of his treasures." See also Psalm cxxxv. 7, and Psalm cxlvii. 15, 38. Jer. x. 13. And thus he gives "rain and drought," the Lord saith, Amos iv. 7. "I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest, and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city; one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not, withered." See Job xxxvii. 6. Isaiah v. 6. James v. 17, 18. (c) The work of the third day was the creation of the herbs and plants. The providence of God extendeth to these also, and therefore "herbs and grass, meat and drink" come from God. "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth, Psalm civ. 14. Thus also "fruit-

ful years and seasons" proceed from the Lord, Acts iv. 17 : and likewise "barren years, when he maketh the heaven as iron, and the earth as brass," Lev. xxvi. 19.(d) On the fourth day God created the lights of heaven. He takes care of these also. "He appointeth the moon for seasons, the sun knoweth his going down : he maketh darkness, and it is night," Psalm civ. 19, 20. See also Job ix. 7.(e) The fishes and fowls were the work of the fifth day. And God attends to these also. "He slew the fish of Egypt." Psalm cv. 29, and enabled Peter to catch a great multitude, Luke v. 5, 6. "He provideth food for the fowls," Job xxxviii. 41. Matt. vi. 26. yea, the meanest sparrow falls not to the ground without your Father, Matt. x. 29.(f) On the sixth day God made the beasts of the earth, and "he takes care of oxen," Deut. xxv. 4. 1 Cor. ix. 9. God directs even vermin, as we see in the lice, frogs, and locusts of Egypt. "The locust, the cankerworm, the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, are God's great army," Joel ii. 25. But God orders and directs especially man, the chief of all the works that he hath made, and that with respect to his natural and spiritual condition. With respect to his natural condition, the providence of God extends (2) to his birth and life. How beautifully doth Job describe the providence of God with respect to his birth! "Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit," Job x. 10, 11, 12. (2) To every occurrence, as "riches and poverty." For "the Lord maketh poor and maketh rich, he bringeth low, and lifteth up," 1 Sam. ii. 7, "Health and sickness." For "he maketh sore and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole," Job v. 18. War and peace. "He maketh peace, and createth evil," Isaiah xlv. 7. "Kings obtain victory of him." Psalm cxliv. 10. "The horse is prepared against the day of battle; but safety is of the Lord," Prov. xxi. 31. Yea, the providence of God "numbers also the hairs of our head," Matt. x. 30. Luke xxi. 18. (3) The providence of God extends to all the voluntary actions of man, as "his thoughts, his downsitting, uprising, walking, downlying, ways and words," Psalm cxxxix. 2, 3, 4. This is evident also from Prov. xvi. 9. xxi. 1. James iv. 13, 14, 15. 1 Sam. x. 26. (4) Also to his death, the manner, the time and the place of his death are ordered by God in his providence, according to his counsel. So Job speaks to the Lord concerning man: "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass," Job xiv. 5. Verily the

greatest revolutions depend upon the death of men, which cannot happen without the providence of God. Did the Lord add fifteen years to the life of Hezekiah, Isaiah xxxviii. 1—5, he did not add them to the years which he had decreed that he should live; but to the life of Hezekiah, when he should otherwise have died of his deadly sickness; those fifteen years also showed that his lifetime was determined, and the whole procedure of God in that affair demonstrates his providence, "Do not wicked men live out half their days," as David speaks, Psalm Iv. 23, this doth not mean that their untimely death happens without the providence of God, but it respects only a possibility of their living longer, and their injuring and forfeiting of their health by their wickedness; for which reason God takes them away suddenly in his anger. (5) The providence of God extends also to those occurrences, which happen to a man accidentally without any direction of the man himself, or of others: "The disposing of the lot is of the Lord," Prov. xvi. 33. Is a man slain unawares, "God delivers him into the slayer's hand," Exod. xxi. 13. compare herewith, Deut. xix. 5.

But the providence of God extends not only to the natural, but also to the moral condition of man, since he is subject to God as his lawgiver: "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king," saith the church, Isaiah xxxiii. 22. The Lord manifests this by establishing his covenant of works, and of grace with man; and thus "God works in him both to will and to do after his good pleasure," Philip. ii. 13, and he inflicts a judgment of blindness and hardness upon particular persons. We shall speak of this more fully hereafter.

4. God exerciseth his providence, either with respect to the essence and existence of his creatures, or with respect to their actions, or with respect to their ends, in their actions.

With respect to the essence and existence of the creatures, the providence of God consists in upholding them, by which he causeth all things, which he hath created to exist, and continue in being: "The Lord preserveth man and beast," Psalm xxxvi. 6. "By him all things consist." Coll. i. 17. God upholds some things with respect to their essence, as the heaven, angels, the sun, moon, stars, and the earth; these are all still the same that they were when they were created and produced: he upholds others with respect to their kind by generation, as men, beasts, herbs, and plants. God upholds those things not merely by not annihilating and destroying them, as a person may be said to preserve a thing that he hath made, when he doth not destroy it, which is the notion of the Pelagians concern-

ing this matter : but God upholds by an actual, operative and powerful influence, which is God's almighty and every where present power : for we cannot otherwise understand how "we live, move, and have our being in God." God's upholding is, as it were, his continual creation, as the four and twenty elders, when they ascribe honour to him, say, Rev. iv. 11, "Thou hast created all things, and by thy will they are, and are created."* It is a continual vivification of them, Neh. ix. 6, therefore it is also said, Psalm civ. 30, "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created ; and thou renewest the face of the earth." Yea, this upholding is, as it were, a bearing with a strong hand ; "God beareth all things by the word of his power. † Heb. i. 3 ; otherwise the creature would perish of itself, since it hath nothing in itself that causeth it to exist in future : and annihilation takes place only when God withholdeth his influence : "when he lets his hand loose, he cuts man off," Job vi. 9. See also Psalm civ. 29.

With respect to the actions of the creatures, the providence of God co-operates with them, whereby he prevents, excites and maintains their motions and actions, by an active, but secret power, so that "they move in him, for the Lord works both to will and to do," Philip. ii. 13. "It is God himself who worketh all in all," 1 Cor. xii. 6. Read this also emphatically, Isaiah x. 5, 6. It is not therefore enough to assert a general preservation of the creature's power and ability to act, or a general, undetermining influence, which is determined by the creature itself, as the wind impels the ship forward, while it nevertheless moves hither and thither by the conduct of the steersman. It is moreover not enough to assert a co-ordinate acting of God, with the actions of the creature, as the Pelagians speak ; for this renders the creature in its actions, independent of God, and God dependent in his act on the action of the creature, which he must follow : yea, the Lord God is not then the principal, but the subordinate cause.

With respect to the end of the creature, the providence of God works by governing, whereby God directs, in a sovereign manner, every event, and the designs of his creatures, to certain ends, which he himself proposeth, according to certain laws which he hath given ; "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation." And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing ; and he doth according to his will in the army

* We have rendered this passage according to the Dutch translation.

† This is according to the Dutch translation.

of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth ; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou ?" Dan. iv. 34, 35. God hath for this purpose given his creatures certain laws, according to which he governs and directs them ; which are either the established order of nature, which God hath given to the inanimate creatures, so " that henceforth, while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease," Gen. viii. 22. See also Jer. xxxi. 35, 36, or the natural instinct of animate creatures, according to which they perform all their actions ; " Even the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming," Jer. viii 7, or " the royal law," which he hath given to rational creatures, James ii. 8. Yea, we may also say, that " the counsel of the Lord's will, after which he worketh all things," is the law of the Lord, or the plan, according to which he doth all things. According to these laws doth God govern all his creatures, and that in a manner suited to their nature. Doth the creature swerve in any instance from that law, either by some miraculous act of God, or by its own vice, God directs it in such a manner, that it is agreeable to his decree, and issues to his honour, and for the welfare of the good, by which the Lord always obtains the end, which he proposeth, even against the purpose and end of the creature. This Joseph observed, when he said to his brethren, Gen. i. 20, " Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good." See Isaiah x. 5, 6, 7.

5. God the Lord provides for all his creatures, and at all times, in different methods ; and therefore we consider providence, as (1) mediate and immediate : the mediate providence is that by which God provides for some creatures by means. The Lord saith, Hosea ii. 21, 22, " I will hear the heavens ; and they shall hear the earth ; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil ; and they shall hear Jezreel," See also Psalm civ. 13, 14, 15, Rom i. 16. x. 17. Immediate providence is that by which God provides for some things without means, as the third heaven, and the angels ; in this manner the Lord also provided for Moses and for the Lord Jesus, forty days, without the means of meat and drink ; but when he makes use of means, he doth not do it from any defect, as though he had need of them, for he is allsufficient ; but he doth it from his goodness, as he is willing to honour the creature by making it his fellow-worker. See 1 Cor. iii. 9. For he makes use sometimes of the most insignificant means : three hundred men sufficed to discomfit the innumerable host of the Medianites. God sometimes renders

the most powerful means inefficacious, so that "a king is not saved by the multitude of an host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength," Psalm xxxiii. 16, 17. God works sometimes in a manner that is above, and contrary to the nature of the means; for instance, causing that the fire doth not burn and singe, Dan. iii. And when God useth means, their power doth still depend on him. See Deut. viii. 3. 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6. (2) Providence is also distinguished into an ordinary and extraordinary. The ordinary providence is, that God works according to the ordinary and established course of nature: but the extraordinary, or super-ordinary is, that God works sometimes above the ordinary and established course of nature, by a miracle: for instance, when God gives bread from heaven brings water out of the rock, makes the sun and moon stand still, effects that the cruel lions do not rend Daniel, and that the hungry ravens bring Elijah bread and flesh: which, and like wonders, God the Lord alone can do, according to Psalm lxxii. 18. Psalm cxxxvi. 4. Are they sometimes ascribed to men, it is only because they were mere moral instruments by their faith and prayers. See Acts iii. 12, 13, 16. Miracles or wonders, are certain great events, which take place beside the ordinary laws of nature, through the almighty power of God, for the confirmation of the divine truth: but we may not look upon that as a miracle, which a person doth by a more than ordinary strength, like Samson; for that is only an increase of strength, which doth not exist in a miracle. Moreover, it doth not enter into the nature of a miracle, that we do not know the precise reason of a thing, and that it happens seldom, as some speak, who are unwilling to allow that God ever doth any thing beside the laws of nature, or contrary to the established motions of matter: for when we speak thus, we lessen, yea, we vilify the great miracles of God: at this rate, there would happen many miracles every day, which no man will consider as miracles, because we can assign the precise reason of but few of God's works. Can we discover the reason why the iron swims upon the water, the sun and moon stand still, and the fire doth not burn? Such wonders hath God sometimes wrought, in order to confirm the truth: but shall our ignorance of the precise reason of such things be a powerful confirmation of the divine truth? (3) Finally, we distinguish the providence of God into a common and special providence. The common providence is that by which he showeth favour, from a common good-will to all his creatures; yea, to the ungodly, as well as to the godly: "God maketh his sun to rise on

the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," Matt. v. 45. The special providence is that by which God, as a Father in Christ, from a special good-will, provides believers with all things : " God is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe," 1 Tim. iv. 10. See Psalm lxxxiii. God gives in the least gift also himself and his Son to believers, as his children and heirs : but he withholdeth himself from others, although he gives them also many gifts, as we give a beggar an alms from a common good inclination to him, but do not unite ourselves to him, do not take him into our house, or make him our heir, as though he were our child.

6. But what doth the carnal mind object here, by the patrons of Pelagianism? (1) That to take care of the smallest things with so much labour and trouble, agrees not with the exalted dignity of God. But if it agreed with the exalted dignity of God to create those things, it can also to take care of them. It doth not occasion God the Lord more labour and trouble to take care of the smallest things, than the greatest ; for he doth all things with a word and a beck : " He speaks, and it is done ; he commands, and it stands fast," Psalm xxxiii. 9. While he provides for small things, he doth not neglect great things, like a king, who by frequently employing himself with inferior things, would overlook those that are most weighty ; yea, by the meanest things, God often accomplishes the greatest matters, as by means of lice, frogs, locusts, and all kinds of vermin he meekened the stubborn Pharaoh, obliged him to acknowledge his hand, and delivered his people. (2) They also object that all things happen then necessarily, and nothing by chance, when nevertheless the word of God often speaks of things which happen by chance, as we see Ruth ii. 3. 2 Sam. i. 6. xx. 1. Luke x. 31. But we say, that with respect to the Lord, nothing happens by chance, since then many things which depend upon such a chance, would happen beside providence ; for how can it be, that any event should occur in the kingdom of God, without his cognizance and direction, and wherein he should not take any concern. Those things that happen to us by chance often disconcert us entirely, and compel us to establish a totally different order than before. Can now things which happen by chance disconcert God likewise, so that he should be obliged to accommodate himself to those things ? what must we not admit, if we will be Pelagians ? It is true, many things happen to us by chance, but this is so, not with respect to God, but with respect to us, who cannot foresee nor direct such things. (3) They say also, that such an efficacious providence and co-operation of God in and with the actions of the creatures, destroys the liberty of human ac-

tions. This must be allowed by those, (although many of them abhor such a consequence, and therefore deny it) who say that the soul is a mere thought, and is unable to act upon any body, and that the body is in like manner unable to act upon the soul : but that God effects upon each thought of the soul, immediately a correspondent motion in the body ; and upon each motion of the body, a correspondent thought in the soul ; and that therefore the reasonable creature is not the true author of its actions. Whither this tends we may see in Spinoza, Van Hattem, Leenhof and Bril, who assert either in a more publick, or in a more private manner, that the rational creature is not active, but passive, and that God works all in all, and that there is no difference between virtue and vice, and that whoever maintains a difference between virtue and vice, sins, and is not in the Spirit, but in the flesh : and would we know the secret ? it is this ; man is not a substantial being by himself, distinct from God, but subsists in God, and is only a form and mode of God ; that is, the world is God, and we and all other creatures are forms, modes and parts of God. Is it necessary to confute this opinion ? will it not suffice to mention it, in order to shame it, and induce every one to abhor it ? is it not a denial of divine providence ? doth it not make God the author of the most abominable enormities ? and doth it not unman man ? Who doth not know of himself, that he is a substantial being distinct from God ? that he apprehends by his spirit ? that he himself judges, assents, denies, reasons, follows his judgment, proposeth an end to himself, excites, urges, moves, and acts himself by that end, that he may by certain means attain unto his end ? It is true, God works effectually in and with the working of his creatures ; but this doth not hinder man from acting willingly, and from being a real author of his actions ; for God doth not act man by a violent urging of his will, as a person moves a stock or a stone, but in a reasonable manner, agreeably to his nature, enabling us to understand, judge and will by objects, and by an inward light and motion : so that understanding, judging and willing are our actions, as much as eating, drinking, standing, walking and lying down, are our actions, and not God's, although he works effectually in and with us, when we do an action ; for actions belong to him, who is the next subject of them. (4) Finally, they pretend that by asserting such an efficacious providence, we make God an author of sin ; but our doctrine cannot be charged with such a consequence ; for we are far from holding such an evil opinion, and say, "Far be it from God, that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity." But doth not the word of God use as forcible

expressions concerning the providence of God, with respect to sin, as any of our divines? for we read that "God hardens and blinds the hearts of men," *Exod. vii. 3. Rom. ix. 27, 18, Isaiah vi. 9, 10,* "that he turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate his people," *Psalm cv. 25,* "that he said to Shimei, Curse David," *2 Sam. xvi. 10,* "that he gave Israel up to their own hearts' lust, so that they walked in their own counsels," *Psalm lxxxii. 12.* "that he gave the heathens up to uncleanness, and to a reprobate mind, to do things which are not convenient," *Rom. i. 24—28,* "that he sends" the followers of the man of sin "a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie," *2 Thess. ii. 11,* and other expressions of a similar nature. To explain these and such expressions in the Pelagian way, of a bare permission, is weakening the force of the words, and being wilfully blind; therefore if these words of God signify any thing at all, it is the same with what we teach, to wit, that sin happeneth according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, agreeably to *Acts ii. 23. iv. 27, 28. Isaiah xlvi. 8,* that God marks it carefully and regards it, *Job xxxiv. 21, 22,* and particularly, which is the principal subject of controversy here, that God powerfully co-operates, not with and in sin, but in the actions of men, which are sinful. If this be not so, the above cited and other expressions of God's word are unintelligible with respect to this matter.

In order to illustrate this somewhat more fully, we must consider sinfulness with respect to its beginning, progress and end.

With respect to the beginning of sin, the providence of God, works sometimes by hindering and restraining it: thus "God withheld king Abimelech from sinning against him," *Gen. xx. 6.* David prayed for this, *Psalm xix. 13.* At other times by permitting it, not by giving license to sin, but by not hindering it: and that not like a mere spectator; for this militates against the abovementioned expressions, but by a powerful permission, which is certainly followed by sin. For (a) God suffers occasions to occur to the sinner, which are in themselves good, but which the sinner abuses by his sinfulness, as Abel's acceptable sacrifice to Cain, Joseph's dreams to his brethren, the request of Moses to Pharaoh, that he would let Israel go, as also the word of grace to reprobates, *Rom. ii. 4, 5. 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.* (b) God also withholds his restraining grace, whereupon the sinner indulges himself in sin, as "when the Lord forsook Hezekiah, his heart was lifted up," *2 Chron. xxxii. 31.* God doth not sin, when he acts thus, since he is not bound to bestow his grace upon man, in order that he may not sin. (c) The Lord God sometimes also gives the sinner up to himself, to sin, and to the enemies,

who are then also let loose on him : " God gives him up to his lusts, to vile affections, and to a reprobate mind," Rom. i. 24, 26, 28. See also 1 Kings xxii. 24, 23. 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, compared with 1 Chron. xxi. 1. 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. And in all this God manifests himself holy and just, punishing one sin with another, Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12. Rom. i. 22—28. With respect to the progress of sin, the providence of God works by limiting it, that it may not proceed further than the bounds which he hath appointed. When the devil bereaved Job of his goods, he might not at first touch his body, and afterwards he was obliged to spare his life, Job i. 12. ii. 6.

With respect to the end of sin, the providence of God works by directing it to the destruction of the ungodly : " He sends them a strong delusion, so that they believe a lie, that they may all be damned," 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12, and to the good of his people, as we see in the selling of Joseph, Gen. xlv. 8. 1.20, and in the delivering up of the Lord Jesus, Acts ii. 23. iv. 27, 28, and also to their humiliation, " that they may not be exalted above measure, because of the excellency of their revelation," 2 Cor. xii. 7. But the Lord doth more especially direct sin most wisely to the honour of his justice, grace and mercy, which are manifested most gloriously upon occasion of sin, Rom. iii. 25, 26. v. 10. xi. 32.

Whence it appears then plainly, that the doctrine of effectual providence doth not make God an author of sin : especially since God neither advises nor commands, nor works sin by his providence : moreover, we ought to know that sin, being a defect, and not something that hath a real being, hath not properly a working, but only a defective author, to wit, the sinner himself ; furthermore, the sinner commits sin from his own inclination, and is not compelled to it by providence : we say also, that the action of God with respect to sin, even his working the physical act, is good, but it becomes corrupt through the corruption of man, as a lame foot causes a horse to halt, but not the action of the rider, who drives the horse. Doth our doctrine still remain somewhat obscure, it ought not to create any prejudice against it, inasmuch as no creature may undertake to fathom all the judgments of God, which are a great deep, for they are unsearchable and past finding it.

7. Without doubt the whole universe is subject to the providence of God. We have indeed proved this with respect to each part in particular from the word of God ; but we will now prove this matter from reason, that our minds may be more fully persuaded of it. This truth appears then, (a) from the nature of God, unto whom the whole creation is subject, and who, on account of his supremacy and sov-

ereign dominion, cannot discharge himself from directing and providing for his creatures, any more than he can be unwilling that they should acknowledge his glory (b) The nature of the creature also teacheth us this, since it is so empty and defective, that it cannot provide for itself, all things must come and be brought to it from without. (c) Contemplate the perfection, beauty, order and stability of the universe. Yea, though all the elements frequently seem to dash and beat one against another, as if heaven and earth would return to their first nothing, nevertheless all things abide in their proper state ; yea, all these commotions only contribute to preserve the vast creation.

Who doth not now know by all these things, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this ? (b) We shall not speak now of the wonderful and extraordinary events, nor of the fulfilment of the prophecies, which are related in the scriptures : attend only to this, that if no universal Ruler directed whatsoever comes to pass, how should good men be able to quiet and comfort themselves in all their tribulations ? would not their condition be worse than that of the wicked ?

It is indeed true, that sometimes, through the divine direction of providence, there are righteous persons, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked, and wicked persons, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous ; but this is not so with respect to things that are essential, to wit, having God for our father and our portion, and enjoying his love, which is the chief and only real good ; but only with respect to visible things, which are not essential ? It is true, it sometimes greatly afflicts and disturbs the godly, when they see that the wicked are often preferred by providence before them ; but the joy of the wicked is only for a moment, and they are afterwards cast down into destruction, when God despiseth their image : on the contrary, the sorrow of the upright doth not last long, but hath soon an end ; and then they will be for ever with the Lord, for he holdeth them by their right hand, he will guide them with his counsel, and afterwards receive them to glory. See more of this in the seventy-third Psalm.

II. We should speak now to the second general head, according to the twenty-eighth question, " What advantage is it to us to know that God hath created, and by his providence doth still uphold all things ? " The instructor mentions three great advantages of this ; first, " that we may be patient in adversity ; " secondly, " that we may be thankful in prosperity ; " and finally, " that in all things which may hereafter befall us, we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father ; " the reason of which is assigned in that which

followeth, "since all creatures," &c. but we shall not speak of these several things at present, but defer them to our application.

APPLICATION.

Behold then this precious and profitable truth of God's effectual providence ; but how is it practically denied, and shamefully opposed in our Christian nation, even by those, who confess it in words ! For,

1. Many see not the hand of God in that which befalls them. Do they look downward, or do they lift their eyes upward, do they receive meat or drink, are they in health or sick, are they rich or poor, they see not in all these things, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this ; they act as if they were Epicureans, fancying that God doth not attend to the things on earth, and that all things happen only by chance : or like the Stoics, they imagine a fate, and that every vicissitude and event happens necessarily, because from the beginning of the creation all things have continued as they are now ; or with the Peripatetics, they think that all sublunary things are governed by the heavenly ? and thus they cry aloud with their actions, "The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil," Zeph. i. 12. "And how doth God know ? can he judge through the dark cloud ? thick clouds are a covering to him that he seeth not, and he walketh in the circuit of the heaven," Job xxii. 13, 14. The proper work of the wicked, "who through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God ; God is not in all his thoughts," Psalm x. 4. For, didst thou, hearer, see with observation a God in all those things, would not a sense of a God, a wonder, and a holy awe for him possess thy soul ? but now men do not attend to him with their hearts, and they walk, as it were, without God.

2. This appears still more, because they will take care of, and direct all things themselves. They propose some advantageous end to themselves ; and in order to obtain it, they devise means, and endeavour to execute them ; this is in itself acting in a rational manner ; but it is acting in a brutal manner, not to do this in obedience to God, and not to expect a happy issue from him, but from ourselves, from our own wise management and diligence : "this is saying, to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain ;" (and thus men conduct in all their undertakings) "whereas they know not what shall be on the morrow. For that they ought to say, if the Lord

will, we shall do this or that," James iv. 13, 14, 15. Doth their un-taking prosper, they bless themselves, because they obtain the desire of their souls. they wonder at their own wisdom and ability; and "say in their hearts, our power and the might of our hands hath gotten us this wealth," Deut. viii. 17, and thus "they sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their own drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous," Hab. i. 16. But doth their conduct and their labour not speed well, they either fret at themselves, or they blame this or that event; but God is not acknowledged in it.

3. Do they acknowledge a providence, it is only from hearsay, and because they either cannot from ignorance gainsay it, or because for fear of reproach they dare not; for it appears that the divine providence doth not influence their hearts, since, (a) they abuse it to slothfulness and sluggishness, and do not make use of proper means, in order to execute the designs of providence. The sluggard thinks that God will provide for him: is one compelled by his lust to a shameful marriage, he pacifies his conscience by thinking that such a partner was allotted him by divine providence: must he suffer through his own misconduct, he comforts himself with the providence of God, and he hardens himself against his suffering: is he cast upon the bed of sickness, he will not make use of medicines, because he persuades himself that if the appointed time of his death be not come, he will certainly recover; and if that time be come, medicines cannot avail: doth he begin to think of salvation and damnation, because he will not be in earnest, he thinks, if I be elected, I shall be saved; and if I be a reprobate, I shall certainly be damned: what then can all my endeavours to be saved profit me? as if God would show his providential kindness to those who despise his institutions. When God had promised that not one of those who were in the ship with Paul should perish in the shipwreck, and they sought to flee out of the ship, "Paul said to the centurion, except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved," Acts xxvii. 31. Though the divine appointment concerning man be ever so certain, God will nevertheless not execute it, but by a diligent use of the means. (b) Because men become heartless and fretful on account of adversities, they will not submit to the hand of the Lord, nor be meek, but they struggle against him, they strive with the Almighty, even when they suffer the smallest misfortune, and when the wind and weather are not as they wish: Yea, "if the sinner be hardly bestead and hungry, he will fret himself and curse

his God," Isaiah viii. 21; and he will sometimes make a desperate attempt to deliver himself without God by some horrible action, like the king of Israel, who would, in the great famine, take off the head of Elisha, saying, "Behold, this evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?" 2 Kings vi. 33. But "the Lord is wise in heart, and mighty in strength; who hath hardened himself against him, and prospered?" Job ix 4.(c) Because they are envious and grudge, when another fares better than they: the sinner will cavil at, and argue against the conduct of God, and ask why he doth not favour him, as well as this and that person: but "wo to him that striveth with his Maker; let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth: shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?" Isaiah xlv. 9. "Is it not lawful for him to do what he will with his own? is thine eye evil because he is good?" (d) Because, when they enjoy any favourable dispensation of providence, they forget God, they forsake him, and fight against him with his blessings, and employ them as "weapons of unrighteousness, saying to God, Depart from us, and what hath the Almighty done? yet he filled their houses with good things," Job xxii. 17, 18, like "Jeshurun, who when he was waxen fat, kicked; then he forsook God who made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation," Deut. xxxii. 15.

O horrid! that a creature should not acknowledge his Creator, and Benefactor. What is this but a denial of God, and of his allupholding, working and directing hand? A brutish stupidity, which doth not look upward. The Lord will compel you to acknowledge his hand, when he will afflict and distress you to the uttermost. Attend to what the church saith, Isaiah xxvi. 10, 11. "Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjust'y, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up they will not see: but they shall see and be ashamed." Nourish yourselves like an ox for the day of slaughter, the Lord will one day exert his almighty arm for your destruction, unless ye be converted: for "because ye regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he will destroy you, and not build you up," Psalm xxviii. 5.

Therefore ye, who do not know nor acknowledge the hand of the Lord, and live altogether without God, O seek to obtain an interest in his special and fatherly providence, and to become his children. O seek him for this purpose; for God hath created you, and pro-

wides for you, "that ye should seek the Lord, if haply ye might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being," Acts xvii. 27, 28, "Receive his Son by faith, that ye may obtain power to become the sons of God," John i. 12.

But ye, O believers, who have the great Creator, the almighty and every where present Provider of the universe for your Father, under whose special and favourable providential care ye are placed, who are the blessing in the cluster of our grapes, for whose sake they are yet spared, and who are therefore the holy seed, the support of the land, conduct yourselves worthily of your Creator, and allsufficient Provider, and therefore,

1. Attend diligently to all that ye see and hear, that ye may behold the almighty and every where present hand of God in it, as the sun in a glass. "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord," Psalm cvii. 43. We should pause at every event, and consider that it comes not by chance, but by his fatherly hand. Observe how wonderfully God orders matters with respect to you, in giving you breath and life, and all things; look at the meat and drink on your tables, consider why ye have just this grain from the field for your bread, this fowl of the air, the flesh of this beast, this fish of the sea or river: how many have laboured at it, before it was brought to you: what wisdom, what power, what goodness, what care your Father hath bestowed, in his love to you, to furnish you with it, even you in particular, who are so unworthy: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, because he is strong in power: not one faileth," Isaiah xl. 26. How was David transported at this in the eighth psalm! Yea, "ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee, and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?" Job xii. 7—10. With Isaac we should go out into the field, that our meditation of the Lord may be sweet:

Each plant that we behold,
 Each herb that we do see,
 The praise of God proclaims,
 And saith, Attempt by me

To learn how wise, how good,
 How pleasant is the Lord!
 How passing sweet. He doth
 What e'er I am afford.

A child of God ought certainly to be reproved, when he looks only at his state of grace, that he may see God in that, and reckons it too ignoble a work for a citizen of heaven to contemplate the whole government of God in the universe, as if this were too low an employment for him: no, this rejoices, this enlivens, this causes that God besets us before and behind, it discovers the divine perfections to us, and enraptures the soul. See this Psalm civ.

2. Let a holy fear and awe for God, who manifests himself worthy to be feared in this great work of providence, fall on your souls: "For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods: in his hand are the deep places of the earth, the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land," Psalm xcvi. 3, 4, 5. "I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all Gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in the earth, and in the seas, and all deep places," Psalm cxxxv. 5, 6. Who would not then fear him, for to him doth it appertain, and he manifests himself incomparably glorious in all that he doth: "Let all the earth therefore 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," Psalm xxxiii. 8, 9. See what the Lord saith, Jer. v. 22. Surely a godly person ought not to be like the ungodly, "who say not in their hearts; Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter rain in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of harvest," Jer. v. 24.

3. Be patient in adversity, that is, composed and calmly resigned to the Lord, by which, from a view of the sovereignty and justice of God, and from a sense of our own demerits, we submit willingly to the Lord, bow to him, and praise him, yea, even thank him with silent satisfaction. So Aaron acted when his two sons were consumed by that most dreadful judgment, even fire from heaven, Lev. x. 3. "And Aaron held his peace." When the Lord threatened to inflict the most fearful plagues upon Israel, upon Eli, and his house, Eli said, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good," 1 Sam. iii. 18. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted," said David, Psalm cxix. 71. How well did Job demean himself under

all those grievous afflictions, which befell him, Job i. 21, 22, "He said, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." See how he reproves his impatient wife, Job ii. 9, 10. And this becomes you also, believers; for nothing comes to you by chance, but by his fatherly hand: "For affliction doth not come forth out of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground," Job v. 6. "Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south: but God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another," Psalm lxxv. 6, 7. For "he is the Lord, he doth with the inhabitants of the earth according to his will; who can, or dares stay his hand? or say to him, What dost thou?" Do ye not deserve the most grievous afflictions? is not he happy whom God chastiseth, that he may not be condemned with the world? We are never taught better by God, than when he chastises us; yea, if we considered this matter aright, we should glory in tribulation, because tribulation worketh patience, experience, and hope. Will your impatience, fretfulness, peevishness, and striving with the Lord deliver you from your affliction? will ye not thereby render your bonds stronger? Yes, but, say ye, if my trouble proceeded immediately from God, I could bear it; but this and that person, from whom I did not expect it, and of whom I do not deserve it, inflicts it upon me. Will ye then, like the dog, bite the stone, and not look up at him who casts it? "Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? doth not both good and evil, proceed out of the mouth of the Most High? wherefore doth a living man then complain? Let every man complain on account of his sins," Lam. iii. 37—39. Conduct therefore like David, who, when Shimei cursed him, and Abishai would on that account take off his head, said, "So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, curse David. Who then shall say unto him, wherefore hast thou done so?" 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

4. Be thankful in prosperity, by which, from a sense of our unworthiness, and a view of the preciousness of the benefits, we are concerned to know what we shall render unto the Lord, and in the mean time acknowledge his free favour with our hearts, words, and actions, by ourselves, and with others. So David acted, Psalm cxvi. 12, 13, 14, "What shall I render unto the Lord, for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord, I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now in the presence of all his people." This is also your duty, believers; for

† We have rendered this passage according to the Dutch translation.

whatever ye have enjoyed with respect to your soul or body, or do yet possess, or expect hereafter, it was not brought to you by any creature, nor by, nor on account of yourselves: "For who maketh you to differ from another? and what have ye that ye have not received? now if ye have received it, why do ye glory, as if ye had not received it?" 1 Cor. iv. 7. But "all things are of him, and through him, that they may be to him, and that ye may give him honour and glory," Rom. xi. 36. Endeavour, as constrained in a holy manner by the gracious providence of God, to praise him with a holy solicitude and admiration, and to employ yourselves wholly in his service; this is required of you, Rom. xii. 1.

5. In all things which may hereafter befall you, place a firm trust in your faithful God and Father. A believer is often anxious and concerned how he shall pass through the world with honour, how he shall obtain his bread and clothing; he is afraid of these and those evil-minded persons, of diseases, and a painful death; yea, the devil acts the prophet with him, telling him that this and that misfortune will yet befall him, which therefore disturbs him. But the creation and providence of his faithful God and Father teaches him, that he ought to place a firm trust in the Lord, by which he attains to a holy carelessness concerning future events, commits himself in all things to the Lord with a believing confidence, tranquil hope, and expectation placed on him, that he will bring it to pass. This is the duty of believers according to Psalm xxxvii. 5, "Commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass," 1 Peter v. 7. Let your souls then exercise themselves herein; for the Lord is a faithful God, he doth not forsake the work of his hands: "He is a faithful Creator, to whom ye must commit yourselves in well-doing," 1 Pet. iv. 19. He is your Father: a father will surely provide for his children. What can the creatures do to you? They are all so in his hand, that without his will they cannot so much as move; they are but "as the staff in his hand," Isaiah x. 5, 15. God hath taken upon himself to care for you; will ye then take the work out of his hand by caring for yourselves: therefore "cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you," 1 Peter v. 7. "He takes care of the grass, and the fowls; and will he not attend to you?" Mat. vi. 26, 28, 29, 30. He takes care of the greater, your body and life, which ye have not by your own, but by his care; will he then neglect your smaller affairs? "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment," Mat. vi. 25. Yea, "he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for you all: how shall he not then with him freely

give you all things?" Rom. viii. 32. Your care cannot avail: "Ye cannot by taking thought add one cubit to your stature," Matt. vi. 27. Yea, let whatever will befall you, no creature shall be able to separate you from the love of God, according to his words by the apostle, Rom. viii. 35, 37, 38, 39, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Amen.

JESUS, THE ONLY
AND
COMPLETE SAVIOUR.

XI. LORD'S DAY.

Matt. i. 21. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus : for he shall save his people from their sins.

Q. 29. *Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is, a Saviour ?*

A. Because he saveth us, and delivereth us from our sins ; and likewise, because we ought not to seek, neither can find salvation in any other.

Q. 30. *Do such then believe in Jesus the only Saviour, who seek their salvation and happiness of saints, of themselves, or any where else ?*

A. They do not ; for though they boast of him in words, yet in deeds they deny Jesus the only Deliverer and Saviour ; for one of these two things must be true, that either Jesus is not a complete Saviour ; or that they who by a true faith receive this Saviour must find in him all things necessary to their salvation.

AS it is necessary to know and believe in God the Father, so it is not less necessary to know and believe in God the Son. Therefore the Lord Jesus said, John xiv. 1, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." For he who knows and believes only in the Father,

and not in the Son, knows indeed that he is become a man by creation and providence, and that he is a sinner by breaking the covenant of works : but he doth not know how he may become a Christian, and be saved ; for " this," saith the Saviour, John xvii. 3, " is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Yea, we do not know, nor believe in the Father without the Son ; for " whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father," 1 John ii. 23. God is also not a father, neither is he known as such, except with relation to his Son, " who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his Person," Heb. i. 3. " He who seeth the Son, seeth the Father also, because the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son," John xiv. 9, 10. It is also the Son only, who reveals the Father to sinners : " No man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him," Matt. xi. 27. The same is said also, John i. 18. Yea, on this account also, God the Lord irradiates the sinner with his light, that he may behold his glory in his son : " For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6. Therefore the ancients, in their creeds, conduct us not only to the knowledge and belief of the Father, as Creator, but also of the Son as Deliverer ; which order the instructor also following, conducts us from the knowledge and belief of the Father, to the knowledge and belief of the Son. In order now that we may know and believe in him, we are instructed in three particulars. 1, His names, Jesus Christ, in the eleventh and twelfth Lord's days. 2, His divine nature, government, and human nature in the thirteenth and fourteenth Lord's days. 3, His states in the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth Lord's days. In this Lord's day, the name of Jesus is spoken of, which signifieth that he is the only and complete Saviour ; as now the œconomy of the Father is referred to the creation, so that of the Son is explained of redemption, which he effects by his names, natures and states.

In this Lord's day we have two important particulars proposed for our consideration.

I. Our faith in Jesus Christ, that he is the only and complete Saviour, Question 29.

II. The manner in which this great truth is denied by some, who are not of our church, Question 30.

I. Our whole faith in this matter is comprehended in one word, that the Son of God is called " Jesus." He is also surnamed Christ,

on account of his three offices, Matt. xxvii. 22. On account of his human nature he calls himself "the Son of man," Matt. xvi 13. From his Godhead he is named "Jehovah, the Lord. God." Hosea i. 7. From the union of his two natures he is called Immanuel," Isaiah vii. 14. On account of his humiliation, "a worm, he whom man despiseth," Psalm xxii. 6, Isaiah xlix. 7. On account of his exaltation he hath a name, which is above every name, that every tongue should confess that he is Lord," Philip. ii. 9, 11. And because he obtains justification and every kind of salvation for his people, therefore his name is, "The Lord our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6. Yea because he is all in all, he is named "David, The Word, Wisdom, The Lion, The Lamb, The Root of David, The Amen, The faithful and true Witness, The Beginning of the creation, Head, Leader, Teacher, Shepherd, Bridegroom, Sun, Morning-star, Life, Rock," and to sum up all in one word, "he is called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of peace," Isaiah ix. 5. But the name Jesus is his proper name, which name alone expresseth the virtue of all those other names. Therefore it behooves us to know what this name signifieth; for which purpose we must not betake ourselves to the Greeks, but to the Hebrews, from whose language this name is derived, and who pronounce it, according to the nature of their language, Joshua, or Hosea, or that it may contain all the letters of that name of God. which is his memorial, Jehoshua, the saviour of the Lord, or Save Lord, as Joshua was called with design, when his name Hoshea was changed into Joshua, or Jehoshua, Num. xiii. 16, which name the Greeks, according to their manner of pronunciation, call Jesous, and we Jesus, signifying Preserver, Deliverer, Saviour. Many other men have had this name, and particularly Joshua, who led the children of Israel into Canaan, Heb. iv. 8, and Joshua, the Son of Josedek the high priest, Zech. iii. 1. vi. 11. They were both holy men, who obtained a great salvation and deliverance for Israel; but the Son of God hath inherited this name in a more excellent manner than those most worthy men; for they were mere men, but our Jesus is also the true God and eternal life: they were his servants, and he is their Lord: they procured only a certain outward salvation for the people of God, but he a spiritual and eternal: we can consider them at the best only as types, but we must honour him, as their antitype: they received their name, for aught that we know, of men only, but the Son of God obtained his of his Father by an angel, Matt. i. 21, 25. Luke ii. 21, that we might acknowledge and receive him upon the authority of God, as the true Saviour of sinners.

Having proposed this in general, we must in the next place inquire why the Son of God is called Jesus, that is, Saviour. In order to consider this formally, we will attend to three particulars, 1. How he saves, 2. That he alone is the Saviour, and 3. that we must believe in him as such.

1. We must in the first place, we say, inquire how he saves. Every person must consider, with a detestation of himself, with shame and sorrow, that he, and the whole world is guilty before God, that he is a child of wrath by nature on account of his sins, whether original or actual, whereby he hath subjected himself to guilt, wrath and condemnation; yea, that he neither knows how, nor is able, nor willing, to deliver himself: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Rom. viii. 7. But Jesus, the Saviour saves the elect sinner, and delivers him from sin. What is salvation? may it be asked here. It is a deliverance from the greatest evil, namely sin, which is in itself evil and bad, renders the sinner guilty, and subjects him to every kind of punishment. temporal and eternal. The Saviour therefore saves by delivering his people from their sins, which David celebrates, Psalm xxx. 8. "He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." This is the reason that the angel assigns why he should be called Jesus; "For he shall save his people from their sins." And truly he delivers his people not only from original sin before baptism, but also from actual sins; and not only from the guilt, but also from the punishment of sin; and not only from temporal, but also from eternal punishment. All which we maintain against the Papists, because "he redeems Israel from all his iniquities, and his blood cleanseth from all sin," Psalm cxxx. 8. 1 John i. 7, and because "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1. But salvation consists not only in deliverance from the greatest evil, but also in having and possessing the greatest good, namely, God, by seeing, enjoying him, being conformed to him in holiness, and praising him. This, yea, this alone can so fully satisfy the rational creature, that it desires nothing besides him in heaven, or on earth: "Fulness of joy is in his presence, at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalm xvi. 11. Since sin separates man from God, and Jesus delivers him from sin, therefore he procures for him also this fellowship, and the salvation of God; for "he obtains for him not only forgiveness of sin, but also an inheritance among the saints," Acts xxvi. 18.

But doth he save only by revealing the way of salvation, and confirming his revelation by miracles, a holy life, and a patient death?

Yea, he hath done this also to procure the salvation of the sinner : for " he hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," 2 Tim i 10. But this alone was not sufficient : the sinner is subject to guilt and to the wrath of God, this was to be satisfied and borne, as we have shown on the fourth and fifth Lord's days. And therefore Jesus saves,

1. As he purchaseth salvation by satisfying the justice of God, according to the demand of the law, by which he endured all the grievous punishment of the sinner in his stead, that he might deliver him from condemnation : " Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ; 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," Isaiah liii. 4, 5. Yea, " Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. This also became God : " For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb. ii. 10. Yea, he hath not only delivered them from condemnation through his suffering, by making satisfaction to the vindictive justice of God, according to the threatening of the law ; but he hath also purchased salvation for them by obeying God in their stead, according to the condition of the law ; " The man who doth these things shall live by them ;" for his whole life was spent in doing that which was pleasing to God ; he even suffered, " in order to obey his Father, unto death," Philip. ii. 8. Now he did not do this so much for himself, but as Surety for the elect ; by which he also saves them, and merits salvation for them : " For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous," Rom. v. 19, and thus the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us," Rom. viii. 4, and " Zion is redeemed by judgment." Isaiah i. 27. " The Lord of hosts is exalted in judgment, and God that is holy is sanctified in righteousness," Isaiah v. 16.

2. Jesus saves also by an effectual application and communication of this purchased salvation to the sinner. Truly the sinner cannot do this himself, although his understanding were ever so enlightened with respect to the purchased salvation, and the means whereby it is communicated to him ; is his will free, he hath nevertheless no ability to effect this. " he is holden with the cords of his sins : " he would be obliged to change his heart, to give himself faith, to justify, sanctify and preserve himself ; for this there is need of nothing less than the exceeding greatness of God's power, according to the working

of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. And therefore it is the work of the great God and Saviour alone, who was for this purpose after his humiliation, "exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 31. "For, if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life," Rom. v. 10. Therefore he also prays, as a high priest, who is gone into the true sanctuary, for those whom he hath delivered, that the Father would help them and would not withhold from them the purchased salvation. See John xvii. where he presupposeth his exaltation, as though he were already in heaven: therefore the apostle glorying in this privilege, saith, Rom. viii. 33, 34. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." As Jesus also, exalted to be a Saviour, hath sent his Spirit, that he may by him cause "the rebellious to dwell with him, and that they may praise him, as a God of perfect salvation," Psalm lxxviii. 18, 19, 20.

He doth not apply salvation instantaneously, but progressively. First in this life, so that he saves the elect sinner even in this life, Titus iii. 5, he doth this by bestowing on him all the blessed and saving benefits of the covenant of grace, even by "regenerating and renewing him by the Holy Spirit," Titus iii. 5, by "calling him with a holy calling," 2 Tim. i. 9. For by this he is brought to the fellowship of the Son of God, the Saviour, 1 Cor. i. 9, by "giving him faith," whereby he is saved, and appropriates the Saviour to himself, Eph. ii. 8. John i. 12, by "justifying" him, by which he is absolved from guilt, and the purchased salvation is imputed to him, Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8, by giving him peace and joy through the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17, by granting him a hope that maketh not ashamed, by which he is saved even at present, Rom. viii. 24. Coll. i. 27, by imparting to him "the adoption of children," and the Spirit, whereby he hath a free access to the Father, and is made an heir of salvation, Gal. iv. 5, 6, by sanctifying him, which is the beginning of his glorification, 1 Peter i. 5. John x. 28. But he also renders him a perfect partaker of salvation after this life at his death: the believer is pronounced blessed immediately after his death, Rev. xiv. 13. "Lazarus dying, his soul was forthwith carried by angels into Abraham's bosom," Luke xiv. 22, and the Saviour said to the converted thief, Luke xxii. 43. "To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;" by

which we cannot understand some happy place, different from the third heaven itself, whither Christ ascended, when he was exalted, and where he sitteth at the right hand of God, Heb. i. 3, where Paul should be, after he was dissolved. Phil. i. 23. As Christ is a Saviour of the whole man, therefore he will save the body also by raising it from the dead, uniting it to the soul, and taking it up to him into heaven, 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, 18.

In the second place, Jesus alone is the Saviour. The Father is also the Saviour and the Holy Ghost also; for he accomplisheth the salvation of the sinner; for we read of "the kindness of God our Saviour, who hath saved us by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour," Titus iii. 4, 5, 6. But the Father hath appointed his Son to be a Saviour, and committed the work of salvation to him as an office, and hath therefore ordered that all fulness should dwell in him, which the Holy-Ghost communicates to the people of Jesus. See this John xvi. 13, 14, 15. And so Jesus alone is the Saviour: "There is salvation in none other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12. He himself, who is the Amen, the faithful witness, saith, "I, even I am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour," Isaiah xliii. 11. Thus he speaks of himself also, Isaiah xlv. 21. Hosea, xiii. 4, and no marvel, for (a) he only hath the necessary qualifications of a Saviour. He who shall be a Saviour of sinners must be a real and righteous man, and very God and man in one person, as we have proved upon the fifth and sixth Lord's days. Now there is no such person but Christ; for "thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts, I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God." Isaiah xlv. 6. (b) To this we add also, that he is the perfect and allsufficient Saviour. "This God is our salvation, Selah. This God is a God of perfect salvation to us," Psalm lxviii. 19, 20. "Wherefore he is also able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Heb. vii. 25. See also Heb. x. 14. And verily believers find all things in him necessary to their salvation. It is necessary to their salvation, that it should be purchased for them by suffering and obedience, and that it should be applied by all kinds of grace in and after this life. Now believers have all this in him, as we have shown above: it therefore followeth that he alone is the Saviour, and that there is no other besides him. Will ye have more? we say (c) that salvation is not to be sought nor found in any other; for salvation is not to be sought nor

found in the saints, no not in Mary; for even she had need of a Saviour: for, "her spirit rejoiced in God her Saviour," Luke i. 47. The church also sought no salvation in "Abraham or Israel, for they were ignorant of her," Isaiah lxiii. 16. Further, salvation is not to be sought nor found in ourselves: for man is in himself guilty, a child of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins, he cannot of himself submit to the law, his righteousnesses are as filthy rags; if he shall be saved, it must be through the kindness of his Saviour: and "by the grace of God he is what he is," though he were even like Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 10. Neither is salvation to be sought or found any where else: not in ministers, though when they are faithful, "they save both themselves, and those who hear them," 1 Tim. iv. 16, for they do not save in any other way, than by directing sinners to Jesus. See this concerning Paul and Timothy, 2 Cor. iv. 5. 7. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." See also 1 Cor. iii. 4—9. Man is saved by the word, but only as it leads him to the Saviour, and as God works by it through his Spirit: for "it is the power of God to salvation unto every one that believeth," Rom. i. 16.

The last particular which we must observe concerning the reasons why the Son of God is called Jesus, that is, Saviour, is that we must believe in him as such; for when we say in our creed, "I believe in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ," it is as though we said, and I believe in Jesus Christ. And verily we must believe in him as well as in the Father, John xiv. 1: for the Father appointed him to be a Saviour, that we should believe in him; for "God hath set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood," Rom. iii. 25, and that we should through him believe in the Father: for "by him we believe in God," 1 Peter i. 21. We are not to show now wherein faith in Jesus the Saviour consists, since we have done this on the seventh Lord's day, but we must show here that a guilty sinner, if he will be saved, must believe in him. For,

1. We become partakers of the Saviour only by faith, because faith owns and receives him: "for as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," John i. 12. And in this manner are we saved by him; but without faith in him we are damned: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not in the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John

iii. 36. Mark xvi. 16. This ought surely to constrain and move a sinner to believe in him.

2. There is nothing which we can believe on better grounds than that Jesus is the Saviour: for there is nothing that can be more fully proved than that he is the only and complete Saviour: "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15, for "to him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins," Acts x. 43. But besides this, every one is also called and invited by him to come unto him through faith for salvation: he himself cries, "Turn unto me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth," Isaiah xlv. 22. lv. 1. John vii. 37, 38. Rev. xxii. 17. This ought surely to allure thee, O sinner.

3. Without faith in him we cannot find either salvation or advantage in aught else, though it may otherwise serve as a mean to salvation. Reading or hearing the word of God is of no advantage "if it be not mixed with faith," Heb. iv. 2. There is no better mean to obtain the favour of God than prayer, but this also is sinful, "if it proceed not from faith," Rom. xiv. 24. Though I were as virtuous as any man living, if I have not faith, I will not please God. See this, Heb. xi, 6. Let this urge you to him.

4. They who receive him by a true faith, find in him all things necessary to their salvation, as we have just now shown. Now we must either be wholly unconcerned about our salvation, or this must determine our hearts to believe in him.

II. Many who are not of our communion deny this great truth. There are not any among those called Christians, who will not confess that Jesus is the Saviour; yea, they will all boast of him with their mouths: but if we will attend to the matter more strictly, we shall find that they deny the only Saviour with their deeds, since they seek their salvation of the saints, of themselves, or somewhere else.

It is evident, that the instructor hath respect here to the Papists, who seek their salvation and happiness,

1. Of the saints, since they make the saints, and especially Mary, the objects of all their devotions, and therefore pray to them for all kinds of happiness, dedicate temples, cities and countries to them; yea, they proceed so far, that a great champion of popery * hath

* This was Bonaventure, whom the Papists style the seraphical doctor: he was an eminent scholastic divine of the thirteenth century.

inserted the name of Mary in the Psalter, wherever he found the names and titles of God. Yea, that the Papists seek their salvation and happiness of the saints appears from their employing them as mediators with God and his Son; for they will not draw near to God through Christ, until they have first sought the favour and assistance of some saint; therefore they are so shameless, that they compare Mary to the neck, by which salvation floweth down to us from Christ, as the head. They endeavour to hide their filth in some measure, by saying that the saints are mediators of intercession, and that we must seek our salvation through them of Jesus: but even then the Papists show that they seek their salvation so far of the saints. The word of God knows of no intercessors besides Jesus Christ the righteous: it is also certain, that the Romish church represents the saints not only as mediators of intercession, but also of merit; we will not transcribe here any prayers of the Papists, in which they pray for grace through the most precious merits of the saints, for it is sufficiently evident without this, that they consider the saints as mediators of merit, since it is the uniform doctrine of the Papists, that the saints perform many works of supererogation, which are laid up by the Pope, out of which treasure the deficiencies of others are supplied, and indulgencies, or pardons of sins granted.

2. The Papists seek their salvation and happiness also of themselves; for they imagine that they merit salvation of God by their good works. When they sin, they will satisfy for it in this life by certain chastisements of fasting, pilgrimages and almsgivings, by muttering a great number of paternosters, and avemarys, and by practising other trifles, enjoined on them by the priest; or after this life by suffering a severe punishment in a hot burning purgatory.

3. If all this will not suffice, they will then seek their salvation and happiness somewhere else, as in the agnus Deis, the wood of the cross, masses for souls, shriving their sins to the priest, who will forgive them the sins which they have shriven, and these things quiet them so perfectly, that it is as though it were proclaimed to them from heaven, that when they do thus, they are saved by Jesus himself.

It follows certainly from this, that the Papists deny the only Saviour Jesus; for one of these two things must be true, and not both, that Jesus is not a complete Saviour; or that he is a complete Saviour, in whom believers find all things necessary to their salvation. Now it is certain, that he is a complete Saviour, as we have proved before; and therefore when the Papists seek their salvation out of Jesus of the saints, or of themselves, or of aught else, they deny the

only Deliverer and Saviour, and do not consider him as a complete Saviour.

It is true, they boast of him with their mouths, and say that he is the supreme and the principal Saviour, and that the saints are saviours of an inferior order; Jesus is with them indeed the supreme and most worthy, but not the only and complete Saviour. To constitute him the supreme Saviour, and the saints inferior ones, what is it but making Christians heathens, who held that there was a supreme God and inferior Gods, and that the inferior Gods were mediators, by whom they drew near to the supreme God, and by whom that supreme God drew near to them, with his favours. The Romanists boast indeed much of the name Jesus, and inscribe it upon almost every thing, in order to sanctify it; they will also hang this name about their necks, that it may preserve them from malignant diseases, and they make use of it to cast out the devil, as if this name were a charm, as it was used by the seven exorcists to their shame and loss, Acts xix. 13—16. But what do these men find in Jesus that should constitute him the supreme and principal Saviour? in truth nothing more than that he delivers them from sins, which they have before baptism, and then only from the guilt, but not from the punishment of sin, or only from temporal, and not from eternal punishment; and thus he leaves the principal work to the saints, and to the sinner himself, all his sufferings and obedience serving only to render our works capable of meriting, and thus Jesus will be the servant to assist these great lords; and so this great name proves with these men to be a mere nothing, yea, a blasphemy, of which it is not the least part, that some of them arrogate to themselves the name of Jesuits, as if they were associates of Jesus, and partakers with him in the work of saving the sinner,

Hath not the instructor therefore reason to say that this people deny him with their deeds?

But some will perhaps ask, Can no man then be saved in the church of Rome? we say, it is not to be doubted, but that some were saved in the Romish church, before the true church separated herself from her, since there were many who groaned under the Romish yoke, and bore witness against the denial of Jesus; but we cannot speak so liberally now; because since that separation, when the hundred and forty and four thousand were sealed, and the gospel preached, an everlasting wo was denounced against all those who worship the beast, and his image, and receive his mark in their forehead. Read attentively the fourteenth chapter of the revelation of John. It may also happen, that there are certain persons in that

church, who not knowing the depths of Satan, possess a certain measure of faith, and of love to Jesus, and do not trust in themselves, or in the creatures and reveal themselves particularly on their death beds, and are thus saved: but how dark and sad is their condition, and how are they saved as it were by fire!

The Socinians will without doubt detest the erroneous opinion of the Papists, but neither are they justifiable in what they teach concerning the Saviour Jesus; for the Socinians imagine, that he is a Saviour only because he taught a better law than that of Moses, enforced it by miracles, and confirmed it by his holy life and patient death: but what influence hath all this upon the soul without his Godhead, satisfaction and effectual changing of the heart? and nevertheless they deny all this, and show thus that they also deny the only and complete Saviour.

The Remonstrants approach somewhat nearer, when they teach that Jesus merited the salvation of a possibility to be saved: but they will not allow that Jesus applies his merited salvation effectually, saying, that he hath left this to our freewill. But then Jesus is only a possible Saviour; and so it might have happened, that though Jesus were a Saviour, no man had been saved, as the will of all men is free to accept of him or not. What doth all this mean, but that Jesus is not a complete Saviour? that believers do not find all things in him necessary to their salvation? and consequently they also deny in deed, the only Saviour Jesus, though they boast of him with their mouths.

Though we cannot censure the Lutherans on this head, nevertheless we cannot commend their superstitious behaviour toward the bare name of Jesus, bowing when it is only mentioned: "At the name of Jesus every knee must bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," according to Philip. ii. 10. But this doth not relate to the name of Jesus, but to his person, to which all must be subject. If we ought to understand any mere name here, it ought rather to be his name Lord, "which every tongue must confess," according to vs. 11. Those also, who are under the earth, to wit, the evil spirits, have no knees. Yea, the Lutherans themselves do not bow their knees, when this name is mentioned, but only their heads.

APPLICATION.

When we consider all that hath been said, must we not justify our fathers in separating from the church of Rome, according to the

divine command. Rev. xviii. 4, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sin; and that ye receive not her plagues?" How could they remain in such an assembly, who denied their Saviour, was become Idolatrous, would not be persuaded, and persecuted those who would heal her, even unto death?

Yea more, ought we to be charged with improper severity, because we would never receive the abominable Socinians as brethren? They had indeed utterly subverted all the foundations of the Christian faith, with respect to Jesus, as his Godhead, satisfaction, and heartchanging grace; on which account the Remonstrants also were justly cast out of our purified church; for they would establish free-will as an associate with Jesus in the salvation of sinners, and would also erect an altar to it: and hence they soon deviated to other erroneous opinions, embraced the Socinians as their brethren, and endeavoured to bring those uncircumcised into the temple of God. How were they then to be endured!

Permit me to offer also this inference from what hath been said, that our reformed church alone exhibits the pure doctrine of the word of God without error. Who can suspect her of errors and misapprehensions, unless it be an error that she conceives too highly of the only and complete Saviour, that she humbles the sinner too low, comforts the sorrowful too perfectly, and glorifies God too much, as a God of perfect salvation? And do we err herein? we err then with the word of God, which teacheth us these things; yea, we esteem it our happiness, that we may err herein so, that we lose ourselves wholly in Jesus, and are swallowed up in his salvation, that we may be found only in him.

May we not now also extol those as happy, who have Jesus for their Saviour? For (a) he is the most worthy, the Son of God, made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Who in heaven can be compared to him? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to him? he is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be revered by all those who are round about him. He is the Lord of lords, and King of kings; yea, he is terrible to the kings of the earth. "His name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace," Isaiah ix. 6. To have the great God for our Saviour is surely a great happiness. (b) Let the benefited sinner only consider from what Jesus saves him. It is indeed from sin; -all that is abominable, evil and hateful, is comprehended under that one word, sin; for it renders man like the devil, it subjects him to the wrath of God, the

curse of the law and eternal damnation; it is the cause of all our misery, and it deprives the sinner of all his faculties, so that he cannot deliver his soul. When a person hath had a heartfelt sense of this, and sees that he is delivered by Jesus, must it not fill his heart with wonder, astonishment, joy, and praise to God, and induce him to cry out, "He who hath delivered us from so great a death, and who still delivereth us, and in whom we trust, that he will yet deliver us?" (c) Believers, consider also what blessedness and salvation he hath bestowed on you. He hath united you to God, translated you into communion with him, so that ye know him who is true, and are in him who is true: your life is hidden with him in God, ye have an interest in his favour and love, and shall always retain it; and all this is but a small beginning; yea, although ye were now filled with all the fulness of God, it could not yet be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in you at the last day. And therefore, "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 1, 2. (d) And what hath Jesus done to save you? he poured forth his soul unto death, he was numbered with the transgressors, he bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors; he made his soul an offering for sin, that he might see you as his seed; and therefore he hath also given you his Spirit, he regenerates you, he hath made you partakers of his divine nature, he hath obtained your acquittal of the judge, he hath sanctified you, he will love you to the end, and will not withdraw his hand from you, until he hath introduced you into glory, and hath saved you perfectly in soul and body. In this, Job gloried under his greatest troubles; "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me," Job xix. 25, 26, 27. Will ye have more? Behold (e) he is the only and complete Saviour, ye have all things in him that are necessary to your salvation. There is no defect in any sinner so great and grievous, but there is a fulness in every respect sufficient in him against it: "Christ is all in all," Coll. iii. 11. "Of his fulness do we all receive grace for grace," John i. 16. "He is made to us of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,"

1 Cor. i. 30. "He is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Heb. vii. 25. And he alone is this, we may not seek, and cannot find salvation out of him; whatsoever the sinner pursues, in order to obtain happiness, is only broken cisterns, which can hold no water. (f) And whose Saviour is he? the Saviour of all men? no: but only of his people, and there are many who are not his people and sheep. That just ye, even ye, O believers, are his people, and the objects of his saving kindness, and that others, perhaps as good, yea, better by nature than ye, come short hereof; ought this not to humble you to the uttermost under a sense of your unworthiness, and cause you to ask with Hagar "Have I here also looked after him, who seeth me?" Gen. xvi. 13.

I know that there are believers, who labour under a grievous uncertainty, whether they have a saving interest in Jesus, and that there are others, who are unconcerned, and think that they ought not to doubt that Jesus is their Saviour, deceiving themselves with vain imaginations: and therefore it will not be unserviceable to inquire for the conviction of the one and the other who are the real partakers of the Saviour. They are,

1. Those who regard their sins and misery with concern and anxiety: they cry out, "What must we do to be saved?" Acts ii. 37. ix. 6. xvi. 30. "For the Son of man came to save that which was lost." Matt. xviii. 11. How is it possible that a sinner should be delivered from all his sins, and dreadful misery, as long as he doth not behold his wretchedness, so as to be humbled. We know indeed that some are brought to Jesus by a word, or by a calm contemplation of the saving truths, or by a flood of saving joy, which Jesus sheds abroad in their hearts, and they do not experience much perturbation, as Matthew, Lydia, and Zaccheus, Matt. ix. 9. Acts xvi. 14. Luke ix. 5, 6, but we also know, that this is not common; and moreover, that such persons, although they are not greatly distressed at the first on account of their sins and misery, because it is swallowed up by the enjoyment of their love, are afterwards so much the more dejected, and thus humbled on account of their former and present sins. And is not humiliation the daily work of every believer? Surely it is.

2. They have an enlarged view of the perfect ability of Jesus to save sinners, which causeth them to set a high value on him: "To you who believe he is precious," 1 Peter ii. 17. They have not a bare apprehension of this, but they perceive through the irradiation of the Spirit of God, the beauty of Jesus, which allures their hearts, excites a desire in them to Jesus, and induceth them to seek him

earnestly, to look from self, and from all self and imaginary worth and works, to surrender themselves to him, to turn to him, and receive him, in order to be saved by him alone. "They account all things," yea, even their best performances, "loss and dung, that they may win Christ, and be found in him," like Paul, Phil. iii. 7—10. Let none, think that since Jesus alone is the Saviour, that he will obtain an interest in him, without any activity on his part. No: those whom he saves, he renders active in their endeavours to be saved by him: therefore the apostle saith, Philip. ii. 12, 13. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." See also Matt. xi. 2.

3. Such are also his people: he saves his people. They surrender themselves willingly and readily to him, and "join themselves to him," not only to be saved by him, but also to be sanctified, and "to serve him, to love him, and to be his servants," as it is said of those who are saved, Isaiah lvi. 6. "They are willing to swear, and to perform it, that they will keep his righteous judgments," like David, Psalm cxix. 106. And therefore they join themselves to that people whom he saves, and who serve him, "saying, we will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you," Zech. viii. 23. Yea, "they are of one heart and one soul" with that people, Acts iv. 32. And thus "we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren," 1 John iii. 14.

Whoever ye are, examine yourselves by these characteristics, and see whether ye have been thus exercised, and whether ye be still exercised in this manner. But how many are there, who know nothing at all of these things! Verily ye know nothing of them who have never yet come to yourselves, to examine whether ye were in the faith, or whether Christ were in you; who show by your carelessness, that ye are unconcerned whether ye be saved or damned: for this seldom or never enters into your thoughts; the things of this life, and worldly and fleshly desires possess your minds, so that there is no room for serious reflections upon your eternal condition; and ye show thus, that ye are not of that people, but of the world, Psalm xvii. 14. 1. John iv. 5. Or doth a sudden and transient thought concerning a life after this life enter your hearts, your self-love induceth you to think, that ye in particular will not be lost, but saved; ye take this for granted, as something that is evident of itself, because ye have heard with the hearing of the ear, that Jesus is the Saviour, just as if he were a Saviour of those who never apply to him as such.

Neither have ye the evidences which we have mentioned, that Jesus is your Saviour, who endeavour to do something, in order to be saved, yet do not embrace Jesus as your Saviour, but seek other Saviours. This will appear strange to you, and induce you to say, we certainly know that Jesus alone is the Saviour : but it is perfectly evident that we look upon that as our Saviour, in which we place our only trust and hope of being saved. But is Jesus your trust and hope ? do ye flee to him ? have ye received him truly, heartily, and entirely ? and do ye still do this ? ye do then show that ye esteem him your Saviour ; but is it your hope and trust, that ye will be saved, because ye have been born in a Christian country, have been educated in the pure church, have made a confession of your faith, that ye partake of the Lord's supper, have a considerable knowledge, do not commit any wicked abominations, are sometimes sorry for your sins, have a relish for the word, associate with the godly, yea, have a great zeal for God, without having ever received Jesus himself, or sought to win him by faith, ye do then surely declare that ye do not seek Jesus, but only those things and works for your Saviour. With the Papists, Socinians, and Remonstrants ye fetch Jesus in as far as concerns his names, thinking that if ye do all ye can, Jesus will do all that he can ; but Jesus himself is not the object of your exercises. Therefore know that ye are yet without Christ. What can it profit you, to boast of him with your mouths, while ye deny him with your works ? He will not save you, while ye rem in thus, but condemn you : alas ! how much more grievous will your condition be, than that of those who never heard of him : for he hath urged you to receive him for salvation, but ye have suffered him to labour and cry in vain. Hear what he saith, John xv. 22, " If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin ; but now they have no cloak for their sin."

Alas ! friends, behold your fearful and wretched condition, and entertain an earnest desire to be saved, and therefore to receive the Saviour by faith. And why should ye not ? have ye too much to do in the world ? are your thoughts too much taken up with the things of this life ? " What will it profit you, if ye should gain the whole world, and lose your own souls ! or what would ye give in exchange for your souls ?" Matt. xvi. 26. Or will ye not, because sin is sweet to you ? how bitter will it be to you, when that momentary sweetness shall be past, to hear him upbraid you, saying, " Ye would not come unto me, that ye might have life," John v. 40. Yea, " the wickedness that is sweet in your mouth, shall be turned in your bowels ; it shall be the gall of asps within you," Job xx. 12, 13, 14. " Or will

ye defer it, until this or that opportunity? but ye will then perhaps have no opportunity, or less inclination than ye have now to believe in him: therefore "to day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," Psalm xc. 7, 8. Or do ye not dare, because ye have sinned too long a time, and too grievously? He is a complete Saviour, who is able to subdue all your sins, although ye were the greatest sinners: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners: of whom I am chief," said Paul, 1 Tim. i. 15. Or are ye afraid, that such grievous sinners may not come to him, and that he would thrust you away? He himself calls to you, "to look unto him, and be saved," Isaiah xlv. 22, and promiseth that "him that cometh to him he will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37. Ye may not linger, without exposing yourselves to the peril of a grievous condemnation, Heb. x. 38. 1 John v. 10. Or can ye not come to him, because ye are so dark and weak, and he is so far off, that ye cannot draw near to him? only offer yourselves to him, although it were afar off; call upon him to give you faith, and to draw you to him; for this also belongs to the work of saving, namely, to give faith, Eph. ii. 8.

But with respect to you, who have been driven out of yourselves, have truly embraced the Saviour for salvation, and are, like his people, zealous of good works, conduct yourselves worthily of his name, and therefore,

1. Rejoice and glory in him: he is matter of the greatest joy: "In this day it should be said, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation," Isaiah xxv. 9. The angel published, as the greatest joy, that the Saviour was born, Luke ii. 10, 11. Mary's spirit rejoiced in God her Saviour, Luke i. 47. Ponder a while on your happiness, that just ye have been delivered by so great a God and Saviour from such a grievous condemnation, that such a great salvation hath been bestowed on you, and that even he, who knew no sin, was made sin for you, that ye might be the righteousness of God in him. Pause and contemplate this, until your souls are enraptured with joy, and are transported out of themselves into him.

2. Glorify and praise him on account of his name: "As his name is, so is his praise," Psalm xlviii. 10. "He hath a name above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow," Philip. ii. 9, 10. All that ye have and expect, proceeds from his name: how well doth it then become you to give him the honour of it. It is the blessedness of the rational creature to glorify God: but how doth it increase his blessedness, that having a view of the power of this

name, he can praise it with his whole heart to the utmost : in this the blessed soul will exercise herself for ever ; and it would therefore be proper, that she should begin it now.

3. Let him also be your only refuge and trust on account of his name : " They that know thy name will trust in thee," said David, Psalm ix. 11. They who believe in Jesus find all things in him necessary to their salvation : therefore in whatever respect ye may be deficient, ye must betake yourselves to him alone, that ye may receive of his fulness grace for grace : " It should be said of him, Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength," Isaiah xlv. 24. Those who are saved ought certainly not to deny his name by being discouraged on account of their afflictions, or by looking for any blessedness in their own endeavours, purposes, exercises or duties : in him alone is the salvation of Israel, and he alone is a God of perfect salvation.

4. Love him and his name heartily : whatever is lovely and love-worthy he discovers and imparts to you by means of this name, that he may allure your hearts and love to him : " He is fairer than the children of men," Psalm xlv. 2. Behold his beauty from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, and ye will find that " he is altogether lovely," Song v. 10—16. " His name is as ointment poured forth ; therefore the virgins do love him," Song i. 3. Let his love then constrain you to love him also. Our love to Jesus fills us wholly with pleasure and perfect delight. This Bernard experienced when, he sang,

I see now what I sought before,
 Enjoy now all my soul's desire :
 I melt in Jesus' ardent love,
 His love doth my whole heart enfire.
 O heavenly fire, blessed flame !
 End of the law, perfection's bond !
 O dear refreshment, ah, how fair
 Jesus to love, who is God's Son !
 'Tis Jesus who delights the soul :
 'Tis Jesus, whom the soul doth crave ;
 O that in which I boast, my bliss
 Is Jesus, who the world doth save.

5. Conduct yourselves as the people whom Jesus saves, separating yourselves from whatever is sinful, surrendering yourselves to him, in order to do his will in all things, and to be conformable to him-

The life of Jesus must be manifest in your mortal bodies : " He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John iii. 3. Men ought to see that ye have been with Jesus ; for what other end hath he saved you ? " He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Titus ii. 14.

It is true, that notwithstanding ye are the people whom Jesus saves ye are still in an evil condition through your manifold inward and outward afflictions, and the righteous are scarcely saved : nevertheless he can and will save you perfectly and certainly. At your death he will command the angels to carry you into Abraham's bosom, and will also quicken your mortal bodies to salvation by his Spirit who dwelleth in you. With what tranquillity may ye, O believers, lay yourselves down upon your death-beds, and say, " Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word ; for mine eyes have even seen thy salvation." Amen.

THE NAMES

CHRIST AND CHRISTIAN.

XII. LORD'S DAY.

John i. 41. We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

Q. 31. *Why is he called Christ, that is, anointed ?*

A. Because he is ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be our chief prophet and teacher ; who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption : and to be our only high priest, who by the one sacrifice of his body, has redeemed us, and makes continual intercession with the Father for us ; and also to be our eternal king, who governs us by his word and Spirit ; and who defends and preserves us in the enjoyment of that salvation he has purchased for us.

Q. 32. *But why art thou called a Christian ?*

A. Because I am a member of Christ by faith, and thus a partaker of his anointing, that so I may confess his name, and present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to him ; and also that with a free and good conscience I may fight against sin and Satan in this life, and afterwards reign with him eternally, over all creatures.

If it is said, and not without reason, " that we know a person by his surname " It is known, that men are distinguished from each other

* This is the literal translation of a Dutch proverb, which hath none that answers to it in English.

by names: but inasmuch as men multiplied faster than they could devise names for them, and thus many, having the same name could not be distinguished from each other, therefore surnames were invented, by which one was called to distinguish him from others. For this reason the Lord God, sending his Son in the flesh, ordered that not only a proper name, to wit, Jesus, should be given him, when he was circumcised, to distinguish him from other men, but also a surname, to wit, Christ. There were indeed many, who were called Jesus, we find several both in the Old and in the New Testament: now, that the Son of God might be distinguished from them and be better known, the surname Christ was given him: therefore it is said, "Jesus, who is called Christ," Matt. i. 16. And verily this surname was also properly adapted to distinguish him from others, who were called Jesus, and to convey to us a most distinct knowledge of him; for it evidenced that he was called Jesus, and possessed the office of Saviour by a divine authority, and that he should also execute this office in an effectual manner, seeing he was surnamed Christ, because he was ordained by God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost to be our prophet, priest and king. Thus also the catechism, having explained his proper name Jesus in the eleventh Lord's day, is not satisfied with this, and therefore explains also distinctly in the twelfth Lord's day his surname Christ, and also how believers are denominated from him.

There are two particulars in this Lord's day, which require our explanation:

I. Why Jesus is called also Christ, Question 31.

II. Why believers are called Christians, Question 32.

I. With respect to the first particular it is asked, "Why is he called Christ, that is, anointed?" Christ is a Greek word, and is derived from the word *chrío*, which signifies, I anoint, and therefore Christ is an anointed: the Hebrews express the same by the name *Maschiach*, or Messiah; thus Andrew said to his brother Peter, "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ," John i. 41. See also John iv. 25. Therefore the Hebrew word *Maschiach* is frequently translated anointed, as several persons, on account of their divine appointment to their office by anointing, were also called the Lord's anointed: such were the prophets; Elijah was commanded to "anoint Elisha to be prophet in his room," 1 Kings xix. 16. Therefore the Lord God said, Psalm cv. 15. "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." The priests were also anointed: "Moses should anoint Aaron and his sons, that they might minister to the Lord in the priest's office," Exod. xxx. 30.

Therefore the high priest is emphatically styled, "the anointed priest," Lev. iv. 5. And thus also were the kings anointed, and therefore also called "the Lord's anointed," 1 Sam. xxiv. 7. Lam. iv. 20. But there was one promised and expected of old, who should be in the perfect sense of the words, the Lord's anointed, the Messiah and the Christ, namely, the natural Son of God, "against whom the kings of the earth should set themselves," Psalm ii. 2. "The Messiah, the Prince, who should be cut off, that he might bring in an everlasting righteousness," Dan. ix. 25, 26. whom the Samaritans also expected, John iv. 25. And who must not say, with a full persuasion of mind concerning our Jesus, "We have found the Messiah, the Christ;" seeing all that was foretold and typified of the Messiah, hath been perfectly fulfilled in him.

Jesus is called the Christ, or the anointed, because he was ordained to these three great offices, and anointed to them with the Holy Ghost. Two things are to be more particularly noticed here, 1. The offices to which Jesus was anointed, 2. What the anointing signifieth.

1. The offices to which Jesus was anointed, are (a) the office of prophet (b) of priest, and (c) of king. And this renders him more excellent than all the children of men, that these three high offices are found in him alone at the same time. Jeremiah and others were prophets and priests at the same time, but not kings; David was a prophet and king, but no priest: but Jesus is a prophet, priest and king at the same time, and thus "anointed above his fellows," Psalm xlv. 7. In order that we may have a clear view of his excellency, let us consider each office distinctly.

1. Jesus is "a prophet like Moses, raised up from among his brethren, to whom we must hearken," Deut. xviii. 15, 18. Acts iii. 22, 23. The prophets were holy men, who were raised up by God in an extraordinary manner, out of all the tribes of Israel, and infallibly moved by the Spirit of God to declare the mysteries of God to his people, to foretell things to come, and to enforce and confirm all this. And thus Jesus also is a prophet; for

1. As a prophet and teacher he declares the mysteries of God, and therefore the instructor also saith, that he hath as a prophet and teacher "fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption." The Lord God had in his eternal counsel devised a wonderful way to lead sinners to salvation, to the glory of his justice and mercy; but that way was unknown to the sinner, and hidden in God; no creature was able to discover it; the Son of God, who was sent in the flesh, was privy to that counsel, and was able

and authorised to reveal it; "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," John i. 18. "For he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him," John iii. 34. Even the Samaritan woman "knew that the Messias, who is called the Christ, when he was come, should tell us all things," John iv. 25, as he hath also done: "All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you," said he to his friends, John xv. 15.

He doth this (a) outwardly by the word of the gospel, by which "he hath brought life and immortality to light," 2 Tim. i. 10. But this would remain as a sealed book to the dark and deaf sinner, if he were not also (b) inwardly addressed by this prophet, speaking to his heart, by which he hears twice that which the Lord speaks once in his word," Psalm lxii. 11. Therefore he teaches and explains the mysteries of God also inwardly, for he sends with his word his light also into the soul, by which the mysteries of God are seen in their proper lustre: "He opens the understanding, so that we understand the scriptures," Luke xxiv. 45. See also Psalm xxxvi. 9. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Eph. i. 17, 18. Yea, he penetrates to the heart, that it may regard this mystery; "the heart is opened that it may attend to the word," Acts xvi. 14. He inclines the soul to embrace it; "He teacheth her to do his will," Psalm cxliiii. 10. He causes the "heart to burn" with love, Luke xxiv. 32. "And he brings the blind by a way that they know not, and leads them in paths which they have not known; he makes darkness light before them, and crooked things straight," Isaiah xlii. 16.

And he did not do this only himself, while he was on earth in the body, but he doth it also by his servants and ambassadors, "who pray sinners in his name, that they would be reconciled to God." 1 Cor. iv. 1. 2 Co. v. 20. For "no man hath a right to preach, unless he be sent," Rom. x. 15. He doth this during the whole time since his ascension, "giving some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry," &c. Eph. iv. 11, 12. He did this also even in the days of the Old Testament; for "in the days of Noah he went in the Spirit and preached to the spirits in prison," 1 Peter iii. 19. 1 Peter i. 11.

2. He doth not only declare the mysteries of God to us, but, as a prophet, he also foretold things to come, which was likewise the proper work of the prophets. The Lord Christ did this also; all that the prophets foretold, they foretold by his spirit," 1 Peter i. 11.

He declared to the New Testament Church beforehand, whatever should befall her, from the beginning to the end, Matt. xxiv. and xxv. he revealed to John all the great events, which should happen to the New Testament Church, Rev. i. 1, 19. He, even "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof," Rev. v.

3. As a prophet he also confirmed and strengthened this by an extraordinary holy life, as an example, that his disciples might walk in his steps, in order to demonstrate that his doctrine and prophecies were "the true words of God," 1 Peter ii. 21, 22, 23, as also by his many miracles, "which no man could do except God were with him," which also manifests that he was a teacher come from God, John iii. 2. As he was therefore acknowledged "a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people," Luke xxiv. 19. And it contributed not a little to confirm his doctrine, that he died such a painful death for it, that he might "witness a good confession before Pontius Pilate," 1 Tim. vi. 13.

Therefore the catechism saith very properly that he is the "chief" prophet and teacher. Moses had great privileges above other prophets, Num. xii. 5, 7, 8, but Jesus was a prophet not only "like Moses," Deut. xviii. 15, 18, but also much more excellent: "for this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house, hath more honour than the house," Heb. iii. 3. See also vs. 4, 5, 6. He is a messenger, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness," Job xxxi. 25. "Who is a teacher like him?" Job. xxxvi. 22. He is indeed the essential wisdom and word of the Father; he could by his discourses so affect those who were sent to take him, that they could not stretch out their hands against him, but were constrained to cry out, "No man ever spake like this man," John vii. 46. "The multitude was astonished at his doctrine," Matt. vii. 28. If the prophets possessed any wisdom, or were in any respect acceptable or venerable, it was wholly from him; his Spirit wrought and did all things by and in them, 1 Peter i. 11. The prophets could indeed preach to the ears, but not to the heart, like Jesus. The prophets had their limited time, in which they administered their office, after which, death put an end to their labour, with their lives: but this prophet continues and exerciseth his ministry from the beginning until the end of the world.

B. He is not only a prophet, but also "a priest, and that for ever by an oath," Psalm cx. 4. Zech. vi. 13, as he also did the work of priest, and still doth: "Every high priest, taken from among men,

is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins," saith Paul, Heb. v. 1. Our Lord Jesus Christ is "a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people," Heb. ii. 17. For which purpose,

1. He offered up a sacrifice to God in order to atone for sins, as this was the work of the priests under the Old Testament: "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer," Heb. viii. 3. But he did not offer gifts and sacrifices according to the law, which could not sanctify as pertaining to the conscience, but he offered his own body: "Therefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared for me: lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of his body once," Heb. x. 1—10. But he gave not only his body, but also his soul a ransom for many: for "he should make his soul an offering for sin," Isaiah liii. 10. As the trespass offerings, sin offerings, and the sacrifices of atonement, effected a typical atonement for sin, according to the law, so he by his one sacrifice hath truly and really atoned for the sins of the elect: "For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Heb. ix. 13, 14.

As he was himself the sacrifice, so he was also himself the sacrificer, according to his divine and human nature: "The word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son an high priest, who is consecrated for evermore," Heb. vii. 23. See also Eph. v. 2. Heb. ix. 15. x. 5, 7. If it be necessary to inquire what his altar was, (of which Paul doth not speak designedly in the epistle to the Hebrews) we might say that the cross served him for an altar, since the sacrifice of his body was laid upon the cross; for "he bore our sins in his own body on the tree," Peter ii. 24. We might also say that his Godhead was the altar which sanctified the gift, inasmuch as "he offered up himself through the eternal Spirit," Heb. ix. 14. Do we desire to know what the fire was that consumed his sacrifice; we must understand by it, the wrath of the Almighty that was kindled as a fire against sin, which was transferred to this true sacrifice, on which account he mourned so bitterly under it," Matt. xxvi. 37, 38, 39, 42, 44. xxvii. 46. By the fire we may also understand his

fiery zeal, and love to the honour of his Father's name, and the salvation of the elect ; " For the zeal of God's house did eat him up," Psalm lxxix. 9.

2. But it behoved him not only to offer a sacrifice for the salvation of the sinner, but also to pray for him, that he might apply by his intercession the atonement which he had purchased by his sacrifice ; as it was the work of the priests not only to offer, but also to pray for the people. This the common priests did, according to Joel ii. 17 ; but it was especially the business of the high priest on the great day of atonement ; for which purpose he was to enter into the holy place with the blood of the sacrifice, Lev. xvi. Thus " Christ also entered into heaven itself, that he might appear in the presence of God for us," Heb. ix. 24. See also Rom. viii. 3, 4. The Lord Christ prayed indeed on earth for his people, John xvii. but it is there supposed, that he was already in heaven, and no longer on earth, seeing his ascension was as certain and near at hand, as if he were already in heaven. See vrs. 11, 12.

This intercession of Christ consists not in a humble supplication, as though he were a sinner, who had forfeited all things, and was obliged to entreat the free grace of God for himself ; but it consists in an effectual willing, whereby he requests of his Father the just rights purchased by him for his people through his sacrifice. And so his intercession denotes (a) his appearing before the throne of God with his blood, representing to the Father, that " he hath finished the work, which the Father gave him to do," for the elect, John xvii. as the high priest behoved to enter into the holy of holies, in the presence of God with incense and the blood of the sacrifices, which he was to sprinkle on the mercy seat, Lev. xvi. 12—16. The apostle alludes to this, Heb. ix. 24, 25.(b) Hereupon he requests of his Father that which was merited by him for his people ; saying, " Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be where I am," John xvii. 24.(c) He also pleads upon his accomplished atonement, his people's causes against those who accuse them ; this the apostle teacheth, 1 John ii. 1, " If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ; and he is the propitiation for our sins." We find the same also, Rom. viii. 33, 34.(d) He likewise sanctifies their prayers, and presents them to his Father. Thus he is represented, as " the Angel who stands at the altar, having a golden censer, and receiving much incense, that he might offer it with the prayers of the saints on the golden altar, which is before the throne ; and the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the Angel's

hand," Rev. viii. 3, 4 (a) Finally, he prays in them by his Spirit, who enables them to pray: "We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God," Rom. viii. 26, 27. See Gal. iv. 6.

3. As a priest, Jesus the anointed priest also blesses; for it was the business of the priests to bless Israel in the name of God, Numb. vi. 23, 27. Christ also did this, not only in words, when he gave them his last farewell, John xiv. 17—Luke xxii. 50, but also in deed and in fact. Therefore Peter said to the Jews, Acts iii. 26, "God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from his iniquities" as all the blessings of the Father are also given to us only in Christ, Eph. i. 3.

And thus he is also the "only" high priest, or as the Latin catechism hath it, "the highest:" for "we have a great high priest," Heb. iv. 14. How worthy soever the high priests of the Old Testament were, they were nevertheless not more than men, who had infirmities; whose sacrifices were not more than irrational and inanimate things, which could not of themselves please God, and did not effect a real, but only a typical atonement: but the Lord Christ is the Son of God, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," who offered himself up to make a true atonement; "who was not made a priest by the law, after the order of Aaron, but by the word of the oath, after the order of Melchizedek." See Heb. vii. Of this man we read only Gen. xiv. 18, 19, 20, and Psalm cx. 4. Of whom the apostle saith, "that he was king of Salem, a priest of the most high God: without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like the Son of God, abideth for ever," Heb. vii. 1, 4. It is a notion that confutes itself that Melchizedek was Shem, or Ham, or a person created immediately by God, perfect, holy and immortal; or an angel, who appeared to Abraham in a human form; or a certain excellent power of God, which was greater than Christ, or that he was the Holy Ghost; or the Son of God himself. Thus one and another have thought of Melchizedek; we approve most of the opinion of those, who conceive he was a famous and holy man, a king and priest, and thus an eminent type of the Lord Christ; for we see nothing more in him, Gen. xiv. 18, 19, 20. It doth not indeed appear to agree with his manhood, that "he was without father, without mother," &c. but

this is said of him because his birth, generation, and death are not mentioned, and are not known to us; and this declaration will not appear so improbable, if we insert the word "only" in the eighth verse, and read, "Here men who die receive gifts: but there he receiveth them, of whom it is only witnessed, that he liveth." We might also say that he was without father, &c. in an ecclesiastical respect, as he was not of priestly descent, and as his priesthood was not transferred to another, and was thus wholly different from the Aaronical priesthood.

Christ being made a priest after the order of Melchizedek, was much more excellent than the priests according to the law, since he is verily with respect to his Godhead, without mother, without descent, beginning and end of life, and with respect to his manhood, without father. He blessed Abraham, the father of Levi, and was thus greater than the Levitical priests. Levi gave tithes in Abraham to Melchizedek, therefore Melchizedek was greater than Levi, and consequently Christ was much greater. The Lord Jesus was made a priest by an oath, he hath an everlasting, and an untransferable priesthood, and he is priest and king at the same time: all this was not found in the weak Aaronical priesthood.

C. And he is not only a prophet and priest, but also a king. As God he is by himself king over all; but as Christ and anointed, he is king of the elect: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion," saith the Father, Psalm ii. 6. But "his kingdom is not of this world," as he himself testifieth, John xvii. 36. For he doth as king (a) subdue by the sword and sceptre of his word and Spirit, sinners, his enemies, to himself so that "people fall under him, the rebellious dwell with him, and become a willing people in the beauties of holiness," Psalm cxlv. 3—6. lxxviii. 18. cx. 1, 2, 3. (b) He gives them his word, laws and gospel: "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king," Isaiah xxxiii. 22. See James ii. 8. (c) He rules, governs and directs them by his kingly law; "He teaches them to do his will, and his good Spirit leads them in the land of uprightness," Psalm cxliiii. 10. lxxxvi. ii. (d) He defends and preserves them by his power in the enjoyment of the purchased redemption, "so that the gates of hell shall not prevail against them," Matt. xvi. 16. 1 Peter i. 5. (e) As a king he also glorifies and saves them: "The King shall say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matt. xxv. 34.

Yea, he is a great God, and a king above all Gods: "He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord

of lords;" Rev. xix. 16. He hath, as Mediator, an unlimited "power over all things in heaven and on earth," for the good of his real subjects, Matt. xxviii. 18, and that for ever, "Of his kingdom there is no end," Luke i. 33. "He will indeed deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and be subject himself," according to 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28, but he will do this only with respect to his outward administration as Mediator, for the Triune God will influence all the blessed immediately, and so "be all in all:" nevertheless the Lord Jesus will be acknowledged king of his perfected church throughout eternity. See Rev. xxii. 1, 3.

We must now inquire what the anointing signifieth. It was an ancient custom to anoint prophets, priests and kings with sweet-smelling oil: but the Lord Christ "was anointed above his fellows with the Holy Ghost, and with power," Acts x. 38. Which anointing denotes,

1. His ordination, by which he was appointed to these three great offices. Samuel said to Saul, after he had anointed, and in token of his submission to him, kissed him, "Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?" 1 Sam. x. 1. Thus also God the Lord appointed his Son, as it were by anointing, in the eternal counsel of peace, or covenant of redemption, to be a prophet, priest and king; for "he was anointed from everlasting," Prov. viii. 23. And thus, "his Father appointed him a kingdom," Luke xxii. 29. See also Acts x. 38, 42. And so "the Father sanctified him, and sent him into the world," John x. 36. The Father also solemnly inaugurated and made him known for this purpose in his baptism, when the heavens were opened to him, the Spirit descended on him, and the Father witnessed before the whole world with an audible voice, that "Jesus was his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased, and that they ought to hear him," Matt. iii. 16, 17, as also on the holy mountain, Matt. xvii. 1—3, and among the people, John xii. 28. Yea, "God the Lord witnessed both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost," Heb. ii. 4, and thus "God the Father sealed him," John vi. 27. But this was more particularly manifested in his exaltation, and in the outpouring of his Spirit; therefore Peter said to the Jews, Acts ii. 36. "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

2. To anoint denotes also to qualify for a certain office. When Saul was anointed, "God gave him another heart, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him," 1 Sam. x. 9, 10. The Father also quali-

fied the Mediator "by preparing a body for him," Heb. x. 5, "by giving him the Spirit without measure," John iii. 34. See this also Isaiah xlii. 1. xli. 1, 2, 3, by upholding him in his laborious service; for "the Lord, who called him in righteousness, held his hand, and kept him," Isaiah xlii. 6. See Psalm lxxxix. 21—24, by giving him a fulness of grace for all the necessities of his people: "For it was the Father's good pleasure, that in him "all fulness should dwell," Coll. i. 19. Psalm lxxviii. 18, Acts ii. 33. And therefore "the Father hath also given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him," John xviii. 2.

This anointing was also necessary, (a) because these great offices might not be assumed by him, except he were called to them: "For no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron; so also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee," Heb. v. 4, 5. This anointing was necessary also, (b) to fulfil the types. The anointed prophets, priests and kings were types of Christ; and it was therefore necessary, that he also should be anointed, but "above his fellows," Psalm xlv. 7. (c). If Jesus were not anointed, he could not then be an object of faith; for faith must find in him all things necessary to salvation. The sinner is blind, guilty, and hath no strength; therefore Jesus behooved to be the anointed prophet, priest and king, in order to "be made of God to his people, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 20. And though he were a prophet, priest and king, and were not called and anointed by God to these offices, who would dare draw near to God by him; since without the anointing, he would have no right to befriend sinners.

II. We come now to our second general head, according to the thirty-second question, in which a true believer is asked, "Why art thou called a Christian?" The Christians were at first called believers, children of God, disciples: but their numbers increasing greatly, they were at length called Christians; which happened first at Antioch, the capital city of Syria, and indeed the greatest and most famous of all Asia, Acts xi. 26. From which place this name could then be made known far and near, and be generally adopted. Whether this happened in consequence of an order of the apostles, or by accident, or whether it proceeded from custom, which calls disciples after the names of their masters, this is not so well known, as that the believers in general adopted this name, and that the Holy Ghost was pleased to approve of it, 1 Peter iv. 16. "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify

God on this behalf." So much the more, as they are thus called after their Master Christ, and therefore also anointed.

We will inquire therefore with respect to this name also, 1. To what believers are anointed. 2. What their anointing signifieth, and 3. What foundation there is for this name.

1. We observe that believers also are anointed to be prophets, priests and kings.

A. Believers are prophets: "In the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men dream dreams; and on my servants, and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy," Acts ii. 17, 18. from Joel ii. 28, 29. But they are not prophets by an extraordinary office and revelation, but by their state of grace, and by an ordinary revelation, which they receive of God, and reveal again to others, as prophets.

1. Christians receive of God, as prophets, the revelation of his blessed mysteries. This was promised, Isaiah liv. 13. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." See John vi. 55. Jer. xxxi. 34. Believers are like Moses, since they "with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18. Compare herewith, Exod. xxxiv. 29—35. And this is called prophesying, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. "We know in part, and we prophesy in part." As certain of God's ancient people, and some of the primitive Christians were constituted prophets by receiving the revelation of divine mysteries through the Spirit, so true Christians receive also divine revelations, not only through "the word of prophecy, to which they take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place," 2 Peter i. 19, but also "through the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of God," Eph. i. 17, 18, 19. For they are taught inwardly by the great Prophet Christ, as we have shown before. Yea, they are sometimes led so far into the mysteries of God, and are so well assured of the manifestation of the Spirit, that it differs but little from a prophetic rapture; for "he brings them into his chambers, and reveals himself to them," Song i. 4. John xiv. 21.

2. Like prophets, they reveal again, that which was revealed to them: either by teaching others the secrets of God with their mouths, and thus, "showing" and confessing "his name;" or praising the Lord in an audible manner, by speaking and singing to, and concerning him; for as "the word of Christ dwelleth richly in them, they teach and admonish one another with psalms, and hymns, and

spiritual songs, singing with grace in their hearts to the Lord," Coll. iii. 16. *Neph.* v. 18. It is said of the singers in the temple, "that they prophesied with harps, giving thanks and praising the Lord," *1 Chron.* xxv. 1, 2, 3, or by a holy conversation, whereby they adorn the doctrine of our Saviour, and excite in others an opinion, that there is something divine in their profession, and that it is worthy to be embraced by every one. So Paul required that the Christians should conduct themselves "unblamably, and shine as lights, and so hold forth the word of life," *Philip.* ii. 15, 16. See also *Matt.* v. 16. *Titus.* ii. 10. *1 Peter.* iii. 1—4, or by their death either passing with a tranquil dependence on the divine revelation into eternity, or sealing the truth of God by martyrdom, by which the spectators must be convinced that the truth which they profess contains something more than human. Yea, dying Christians have often been more useful in their death to persecutors, outward professors, and weak believers, than they were in their lives. See what Paul saith, *Philip.* i. 12, 13, 14, 20.

B. Christians are also priests: it was foretold of them, *Isaiah* lxi. 6. "Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God." And they are not so called without a reason; for

1. They have a priestly perfection. The priests were to be perfect in body, and without any fault, *Lev.* xxi. 16—21, but Christians also are "perfect in Christ," through their justification, *Coll.* ii. 10: So the great Bridegroom commended the bride, *Song.* iv. 7, "Thou art all fair, my love: there is no spot in thee." It is true, Christians have still their sinful imperfections, their sanctification is yet defective: but they have notwithstanding a perfection of parts in this respect: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new," *2 Cor.* v. 17. *1 Thess.* v. 2.

2. Christians have also, in a spiritual sense, a priestly clothing. Priests had among other garments, clothes of fine linen; so also Christians; for "it is given to them to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints: *Rev.* xix. 8. The priests had also garments embroidered with gold: thus also "the king's daughter, through the image of God, her many gifts of grace and comely virtues, "is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework," *Psalm* xlv. 13, 14. *Isaiah* lxi. 10. And as the golden plate, engraven with "holiness to the Lord shone forth from the priests forehead, so also a divine lustre shines from the con-

duct of sanctified Christians: "He that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, saith of the Christian, who overcometh, that he will make him a pillar in the temple of his God, and will write upon him the name of his God, and the name of the city of his God, even of the New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from his God, and also his new name," Rev. iii. 7, 12. This will beam forth especially in the happy eternity, Rev. xxii. 4.

3. Christians perform also a priestly service: "Every priest stood daily ministering," Heb. x. 11. And thus also Christians "have boldness to enter into the holiest," that they may draw near to the Lord, ch. x. 19, yea, "into that within the veil," ch. vi. 19. And so they are *cohenim*, which signifies priests, but also princes; thus it is used of the sons of David, 2 Sam. viii. 18, which is explained 1 Chron. xviii. 17. "The sons of David were chief about the king." Yea, it belongs also to the priestly service of Christians, "that being a holy priesthood, they offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ," 1 Peter ii. 5. "Their reasonable service consists in presenting their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God," Rom. xii. 1. They offer to God "a broken and contrite heart," Psalm li. 17. Their liberality is "an acceptable sacrifice to God," Heb. xiii. 16. "The prayers of the saints ascend out of the hand of the" uncreated "angel," as a sacrifice "before God," Rev. viii. 3, 4. And if the Lord require it of Christians, they will offer themselves readily "a sacrifice of thanksgiving to him," by suffering the most grievous martyrdom, 2 Tim. iv. 6.

C. Christians are not only prophets and priests, but also kings; "Christ hath made them kings and priests unto God and his Father," Rev. i. 6. For as kings they have,

1. A kingly spirit, they are of an elevated mind, and have a free and good conscience, which is not enslaved to ignoble things: they can esteem all their own privileges loss and dung, that they may pursue nobler objects, and be found only in Christ, Philip. iii. 7—10, Moses was elevated so far above visible things, that "he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and he endured, as seeing him who is invisible," Heb. xi. 24—27. See this also 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

2. As kings they wage war with, and overcome the world, sin, and the devil; "The Lord makes them as his goodly horse in the battle, and therefore they are as mighty men, who tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets, in the battle, and they confound them who ride on horses," Zech. x. 3, 5. "Their faith overcometh the world," 1 John v. 4. "Sin shall not have dominion over them."

Rom. vi. 14. And so "they overcome also the accuser of the brethren," Rev. xii. 11.

3. They have also kingly riches, although they may be the poorest in the world; for they have a true title to whatsoever exists. Read only what Paul saith of this, 1 Cor. iii. 21—23. The ungodly may scoff at this, as a vain boasting; but the godly shall reign in an open manner, "eternally with Christ over all creatures," in spite of those who are vexed at it; for "he will grant to them to sit down with him in his throne," Rev. iii. 21. Compare herewith, Rev. ii. 26, 27.

4. Christians have also a kingly majesty and dignity. They are indeed "the holy and the excellent in the earth," Psalm xvi. 3. Yea, "the saints of the high places," Dan. vii. 18. "Of the rest no man dares to join himself to them; but the people magnify them," Acts v. 13.

2. But what doth their anointing signify? Paul teacheth us that Christians are anointed, 2 Cor. i. 21. "He who hath anointed us is God." This anointing denotes,

1. The ordination and appointment of Christians, to these offices. So the Lord saith to his people, Exod. xix. 6, "Ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests." They are ordained and appointed to this by their eternal election, redemption through the blood of Christ, sanctification and calling, 1 Peter ii. 9. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Yea, they bear, as it were, a mark, by which they may be known as the Lord's anointed, and his sealed, Rev. vii. 3—8. Isaiah lxi. 9.

2. Their anointing denotes their qualification to these offices. They are by nature "reprobate to every good work;" but they are qualified by the Holy Spirit; therefore the apostle saith; "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things," 1 John ii. 20, 27.

3. We are to consider in the last place the foundation of this name and anointing. The catechism saith, "Because I am by faith a member of Christ, and thus a partaker of his anointing." God hath given his Son to be the head of the church, so that believers are "members of his body," Eph. i. 22, v. 30. Hence arises the closest union between Christ and Christians, which is effected by his spirit and their faith, 1 Cor. xii. 13, Eph. iii. 17, and so they become partakers of his anointing; for "he hath received gifts to distribute them among men," Psalm lxxviii. 18, and "they receive of his fulness grace for grace," John i. 16. For the head being anointed, the anointing descendeth also to the members, as this is beautifully represented to us in the anointing of Aaron, Psalm cxxxiii. 2, and so "his name is as ointment poured forth," Song i. 3.

APPLICATION.

Behold, Christians, is not this our doctrine agreeable to the word of God? can it be censured as erroneous? doth it not fully answer all the needs of a sinner? doth it not render Christianity glorious? and may we not rest in it with perfect satisfaction? Surely yes. But how do those who are not of our church act here? The Papists esteem the pope on earth the only and infallible prophet, high-priest, and king, with his triple crown; we must depend on him for the sense of the word of God: he hath invented priests, altars and sacrifices, and will offer Christ in the mass for the quick and the dead: he weens that he is the king of kings, and that he hath a right to depose and confirm kings, and to change times and seasons: yea. he fancies that his vassals, and those who propagate his doctrine, are the only heritage of God, even those who call themselves after Dominic, Francis, &c. and that Christians are but laymen, dogs and swine. And so he manifests himself to be "the man of sin, and the son of perdition," according to the description of Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 12. The Socinians conduct no better; for as they deny his Godhead and satisfaction, they evacuate his offices. Christ is indeed a prophet and king, but only because he taught a new doctrine and enacted new laws, his Spirit doth nothing at all; if he be a priest, it is only in name and by analogy: the common priests were not types of him, but only the high priest, and he is a high priest so far as he is a king: he offered no satisfactory sacrifice on earth, but only his intercession in heaven: believers are indeed called Christians after Christ, but it is only because they receive the new doctrine of Christ, and not on account of the reasons which the gospel exhibits to us. And so the scripture saith many things of Christ and Christians, but they are without meaning and force, if the doctrine of the Papists and Socinians be true. But let God be true, and every man a liar. We will not attempt now to show the falsehood of these erroneous opinions, for we have been already too diffuse on this Lord's day. The bare proposing and comparing of these opinions with our doctrine, which is according to the word of God, fully manifests that they are only wood, straw and stubble, which will not endure the day of trial.

We will rather attend to those who profess this truth, and will contemplate a while the excellence of true Christians. What a precious Head have they! the Son of God is their prophet, priest and king. Who is comparable to him? collect together whatever was glorious in all the prophets, priests and kings, and it will all vanish

before him. He is much fairer than the children of men, he is anointed above his fellows. And what should induce Christians to triumph more, is that he possesseth all this glory not merely for himself, but for them also: for is he a prophet, it is that he may reveal to them the true ways of God, and open the eyes of the blind: is he a priest, it is to reconcile them to God by a perfect sacrifice for all their iniquities: is he a king, it is that he may subject their souls to his pleasant yoke, and unite them to the fear of God's name. And thus he is allsufficient to supply all their needs; and verily no Christian needs to fear that it will displease God, that he seeks and places his whole salvation in Christ, as a prophet, priest and king, as though he had usurped these offices, or Christians had thrust him into them. No, he is by a most just title, prophet, priest and king: the Lord God himself hath anointed him to these offices with the Holy Ghost, and with power. Will ye have more, Christians, that ye may rejoice in him? behold, he hath made you conformable to himself, so that ye also are prophets, priests and kings; ye are partakers of his anointing; as ye are members of him by faith, and he is your head, his grace and Spirit hath flowed down from him on you. And therefore "your beauty is perfect through his comeliness, which he hath put upon you," Ezek. xvi. 14.

But, friends, imagine not that all who bear this name are Christians indeed. Many have the name that they live, while they are dead. It doth not constitute a person a Christian, that he is one outwardly; therefore we ask you, and each of you in particular, why ye are called Christians? Is it because ye were born of Christian parents, have been educated among Christians, and partake of the outward privileges of Christendom, the word and sacraments? Ye would then mistake in a dreadful manner, and deceive yourselves with vain imaginations; for if all, who are such, were really Christians, would so many then conduct like Jews, Turks and heathens? and is it not true, that many of you conduct themselves, as if they had never heard of Christianity? For,

1. Are ye indeed so well pleased with it, that ye conduct yourselves worthily of the Lord Christ, and of your name? is it not your aim to have only the name that ye are wise, mighty, rich and religious? If Paul should see such Christians, would he not say now, as he did, Philip. ii. 21. "They all seek their own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's?"

2. Do ye not rest in your name, that ye are called Christians? ye conduct as the Jews, of whom the apostle saith, Rom. ii. 17. "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy

boast of God." Have ye indeed any other ground of security with respect to your eternal condition?

3. Do not many become more wicked on account of their name? Alas! how many think that they may practise every kind of iniquity greedily, because they imagine that they have a Christ, and are called Christians, and thus they commit whoredom, because of their renown," like the Jews, Ezek xvi. 15. "Ungodly men, who turn the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ into lasciviousness, and deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," Jude vrs. 4.

4. Will not many "blaspheme that worthy name, by which a true Christian is called?" James ii. 7. Let a Christian only conduct himself like a Christian by abstaining from sin, and living with much seriousness only for God and Christ, will not a nominal Christian then, who cannot endure this light, presently despise such an one in his heart, consider him as a subject of a taunting proverb, and heap every kind of reproach upon him? abominable: But "against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom do ye make a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood?" thus asks the Lord, Isaiah lvii. 4.

5. It is true, many will not be so abominable, at least will not continue so: they now and then repent of their shameful conduct, and intend also to become at length true and better Christians, yea, they do also many things; but they never become members of Christ by faith, and thus partakers of his anointing, and so they are with Agrippa only "almost persuaded to become Christians," but not altogether, Acts xxvi. 28, 29. And they never enter wholly into the kingdom of God, although they "are not far from that kingdom," Mark xii 34.

Alas! that those who are thus disposed knew that they were yet "without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12. For they have never become members of Christ, and partakers of his anointing by faith. Nominal Christians, ye pretend to be true Christians, but ye lie, and shall be proved liars in the day of trial: ye are an occasion of reproach to God and Christ: "For the name of God is blasphemed through you, among the Gentiles, as it is written," Rom. ii. 24, and also among all who are not of our communion. Your name shall be changed; the Lord calls your name "Loruhamah, not having obtained mercy, Loammi, not my people," Hosea i. 6—9. "Magormissabib, a terrour round about," Jer. xx. 3. "And ye shall leave your name for a curse to God's chosen," Isaiah lxxv. 15. And so your name shall bear wit-

ness against you at the last day, and condemn you. Behold it, we entreat you, that your concern may drive you out of yourselves to Christ, in order to become members of him by faith and partakers of his anointing, and thus not only almost, but altogether true Christians.

But who are true Christians? They are those, (a) who see with grief and concern their misery, that they are poor, and wretched, and blind, and naked; for such are capable and proper objects of his offices. (b) Who have chosen, and still choose him with respect to his offices to supply their needs, that he may remove their blindness, reconcile their guilt, and slay their sins, as his enemies; for they become members of him through faith. (c) They have chosen him entirely, not only to be their prophet, and priest, but also their king; they do not desire to have him more for wisdom, as their prophet, for justification, as their priest, than for sanctification, as their king. If he will subject them wholly to himself, will cleanse them from their seemingly honourable, pleasant, and profitable sins, and direct their ways to keep his statutes, they will esteem it a great joy. (d) These persons endeavour to be conformed to him in their behaviour, as well as in their name: they strive, pray, stir up, and exert themselves for this end: "for he that saith he abideth in him, ought also so to walk, as he walked," 1 John ii. 6. iii. 3.

But since we have exhibited nearly the same evidences in treating on the name Jesus, we will not enlarge further on this matter at present. Let each of you only examine himself by what hath been said now, and before, and see whether he be a true Christian, and let him bestir himself, in order to conduct as becometh a Christian. And therefore,

1 Christians, make use of your Prophet, Priest, and King; there is in him, a fulness suited to your necessities: are ye in darkness, "he is a light to lighten the Gentiles," Luke ii. 32. Do ye perceive that ye are guilty through your frequent misbehaviour, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins," 1 John ii. 1, 2. He saith in behalf of the Christian to his Father, "deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom," Job xxxiii, 24. Are ye overmatched by your enemies, "the Lord is our defence, and the holy One of Israel is our King. Help is laid upon one who is mighty," Psalm lxxxix. 19, 20. This grace ought not to remain in him useless and unemployed, but every one should derive by faith from his fulness, grace for grace: yea, it is his office and work to bestow this grace upon you, he is anointed and exalted for this purpose, Isaiah lxi. 1,

2, 3. Acts v. 31. Do not then endeavour to deliver yourselves by your own exertions, but rather, employ him, as his office and work require.

2. Rejoice and glory in a holy manner on account of your name. The great Theodosius esteemed it a greater honour to be a Christian, than an emperor. A certain martyr being asked what his name was, said, by men I am called Probus, but my most honourable name is Christian. The emperor Julian, who had been only a nominal Christian, and knew the excellency of this name, envied the believers the honour of it, and therefore ordered them to be called Galileans, and not Christians. This name implies indeed that ye are prophets, priests and kings; ye have the greatest right to it through your anointing, yea, this renders you like the Son of God in his glorious offices.

3. Conduct yourselves worthily of the names Christ and Christian, that ye may plainly manifest by your behaviour, that ye are partakers of his anointing, prophets, priests, and kings. Let his name be known and professed by you: dedicate yourselves wholly in all that ye are, have, and do, to be a sacrifice unto him, as "men who have hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," Acts xv. 26. Yea, conduct yourselves with a holy, but humble greatness of mind, as kings, "who will not be brought under the power of any," as that great man said, 1 Cor. vi. 12. Ye are too noble, and of too high a condition to suffer yourselves to be enslaved to any sin, or to any creature, without and contrary to the will of God; ye must bow down only to your Lord, and be only to his praise: for "ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light," 1 Peter ii. 9, and ye must lay aside whatever opposeth this name: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity," 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Are ye poor, let it suffice you, that ye are rich in Christ: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich," 2 Cor. viii. 9. Do men reproach you, he will behold and visit it: "He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes, saying, "touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm," Psalm cv. 14, 15. Doth your glory not beam forth much at present, the Lord will perfect it hereafter; "for ye shall see his face, and his name shall be in your foreheads," Rev. xxii. 4. And so "the righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Amen.

THE SONSHIP
AND
GOVERNMENT OF CHRIST.

XIII. LORD'S DAY.

John i. 49. Nathanael answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.

Q. 33. *Why is Christ called the only begotten Son of God, since we are also the children of God ?*

A. Because Christ alone is the eternal and natural Son of God : but we are children adopted of God, by grace, for his sake.

Q. 34. *Wherefore callest thou him our Lord ?*

A. Because he hath redeemed us, both soul and body, from all our sins ; not with gold and silver, but with his precious blood, and hath delivered us from all the power of the devil, and hath thus made us his own property.

THE Lord, moved with compassion toward his afflicted church, promiseth her, Hosea i. 7, " I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen." Judah was often afflicted by malicious neighbours, and the Lord had often delivered them by bow, sword, battle, horses, and

horsemen ; but this was too little for the Lord, he chose to bestow a greater salvation on them, and to deliver them by the Lord their God. The misery of Judah was indeed not only a bodily, but also a spiritual and sinful misery, which subjected them to the wrath of God, to the curse of the law, and to death, against which no weapons could avail, and from which none but the Lord their God, the Messiah, could deliver them. It was necessary, in order to deliver them from this misery, that the infinite wrath of God should be borne, an everlasting righteousness procured, and effectually applied : and he who did this behoved to be the object of all religious thanksgivings. No rational, nor irrational creature was capable of this : it was therefore necessary, that he who should deliver Judah, should be the Lord God ; therefore the great Deliverer also saith "there is no God beside me," *Isaiah xlv. 21.* For which reason the instructor, having taught in the eleventh Lord's day that the Deliverer is Jesus the Saviour, and in the twelfth Lord's day that he is for this end the Christ, the anointed Prophet, Priest and King, he now shows that he is the Son of God, and thus also the true God and Lord in this Lord's day. He had indeed declared in the fifteenth question, that the Mediator and Redeemer must be God, and therefore he judged it also necessary to inform us that he is God, and particularly the Son of God, who is mighty to redeem.

The present Lord's day affords two particulars that require our explanation :

I. Why Jesus Christ is called the Son of God, Q. 23.

II. Why believers call him their Lord, Q. 34.

I. With respect to the first particular it is asked, "Why is he called the only begotten Son of God, since we are also the children of God?" It is therefore proposed as a difficulty, that since we are children of God, Christ cannot be the only begotten Son of God, because he should then have brethren, and God would have more than one Son.

In order to understand this properly, we must consider that Christ is called the Son of God in one sense, and that reasonable creatures are called sons and children of God in another sense. The angels, because they were created immediately by God in special glory, after his image, are called "sons of God," *Job xxxviii: 7,* as also Adam, *Luke iii. 38.* And so likewise all men, who have proceeded from God through Adam, *Mal. ii. 10.* Magistrates are also called "children of the Most High," *Psalms lxxxiii. 6,* because God hath given them great glory, and dominion over their fellow-men : but true believers are especially the children of God by a gracious adoption, re-

generation and spiritual marriage with the Son of God, as we have shown on the ninth Lord's day. Because others join themselves to believers by an outward profession, they also are called the children of God from the better part of the church, though they are not so in spirit and truth, but only in the letter, Gen. vii. 12.

But Christ is the Son of God in another, and a more exalted sense, on account of which he is the only begotten Son of God, and indeed so that he is the proper Son of God, being "the eternal and natural Son of God," of the same essence with the Father, as one man is a son of another, who is a partaker of his Father's nature by his birth. In order to explain this, we will show, 1. That he is of the same essence with the Father, very God. 2. What is the ground and true reason of his Sonship.

1. We must show that he is of the same essence with the Father and so very God for our own confirmation, and in order to confute the Socinians, who assert that he was but a mere man, who had no existence at all before his birth of Mary: they would indeed with feigned words make merchandize of us, in order to beguile us, saying, that many titles which belong to God are given to Christ, and that he is therefore God; but they will not allow that he is the supreme God, and God co-essential with the Father; but that he is truly the supreme God, co-essential with the Father, appears not only from the equality and oneness of his essence with that of the Father and Holy Ghost, John v. 18. x. 30 as we have proved more particularly on the eighth Lord's day, but also from the names, attributes, works and honour of God, which are ascribed to him in the word of God; for he who is called God, who hath the attributes of God, and doth the works of God, and whom we must honour and serve as God, he is the true and supreme God. Now Christ is called God, he hath the attributes, and doth the works of God, and we must honour and serve him as God; consequently he is the true God. The first proposition cannot be denied; for how should we otherwise prove that any one is God? The second proposition is also evident: for

(a) The names of God are ascribed to Christ, for he is called God Psalm xlv. 6. 7. Heb. i. 8, 9. "To the Son he saith, thy throne O God, is for ever and ever; therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee." And the name of God is given to him, not only as a name of honour and office, but also subjectively, as that which is ascribed to him as a subject; "God was manifest in the flesh," 1. Tim. iii. 16. See also John xx. 28. Acts xx. 28. And so it is said, that "he was in the form of God," Philip. ii. 8—"the true

God," 1 John v. 20.—"the mighty God," Isaiah ix. 5—"God our all, blessed for evermore," Rom. ix. 5. Therefore the name Jehovah is also appropriated to him: "He is called the Lord our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. This we find also, Hosea i. 7. Isaiah vi. 1—10, compared with 1 Cor. x. 9, 10. Compare also Psalm lxxviii. 18, with Eph. iv. 7, 8. It is true that when the Jews would stone him for blasphemy, because he, being a man, made himself God, he said, "Is it not written in your law, I have said ye are gods?" John x. but we cannot infer from this that he calls himself God in the same sense, in which the magistrates are called gods; for he saith, vrs 30, that "he is one with the Father;" but he concludes from the less to the greater, that if magistrates be called gods, he did not blaspheme when he called himself the son of God, because he was greater and worthier than the magistrates, John x. 30—38.

(b) The divine attributes of supreme perfection, independence, simplicity, and unchangeableness are ascribed to Christ. Rev. i. 8, "He is before all things, from everlasting," Coll. i. 17. Micha v. 1. He is allknowing, "knowing all things," John xxi. 17. See John ii. 24, 25. Rev. ii. 23. Yea, he is "the Almighty," Rev. i. 8. Philip. iii. 21.

(c) He doth the works of God: "for what the Father doth, the same doth the Son likewise," John v. 19. "Of old he laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of his hands," Psalm cii. 26, 27, 28. Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. Psalm xxviii. 6. John i. 1, 2, 3. Coll. i. 17. The work of providence is also ascribed to him; "for all things consist by him," Coll. i. 17. Heb. i. 3. Doing miracles and wonders by his own power, was his proper work, and it is "God alone, who doth wonderous things," Psalm lxxii. 18. cxxxvi. 4. Yea, the whole work of redemption is ascribed to him, as his œconomy; but this is the work of God the Lord only," Hosea i. 7.

(d) "All men must honour him also even as they honour the Father," John v. 23. Isaiah xlv. 23. Rom. xiv. 10, 11. For we must worship him, as Stephen did, Acts vii. 59, 60, and all the Christians, 1 Cor. i. 2. It is the will of God "that all the angels should worship him," Heb. 1. 6. And this is also a divine honour, which we must offer to none but God, Matt. iv. 10. We must be baptised in his name, Matt. xxviii. 19, but not in the name of any creature, 1 Cor. i. 13. We must believe in him as well as in God the Father. John xiv. 1. Psalm ii. 12. But "cursed is the man who trusteth in man," xvii. 5.

It naturally follows from these several particulars, considered in connexion, that he is the supreme and true God, co-essential with the Father. It is of no avail what the Socinians object here, that Christ is a man, inferior to the Father, the Father's servant; that he humbled himself so low, and more of this kind; for we do not say that he is God, as far as he is man, inferior to the Father, or humbled; and therefore these suggestions do not affect our opinion. Yea, the Socinians are obliged to explain how it is possible that he who is inferior to the Father, should nevertheless be God. See Matt. xxii. 42—46. They cannot say that he is a God, inferior to the Father; for then we should have two Gods; besides, there is no superiority, nor inferiority in the Godhead, the inferior God is no God.

2. But that on which we must insist most of all with the instructor, is, what is the ground and true reason of his Sonship. The Arians imagined that Christ was called the Son of God, because God created him before all things; but this opinion is become obsolete. The Socinians imagine that the grounds of Christ's Sonship are, (a) that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, (b) that he was sanctified by the Father; which imports that he received abundantly the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and was sent into the world with a divine authority and power to save mankind, (c) that the Father loves him in a special manner, and more than others, (d) that he was raised from the dead, (e) and exalted to the right hand of the Father; but these are not the true grounds of his Sonship; for he was the Son of God before he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, sanctified, raised from the dead, and exalted; for "he was brought forth when there were no depths," Prov. viii. 24. If these be the grounds of his Sonship, then he is the Son of God only according to his human nature, but not according to his divine nature, contrary to Rom. i. 3, 4, where it is said, that "he was of the seed of David according to the flesh," (and so David's son according to the human nature,) "but the Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness." And truly the Socinian grounds do not constitute him the Son of God, but suppose, and prove that he is the Son. See Rom. i. 4.

The church hath always opposed these errors, even to the present day, and taught that the only and true ground of the Sonship of Christ is his eternal and natural generation by the Father, who communicated his essence in and by himself to the Son, in an incomprehensible manner, without change. This was properly expressed by the council of Nice against Arius, in the year 325, when that assembly obliged the professors of Christianity to say, "We believe

in the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father."

But is it not a lamentable consideration? men have risen up among us, speaking perverse things, for they deny the eternal and natural generation of the Son of God; and say that he is called the Son of God, because he is co-essential with the Father. So they taught at the first, but seeing that this could not be the proper ground of his sonship, they have devised and pretended something else, to wit, that the ground of Christ's sonship is, that he was ordained, disposed, or appointed and sent by the Father to perform the office of Mediator. And are ye desirous of knowing the secret? these men have persuaded themselves, that man is possessed of a treasure of innate ideas, which are to be the rule of all the conceptions, that he ought to form of the truth, and that whatever agrees not with those ideas ought to be rejected as an error. Now since they cannot find in themselves an idea of such a divine generation, they have therefore rejected it, and substituted something else in the place of it.*

But it is evident to us, that Christ is the eternal and natural Son of God by an eternal and inconceivable generation.

1. Because the Son of God saith this of himself, John v. 26. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." It is certain that the life of the Father is his essence; that he hath this life and essence in himself; that he hath it essentially, necessarily and independently; that the Son hath life in himself thus also; but how hath he this life and essence in himself; it is given to him by his father, to have it in himself. Who can understand this, unless he will admit such a generation of the Son of God? Add to this,

2. That the word of God expressly informs us, that he was begotten of the Father from eternity. Thus he speaks of himself, Rev. viii. 24, 25. "When there were no depths, I was brought forth. Before the hills I was brought forth." Therefore the Father said also to his Son, before he had promised him an inheritance, and so

* Our author hath respect here to Herman Alexander Roell, and his disciples. He was a professor of theology in the university of Franeker, and afterwards of Utrecht, in the United Provinces. His opinions were condemned by the synods of the United Provinces, and he consented to bury them in silence for the peace of the church. Although his disciples gave solemn protestations of the soundness of their religious sentiments, they were nevertheless suspected of concealed errors.

from eternity, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," Psalm ii. 7. Therefore he is also called the only begotten Son of God, John i. 14, 18. iii. 16. It ought not to be said, that Psalm ii. 7, speaks of the resurrection of Christ, because Paul saith, Acts xiii. 32, 33, "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again: as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;" for he only showeth in whom God hath fulfilled the promise, namely in his Son, whom he hath begotten, of whom he spoke in the second psalm; but in the thirty-fourth verse the apostle undertakes to prove that God had raised him from the dead, for he begins there a new proposition, saying, "and that he raised him up from the dead now no more to return to corruption;" he proves this not from Psalm ii. 7, but from Isaiah lv. 33, and from Psalm xvi. 10. Should it be said, that the phrase "to bring forth" signifies sometimes to reveal or discover, as Prov. xvii. 17, "A brother is born (or brought forth) in adversity," and Prov. xxvii. 1. "Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth," we will admit, that to bring forth, denotes in these passages improperly to reveal, or discover; but must it therefore be understood in such a sense in those passages which speak of the generation of the Son? surely no: for Christ is always said to have been brought forth in such a manner, that he became a Son thereby, and that the Father gave him life. Moreover the phrase, to bring forth signifies in those passages not only to reveal, but also to bring forth, as a mother brings forth a child.

3. Christ is the Son of God so, that "he is the express image of the Father's Person," Heb. i. 4. God hath expressed his image also in angels and men, but they cannot on that account be called the express image of his person, as the apostle also shows, when he adds, vrs. 34, "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? and again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." We cannot surely understand this any other way, than of a proper generation, by which the Father communicated his essence to his Son.

4. Christ is God's "own Son," Rom. viii. 32, and God is "his own Father," John v. 18. Now we never say that any person is an own son, or own father, except on account of a proper and natural gen-

eration: therefore Christ also, as God's own Son, must have been properly begotten by his Father. We say further,

5. That he is the son of God according to his divine nature, as he is the Son of David according to his human nature. This the apostle showeth us, Rom. i. 3, 4. "Concerning his Son, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness." How was he made according to the flesh of the seed of David? was it not by being born in a proper manner of Mary, David's daughter? so then he was the Son of God also according to the Spirit of holiness by a proper generation of God. Finally,

6. If Christ be not properly begotten of God, then there is no ground for his being called the Son of God, and for calling God his Father; for the only ground of the relation of a son to a father, or of a father to a son, is the generation of the son by the father. Yea, if Christ be not begotten by the Father, the Son may be called the Father, and the Father the Son. They then who deny the generation of the Son by the Father must necessarily decline either to the opinion of Sabellius, who denied all distinction of Persons in the Godhead, confounding them with one another, and holding that there were only three distinct names of Father Son and Holy Ghost, and thus subverting the doctrine of the Trinity: for when we deny that the Son is begotten, and that the Holy Ghost proceedeth, we then destroy the only foundation of every distinction of the Persons, and of their personal properties, and must therefore say that the Father is the Son, and the Son is the Holy Ghost: and thus the Persons will be no more than three negations, and only three names. Or if those who deny the generation of the Son will not decline to the error of the Sabellians, they must necessarily abandon themselves to the impious heresay of the Tritheists, who held in the ancient church that there were three Gods: for when they deny that the Son is begotten, and that the Holy Ghost proceedeth, and do thus subvert the only foundation of a distinction of Persons, they necessarily assert three distinct essences, which are essentially distinct from each other: and so there will be not only three divine Persons, but also three divine essences. And they do thus also wholly subvert the foundation of the oneness of the essence of the three Persons, since we cannot say that the Son and the Holy Ghost are one and the same essence with the Father, as this is founded only in the generation of the Son, and the proceeding of the Holy Ghost from the Father. See how many grievous consequences unavoidably follow from denying the generation of the Son.

We know that they would put us off here, by saying that (a) the ground of the sonship of Christ is, that he is co-essential with the Father; but this cannot be the ground of his being the Son of God: the expression co-essential, doth not require this; this would rather make him a brother of God; therefore dismissing this pretence, these men say (b) that his appointment and delagation to the office of Mediator intimates his generation of the Father, and is the ground of his sonship; but neither can this suggest to any one a notion of generation, nor a foundation of sonship: his office of Mediator, and his appointment and delegation thereto constitute him indeed a servant and a Christ, but not a Son of the Father; he was also a Son of God before this. See John iii. 16. Rom. viii. 3. Gal. iv. 4. But lest it should leak out, that these men believe that there are three Gods, they say that the three Persons have always the same supreme and perfect ideas, and acts of thinking. But how doth it happen, that three distinct persons have always the same ideas? this is inexplicable by those who deny that the Son is begotten, and that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from, and still subsists in the essence of the Father: but perhaps we may see by this what these men think of the oneness of the three Persons in the Godhead, to wit, that they are not one in essence, but only in acts of thinking.

So much do these men say, though to no purpose, in order to excuse their errour. But what do they object, in order to subvert the doctrine of the church concerning the generation of the Son by the Father? They say, (1) that the third Person is called Spirit to express his spiritual work of grace, and that therefore the second Person must also be called Son, to express his Mediatorship and work of grace; but it is not true, that the third Person is called the Spirit on account of his work, but he is so called on account of his personal proceeding from the Father, and from the Son. The epithet "holy" denotes indeed his work of grace: but his personal name Spirit doth not, as we must show upon the twentieth Lord's day. They say further, (2) that the names "Son" and "Word" are used one for the other as signifying the same thing; for he who is called in Matt. xxviii. 19, "Son" is called 1 John v. 7, the "Word." Now, say they, the name "Word" hath respect to the Mediatorship of Christ, and therefore the name "Son" hath also respect to his Mediatorship. But the names Christ, the Son of God and King of Israel are also used one for another, Matt. xvi. 16. John i. 50, yet who sees not that the one name exhibits him to our thoughts somewhat different from the other? Moreover the names "God" and "Word" are used one for the other, John i. 14. 1 Tim. iii. 16. If now the

name "Word" express his Mediatorship, will not the name "God" also express his Mediatorship? God forbid. Who knows not that Christ is God and man in one person, and thus also Mediator, and that he is therefore sometimes denominated from one, and at other times from the other nature, and also by different names from his offices? They say finally, (3) that such a proper generation implies that the Son is inferior and later, than the Father, and therefore that he is not independent, eternal and impassible: but if these men had not suffered themselves to be spoiled by philosophy, they would have considered, that "such knowledge was too high for us, that we cannot attain to it, and that we cannot find out the Almighty to perfection." See Psalm cxxxix. 6, 14, 18. Job xi. 7, 8, 9. It is indeed true, that a father, who begets a son without his essence, is before and greater than his son; so also when God produced the creatures by creation without his essence, they could not be independent nor eternal; but it is not so with the Son; for he was not created without the essence of God, but begotten of him in his essence, by an immanent act of the Father within him. And therefore we say with the ancients that this generation of the Son by the Father was (a) *akataleptos*, inconceivable, Prov. xxx. 4. (b) *achronos*, without succession of time, Micha v. 1. (c) *achoristos*, inseparable, John i. 1. xiv 10, 11. (d) *afuthos*, impassible, and without any change in the Father, or in the son, James i. 18.

We have insisted so long on the sonship of Christ, because the instructor speaks of it particularly in this Lord's day, and also because it is the scope of the whole gospel, that man should know and believe in Christ as the Son of God, John xx. 31, as the Father therefore proclaims him before the whole world to be "his Son, whom we must hear," Matt. iii. 17. Yea, "whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father," 1 John iii. 23. And therefore we hold the generation of the Son to be a fundamental doctrine of the faith; for that is a fundamental doctrine of the faith which is the foundation of other doctrines of revelation, which are either believed or denied, according as that first foundation is believed or denied. Now it is evident, that if we deny this generation of the Son, we must then also deny that Christ is truly the Son of God; that there are three distinct Persons in the divine essence, because the only foundation of the distinction between the Persons is then destroyed; or we must deny the oneness of the essence of the three Persons. We have shown all this more fully above.

Since then Christ is the Son of God, "the Father hath made him heir of all things," Heb. i. 1, 2. And so he is also "King of Israel,"

John i. 49, and thus also "our Lord," as he is also called in the Christian creed, which is explained in the thirty-fourth question.

II. The catechism doth not ask barely, "Why callest thou him Lord?" for we should then answer because he is God, and hath received, as Mediator, power over all things, that he may employ them for the furtherance of his kingdom; for "he hath received all power in heaven and in earth," Matt. xxviii. 18. And therefore "he hath bought the false teachers also, who deny him, their Lord, and bring swift destruction upon themselves," 2 Peter ii. 1. But it is asked here, Why callest thou him "our" (or thy) Lord? and we answer not, because he rules us by his word and Spirit, and defends and preserves us in the enjoyment of the purchased salvation, as we answer to explain his government as king, in the thirty-first question: for the instructor doth not desire to know now how he governs us as Lord, but how he hath made us his property, by which he hath an indisputable right to us. We might answer here, because the Father gave us to him from eternity; because he hath owned us as his bride and spouse, and because, having been drawn by the Spirit, we have surrendered ourselves to him cheerfully, as his own. But the catechism having respect here to servants, as entire bondmen, who have been rendered the property of their masters, either by being purchased with money, or by conquest, assigns two reasons why believers are his property, 1. "Because he hath redeemed them, both soul and body, from all their sins, not with gold or silver, but with his precious blood." 2. Because he hath delivered them from all the power of the devil." The instructor had mentioned this also in the first question. But as we have explained this in treating on that question, we shall refer our reader thither; and hasten to impress the minds of all with what we have now said of the Sonship and government of Christ.

APPLICATION.

We might insist here somewhat on the matter, that believers are adopted to be children of God through grace, for Christ's sake, as is said in the thirty-third question; but as we have treated upon that subject distinctly on the twenty-sixth question, we will wave any further consideration of it at present, and say, that the sum of the things of which we now speak is, that the children of God have this

triumph of faith, that the Son of God is their Lord and King. This is professed by every believer, when he saith, I believe in the Son of God our Lord. This conduceth indeed to the glory of the people of God, for the glory of the lord and king, is also the glory of the people; therefore the greatest of Israel's kings said, Eccl. x. 17, "Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of Nobles." Are not they then a happy people, who have the Son of God for their lord and king? The church gloried in him as such, saying, Isaiah xxiii. 22, "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us." Nathanael praised him thus, John i. 49. "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel." For if our Lord be the Son of God, then he is (a) a most excellent lord and king: "I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen," Mal. i. 14. Solomon was a great king; his name was celebrated far and near, "but behold a greater than Solomon is here," Matt. xii. 11. Our Lord is the Son of God, yea God himself: "He is a great God, yea, a great King above all gods; in his hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hill is his also: the sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land," Psalm xcv. 3, 4, 5. How did the church exult in her expectation of him! Isaiah ix. 5, "Unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace: He is fairer than the children of men," Psalm xlv. 2. Solomon was the wisest of Israel's kings; but Jesus is the essential, the supreme Wisdom: "The Spirit of the Lord rests upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord," Isaiah xi. 2. See how the spouse describes him, Song, v. 10—16. He hath an unlimited jurisdiction, he hath all power in heaven and in earth: "he rules from sea, to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth," Psalm lxxii. 8. "Who in the heaven can be compared to the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to him?" Behold him in the brightness of his glory, which no mortal can sustain, Rev. i. 10—18, and that which increaseth your triumph, believers, is (b) that he is a Lord of you, not as hateful and despicable slaves, but as his special property, precious above all other men, Exod. xix. 5, 6. He makes you also children of God. John i. 12, his sister and spouse, Song v. 1. Yea, he makes you "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," 1 Peter ii. 9. (c) If the Son of God be your Lord, then ye are under the most desira-

ble government and jurisdiction; for he is also just: "The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre: he loves righteousness, and hates wickedness," Psalm xlv. 6, 7. "He is of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, and he judges not after the sight of his eyes, and reproveth not after the hearing of ears: but with righteousness doth he judge the poor; and with equity doth he reprove for the meek of the earth," Isaiah xi. 3, 4. Therefore his government is also pleasant and gentle. Though Israel prospered exceedingly under the reign of Solomon, he nevertheless imposed such heavy burthens upon them, that they refused to be governed by his son under those grievous impositions; but the yoke of "the Son of God is easy, and his burthen is light," Matt. xi. 30. His commandments are not grievous; "There is no nation that hath statutes and judgments so righteous," Deut. iv. 8. He doth not hate the mean nor the weak, but "he feeds his flock like a shepherd; he gathers the lambs in his arms, he carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young," Isaiah xl. 11. Doth he chasten them, when they transgress, it is with measure, and "for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness," Heb. xii. 6—11. Neither doth he impoverish his subjects, as many kings do, "who eat the flesh of their subjects, flay their skin, and break their bones to enrich themselves:" but he enriches them greatly, so that the apostle could say to believers, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." It is true, ye have many enemies, who endeavour to detach you from his desirable government, and to carry you captive to your destruction; but he sees it, and it is evil in his eyes: "For he who toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye," Zech. ii. 8. Think not that he is deficient in power to revenge the wrongs that are done to you: no, he is mighty to redeem: "Your Redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is his name; he shall thoroughly plead your cause," Jer. i. 34. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against you, none shall pluck you out of his hand." (d) Let me add this also: what a high price did he pay, before he became your Lord, and ye his property! It cost him his own blood and life: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation; but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot," 1 Peter i. 18, 19. How sad was his condition, when he was obliged to wrestle under the burthen of God's wrath with the powers of hell! Hear and see how he mourned, Luke xii. 50. Matt. xxvi. 36—44. xxvii. 46. How much was

to be done to you, before he broke your yoke, and burst your bonds ! It was necessary that he should bind the strong devil, that he might spoil him of you, Matt. xii. 29. How did ye struggle against it; before ye would submit to his government ! he was therefore obliged to exert the exceeding greatness of his power, that he might cause such rebels as ye were to dwell with him. With good reason then do we cry out concerning you : " Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency ! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places," Deut. xxxiii. 29.

Are ye desirous now of knowing who can triumph thus in the faith, behold, 1. They are those who have disengaged themselves from all things, and from themselves, and have resigned and surrendered themselves unto him, in order to be his property. Thus it is said, Isaiah xlv. 5. " One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall subscribe with his hand, I am the Lord's." And that not only to be saved by him, but also to be sanctified by him ; therefore they cry unto him, " Unite my heart to fear thy name," Psalm lxxxvi. 11. " They join themselves to him to serve him, to love his name : and to be his servants," Isaiah lvi. 6. They submit themselves to him in a most hearty, willing and ready manner, and say, " O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant," Psalm cxvi. 16. They esteem all his commandments to be holy, just and good, with David, Psalm cxix. 128. " I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right : I hate every false way." They choose them also for their treasure and possession, and keep them as such ; " Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever ; for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end," saith David, Psalm cxix. 111, 112. And as they are so intent upon doing the will of the Lord, " they will swear and will perform it, that they will keep his righteous judgments," Psalm cxix. 106. And though they cannot attain to perfection, yet knowing that they can be more perfect than they are, they will still seek, strive, and follow after perfection, like Paul, Philip. iii. 12, 13, 14. Yea, this is their glory, their soul saith, " The Lord is my portion, I have said that I would keep thy words," Psalm cxix. 57.

Others who cannot triumph herein, that the Son of God is their Lord, remain in themselves, they set themselves against him, and they will not have him to rule over them. It is forsooth too strict a band, and they will not be brought under it. Doth he call them,

they cry aloud with their actions, "We are lords, we will not come unto thee," Jer. ii. 31. They think that it doth not concern others, what they either say or do, and therefore they say, "Our lips are our own; who is lord over us? Psalm xii. 4. And "they do the will of the flesh and of the mind," Eph. ii. 3. Do the servants of God reprove and convince them, they become angry, and are wroth, like the Jewish council, Acts vii. 51, 54. They are indeed not all so wicked, many will own the Son of God for their Lord; but they will nevertheless not yield themselves up to him in truth and sincerity, to be actually and inwardly ruled by him, but they content themselves with a little civility, with an outward devotion, with knowing and talking somewhat about him: but he saith, Matt. vii. 21. "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

2. They who can triumph thus in the faith, do also choose the party of the Lord; they join themselves to the people of God, and cleave to them; "Ten men of all languages of the nations take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you," Zech. viii. 23. They love heartily and really what their Lord and his people love: "They choose that in which the Lord delighteth," Isaiah lvi. 4. "The Lord delighteth in his people," Isaiah lxii. 4. But they who triumph thus delight also in the saints, who are in the earth, and in the excellent," Psalm xvi. 3. Doth the Lord hate sin, they also "hate every false way," Psalm cxix. 128. Doth the Lord abhor the ungodly, they can say with David, Psalm cxxxix. 21. "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with them that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies."

Others choose the party of the world; it appears by their looks, their clothing, their thoughts, and discourse, "They are of the world, therefore speak thou of the world, and the world heareth them," 1 John iv. 5. Yea, they oppose the people of Jesus, because they separate themselves from them: therefore this Lord said to his people. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you," John xv. 19.

To whom do ye now belong? to us, or to our foes? have ye never yet surrendered yourselves to him to serve him, nor chosen his party, ye cannot then triumph thus in the faith: but it is your reproach, that the ruler of this world is your lord and king. And what a

wretched, despicable, cursed and cruel lord do ye then serve? and what a wretched reward will he bestow on you for your faithful service? (for ye serve him with great faithfulness) Your reward will be "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. xxv. 41. Think not that ye shall escape the hands of our great Lord, he will command you to be brought to him, and to be slain before his face, Luke xix. 27. "Ye shall perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little," Psalm ii. 12. O that ye might recover out of the snare of the devil, in which ye are taken captive at his will; flee, I beseech you, from him and from the wrath to come, and join yourselves to the Lord, and to his people, that ye may prevent your destruction.

But with respect to you, who have joined yourselves to the Lord, and chosen his party, conduct yourselves worthily of your Lord. And therefore.

1. Believe, and be assured, that the Son of God is also your Lord. Ye certainly confess this in your creed; he hath bought you with his blood, delivered you from all the power of the devil, and rendered you his property. Hath he not drawn your souls, so that ye have run after him? have ye not dedicated yourselves sincerely and heartily to him and to his service, and do ye not still do this? Are not your sins your greatest grief, and do ye not withstand them? can ye deny this? do ye not know then that ye have believed in him? Why are ye then so mistrustful, and say, "The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people, and I am a dry tree?" Isaiah lvi. 3. As long as your souls indulge such imaginations, they will never exert a single act towards him, which will be worthy of him; therefore encourage yourselves in this, and say with David, Psalm xlii. 11. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

2. Contemplate much the glory of the Son of God, as your Lord. Are ye not permitted with Stephen to see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God, behold him then with an enlightened eye of faith, according to his word, and see how the Father anointed him from eternity King of Zion, how he sent him into the world, so that every one beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, how he spoiled on the cross principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, and triumphed over them; how his Father hath therefore exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that in his name every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things

under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father; how by his gospel he subdues the world to himself, causes the rebellious to dwell with him, governs the hearts of all, how the angels worship him, the souls of the blessed glorify him, and every believer looks to him, to receive of his fullness, and grace for grace. Ye are exhorted to this, Song iii. 11. "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." Ye endeavour to be conformed to him in a glorious holiness, but this view of him transforms the soul: for "we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18.

3. Acknowledge the Son of God, as your Lord, this ye must do (a) by extolling him as your Lord, praising him, and crying to him with elevated minds, in order to glorify him, like Nathanael, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel." John i. 4. Hear how his people shout to him, (unite with them in heart and voice) Psalm xlvii. 7—10, "Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth, sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. The princes of the people are gathered together to the people of the God of Abraham; for the shields of the earth belong unto God; he is greatly exalted." (b) It behooves you to acknowledge him as your Lord also by submitting yourselves wholly to him, and in all things, bowing to him, with a total denial of yourselves, not seeking yourselves, nor following your inclination, but him only; as well in adversity as in prosperity, as well in darkness as in light, he is your Lord, ye are his servants, and his property: he may do with his own, as seemeth good to him: "Because he is your Lord, therefore worship ye him," Psalm xlv. 11. (c) Acknowledge him as your Lord by devoting yourselves wholly to his service; he hath rendered you his property in soul and body: it is therefore your duty to dedicate yourselves with soul and body to him, and to employ them in his service: "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Titus ii. 14. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" Rom. xii. 1. (d) Ye must also acknowledge him as your Lord by improving him as such,

and putting your sinful hearts into his hand, with every foe that he may destroy them, and subject them to himself: "As for those mine enemies," saith he, "who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before my face," Luke xix. 27. For this David prayed, Psalm xix. 13, 14.(c) It is your duty to acknowledge him as your Lord by intrusting your own, and his church's cause to him, even when it appears exceedingly gloomy, considering that he will order matters aright "Why dost thou cry aloud? is there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail," Micha iv. 9.

4. Commend him also to others that they may love him, and may also surrender themselves to him, in order to serve him, like the spouse, Song v. 10—16, which had such an effect, that the daughters of Jerusalem would also seek him, Song vi. 1, for "in the multitude of people is the king's honour," saith Solomon, Prov. xiv. 28. Ought not every subject of the King then, whose glory is the glory of his people, endeavour to procure people for him, and encourage every one to join himself to this King? We ought not to be content, that we ourselves have been favoured and honoured by him, but we ought to bring others also to him, as Andrew brought his brother Peter, and Philip brought Nathanael to Jesus, who also acknowledged him to be the Son of God, and the King of Israel, John i. 40—49. We ought all of us to "bring forth twins, and there ought not to be one barren among us," as it is said concerning the spiritual sheep, Song vi. 6.

5. Triumph and rejoice also in him, since he, who is the Son of God, is also your king. Therefore the Lord said, Jer. ix. 23, 24. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord." To this ye are exhorted, Psalm cxlix. 2. "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." Therefore he sends his servants to you, "who say to Zion, Thy God rejoiceth," Isaiah lii. 7.

It is true, his glory, and your happiness and triumphing in and through him are not perceived so much at present: but when the curtains of darkness, of sin, adversity and mortality shall be drawn, then will he appear in all his brightness to your joy: yea, "then will the King say to them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Amen.

THE INCARNATION
OF
THE SON OF GOD.

XIV. LORD'S DAY.

Philip. ii. 6, 7. Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

Q. 35. *What is the meaning of these words, "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary?"*

A. That God's eternal Son, who is and continueth true and eternal God, took upon him the very nature of man, of the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; that he might also be the true seed of David, like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted.

Q. 36. *What profit dost thou then receive by Christ's holy conception and nativity?*

A. That he is the Mediator; and with his innocence and perfect holiness, covers in the sight of God my sins, wherein I was conceived and brought forth.

AMONG the several great promises of the Lord God to his ancient people concerning the Messiah, who was to come, this was

particularly emphatical, that "a Redeemer should come unto Zion," Isaiah lix. 20. The Lord had ordered in the civil law, which he gave to Israel, that the nearest kinsman should be the redeemer of his brother, who was therefore obliged, besides other duties, to redeem the possession of his brother, when it was sold, and also his person from slavery, and to avenge his blood, which was shed. The Messiah should also be such a Redeemer; not with respect to a bodily redemption, this was too ignoble for him; the redemption which he obtains is "an eternal redemption," Heb ix. 12. Those whom he should redeem had lost their eternal inheritance, they were slaves to the devil and to sin, and therefore slain with respect to their souls. If he should then redeem them, he behoved to be greater than those redeemers, yea, even their God and Lord: therefore the Father promiseth "that he would redeem his people by the Lord their God." Hosea i. 7. He ought indeed to possess an infinite power, if he should destroy the works of the devil, bind him, and spoil his goods, thus taking vengeance of him: but this alone was not enough, he behoved also to pay the price of redemption, which was more precious than perishable things, silver, or gold, it could be effected only by the precious blood of a Lamb without blemish, and without spot: and it was therefore necessary, that he should also be man, and indeed man of man, more especially since he was obliged to be the nearest kinsman and brother, if he should be a Redeemer. Therefore the Lord, when he promiseth that the Redeemer should come to Zion, intimates that he would send him in the flesh, and that he should become man, and that he should therefore redeem Zion, as the ancient redeemers redeemed their brethren; which the Lord also fulfilled, when he appointed his Son to become man. The apostle having respect to this manner of redeeming, said therefore concerning him, Heb. ii. 11, 14, 15. "For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same: that he through death might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage." Having shown how necessary it was for the Mediator and Redeemer to be God and man in one person, in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth questions, the instructor explaining the doctrine of redemption, shows therefore that the Redeemer Jesus Christ, is not only the Son of God, and thus very God, in the thirteenth Lord's day, but also that he is man, made like his brethren in all things, sin excepted, in this fourteenth Lord's day.

There are two particulars here, that require our explanation,

I. The nature of Christ's incarnation, Question 35.

II. The advantage which results from it, Question 36.

I. We have an explanation of the nature of Christ's incarnation in the thirty-fifth question: with respect to which we learn, (a) who became incarnate, or man, (b) the nature of his manhood, (c) of whom he received his manhood, (d) by whose operation, (e) in what manner, and (f) to what end he became incarnate, or man.

A. It is inquired in the first place who became incarnate or man. It is said in general, that "God was manifested in the flesh," 1 Tim. iii. 16. It was not the essence of God; for he who became man is Mediator between God and man, which could not be, if the whole essence became man: but it was one of the divine Persons, who became man: "he who was in the form of God, and was equal to God, took upon himself the form of a servant," Phil. ii 6, 7. But it was neither the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, who became man, but the Son only; for "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman," Gal. iv. 4. And so the instructor saith that the eternal Son of God, who is and continueth true and eternal God, became man. He is indeed God, co-essential with the Father and the Holy Ghost, as we have proved on the foregoing Lord's day; it doth not however follow therefore, that the Father and the Holy Ghost, who are co-essential with the Son, became man, because the Godhead of the Son, which is also the Godhead of the Father and of the Holy Ghost, did not become man, but the Person of the Son. For although the Father and the Holy Ghost prepared a body for him, according to Heb. x. 5. Luke i. 35, nevertheless the Son alone took upon himself the nature of man, and united it to himself.

Although it proceeded only from the free good pleasure of God, that the Son was made man, we may however learn from the consequences how well this became God, and how proper it was; for, (a) as he was the Son of God, he could be sent by the Father, and also himself send the Holy Spirit, Gal. iv. 4, 5, 6. (b) As he was the personal Word of God, God could speak by him to us, and also reveal his secrets to us by him, John i. 1. iii. 34. Heb. i. 1. (c) As man was created by him, therefore man could also be new-created by him, Eph. ii. 10. (d) As he is the Son of God by nature, he can also make us the sons of God by grace, Gal. iv. 4, 5. (e) He who is the image of the invisible God, can restore us after the image of God Col. iv. 19. (f) Thus also the love of God appears in the highest degree, that he sends his Son for the salvation of sinners, John iii. 16.

B. The second particular that requires our consideration with respect to the incarnation of Christ is the nature of his manhood. Of this the instructor saith, that he took on him the very nature of man. This was opposed by many erroneous spirits in the early ages of Christianity. The followers of Mareion, Manes and Cerdo, asserted that Christ was man only in appearance. The Arians said indeed that he had a real body, but they imagined that it was a body without a soul, and that instead of a human soul, an excellent spirit was created for him, before the creation of the world. And the Apollinarists held that his Godhead served him instead of a soul. But the word of God teacheth us that he hath a real and perfect human nature. For,

1. He is such a man as we are; "in all things like his brethren," Heb. ii. 17. Yea, he is opposed to a mere appearance, as he himself proved to his apostles, when "they supposed they had seen a spirit," Luke xxiv. 37—43.

2. He hath the constituent parts of a man, to wit, a human body, and a human soul: his body was born, it grew, was seen and handled by men; we cannot doubt that he had a soul; for "he came to give his soul a ransom for many," Matt. xx. 28.

3. All that can be said of a man as man is found in him; for besides his birth, growth, conversation with men, and other particulars of this kind, he was also, like men, hungry and thirsty, he wept, complained, was weary, and rested. He had a human understanding, will, and affections; he loved, was angry, rejoiced and was sorry, as the evangelical historians inform us.

4. He was a man of man of the same human race with other men: "For he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same," Heb. ii. 11, 14. Therefore he is also called "the seed of the woman," Gen. iii. 15, "the seed of Abraham," Gen. xxii. 18, compared with Gal. iii. 16. He is said to "have been of the seed of David according to the flesh," Rom. i. 3, "the fruit of the loins of David," Acts ii. 30, "a son of man," Mat. xvi. 13, "a son of Mary," Matt. i. 18. "He was conceived in her," Matt. i. 20. "He is the fruit of her body," Luke i. 42. Was made of her," Gal. iv. 4, and "was born of her," Matt. i. 16,

What can be objected against this, but what is exceedingly trifling, as that "he was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh," Rom. viii. 3, and that "he was made like men," Philip. ii. 7. But it is easy to comprehend, that this doth not disprove, but rather evince that he was a real man, as he was in all things made like us, Heb.

li. 17, and if it assert any unlikeness to us, it is only with respect to sin, which he had not, although he was considered as a sinner, and treated as such, as his Father also sent him, that he might be a sacrifice for sin; for "him who knew no sin he made to be sin for us," 2 Cor. v. 21.

C. The third particular that must be considered with respect to his incarnation is of whom he received his manhood. The catechism saith, "of the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary." The Valentini-ans of old said, as the Menonites do still, that the human nature of Christ was not born of the flesh and blood of Mary, but through her, and that he brought it with him from heaven of the seed of the Father, and of the Word, or from elsewhere, we do not know whence, and that he only passed through Mary, as water through a conduit, and as the sun shines through glass. The Socinians assert that the Holy Ghost supplied the place of a natural Father, and that he created and produced a new substance in Mary: but then (1) Christ was not in all things like us, nor man of man, contrary to what we have proved before. (2) Then also the genealogy of Christ could not be referred to Mary, Matt. i. and Luke 3. (3) Neither was he then, according to his human nature, without father, contrary to Heb. vii. 3. (4) Moreover, the guilt of man might not be punished in any other besides the human nature, as we have proved on the sixteenth question.

It is indeed said, that "he came down from heaven," John vi. 38, and that "he is the Lord from heaven," 1 Cor. xv. 47, but this doth not mean that he brought his manhood from heaven, but (a) that his Godhead manifested itself, present in his manhood in a particular manner, when he assumed his manhood: "For the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) John i. 14, as it is said that the Lord God came down from heaven, when he manifested himself present any where in a glorious manner, Exod. xix. 20. Neh. xix. 13. Or we may understand by it (b) the original and institution of his office, which was not of men, but from heaven, as it is said of the baptism of John, that "it was from heaven," Matt. xxi. 25.

He received his manhood of Mary without any previous inter-
course of her with a man, for she was a virgin, and conceived, bore and brought forth the man Christ Jesus, as a virgin without knowing man. See Matt. i. 18. This was not less necessary than it was true, not only because it was foretold, Isaiah vii. 15, "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a Son, and call his name Imman-

uel," to which the angel also appealed, and referred Joseph, the betrothed husband of Mary, when he suspected her, Matt. i. 23. But it was also necessary that he should receive his manhood of a virgin, because he should be born holy, and without original sin: Christ should be "that holy thing, which should be born of her," Luke i. 35. The reason of which was not that the virgin had not any original sin, as the Papists without any reason pretend; but the reason of Christ's holy birth of the virgin was, that he was thus born out of the broken covenant of works, which transmits original sin by the intercourse of the man and woman to the posterity of Adam. This is not so difficult to understand, if we consider that Adam and Eve received the marriage law, and the blessing, that they should "be fruitful and multiply," while they were in the covenant of works, Gen i. 28, and hence all men should be born in that covenant of works, and thus all men since the fall are born under the breach of that covenant in iniquity, and conceived in sin. Therefore because the Saviour was born of a virgin, who had not any fellowship with a man, it is evident that he was born out of the covenant of works, under which all other men are born by virtue of the law of marriage. And thus Christ cannot be reckoned under Adam in the covenant of works; wherefore he is also opposed to Adam in this respect, 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47.

D. But how could this be? Mary also proposed this difficulty, when Gabriel brought her the tidings, that she should conceive, Luke i. 34, 35. "And Mary said to the angel, how shall this be, seeing I know not a man? and the angel answered, and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." The work of the Holy Ghost in this matter was, (1) that he formed and disposed, in an extraordinary and superordinary manner, the human nature of Christ, of the seed of Mary, and thus he was conceived in Mary, born and brought forth by her without miscarriage. (2) The Holy Ghost also sanctified him, by forming him in the image of God, that he who should be born of Mary might be holy, and also by separating and disposing him in his Father's name for a suitable sacrifice: so Paul considers this matter, Heb. x. 5. (3) Many also affirm that the Holy Ghost united the human nature from the time of its conception, to the divine nature: but we rather consider this as a personal act of the Son, who united his human nature to himself, as we will see hereafter, more particularly.

E. In what manner did the Son of God become man? the catechism saith that "the eternal Son of God, who is, and continueth

true and eternal God, took upon himself the very nature of man." He did not become a man as other men do, who had no manner of existence before: but he who was before true and eternal God, and continueth such, became also man. Not by a changing of his Godhead into the manhood, as the Menonites imagine; for his Godhead is unchangeable. James i. 17. "The Word indeed became flesh," according to John i. 14. but we do not read that it was changed into flesh: the word "became" doth not always intimate a change; for otherwise the body of Adam, which was formed of the dust of the earth, and "became a living soul," Gen. ii. 7, was changed into a living soul; and "Christ, who became a curse," Gal. iii. 13, would have been changed into a curse; but the Son of God became man by taking upon himself the nature of man, and uniting it in the strictest manner to his divine nature.

We must consider this union somewhat more particularly, and must take special care, that we do not misunderstand this matter, as the smallest misconception of it is exceedingly mischievous and pernicious. We must therefore know that this union of the two natures in Christ is not an essential union, like that of the three Persons in the Godhead; for then there would be but one essence or nature, and two Persons in Christ, whereas we find two natures in him, and only one Person, since there is but "one Mediator, as there is but one God," 1 Tim. ii. 5. Moreover, the union of the two natures in Christ is not a physical union, like that of the soul and body, which being physically united to each other, make one person; for he was a person before he became man. Neither is this union, a merely relative union, consisting in the love of the Godhead to the human nature, disposing the Godhead to assist the human nature, and show kindness to it, as the husband is united to the wife, and Christ to the church; for then there would be two persons, as well as two natures in Christ, and we should have two Mediators, contrary to 1 Tim. ii. 5.

This was the opinion of Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople; but it was condemned by the great council of Ephesus, in the year 431. In opposition to his opinion it was determined, that the union of the two natures was *adiaretos*, "indivisible," and *achoristos*, "inseparable," and thus that there were not two divisible and separable persons in the Mediator. Eutyches, Abbot of Constantinople, fell, from an excess of opposition to Nestorius, to another extreme, for he taught that the two natures of Christ, and their properties were mixed, so that Christ, who had two natures before they were united, was, after they were united, no longer such a man as we are. He

was condemned for this opinion in the general council of Chalcedon, in the year 451, and in order to illustrate the nature of this union, it was said, it was *atreptos*, "unchangeable," and *asunchutos*, "unmixed." And they signified thus, that the Lord Jesus in his incarnation continued what he was, namely God, and became what he was not, namely man; for otherwise his Godhead would have been changed into the manhood, and the manhood into the Godhead.

We say then with the catholic church, that this union was a personal and hypostatical union, that is, the divine Person took upon himself the human nature, and continued one Person: we have shown on the eighth Lord's day that a person is an intelligent substance, by which he is individually what he is, without constituting a part of another. We must now know that the human nature is not an individual person, and that it doth not subsist individually, but that it subsists in, and by the personality of the Son of God: not that the personality of the Son of God is communicated to his manhood, as the Lutherans suppose; for the personality and self-subsistence are incommunicable: but that the divine nature, constituting the human nature in its person, causeth it to subsist; for otherwise the several phrases used with respect to this matter will be unintelligible, as John i. 14. "The Word was made flesh." Rom. viii. 3. "God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," Gal. iv. 4. "Made of a woman," 1 Tim. iii. 16. "God was manifest in the flesh, Philip ii. 6, 7. "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant."

This personal union is illustrated also by an observation of the consequences of it, which are three:

1. That from this union follows a communion of the properties of both natures, which the person hath by virtue of the union of the two natures. This doth not imply, that the divine attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, vivification and adorableness, are communicated to the manhood, as the Lutherans imagine; for the manhood of Christ is not capable of divine attributes, and this would make the manhood a God. In this manner the divine attributes are incommunicable; if this followed from the personal union, not a few only of the divine attributes would be communicated to the manhood, but all of them, because the manhood is united to the whole Person of the Son of God; but this is to be understood in such a manner, that the Person of the Mediator doth perfectly possess the properties of the divine and human natures. This hath occasioned a variety of phrases, to wit, that which is proper to

him with respect to his Person, is ascribed to him with respect to the one or the other of his natures, and what is proper to him with respect to the one nature, is ascribed to him with respect to the other, or to his Person. We may say, for instance of his Person, that Christ is eternal, was born in time, is our righteousness : with respect to his divine nature, we can say that Christ who is God, is infinite, the Lord of glory was crucified, God hath bought his church with his own blood, 1 Cor. ii. 8. Acts xx. 28. We may say also with respect to his human nature, that Christ the man died, is in heaven, John iii. 13, is Mediator, 1 Tim. ii. 5. All which is unintelligible without a respect to this personal union. But we cannot use these phrases in the abstract ; for we cannot say that the Godhead of Christ was crucified, that his manhood was in heaven, while he was on earth, because then the Godhead would necessarily be the manhood, and the manhood the Godhead.

2. From this personal union follows also the communion of the works and actions of both natures ; by which we understand that both natures co-operate in that one Person in the same work of redemption, so that we have here (a) a working person of the Mediator, (b) a work of redemption, and (c) a twofold principle, his divine and human nature, which do each contribute their proper share to the work of redemption, the manhood suffers, and the Godhead adds an infinite value to it, Acts xx. 28. Whence it is easy to understand that he is Mediator according to both natures.

3 The third consequence of this personal union is, that many glorious gifts of grace are communicated to the manhood ; and particularly, that it is dignified with a personal union with the Godhead, and is in consequence of this become endued with exalted wisdom, perfect holiness, power and dignity above all men and angels. See all this Luke i 35. John iii. 34. Psalm xlv. 7. Philip. iii. 6—9.

F. We must finally inquire for what end the Son of God became man. The great end was that the sinner might by him be reconciled to God. and saved : the whole word of God aims at this only, and the name Jesus was given to him on this account. It is therefore an idle assertion of the schoolmen among the Papists, of the Socinians and Osiander, that Christ would have become man, although man had not sinned. But how do they know this ? have they been in the council of God ? no : do they find it in the word of God ? the word of God saith nothing of it. It is then an idle fiction of their own brains.

But inasmuch as the instructor adds this great end to the advantages of the incarnation of Christ in the thirty-sixth question, there-

fore he shows in the thirty-fifth question the end why he became incarnate particularly of the virgin Mary Which ends are,

1. "That he might be the seed of David." It is here supposed that Mary was of the seed of David, and indeed truly; for she was two ways of the seed of David. (a) By her marriage, as she was espoused to Joseph, who was of the family of David by Solomon, according to the genealogy of Matthew, Matt. i. And thus Mary was also reckoned of the seed of David, because women were considered in genealogical accounts, as comprehended in the men. But she was not only in this way of the seed of David, but also by natural descent, (b) in consequence of her birth of Heli according to Luke iii. 23, who was indeed the father-in-law of Joseph; but the proper father of his spouse Mary. Now Heli, the father of Mary, was a descendant of David by Nathan, Luke iii.

This is not denied by the words "that Elizabeth, the cousin of Mary, was of the daughters of Aaron," Luke i. 5, and so of the tribe of Levi, and not of the family of David, and of the tribe of Judah: from which it would seem to follow, that Mary was not of the family of David. But we must know that Mary could very well be of the family of David, although Elizabeth were of the daughters of Aaron: for the mother or grand-mother of Mary might have been of the family of Aaron, and have married a husband of David's family, of whom Mary was then born in the family of David. Or it might have been, that the mother, or grand-mother of Elizabeth was of the family of David, and married to a husband of Aaron's family, from whom Elizabeth then sprang. And therefore it is no contradiction when it is said, that Elizabeth was of the daughters of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi, and Mary of the family of David, and tribe of Judah. If any one ask whether the families and tribes might intermarry, we say, yes; for "Aaron of the tribe of Levi, married the sister of Nahshon, who was a prince of the children of Judah," Exod. vi. 22. 1 Chron. ii. 10. The priest Jehoiada had the sister of the king of Judah to wife, 2 Chron. xxii. 11 and David, of the tribe of Judah, had the daughter of Saul, who was of the tribe of Benjamin, to wife. It was ordered indeed, Numb. xxxvi. 6, that the daughters of Zelophehad should marry only in a family of the tribe of their father: but this was only a special order for daughters who were heiresses, and not for all, who, having brethren, did not inherit, and who, by marrying into another tribe, did not bring the possession of their father to another tribe, as daughters, who were heiresses, would do if they married into another tribe: and therefore they were forbidden to marry out of their tribe.

Whence it therefore follows, that the Lord Jesus was the true seed of David, and thus also of the tribe of Judah, Heb. vii. 14. God the Lord had promised David, "that he would raise up the Messiah of his loins, and that he should sit upon his throne," Psalm cxxxii. 11. Acts ii. 30. That this promise might now be fulfilled, the Son of God was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary, that he might sit upon the throne of David: therefore the angel said to Mary, when he brought her the tidings, that she should conceive and bear the Messiah, Luke i. 32, 33, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

2. The second end which the instructor mentioneth is, "that he might be like his brethren in all things, sin excepted." The brethren of Jesus are not here his natural brethren, born of Mary; for we do not find that Mary ever had children after Jesus. James is indeed called the brother of the Lord, Gal. i. 19, as also others, Matt. xiii. 35. But these were, according to the style of scripture, only cousins after the flesh. All men who have sprung with him from Adam by natural generation, are also his brethren after the flesh, Luke iii. 23—38. Acts xvii. 26, but they are not his spiritual brethren; the elect only, who are sanctified, to whom he declares the name of the Lord, whom he receives as the seed of Abraham, and redeems after the example of the ancient redeemers, are his spiritual brethren, Heb. ii. 11—15. It behoved him to be like them in all things, if he should redeem them, as the apostle saith, Heb. ii. 17, which we have also shown upon the sixteenth question. Since now he took upon him the true human nature, of the flesh and blood of Mary, therefore he was in all things like the brethren; yea, the "Firstborn among many brethren," Rom. viii. 29, and therefore also his Father's heir, Heb. i. 12. "Of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named," Eph. iii. 15, to whom it also belongs to rule over his brethren, Psalm lxxxix. 27, for these things were the privileges of the firstborn.

But when he is said to be like his brethren in all things, "sin is excepted;" which we have also proved before, when we showed that he was born of the virgin Mary, out of the broken covenant of works. We maintain this, and also that he could not sin, against the patrons of freewill, who imagine that he could sin; observe, so exceedingly are they enamoured of their darling freewill, that they will reproach even the Son of God with it. But how could he sin, when he was

conceived by the Holy Ghost, and united to the divine nature, and had received the Spirit without measure?

II. The advantages of Christ's incarnation are, according to the thirty sixth question, these two:

1. "That he is our Mediator." He is a Mediator not only of intercession, but also of reconciliation, as it behooved him to be, according to what we have taught on the fifteenth question. The Mediator behooved to be God and man in one person, as we have shown upon the sixteenth and seventeenth questions. Since now the Son of God took upon himself the true human nature in one person, therefore he is also the Mediator of believers; "for there is one God, there is also one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus: who gave himself a ransom for all," 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. This is truly a great advantage and profit to his brethren; they were indeed alienated from God, sin had separated them and their God, they could not draw near to him, to make reconciliation for their guilt, or to ask any thing of him; he was a consuming fire to them. But behold, the Lord God himself gives them his Son, that he may make himself of no reputation, and take upon him the form of a servant, become their brother and so their mediator, who reconciles them to their Judge, entreats his Father, that they may not go down into the pit, but may draw near to him with confidence, both in their state of grace and of glory: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins," 1 John ii. 1, 2. See, believers, what is said on this subject for your profit, Rom. viii. 33, 34. Heb. x. 19—22.

2. The second advantage of Christ's incarnation is, "that he with his innocence covers in the sight of God our sins, wherein we were conceived and brought forth." We have explained and proved on the seventh question, that every man is conceived and brought forth in sin. These sins, and also actual sins proceeding from them are offences, which deserve punishment, and are recorded before God, that he may recompense them. See this Isaiah lxxv. 6. Yea, "he sets them before him in the light of his countenance," Psalm xc. 3. But Christ the Mediator interposeth between God and the sinner, and thus covers and hides his sins from the face of God by taking them away, so that the Lord God cannot behold them, so as to be wroth on account of them, and to rebuke the sinner. The Mediator doth this "with his innocence and perfect holiness." This innocence and perfect holiness of Christ must be viewed, either as a requisite qualification of the Mediator, as we have taught on the fifteenth

question : or as meritorious, because his holy birth is advantageous to believers, as well as his sufferings. See Luke ii. 10, 11. The law demands a holy birth, as well as a holy life. When a man hath not this, the law curses him. But the Mediator substitutes his holy, though humble incarnation, in the stead of it. Or we must consider the Mediator's innocent and perfectly holy manhood, as an acceptable offering to God, which he should "give to the Father, as an offering and a sacrifice for a sweet smelling savour," Eph. v. 2, by which our sins should be covered in the sight of God, as Paul teacheth us most emphatically, Heb. x. 1—18. And this is also a great advantage to the brethren of Christ. For nothing is more grievous to them, than that their sins stand uncanceled in the sight of God, yea, they also see them then in their dreadful nature, and the wrath of God on account of them : "My sin is ever before me," said David, Psalm li. 3. Their iniquities do then go over their heads, and as a heavy burthen, become too heavy for them ; yea God's hand presses, and is heavy on them day and night, and their moisture is turned into the drought of summer, and with Job they must complain to the Lord. "Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth," Job xiii. 26. But when their sins are covered in the sight of God, then all their distress and perturbation ceases, a wonderfully sweet and tranquil peace and calm takes place in the soul, and she is compassed with joyful songs of deliverance ; the Lord takes pleasure in his people, and they behold his countenance with joy. Therefore David saith with reason, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered," Psalm xxxii. 1. Since now this happiness is procured by the holy incarnation of Christ, therefore this is of the greatest advantage.

This then is the faith of Christians, that the Son of God was made man, and indeed for such an advantageous purpose, according to the word of God, which proposes him thus, as the object of faith : to whom the ancients looked, John viii. 56, and this is a fundamental article of the faith, 1 John iv. 2, 3.

APPLICATION.

But, hearers, that which is of the greatest concern to you, and which is also of special importance, is, whether ye too are partakers

of the advantages of Christ's incarnation, and whether he is your Brother and Mediator, who with his innocence and perfect holiness covers your sins. Do ye believe this for yourselves? do ye say, yea?

1. Have your sins then been discovered to you, so that ye see them clearly in the sight of God, not merely with a simple apprehension, knowing that ye are sinners, but so that ye see them in yourselves, and in their circumstances, ye have a clear view of them, ye are troubled, grieved and concerned on account of them; ye do not cover them, nor palliate your guilt with the fool, but confess them willingly before the Lord, and earnestly desire that they may be covered in the sight of God with the innocence and perfect holiness of Christ. If it be thus with you, then Christ came for your salvation; "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost," Matt. xvii. 11. See also Matt. ix. 13. 1 Tim. i. 15.

Or do ye know nothing of this? and do ye endeavour to cover your sins? are ye unwilling that they should be exposed to your view, and doth such an exposure provoke you to anger? and when your conscience convinceth and distresses you, do ye then stifle it, and endeavour to divert your anxiety by pursuing this or that amusement, or by indulging yourselves in abominations, or by doing some duty, or by flattering yourselves "that ye shall have peace, though ye walk in the imagination of your hearts;" know then that "the Lord will not spare you, but that his anger and jealousy will smoke against you, Deut. xxix. 19, 20.

2. Ye who think that Christ became incarnate for you, and who are sometimes troubled on account of your sins, do ye also turn from your sins? do ye part with them? do ye cast them away, as a menstruous cloth? and do ye say to every one of them, and not only to this and that one, get thee hence? do ye turn to the Lord heartily, sincerely and continually, that ye may keep his commandments, for ever? and when your iniquities take hold of you, and cast you down, do ye rise up again, mourn and fight against them? then the incarnation of Christ is profitable to you; for he was promised for you, Isaiah lix. 20. "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord."

But are ye still the same that ye always were, without any change for the better? or have ye in some measure forsaken this and that sin, while ye retain knowingly and wilfully, without opposition, your constitutional sin, as a delicate morsel under your tongue? ye will not be just the most wicked wretches, but moral and devout; and

ye will not turn truly and wholly to the Lord; how can ye then think that ye will receive profit from the incarnation of Christ?

3. Ye who believe that the man Christ Jesus is your brother and mediator, who covers your sins in the sight of God; how did he become your brother and mediator? have ye united yourselves to him, and procured him to "dwell in your hearts by faith?" Eph. iii. 17. have ye received him, and obtained power to become the sons of God, and so the brethren of Christ, and to obtain reconciliation by his blood, because your sins are covered in the sight of God? then it is evident that he is truly your brother, according to John i. 12. Rom. iii. 25.

Or do ye know nothing of this by an actual experience? Ye know indeed that we must believe in him, and that we are united to him by faith, but ye have never yet exercised this act of faith by receiving him, though he came to you by the offer of the gospel; therefore ye are yet "without Christ," Eph. ii. 12.

4. Are ye certain, that the great benefit of the incarnation of Christ belongs to you? are ye then become like him even conformable to his image, as he became like you by taking upon himself the human nature? have ye been conceived and born again of his Spirit, so that he hath been formed in you? as he separated himself from whatever was sinful, and dedicated himself to God, that he might live in and for him, and to his service, have ye also thus died to yourselves? and is your life hidden with Christ in God? then he is also your brother and mediator, and covers in the sight of God all your sins. And so ye have the evidence, that "God fore-ordained you to be conformed to the image of his Son," Rom. viii. 29. Yea, "that which is true in him, is also true in you," 1 John ii. 8.

But if it be not thus with you, and if ye be still conformed to the world, and act as this and that worldling acts, and think that it is lawful for you, because this and that one doth so, and if ye have no more of Christianity than the name, and the outward profession, with a few religious ceremonies; how can ye then think that Christ became incarnate for your good! ye have indeed not one solid proof of this; and did he not become incarnate for your good, it will then be to your harm, and will greatly aggravate your sins? Hear him say himself, John xv. 22. "If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin. He is set as well for a fall, as for a rising again," Luke ii. 34. See only how dreadful and intolerable his coming will be to them, who are strangers to him, Mal. iii. 2. Doth this not affect you, consider what ye will do, when his second coming will awaken and consume

you: for concerning this we can say. "Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch," Mal. iv. 1.

Therefore, behold your perdition, endeavour to escape from it, receive him still, while he still offers himself to you, yea, invites you to him, that he may manifest his kindness to you, and save you, Isaiah xlv. 22. Matt. ix. 13.

But with respect to you, who have been convinced of your sins, have turned from them, have received the Son of man, and are born again after his image, manifest now that ye believe this great truth of the incarnation of Christ. And therefore,

1. Endeavour to contemplate the length, breadth, depth and height of it: "Mary kept all these things, which concerned her child, and pondered them in her heart," Luke ii. 19. "The angels desire to look into these things," 1 Peter i. 12, for "without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh," 1 Tim. iii. 16. Of all the great and inconceivable wonders, which God hath ever wrought, none is comparable to this wonder; it is a wonder which surpasseth all wonders, that the Son of God was made man; that he who was equal with God took upon himself the form of a servant; that he was made man of a virgin; that the Holy One was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh; that he was born perfectly holy of a sinner, that although he became man, he nevertheless is and continueth true and eternal God: yea, that he became man to suffer, thus to cover our sins in the sight of God, and like your eldest brother and mediator to redeem you, and that "God made him who knew no sin, to be sin for you; that ye might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. The wonderful power of God shines forth here in the brightest manner, since he hath effected so many wonders, the manifold wisdom of God beams forth here in the clearest manner, since he knew how to devise a way for the salvation of sinners, and order it so, that neither his justice nor his mercy should be in the least dishonoured, but that God who is holy should be sanctified by righteousness; the power of the divine love appears here in the most lovely manner, "For herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," 1 John iv. 10. O how ought ye to wonder at this! Did Elisabeth wonder so, that she said, "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me," Luke i. 43, how ought

it then to ravish you, that your Lord himself comes to you! yea, your wonder ought to transport you out of yourselves, and cause you to celebrate the praises of the Lord. Behold how Elisabeth, Mary, the shepherds, Simeon and Anna praised the Lord on account of this matter. Yea, the angels came down from heaven on earth, "praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men," Luke ii. 13, 14.

2. Exercise yourselves much in acts of union with him. Ye are united to him, he hath taken your nature upon him, and united it to himself; ye are considered by God as in him; his Spirit hath ingrafted you into him; ye have united him to you by faith: but how great an estrangement doth there often take place between him and you! Oh, do not suffer it, but "acquaint yourselves with him, and be at peace," Job xxii. 21. Let your souls "follow hard after him," with strong desires and aspirations, like David, Psalm lxi. 8. Maintain an active faith, that ye may cause him to dwell in your hearts, and exert often an ardent love, that ye may hold him fast, like the spouse, "who would hold him, and not let him go," Song iii. 4. For "he who cleaves to the Lord is thus one spirit with him," 1 Cor. vi. 17.

3. Show now also by your conversation that he became like you as his brethren, and that ye are become like him by your regeneration and sanctification: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men," Philip. ii. 5, 6. His humility, lowliness, self-denial, heavenly-mindedness, obedience to his Father, love to God and his brethren, ought to beam forth also in you: "He that saith he abideth in him, ought also so to walk, as he hath walked," 1 John ii. 6.

4. Is he become your brother, and indeed your eldest brother by his incarnation, submit yourselves then to him. It was the privilege of the first-born in ancient times to rule over the younger brethren, as we have shown in our explanation; therefore Paul also saith, Coll. i. 18. "He is the head of the body, the church, he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." The Lord said to Cain concerning Abel, Gen. iv. 7. "His desire shall be unto thee, and thou shalt rule over him." But is not your desire also to your Brother, that he should rule over you? verily he hath deserved it of you, since he became man and mediator for you, that he might cover your sins in the sight of God. And for

what purpose is he the true seed of David? is it not, that he may reign over the house of Jacob?

5. By his incarnation he hath also become a Mediator for you between God and you. Do not expect then that God will draw nigh to your souls in his grace, except through him: "He is made of God unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30. Neither should ye draw nigh to God, except through him; "Jesus said, I am the way, and the truth and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by me," John xiv. 6. Let this, that your Mediator is also your Brother, encourage you to go boldly to the throne: "For we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh," Heb. ix. 19, 20. Eph. iii. 12.

6. He hath covered your sins in the sight of God by his holy incarnation: Beware then of uncovering them again, either by a careless and dissolute behaviour, by which your iniquity will rise up, and be discovered in the sight of God, yea, of men, and distress your souls in a grievous manner: "When the Lord speaketh peace to his saints, let them not return again to folly," Psalm lxxxv. 8. or by unbelief, whereby we mistrust the grace of God and of his Son, either through a mere conceit. or on account of adversity, as if our sins were not covered in the sight of God, and he had not testified this to the soul. May we not apply here that which is said, Job. xv. 11, 12, 13. "Are the consolations of God small with thee? is there any secret thing with thee? why doth thine heart carry thee away? and what do thine eyes wink at? that thou turnest thy spirit against God, and lettest such words go out of thy mouth?"

7. Finally, let the incarnation of Jesus support you under your dejections- The incarnation of Jesus is truly "the consolation of Israel," Luke ii. 25. Are ye mean and despised in the world, and doth this disturb you, let it suffice you that the Son of God is your brother, and that ye are of one family with your Brother, Heb. ii. 11. Do ye suffer many afflictions in soul and body; "he was made like you his brethren in all things; that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted," Heb. ii. 17, 18. Are ye troubled mostly on account of your sins? "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, yea, the chief of sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15. Are your bodies exceedingly weak and languid? The Son of God, who was made like you, "shall change your vile bo-

dies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," **Philip**
iii 31. Must ye often stand aloof from him, and be separated from him,
so that ye are even hidden from his face, it will not be long ere "ye
shall be taken up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so
ye shall be ever with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another
with these words," Amen.

CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

AND

CROSS UNDER PONTIUS PILATE.

XV. LORD'S DAY.

1 Peter iii. 18. For Christ hath also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

Q. 37. What dost thou understand by the word "he suffered?"

A. That he, all the time he lived upon earth, but especially at the end of his life, sustained in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind, that so by his passion, as the only propitiatory sacrifice, he might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the favour of God, righteousness and eternal life.

Q. 38. Why did he then suffer under Pontius Pilate as his Judge?

A. That he, being innocent, and yet condemned by a temporal judge, might thereby free us from the severe judgment of God, to which we were exposed.

Q. 39. Is there any thing more in his being crucified, than if he had died some other death?

A. Yes there is: for thereby I am assured, that he took on him the curse which lay on me; for the death of the cross was accursed of God.

THE Saviour Jesus speaking of himself, saith Matt. xx. 28. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and

give his life a ransom for many." It was indeed foretold, that Israel should serve David their King, the Messiah, Jer. xxx. 9, as the Father also promised to him in the council of peace, "that he should have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession," Psalm ii. 8, wherefore he also went by his incarnation, like a nobleman, into a far country, that he might receive a kingdom for himself, Luke xix. 12, but it behooved him first to humble himself, and "make his soul an offering for sin, if he should see his seed," Isaiah liii. 10. And so he came in a humble manner, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many, inasmuch as he came to suffer; therefore he is also represented to us, as "one whom man despised, whom the nation abhorred, and a servant of rulers," Isaiah xlix. 7. On which account he also withdrew, when "he knew that they would come, and take him by force, and make him a king," John vi. 15. His design in coming into the world was, "to save sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15. As it was also foretold, that he should come in a most despised condition, in order to suffer, and give his soul a ransom, and an offering for sin, Isaiah liii. And therefore his suffering and humiliation for the redemption of the elect sinner are usually joined to his incarnation, as we see not only, Matt. xx. 22, but also Matt. xviii. 11, Philip. ii. 7, 8. In this manner do the compilers of the Christian creed proceed, when they teach us to say, "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate." And in this manner doth the instructor also proceed; for after explaining the doctrine of Christ's incarnation in the fourteenth Lord's day, he exhibits his suffering in this Lord's day.

We have three general heads proposed in this Lord's day :

- I. The exposition of the word "suffered," Question 37.
- II. the reason why he suffered under Pontius Pilate, Question 38.
- III. The grievousness of his crucifixion, Question 39.

I. Although the word, "suffered" is very small, yet it implies the whole of Christ's sufferings, from the beginning to the end of his life: "Christ suffered once for sin," saith our text. See this also Heb. ii. 18. 1 Peter ii. 21. The captious Remonstrants will not allow that the whole of Christ's sufferings is expressed by the word, "suffered." The creed restrains the suffering indeed to Pontius Pilate; yet this doth not exclude Christ's former sufferings, but only shows when he suffered most grievously.

In order then to explain this word in its more extensive signification, we will consider particularly, (a) who suffered, (b) what he suffered, (c) when he suffered, (d) for what end he suffered, and (e) for whom he suffered.

A. If we believe the word of God, we must say that the Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary, suffered; and that not only in appearance, but in reality. We do not deem it necessary to refute here the ancient and long since obsolete opinions of the Patripassians, who taught that the Father suffered: neither will we busy ourselves with Marcion, and others, who held that the Son of God suffered only in appearance, and not in reality. These opinions have confuted themselves and they have therefore also perished, and we know not that they are patronized by a single person at present. Sabellius taught in former times that the divine and human natures of Christ were mixed, the one with the other, or that the Godhead was changed into the manhood, which opinion is still maintained by certain Anabaptists, who also say that the Son of God suffered in his Godhead. But what can be imagined more absurd? For since he is the blessed and unchangeable God, he is also "immortal and incorruptible," 1 Tim. i. 17. vi. 16. The apostle saith indeed that "God hath purchased his church with his own blood," Acts xx. 28, but he doth not say that the Godhead purchased the church with its own blood: he only intimateth that the person, who gave the blood of his manhood to redeem and purchase his church, was God.

But when we say that he suffered only in his manhood, we do not understand it only of his body, as the Papists do, in order to deny the perfection of Christ's satisfaction, but also of "his soul, which was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death," Matt. xxvi. 38. We must understand this not only of the inferior and less noble parts of his soul, which were affected with sorrow, fear and compassion, on account of his approaching bodily suffering, as the Papists speak: for he suffered properly the power of God's wrath in his soul; inasmuch as compassion and fear alone could not cause him to mourn and sweat blood, as he did, because he would then have manifested greater weakness than many martyrs, whose souls sustained the most grievous suffering with the greatest courage, triumph and joy. He was also obliged to satisfy the justice of God for the sins of the soul, and thus to give his soul a ransom for many," Matt. xx. 28. It was also foretold, that "he should make his soul an offering for sin," Isaiah liii. 10, as it was also typified, when the blood of beasts, and therefore their soul was offered upon the altar, to make reconciliation for souls, Lev. xviii. 11.

But although Jesus suffered only in his manhood, yet he did not suffer without any relation to his Godhead: but his Godhead (1) surrendered the manhood to be an offering for sin, and dedicated it

to God, to make reconciliation : " He offered himself without spot to God through the eternal Spirit, to purge the conscience," Heb. ix. 14. See John x. 18. Eph. v. 2. (2) His Godhead veiled its glory under the manhood, so that it could not beam forth in its greatest lustre : " For he, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," Philip. ii. 6, 7, 8. (3) The Godhead sustained the manhood under its suffering : " His own arm brought him salvation, and his fury it upheld him : for the Lord God helped him, therefore he was not confounded : therefore he set his face like a flint, knowing that he should not be ashamed." Isaiah l. 7. (4) The Godhead also added the value to his suffering ; by which the suffering of the manhood being the suffering of him who was also God, " brought in an everlasting righteousness," Dan. ix. 24. Acts xx. 28. 1 John i. 7.

5. We shall now consider what he suffered. The instructor saith " that he suffered the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind." God was terribly displeased with the sins of mankind, as we have shown on the tenth question. Since now the Son of God was become surety, and had taken all the sins of elect men upon himself, in order to satisfy for them, therefore the righteous God also stirred up his whole wrath, and poured it out upon the Surety. It is indeed true, that he suffered from devils and from men, from friends and from enemies ; but in all this he still suffered the wrath of God. For (1) the men who procured this suffering to him, were the rods of God's anger," Isaiah x. 5. Therefore Peter also saith, Acts ii. 23. " Him, being delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (2) He suffered all that was necessary to make satisfaction for sin, as we shall show in the sequel. Now sin could not be satisfied for, but by bearing the wrath of God : this hath been proved on the fifth Lord's day. (3) The suffering was a cup of God's wrath, as we see Matt. xxvi. 39, compared with Psalm xl. 6. Isaiah li. 17—23. Jer. xxv. 15—29. (4) He suffered the death of the cross, inflicted on him by men, as a curse, and indeed so, that he hath delivered the elect from the curse, Gal. iii. 13.

He suffered the wrath of God thus from wicked instruments ; but he suffered it also immediately in his soul, when his Father withheld his light and lovingkindness from him, abandoned him to a dreadful darkness, subjected him to his grievous wrath on account of all the

bins of the elect, and let all the powers of hell loose upon him. We might speak of this somewhat more largely here, but it will be more proper to do it in order on the forty-fourth question.

C. We must observe in the third place, with respect to the word suffered, when Christ suffered. The catechism saith, that he suffered in body and soul "during his whole life." This is also true: for he was born in a poor and needy condition; when he was only eight days old, he underwent the bloody and painful rite of circumcision: he was obliged to flee for his life into Egypt, while he was yet very young. He had no sooner begun his publick ministry, than he fasted forty days, was tempted by the devil, blasphemed, threatened, and insidiously watched by the Jews; and though the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, yet the Son of Man had not where to lay his head. And who knows what spiritual distresses and desertions he was obliged to suffer, when he spent so great a part of his time alone, and in the dreary night, that he might wrestle in prayer with his Father:

But he suffered the wrath of God particularly "at the end of his life." Then the hour and power of darkness surprised him, when his Father attacked him with his anger in the garden and on the cross; when he was betrayed by his own apostle Judas, was apprehended as a thief by the Jews with swords and staves, was deserted by his pious disciples, and denied by his zealous Peter, dragged from tribunal to tribunal, falsely accused there of sedition and blasphemy, condemned, mocked, spitten upon, scourged, and finally put to death in the most shameful, and most painful manner on the cross. Alas, how bitter was all this to him! The anguish of his heart forced that dismal complaint from him, which he uttered with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" All nature was disturbed at this grievous suffering: "For the sun was darkened, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept arose;" Matt. xxvii: 45, 46, 50, 51, 52.

D. The fourth particular that requires our consideration with respect to the word suffered, is the end for which Christ suffered. Surely it could not be by accident, and without a regard to some great end, that God's innocent Son suffered so long a time, and so grievously. The word of God informs us, that he suffered, (a) "Because the hand and counsel of God had before determined, that he should suffer," Acts iv. 28. He had entered into an engagement to his Father in the council of peace to suffer, Psalm xl. 6, 7, 8. In

order to fulfil this council, he submitted willingly to suffering ; therefore he said to Peter, who would protect him from suffering, " The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?" John xviii.

11. The word of God also teacheth us, (b) that he suffered in order to fulfil the prophecies. It was often foretold, and particularly in the xxii. Psalm, and Isaiah liii. that Christ should suffer. He would therefore suffer, that he might fulfil the scriptures in this respect : wherefore, when he complains of the injustice of his enemies, that they took him with swords and staves, as if he had been a thief, he still comforts himself therewith, that " all this came to pass, that the scriptures of the prophet might be fulfilled," Matt. xxvii. 56. (c) His suffering was not only foretold, but also typified by all the trespass-offerings, sin-offerings, sacrifices of atonement, and of slain beasts, which were shadows of him, Heb. x. i. In order to show that he was the body of them, " he gave himself up an offering and a sacrifice to God," Eph. v. 2. We must also say that he suffered, (d) to afford a perfect example of obedience to his Father, and of holy patience ; for " Christ hath suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps," 1 Pet. ii. 21.

But the chief end of his suffering, and of God's appointing, foretelling and typifying that he should suffer thus, was that he might by his suffering fully satisfy the justice of God for the sins and guilt of his people, " that so by his passion, as the only propitiatory sacrifice, he might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the favor of God, righteousness and eternal life." That such a satisfaction was necessary, we have proved on the fifth Lord's day. We must now prove (1) against the Socinians, that he hath by his suffering " really " satisfied the justice of God ; and (2) against the Papists, that he hath satisfied fully.

1. We say that the Son of God hath by his suffering really satisfied the justice of God for the sinner. The Socinians, who reject all those particulars in the gospel, that can afford comfort to the people of God, have dared to deny this great ground of salvation also ; but the word of God teacheth us this truth, and therefore we cleave to it :

1. Because the suffering of Christ is put in the stead of all the sacrifices of atonement under the Old Testament, which atoned for sin typically. See Lev. iv. and xvi. Now it was impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins ; he nevertheless being willing to reconcile the sinner to God, substituted and offered his body and soul for a trespass-offering, instead of those sacrifices ; and thus " by one offering hath perfected for ever, them that

are sanctified," Heb. x. 4—14. And he thus really effected the atonement, which the sacrifices could not accomplish, but which only pointed to Christ. See John i. 29.

2. Because the sins of the elect were laid upon him, and punished in him, that he might take them away. The ancient church foresaw this long before it came to pass, when she said, "Surely he hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows. 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. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, when it was required of him," * Isaiah liii. 4—7. Peter having respect to this, saith that "Christ bore our sins on the tree," 1 Peter ii. 24.

3 The reality of the satisfaction appears still more, when we consider that his sufferings were the ransom and price of redemption for the sinner, who was taken captive on account of his guilt. Believers "are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold: but with the precious blood of the Lamb," 1 Peter i. 18, 19. "He gave his life and himself a ransom," Matt. xx. 28. 1 Tim. ii. 6.

4 We add to this, that Christ suffered for the elect. and in their stead: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Rom. v. 8. "Christ was made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. So that the sufferings of Christ are considered as the sufferings of the elect, 2 Cor. v. 15. "We judge thus, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and he died for all."

5. "God declares his righteousness in the remission of sins through his blood," and suffering, Rom. iii. 25, 26. How can this be, if he did not satisfy the justice of God by his suffering? for when God forgives sin without the satisfaction of his Son, he declares indeed his grace, but not his righteousness; and it would not then be necessary, that remission should be obtained by the blood of Christ.

6. If the sufferings of Christ were not for satisfaction, why did God then punish his guiltless Son? It could not be only to afford a perfect example of obedience and patience, nor to confirm his doctrine by his sufferings, seeing any ordinary man, who was eminently sanctified by God, was sufficiently qualified for this; but Peter showeth that "Christ suffered in the stead of the unjust, that he might bring us to God," 1 Peter iii. 18.

7. Finally, we say also that Christ by his suffering delivered the

* This is agreeable to the Dutch translation.

elect from eternal damnation: for "Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. Eph. i. 7. By his suffering he also obtained for them the favour of God, righteousness, and eternal life: "God made him to be sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Cor. v. 30. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vi. 23.

Whoever considers without prejudice these, and such proofs of the doctrine, that Christ hath really satisfied the justice of God by his suffering for sin, will be obliged to do violence to himself, if he will deny the satisfaction. The Socinians indeed deny this great truth, but it proceeds only from a prejudice, that Christ is not God, coessential with the Father; and therefore they say that the transient sufferings of one man could not satisfy for so many sins of such a number of men, who should have been punished for ever. We also should say this, if Christ were not more than a mere man, but since he is also God over all blessed for ever, and since his blood is thus the blood and sufferings of God, therefore his sufferings were of such an infinite value, that he could take away all the sins of all the elect "in one day," Zech. iii. 9.

They deny this truth also from another prejudice, to wit, they look upon sins, as pecuniary debts, and therefore say, that if the sufferings of Christ satisfied for sins, there can then be no forgiveness nor grace shown to men. This would be true, if sins were pecuniary debts, which are not forgiven from kindness, when they are paid: but inasmuch as sins are debts that deserve punishment, which God can exact of the sinner himself, therefore great grace is shown to him, when they are forgiven him on account of a satisfaction; because God demands this, not of the sinner himself, but of his Surety, and because God will admit of a surety, bestows one himself, and particularly his Son, and that just for this, and not for that sinner.

2. Having thus proved the reality of Christ's satisfaction against the Socinians, we must also prove the perfection of his satisfaction against the Papists. These will have that he satisfied merely for sins committed before baptism; or if he satisfied for all sins, that he then satisfied only for the guilt, and not for the punishment of sin; and if he satisfied for any punishment, that it was only for eternal, and not for temporal punishments, thinking that they themselves must satisfy for these in this life by afflicting their bodies, and after this life in purgatory. But the word of God teacheth us,

1. "That with one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14. If he satisfied only for some sins, and

not for guilt, but only for certain punishments, then he did not perfect his delivered people with one offering; and so these men contradict the apostle to his face.

2. The sufferings of Christ were of infinite value, as hath been shown; the Papists must also allow this, for they say that he could redeem the whole world with one drop of his blood. Now to say that he hath not fully satisfied, what is it but reproaching him, and his great work?

3. The Saviour himself said, "It is finished," John xix. 30. His Father also showed that he had finished all things, when he raised him from the dead, and so gave him an acquittance, certifying that he had discharged the debt, Acts ii. 24. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Peter iii. 21. How could all this be, if he did not satisfy fully?

4. Believers obtain by his suffering redemption, the favour of God, righteousness and eternal life, and so all that they need. How can this be if he did not satisfy fully?

When the apostle saith, Coll. i. 24. "I now rejoice in my suffering for you, and fill up that which is behind of the affliction of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church," he doth not teach by these words the imperfection of Christ's satisfaction, and that he left any punishment for us, that we might satisfy by bearing it: for he doth not say that he suffered for himself, but for the church, which was nevertheless not for satisfaction, according to 1 Cor. i. 13, but for her confirmation and edification. When he speaks of that which was behind of the affliction of Christ, he means not the Person of Christ, but the church, which is by virtue of her union with him the mystical Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12, and therefore her affliction, which she suffereth for his sake, is also called the affliction of Christ. See all this, 2 Cor. i. 5, 6. "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings, which we also suffer."

When we say that Christ satisfied by his suffering, we do not then exclude his obedience, but suppose that he satisfied by his obedience also; for the law demands, in order to a satisfaction, not only a bearing of the curse, Gal. iii. 10, but also keeping the law by obedience, that we may live, Rom. x. 5. He suffered also in obedience, Philip. ii. 8. And so "many are made righteous by the obedience of one," Rom. v. 19.

And therefore the Remonstrants must also be condemned, when they assert that Christ did not satisfy the justice, but only the will of

God, who required merely something of his Son, in order that he might merit a covenant of grace for all men, of which they must accept by their freewill, which is sufficiently able to believe; for Christ did not merit faith, according to them: but at this rate he would not have reconciled God with man, but only rendered him reconcilable, and it would depend upon man to reconcile God with himself, and himself with God actually. But, as we have proved just now, the sins of the elect were punished in him; his sufferings were the ransom; he was punished in their stead; God forgives sins, through the blood of Christ, in order to declare his righteousness, and so he hath satisfied the justice of God, which was also necessary, as hath been shown on the fifth Lord's day. Moreover, "he hath fulfilled the righteousness of the law in us," Rom. viii. 4, and so hath obtained redemption, grace, righteousness, and therefore faith also; for faith is grace, Eph. ii. 8. Philip. i. 29.

E. We must finally observe with respect to the word "suffered," for whom Christ suffered. The instructor saith that he suffered the wrath of God "against the sins of all mankind." He doth not teach us by these words that Christ suffered for every man in particular; for he had denied this in the thirteenth question; but he declares the grievousness of Christ's sufferings, inasmuch as he sustained the wrath of God, which was kindled against the sins of all mankind; or he shows that he sustained the wrath of God, not only for the sins of the Jews, but also for the sins of all the kindreds of the Gentiles; as therefore the multitude of the delivered praise him for "redeeming them to God by his blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," Rev. v. 9. Add to this 1 John ii. 1. We will not say any more on this subject at present, having exhibited it more largely on the twentieth question.

II. But why did he suffer "under Pontius Pilate?" This man was a heathen, severe, and cruel, nevertheless appointed by the Roman emperor governour of Judea; he was however deposed on account of his evil government, and banished to Vienne in France, where he stabbed himself to death. But though he was such an evil man, nevertheless the compilers of our creed thought proper to introduce him here, not only to evidence that we speak of Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of Mary, and suffered under Pontius Pilate; but also to show that he was the true Messiah, since it thus appeared, that, a heathen being judge of the Jews, "the sceptre was departed from Judah, and the Shiloh was therefore come," according to the prophecy of Jacob, Gen. xlii. 10, as Augustus and Tiberius, Roman emperours, are also mentioned for this reason by the evan-

gelsists, Luke ii. 1. iii. 1. But it is shown, that Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate particularly to manifest "that he, though innocent, was condemned by a temporal judge." Jesus was pronounced innocent by Judas, by Pilate's wife, by the centurion, and others: but Pilate did this several times as judge, See John xviii. 38. xix. 4, 6. Luke xxiii. 14, 15. Matt. xxvii 24. Pilate however condemned him, though he was innocent. The faith of Christians must conclude hence, "that he hath delivered them from the severe judgment of God, to which they were exposed." The reason is, because he stood before Pilate, as their surety, who having no guilt of his own, was condemned on account of their guilt, that the judgment of God might not pass on them. Which we must believe the rather, because Pilate's tribunal was God's tribunal, in whose name, and by whose judiciary appointment, he was pronounced innocent and condemned: in this, and in no other light was the matter viewed by our Surety; for when "Pilate said to him, Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above," John xix. 10, 11.

III. He suffered under this judge crucifixion, the grievousness of which we must now consider, as our third general head, and show that "there was something more in his being crucified, than if he had died any other death." There were several kinds of capital punishments among the Jews and Romans; but the Romans inflicted most commonly upon odious malefactors the punishment of crucifixion, in which the criminal was raised up on an erect post, having his arms stretched out upon a cross-beam, and the lower parts of his body resting upon a prominence, his hands being nailed to the cross-beam, and his feet below to the post. This punishment was indeed (a) exceedingly grievous and painful; for it could not but be most excruciating to be pierced with nails through the tender sinews, and obliged to hang in this manner, until a person either died of hunger, or was devoured by wild beasts. The punishment of crucifixion was also (b) a most shameful death, as it was not a Jewish, but a heathen punishment, which they inflicted, not upon a citizen, but only upon their slaves. To be obliged to hang naked between heaven and earth, as unworthy of either, was sufficient to depress the heart of the most shameless, and the most stout-hearted. The death of the cross was also (c) an accursed death, yea, it was accursed of God himself, Deut. xxi. 23. "He that is hanged is accursed of God." Paul having respect to this saith, "For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," Gal. iii. 13 To

be a curse, and accursed is to be devoted and given up to destruction; Deut. vii. 25, 26. Joshua vi. 17. Deut. xxvii. 15—26. But how is he who is hanged accursed of God? Many and various are the opinions of the learned upon this subject, which we will not recite at present, that we may not be too diffuse; we will only say, that he who is hanged is accursed of God, inasmuch as he is given up, offered and devoted to God and to his vindictive justice, for his destruction, in order that he may make satisfaction; and therefore he who is hanged is said, as it were to the honour of God, to be a curse to God, Deut. xxi. 23. In the Hebrew it is *killath elohim*, a curse of God, as the sacrifices are called God's sacrifices, because they were offered up to God, Psalm li. 17. This is exceedingly plain from Numb. xxv. 4. "Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up to the Lord, *laihovah*, against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel," See also the same, 2 Sam. xxi. 6, 9. And this capital punishment was accursed of God more than any other, because the malefactor was lifted up toward heaven, the habitation of God, like the heave-offerings; so also the burnt offerings, and the devoted Jericho were sent up toward heaven by fire, See Joshua vi. 17—27. And thus was the Lord Jesus also made a curse, and truly a curse to God, when he was hanged on the cross, not for his own sins, but for the sins of the elect, which the Lord had laid upon him; for "he made him, who knew no sin, to be sin, for us;" and therefore the apostle saith emphatically, that "he bore our sins in his own body on the tree," 1 Peter ii. 24. And so believers are assured, "that he took on him the curse which lay on them;" whereby they are also delivered from the curse; for "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," Gal. iii. And it was therefore also necessary, as likewise on account of the prophecies, which foretold that "they should pierce his hands and his feet, and pierce him through," Psalm xxii. 16. Zech. xii. 10. His crucifixion was necessary also, because it was typified by the heave-offerings, and also by the burnt-offerings, which were ordered upon the wood, and offered up to God. Many refer hither also the brazen serpent, which was lifted up upon a pole, according to John iii. 14, 15.

APPLICATION.

If there be any doctrine in the word of God, which is important, and requires our serious and diligent improvement, it is the doctrine of the suffering of Christ. And therefore,

1. See only the grievousness of his suffering. Pilate, after insulting him in a cruel manner by his officers, and clothing him in a ridiculous habit, showed him thus to the Jews, and said, "Behold the man," John xix. 5. But do ye also go near him, and follow him from his manger to his cross, and see how he was contemned, how the nation abhorred him; how he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. One while Herod would slay him, another while the Nazarenes would cast him down headlong from the brow of their hill, and often the Jews took up stones to stone him: now he was reviled as a Samaritan, who had a devil, and who cast out devils by the prince of devils, and then he was reproached as a glutton and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, yea, even as a blasphemer: and to what a length did their scoffing and mocking proceed! when he was treated in the hall of Caiaphas and of Pilate as a fool, and when he was reproached to the utmost upon the cross with a wagging of their heads by the officers, the chief priests, the common people, yea, even by one of the thieves, who suffered the same condemnation with him. It was not therefore so strange, that he complained, "Reproach hath broken my heart," Psalm lix. 20. And how grievous was it to him, to be bound with chains, to be dragged from one tribunal to another, to be buffeted, crowned with thorns, cruelly scourged, laden with his cross, and nailed to it by his hands and feet, yet all this he might have endured; but when the powers of hell also attacked him, while he was in a profound separation from God, whose sword of vengeance smote him on account of the sins of the elect, this was almost intolerable to him: this filled him with such anguish, caused his sweat to fall down from him, like great drops of blood, and forced him to complain so bitterly, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." And what rendered his suffering still more grievous was, that every one attacked him, high and low, learned and unlearned, Jews and Gentiles, God, the devil, and men, friends and enemies were all against him, "every one hid as it were his face from him," Isaiah liii. 3. None can imagine that he was so stout and unfeeling, that he knew but little of this; no, he was a man of like passions with us; his bitter complaints show the painful sensations of his heart,

and how grievous his sufferings were to him. See, believers, so hard was your Jesus beset, he who is the desire of your souls, the delight of your eyes, the joy of your hearts, the object of all the outgoings of your minds, and your only and perfect satisfaction. Doth it not affect your hearts, that your dearly Beloved, your Bridegroom and Husband, suffered so grievously? a heart of stone might relent at this.

2 But ye, who seek not yet the suffering Jesus, who pursue your happiness in your own works, to whom Jesus is not yet precious in his sufferings, who mind earthly things, and are thus enemies of the cross of Christ; who once seemed to have chosen his side, but have again loved the present world, and do thus crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame; who withstand the people of Jesus, and therefore Jesus himself, see in these sufferings of Jesus what will betide you also: for "if these things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Luke xxiii. 31. If the Son of God experienced so much wo, when he was guiltless, and had done all things well, how will ye, O vile wretches, endure, when he will attack you not as a man, but when he will stir up all his wrath, and bring you to his seat, that he may accuse you of all your misdemeanours, your sedition against him, your blasphemy, reproaching and transgressing of his law; that he may condemn you as guilty, and send you away as accursed, when he will say to you, standing on his left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. xxv. 41. How will ye then be crucified? for "your worm shall not die, and your fire shall not be quenched," Mark ix. 44. Either ye must suffer, or Jesus for you. Since now ye evidence by your behaviour, that ye have never sought him in truth, ye have therefore no proof, that he suffered for you: therefore be anxious and concerned, look unto him, that ye may be saved. He stretches out his hands, pierced with the nails, to you, and invites you to come unto him.

3. But with respect to you, O believers, to whom sin is so bitter, your heaviest cross, who condemn and detest yourselves on account of it; who have sought all your salvation in his sufferings, and who hate and curse sin, as a crucified one, see from what this grievous suffering of Christ proceeded; will ye be angry with the wicked Jews and Gentiles? or will ye complain of the Lord for causing his beloved Son and your dear Jesus to suffer in this manner? No, look at yourselves; your way, and your doings procured these things to him, and made it so bitter to him, and that it reached to his heart, Ye were the seditious persons, who broke his yoke, and burst his

bonds ; ye, by your wicked dispositions, opinions, and conduct, blasphemed God, your iniquities stirred up the Jews and Gentiles, and all the wrath of God against the Son of his love. It behooves you to see this, and to behold in it the dreadful nature of sin, it ought to incense you against it, and induce you to take vengeance of it, and to crucify it ; yea, this should cause your hearts to bleed for shame and grief, that ye, even ye procured these grievous sufferings to Christ. He foretold this, "that ye should look on him, whom ye had pierced, and mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born," Zech. xii. 10.

4. Look deeper into this matter, and see the efficacy of Christ's sufferings for you, in your stead, and for your advantage. By his sufferings all your sins have been taken away in one day ; your sins and iniquities, when they shall be sought, shall not be found ; when ye were enemies, ye were reconciled to God by the death of his Son : he hath redeemed your body and soul from eternal damnation by his passion, as the only atoning sacrifice : God will be no more angry with you, nor rebuke you ; in him ye have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace : by his suffering he hath obtained for you an everlasting righteousness. This is your hope, your joy and boasting ; "God forbid that ye should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," Gal. vi. 14. Bathe, swim, delight yourselves in his suffering, yea, ye should wake and sleep in it, that ye may inhale the flavour and efficacy of it, with the spouse, Song I. 13. "A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me ; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts." Behold therefore the sufferings of Christ for you, and in your stead, with Paul, Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Christ, and I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." To cast away your hope with respect to this, after so many evidences of his love, and the witnessing of his Spirit, upon every casual thought, deprives your souls of the sweetness, relish and efficacy of Christ's sufferings.

5. Open your eyes, that ye may see how much of God ye can discover in this. The inconceivable and manifold wisdom of God is exhibited to you here, in devising this way of saving you by the grievous sufferings of his Son, when it was impossible for any created understanding to contrive this proper way. The supreme power of God is discovered here, in accomplishing it against all the power of the gates of hell : this is the sum of the whole gospel, that "Christ

is the power of God, and the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. i. 24. But that which shines forth no less in this suffering, is the unfathomable love of God and of his Son; that God surrendered his Son, yea, that the Son surrendered himself to such bitter sufferings for such vile sinners as ye are: how ardent was the love that urged him to this! could his love have manifested itself to you in a stronger manner? Christians, stand still awhile here, and let your souls endeavour to contemplate this love, and be assured, that it will overwhelm you with wonder and joy: therefore the apostle said, Eph. iii. 18, 19, "That ye may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God."

6. Look at these sufferings, that ye may imitate Christ in his holy suffering: "For hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps," 1 Peter ii. 21. Jesus suffered in obedience to his Father, Philip. ii. 8. "Not my will, but thy will be done," was his language. He suffered with meekness; "When he was reviled, he reviled not again, and when he suffered, he threatened not," 1 Peter ii. 21. Yea, he prayed for his enemies, who crucified him, Luke xxiii. 34. He suffered also very patiently: "He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth," Isaiah liii. 7. He suffered also from special love to his people, Eph. v. 2. Behold this love of Jesus ought also to manifest itself in your mortal bodies, in your whole conversation as well as in your suffering. Doth the Lord subject you to suffering, "keep silence, because he hath inflicted it upon you," Lam. iii. 28. Are ye injured, be not displeas'd, render not evil for evil, insist not upon your utmost right, but abate somewhat of it; consider what Jesus hath done for you; though ye had injured him to the utmost, he forgave you. See how Paul exhorts you, Coll. iii. 12, 13, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so do ye also." Read also, Eph. iv. 31 32. v. 1, 2. Doth the hand of the Lord press you with any heavy cross, open not your mouth to reprove his way; all that God doth is glory and majesty: Jesus suffered more grievously than ye do, and he endured it: ye must "suffer with him that ye may be glorified with him," Rom. vii. 17. Doth the Lord expose you to the danger of losing your honour, property, ease and life for his name's sake; suffer it from

love to him, and do not shrink from it, as he also suffered for you in the most grievous manner from love to you. So that great follower of Christ would conduct, Acts xxi. 13, "I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." So also the other apostles conducted; yea, "they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name," Acts v. 41.

7. Look at this suffering for your support; for this suffering hath taken away the wrath of God, and the curse from your sufferings. Doth he smite, it is only love; "For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," Heb. xii. 6. Yea, Jesus knoweth by experience what ye feel, yea, he suffers with you: For we have not an high priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," Heb. iv. 15. ii. 17, 18. Are ye grieved on account of your iniquities, on account of the severe judgment of God, and on account of the curse of the law; the Lord Jesus hath fully satisfied for all your iniquities, and therefore God will declare his righteousness in the remission of your sins," Rom. iii. 25, 26. 1 John i. 9. Jesus was condemned, though innocent, and was made a curse for you, that ye might be delivered from the severe judgments of God and from the curse: "There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus; "who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died," Rom. viii. 1, 33, 34. Did he pray to his Father to forgive them who crucified him the evil which they did to him, Luke xxiii. 34; will he not then pray for you, when "he is your advocate with the Father, and when he is a propitiation for your sins?" 1 John ii. 1, 2. Or are ye concerned about your bodily wants, not knowing what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed? do ye not know, "that if God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for you all, he will also freely give you all things with him?" Jesus, even while he suffered, provided for his mother, when he commended her to his beloved disciple, John xix 26, 27, will he not then, now he is in heaven, his full treasury, provide for you?" Cast then all your care upon him, for he careth for you," 1 Peter. v. 17. Ye are indeed as dear to him as his mother was, Matt. xii. 50. Do ye often consider how ye shall pass through this howling wilderness to him in heaven? he, who when he was under the penal curse, said to the converted thief, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise," Luke xxiii. 43, even "he is gone before you, to prepare a place for you," which when he hath done, "he will take you to

himself, that ye may be where he is," John xiv. 2, 3. Is it matter of sorrow to you, that God delivers you up to desertions, God doth not however do this in his anger, which Jesus suffered for you, when he complained, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. xxvii. 47. Neither will it be always thus with you, for a time is coming, when ye shall be for ever with the Lord: ye shall not then be obliged to complain, like Jesus on the cross, "I thirst," John xix. 28. For since Jesus hath thirsted for you, therefore "ye shall not thirst any more; for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed you, and shall lead you to living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes," Rev. vii. 16, 17. Do ye think that all would be well with you, if ye were not so deficient in sanctification, and did not come short so much? yea, it would indeed be exceeingly ill with you, if your sanctification should be your righteousness before God: but behold, Jesus hath fulfilled the righteousness of the law for you, and proclaimed before the whole world, "It is finished," John xix. 30. And he hath thus cancelled the bond, "having nailed it to the cross," and hath obtained that "the righteousness of the law should be fulfilled in you, and that ye should be perfect in him," Rom. viii. 3, 4. Coll. ii. 10—15, and "he is also made sanctification to you," 1 Cor. i. 30. There remains nothing for you to do, but to forget that which is behind, and to reach forth to that which is before, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, that, laying yourselves as it were upon his cross, ye may pour forth your souls with him in death, and commend them into the hands of his Father, as he also did, Luke xxiii, 46. And truly, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Amen.

CHRIST'S DEATH, BURIAL
AND
DESCENT INTO HELL.

XVI. LORD'S DAY.

1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, and that he was buried.

Q. 40. *Why was it necessary for Christ to humble himself even to death ?*

A. Because with respect to the justice and truth of God, satisfaction for our sins could be made no otherwise than by the death of the Son of God.

Q. 41. *Why was he also buried ?*

A. Thereby to prove that he was really dead.

Q. 42. *Since then Christ died for us, why must we also die ?*

A. Our death is not a satisfaction for our sins, but only an abolishing of sin, and a passage into eternal life.

Q. 43. *What further benefit do we receive from the sacrifice and death of Christ on the cross ?*

A. That by virtue thereof, our old man is crucified, dead and buried with him, that so the corrupt inclinations of the flesh may no more reign in us ; but that we may offer ourselves to him a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

Q. 44. *Why is there added, "He descended into hell?"*

A. That in my greatest temptations, I may be assured, and wholly comfort myself in this, that my Lord Jesus Christ by his inexpressible anguish, pains, terrours, and hellish agonies, in which he was plunged during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross, hath delivered me from the anguish and torments of hell.

IT is related of Samson, that "the dead which he slew at his death, were more than they which he slew in his life," Judges xvi 30. It was wonderful, that after the death of Elisha, when a dead man was cast into his grave, he was restored to life upon touching the bones of the prophet, 2 Kings xiii. 20, 21, but it was still more wonderful, not only that one man destroyed so many men in his life, but also that he slew still more in his death, when he lost his own life. We do not read, that, besides those whom he smote hip and thigh, he slew more than a thousand and thirty men in his life; but when he was brought by the Philistines into their idol temple, which was full of men and women, and of the lords of the Philistines, and upon the roof of which there were also three thousand men and women, he bowed the two pillars, upon which the house stood, and it fell upon himself, and upon all the people; and so the dead whom he slew at his death, were more than they whom he slew in his life.

Truly this is a beautiful emblem, if not a type of the Lord Jesus, whose conception, and birth were announced by an angel, as well as Samson's; Jesus was an Israelite, as well as Samson: Jesus was also like Samson a Judge in Israel: was Samson strong, our Jesus is not less so, for he is the mighty God; did Samson surrender himself willingly to death, Jesus did so likewise, John x. 18. Were the dead whom Samson slew at his death, more than they whom he slew in his life, Jesus also slew more by his death, than in his life. It is true, he never, on account of his meekness, destroyed any man with a bodily death, though he once smote to the ground with a word those wicked men, who came to take him; but, which required more strength, he slew many spiritually "by the breath of his lips," Isaiah xi. 4, when he convinced them of their wickedness, and condemned them to death, so that they could not alledge, in vindication of themselves more than the dead, and many died to themselves by conversion; although he slew so many in his life, he slew still more at his death; for by his death he slew the law, and caused all the elect to die to themselves and to the law, Rom. vi. 6, 5. "He abolished death itself," 2 Tim. i. 10. Yea, "by his death he destroyed

him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," Heb. ii. 14. By the power of his death our old man is crucified with him, dead and buried, as it is said in the sixteenth Lord's day and forty-third question. Christ's humble incarnation and his suffering on the cross having been spoken of in the fourteenth and fifteenth Lord's days, the three last degrees of his humiliation, to wit, his death, burial, and descent into hell, are now treated of for our information.

In order that we may avoid too many subdivisions, we will according to the number of the five questions in this Lord's day, attend also to five general heads.

I. The reasons of the necessity of Christ's death, Q. 40.

II. The reasons of his burial, Q. 41.

III. The refutation of a pretended reason from our death against the death of Christ, as a satisfaction, Q. 42.

IV. The benefits of Christ's death, Q. 43.

V. Why it is said that Christ descended into hell, Q. 44.

1. Our first general head contains the reasons why the death of Christ was necessary, for so it is asked in the fortieth question, "Why was it necessary for Christ to humble himself even unto death?" It is here supposed that he was dead; which we, since we have many other weighty matters to observe, and intend to abide here strictly by the instructor, do also presuppose; and particularly that Christ suffered a real, painful, and bloody death, although he died being guiltless, and willingly, and yet necessarily: but that which is of the principal importance is, whether he was obliged to humble himself even to death, in order to make satisfaction, and whether a single drop of his blood was not sufficient to deliver all mankind, as the Papists imagine, that they may lay up whatever he suffered more than a drop of blood, as a treasure, out of which the pope may dispense so many indulgences. In opposition to which we teach that one drop of his blood was not sufficient to make satisfaction, but that he was obliged to humble himself even unto death for this purpose. We might adduce many reasons for this, as that the covenant of grace, in which redemption and forgiveness of sins are promised, is a testament, which he was obliged to confirm by his death, Heb. ix. 15, 16, 17, that he was obliged to obey his Father, who had ordered him to die, Philip. ii. 8, that he had promised his Father this, Psalm xl. 6, 7, 8, that his ardent and supreme love to the elect urged him so far, Psalm lxix. 9. John xv. 13, and that, if it had not been necessary, his Father would not have subjected him to death. But that we may abide by the instructor, we say that

he was obliged to humble himself to death in order to satisfy, for two reasons :

1. Because the justice of God required it : for man had by sin injured, and, as it were, corrupted the majesty of God ; saying with his actions that he was not God, that he was not glorious, and that he ought not to be obeyed : now the justice of God demands, according to the law of retribution, that man should also be corrupted by death, and thus "receive in himself that recompence of his error that was meet," Rom. i. 27. The law in which God has expressed his demand, declares him also to be guilty of death, Gen. ii. 17. Rom. vi. 23, as the Gentiles likewise know by the law written upon their hearts, "the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death," Rom. i. 32. Now since the Son of God was become the surety of the sinner, in order to satisfy for him, according to Job. xxxiii. 24. Psalm xl. 6, 7, 8. Heb. x. 4—9. Jer. xxx. 21 ; therefore sin could not be atoned for in any other way than by the death of the Son of God. Further, he was obliged to humble himself to death, in order to satisfy,

2. Because the truth of God required it : for it was foretold, that he should die for the sins of the elect, Isaiah liii. 8. "For he was cut off out of the land of the living : for the transgression of my people was he stricken," vrs. 10. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief ; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed," vrs. 12. "He poured out his soul unto death ; and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bore the sins of many." It was also typified, and therefore sealed, that he should die, in order to make satisfaction, as well by the slaying of the paschal lamb : "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," 1 Cor. v. 7, as by all the sacrifices of slain beasts : for he gave himself a sacrifice to God," Eph. v. 2. Now he could not do this, unless he humbled himself to death ; for the scripture cannot be broken. And therefore he would not be rescued, either by Peter, or by the angels from death, saying, "How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be ?" Matt. xxvi. 54. And so we see in what sense the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xv. 3, "That Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures.

II. But Christ, after he had died on the cross, did not remain hanging on it, to be consumed by the air, or to be devoured by the fowls of heaven, or the wild beasts of the field, like other crucified persons, but he was buried. We show upon other occasions by whom, where, when, in what manner, and in whose presence he was buried, what are the consequences of his burial, and how long he re-

remained in the grave.* We shall now treat only of the reasons, "why he was buried," according to the forty-first question. We need not inquire here why his friends buried him: they did this from special affection, to preserve him from further improper treatment, and against the day of his resurrection, whether the last day, or the third day, agreeably to his prediction, in proportion to the weakness, or strength of their faith. But that which we must chiefly consider here, is, what was the reason and end proposed by God in this burial, why he appointed that his Son should be buried. The reason was not, that he might, like others, see corruption, since this was contrary to his steadfast hope, expressed in the sixteenth Psalm; neither can we think that he was buried, that he might as an antitype of the sabbath day, rest in the grave on the sabbath, and thus abolish the fourth commandment; for we cannot discover any proof of this opinion. But he was buried,

1. "Thereby to prove that he was really dead." Christians have the greatest concern in knowing that he was really dead, because they cannot otherwise know whether he fully satisfied; and if they do not know this, they cannot become partakers of his satisfaction. Therefore his death and burial are delivered as two fundamental points of the doctrine of faith, 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. There could not be a stronger proof, that he was really dead, than that he was buried: for we do not bury the living, but the dead; at least in an ordinary judicial process, such as was holden with Christ, the living are not buried, but only the dead. His friends also loved him too well to thrust him into the grave alive. And his judge would not consent that he should be buried, before he was well assured that he was dead, Mark xv. 44, 45. He was buried also,

2. Because it was foretold, Isaiah liii. 9. "He made his grave with the wicked, and was with the rich in his death; his soul should not be left in hell," that is, the grave, "to see corruption," Psalm xvi. 10. See Acts xiii. 35, 36, 37. Therefore he should enter into the grave by a burial: the Saviour himself foretold it, Matt. xii. 40. "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." The scriptures ought also to be fulfilled, and so "he was buried according to the scriptures," 1. Cor. xv. 4. He was buried also,

3. That he might be humbled to the lowest degree. The human

* The Author hath respect here to a custom of the Dutch church in Holland, of preaching, during certain weeks previous to Easter, on the history of the passion, death, and burial of Christ,

body cannot be reduced to a humbler condition, than to be taken away from among men, and shut up in a dark pit of the earth: the lowest humiliation of Tyre is expressed by this figure, Ezek. xxvi. 20. And thus Jesus also "descended into the lower parts of the earth," Eph. iv. 9.

4. That he might wholly take away the curse, and hide it in the grave from the face of God and of his people, and stife it, as those who were hanged, being accursed of God, were ordered to be buried the same day on which they were hanged, Deut. xxi. 23. So all things that were devoted to God, were to be taken away from among men, as Jericho was devoted by the edge of the sword, and by fire, and therefore might not be rebuilt, Joshua vi. 21, 24, 26. See also Joshua viii. 28, 29, for the guilt and uncleanness would have remained, if he had not been buried, according to Deut. xxi. 23, but when he was buried, "the Lord removed the iniquity of the land in one day," Zech. iii. 9. And thus also the curse of returning to the dust, inflicted upon the sinner, Gen. iii. 19, was taken away, the graves were made agreeable restingplaces of the saints, Isaiah lvii. 2, and the old man was buried with him, Rom vi. 4.

III. But did Christ die to satisfy the divine justice, why must we then also die? thus asks the instructor in the forty-second question. For if Christ died to satisfy for the guilt, by which the elect deserved punishment and death, it would seem to follow, that they ought not then to die, or that God would demand the debt twice, which militates against the justice of God; from which the Socinians conclude that Christ did not satisfy by his death, and the Papists that he did not satisfy perfectly, but that we ourselves must still satisfy by our own death, as a proper punishment. Others justly condemned by the synods of our own country, say that death, and all the temporal afflictions of believers are proper punishments of their sins.*

In order to confute this pretended argument, and to show that our death detracts not from the perfect satisfaction of Christ by his death, we must know that a proper punishment of sin is not any misery inflicted upon believers, on occasion, and from a consideration of sin, for their chastisement, amendment, humiliation, and glorification; but misery inflicted upon the sinner for his destruction by God, as a judge for the satisfaction of his justice. Thus the instructor also understands this, when he saith to the proposed objection,

* The author hath respect here to Professor Roel, whom we have mentioned before.

“Our death is not a satisfaction for our sins,” and thus also must those who oppose us consider it, as they verily do; but they disguise the matter, that their opinion may not be exposed and detested.

That the death of believers, and all their temporal misery is not a proper punishment of sins, and a compensation for them, appears,

1. From the reality and perfection of Christ's satisfaction, which we have proved on the foregoing Lord's day. For if he satisfied fully for all their sins, there cannot then remain any proper punishment for them, and they are not obliged to make satisfaction, nor to discharge their debt by their death and temporal afflictions.

2. The guilt of believers is removed from their afflictions, because God hath forgiven and taken away their sins, so that they cannot, properly speaking, be punished any more on account of them; for the Lord saith, “I have sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee,” Isaiah liv. 9. “He is a God who forgiveth his people, but who still taketh vengeance of their inventions,” Psalm xcix. 8. “Nathan said unto David, the Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die, 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14. Afflictions are indeed called vengeance, after sins are forgiven: and punishment is indeed inflicted on account of sins, yet they are not therefore a proper punishment for the satisfaction of sins, because these were taken away; but they are designed for chastisements, which are inflicted on believers upon account of sins, and so retain a semblance of vengeance for their advantage, humiliation and amendment. We see this in many passages of the word of God, Heb. xii. 6—11. Psalm xciv. 12, 13. cxix. 71.

3. Temporal afflictions and death are welcome to believers, for they glory and take pleasure in them, 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. Death is their treasure, 1 Cor. iii. 22, their gain and they long for it, Philip. i. 21, 23. Could this be so, if it were a proper punishment? could a malefactor speak thus, when he was punished for his abominations?

4. Death delivers believers from every misery, and procures the greatest happiness to them: shame, loss, and pain may remain with them until death, but they must then depart: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours,” Rev. xiv. 13. By death they die also to their sins, which are their greatest afflictions: “For he that is dead is freed from sin,” Rom. vi. 7. Yea, death is to them

a passage into eternal life: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens," 2 Cor. v. 1.

If it be asked, why God still inflicts death not only upon the ungodly, but also upon his people, when it is so bitter to them, seeing his Son hath fully satisfied his justice by suffering every punishment, and death also? we answer briefly, that God could indeed glorify the elect, and take them up into heaven immediately, without seeing death; for it doth not militate either against his power, or his justice, as he showed in the ascension of Enoch and Elijah; but God hath wise reasons for not doing this, since it is his will to apply the merits of his Son gradually; and therefore he doth not sanctify them neither perfectly in a moment from their conception and birth, that they may observe his wonderful way in order; he desires by such a bitter fruit to show them, and cause them to bewail the abominable nature of sin, that they may humble themselves for it; to induce them to consider the exceeding grievousness of the suffering and death of Christ: he hath also ordered this so, that they may be conformed to the image of his Son in death; the Lord teacheth his people thus the greatness of his power by leading them through every opposition, and in such an unsightly way to life. Finally, we say also that it is a wonderful goodness of God, that he doth not take his people up into heaven in the body without death; for if he did, then those who remained alive, would know infallibly that all those who died, were lost. This would be an insupportable grief to those who remained alive, especially when they saw their dearest friends and relations die. That the Lord might now manifest his goodness, and not willingly afflict, or grieve the children of men, therefore he hath appointed it to all men once to die, the righteous as well as the wicked.

IV. But "what further benefit do we receive from the sacrifice and death of Christ on the cross?" Many and great benefits of the sufferings and death of Christ on the cross under Pontius Pilate are exhibited in the fifteenth Lord's day; but there are also other benefits, and particularly, that "by virtue thereof our old man is crucified, dead and buried with him, that so the corrupt inclinations of the flesh may no more reign in us, but that we may offer ourselves to him a sacrifice of thanksgiving."

The old man is the natural corruption of man, which possesseth him entirely from his birth, and is a continual source of evil lusts, which reign and rule over the sinner, as a king, according to a sinful law, which they prescribe to him, and under, and according to which

they hold him captive, and compel him, while he is neither able, nor willing to be delivered from his bondage. -See Rom. vii. 5, 23, Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3. Which old man is also called "indwelling sin, the motions of sin, the law of the members, the flesh," &c. Rom. vi. and vii.

This is crucified, dead and buried, not only with respect to guilt by justification, since our guilt was nailed to the cross of Christ, slain, and thrust in his grave, Coll. ii. 14, of which we have treated on the fifteenth Lord's day, when we showed that he obtained redemption, the favour of God, righteousness and eternal life for the elect, and freed them from the severe judgment of God, and from the curse by his suffering; but also with respect to the power and dominion of the old man, which is crucified, dead and buried by sanctification, partly in this life, so that the evil lusts of the flesh do not reign any more: "For sin shall not have dominion over you," saith the apostle, Rom. vi. 14, whereby believers, being thus freed and separated, offer themselves a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God, Rom. xii. 1. "We beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." But after this life the old man will be perfectly crucified, dead and buried, Heb. xii. 23.

The old man is crucified, dead and buried with Christ by virtue of his crucifixion, death and burial,

1. Because he by his death on the cross, and by his burial, deprived sin of its strength, whereby it reigneth: "The strength of sin is the law," 1 Cor. xv. 56. The law condemns the sinner to be a slave of sin, it discovereth sin, yea, sin works effectually by occasion of the law. See this, Rom. v. 20. vii. 5, 13. Now Christ hath deprived this law, which is the strength of sin, of its strength, by his death on the cross, and by their burial, inasmuch as he satisfied it, and so it cannot hold the elect sinner any longer under sin. Therefore Paul saith, Rom. vii. 4. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." And thus "sin hath no longer dominion over believers, because they are not under the law, but under grace," Rom. vii. 14.

2. Christ hath merited satisfaction for them; for "he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Titus ii. 14. For they are reckoned in him, when he is made sanctification to them, 1 Cor. i. 30, and so are said to be crucified, dead, and buried with him. "We are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead to the glory of the Father,

even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him," Gal. ii. 20. Coll. ii. 11. 12.

3. By his death on the cross, and his burial he hath also merited and given the Holy Ghost to them, Gal. iii 13, 14, whereby they "mortify" their sins, the old man, and "the deeds of the body," Rom. viii. 13. So the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. vi. 11. "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

4. The death of Christ on the cross, and his burial, affords them a powerful motive to crucify, mortify and bury the old man; for when they see the love of Christ, the grievousness of his sufferings for them and that their old man procured all this distress to him, they are then powerfully moved to dedicate and offer themselves up to him, in order to serve him, and to recompense that evil upon the old man, and to take vengeance of him: for "they who are Christ's have crucified the the flesh, with the affections and lusts," Gal. v. 24. This Peter also intimateth, when he saith, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind, to wit, that he who hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin," 1 Peter, iv. 1.

5. The death of Christ on the cross and his burial is also a lively figure of the manner in which believers ought to crucify, mortify, and bury the old man. As Christ was sought until he was found, seized, arraigned before the tribunal, accused, reproached, spitten upon, scourged, stripped naked, tortured, deprived of food, slain, and taken from among men, so also must believers deal with the old man: in this manner would Paul "be conformed to the death of Christ," Philip. iii. 10. For this end Christ also suffered, 1 Peter ii. 21—24.

V. We must inquire further why it is said, "that he descended into hell." We must not understand this so, as though Christ descended properly into the place of the damned, to triumph there over the powers of hell, as the Lutherans imagine: or that he entered into a porch of hell, where the believing fathers of the Old Testament were kept, to deliver them out of it; for the word of God knoweth nothing of such a descending into hell. His body was in the grave, and his soul in the hands of his Father, during his death, when he should have descended into hell. It hath never been heard of, that a general triumph before a prison; Christ triumphed on the cross, Coll. ii. 15, and in his exaltation, Psalm lxxviii. 18. The be-

Living fathers of the Old Testament entered into heaven in consequence of the suretiship of Christ, and by the reflex virtue of his sufferings; we see this not only in Enoch and Elijah, but also in Abraham, Luke xvi. 22, in Jacob, Gen. xlix. 18. "Christ preached indeed to the spirits in prison," 1 Peter iii. 19, but he did not descend in the body into the prison, but by his Spirit, in which he went, and preached in the days of Noah, and by him, to the inhabitants of the old world, who are the spirits, and who were, when Peter wrote this, in prison, but not when Christ preached to them.

It is true, our creed saith that "Christ descended into hell:" but we also know that this creed, being a human composition, must therefore be explained according to the word of God; that the descent into hell is not found in the most ancient creeds, and that it occurs indeed in the creed of Athanasius, but that then the burial is left out, as the burial is inserted in the creed of Nice, but the descent into hell is not found there. All which proves that the ancients understood by the descent into hell the burial; which is also agreeable to the word of God. David charges his son Solomon, "not to let the gray hairs of Joab go down to the grave in peace," 1 Kings ii. 6. We must remember that the Hebrew word *scheol*, and the Greek word *hades* signifies hell and the grave both, for which reason they are translated sometimes by hell, and sometimes by the grave. And thus the descent of Jesus into hell is the same with his burial; therefore he saith, Psalm xvi. 10. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption," Peter and Paul prove that he speaks here of the burial of his body, Acts ii. 24—31. xiii. 35, 36, 37. But as his burial was expressed before in proper language, hence it is not suitable, at least not in such a short compend of the articles of our faith, to repeat the selfsame thing in the figurative words of descending into hell. And therefore we understand by this with the instructor the suffering of Christ's soul, "his unspeakable anguish, pains, terrours and hellish agonies, in which he was plunged during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross." As David also expresseth the suffering of his soul by the pains of hell, Psalm cxvi. 3. The pains of hell got hold on me: I found trouble and sorrow." See Psalm xviii. 4, 5. As he also truly suffered the anguish of hell; for "his soul was troubled," John xii. 27. xiii. 21. "How am I straitened?" thus he complained, Luke xii. 50. "He was sorrowful and very heavy. Then said he to his disciples, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful," Matt. xxvi. 37, 38. Yea, "he was sore amazed," Mark xiv. 33, and "he was in a great agony," Luke xxii. 44. But he suffered still more grievously on the cross, when "he

cried out" in such great distress, "with a loud voice, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. xxvii. 46.

We showed briefly on the foregoing Lord's day wherein this suffering of his soul properly consisted: we will exhibit this now more fully. And O that every one would earnestly endeavour to obtain a proper understanding of this matter, that the believer may perceive from what the Son of God hath delivered him, and others what they must yet expect; for they will also be obliged to suffer that which Christ suffered, if they do not become reconciled to God in Christ. The suffering of Christ's soul, and his hellish anguish consisted in these things:

1. That he had a deep sense of the power and abominable nature of all the sins of all his dear elect, since he was made sin for them," 2 Cor. v. 21, for he had a deep sense of their guilt, the dreadful nature of sin, their aiming at the throne and crown of God, their breaking of his yoke, and bursting of his bonds, all this he was obliged to sustain now. Let a believer only imagine how he is pierced with sorrow, when he hath a feeling sense of sins, and when they become like a heavy burthen too heavy for him, but how then was the soul of Christ burthened, when all the sins of all the elect, with all the curses and penalties, which are threatened on account of sin, were laid with all their weight upon him, when he was nevertheless perfectly innocent? verily he was not insensible, but complained "I restored that which I took not away," Psalm lxix. 4.

2. That he was obliged to experience a deprivation of the ordinary and sensible influence, the kindness and love of his Father. He who was the Son of the Father's bosom, and brought up with him, who was wont to bathe in his Father's light and love, was now thrust far away from peace, and abandoned to hellish darkness; no pleasing sensations occupied his soul; nothing but darkness, distress and terrour possessed his mind; for he complained that he was forsaken; to this was also added,

3. That even his Father set himself against him; for he kindled his wrath against him, like a fire. Did Job complain, "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrours of God set themselves in array against me," Job vi. 4. "Thou art become cruel against me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me," chap. xxx. 21, how grievous was then the condition of Jesus, against whom God stirred up his whole indignation! The hardened sinner doth not apprehend this: but let him only represent to himself, that those whom he heartily loves, and without whose mutual love he cannot live, depart from him with

aversion, that they behold him with anger and displeasure, and inveigh against him with vehement indignation, will it not be insupportable to him? How grievous then was the condition of Christ, when not any beloved creature, but his allsufficient and loving Father himself attacked him in such a severe manner with his anger!

4. That the whole power of hell was let loose upon him: "It was now the hour and power of darkness," Luke xxii. 53. "The prince of this world came against him," John xiv. 30. He stirred up against him all those who scoffed at his sonship, kingdom, and trusting in God; and must we not think that he who sought to bereave him in a crafty manner in the wilderness, of his belief in his sonship, and of his trusting in his Father, did now much more do this? Who can doubt but that he assaulted him in this, or some other disquieting manner. If thou wert the Son of God, would thy Father himself be so wroth with thee? would he depart from thee? would he afflict thee in this manner for the sins of others, when thou hast not committed any offences thyself? is this indeed just? dost thou intend to be the surety of the elect in thy sufferings? is it possible that one should satisfy for all? dost thou hope that thou wilt yet surmount thy suffering? no, thou must suffer for ever, and thou wilt never surmount it; desist, curse God and die. Every person who hath at any time been the object of the fiery darts of the wicked one, knows how grievous this is? If we consider further, that his clear understanding was overclouded with the greatest darkness, although without sin, that he was forsaken by God in all the torments of his body and soul, that the bright noonday was darkened over him, and that the sun withdrew its light from him, we cannot but perceive that he suffered the anguish of hell in the most grievous manner.

Why did it please the Lord, might it be asked here, to bruise him thus? It was foretold, Psalm xxii. 1. He was obliged to satisfy for souls, and therefore "to make his soul an offering for sin," Isaiah liii. 10, and deliver the elect from the anguish and pains of hell, Hosea xiii. 14. And thus "hath Jesus delivered them from the wrath to come," 1 Thess. i. 10.

APPLICATION.

When we attend carefully to all this, and also to what hath been said on the foregoing Lord's day, must we not then be astonished at the inconceivable love of Christ to his people? When he wept over

Lazarus who was dead, "The Jews said, behold how he loved him," John xi. 35, 36. But if his tears were evidences of his great love, was it not then the greatest evidence of his love, that he poured out even his soul unto death, descended into the lowermost parts of the earth, yea, suffered such grievous, hellish agonies, that he might deliver his people from the power of hell?

But ye surely know that he did not suffer thus in the stead of all men, and that all do not partake of the benefits of his death, burial, and descent into hell. Therefore examine yourselves, and see how it is with you in this respect. And that we may assist you herein, we will show you who may believe that these things belong to them.

1. These persons have died in their imagination that they were spiritually alive, having learned with distress and concern, that they were under the sentence of death. This appears from Rom. vii. 9, "I was alive without the law once; but, when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died," Gal. ii. 19, 20. "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ." The sinner, born and educated under the gospel, imagineth that he is alive, because he enjoys the privileges of the Christian worship, because God is merciful, Christ hath died, and he is civil and devout; is he convinced that he hath corrupted himself in a horrible manner, he doth not yet say, there is no hope, he finds still the life of his hand, for he will amend his ways. But those for whom Christ became a surety in his death, are convinced by him of their folly, their imaginations fail them, they see that they are dead in trespasses and sins, and they are amazed that they have so long a time fed upon a lie in their right hand, and upon ashes. And so "they are pricked in their hearts," Acts. ii. 37. Yea, all their great virtues, with which they were formerly so well pleased, fail them, like loss and dung, Philip. iii. 4—9.

2. These persons are more disturbed and concerned about the wrath of God, under grievous adversities, and crosses, than about the most grievous cross itself. Extraordinary disgrace, losses and pains depress them exceedingly: but when they suspect that they may be proper punishments, inflicted by an angry God, this is insupportable to them, and is, as it were, a descending into hell: "thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled," said David, Psalm xxx. 9. They can sometimes rejoice and glory in their sufferings, but not unless they know that they are reconciled to God, and have peace with him, Rom. v. 1, 2, 3. Therefore they pray so exceedingly against the wrath of God in his judgments: "O Lord," said

David, Psalm vi. 1, "rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thine hot displeasure." And Jeremiah prayed in his grievous tribulations; "Be not a terrour to me," Jer. xvii. 17. Others do not concern themselves about the anger of God, but only that God would remove the death of misery from them.

3. They are such whose old man is crucified, dead and buried, so that the corrupt inclinations of the flesh do not reign any more in them. We see this Rom. vi. 4, 5. 6. Coll. ii. 11, 12. Gal. v. 24. They are sometimes indeed hurried to evil lusts, yet not like slaves and servants of sin, but like prisoners, who are dragged along; they follow indeed, but at every step they withstand their mighty enemy, and endeavour to disengage themselves from him; therefore they pray and strive against the old man, and when they are cast down by him, they rise up anew, and bewail themselves with Paul, Rom. vii. 23, 24. Yea, they surrender themselves to the Lord, as a sacrifice of thanksgiving, that they may serve him, and they dedicate themselves to him, and exert themselves for him. This we are taught, Rom. vi. 17. "God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart, that form of doctrine which was delivered you." Others esteem sin a pleasure, they swim in it, as a fish in the water, they follow nature: doth their conscience reprove them, they are displeased, they even wish that this and that action were no sin: are they moral, would they not by any means commit heinous sins, it is not because their old man is mortified by the death of Christ, for their heart hath never yet been changed, nor the new man formed in them; but it proceeds from a moral disposition, a virtuous education, and natural conscience; as they have never yet surrendered themselves to him, but live only to themselves, and for themselves, and that even as far as they are religious, Isaiah lviii. 3. Zech. vii. 5, 6.

If now, hearers, ye have the least concern about your eternal wellbeing or illbeing, and attend seriously to what hath been said, and examine yourselves, ye will indeed see how it is situated with you in this respect; but if ye do not regard it, if ye know not of such a dying to yourselves, if ye will not suffer such an anxious mind, if ye do not think of the wrath of God in adversity, but consider all as well, so long as ye enjoy peace, and are without fear, if sin do still live in you, and ye live in sin: know then, that "ye are dead in trespasses and sins," Eph. ii. 1. "Ye have indeed the name that ye live, but ye are dead," Rev. iii. 1. It is true, ye live, but like a dead carcase, which is alive with worms: "The widow that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth;" 1 Sam. v. 6. All your

adversities are only the beginnings of sorrow : God "distributeth sorrows to you in his anger," Job xxi. 17. But it will be much more grievous for you, when God will require your souls of you, when your bodies shall be laid in a dark cave, to be food for worms, and your souls shall descend into hell, to die eternally without living, and to live eternally without dying, and thus to satisfy by yourselves the justice and truth of God ; for "death shall seize upon you, and ye shall thus go down quick into hell," Psalm lv. 15.

O that ye would lay this to heart, would shake off your carnal security, and endeavour to prevent your destruction. This is indeed the only way to cause you to flee out of yourselves to him, who is set forth to you by God to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.

But ye, who cannot disown these evidences of your interest in the death, burial, and descent of Christ into hell, will ye still indulge this and that corrupt inclination of the mortified old man ? "will ye continue in sin, that grace may abound ? God forbid ; how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein ?" Rom. vi. 1, 2. Your old man is indeed crucified, dead, and buried with Christ, but it is only initially ; ye know how often ye are seized by him, and carried captive, and therefore it is, and remains your duty to crucify, mortify, and bury him : exert yourselves then for this purpose. And should ye not do this ? (a) Have not your sins done this to him, who is the beloved of your soul ? "Ye have pierced him" by them, Zech. xii. 10. He received the wounds of his hands and feet in the house of his friends, yea, ye still cause him to "serve with your sins, and weary him with your iniquities," Isaiah xliii. 24. Can ye suffer this ; and will ye not revenge it ? (b) How many crosses do your sins procure to you ? "Your iniquities separate between you and your God, and your sins hide his face from you, that he will not hear," Isaiah lix. 2. Whence proceed all your afflictions with respect to your body and soul, "that it is so bitter, that it reacheth even to your heart ?" Is it not "from your way, your doings and your wickedness ?" Jer. iv. 18. When do ye experience most pain, anguish, terror, and hellish sorrows ? Is it not after ye have suffered yourselves to be ensnared in sinful actions through your unwatchfulness ? will ye not then attack your sins, that ye may slay them, although they should be like a right eye, a right hand, or a right foot ? (c) A Christian surely never lives content, while he doth not slay his sins ; because his old man is crucified, dead and buried with Christ, therefore sin doth not agree with his nature : he cannot make sin his proper work, like Satan and his people ; "for he who is born of God

doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," 1 John iii. 9. Doth sin surprize him sometimes, "bringing him into captivity to the law of sin, which is in his members," he is not pleased with it, but complains, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. viii. 23, 24. But when he crucifies, mortifies and buries sin, how free and unconstrained doth he then live! What clearness is there then in his soul! How doth he triumph over his enemy! yea, with what joy is he then admitted to the life which is hidden with Christ in God! for we may then especially apply to the Christian that which we find, Coll. iii. 3. "Ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" Have ye no mind to that life, nor any great inclination to it? Surely ye have: "mortify then your members which are upon earth," Coll. iii. 5. (d) If your old man be crucified, dead and buried with Christ, he hath taken you for his soldiers, to fight with him against his enemies, who are also your enemies. Will ye then prove faithless, or suffer yourselves, through cowardice, to be wounded, or taken captive? he stands upon mount Zion, and sees who among you fights valiantly, and manfully, and him he will crown. Shall not his eye, which is upon you, encourage you to fight? victory is certain; "The Philistines are already fallen before the face of our Jonathan, and ye, his armourbearers, have only to slay them after him," See 1 Sam. xiv. 13.

Do ye not know how ye should conduct in this warfare? are ye desirous of knowing how ye must act, in order to crucify and mortify them? are ye willing to exert yourselves, in order to subdue them? consider then (a) in what condition ye are; that ye belong not any more to the old man, nor he to you, and that your old man is crucified, dead and buried with him, that ye have therefore nothing to do with him, but to fight against and slay him; "therefore reckon ye also yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vi. 11. As long as we waver between both parties, and know not whether we belong to Jesus, or to his enemies, so long we will be in a maze, and will not be able to learn this warfare. Examine yourselves therefore, that ye may see whether the above mentioned evidences be truly in you; and if they be, why do ye then doubt? (b) Learn to distinguish properly between the motions of the new and of the old man: it often happeneth, when we see corrupt inclinations in ourselves, proceeding from the old man, that we are discouraged, as though we were traitors, who had still such an evil heart, which retained yet so many inclinations to the enemies; but if ye were skilful soldiers in this warfare, ye would see

that ye yourselves were not the authors of these things, but sin that dwelleth in you, and ye would withstand these inclinations courageously, like that experienced captain, Paul; see his manner of acting in his warfare, Rom. vii. 15—23.

He who will fight well, must know his enemies. These enemies sometimes change their military ensigns, but their surest sign, by which they may be known, and which they never lay aside, is selfseeking, and aiming at self, though they often disguise this sign with an appearance of virtue, as zeal for God, the love of our neighbour, necessity, and other things of this kind. (c) If ye will destroy them, maintain a perfect and irreconcilable hatred to them; the Jews would never have crucified Christ, if a malicious hatred to him had not possessed their souls. If we have other enemies we must love them; but our souls must hate these lame and blind so that we will never make any league with them.

And verily, when such a hatred possesseth your souls, it will render you active and strong against the enemy. (d) Stand upon your guard, and take care that the enemy fall not upon you unawares, or surprise you: sin endeavours to assault you secretly by silent motions of your corrupt nature, or by selfish ends in your good works, or by means of opportunities that offer themselves, or by your outward members. Therefore take good heed, and look on every side, that ye may see whether some enemy do not appear. Learn how to keep this watch from Prov. ii. 10, 11, "When wisdom entereth into thy heart, and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, and understanding shall keep thee. Also from chapter iv. 23—27, "Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil." We ought indeed to take the lantern, and the torch of the word of God with us, that we may see the enemy who endeavours to conceal himself under cloaks of shame, as the Jews sought Christ with lanterns and torches. (e) Seize and take your enemies, and even "the little foxes that spoil the vines," Song ii. 15. Ye ought not to let one of them escape from you, but ought to hold and bind them fast, that not one sin may break loose and mislead you: "Abstain from all appearance of evil," 1 Thess. v. 22. "Hate even the garment spotted by the flesh," Jude vrs. 23. (f) Inflict punishment upon your enemies by arraigning them before the high tribunal, accusing them of sedi-

tion and blasphemy ; deride them as vain and foolish ; scourge your body of sin, restrain it, and subject it to bondage ; deprive your enemy of his food, and of whatever maintains his life, and deceives you ; nail and slay him on the cross of Christ, that he may be buried, and taken away from among men ; for " they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Gal. v. 24. Your King requires this, Luke xix. 27. (g) But forget not to put on the whole armour of God, which Paul describes, Eph. vi. 11—18, especially prayer ; " Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation," Matt. xxvi. 41, that he may afford you his help ; so Asa and Jehoshaphat acted, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. xx. 12, for there " is help laid upon one that is mighty " for you, Psalm lxxxix. 19. Urge him with your claim which ye have upon his death, burial, and descent into hell, for which he hath given you the seal of baptism, Rom. vi. 3—6.

If ye conduct in this manner, ye will be able to shout and triumph over your enemies in his appointed time, like Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. " I have fought the good fight," &c. Are ye still burthened with many crosses, it is not in God's wrath, and for your destruction, but it is from his love, and for your advantage, Heb. xii. 6—11. Are ye afraid of death, it is unstung ; death will deliver you from every sorrow, and be a passage for you into everlasting life. Are ye afraid of the dreary grave ; it hath been sanctified for you by the grave of Christ, " so that ye shall enter into peace, ye shall rest in your beds." Isaiah lvii. 2. Are ye sometimes afflicted with many terrours, and sorrows of hell, let it, not seem strange to you ; Jesus, who is yours, drank a more bitter cup : he pities you, and will deliver you finally from these evils. Hear what he saith, Isaiah lvii. 18. " I have seen his ways, and will heal him : I will lead him also and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners." Or are ye afraid of an everlasting descent into hell : " He that believeth hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life," John v. 24. He hath delivered you from the anguish and pains of hell, by his descent into hell ; yea, whatever is, as it were, a death and hell to you, shall itself be cast into the fire of hell, as was shown to John, Rev. xx. 14, " Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." But Jesus, who was once offered to take away the sins of many, shall appear the second time without sin unto them that look for him to salvation. Amen.

THE
PROFITABLE RESURRECTION
OF CHRIST.

XVII. LORD'S DAY.

Rom. x. 9. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Q. 45. *What doth the resurrection of Christ profit us?*

A. That by his resurrection he hath overcome death, that he might make us partakers of that righteousness, which he had purchased for us by his death: secondly, we are also by his power raised up to a new life: and lastly, the resurrection of Christ is a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection.

“**O**UGHT not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” Thus spake Jesus to the men who were going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 26. Nothing can appear more wonderful to the world, than that he, who was the hope of mankind, suffered so much: “Therefore he was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness,” 1 Cor. 1. 23. Yea, this greatly weakened the hopes of his disciples also; the notion of an earthly and ever prosperous kingdom hindered them from thinking of a Messiah,

who was to be humbled : but if they had had access to the counsel of God, they would have known, that Christ ought to suffer these things, and so enter into his glory. The Son indeed promised the Father, in the eternal counsel of peace, that "he would make his soul an offering for sin : and the Father promised him, that he should then " see his seed, should prolong his days, have a portion with the great, and divide the spoil with the strong," Isaiah liii. 10, 12. As "the prophets also testified beforehand through his Spirit, the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow," 1 Peter i. 11. See Psalm xc. 7. cxviii. 22. Isaiah xlix. 4, 5. He should be glorified for a reward of his painful labour, Isaiah xlix. 4, 5. The Father glorified him also, because he had humbled himself ; so the apostle speaks, Philip ii. 8, 9, " Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross ; wherefore God hath also highly exalted him." And so he is not a stumbling-block or foolishness to them who are called, but the power of God, and the wisdom of God ; as the instructor therefore, having spoken largely enough of the state of his humiliation, shows also that he was exalted and glorified by the four degrees of his resurrection, ascension to heaven, sitting on the right hand of God and coming again to judgment.

We must discourse at present only of his resurrection from the dead ; with respect to which we shall observe,

- I. The nature,
- II. The circumstances,
- III. The reality,
- IV. The necessity, and
- V. The advantages of his resurrection.

I. We shall attend in the first place to the nature of Christ's resurrection.

We suppose that he did not rise according to his Godhead, but according to his manhood, which died ; " That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die," 1 Cor. xv. 36. This resurrection consisted in the re-union of his body, which had been dead, with his soul, and in the revival of his body. Therefore Saul saith that " he rose and revived," Rom. xiv. 9. Having revived, he remained not with the dead, but departed out of the grave ; therefore when the women sought him in the grave, the angels said to them, Luke xxiv. 5, 6. Why seek ye the living among the dead ? he is not here, but is risen." Yet he rose not in the same weak and humble condition, in which he was before his death ; but with a glorified, incorruptible, and immortal body ; for " we know that Christ, being raised

from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him," Rom. vi. 9. The Socinians deny this, and imagine that he had not a glorified, incorruptible and immortal body during the forty days before his ascension, but that he was still mortal and corruptible, so that he might still have died, as long as he was not ascended into heaven. And do ye wish to know the reason why they think so dishonourably of him? it is that they may evade the proof which we adduce for our resurrection with the same body. We teach that we shall rise again with the same body in which we die, because Christ arose with his own body: the Socinians say in opposition to this, that we shall not rise, as Christ arose, but that we shall arise glorified, immortal and incorruptible; that Christ had not a glorified, incorruptible and immortal body in his resurrection, because after his resurrection he had still the humble marks of his wounds, that he ate and drank; but these things were not proofs of a humbled and mortal body, but of the reality of his resurrection, and he produced them as such to his unbelieving disciples, Luke xxiv. 38—43, John xx. 27, 28. The marks of the wounds were indeed proofs that he had been humbled, but not that he was still humbled: they were rather honourable tokens of the conqueror.

But when we say, that he arose glorified, incorruptible and immortal, we do not then say with the Lutherans, that he became omnipresent with respect to his manhood in his resurrection: for this militates against the nature of his real manhood: omnipresence is an attribute of his divine nature which cannot be communicated to the human nature, neither is the human nature capable of it; for otherwise the human nature would be changed into the divine nature itself. It is silly what they say in order to maintain this erroneous opinion, that his body penetrated through the grave-stone, when he arose, and through the door, when he came unexpectedly to his disciples, "the doors being shut," John xx. 19, 26: for "the angel of the Lord rolled the stone from the mouth of his grave," Matt. xxviii. 2, and he opened the door of the house, to which he came, by his power. That the doors were shut, when he came in, only shows us the time when he came to them, to wit, in the evening, when men are wont to shut the doors: and it manifests also their fear for the Jews, that they shut the doors: but it doth not declare that he passed through the doors, while they were shut.

II. The circumstances of his resurrection relate either to the Person who raised him, or to the time, or to the manner of his resurrection from the dead.

1. The Person who raised him was himself. This he showed

when he said, John x. 17, 18. "Therefore the Father doth love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh from me, but I lay it down for myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." See John ii. 19. 1 Pet. iii. 18. The Socinians, whose errors pervade every considerable point of doctrine, deny, yea, deride this, imagining it to be impossible, that one, who is himself dead, should raise himself from the dead; and it is not to be wondered at, that they think thus; for they look upon him to be no more than a feeble man, who hath nothing but his human nature to quicken him. But since he is also the almighty God, as we have shown in its proper place, therefore it is not so absurd and ridiculous to say, that he raised himself. It is indeed true, that the Father is most usually said to have raised him; but as he is co-essential with the Father, it was also his own work, which he did from the Father, and the Father by him: "For what things soever the Father doth, these doth the Son likewise; for as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will," John v. 19, 21. And it is truly a mystery, that the resurrection of Christ from the dead is sometimes ascribed to himself, and at other times to the Father; as we shall show in the sequel, that the Father ought to have raised his Son, and the Son to have raised himself, when we shall explain our fourth head. The Socinians, who do not comprehend this, blaspheme what they do not understand.

2. The time of his resurrection was the third day after his burial: this is the declaration of the creed, agreeably to the scriptures, 1 Cor. xv. 3. We must know, that the Jews began their days with sunset, and that Jesus was laid in the grave on Friday, before the sun was set, and this was the first day; the second, beginning, according to the reckoning of the Jews, with sunset on Friday, was Saturday; the third day, beginning with sunset on our Saturday, was Sunday, or the first day of the week, on which day, after he had lain the whole night in the grave, he rose early in the morning. It is said indeed, that he should rise after three days, Mark xiii. 31, but it is usual in scripture to say, after a day, when the day is not yet past: so Matthew saith, "after six days," Matt. xvii. 1, which Luke expresseth by "about eight days," Luke ix. 28. Christ was circumcised on the eighth day, and it is said, "that eight days were accomplished," Luke ii. 21. See also Acts ii. 1. And so it is not difficult to understand what Jesus saith, Matt. xii. 40. "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so also shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth;" for it was

customary with the Jews to express a part by a whole. Esther enjoined on the Jews, that they should neither eat nor drink in three days, night nor day; and then she would go to the king, Esther iv. 16, yet she went not after, but on the third day to the king, chap. v. 1. See this also, 1 Sam. xxx. 1, 12, 13. There were also certain reasons, why he did not rise later than the third day, to wit, that he might not see corruption, according to Psalm xvi. 10, like Lazarus, who having lain three days in the grave, stank, John xi. 39; also, because the faith of his disciples would have been too much weakened, if he had risen later than the third day; their faith began to fail even on the third day, Luke xxiv. 21, what would then have become of them, if he had risen later? We might add, that if he had risen after three days, it would have strengthened the unbelief of the wicked Jews; for they knew that he had said, 'after three days I will rise again,' Matt. xxvii. 63. Moreover, he would not rise before, that he might not render his death uncertain, as though he had only fainted. And he chose the first day of the week in particular for his resurrection, that he might hallow it to be the Christian sabbath; and therefore that day is called the Lord's day, Rev. i. 10, as the seventh day of the week is called the sabbath day of the Lord.

3. The manner of his resurrection was exceedingly glorious, as the earthquake, the descent of the glorious angel, and the flight of the keepers manifested, Matt. xxviii. 2, 3, 4. For the Lord of glory arose, and desired to display in this manner his triumph over death, the devil, sin, and hell.

III. But that which is of the greatest importance is the reality of his resurrection. Christians have not followed in this matter cunningly devised fables; but they can say with a full persuasion of mind, "The Lord is risen indeed," Luke xxiv. 34. For there never was any matter of fact, which was attended with so many evidences of its credibility, as that Jesus arose from the dead. We will not speak now of the empty grave, from which the Jews must have taken him, if he did not rise, since they were the persons, who had the care of it; neither will we alledge that God testified from heaven above by an angel, and from the earth beneath by an earthquake, that his Son arose; but we will prove the resurrection of Christ particularly,

1. From the testimony of the keepers, who showed the chief priests all the things that were done," Matt. xxviii. 11. They related not only the earthquake, and the appearing of the angel, but also that Jesus was risen; for, to conceal this "the chief priests gave the keepers large money," vrs. 12. There cannot be a better testi-

mony than this of the keepers; for they were enemies, who would not bear witness to the truth, if they were not constrained: moreover, they were appointed to watch the grave, that the disciples of Christ might not steal him by night, and say to the people, He is risen from the dead, Matt. xxvii. 62—66. When such persons testify that he arose, it ought to convince us fully; for they were best and fully assured of it. When they afterwards said, "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept," Matt. xxviii. 13, 14, 15, they relate an arrant falsehood; for they retracted their first testimony, not because they were convinced, that they had testified a falsehood at the first, but because the chief priests instructed them to do so, bribed them with money, and secured them from punishment by the governour. Yea, when they say, "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept," they lie so notoriously, that it hath become proverbial, in speaking of great liars, to say, he lies like a * person whose office it is to watch; for this is such a palpable falsehood, that it shames itself, and establisheth the truth: for how was it possible, that the fearful and offended disciples should dare to undertake this? how could they effect it? for the grave was sealed and guarded by armed men. Did the keepers sleep, and indeed all of them? how is this credible? why were they not punished for sleeping, and suffering the body to be stolen. when they ought to have watched in a matter of such great importance? When the keepers suffered Peter to be taken from them, they were imprisoned for it, Acts xii. 18, 19. If the keepers slept, how could they know that he was not risen, but stolen, and indeed by his disciples? if the council themselves believed that the disciples had stolen him, why did they not summon the disciples before them, accuse them, and punish them, as the council indeed acted, when the apostles published his resurrection? but the council never accused any of his disciples of such a robbery. And therefore the first testimony of the keepers, that Christ was risen from the dead, remains in full force. The reality of Christ's resurrection appears also,

2. From the testimony of the apostles and other disciples. These "testified of God, that he raised up Christ," 1 Cor. xv. 15. Their testimony cannot be deemed suspicious: for (a) they were eye and ear-witnesses, who had handled him, had eaten and drunk with him forty days, 1 John i. 1, 3 Acts i. 3. x. 40. 41. (b) They were not only two or three witnesses, by whose mouth every matter was to be established, but very many, the twelve apostles, and more than five

* This is the literal translation of a Dutch proverb.

hundred brethren, who saw him at one time, after his resurrection, of whom the greater part were alive in Paul's time, and to whose testimony he appeals, 1 Cor. xv. 5, 6, 7. (c) They were even slow to believe this matter, and they would not admit it, before they were assured by the most palpable proofs, that he, whom they saw, was not a spirit, but Christ himself, Luke xxiv. 37—48. John xx. 20—28. (d) They testified this, not many years after it had happened, and when those, who could confound them, if they did not testify the truth, were dead, but at the very time, when it happened; and that not only in distant countries, but in Jerusalem itself, near which it happened, and near the stations of the soldiers, who were in Jerusalem. (e) These witnesses were men, who loved the truth; and abominated the least lie, as they manifest in their writings. (f) They had no reason for propagating their testimony, that Jesus was risen, if they were not fully assured of the truth of it; for they could not promise themselves any honour or profit from it, but rather shame, loss and reproach. (g) "They were unlearned and ignorant men," Acts iv. 13, and therefore unable to contrive and propagate that Jesus was risen, if it had not been true. They could not do it by force, like Mahomet, who pushed his fictions in this manner; since they had neither riches, arms, nor friends to assist them. The reality of Christ's resurrection appears further,

3. When we attend to the consequences of it. For instance, (a) the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, so that those rude Galileans were endued with the greatest wisdom, and enabled to utter it in every language. (b) That the world received the testimony of simple fishermen, and was converted from its evil manners to God; yea, though many were enraged at the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus, they were nevertheless subdued, and subjected to him. (c) Observe only how Saul became a Paul: and add to this, (d) the destruction of the city, the temple, and commonwealth of the Jews. When we attend to all these consequences, and know that they happened agreeably to the prophecies of Christ, yea, that they were foretold even before him by the prophets of the Lord, are not our minds then perfectly convinced, that our Jesus, who was crucified, dead and buried, is truly alive, and that he arose from the dead.

IV. But as his resurrection was real, so it was also necessary, that he should arise, for "as it behoved him to suffer, so it behoved him also to rise from the dead on the third day," Luke xxiv. 46. It was not possible, that he should be holden of death," Acts ii. 24. The reasons are,

1. Because it concerned the Father, that his Son should arise from the dead; for, (a) the Father had promised him this and foretold it, Isaiah liii. 3, 10. "He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? He shall prolong his days," Isaiah lv. 3. "I will give you the sure mercies of David." Upon which the Saviour also grounded his expectation, when he said to his Father, Psalm xvi. 10. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; thou wilt not suffer thy holy One to see corruption." By which Peter and Paul also prove the resurrection of Christ, Acts ii. 24—31. xiii. 34—37. And the Saviour also frequently foretold it, as he had a certain knowledge that he should live again after his death, Matt. xii. 40. xvii. 9, 23. John ii. 19, 22. (b) The Father had proclaimed him to be his Son before the whole world, Matt. iii. 17. xvii. 5. This is denied by the Jews, and Jesus had maintained it. This dispute was therefore brought to the throne and the judgment-seat of God, that the supreme Judge might decide it: for Caiaphas had adjured him by the living God, and Jesus, adjured in this manner, confessed it before God, Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. Ought not now the Judge of the whole earth to do right, and to show that he had proclaimed him to be his Son in truth, and that his Son had been put to death unjustly on account of this confession? And how could the Father decide this better than by raising him from the dead, and so publicly manifesting that he still acknowledged him to be his Son? and thus "he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead," Rom. i. 4. And so "he was also raised up from the dead to the glory of God the Father," who had proclaimed him to be his Son before the world, Rom. vi. 4. (c) The Father had constituted him Surety, that he might satisfy his vindictive justice for the guilt of the elect. He had also fully satisfied for their guilt, and had therefore proclaimed, John xix. 30. "It is finished." And so it behooved the Father to manifest this by his resurrection, to give him an acquittance, to discharge him from his obligation to die, to raise him from the dead, and so to justify him: therefore Paul saith, that "he was justified in the Spirit," 1 Tim. iii. 16. He said himself from a foresight of this, that the Lord would help him, and would raise him up to justify him, because none could emplead him any more, Isaiah l. 8, 9. "He is near, that justifieth me, who will contend with me? let us stand together; who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold the Lord God will help me, who is he that shall condemn me?"

2. It was necessary, that the Saviour should rise from the dead,

because it concerned himself that he should rise. For (a) his human nature was united to his divine nature ; now it was impossible that he should suffer his body to see corruption, after he had fully satisfied by his death. (b) He was anointed to be king of Zion, and the government was to be on his shoulders : but this could not be, unless he lived and arose from the dead ; for how should it appear that he was a king as long as he continued under the power of death ? how could he rule over others, as long as he was himself dead ? therefore it is said, Rom. xiv. 9. " For this end Christ both died, and arose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the living and dead," Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. The resurrection of Christ was necessary also,

3. Because it concerns believers ; for it was necessary that he should be profitable and advantageous to them by his resurrection, as well as by his death. We must now therefore explain,

V. the advantages which believers receive from his resurrection. The catechism mentioneth three.

1. The first advantage is, " that he by his resurrection hath overcome death, that he might make us partakers of that righteousness which he had purchased for us by his death." Since he satisfied for guilt by his death, therefore he also destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," Heb. ii. 14. Because the devil could not hold him under the power of death, as a creditor, since the Judge was satisfied he endeavours to do it as a tyrant, stirring up his instruments to keep him shut up under death, and in the grave by a seal and watch. But since it was impossible that he should be holden any longer by death, he manifests that he is the mighty God, he bursts the prison open, and goes forth conquering and to conquer : therefore he said, Rev. i. 18, " I am he that liveth, and was dead ; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen. And I have the keys of hell and of death." As he was alive, he could render us partakers of the righteousness, which he had purchased by his death, that we by his righteousness might be justified before God : whereas if he had not risen, he could not impart his righteousness to any man, and would have evidenced that he had not satisfied, and that he had not been constituted surety by God. So the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xv. 7, " If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." But, as " he was delivered for our offences, so he was also raised again for our justification," Rom. iv. 25. And therefore believers may, in consequence of his resurrection, as an instrument of acquittance, showing that he had satisfied for guilt, and purchased righteousness, " come unto God with the answer of a

good conscience," and humbly request whatsoever he hath purchased for them. See this 1 Peter iii. 21.

2. The second advantage is, "that we by his power are raised up to a new life." By his sacrifice and death the old man is crucified, dead and buried with him, as is shown on the 43d question; but it is more especially a fruit of his resurrection, that the new life is raised up. The new life is the spiritual life, which is dead in the sinner, but which is raised up in regeneration and sanctification, whereby the elect receive a principle of life, new habits and powers, according to the image of God, are united to him by his Spirit, grow up continually, and surrender themselves unto him to serve him, Eph. ii. 1. 1 Peter iv. 2. Rom. vi. 13. This is effected by the power of the upraised Christ: for "as the first man Adam was made a living soul, so the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit," 1 Cor. xv. 45. This power of his resurrection Paul wished to know, Philip. iii. 10. And truly this new life is raised up by the power of his resurrection, because, (a) he, being risen, raiseth up the dead sinner, and admonisheth him to rise up also from the dead; "Therefore he saith, awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," Eph. v. 14. If Jesus were not risen, he would never send the word of life to any sinner. (b) His resurrection is the pattern after which we must raise up and dispose the new life; "We are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up to the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life," Rom. vi. 4. (c) As the elect are considered as dying with him, so they are also considered as rising from the dead with him, by which his life becomes also their life; for "they are quickened and raised up with him," Eph. ii. 5, 6, and "are thus planted together in the likeness of his resurrection," Rom. vi. 5. (d) By virtue of his resurrection he also works this new life in them through his Spirit; therefore he said, "Because I live, ye shall live also," John xiv. 19. And he works this life by living in them himself, Gal. ii. 20. (e) His resurrection is also a powerful motive to believers to live for him, and to his service; as they are also urged to this by the resurrection of Christ as a motive, Rom. vi. 9, 10, 11. (f) Christ being risen is also "a fountain of life" to them, Psalm xxxvi. 9, by which he hath a fulness of life, to communicate "out of his fulness, grace for grace," John i. 16. xiv. 6. Finally, (g) he is the object, and, as it were, the breath of their life; "your life is hidden with Christ in God," Coll. iii. 3. "To me to live is Christ," Philip. i. 21.

3. The third advantage is, "that the resurrection of Christ is a

sure pledge of our blessed resurrection." We will show in its proper place, that both the righteous and the wicked shall rise again. We speak now of his resurrection only as a sure pledge of the resurrection of believers; but not of the resurrection of the wicked. They will surely be raised up by Christ as a Judge, but not as a Mediator, since he is not their Mediator. Because he arose from the dead, they also surely shall be raised up by him, but not to be saved, but to be condemned by him: for "God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead," Acts xviii. 31. But believers shall arise to salvation, of which the resurrection of Christ is a certain pledge to assure them of it; for (a) he rose again, as "the first fruits of them that slept," 1 Cor. xv. 20, from which it is certain, that the whole harvest of believers is sanctified, and shall be gathered in, 1 Cor. xv. 22. (b) Christ arose as a conqueror of death, not only for himself, but also for his friends, whom he loved dearly: for "he died, and rose again for them," 2 Cor. v. 15, from which it is certain, that they shall not be holden by death, but shall be raised up. This is evident from 1 Cor. xv. 54—57. "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (c) He rose also as the Head of believers, who are his members, and who must therefore be also raised up; for he cannot be a living head of dead members. And therefore believers may say with a sure expectation of him, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," Philip. iii. 21. (d) He rose also as Lord to rule over them; now he could not rule over them, if he did not raise them from the dead; "for, to this end Christ died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living," Rom. xiv. 9. (e) And he rose also as their pattern, to which they must be made conformable: for "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," 1 Cor. xv. 49.

APPLICATION.

What we have now observed must certainly tend to demonstrate the sincerity of our doctrine against the Socinians, who slander us, as though we ascribed the whole efficacy of the salvation of believers only to the death of Christ, and no part to his resurrection. For we say that his death would have been of no avail, and he could not have rendered believers partakers of it, if he had not been raised from the dead. And therefore the resurrection of Christ perfects the consolation, which the saints receive from his death, so that they may say with the high praises of God in their mouths, on account of the resurrection of Christ, "Who is he that condemneth, it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is also risen from the dead," Rom. viii. 34.

See also herein the greatest proof of the truth and purity of the Christian faith against heathens and Jews; for if Christ be risen, his doctrine is also true and divine; for he rested the final decision of the matter, whether he was the true Messiah, who was sent by God, or not, upon the reality of his resurrection; for when his adversaries asked of him a sign, as a proof that he was the Christ, the Messiah, he gave them no other sign than that as Jonas had been three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so he should be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, Matt. xii. 40. See also John ii. 18, 19. The Jews had also observed this saying, and therefore they also secured the grave, that Jesus might not be taken from them by stealth, and it might appear, as though he were risen Matt. xxviii. Yea, the apostles also rested the truth of Christianity upon the reality of the resurrection of Jesus. See particularly 1 Cor. xv. 14—19. As we have now fully proved, that Jesus really arose from the dead, we conclude with perfect assurance, that the faith of Christians is the pure truth.

Although all who profess themselves to be Christians will own that Jesus is risen, and is therefore the true Messiah, according to the scripture, and that the doctrine which he and the apostles taught is consequently the truth; nevertheless, when the matter is rightly considered, we shall find that the Pelagians and Semipelagians, to whom nearly all those, who are not of our church, have joined themselves, deny the power of Christ's resurrection; for the Socinians hold that the righteousness purchased by his death is nothing but the publication of a new law, which is an improvement of the law of Moses: the Remonstrants teach nothing of it, but only that he

satisfied the will of God, and rendered God in some manner reconcilable to us; and the Papists say that the righteousness of Christ merited that their good works can merit, and thus become their righteousness before God, or a part of it. And so Christ hath no righteousness to apply. Do they speak of any application, they deny it in fact; for they ascribe all efficacious working to free-will, and to their own activity. The reformed church alone confesses and believes the power of Christ's resurrection in her doctrine of this Lord's day, because this is according to the word of God, which we have shown in order.

Let none of us however think that we believe the power of the resurrection of Christ, and partake of the advantages of it, because it is preached to us, is understood and professed by us; for "many have the name that they live, while they are dead," Rev. ii. 1. Therefore it becomes us to examine ourselves whether we do truly partake of the advantages of Christ's resurrection, and let each one attend diligently, and see whether he can apply to himself what we shall say. These do now truly partake of these advantages:

1. They who partake of his righteousness. He doth not render a person a partaker of his righteousness immediately, without any intervening act of the person, but by faith, which he giveth to him; the apostle mentions this evidence, Rom. x. 9, 10, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." They see by faith that there is no righteousness nor worthiness at all in themselves, or in their best works, by which they can stand before God. They see this not only as a truth out of themselves in the word, but in themselves, so that they regard it with concern and solicitude; and as persons who are self-condemned, hungering and thirsting through faith, they take their refuge to him, that they may be found in him, and have his righteousness, may rest and glory in him, and thus confess him. See this in the example of Paul, Philip. iii. 7—10.

2. They who are raised up by his resurrection to a new life. A life altogether different from the former takes place in them; for "if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. They who were dead are made alive, Eph. ii. 5, 6. The eyes of their understandings are opened, so that they see and know God and Christ by a new and heavenly light, which beams on them from the face of God, 2 Cor. iv. 6. They have ears to hear, so that the

word of God penetrates to their hearts, and subjects their souls to the obedience of the Lord, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. They have also a right taste and relish for the good things of God's house: to live with and for God, and in fellowship with him, is the sweetest of all sweet things to them; "They taste that the Lord is gracious," and therefore they are exceedingly desirous of this, 1 Peter ii. 2, 3. May they not attain to the enjoyment of it, and doth the Lord hide his countenance from them, they have a painful feeling of it: yea, the least sin which occasioneth it, is bitter to them, and their hearts, smite them on account of it, 1 Sam. xxiv. 6. 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. Yea, since they are alive, they will be averse from dead sinners, and their dead sins, and they choose the society and conversation of the living: "They contemn vile persons, and honour them that fear the Lord," Psalm xv. 4. 1 John iii. 14.

3. They to whom the resurrection of Christ is a sure pledge of their blessed resurrection. This doth not imply that they are always assured of their blessed resurrection: O no, they are again and again distressed with fear: yet they are exceedingly set upon the blessed resurrection, and exceedingly desirous of it, on account of, and through the resurrection of Jesus. See 2 Cor. v. 2—5. And that they may not deceive themselves here with vain imaginations, they will examine themselves repeatedly, and will give themselves no rest, until they have indisputable evidences, and the testimony of the Spirit of God, that they are the children of God, and that "he saith to their souls, I am thy salvation," Psalm xxxv. 3.

Is it thus with you, hearers? or do ye know nothing of all this? doth it suffice you that ye have only an agreeable hope that all will be well with you? know then, that ye have not yet any part in the righteousness of Christ, in the new life and blessed resurrection; for ye are, though not heathens by profession, nevertheless without grace; "ye are without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12, and therefore ye are not yet "born again, and cannot enter into the kingdom of God," John iii. 5. And what a deplorable case! ye shall die and be buried, without ever having yet lived. It is true, ye shall rise again: but alas! what will it be! when ye shall "go forth to the resurrection of damnation?" John v. 29. "Ye shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt," Dan. xii. 2. And therefore, friends, "to day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," Psalm xciv. 7, 8. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," Eph. v. 14.

But, believers, ye who are partakers of his righteousness, the new life, and the hope of the blessed resurrection through his resurrection.

1. Exercise often faith in, and with respect to his resurrection. This is the greatest object of faith, and we render his resurrection profitable to us by faith, as we have just now shown from Rom. x. 9, 10. Let your faith then be active here, (a) in acknowledging and receiving, upon so many evidences, the doctrine of his resurrection, with an elevation of mind, as a great and real truth. It is not enough to suppose it to be a truth, for this doth not derive any power to the soul from his resurrection; but there must be an actual assent to it with an elevation of mind, so that we can say from the contemplation of this truth, "the Lord is risen indeed," as the apostle saith, Luke xxiv. 34. Because we do not do this more, therefore we mourn and complain, like the disciples, who did not believe the testimony concerning his resurrection: yea, this is the reason why our hearts are disturbed with so many wicked injections concerning God, his truth, and our blessed expectation. What causes the soul to fear so from time to time that her faith will be in vain, that she is yet in her sins, that she will be lost, and be of all men the most miserable? Is it not because she doth not exercise an active historical faith in this truth? See what shakings it occasions, when we neglect to exercise an active faith in the resurrection of Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 14, 15, 17, 18, 19. (b) Exercise faith in the resurrection of Christ, in order to infer therefrom your great advantage and happiness; for if he be risen, ye have an interest and property in his righteousness; he hath also made you alive, and "begotten you to a lively hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ," 1 Peter i. 3. Can ye not perceive this, because ye are not led into it so clearly, in such a lively manner, and so sensibly by the Spirit of the Lord? Christians have their rational understanding, and must therefore endeavour to be active here not only with their feelings, and with wonderful raptures, but also with their rational faculties; what else is the meaning of those words, which we read, Rom. vi. 10, 11. "In that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." What is the consequence; when "the love of Christ constraineth us," is it not, "that we judge that if one died for all, then were all dead?" 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, and doth it not also cause us to judge that if one be risen for all, then are all risen? if we were only active in a rational manner, we should obtain more and higher actings of the Spirit of the Lord. (c)

Let your faith act also upon the resurrection of Christ, by improving it to your advantage and profit ; (a) by pleading with the Father by "the answer of a good conscience," 1 Peter iii. 21, upon the ground of the resurrection of Christ, which hath procured for you an interest in his purchased righteousness, as we do, when praying for purchased grace, we say to God in this, or some other manner, hath not thy Son satisfied for me, and purchased all righteousness and grace? hast thou not raised him up from the dead, and thus manifested that thou wast satisfied, and that he was made to me of thee wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption? This truly conveys much grace to the soul. Or, (b) by uniting yourse ves to the living Jesus, in order to receive from him continually the influence of the new life : "I live," saith that great man, Gal. ii. 20, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." As Elisha stretched himself once and again upon the dead child, and thus restored it to life, 2 Kings iv. 33, 34, 35, so ought the believer often to cast and stretch himself upon the living Jesus, until he receives warmth and life from him. Or (c) by looking for your blessed resurrection through him with a lively hope, as Job did, when he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another : my reins long exceedingly within me," * Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

2. Let the resurrection of the Lord Jesus be your boasting and joy. When ye contemplate the wonders, the reality, and advantages of his resurrection, it will ravish and transport your souls with marvellous joy. Verily Christ, the angels, and all the believers were wonderfully pleased, when he was risen ; yea, the ancient believers rejoiced in the expectation of his resurrection, when they said in the Spirit, "The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." Christians ought then also especially to abstain from labour on their day of rest ; and they ought therefore to meditate much on the resurrection of Christ, to speak much of it, and rejoice together on account of it. Hear how the scripture calls on you to do this, 2 Tim. ii. 8. "Remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead."

* This is agreeable to the Dutch translation.

3. Show yourselves now also alive, and raised from the dead : "His love ought to constrain you to live, not any more to yourselves, but to him who died for you, and rose again," 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Read the sixth chapter of the epistle of Paul to the Romans, and see what motives he derives from a consideration of his, and therefore also of your spiritual death and resurrection, to live to your living Lord ; dismiss therefore from you the dead, your deadly sins, and your dead languor in good works, that ye may not seek the living Jesus among the dead, and may do his will heartily, with sincere love, and with liveliness.

4. Let the resurrection of the Lord Jesus also administer consolation to you. Are ye fearful of any bodily or spiritual danger ? "Fear not ye ; for ye seek Jesus who was crucified ; he is risen," Matt. xxviii. 5, 6. Do ye miss him, hath he withdrawn so far from you, that he seems to be entirely and for ever taken away from you, he will return to you again in mercy, and say, "Mary," behold here am I, See John xx. 11—16. Doth your hope begin to languish, like that of the men who went to Emmaus ; he will new-quickened and new-enliven it, and enable you to say, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" Luke xxiv. 32. Is your peace interrupted ; your Lord, who is risen, "saith, Peace be unto you," John xx. 19, 21. Doth it grieve you, that ye are so little influenced by the Spirit with respect to your hearts and actions ; since Jesus is risen, he will in his own time breathe upon you, and say, "Receive the Holy Ghost," John xx. 22. Yea, his Spirit shall not be taken away from you, but abide with you, to raise you also from the dead, according to the words of Paul, Rom. viii. 11. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Amen.

CHRIST'S PROFITABLE ASCENSION

INTO HEAVEN.

XVII. LORD'S DAY.

Acts i. 9, 10, 11. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And, while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Q. 46. How dost thou understand these words, "He ascended into heaven?"

A. That Christ, in sight of his disciples, was taken up from earth into heaven, and that he continues there for our interest, until he come again to judge the quick and the dead.

Q. 47. Is not Christ then with us even to the end of the world, as he hath promised?

A. Christ is very man and very God: with respect to his human nature, he is no more on earth; but with respect to his Godhead, majesty, grace and Spirit, he is at no time absent from us.

Q. 48. But if his human nature is not present, wherever his Godhead is, are not then these two natures in Christ separate from one another?

A. Not at all; for since his Godhead is incomprehensible and omnipresent, it must necessarily follow, that the same is not limited with the human nature he assumed, and yet remains personally united to it.

Q. 49. *Of what advantage to us is Christ's ascension into heaven?*

A. First, that he is our advocate in the presence of his Father in heaven: secondly, that we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge, that he as the head will also take up to himself us his members: thirdly, that he sends us his Spirit, as an earnest, by whose power we "seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, and not things on earth."

WHEN the high priest was about to make an atonement for himself, for his household, and all the people, on the great day of atonement, according to Lev. xvi. he was obliged, besides other ceremonies, to slay a bullock and a ram, to enter with their blood into the holy of holies, to sprinkle it on the mercy-seat, and to take a censer with burning coals, and put incense thereon, that he might cover the mercy-seat with the cloud of the incense.

These things were certainly allegorical. This law was "a shadow of things to come, the body of which is Christ," Coll ii 17. We may not doubt but that the holy of holies signified the third heaven; the high priest shadowed forth the Messiah; the slaying of the bullock and of the ram, had respect to the suffering and death of our Mediator; the entrance of the high priest into the holy of holies with the blood and incense represented the entrance and ascension of Christ into heaven, to present the blood of his atonement to his Father, and enforce it with the incense of his intercession, as an offering. Let none imagine that this, though a pleasant, is an ungrounded allusion, contrived by one or another; the Holy Ghost himself reveals this mystery to us by his wise apostle, Heb. ix. 12—24.

Inasmuch as the Lord Jesus is exhibited to us in the fifteenth and sixteenth Lord's days, as a sacrifice slain for atonement, we see him, (after he had shown himself alive by many infallible tokens, as it is represented in the seventeenth Lord's day) enter by his ascension into heaven, into the true sanctuary, with his own blood, in order to be our advocate in the presence of his Father, to fix our hopes upon heaven, and to render us heavenly-minded. This is the sum of the eighteenth Lord's day.

There are four particulars in this Lord's day, which require our consideration, with respect to the ascension of Christ.

I. The nature.

II. The reality.

III. The necessity, and

IV. The advantages of his ascension.

I. The first particular is (1) explained in the forty sixth question, and (2) rescued from two objections in the forty-eighth question.

We must explain then in the first place the nature of Christ's ascension, that we may the more easily refute those who oppose us in this matter, and may exhibit more emphatically the important salvation, which is procured for believers by this ascension. We must know beforehand, that neither the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, but only the Son of God, or Christ ascended into heaven: not according to his divine, but according to his human nature, which alone was capable of a change of place; but the divine nature, being omnipresent, is incapable of a change of place. It is true, that the Godhead is sometimes said to ascend: "God went up from Abraham," saith Moses, Gen. xvii. 22, but this doth not denote that God departs from earth, and enters into heaven with his essence, but that he takes up the visible token of his special presence from men: as when the ark of the covenant, the visible token of the divine presence, was carried up to Zion, they sang, "God is gone up with a shout," Psalm xlvii. 5. And we might also say that Christ ascended in this manner into heaven with respect to his Godhead, because the Godhead took up its human nature, in which it manifested itself especially and personally present, into heaven from among men. And so "he ascended even as he descended. See John iii. 13. xvi. 28. Eph. iv. 9, 10. He did not descend from the Father out of heaven, according to his manhood, but according to his Godhead, which manifested itself personally present in its human nature. John teacheth us this most emphatically, when he saith, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father)," John i. 14. In the same manner he also ascended, when the Godhead took up its human nature into heaven.

This being premised, we will explain his ascension into heaven more particularly with respect to the circumstances 1, of place, 2, of time, 3, of persons, 4, of agents, and 5, of qualities.

1. The first circumstance of Christ's ascension is the place from which, and the place to which he ascended. The place from which he ascended was the earth; this lower world; "He should depart

out of this world, and go unto the Father," John xiii. 1. "When he should go to the Father, he should leave the world," chap. xvi. 28. And it was particularly "the mouut of Olives, lying a sabbath-days journey from Jerusalem," Acts i. 12. This mountain he had made the place of his usual resort for prayer: there where he had so often sent up his soul toward heaven, he would now ascend up to heaven in body and soul together.

By this mountain lay the village of Bethany, and it was near this village where he ascended into heaven, as Luke relates, Luke xxiv. 50, 51. He would thus make that house of affliction * a house of glorification for himself. The place to which he ascended was "heaven, into which he was taken up," Luke xxiv. 51. Acts i. 11. He was not taken up only into the air, which is also called heaven, Matt. vi. 26, nor into the firmament, the starry heaven, called "God's heaven," Psalm viii. 3, but "far above all" visible "heavens," Eph. iv. 10, and so into the third heaven, into which Paul was caught up, 2 Cor. xii. 2, called "the heaven of heavens," 1 Kings viii. 27, by which we cannot understand with the Lutherans, who hold that the body of Christ became omnipresent, the state of happiness, and God himself, who is every where; but a real place so called, into which he entered by his ascension, and from which he is not absent with respect to his manhood; for "he left the world, and went to the Father," John xvi. 28, and "he departed out of the world unto the Father," John xiii. 1. As this third heaven, into which he ascended, is also described as a limited place, distinct from the earth, and is therefore called "Paradise," 2 Cor. xii. 4, "The house of his Father, in which there are many mansions," John xiv. 2. "The palace, and throne of God," Psalm xi. 4. Isaiah lxvi. 1. "The city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," Heb. xi. 10, being the highest heaven," Heb. i. 3, where Jesus is, as in a place, "sitting on the right hand of God," Coll. iii. 1, "from which place believers also wait for him," 1 Thess. i. 10, and "to which he will also take up" all the saints to him, John xiv. 3. Paul saith indeed that "he ascended up far above all heavens," Eph. iv. 10, but this doth not denote that he is not in heaven, as in a place, but present every where with his human nature: for his ascending up far above all heavens is opposed to his descending into the lower parts of the earth, vrs. 9. Now as we cannot say that his descending into the lower parts of the earth denotes that he became omnipresent, so we cannot say that his ascending up far above all heavens denotes that

* The author alludes to the meaning of the name Bethany, which signifies a house of affliction.

he became omnipresent ; but the apostle intimateth that Christ was by his ascension glorified to the highest degree in the third heaven, (which is far above all visible heavens) as he was humbled to the lowest degree in his incarnation, descending into the lower parts of the earth.

2 The time of his ascension deserves our attention, as well as the place. This was forty days after his resurrection. Moses was forty days with God on the mount ; just so many days Elijah travelled in the strength of the meat which he had received of the angel, until he came to the mount of God : Jesus was presented to the Lord on the fortieth day after his birth, Luke ii. 22, according to the law, Lev. xii. 2, 4, 6. He was also forty days in the wilderness, fasting, that he might be tempted of the devil, Matt. iv. 1—11. Thus he also ascended into heaven forty days after his resurrection. He would not ascend sooner, that he might instruct his apostles so long in the things pertaining to his kingdom, and give them the most certain proof that he was really arisen, that there might not remain the least suspicion concerning this matter ; for “ he was taken up, after he had through the Holy Ghost given commandments unto the apostles, whom he had chosen. To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,” Acts i. 2, 3. Therefore Paul also alledgeth as a proof of the reality of his resurrection, that “ he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who were his witnesses unto the people,” Acts xiii. 31. Neither would he remain with them longer, that he might not confirm them in their opinion that he was about to erect a temporal kingdom, and also strengthen their excessive attachment to his bodily presence. See Acts i. 6, 7.

3. But he did not ascend privately, at a distance from the society of men, but before the eyes of many who were present. We do not read that there was any person present when Enoch was taken up to heaven, Gen. v. 24, and we do not find that any one saw near at hand Elijah ascend up into heaven, except Elisha, 2 Kings, ii. 12. But Jesus ascended “ in the sight of his disciples,” saith the instructor. These were his eleven apostles, Acts i. 2, 9. Those who had been with him during all his sufferings, he wished to be with him also when he was glorified, that they might be witnesses of his glory, as they had been of his sufferings ; but the holy apostles were not the only persons who were present, but there were also two men in white apparel, doubtless angels, present ; in order to inform the apostles of the manner, in which the Lord Jesus ascended and should

come again. See this Acts i. 10, 11, and also to honour him as well by their presence, as by their acclamations on account of this glory of his. And who can doubt but that there was a great multitude of the heavenly host present, although invisible, who surrounded, accompanied and welcomed him, and shouted aloud his praise? This was seen at his birth, when he came to fight, Luke ii. 13, 14. After he had put the devil to flight, "the angels came and ministered to him," Matt. iv. 11. May we not then conceive that they came to him, in order to increase his glory, after he had accomplished his fight, and when he ascended triumphantly into his palace? Surely when "he ascended up on high, when he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that they might dwell with him, then the chariots of God were twenty thousand, yea, thousands of angels: the Lord was among them, as in Sinai, the holy place," Psalm lxxviii. 17, 18.

4. But we must inquire particularly who were the agents in this ascension. These were the Father, and Christ himself. When the divine work of ascension is ascribed to the Father, it is then called "a taking up," Mark xvi. 19. Luke xxiv. 51, and "an exaltation by the right hand of God," Acts ii. 33, in order to evince, (a) that the Father acknowledged and accepted him as his Son, though he was not acknowledged as such by the Jews, but slain by them, as a blasphemer. (b) That the Father himself declared that he had finished the work which had been given him to do, and that he would therefore bestow upon him the stipulated reward of his labour. This Jesus urged with his Father, when he said, John xvii. 4, 5. "I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine ownself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." The Father had promised him this, as a reward of his grievous labour, Isaiah xlix. 4, 5. lii. 13. liii. 10. And thus "the Father hath highly exalted him, because he obeyed him unto death, even the death of the cross," Philip. ii. 8, 9. But the divine work of the ascension is also ascribed to the Son, who is co-essential with the Father, and then the ascension is called "a departing to the Father," John xiii.—"a going," John xiv. 2, 3,—"a going away," John xvi. 7,—"a passing into the heavens," Heb. iv. 14, and "an entering into that within the veil," Heb. vi. 19, 20, as an evidence of his divine power, and his right as Mediator to take possession by himself of the glory which he had merited; for "all power was given him in heaven and on earth," Matt. xxviii. 18. But we ought not to forget that a cloud was employed in this ascension into heaven.

either (a) to conceal Jesus from the eyes of the beholders, who were yet too much attached to his bodily presence ; for " a cloud received him out of their sight," Acts i. 9 ; or (b) to serve as an instrument and vehicle to take him up, as the chariot and horses of fire took Elijah up, 2 Kings ii. 11 ; or (c) to serve as a triumphal car, in order to display his glory ; as God, when he displayeth his glory in the clouds, is said " to make the clouds his chariot," Psalm civ. 3.

5. In order to illustrate the ascension of Christ further, we must attend also to the qualities of it. These qualities are many and various, particularly. (a) That he ascended only once into heaven, as " the high priest went once a year into the sanctuary, not without blood, so Jesus, the true High Priest entered into the holy place by his own blood," Heb. ix. 7, 11, 12. We must therefore condemn the opinion of the Socinians, that Christ ascended twice into heaven. once about the time of his baptism, in order to be instructed, and then also forty days after his resurrection ; for it was not necessary that he should ascend into heaven in order to be instructed, seeing he was the essential Word and Wisdom of the Father. The scripture doth not mention aught of such a first ascension about the time of his baptism ; doth it speak of his descending from heaven, we have explained before the meaning of this. Christ saith indeed that " he who had descended from heaven, had also ascended," and that before he ascended forty days after his resurrection, John iii. 13, but he speaks not then of his bodily ascension, but of an ascension into heaven with his understanding, either according to his divine, or his human nature, which had penetrated to the highest matters in the highest manner, which was not permitted to every man, but only to him " who had descended from heaven, and was notwithstanding still in heaven," John iii. 13. For " who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended ? who hath gathered the wind in his fists ? who hath bound the waters in a garment ? who hath established all the ends of the earth ? what is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell ?" Thus asks Agur that he may humble himself, and all other men, on account of the diminutive capacity of man. See this Prov. xxx. 1—4.

(b) When he ascended in this manner, he was not silent, but discoursed till the last moment : " After he had spoken these things, to wit, that they should receive power from the Holy Ghost, that they might be his witnesses, he was taken up," Acts i. 8, 9. Jesus would be profitable to the last, no less than Elijah, who was taken up while he talked with Elisha.

(c) But did he depart from his friends with severity ? no, but

with a blessing; for "it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them," Luke xxiv. 51. Although he withdrew, he would not take his blessing with him; yea, by and after his ascension he poured out his Spirit upon them. He promised this, Acts i. 8, and he also performed it, Acts ii. 1, 4, 33. After Elijah was ascended into heaven, his spirit rested upon Elisha, according to his petition, 2 Kings ii. 9, 15. But Jesus, possessing the fulness of all grace, bestowed a greater measure of his Spirit upon his apostles.

(d) He ascended also visibly into heaven; for "he was taken up, while they beheld," Acts i. 9. Yea, they doubtless looked a long time after him, even until the intervening cloud hid him from their sight, and they saw him no more, as it is said of Elisha, that "he saw Elijah no more," after he was ascended, 2 Kings ii. 12.

(e) Nevertheless he did not ascend into heaven to remain there for ever, but "to return, in order to judge both the quick and the dead." The two men in white apparel said to the apostles, "This Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," Acts i. 10, 11. As his coming again will be to the terrour of the wicked," who will mourn, when they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven," Matt. xxiv. 30, so it will be to the joy and comfort of his favourites; for he promised them, that "if he went away from them, he would prepare a place for them, and after that, he would come again, and receive them to himself, that they might be where he was," John xvi. 3.

(f) But the quality that discovereth most of all the nature of his ascension is, that he was taken up locally from earth into heaven, leaving the earth, and going into heaven. This is denied by the Lutherans, who pretend that Christ became omnipresent with his body, as though he were now on earth with his body, as well as in heaven. This opinion which confutes itself, these men will by all means maintain, that they may the more easily defend their erroneous opinion concerning the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord's supper; but it is untenable, inasmuch as (a) he according to his manhood, "left the world, and went to the Father," John xvi. 28. Therefore he said, "Me ye have not always," Matt. xxvi. 11. (b) He is also with respect to his manhood in heaven; for the heaven must receive him until the times of the restitution of all things," Acts iii. 21. (c) He ascended visibly; for "he was taken up while they beheld," Acts i. 9, but they never saw him become omnipresent. Was he concealed from their sight by a cloud, his body was however not extended and rarified in such a manner, that it vanished. (d) He will

come again in the same manner, in which he departed ; but he will come locally from heaven in the clouds, according to Philip. iii. 20. 1 Thess. i. 10. iv. 16, therefore he also ascended locally (e) The phrases of "receiving up, departing to the Father, going, and going away," which are used here, intimate a change of place. (f) The omnipresence of Christ's body militates against the nature of that body, which cannot be present in more than one place at the same time : moreover, omnipresence is an incommunicable attribute of God.

We must now defend the orthodoxy of our church on this head against two objections, which are offered by the Lutherans.

(a) The first is thus proposed in the forty seventh question : "Is not Christ then with us even to the end of the world, as he hath promised?" This he promised, Matt. xxviii. 20, but it follows not from this promise, that he is present with us according to his body ; for, seeing he is God and man in one person, therefore he can be truly present with his people according to his Godhead, majesty, grace, and Spirit, although he be not present with them according to his body : when he had no body, he was present with his people, by his Spirit and grace, for he promised, Exod. xx. 24. "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and bless thee." Why then cannot he, now he hath a finite and limited body, also be present with us without his body ? yea, when he promiseth that he will be present with his Spirit and grace, he denies that he will be present with his body : "If I go not away," saith he, "the Comforter will not come unto you ; but, if I depart, I will send him unto you," John xvi. 7.

(b) The second objection is, that the human nature ought to be wherever the Godhead is, or that otherwise those two natures will be separated, one from the other, which being impossible, the human nature must be present wherever the Godhead is. We should allow this consequence, to wit, that the human nature is in all places with the Godhead, on account of the union of the two natures, if those two natures were united in such a manner as to be mixed, or to be equal one to the other ; but the two natures are not united in this manner, but the divine nature, which is infinite, assumed the human nature, which is finite, into a personal union with itself. It follows from this, that wherever the human nature is, there also the Godhead is, and that it remains personally united to the human nature ; but it doth not follow that the human nature is wherever the Godhead is, For instance, the sun is united to its beams, but the sun is not wherever its beams are.

(c) They say also, that "Christ filleth all things," according to Eph. iv. 10. But it is not said, that he fills all places with his body; but the apostle speaks only of his filling up that which was lacking in his church with the gifts of grace, by means of his servants, whom he gives. See Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13.

I. Our second general head is the reality of his ascension into heaven. And verily we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the glory of his ascension, for it can be proved by the most forcible arguments; (a) Seeing he is risen, as we have fully proved on the foregoing Lord's day that he really arose. The force of this argument lies herein, that since he is risen, if he did not ascend into heaven, he must then either have died again, which none can imagine with any probability, or he must have been found here or there, as it was a manifest evidence, that Elijah was really ascended, because he could not be found, 2 Kings ii. 16, 17, 18. Now our Jesus was not found. (b) It is also certain, that he ascended into heaven, because those who testified it, saw it with their eyes; "He was taken up, while they beheld," Acts i. 9. Yea, since this uptaking he hath been seen in heaven: "Stephen saw the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," Acts vii. 56. And "he was seen last of all by Paul, as by one born out of due time," 1 Cor. xv. 8, to wit, when he appeared to him on the way to Damascus, Acts ix. 4—7, 17. The testimony of these persons cannot be deemed suspicious, as we have proved on the foregoing Lord's day. (c) If we attend to the events following his ascension, as the outpouring of his Spirit, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the conversion of the world, and all this according to his prophecies; and also the outgoings of the hearts of believers toward him in heaven, through the operation of his Spirit, who is sent to them from heaven by Christ, and leads them up to him, we must conclude with a full persuasion of mind, that he really ascended into heaven.

III. We must also be certain, that this ascension into heaven was necessary, (a) because it was foretold, and indeed with such an assurance of mind, as if it had already happened; thus they shouted to him, Psalm lxxviii. 18, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men: yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Jesus himself foretold it, John xiv. 15, 16, 20. Now this could not fail. (b) It was also typified: we do not speak now of Enoch and Elijah, see only how the high priest went once a year with strange blood into the holy of holies, and thereby plainly represented that the true

High Priest should enter into heaven itself with his own blood. Paul assures of this, Heb. ix. 7, 12, 24, 25. It was also typified by the bringing of the ark of the covenant up into the city of David, and into the temple, 2 Sam. vi. 12, 15. 1 Kings viii. 1—6 That this had a respect to the ascension of the Lord Jesus into heaven, the people of the Lord inform us, when they cry one to another, while they were bringing the ark up, "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet," Psalm xlvii. 5. Since now these types foreshowed the people of the Lord, yea, sealed to them on the part of God, that his Son should ascend into heaven, therefore it was also necessary, that he should ascend into heaven.

(c) The ascension of Christ was necessary also on the Father's account, who would not suffer that his Son should always remain absent from him inasmuch as "he was his delight," Prov. viii. 3, and also on the Son's account, who ought to receive in this manner, his promised reward, that "he should lift up the head," according to that which is said, Psalm cx. 7. It was necessary also on account of the elect, who would otherwise have missed the greatest and most necessary advantage of his ascension: therefore he quieted them with this consideration, when they were greatly disturbed on account of his departure, saying, "It is expedient for you that I go away," John xvi. 7. And thus,

IV. We proceed to our fourth general head, to wit, the advantages of the ascension of the Lord. The instructor mentions three advantages:

1. "That he is our advocate in the presence of his Father in heaven." We explained the nature of Christ's advocacy, when we discoursed of his priesthood on the twelfth Lord's day; to perfect which, it was necessary that he should ascend into heaven; "for if he were on earth, he would not be a priest," Heb. vii. 5. It was therefore necessary, that he should ascend into heaven, and thus, like the high priest under the Old Testament, enter into the sanctuary, "to appear in the presence of God for us," Rom. viii. 34. It is true, he could pray for his people on earth, as he also did, John xvii. but on account of his certain expectation, that he would shortly be taken up into heaven, he prays, John xvii. as if he were already in heaven: therefore he saith, vrs. 11, "I am no more in the world," and vrs. 24. "I will also that they whom thou hast given me be where I am." And it is truly a great advantage to his people, that they have such an advocate at court, before the throne, who pleads for them, and who will assuredly gain their cause. With this John supported the minds of believers under their dejection on account

of their sins, when he said, 1 John ii. 1, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

2. Of no less consequence is the second advantage, to wit, "that we have our flesh in heaven, as a sure pledge, that he as the head will also take up to himself, us his members." Believers know of nothing worthier or more blessed than that Christ will take them up to him in heaven: "For this being far the best, Paul was therefore desirous to depart, and to be with Christ," Philip. i. 23. The words with which believers must comfort one another, are that they shall be taken up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall ever be with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18. This great advantage follows from his ascension, as he himself testifieth, John xiv. 3, "If I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." It is not strange, that being ascended into heaven, he will take them also to himself into heaven; for (a) he is there, as their sure pledge, since he is their portion and treasure, given to them in behalf of that house of their Father, which confirms and ensures heaven to them, as their property, and therefore the apostle saith that "they were set together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Eph. ii. 6, For he is only gone before them, to take possession, and to prepare a place for them beforehand, as their forerunner, Heb. v. 19, 20. John xiv. 2, 3. (b) He is there also as their own flesh. On account of the mystical marriage, they are one with him, and are thus "of his flesh and of his bones," Eph. v. 30. Now it is certain that a part of their flesh and bones, yea, their bridegroom and husband, being in heaven, he will not suffer his own flesh and bones, his other half, his beloved bride and wife, to remain always absent from him. (c) He is also in heaven, as their head: therefore he will take them up to himself as his members.

3. Moreover, "he sends his Spirit as an earnest, by whose power we seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, and not things on earth." The sending of his Spirit is a consequence of his ascension into heaven: this he declares, John xvi. 7, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." As this was also foretold, Psalm lxxviii. 18, and fulfilled by him, Acts ii. 33. The Spirit is also an earnest to believers, whereby they are assured, as by a sealed epistle, of their right to Jesus and to heaven; for "God hath sealed them, and given them the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts," 2 Cor. i. 21. See also Eph. i. 13, 14. iv. 30. Yea, the Holy Spirit is like a pledge in the stead of Christ; therefore he said, when

he was about to go away ; " I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever," John xiv. 16. And truly he is an infallible seal and pledge, as he not only sets the mark of Jesus upon their souls, by " changing them from glory to glory after his image," 2 Cor. iii. 18, and assures them, " bearing witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God," Rom. viii. 16, but as he also directs them to Jesus, and leads them to him, yea, causes them by his power to " seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting on the right hand of God, and not the things which are on earth," according to Coll. iii. 3, and that not only by admonitions, but also by efficaciously directing and leading them thither, by which means their conversation is in heaven ; for " the good Spirit of God leads them into the land of uprightness," Psalm cxliiii. 10. Is not this now a precious advantage of Christ's ascension into heaven ? is it now possible, that they should lose their right and expectation ? Have they not a double ensurance upon heaven ? certainly they have : for they have their own flesh, as a pledge, in heaven, and also the Holy Spirit, as an earnest in their souls, in the stead of Jesus.

APPLICATION.

Since then Christ is in heaven, we conclude, that he is not in or with the bread and wine in the Lord's supper, either by a consubstantiation, as the Lutherans conceive, or by a transubstantiation, to wit, a real change of the bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Christ, as the Papists imagine : for as he is with his human nature in heaven, and continueth there in that nature until his final coming, therefore he cannot be with his human nature in the Lord's supper.

We conclude also from what hath been said, that believers have a glorious Saviour ; for " they have a great High priest, who is passed into the heavens," Heb. iv. 14, " Who is made higher than the heavens," Heb. vii. 26, and that by his own power. Wonderfully were Enoch and Elijah glorified above other saints, when they ascended into heaven with body and soul together, without tasting of death ; but it was not through their own power, but through Christ's power, who took them up : but he was raised to heaven by his own power and strength. Yea, more he ascended for the good of believers, and to procure them the greatest and most precious

advantages; Enoch and Elijah left only a blessed remembrance of themselves to their people, but they could not be advocates for one human being in heaven, nor take their followers to themselves, nor send them the Spirit of God, as an earnest, all which our Jesus doth by his ascension into heaven. It is true, after Elijah was ascended into heaven, his spirit rested upon Elisha: yet he did not send his spirit by himself, except only as a moral instrument by faith and prayer; but Jesus sends his Spirit immediately by himself, and causes "all to receive of his fulness, and grace for grace," and therefore "all the seed of Israel may glory in the Lord," Isaiah xlv. 25.

But, hearers, can ye also glory in him as your head and pledge, who is ascended into heaven for your good? ye ought to think of this; for if ye know aught of Jesus, ye do surely know, that he was not glorified for all men, and that it behooves you to inquire whether ye are partakers of the advantages of his ascension: do ye ask, whereby ye may know this? I will inform you, and examine yourselves by it.

1. Those who are partakers of these advantages, have him as well by his Spirit in their hearts, as in heaven; "for they are builded for an habitation of God through the Spirit," Eph. ii. 22. See this evidence also Rom. viii. 9, 10. The Holy Spirit works faith in their souls effectually, whereby they embrace him, and cause him to dwell in them; in as much as "they are strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell by faith in their hearts," Eph. iii. 16, 17. Others are yet without Christ; they know not this hidden work of faith, their souls have never wrought thus with him, they are strangers to him, and he is a stranger to them.

2. These persons look upon God and Christ alone as their allsufficient portion; they have sought and chosen him as such, in opposition to all others: they seek their rest and full satisfaction in him only. They can say to him in truth, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever," Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26. Others are "men of the world, who have their portion in this life," Psalm xvii. 14. They pursue after the world, the world possesseth their hearts, they think of it, speak of it, and are cheerful or sorrowful in proportion to the measure of worldly goods which they enjoy; it is their continual cry, "Who will show us any good? who will increase our corn and wine?" Psalm iv. 7, 8.

3. These persons know experimentally what it is to be near to, and far from him, and they are joyful or sorrowful in proportion to

this. When he permits them to come near him, and into his bowels, and when he reveals himself to their souls, it is to them "a supping with Jesus, and of Jesus with them," Rev. iii. 20. "They rejoice in the shadow of his wings," Psalm lxxiii. 7. "It is good for them to draw near to God," Psalm lxxiii. 28. But when he withdraws himself, and hides his face, how is their soul then troubled? "My bowels were moved for him," saith the spouse, when he had withdrawn himself from her, Song v. 4. See this also in David, Psalm xxx. 7, 8, 9. Others know nothing of this. Jesus hath never been revealed to them, they have never tasted of this honey, and therefore their eyes have not been enlightened, neither do they know wherein it consists to be far from him; as he is out of their sight, so he is out of their mind; they think that it is enough "to draw near him with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, though their hearts be far from him," Isaiah xxix. 13.

4. It is also the aim of those who partake of the advantages of his ascension, to seek those things which are above, where Christ is, and not the things on the earth, "Our conversation is in heaven, whence we look also for the Saviour," saith that heavenly-minded man, Philip. iii. 20. They are citizens of heaven, and not of the earth; they are strangers here, they will not settle themselves here, the earth holds them fast to their sorrow, more than they would hold the earth fast; their thoughts, desires, and longings are for and toward heaven, and heavenly things. If they be at any time drawn away from these things, they are grieved, and they will time after time break loose from the world, that they may pursue heaven only; "For we," saith that great man, Heb. xiii. 14, "have here no continuing city, but we seek one to come." For Jesus is there, and he is their treasure, and therefore their heart is there also, Matt. vi. 21. Yea, they love all who seek heaven, as their fellow-citizens, and consider those who are citizens here as strangers. "A citizen of Zion contemns a vile person; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord," Psalm xv. 4. Others aim only at being acknowledged and established here on earth: they are best acquainted with the men of this world, for they are their fellow-citizens; they cannot converse with the citizens of heaven, as well as they can with the most perfect strangers, who speak another language: yea, how like-minded are they with those who are most worldlywise; "they are indeed of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them," 1 John iv. 5. See how Paul describes the citizens, who are from beneath, in opposition to the citizens of heaven. Philip. iii. 18, 19. "Many walk otherwise, whose end is destruction, whose

God is their belly : and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."

Look now in this glass, and see whether ye can discover in yourselves the features of those, who are partakers of Christ's ascension, and whether ye have good reason to glory in him. But are not these features in you, alas, how unhappy are ye ! ye have no advocate at court, Jesus is not your head, ye are yet without his Spirit : and therefore he will not take you up to him, but thrust you down to hell though ye were exalted even to heaven, except ye will yet humble yourselves, and flee to him, who dwelleth in heaven. Therefore attend more to the ascended Jesus, and to heaven, than ye have done hitherto. Hear what Jesus commands you to do, Matt. vi 33. " Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you " Do not suppose that one faint sigh in the air will carry you to heaven ; no, we must be in earnest, we must exercise violence, if we will enter in : " The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Matt. xi. 12.

But, true citizens of heaven, improve the ascension of Christ into heaven. And therefore,

1. Rejoice in it, shout and sing aloud after him in this glory. Who knows how the heavenly host shouted, when heaven was opened to him ! how gloriously the Father seated him on his throne at his right hand ! how the angels attended on him ! how the souls of the blessed rose up from their thrones, " fell down before him, cast their crowns from their heads, before the throne, and cried one to another with a loud voice, The Lamb which was slain is worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing !" as they did, Rev. iv. and v. It behooves you also to unite with them, that ye may proclaim his glory with rejoicing to the utmost ; for he ascended into heaven also for your salvation and happiness. Behold how the congregation of Israel did this before the ark of the covenant, the great type of Christ, Psalm xlvii. 5—9. " God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises : sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth, sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the heathen : God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham : for the shields of the earth belong unto God : he is greatly exalted."

2. Is he ascended into heaven, do not lament that ye may not see him any longer in the body on earth. It discovers ignorance, yea,

fleshly-mindedness in you, to be desirous of seeing him in the flesh, as though your souls would then be more influenced toward and by him to faith and love. We know to what this vanity hath betrayed the Lutherans and Papists; if he were still on earth, he would not be a priest: ye should never have had an advocate with the Father, nor any expectation of your ascension into heaven, ye should not have received the Holy Spirit, nor sought the things in heaven, if he had always continued on earth. Because the believing apostles understood not this before his ascension, therefore "sorrow filled their hearts;" and therefore he said unto them, "I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you," John xvi. 6, 7. It is also your glory, that he who is your Lord, hath ascended up from you in such a glorious and illustrious manner. Is he absent from you with his body, he doth never depart from you with his Godhead, majesty, grace and Spirit: "He is with you alway, even unto the end of the world," Matt. xxviii. 20. "Where only two or three are gathered together in his name, there he is in the midst of them," Matt. xviii. 20. Yea, he is with you, when your soul unbosoms herself to him in private: "He will regard the prayer of the destitute," Psalm cii. 17. Doth he hide himself, and forbear to show his kindness to you, he is still with you in secret, and also "when ye pass through the fire and water," Isaiah xliii. 2. For he hath said, "I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5. Yea, he will come again, ye shall see him with your eyes, and he will take you to himself.

3. Is he your advocate in heaven, in the presence of his Father, bring then all your complaints to him and before him, that they may ascend up from his hands before the throne of God; for to this end he stands at the golden altar, as John saw, Rev. viii. 3, 4. Why do ye deprive Jesus of his honourable office, by neglecting to give him more employment in it, through discouragement smothering your complaints and difficulties in your own bosoms, and seeking relief in sorrow? Do iniquities prevail over you, and render you irresolute, so that ye dare not draw nigh to him, because ye provoke him so often; he is your advocate for this end also; it is your duty to be ashamed, and to humble yourselves, but ye ought not to remain aloof from him; for "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins," 1 John ii. 1, 2. Doth he not also frequently show that he prays for you, when he rebukes your enemies, looses your heart and tongue, that ye may plead heartily for yourselves

before the throne with groanings that cannot be uttered, and when he speaks peace to your souls, and gives you much life of grace? for all these things proceed from his intercession.

4. Entertain now an assured hope and expectation, that he will take you up to himself into heaven. What causes you to doubt so? what renders the adversities that befall you, so grievous to you? is it not because ye do not perceive that ye have an assured title to heaven? if ye had a certain and clear expectation, would ye not laugh at whatever is otherwise dreadful, and say courageously, "Our light affliction, which endureth but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," as Paul speaks, 2 Cor. iv. 17. Have ye not also reasons enow to entertain such an assurance? did not he promise you, when he departed, that "he would come again, and receive you unto himself?" John xiv. 3. Is he not in heaven as your pledge, your flesh and head? hath he not sent you his Spirit as an earnest of it? dare ye not think thus of yourselves, because ye perceive so many earthly inclinations still in you? are they not matter of grief to you? do ye not mourn on account of them, and strive against them? doth not your soul lift up itself, time after time, toward heaven? well, assure yourselves then, "that if your earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, ye have a building of God, an house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens," 2 Cor. v. 1. Yea, that "when after your skin worms destroy this body, yet in your flesh ye shall see God: whom ye shall see for yourselves, and your eyes shall behold, and not another." Let "your reins then long exceedingly within you," Job. xix. 26, 27.

5. In the mean while, endeavour more than ye have heretofore to be heavenly-minded. It is indeed your element, ye have received the Spirit from heaven for this purpose; it is also your duty. For it is enjoined on you, Coll. iii. 1, 2, 3. "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Therefore let your souls detach and withdraw themselves from visible things, and surrender and devote themselves to those that are heavenly, musing on them with your thoughts, directing your desires toward them, and opening unto Christ, that he may enter in, and may be fetched in by you; "Lift up your hands, O ye gates and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in," Psalm xxiv. 7.

Do afflictions discourage you; "Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endu-

red the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God," Heb. xii 2. "It behooved Christ to suffer all things first, and then to enter into his glory," Luke xxiv. 26. "If we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him," Rom. viii. 17. O friends, how doubly sweet will your sorrows be, when ye shall be revealed with him in glory! what a fair prospect will it be, when "ye shall be taken up" in the sight of your, and the Lord's enemies, "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall be for ever with the Lord! My soul saith, yea, let all the people say Amen, yea Amen."

CHRIST

A

KING AND JUDGE.

XIX. LORD'S DAY.

Psalm cx. 1. 2. The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion ; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Q. 50. *Why is it added, " And sitteth at the right hand of God ?"*

A. Because Christ is ascended into heaven for this end, that he might there appear as head of the church, by whom the Father governs all things.

Q. 51. *What profit is this glory of Christ our head unto us ?*

A. First, that by his holy Spirit he poureth out heavenly graces upon us his members ; and then, that by his power he defends and preserves us against all enemies.

Q. 52. *What comfort is it to thee, that " Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead ?"*

A. That in all my sorrows and persecutions, with uplifted head, I look for the very same Person, who before offered himself for my sake, to the tribunal of God, and hath removed all curse from me ; to come as Judge from heaven : who shall cast all his and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall translate me with all his chosen ones to himself, into heavenly joys and glory.

“**T**AKE silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them on the head of Joshua, the son of Josedek, the high priest.” Thus the Lord commanded the prophet Zechariah, Zech. vi. 11. Among the several ornaments of the high priest, the golden plate, inscribed “Holiness to the Lord,” and placed on his forehead, shone forth with special lustre; yea, this was a holy crown to the high priest. Exod. xxix. 6. But this was too little for Joshua the high priest; the prophet must make for him, other crowns, and set them on his head, and therefore also say to him, “Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying Behold the man whose name is the Branch, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit, and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne,” Zech. vi. 12, 13. It is not to be doubted but that Joshua the high priest was, like every other lawful high priest, a type of the Messiah, the man whose name is Branch; but herein Joshua excelled the other high priests, that crowns of silver and gold were set upon his head, as a greater and worthier type of the Messiah. The other high priests were types of this Branch, as the only and perfect high priest; but Joshua, when these crowns were set upon his head, and the signification of them explained to him, became also a type of the Messiah as king, and foreshowed particularly that the offices of king and priest, which were never united together in one person and tribe in Israel, should both be administered by him, in order that he might “build the temple of the Lord.” Like Melchizedek, he should be also king of Salem, and a priest of the most high God. And truly our Jesus is both high priest and king. As high priest he hath obtained an eternal redemption, and as king he applies it; as high priest he ascended into heaven, and entered thus into the true sanctuary, as we have seen in the former Lord’s day; and as king he sits at the right hand of God, to rule upon his throne, which will appear particularly in the last judgment; and this we must show at present.

We must attend in this Lord’s day to two particulars with respect to the exalted Mediator:

I. His sitting at the right hand of God, as king.

II. His coming again to judgment, as judge.

These are two great articles of our faith, and they contain many and important matters; but we cannot exhibit them all at present on account of the brevity of our method; and we will therefore remark only the principal particulars.

I. The first head is explained by the instructor in the fiftieth ques-

tion ; and the advantages are then shown in the fifty-first question.

The instructor, in order to explain Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, asks why it is added, "and sitteth at the right hand of God," to show that Christ's sitting at the right hand of God is different from his ascension into heaven ; for though Enoch and Elijah ascended into heaven, they did not sit at the right hand of God ; but Christ ascended into heaven, that he might sit at the right hand of God. Therefore Mark saith, "The Lord was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God," Mark xvi. 19.

In order to know wherein it consists to be on the right hand of God, we must observe, that this is not to be understood in a proper sense, or of a bodily posture ; for as God is a Spirit, and hath therefore no hands, the Son of God cannot be in a bodily manner at his right hand. When a right hand is ascribed to the Lord, we must explain it in a manner which becomes God, and according to his word : now the word of God understands by his right hand, (a) the special favour which he showeth to them who are the objects of his favour, as we show favour with the right hand, and not so much with the left. So David speaks of it, Psalm xx. 6, "The saving strength of his right hand." (b) The majesty and glory of God, which he manifests especially in heaven ; for the right hand is considered as the most honourable. So we read of "the right hand of the majesty on high," Heb. 1. 3. (c) By the right hand of God is also understood the power, dominion, and government of the Lord over all ; for our greatest strength is in our right hand, and by that we govern all our actions. In this sense do we find the right hand of God, Psalm xvii. 7, "Thou savest them which put their trust in thee, from them that rise up against thy right hand ;" that is, against thy mighty dominion. It is said,

I. That Christ is at God's right hand, by which it is intimated, (a) that he is in heaven in the enjoyment of his Father's special and full favour, by which he fully enjoys the greatest happiness. Therefore he saith, Psalm xxi. "Thou wilt show me the way of life : in thy presence is fulness of Joy : at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Peter, explaining these words, represents the Saviour as saying, "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life ; thou shalt make me full of joy by thy countenance," Acts ii. 28. And thus Jesus is "the man of God's right hand," Psalm lxxx. 17. As Jacob called his youngest son, on account of his special affection for him, Benjamin, that is, son of the right hand. (b) That he is exalted to the highest honour and glory, so that "every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the

earth, and which is in the sea, and all that is in them, must say, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever," Rev. v. 13. And so "God hath highly exalted him, and hath given him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11. For when we set any person at our right hand we honour him; so Solomon set his mother on his right hand to honour her, 1 Kings ii. 19, and thus the bridegroom places the bride on his right hand, to honour her, Psalm xlv. 9. And so "Jesus sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high," Heb. i. 3. viii. 1. Yea, he is thus glorified more than the most glorious angels; "for to which of the angels said he at any time, sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" Heb. i. 13. Christ's being at God's right hand consists also, (c) in his being appointed by the Father to be a ruler and a king over all, and particularly over his church; and so "the Father hath made him sit with him in his throne," Rev. iii. 21, and the Father therefore governs all things by him. This hath respect to the custom of sovereign rulers, who, when they adopt others or their followrulers, place them on their right hand. So the mother of Zebedee's children, when she desired that her sons might be the first after the Lord Jesus in his kingdom, requested, saying, Matt. xx. 21, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left in thy kingdom." Of David's sons it is said, that "they were Princes," 2 Sam. viii. 18, and so they were also "the first at the hand of the king" 1 Chron. xviii. 17. In this sense the catechism explains Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, when it saith, that "Christ is ascended into heaven for this end, that he might appear there as head of his Christian church, by whom the Father governs all things; see the fiftieth question. And truly the instructor speaks here according to the word of God; for Peter saith, Acts ii. 33, 36, "He therefore being exalted by the right hand of God, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." And Paul, explaining our text, saith, 1 Cor. xv. 25, "He must reign until he hath put all things under his feet." Therefore it is also said, that "God hath exalted him at his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour," Acts v. 31. To which also pertains, that "the Father hath put all things under his feet," as Paul and Peter speak, Eph. i. 20—23. 1 Peter ii. 21, and

that "the Father himself is at the Son's right hand, and strikes through kings in the day of his wrath," Psalm cx. 5.

2. He not only "is," but he also "sits" at the right hand of God. "He sits on the right hand of God," saith the apostle, Col. iii. 1, which intimates, (a) his agreeable resting from his painful labour; for we sit in order to rest, (b) his actual employment in the exercise of his dominion, and judicial power: for a king sits down on his throne, in order to exercise his dominion, and to maintain justice, Psalm ix. 4, "Thou hast maintained my right and my cause, thou sittest on the throne, judging right." And (c) his stability and continuance in his government; for "he shall rule over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end," Luke i. 33. For he who sits down, shows that he intends to continue. Thus it is said of the Saviour, Isaiah xvi. 5. "A throne shall be established in mercy, and he shall sit upon it constantly in the tabernacle of David." *

3. It is also said, that he "stands" on the right hand of God: "Stephen saw the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," Acts vii. 56. This was in order to manifest his readiness and willingness to assist Stephen against his enemies, to take him up to himself in glory, and to avenge himself of his enemies like a king; for he who stands shows that he is willing and ready to do his work; as the Lord is represented to us, Isaiah iii. 13. "The Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people."

As this is a glory of his mediatorial office, so it is also proper to him according to both his natures; for his human nature is exalted hereby above all the saints and the blessed, and is acknowledged and glorified by them to the utmost, as "having redeemed them to God by its blood, and as having made them kings and priests to God," Rev. v. 9. And thus "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour," Heb. ii. 9. Compare herewith Heb. xii. 2. We may also say, that he is on the right hand of God according to his Godhead, inasmuch as the glory of the Godhead, which was concealed before under the humbled manhood, was revealed. Therefore he prayed to his Father, John xvii. 5. "Glorify me, O Father, with thine ownself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." See Philip. ii. 6, 7.

It is therefore silly in the Lutherans to hold, that he is only ac-

* We have rendered this passage according to the Dutch translation.

ording to his human nature at the right hand of God, that they may conclude therefrom, that his human nature is every where, because the right hand of God is every where : but although God's right hand is every where, Christ is not on that account according to his human nature every where at God's right hand, but only in heaven ; for "he sits at the right hand of the majesty on high," Heb. i. 3. As "the heaven is God's throne," Isaiah lxvi. 1. Psalm xi. 4. And therefore "Christ sits on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens," Heb. viii. 1.

As his sitting at the right hand of God was his reward, and conduceth to the glory of God the Father, so it is also to the advantage of his elect ; the instructor shows in the fifty first question, that they receive a two-fold advantage from his sitting on the right hand of God :

1. "First, that by his Holy Spirit he poureth out heavenly graces upon us his members." That believers are made partakers of the Holy Spirit, as an earnest of Christ, who is ascended from them into heaven, is shown in the forty ninth question ; but it is now shown that they receive by the Holy Spirit the heavenly graces, which are sent down to them from heaven, and from the throne of God, which render them heavenly-minded, and lead them up to heaven ; which graces are many and divers, as we will show upon the twentieth Lord's day, and are not shed forth now in drops only, as under the Old Testament, but in whole streams, according to the promise which was made, Isaiah xlv. 3. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground : I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thine offspring." And the out-pouring of these graces is an advantage, which we obtain by his sitting at the right hand of God, as Peter testifieth, Acts ii. 33. "Therefore being exalted by the right hand of God and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." He hath respect here to the Spirit, who was poured out at the feast of Pentecost : of which every believer, each according to his measure, partakers, as well as the apostles, according to what was promised, Joel ii. 28—32. John vii. 38, 39.

2 "And then that by his power he defends and preserves us against all enemies." Believers have many enemies, who seek their destruction ; but Jesus preserves them : even "the gates of hell shall not prevail against them," Matt. xvi. 18, for "all power is given unto him in heaven and on earth," Matt. xxviii. 18. As he sits at the right hand of God, he defends and preserves them by the right

hand of his power, the rod of his strength, with which he rules in the midst of his enemies, as the text shows.

II He will manifest that he defends and preserves them against all enemies particularly in the last judgment; for he will show then as judge, that he is on the right hand of God: for this sitting implies also a public exercise of judgment and of judiciary power. So he said to Caiaphas, that he might terrify him and the wicked Jewish Sanhedrim. "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," Matt. xxvi. 64. For God is said to ride and to come upon the clouds, when he draws near to judge a people, Isaiah xix. 1.

Although God exercises many and severe judgments upon human beings, there are nevertheless more particularly two general judgments, which will pass on all men; one is exercised in secret upon the soul of every individual, when it removes out of the body in death; the soul is then brought before God, and receives of him the reward of that which was done in the body, whether it were good or evil: the other will be exercised in public upon body and soul at the last day. Of this judgment the creed and the instructor speak in the fifty second question.

In order to treat of the last judgment in such a manner as shall conduce to our advantage, we must attend to these three particulars, 1, To the nature of this judgment, 2, to the reality of the judgment, 3, to the comfort that believers receive from the expectation of the judgment.

1. With respect to the first particular, the nature of this judgment, we learn wherein it will consist, (a) by the judge who shall judge, (b) by the persons who shall be judged, (c) the matters that shall be brought into judgment, (d) the judiciary procedure, or the manner in which this judgment shall be exercised and holden, and, (e) the circumstances of this judgment. The brevity of our method will permit us to say only a few words to each of these particulars. (a) The Judge in this judgment, saith Paul, is God, Heb. xii. 23. But God the Father will not judge by himself, but by his Son: "the man whom he hath ordained, of which he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead," Acts xvii. 31. The Father set him at his right hand, that he might be Mediator, and it belongs also to his Mediatorship to judge as a judge. Yea, the Father hath committed the work of judging to him, because it is his will, that it should be exercised in a public and visible manner; for he, being also man, can appear visibly: "For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; and hath

given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man," John v. 22, 27. "He came not indeed to judge, but to save the world, John iii 17. xii. 47, but he will come hereafter to judge. "The saints also shall judge the world and angels," 1 Cor. vi. 3, but it will be only with a judgment of approbation, by which they will approve of the sentence of the Judge, as they do with respect to "his judging the great whore," Rev. xix. 1, 2.

(b) Every reasonable creature will be cited before this Judge ; for "not only the angels will be judged," 1 Cor. vi. 3. "The angels that sinned were cast into hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," 2 Peter ii. 4. Thus Jude also speaks in his epistle, in the sixth verse. But all men likewise will be cited before this Judge, as well those who have been, as those who are now, and those also who shall be hereafter ; whether they be high or low, rich or poor, men or women, young or old, righteous or wicked, dead or yet living, also thou and I : "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," 2 Cor. v. 10.

(c.) But upon what matters shall this judgment be holden ? Paul saith that it will be holden upon "that which is done in the body, whether it be good or evil," 2 Cor. v. 10. All the good actions of God's children, although they have not considered their actions as good on account of their impurity ; but especially their works of mercy, will be brought to light by the great Judge, will be highly esteemed by him, and extolled as evidences of their good state. The Judge himself showeth this, Matt. xxv. 35—40. The ungodly will be obliged to render an account of all their wicked actions, whether sins of omission or commission, or sins of their thoughts ; for "God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ," Rom. ii. 16. 1 Cor. iv. 5 ; or words, as well "idle words," Matt. xii. 36, as "all hard words," according to the fifteenth verse of the epistle of Jude ; or deeds, so Jude speaks also in the same verse. We dare not decide positively whether the sins of believers will also be produced in this judgment, although it is highly probable that they will : for not to alledge all that might be offered here, when the sins of the ungodly, into which they have seduced the godly, will be brought to light, it will then be necessary that the sins of believers should also be mentioned. "But however this may be, they will not be upbraided with their sins, as unatoned, and as subjecting them to condemnation.

(d) In order that we may consider the nature of this judgment more particularly, we must attend also to the judiciary procedure of it. To this pertains, (a) the constituting of the tribunal or the

court of judgment, (b) the examination, (c) the sentence, and (d) the execution of the sentence.

(a) The constituting of the tribunal or court of judgment will begin with a terrible commotion in heaven and on earth; the Judge Jesus will appear in the clouds, before the eyes of every individual, in a most glorious manner, surrounded with the hosts of heaven, and "he will therefore come again" to judge "in the same manner, in which the apostles saw him depart," Acts i. 9, 10, 11. Upon which the dead will be raised up, and with all those who will remain alive, be cited and brought before the judgment seat. The Judge himself declares this, Matt. xxiv. 29, 30, 31. "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." And that all things may be conducted in a more orderly manner, all men will not pass confusedly together, but the Judge will separate the godly from the wicked, and he will place the godly on his right hand, and the wicked on his left, Matt. xxv. 31, 32, 33.

(b) Hereupon will follow the examination, which will be exceedingly strict, like an examination from certain books. In this manner was the judgment exhibited to John in a vision, Rev. xx. 12. "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." See also Dan vii. 10. These are not real books, but books figuratively so called, of different kinds, to wit, (a) that in which the duty of man is written, or made known; either the book of nature, from which the heathens, who will be cited, will learn what they ought to have done, according to the discovery which God had made to them of himself and of his law in their nature; or the book of scripture, and the revelation of the gospel, according to which those only, who have had the scripture, will be informed what they ought to have been and done; "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" Rom. ii. 12. (b) Moreover, the book and the register of men's actions, to wit, the omniscience of God, will be opened. As God

records all the calamities of his children, as it were, in a book, so he doth all their virtues. See Psalm lvi. 8. And he will reveal them publicly before the whole world in all their lustre, as we have seen, Matt. xxv. 35—40. And he keeps in the same manner by his omniscience a book of remembrance of all the sins of the wicked and "he will set them in order before them" on that day. This we see, Mal. iii. 16. Psalm li. 21. But that the justice of God may appear publicly, when he doth not bring the sins of the righteous to light for their condemnation," another book which is the book of life, will be opened," Rev. xx. 12, and it will be made known, that they were chosen and written in it to life; and not only this, but "the book of the life of the Lamb will also be opened," Rev. xxi. 27. That is, the book of the council of peace, or of the covenant of redemption, made from eternity by the Father with the Son, into which the names of the elect were, if we may so say, transcribed. See John xvii. 6. This book will be opened, that is, it will be manifested, that Jesus is the Surety of the elect, and that he hath satisfied for them; and that they therefore cannot be condemned on account of their sins, according to Rom. iii. 25, 26. Thus speaks the Saviour, John iii. 18. "He who believeth on the Son is not condemned." (c) That it may now appear, that he judgeth according to truth, the book of the testimony of truth will also be opened, when all things will be discovered, and recur in a lively manner to the consciences of men, how much soever they may be blinded and hardened in this life; for if "the consciences of the heathens do now bear witness, and if their thoughts do now accuse them," Rom. ii. 15, what will it be then," when the Lord will come, and will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts?" 1 Cor. iv. 5.

(c) After all things have been strictly examined in this manner, the sentence will be pronounced, in the sweetest and most ravishing words upon the righteous, and every word will be most emphatical; for the King will say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matt. xxv. 34. But in a terrible manner and in his wrath "will he say to them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. xxv. 41.

(d) Whereupon the execution of the sentence will also immediately follow; for "these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal," Matt. xxv. 46. For which pur-

pose the angels will be employed, as the Lord Jesus foretells, Matt. xiii. 40—43.

(e) We must now also attend to the circumstances of this judgment: these are, (1) the time, (2) the place, and (3) the qualities of this judgment.

1. The time when this judgment will be holden is certain and determined; for "God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness," Acts xvii. 31, and it is called "the last day," John xii. 48. But when that time will be is unknown to us, no less than it was to the Son of man, according to his human nature, while he was conversant on earth, Mark xiii. 32. Nevertheless we know that the time draweth near, and is at hand: "The end of all things is at hand," said the apostle, even in his time, 1 Peter iv. 7. How much more is that time than now near at hand?

2. The place will be in the air, upon the clouds; for "we shall be taken up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air," saith the apostle, 1 Thess. iv. 17. But the scripture doth not inform us near what region of the earth. The papists say, that the judgment will be holden in the valley of Jehoshaphat, because the Lord saith, Joel iii. 1—21. "That he will bring the heathen into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and plead with them there;" but that chapter treats not of the general judgment, but of a certain particular one on the heathens, in the manner of a battle and war, as every one may see, vrs. 8—14.

3. The qualities of this judgment are, (a) that it will be dreadful to the wicked; for when they will unexpectedly see him, whom they despised, coming in the clouds of heaven, and that to examine and destroy them, on account of all their evil doings, how will their hearts then fail for fear! and how will "all the kindreds of the earth wail because of him!" Rev. i. 7, and so much the more, because they will not be able to deprecate the sentence, nor be able, nor be permitted to appeal from it to a higher judicature. (b) It will be a comfortable sentence to the righteous, as we will show anon. (c) It will also be a righteous judgment; for "God will render to every man according to his deeds," Rom. ii. 5, 6. The destruction of the wicked will be the deserved recompence of their works; but eternal salvation will be recompensed to the righteous according to their works, forasmuch as their works are certain evidences, that they are the favoured people of the Lord, and are reconciled to God through Christ; for Christ will produce their works of mercy, which they have shown to the least of his brethren, as evidences, that they are the blessed of his Father, and he will thereupon call them into the kingdom prepared for them, Matt. xxv. 34-40.

2. Christians believe on the surest evidences, that Christ will really come to judgment; for all the saints from the beginning of the world until John, the last of the holy writers, believed in Christ's coming to judgment, they inculcated it upon their people, and comforted them therewith in all their tribulations, as we might show in order, but we deem it unnecessary on account of the brevity of our method, to alledge every passage of scripture; those which we have already cited are sufficient. But besides this, we have many reasons, on account of which we must expect such a judgment; for (a) Christ sits at the right hand of God, that every knee may bow to him: but the world doth not behold his glory, it tramples without concern upon his laws, and injures his people. What think ye? doth he not take this ill? will he not revenge it? will he not one day reveal his glory? and how will he do it? must he not for this end, "sitting thus at the right hand of God, come in the clouds of heaven," as he threatened the Jewish council? (b) The justice of God requireth, that the good should fare well, and the bad ill. Now, this doth not appear so much at present; the good are filled with bitter things, and the bad spend their days in good. How shall it appear, that God is righteous, if he do not manifest it after this life by the general judgment? Paul reasoneth thus, 2 Thess. i. 6—10. (c) Doth not the sinner think that God is like himself, as though God forgot his sins, as he himself forgets them? yea, doth he not jest with the judgment, saying in his heart, "Every one that doth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them: or, "where is the God of judgment?" Mal. ii. 17. Can the Lord indeed suffer this? must he not one day bring such a scoffer into judgment, "reprove him, and set these things in order before him?" Psalm l. 21. (d) Men have a natural apprehension of the general judgment, yea, even the heathen have; for their conscience accuseth them, Rom. ii. 15. And if this judgment were not to be expected, would not the world be still more abominable, and intolerable than it is? but the fear of such a judgment restrains the wickedness of the world.

3. Although the wicked ought to shudder and tremble at this judgment, it is matter of joy and comfort to believers; for the day of judgment is to them "a time of refreshing," Acts iii. 19, "of redemption," Luke xxi. 28, and of "crowning," 2 Tim iv 8. Many are their sorrows and persecutions; but in the midst of them they may with courage, with uplifted heads, and with longing, look for the Judge from heaven to judgment. The Judge himself encourageth them to this, Luke xxi. 28. "When these things," the

various commotions in heaven and earth, at his coming to judgment, "begin to take place, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. "They may "look for, and hasten to the coming of the day of God," 2 Peter iii. 12. They have also reasons for this; since, (a) as the instructor saith, "they look for the very same Person, who before offered himself for their sakes to the tribunal of God, and hath removed all curse from them, to come as judge from heaven." This the instructor also learned of Paul from 1 Thess. i. 10. "To wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." This that apostle teacheth also, Titus ii. 13, 14. And so they look for their Surety, Redeemer, and Advocate, whom they have chosen, sought, and found to be their friend. So Job did in his book, chap. xix. 25 — 27. (b) He will also, when he cometh to judgment, "cast all his and their enemies into everlasting condemnation." They frequently wish now, that they were delivered from their enemies, nevertheless not from revenge: no, they will bless, though they be cursed: but it pleaseth the Lord to try and exercise them by enemies: yet when that day comes, (and lo it will come) then they will be delivered from them. This expectation ought to comfort them; fear not, ye afflicted, tossed with a tempest, and not comforted, stand still, behold the salvation of the Lord which he will shew you; your enemies, whom ye see to day, ye shall see no more for ever; and then "death and hell," that is, all that is as a death and hell to you, "shall be cast into the lake of fire," Rev. xx. 14. And thus "the righteous shall rejoice, when he beholds the vengeance," Psalm lviii. 10. (c) Once more, the great Judge "will translate believers, and all his chosen ones to himself, into heavenly joys and glory." "I will come again," saith he to them, John xiv. 3, "and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." This is surely their desire, even to be with Christ! this is their great salvation! to this the soul aspires now, and it is good for her to be near him. What will it be then, when she will not be now and then near him here, and when, unclothed of her body, she will be taken up to Christ, her Head, but when she "will be taken up" with her body, and that clothed with immortality," in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall be ever with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 17.

APPLICATION.

May we not infer from all this, (a) that Christ alone is the head of the church; for when "God set him at his own right hand, he gave him to be the head over all things to the church," Eph. i. 22. And therefore the Pope cannot be the head of the church, since he doth not sit at the right hand of God; but manifests by his exalting of himself in the temple of God, that he is the man of sin, and the son of perdition, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming," 2 Thess. ii. 3—8 (b) We infer also from Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, and from his coming again, the truth of the doctrine of Christians, in opposition to Jews and heathens, inasmuch as these foundations of Christianity are sure; for Christ confirmed them with the strongest proofs, when according to his prediction, he as sitting at the right hand of God, destroyed Jerusalem, poured out the Spirit, and converted the world by the rod of his strength, and thus rules in the midst of his enemies. Yea, our faith in his coming to judgment, and our resting of our doctrine upon it, is a proof of it.

But who are they, for whose profit and comfort he sitteth at the right hand of God, and will come again to judgment? they are those who have been made partakers of his heavenly graces of regeneration, conversion, faith and sanctification, and for whom he offered himself to the tribunal of God, and from whom he hath removed all the curse. Who these are we have shown before by certain marks, and therefore we deem it unnecessary to do it here again.

But hear this and tremble, ye ignorant persons. "God will take vengeance in flaming fire upon them who do not know him," 2 Thess. i. 8. Careless persons, ye "men who are settled upon your lees, the Lord will search you with candles," Zeph. i. 12. "Rise up, ye women, who are at ease, hear my voice, ye careless daughters, give ear to my speech. Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women; tremble ye women that are at ease; be troubled ye careless ones," Isaiah xxxii. 9, 10, 11. Hypocrites, who make a fair show externally, but have rotten hearts, "when the Lord shall come, then he will reveal the counsels of the heart," 1 Cor. iv. 5. "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" Matt. xxiii. 33. Stout-hearted sinners: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him," Jude vrs. 14, 15. Impenitent persons, who, notwithstanding

all the means which are used in order to influence you to repentance, continue immovable: "who despise the riches of the goodness of God, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth you to repentance: after your hardness and impenitent hearts, ye treasure up for yourselfe wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. ii. 4, 5. Oppressors, opposers, scoffers and despisers of the godly, attend only to what we find in the Apocryphal book of wisdom, chap. v. 1—6. "Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. When they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. And they repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, this was he whom we had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach. We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints! Therefore have we erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness hath not shined to us, and the Sun of righteousness rose not upon us." Unchaste persons, "God will judge whoremongers and adulterers," Heb. xiii. 4. Covetous, avaricious, unrighteous persons, who swallow up riches, ye shall vomit them up again; God will cast them out of your belly," Job xx. 15. All who have not truly fled from the wrath to come, ye may seek to banish the fear of this judgment out of your hearts, and may jest with it, thinking or saying, where is the promise of his coming? or ye may seek to put the evil day far away from you, or with the foolish virgins may indulge yourselves in carelessness, relying upon your profession of religion; this judgment will overtake you unawares: "when ye shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon you, as travail upon a woman with child; and ye shall not escape," 1 Thess. v. 3. The trumpet which will blow will awaken you: "The hand of God will," with perfect ease "find out all his enemies, his right hand shall find out them that hate him. He shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of his anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them," Psalm xxi. 8, 9. O how will his sitting at the right hand of God, and his appearing to you as a Judge, affright you! "for ye will say to the mountains and rocks, fall on us. and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. vi. 16, 17.

O that the terrour of the Lord might persuade you to believe, to flee to his throne of grace, upon which he still sits at his Father's right hand. To this end are these things made known to you. See this, 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. Yea, repent yet, for ye are still invited to this. Hear what Paul saith to the Athenians, and also to you, Acts vii. 30, 31. "The times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness. God is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," 2 Peter iii. 9. Yea, "he is exalted by the right hand of God, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 31. Seek him then.

But ye, whom he hath subjected to himself, that he may render you partakers of his heavenly graces, and may cause you to dwell with him, and who are of the willing people, show now that he is your King and Judge at the right hand of God, by a frequent contemplation of him in his glory, by exalting him, submitting to him, being ready to serve him, delivering all your enemies into his hands, betrusting all things to him, praising him, and rejoicing in him: but we have spoken of all these things on the thirteenth Lord's day. We must say something different to you at present:

1 Seek of him the advantages of his sitting at the right hand of God, not only to be preserved and defended by him against your enemies; for ye may find this also in the thirteenth Lord's day; but also particularly that he would pour out his heavenly graces upon you by his Spirit. He hath obtained of the Father by his exaltation, the promise of the Holy Spirit, to shed him forth, as Peter teacheth us, Acts ii. 33. Do ye therefore need light, life, wisdom, holiness, joy and comfort, look unto him, apply to him, plead with him, as sitting at the right hand of God, that he would show you his glory, since "he is your head, and ye are his body, and the fulness of him that filleth all in all," Eph. i. 22, 23. Ye should then "receive of his fulness and grace for grace," John i. 16.

2. Dispose and prepare yourselves for his coming again to judgment: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and be ye like men who wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately," Luke xii. 34, 36. And for this end, endeavour to make your state of grace sure to yourselves, with Paul, 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him

against that day." Be also watchful over yourselves, your conversation and future expectation at his coming, that ye may not be surprised unawares. It highly misbecomes the wise virgins to slumber and sleep, like the foolish: "watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour, wherein the Son of man cometh," Matt. xxv. 5, 13. Be moderate in eating, drinking, clothing, worldly cares and diversions, that ye may not unfit yourselves for waiting for his coming. This is so strictly enjoined on you by the Judge, Luke xxi. 34. "Take heed to yourselves, that your hearts be not overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" Yea, do now what ye would wish ye had done, when that day cometh. Is there any sin to be mortified, is this or that person to be convinced, exhorted and comforted, make speed to do it, that, having done your work, ye may be ready to meet him. So your Head himself conducted, John xvii. 4, 5, as also Paul, who could say, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give me in that day."

3. Have and maintain a holy concern and solicitude to please the Judge in all that ye do. Do nothing now, which ye wish should not be made known on that day, but conduct yourselves as ye wish that Christ should find you at his coming: "We labour," saith the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 9, 10, "that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him: for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Emphatical is the admonition of Peter to this purpose, 2 Peter iii. 11, 14. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless."

4. Long for his coming. He will not come to terrify, but to comfort you, and to glorify himself in your glory, as your Bridegroom, Husband, Head, Surety and Redeemer; for "he will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," 2 Thess. i. 10. Ye do surely love his appearing, as Paul saith, of every believer, 2 Tim. iv. 8. Therefore long for it; "the Spirit and the bride say come. And let him that heareth say come," Rev. xxii. 17. Ye ought also to "groan in this tabernacle, desiring to

be clothed upon with your house which is from heaven," as Paul and the Corinthians did, 2 Cor. v. 2.

5. Be now also patient and courageous in your adversities, sorrows and persecutions, which befall you from without, or from within: "Be patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," saith James, chap. v. 1. It doth not become you to be so impatient, and to hurry so to be healed, and delivered from all your pains here, as soon as they attack you. It is not seemly in Christians neither, to let their heads hang as a bulrush, on account of troubles: let those act so, who have no hope in the coming of Christ: but as for you, believers, look, with uplifted heads, for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ; who hath given himself for you, that he might redeem you. Do your enemies, either your spiritual or temporal enemies harrass you exceedingly, do they render your condition exceedingly grievous to you; well, they are also the enemies of your Surety, your Redeemer and Judge, and he will cast them into everlasting condemnation. For he will bring the blessing of Abraham upon you, according to Gen. xii. 3, and "curse them who curse you." Think not that, when he will take all the elect up to himself, into heavenly joys and glory, he will forget the meanest among you; he will know you perfectly well, that ye are they, for whom he offered himself to the tribunal of God, and from whom he hath removed all the curse. He will say then to his Father, as he said formerly, "Those whom thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost," John xvii. 12. All your crosses will then be taken away, and all your tears wiped from your eyes; and ye will be taken up before the throne of God, and "be for ever with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words," as ye are commanded, 1 Thess. iv. 17. I conclude with the blessing and doxology of Peter, 1 Peter v. 10, 11. "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that we have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

FAITH IN GOD

THE

HOLY GHOST.

XX. LORD'S DAY.

John xiv. 16, 17. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Q. 53. What dost thou believe concerning the Holy Ghost?

A. First, that he is true and co-essential God with the Father and the Son: secondly, that he is also given me, to make me by a true faith, partaker of Christ, and all his benefits, that he may comfort me, and abide with me for ever.

AS the Father is not known, except by the Son, so also the Son is not known except by the Holy Ghost. That the Father is not known except by the Son, the Son himself teacheth us, when he saith, John i. 18. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." But the Son himself is not known, and so neither the Father, but by the Holy Ghost; for "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;" thus speaks the apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 3. And no wonder; for how can we know the love of the Father, by

which he prevents his people with his everlasting kindness, unless we know the grace of the Son, by which he purchased all happiness for them of the Father? But how shall we know the Son & salvation, unless we obtain by the Holy Ghost communion in the love of the Father, and in the grace of the Son? therefore not only "the love of God" the Father, "and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is supplicated for believers, but also "the communion of the Holy Ghost," 2 Cor. xiii. 13. For it is the Holy Ghost, who conveys the love of the Father, and the grace of the Son to the elect, as the Son promiseth the apostles, John xvi. 13, 14, 15. "When he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." As it is therefore necessary, that we should know the Father and the Son, so it is not less necessary, that we should know the Holy Ghost. For which reason the instructor having divided the Christian creed into three parts, the first relating to God the Father and our creation, the second to God the Son and our redemption, and the third to God the Holy Ghost, and our sanctification; and having explained the doctrine of God the Father and of God the Son, he proceeds in this Lord's day to the mystery of the doctrine concerning God the Holy Ghost.

There are three particulars here, which require our consideration;

I. What the Holy Ghost is,

II. How he is given, and

III. How we believe in the Holy Ghost.

I. In order to know what the Holy Ghost is, we must consider, 1, the meaning of the words, Holy Ghost, 2, that he is a person, 3, that he is, together with the Father and the Son, true and eternal God, and 4, that he is a person distinct from the Father and the Son.

1. In order to understand the meaning of the words, Holy Ghost, we must know that the word Ghost, (or Spirit) in Hebrew *ruach*, in Greek *pneuma*, and in Latin *spiritus*, denotes primarily a wind, or any blast, and thus something that is bodily; but it is also used to denote immaterial beings, which act by a natural ability, and from themselves with understanding and will. And in this sense angels and souls are ghosts, (or spirits); but this word is used particularly of God, and especially with respect to the essence of God; thus our Saviour speaks, John iv. 24, "God is a spirit." And with respect

to one of the divine Persons ; thus the Son is called, according to his divine nature, a spirit ; “ He was justified in the Spirit,” saith Paul, 1 Tim. iii. 16. But this name is given chiefly to the third Person in the divine essence : and of this Person our text speaks, and also the instructor in this Lord’s day. The third Person in the divine essence is called emphatically the Spirit, not because he is more spiritual in his essence than the Father and the Son, for he is co-essential with the Father and the Son, and of the same simple and spiritual essence ; neither is this third Person called Spirit, on account of his spiritual œconomy, and work of grace ; for he is called the “ Holy ” Spirit, on account of his œconomical work of grace, as will appear more particularly hereafter ; but he is called Spirit on account of his personal and spiritual proceeding from the Father through the Son : for as the first Person is called Father, and the second Son, on account of the eternal generation of the Son by the Father ; so the third Person is called Spirit on account of his personal and spiritual proceeding from the Father through the Son from eternity. As the Father and the Son are denominated from their personal property, to wit, the eternal generation, so also the third Person is denominated from his personal property, to wit, his eternal proceeding. It is the ancient and well established doctrine of the church, that the Holy Spirit proceedeth from the Father ; and therefore it is detestable, not only in the Socinians, but also in a certain person, * who desires to be esteemed orthodox in our church, to deny this proceeding of the Holy Ghost. Suffering himself to be misled and spoiled by philosophy, he did not find any innate idea of an eternal generation of the Son by the Father, therefore he would deny it, although the word of God asserted it ever so plainly. No marvel then that he subverted the faith of the church with respect to the proceeding of the Holy Ghost : but we reverence the word of God too much to deny, or doubt of this truth ; for the word of God teacheth us that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father. Of this the Son of God speaks, John xv. 26. “ When the Comforter shall come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.” It is said here, that the Spirit proceedeth from the Father, and this is distinguished from the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Son from the Father. On account of this proceeding, the Holy Spirit is also called “ the Spirit of God,” 1 Cor. ii. 11. “ The Spirit which is of

* By this person our author means Professor Roel.

God," 1 Cor. ii. 12. "The Spirit of God's mouth," Psalm xxxiii. 6. "The breath of the Almighty," Job xxxiii. 4.

But when we say that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father, we add that he proceedeth from the Son also. This occasioned severe disputes in the seventeenth and following centuries between the Greek, or eastern, and the Latin or western churches; for when the Catholic creed of Constantinople confessed that the Holy Ghost proceeded "from the Father, the Latins added, "and from the Son." The Greek church took this exceedingly ill, considering it as a falsifying of that creed: but if we consult the word of God, we shall see that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son also; for he is called "the Spirit of Christ, and of the Son." Rom. viii. 9. Gal. iv. 6. The Son "sends the Spirit from the Father," John xv. 26. And the Spirit receives all things from the Son, who hath what he hath from the Father, John xvi. 13, 14, 15. Since now the order of working among the divine Persons follows the order of their subsistence, it is evident, that the Holy Ghost doth proceed not only from the Father, but also from the Son. It was not therefore commendable in the Greek church to oppose so vehemently the proceeding of the Holy Ghost from the Son: neither can we approve of the conduct of the Latins in altering the creed by their own authority, and insisting upon the words, "from the Son," and not rather saying "through the Son," which the Greeks were willing to allow, and which would perhaps have been altogether as proper, because the Father works through the Son, and thus also causeth the Holy Ghost to proceed through the Son.

The third Person is called not only the Spirit, but also the "Holy" Spirit, not because he is more holy than the Father and the Son: for the hymn Holy, holy, holy, is addressed to each Person, and not unto one only, Isaiah vi. 3. But the third Person is called holy, because the making of the Church holy, is particularly attributed to him; for as creation is attributed to the Father, and redemption to the Son, so sanctification (or making holy) is attributed to the Holy Ghost, as his peculiar œconomy and dispensation of grace; therefore Paul saith, 2 Thess. ii. 13, that "God hath chosen believers to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit." And thus the whole œconomy, the dispensation of grace by the Spirit, or the application of the foreordained and purchased grace of the Father and Son is intimated by the additional word "holy," as the word sanctification denotes also the whole work of grace, which belongs to the Spirit. Peter teacheth us this, when he saith, 1 Peter, i. 2 "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sancti-

fication of the Spirit and obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Since now the Holy Spirit effects the work of sanctification spiritually, that is, rationally and internally in the spirit, or soul of man, by the instrumentality of the gospel, therefore the gifts of grace are sometimes called the Spirit. So we read, John vi. 39, "This he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." So the gospel is also called the Spirit, because it is the ministration of the Spirit: this we may see 2 Cor. iii. 6. 8.

2. The Holy Ghost is a Person, that is, an intelligent substance, by which he is in the divine essence individually what he is, being neither a part, accident nor quality of either of the other Persons, or aught else. The Arians, Servetians and Scenians, who deny that the Holy Ghost is a Person, are so perplexed here, that they know not what to make of him. Some will have that he is an inbreathed affection of God; others that he is the power of God; a third thinks that he is neither God, nor a creature, but something wholly different from either; a fourth that he is like one of the attributes of God; a fifth saith that he is a gift of God; a sixth makes him to be an excellent angel, or a certain order of angels; but those among them who wish to speak accurately, distinguish between the Holy Ghost, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. By the Holy Ghost they understand the power of God the Father, which is naturally in him; by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are also called the Holy Ghost, they will have that the gospel is signified, and certain gifts granted to particular persons.

The church teaches in opposition to this, that the Holy Ghost is a person; and not without reason; for (a) the Holy Ghost hath the personal properties of understanding: "For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11; and also of will: "For all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will," 1 Cor. xii. 11. (b) The Spirit hath appeared in divers forms, as in that of a dove, and of fiery tongues, in order to represent his gifts of Grace, Matt. iii. 16. Acts ii. 3, 4. Now persons only do such things. (c) The Holy Ghost hath his personal works; for he sends the preachers, Acts viii. 29, 30. xiii. 2. He leads, comforts, assures and intercedes, Rom. viii. 14—27, therefore the Holy Ghost is also a person. By a personification, personal works are indeed ascribed to charity, 1 Cor. xiii. 4—7, but this supposeth a charitable person. We cannot certainly think that the personal works of the Holy Ghost are personi-

fied, since the Holy Ghost is distinguished as a person from his works. Thus Paul teacheth us: "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit," 1 Cor. xii. 8. See also vrs. 9, 10, 11. (d) The Holy Ghost is also distinguished from the other divine Persons, not only as a distinct thing, but as a distinct Person. See John xiv. 15. xvi. 13, 14, 15. We have exhibited these passages at large before.

The objections which the adversaries of the Spirit offer against this doctrine are insignificant: they say that we are baptised with the Holy Ghost, according to Matt. iii. 11. Acts i. 5. 1 Cor. xii. 13, that the Holy Ghost is the power and gift of God, Luke i. 35. xxiv. 49. Acts x. 38, 45. We freely allow that by the Holy Ghost we must sometimes understand his gifts, with which we are baptised and influenced; but it follows not from this, that the Holy Ghost is not a person: for the Holy Ghost is distinguished as a person from his gifts, as hath been shown from 1 Cor. xii. 8—11. Is the Holy Ghost called the power and gift of God, it doth not denote that he is not a person; for then Christ would not be a person neither, since he also is called the power and the gift of God, 1 Cor. i. 24. John iv. 10.

3. We profess furthermore concerning the Holy Ghost, "that he is true and coeternal God with the Father and the Son." The above-named adversaries of the Spirit deny this also; but we hold it to be a most certain truth; because the names, attributes, works and honour of God are ascribed to the Holy Ghost: For,

1. The Holy Ghost is called God; for Peter said, Acts v. 3, 4, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." By lying to the Holy Ghost, they had lied to God; how is this to be understood, if the Holy Ghost be not God. The Holy Ghost is also called Jehovah: "Israel tempted the Lord," Exod. xvii. 7. Num. xx. 3—13. Deut. vi. 16. Psalm xc. 6—9; but the Lord was the Holy Ghost, as Paul showeth, Heb. iii. 7, 8, 9. Compare also Isaiah vi. 6—10, with Acts xxviii. 25, 26, 27. Now this name is proper to God only, and expresseth his essence as we have proved on the eighth Lord's day. Whence it therefore follows that the Holy Ghost is true and eternal God with the Father and the Son.

2. Divine attributes are ascribed to the Holy Ghost; for he is "the eternal Spirit," Heb. ix. 14. He is also omnipresent, Psalm cxxxix. 7. He is all-knowing, so that "he searcheth not only the hearts and reins," as it is said of God, Jer. xvii. 10, but what is more, "he searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God, and he know-

eth them," 1 Cor. ii. 10. 11. The Holy Ghost is likewise almighty, yea, he hath a sovereign might : " For all these things worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." It is now surely evident that he is the true God ; for he who is not God cannot be eternal, omnipresent, all-knowing, almighty, and sovereignly mighty.

3. We find also that the Holy Ghost hath performed divine works. He created the world ; for " the Spirit of God moved upon the waters," Gen. i. 2. See Job xxxiii. Psalm xxxiii. 6. He also upholdeth all things by a second creation : " Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created," saith David, Psalm civ. 30. This is the work of God only, as he himself declares, Isaiah xlv. 24. The work of regeneration and of sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, as we may see, John iii. 5. Titus iii. 5 ; and he manifests thus that " he is the Lord who sanctifieth Israel," Isaiah xxxviii. 28. " The Holy Spirit will quicken our mortal bodies," Rom. viii. 11. Now the Lord only quickens, (or makes alive) as he also kills, 1. Sam. ii. 6. Deut xxxii. 39. " Jesus cast out devils by the Spirit of God," Matt. xii. 28. Now " the God of Israel alone doth wonderful works," Psalm lxxii. 13. cxxxvi. 4. Therefore the Holy Spirit is also true God.

4. We must also give divine honour and worship to the Holy Ghost ; for we are sanctified to be his temples, " in which he dwells," 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. vi. 19. He is therefore God, for the temple of Solomon was builded for the service of God only, 1 Kings v. 5 ; and it is idolatry to build temples for the service of him who is not God, Hosea viii. 14. We must also obey God, and therefore the Holy Ghost, Heb. iii. 7, 8, 9, and therefore we can " vex him," Isaiah lxiii. 10—" grieve him," Eph. iv. 30—" commit an unpardonable sin against him," Matt. xii. 31. How can all this be, if the Holy Ghost be not the true God ? we must be baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost, Matt. xxviii. 19. This is a divine honour, which belongeth to none but God, as Paul shows, 1 Cor. i. 13, 14, 15. We must also worship the Holy Ghost, as the source of all blessings, 2 Cor. xiii. 13. Now, " the Lord God only must we worship," Matt. iv. 10. We must show that we are commanded to worship the Holy Ghost, that we may silence the Arminians, who allow indeed that the Holy Ghost is God, but nevertheless say, in order to flatter their brethren, the Socinians, that we have neither a command nor example permitting or obliging us to worship the Holy Ghost. The Saviour enjoins, Matt. ix. 38, " Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, to send forth labourers into his harvest." The

Lord of the harvest, who sends forth the preachers, is the Holy Ghost, as we see, Acts xiii. 1, 2; and therefore we are commanded to worship the Holy Ghost. We have also an example, showing that the Holy Ghost, the God who spake by the mouth of David, was worshipped, Acts iv. 24, 25. Now "the Spirit of the Lord spake by David," as he himself saith, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. When all this is considered, we may with certainty conclude that the Holy Ghost is the true God.

Although it is evident now, that he is the same God with the Father and the Son, we may nevertheless not think with the Sabelians, that he is the same Person with the Father and the Son; for there are three Persons in the divine essence, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, as we are taught, Matt. xxviii. 19. 2 Cor. xiii. 13. 1 John v. 7; and which we have explained upon the eighth Lord's day. Whence it therefore evidently follows, that the Holy Ghost is not the same Person with the Father and the Son. (b) The Saviour saith in the text, that the Holy Ghost is another Comforter, or one distinct from himself. (c) This matter may be further illustrated by observing that the Holy Ghost hath a distinct personal property and work from the Father and the Son; for the Father is the first Person, and the Son is the second in the order of subsistence and working; but the Holy Ghost is the third, the Father hath begotten the Son, the Son is begotten by the Father; but the Holy Ghost hath neither begotten the Son, nor is he begotten by the Father; but he proceedeth from the Father through the Son. The Father works from himself through the Son and the Holy Ghost; the Son works from the Father through the Holy Ghost; but the Holy Ghost works from the Father and from the Son. This is clear from John xvi. 13, 14, 15.

II. We come now to our second general head, which teacheth us how the Holy Ghost is given in his sundry workings. Thus the instructor saith, "that he is given to me, that he may make me by a true faith," &c. By which the Holy Ghost actually and effectually applies to believers all that grace, which was pre-appointed for them by the Father, and purchased by the Son. This we learn, 1 Peter i. 2. Therefore he is called "Spirit of the Father," Matt. x. 20, and so also "of the Son," Gal. iv. 6, because he is given by the Father to the Son, and hath qualified and anointed him for the work of Mediator, as the Son himself testifieth, Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, 3. And thus the Holy Ghost hath his special work also with respect to the church, on behalf of the Father and of the Son, as Christ teacheth, John xvi. 13, 14, 15. And therefore believers are

also called "spiritual," 1 Cor. ii. 15. In order to explain this somewhat more fully we shall consider the manner of the giving of the Spirit to the church under the Old and under the New Testament in general; and then how he is given under the New Testament in particular.

The gifts of the Holy Ghost under the Old and New Testament are either extraordinary, or ordinary gifts.

The extraordinary, or superordinary gifts are, (a) gifts of skill in arts, whereby some were qualified to do this or that work of art, as "Bezaleel was filled with the Spirit of God," that he might make the artificial work of the tabernacle, Exod. xxxi. 1—5. (b) Gifts of heroism and valour, by which the ancient heroes were urged and enabled to perform great exploits for the preservation and prosperity of God's people: thus "the Spirit of God came mightily upon Samson at certain times," Judges xiii. 23. xiv. 6, 19. xv. 14. (c) Gifts of office, as an ability to conduct in a kingly manner in ruling. It was "the Holy Spirit who changed the heart of Saul," 1 Sam. x. 9. "The Spirit of the Lord came upon David," 1 Sam. xvi. 13. To the gifts of office belong also those of a prophet, to reveal secrets, either such as are past, as Daniel revealed Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which he had forgotten, Dan. ii. 29, 30. iv. 8, or those which are to come; for "the Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, signified and testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow," as the apostles also possessed such a prophetic Spirit, particularly John, who was for that end "in the Spirit," Rev. i. 10. iv. 2. xxi. 10. To this pertains also, that the prophets and apostles taught the people of God infallibly the greatest mysteries, by word and writing. We see this John xvi. 13, 14, 15. 2 Peter i. 19, 20, 21. Hence also proceeded the gifts of all kinds of languages and miracles, Acts ii. 1—4, Rom. xv. 18, 19, as there were also many Christians in the primitive church, who were endued with superordinary gifts, Acts x. 44, 45, 46. See particularly 1 Cor. xii.

The ordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost are either common gifts of great light and joy in the mysteries of God, of which temporary believers do also partake, as those gifts are not inseparably connected with salvation; for "they are enlightened, taste the heavenly gift, are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, they taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; and notwithstanding fall away," Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. Or the ordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost are saving gifts, of which the elect only partake. These gifts are "those better things, which accompany salvation," Heb. vi. 9. And thus the Holy Ghost is "the Spirit of grace," Zech. xii. 10. These

gifts are many, and wrought in divers ways through the instrumentality of the word, which the Holy Ghost conveys to the elect, with a design to influence them thereby to salvation. The Spirit forbade Paul to preach the word in Asia and Bithynia, but sent him into Macedonia to convert many, Acts xvi. 6—9. To which the Holy Ghost also adds the sacraments; for all the elect “are by one Spirit baptized into one body, and all made to drink into one Spirit,” 1 Cor. xii. 13. By these means the elect receive the following gracious gifts of the Holy Ghost.

1. Regeneration, whereby the Holy Ghost renews them after the image of God, infuseth a principle of spiritual life into them, convinces them of their sins and damnable condition, subdues the ruling power of sin, and effects in them new powers to do that which is good. And so “they are saved by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost,” Titus iii. 5. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. And thus he is a Spirit of conviction, John xvi. 8, 9. Zech. xii. 10, and “the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” Rom. viii. 2.

2. True faith, whereby the Holy Spirit “makes them partakers of Christ and all his benefits.” We are taught in the seventh Lord’s day that “we receive and apply Christ with all his benefits to ourselves by faith.” This faith the Spirit works, and so he is “the Spirit of faith,” 2 Cor. iv. 13. For he enlightens the understanding with respect to the truths of the gospel, by which it discovers the acceptableness of Christ; for “he is given by God, as the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, enlightening the eyes of the understanding,” Eph. i. 17, 18, and thus “he leads into the truth,” John xvi. 13, “teaches all things, and brings to remembrance,” John xiv. 26, and “testifies of Christ,” John xv. 26. The Spirit of faith convinces also the mind of the divinity and truth of all the mysteries of Christ, and of his invitation to come unto him; for “the Spirit beareth witness that the Spirit is the truth,” 1 John v. 6. Yea, he unites the soul to Christ, causing her to receive him actually and operatively. This the apostle teacheth, Eph. iii. 16, 17.

3. Comfort. He is given to me, “that he may comfort me,” saith the catechism: therefore the Holy Ghost is called emphatically, the Comforter,” John xiv. 16, 26. xv. 26, and “he multiplies comfort,” Acts ix. 31. Many are the sorrows of believers, one while because they know not whether their state be good or not, another while on account of the power of corruption, then on account of the hiding of God’s countenance, yea, also on account of many bodily afflictions, either manifest tribulations, or secret vexations; but “the Holy Ghost comforts them,” for sometimes he assures them by “his witnessing

that they are the children of God, and heirs of God and of Christ," Rom. viii. 16, 17. 1 Cor. 11, 12. At other times he favours them with a sense of the love of God, that they may "glory in tribulations," Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. He also endues them sometimes with courage in their calamities, Psalm xxiii. 4. And so they obtain the benefits of God's kingdom, righteousness, peace and joy through the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17.

4. Sanctification : for he is "the Spirit of sanctification," 2 Thess. ii. 13. "He washes" believers from the filthiness of sin, 1 Cor. vi. 11, "changes them from glory to glory after the image of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18, directs them in all their ways ; for "he leads them," Rom. viii. 14. Psalm cxliiii. 10, and fills them with all his holy virtues of "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," Gal. v. 22. Yea, he is especially "a Spirit of prayer to them," Zech. xii. 10, for he enableth them to draw near the throne boldly, Eph. ii. 18, "to cry" as it were "with the Spirit of adoption, Abba Father," Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6. He dictates their prayers to them, enables them to pray heartily, renders their prayers acceptable, and procures a hearing for them, Rom. viii. 26, 27.

5. Preservation ; for "they are kept by the power of God," and thus by the Holy Spirit, "unto salvation," 1 Peter i. 5. Since "he abides with them for ever," as the instructor speaks agreeably to our text ; therefore he is said to "dwell in them, as his temple," 1 Cor. iii. 16. He is "an earnest to them, seals and establishes them," 2 Cor. i. 20, 21, 22. He strengthens and increases the spiritual life of the inner man in them, Eph. iii. 16, causes them to "mortify the deeds of the body," to wit, sins, Rom. viii. 13. Are they at any time seized with a languor, so that they faint and are weak, he raiseth them up again, and "creates in them a clean heart, and renews a right spirit within them, he doth not depart from them, but restores unto them the joy of his salvation, and the free Spirit upholds them," Psalm li. 10, 11, 12. When they die, the Spirit pronounces them blessed, Rev. xiv. 13, and "he will quicken their mortal bodies," Rom. viii. 11.

But the gifts of the Holy Ghost are given especially under the New Testament. We conclude from what we have just now said from many passages of the Old Testament, that the Spirit was given to believers under the Old Testament : but he is given under the New Testament in a greater measure, and to a greater number of persons. The church of the Old Testament hoped for "the outpouring of the Spirit from on high, when the wilderness should be-

come a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted a forest," Isaiah xxxii. 15, for the Lord God promised such "an outpouring of his Spirit," Isaiah xlv. 3, 4. Yea, on account of the increase of the gifts of the Spirit in the days of the New Testament, it is said, that "the Spirit was not given before Jesus was glorified, John vii. 38, 39. Therefore the ministration of the New Testament is also "the ministration of the Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 8.

III. That we may at length finish our meditations on the Holy Ghost, we must expound our third general head, to wit, how we must believe in the Holy Ghost.

The Remonstrants, who have no great regard for the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, as they have not neither for that of the Trinity, say that there is no express command to believe in the Holy Ghost; but are we not commanded to believe in the Holy Ghost when we are commanded to believe in God, since the Holy Ghost is God, as they themselves allow? Faith is a holding of a person's testimony to be true. Now the scripture is the testimony of the Holy Ghost; when then we are commanded to believe the word of God, we are then also commanded to believe in the Holy Ghost. And therefore every person, who confesseth his faith saith also, I believe in the Holy Ghost.

This faith in the Holy Ghost consists, (a) in holding with an assured mind the testimony of the Holy Ghost, and so the whole word of God, to be true, on account of the testimony of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit exhibits many evidences of the truth and divinity of the word, both in the scripture itself, and in the hearts of believers; for "the Spirit testifieth that the Spirit is the truth," 1 John v. 5, whereby believers then become assured of the truth and divinity of the word, and do thus believe. Faith in the Holy Ghost consists also, (b) in accepting him in and through Christ upon his proffer. The Lord Jesus proclaims to every sinner, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive," John vii. 38, 39. Now he who believes in Christ, accepts also this promise in and with him. Add to this, that (c) faith in the Holy Ghost consists also in the believer's having an assurance, that the Holy Ghost is given to him also for such gifts, according to the testimony of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost testifieth in the word, that he who believes in the Son, doth also partake of him, as we have seen, John vii. 38, 39. The Spirit enables the believer to take a near view of his heart; and causeth him to see that he himself hath wrought faith therein; for "the Spirit which is

of God, causes him to know the things, which are freely given to him of God," 1 Cor. ii. 12. Whereupon "the Spirit of God testifieth with the believer's spirit, that he is a child of God," Rom. viii. 16. And therefore he doth not believe this of his own imagination, but upon the divine testimony of the Spirit himself.

APPLICATION.

When we now duly consider all that hath been said, must we not conclude that the Spirit works grace in the elect effectually, in such a manner, that he changes the heart, and irresistibly? surely yes; for the Holy Ghost is the true God, and he works in a divine manner in the work of grace, with "the exceeding greatness of his power, according to the working of his mighty power," Eph. i. 19. Our reformed church therefore teaches with good reason, that there is such an effectual grace: but those who oppose this doctrine, and set free-will against the Spirit, deny the Holy Spirit and his work of grace. The Socinians, who connect their doctrines better than the Remonstrants, do also show this, when they deny with the Godhead of the Spirit, likewise his effectual work of grace.

"Paul finding certain disciples at Ephesus, said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Acts xix. 1, 2. He spoke of the superordinary gifts of the Spirit, which in those days were communicated also to common Christians, as we see in the sixth verse: but I also ask you, whoever ye be, Have ye received the saving gifts of the Holy Ghost. Verily this a matter of the greatest importance to you, for if ye have the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you," according to 1 Peter iv. 14, ye have then also the Father and the Son, "ye abide in God, and God abideth in you;" for "we know this, because he hath given us of his Spirit," 1 John iv. 13. Ye have then also saving faith, and partake of Christ and of all his benefits; ye may live joyfully and comfortably in peace, and the God of love and of peace will be with you, yea, his Spirit will abide with you for ever; but if ye have not the Spirit, ye are then yet "natural men, who have not the Spirit," as holy Jude speaks in his epistle, at the nineteenth verse, and therefore "ye cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto you; neither can ye know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. Ye have no saving interest

in Christ : for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Ye are yet after the flesh, and do mind the things of the flesh, ye cannot please God, and shall therefore die," Rom. viii. 5, 8, 9, 13. Therefore bethink yourselves well. What answer do ye return to yourselves upon that important question. Have ye received the Holy Ghost? Do ye wish to discover your condition, that it may conduce to your salvation, attend then to the different dispositions of men, and see whether ye can find your own.

1. Many do not know at all what it is to have the Spirit; they may indeed say with the disciples at Ephesus, Acts xix. 2. "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." The things of this life possess their hearts so, that they regard nothing but eating, drinking, laboring, buying and selling : doth any person speak to them concerning the Spirit, and his experimental works, they look upon it to be strange talk, which exceeds their comprehension; yea, some will deride it, as enthusiasm; "but," as Peter saith, "these as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption," 2 Peter ii. 12. Thus holy Jude also speaks in the tenth verse of his epistle.

2. Others are not so ignorant nor blasphemous, but exceedingly devout, they hear gladly a serious sermon, and with Herod do many things; yea, some are exceedingly attentive, and have also an understanding of the word, yea, they relish it so, that through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus they escape the pollutions of the world, and show thus that they are also partakers of the Holy Ghost. But they depend upon this common work, they promise themselves heaven in consequence of it, and doubt not that they will be saved. Unhappy men, who have no more than this, who have neither Spirit nor life, are not regenerated, nor united to Christ! Have not many temporary believers proceeded further than ye have? See it in Balaam, Numb. xxiii. 24, in Judas and others, Matt. vii. 22, 23. xiii. 20, 21. Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. 2 Peter ii. 20.

3. There is still another kind of persons: these experience such an inward working of the Spirit convincing them of sin and of their unhappy condition, that they feel an arrow in their souls: but some cannot endure such a particular discovery, and therefore they oppose it in an angry manner, and so "resist the Holy Ghost," Acts vii. 51. Others are exceedingly grieved, that they are so miserable, but the work is not perfected, it is only a sea-sick qualm, which soon ceaseth: they either reform a little, and depend thereon, without ever partaking of the true life of regeneration and of faith, or they

divert their distress by amusements, or by necessary business ; or continuing careless and not being able to get rid of their distress, they dismiss their concern, and neglect their salvation, and do not strive any more to be saved. Yea, many, when the Holy Spirit convinceth them, will look upon it to be a weakness of faith, and an assault of the devil, which they ought to resist ; and if they cannot get rid of their concern, and complain of it to an unskillful person, who is not acquainted with the work of grace, such an one will sometimes inform them, that it is nothing but a distemper of their brain, which they must endeavour to remove. And thus are these unhappy persons kept back from Christ, the only Saviour.

4. There are also some, who are exceedingly concerned whether the work of the Holy Ghost, which they perceive in themselves, be indeed the saving work of the Spirit of grace according to the word of God. They would not willingly deceive themselves in this matter, and therefore they examine themselves repeatedly, and ask persons of understanding how they ought to conduct with themselves in this respect, so that they may not be finally deceived, and what are the true evidences of the Spirit of grace.

We inform these (a) that this concern, serious examination, and restless desire of the Spirit of grace, is a sure evidence, that they are truly partakers of the Holy Spirit ; for the Holy Ghost causeth persons to "search," in this manner, "all things, yea, the deep things of God," and particularly, whether that "be revealed to them, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which hath never entered into the heart of man," as Paul teacheth, 1 Cor. ii. 9, 12. How much soever temporary believers may have of the Spirit, nevertheless, they will not suspect themselves so much, they never labour with themselves, but only with their understandings, that they may apprehend spiritual things, may instruct others in a masterly manner, and may imagine that they partake of the Spirit of salvation. (b) The Spirit of grace humbles a person, and renders him lowly ; for he discovers to him the abominable nature of his sins, so that he is ashamed of himself, detests and humbles himself on account of them ; the Spirit causeth him, not only when he is first convinced, but also daily, to bewail his iniquity, to mourn and lament over it. This we see, Zech. xii. 10. The temporary believer neglects this, he thinks that his sins are forgiven him. (c) The Spirit of grace imparts a knowledge of himself, by which the believer knows from experience the working of the Spirit ; he sees that it is the Spirit who humbles him, stirs up his desires to Christ, detaches him from that which is visible and sinful, and works in him a delight to do the

will of the Lord. He saith with the spouse ; " It is the voice of my Beloved," Song ii. 8. Can he not venture, through an unbelieving mistrustfulness, to think that the Spirit of grace influenceth him, he nevertheless knows how he would have it ; when another exhibits the true nature of the spiritual work of grace, he thinks, yea, this is it, and his desire goes out after it, to possess it in the same manner. But the temporary believer doth not know this : doth he even know what the word saith, the Spirit hath not however revealed himself to him by the word : " The Spirit of truth, the world cannot receive" saith the Saviour, " because it seeth him not ; neither knoweth him ; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," John xiv. 17. See also 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15, 16. (d) The Spirit of grace unites the believer to Christ, he discovers him to the soul, so that she desires him, surrenders herself to him, and receives him ; for " the Spirit of truth testifieth of Jesus," John xv. 26. " The Spirit strengthens him with might in the inner man, that Christ may dwell by faith in his heart," Eph. iii. 16, 17. Others remain out of Christ, and attend only to certain outward duties. (e) The Holy Spirit also sanctifies the soul, renders her averse from sin, causes her to fight against it, that she may be delivered from it, and may live only to God, according to the Spirit : others think that they are great proficients in holiness, when they only abstain from gross iniquities, though their whole heart be filled with the things of the earth. This evidence Paul gives us, Rom. viii. 5. " They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit," (f) The Spirit accompanies his word. See this, Isaiah lix. 21. Acts x. 44. xvi. 14. Because the Spirit influenceth the soul by the word, therefore the believer hath so great a desire to it, so great a delight in it, and love to it : but others excite certain emotions in themselves without the word, by certain exertions, and compel themselves to believe that these are the works of the Holy Ghost ; or they content themselves with the word, although their souls remain cold and immovable, and without spirit.

Ye may now see whether ye have received the Spirit of grace or not ; and have ye not received that Spirit, be concerned, and be desirous to receive the Spirit, pray to God that he would give him to you : for " the heavenly Father giveth the Holy Spirit to them that ask him," Luke xi. 13. Remain under a serious ministration of the Spirit, even the word ; for " the Holy Ghost falls on them who hear the word," Acts x. 44.

But do ye truly and savingly partake of the Holy Ghost, take heed to conduct properly toward him ; and therefore,

1. "Grieve not the Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," Eph. iv. 30. Will ye know how we grieve the Spirit? We do this, (a) by not obeying his commands, motions, convictions, and excitations, but resisting him in these respects; therefore it is said, Isaiah lxiii. 10, "But they rebelled and vexed his Holy spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them." (b) By an unbelieving suspicion, and a fretful discontent with the leading of the Holy Spirit. Concerning this Eliphaz asked Job, "Are the consolations of God small with thee? is there any secret thing with thee? Why doth thine heart carry thee away? and what do thine eyes wink at, that thou turnest thy Spirit against God, and lettest such words go out of thy mouth?" Job xv. 11, 12, 13. (c) By scandalous sins. David was obliged, on account of such sins, to pray that "God would not take his Spirit from him, but restore to him the joy of his salvation," Psalm li. 11, 12. (d) By "quenching the Spirit," from which the apostle dehorteth 1 Thess. v. 19. This we do often in ourselves by a defect of zeal, in others by suspecting and opposing their gifts and graces: we do it also when we use our liberty to excess, so that we offend those who are weak; for "thus we sin against the brethren, and wounding their weak conscience, we sin against Christ," 1 Cor. viii. 12. (e) By envying the grace and gifts of others, by which discontentment arises on both sides, and the Spirit being grieved in this manner, departs; therefore James asks, "Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, Doth the Spirit who dwelleth in us, delight in envy?"* James iv. 5. This ought not so to be, my brethren, "but follow after charity, and covet spiritual gifts."

2. Cherish and stir up in yourselves the gifts of the Holy Spirit by a constant attention to the inbreathings of the Spirit, by following them, depending on them, making use of spiritual means, and conversing with spiritual persons. Thus Paul admonished his Timothy, to "stir up the gift of God, which was in him," 2 Tim. i. 6.

Walk and conduct in all things by the Holy Spirit. "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."† saith Paul, Gal. v. 25. Permit me to declare briefly, how we walk by the Spirit. We do this. (a) when we walk according to the rule or word of the Spirit, Gal. vi. 16 (b) When we employ ourselves with spiritual things, Eph. v. 18, 19. Rom. viii. 5. (c) When we act from the spiritual principle of life, 1 Tim. i. 5. Matt. xii. 35. Psalm xlv. 2. (d) When we regulate ourselves by spiritual ends in our actions, 1 Cor. x. 31. (e) When we do all things by the influence of the Lord's Spirit, and

* This is according to the Dutch translation.

† We have rendered this passage according to the Dutch translation.

not by our own might and power, Zech. iv. 6. (f) And also when we conduct ourselves circumspectly, and courageously through the Holy Spirit, and thus "walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost," Acts ix. 31.

Thus ye will have the clearest evidences that ye are truly partakers of Christ and all his benefits; your souls will be filled with the comfort of the Holy Ghost; yea, the Spirit will abide with you for ever, and your state will remain immovable through the Almighty Spirit, until he pronounce you blessed in death, and quicken your bodies in the blessed resurrection; for "we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," saith Paul, Rom. viii. 23. Amen.

THE
CHURCH OF GOD,
AND HER
BENEFITS IN THIS LIFE.

XXI. LORD'S DAY.

1 Cor. i. 2. Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.

Q. 54. What believest thou concerning "the holy catholic church" of Christ?

A. That the Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to himself by his Spirit and word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith; and that I am, and for ever shall remain a living member thereof.

Q. 55. What do you understand by "the communion of the saints?"

A. First, that all and every one who believes, being members of Christ, are in common, partakers of him, and of all his riches and

gifts: secondly, 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.

Q. 56. *What believest thou concerning "the forgiveness of sins?"*

A. That God, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction, will no more remember my sins, and my corrupt nature, against which I have to struggle all my life long; but will graciously impute to me the righteousness of Christ, that I may never be condemned before the tribunal of God.

TRULY God is good to Israel," saith Asaph, Psalm lxxiii. 1. "The Lord is indeed good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works," Psalm cxlv. 9. Yea, there is no creature, whether rational, or irrational, animate, or inanimate, that doth not exhibit many evidences of the divine goodness. "He is kind also to the unthankful and to the evil." Luke vi. 35. But God is good particularly to Israel from a hearty and fatherly love, "giving" himself "his Son, and all things with him" to Israel, Rom. viii. 32. The Lord promised once with respect to Solomon's temple, 1 Kings ix. 3. "Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." But this is especially true with respect to Israel, his spiritual temple; for God doth set his heart upon Israel with a special affection; he bestows himself wholly upon them for an inheritance, and a sufficient possession: "Israel is that happy people, whose God is the Lord, and whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance," Psalm xxxiii. 12. Yea, the whole divine Trinity is engaged in showing favour to Israel; the Father elected them, the Son redeemed them, and the Holy Ghost sanctifies them; and therefore the believing Israelites are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," 1 Peter ii. 9. They are "the church of God, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," as Paul saith in our text; and herewith agrees the description, which the instructor gives of the church, upon which God bestows such precious favours, both in this life, and in that which is to come.

Having seen thus far the lovingkindness of the three Persons in the divine essence, and that each person contributes his share to the salvation of the sinner, it behooves us now to show you who are the Israel, the church of God, to which he shows all his saving kindness.

It appears that three particulars are exhibited to us here:

I. The faith of Christians concerning the church, Q. 64.

II. Concerning the communion of saints, Q. 55.

III. Concerning the forgiveness of sins, Q. 56.

J. With respect to the faith of Christians concerning the church we will inquire 1. What the church is, 2. How we believe this church.

1. In order that we may learn what the church is, we must know that the word church is properly a Greek word, and that it signifies the Lord's, as this word is used of the Lord's supper, and the Lord's day, 1 Cor. xi. 20. Rev. i. 10. And this word was also used thus by the Christians of old to denote the houses of worship, which they set apart for the worship of the Lord; but when we now make use of the word church, we understand by it not only the ordinary houses of worship, but particularly the congregation of the Lord. This is called by the Hebrews *gnedah*, Jer. xxx. 20, and *kahal*. The first word is sometimes translated by the Greeks "Synagogue," as we see in the septuagint, Joshua xxii. 16, which word is commonly used by the writers of the New Testament to denote the Jewish houses of worship, which they had besides the temple; and sometimes also the assemblies of Christians, who were of Jewish extraction, as we may see, Heb. x. 25. James ii. 2. But the Hebrews most commonly used the word *kahal*, as the Greeks did the word *ekklesia*, by which they translate that Hebrew word, as we may see, Psalm xxii. 22, 25, which word, derived from *ek*, and *kaleo*, signifieth an assembly of men called from among others, and together. And so this word is used of the church and congregation of the Lord, which is called and gathered together by his word and Spirit, Matt. xvi. 18, either with respect to her internal state; and so believers only are called "the church, which God hath purchased with his blood," Acts xx. 28. Eph. v. 25, 26, or with respect to her external state, in the publick administration of the word and sacraments, to which hypocrites also join themselves. This, considered by itself, and without respect to the leaders, is sometimes called "the church of the living God," 1 Tim. iii. 15, as the leaders also, exclusively of the common members, are sometimes called the church, Matt. xviii. 17, "Tell it to the church." This word is moreover used to denote the body of believers, in this or that place; so the apostles wrote their epistles to particular churches, as John to the seven churches of Asia, Rev. i. 11. It is also used to denote the catholic (or universal) church of all times, nations, and places, of which the particular churches are particular members. "God gave him," namely Christ, "to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, and the fulness of him that filleth all in all," Eph. i. 22, 23. And in this sense the church is spoken of in the creed, and in this Lord's day. And thus

this church is also called *faneguris*, "the general assembly," Heb. xii. 23, a word which was used to denote the body of men, who came together to the publick shows. And truly the most glorious publick show is exhibited in the church: "By the church is made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," Eph. iii. 10, 11. See also, vrs. 18, 19.

Having explained thus previously the word church, we will consider more particularly, A. The nature of the church. B. The epithets of it, holy, catholic, and Christian, C. The different situations of it, and D, the manner in which it becomes a church, which the instructor explains in the fifty fourth question.

A. To the nature of the church pertains, that it is the body of Christ, consisting of members, head, and the union of both.

1. The members of the church are not the angels; for although "Christ hath subjected the angels to himself," as Peter speaks, 1 Peter iii. 22, and though believers "are come to an innumerable company of angels," Heb. xii. 22, and they are "fellow servants" of the preachers of the word, Rev. xxii. 9, and "are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation," Heb. i. 13, nevertheless the privileges and benefits of the church belong not to them. On this account also the reprobates, who join themselves in an outward manner to the church, are not true members of the church, which the Papists nevertheless imagine, because they will have that outward multitudes and splendour are marks of the true church, and that the Pope of Rome is the publick head of the church. Reprobates, who are outwardly in the church, are not in it as wheat, but as "chaff, which shall be burned with unquenchable fire," Matt. iii. 12, as "evil fishes, which must be cast away," Matt. xiii. 48, as "vessels of dishonour," 2 Tim. ii. 20. They may join themselves to the church, but they are not of the church, 1 John ii. 19. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God," Rom. ii. 28, 29. See also what is said, Rom. ix. 6, 7, 8. And therefore elect believers only are true members of the church: "Those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," as the apostle speaks in the text; "the called, the chosen and faithful, who are with Christ," Rev. xvii. 14, of whom Christ is "the Head and Saviour," to whom they "are subject; those whom Christ loveth, for whom he gave himself,

whom he sanctifieth, and presents to himself as glorious," Eph. v. 23—27, for the church is "his body," Eph. i. 23, "his bride," Rev. xxii. 17, "his sheep," x. 26—28.

2. Christ alone is the head of the church; for his headship over the church is represented as the same with his sitting at the right hand of God, and with his universal lordship over all things, as Paul explains it, Eph. i. 20—23. And it therefore denotes (a) his dominion over the church, he is therefore called the Lord, Shepherd, King, Bridegroom and Husband of the church, (b) his glory and excellency above all that is glorious, (c) his union with the true members, and also (d) his influencing of all his members.

Therefore Peter is not the visible head of the church, much less is the Pope of Rome; for (a) then there would be two heads of one body, and the church would thus be a monster. (b) Such a glory belongs not to any creature, neither is any creature capable of exerting it; for it cannot influence the members. (c) Peter refused every kind of headship, and forbade others to assume it. See this 1 Peter v. 1, 2, 3. (d) If it were even so, that Peter was the head of the church, it would not follow therefrom that the Pope is the head, for he hath neither the doctrine, nor the life of Peter. (e) The Pope by arrogating this honour to himself, evinceth that he is "the man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, and that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.

Therefore Christ alone is the head of his church; and he was the head under the Old Testament, as he is now under the New; for the church gloried in him as such, Isaiah xxxiii. 22, "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us." Therefore it must appear exceedingly strange to us, that certain persons will have, that the church of the Old Testament was in bondage under the elders, the priests and prophets, as other Lords, associates of Christ, Gods on earth, and Gods so called. What is this but saying that there were many heads of the church under the Old Testament, contrary to its nature.*

* By these persons the author understands the Cocceians, a party more especially in the Reformed churches of Holland, Switzerland and Germany, so called from their founder John Cocceius, a native of Bremen, and professor of theology in the university of Leyden, a man of eminent piety, but of a luxuriant fancy. They entertained several singular opinions in theology, but did not deviate from the standards of the Reformed church.

3. To the nature of the church pertains also the union of the members with the Head, and in the Head with one another; but as this constitutes the nature of the communion of saints, we will defer speaking of this matter, until we treat of that privilege.

B. This church is called "a holy, catholic, Christian" church. The church is (a) "a holy" church; for "she is washed, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11. she is separated from the world, dedicated to God, and lives holily according to the will of God; and the Saviour "gave himself, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Titus ii. 14. (b) The church is also "catholic," or universal. This applies not to the church of Rome, as though it were her peculiar privilege, and thus a title of honour, and an evidence that the true church is to be found with the Papists; for Roman Catholic is as great a contradiction as particular universal; the church of Sardis "had the name that she lived, and she was dead," Rev. iii. 1. In the church of Philadelphia there were "those who said that they were Jews, and were not, but lied," Rev. iii. 9. Thus also the Romish church saith that she is catholic, or universal, but she lies; for she hath apostatized from the doctrine of the universal church, and is become antichristian, as may be seen from a comparison of the Romish church with the word of God: but the church is called catholic, or universal, because it comprehendeth all the believers of all times and places; hath one universal doctrine in all times and places, and partakes of all the graces and privileges of all the true members: "There is one body, and one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all," Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6. But the church of the New Testament is especially universal, because it is not, like the Old Testament church, limited to one nation and country, but is redeemed to God by Christ with his blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," Rev. v. 9. This church, called and gathered from Jews and Gentiles, is named "the general assembly," Heb. xii. 22. Therefore she is also surnamed (c) Christian, after Christ her Head, as hath been shown more particularly upon the thirty-second question.

C. This church may be considered in different situations, and indeed as (a) militant and triumphant. The church militant is here on earth, and hath many, exceedingly mighty, crafty, and unwearied enemies; the devil, the world, and her own flesh; but she will overcome them, and triumph in heaven. That great champion Paul,

having respect to this, said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me in that day: and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. (b) The church militant is invisible and visible. The church is invisible, with respect to her true members, whose inward grace of the heart God alone infallibly knoweth: "The Lord knoweth them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. See also Rom. ii. 28, 29. Coll. iii. 3. The church is visible, with respect to her publick profession, worship, and holy conversation. And so the church is called "the light of the world, a city on a hill, which cannot be hid," Matt. v. 14. (c) This visible church is sometimes manifest, when she enjoys great glory and prosperity in the world, and is not persecuted; when "kings are her nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers," Isaiah xlix. 23. See this also, Rev. xi. 15. But the church is also sometimes hidden, when she is compelled, on account of the general prevalence of errors in doctrine and practice, and on account of grievous persecutions, to conceal herself, and "flee into the wilderness," Rev. xii. 6, so that even a prophet, like Elijah, thinks "that he only is left," although the Lord God "reserves seven thousand besides, a remnant according to the election of grace," who are not carried away with the flood of seductions, as we may see, 1 Kings xix. 14, 18, Rom. xi. 1—5. Therefore it is no mark of the true church, that she enjoys always a great outward splendor in the world, as the Papists fancy; this is rather a mark of the whore of Babylon, "who saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow," Rev. xviii. 7. When we read so frequently in the Old Testament concerning the splendor of the New Testament church, this doth not indicate that she should always possess such glory, but we must understand it sometimes also of her inward and spiritual state; therefore none needs to ask us, where our church was before the time of Luther and Calvin, since, according to the prophecy, she was constrained to "flee into the wilderness for a thousand, two hundred and threescore days," Rev. xii. 5. (d) The church is also considered as representative, being the leaders, who represent the whole church, and are therefore called the church itself, Matt. xviii. 17, and also "the presbytery," 1 Tim. iv. 14. The church is also called the represented, which is the body of believers, who are represented by their leaders; as these are also called the church, Acts xx. 28. 1 Tim. iii. 15.

D. In order that we may learn what the church is, we must know

also how she becomes a church. This is explained to us in a most beautiful manner, in the fifty fourth question; in which we are taught, 1. The essentials, that properly constitute her a church, that the Son of God gathers and unites her in the true faith, 2, whence he gathers her, 3, by what means, 4, according to what plan, 5, when, and 6, how he defends and preserves her.

That we may not be too diffuse, we shall treat of each particular briefly: 1. The essentials, that properly constitute her a church, are, that "the Son of God gathers and unites her in the true faith," that is, that all the members believe one doctrine with one mind; one member conceives not differently from another of God, and of his revealed way of salvation. "Faith is common," Titus i. 3, as "salvation is also common," Jude vrs. 3. Yea, all the members have the same mind of faith, "one heart, and one way," Jer. xxxii. 39. We have shown this also in treating on the epithet "catholic." To this they are gathered: before the Lord lays his hand on them, they are "the children of God, scattered abroad, but whom he gathers together," John xi. 52, as "sheep that are not of his fold, which he brings in; and so they become one fold, and one Shepherd," John x. 16. And this inbringing and uniting constitutes the essence of the church, which consists in the communion of saints, whereof we shall speak particularly hereafter.

2. He gathers these "out of the whole human race." He doth not gather the whole human race, as the Socinians think, as though God revealed a general doctrine of salvation to all men; or, as the Remonstrants fancy, that God gave a general covenant of grace, and a general sufficient grace to all men, and called all men to salvation: for "God suffered in times past the Gentiles to walk in their own ways," Acts xiv. 16. Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20. And in this manner doth the Lord God still deal with many nations, withholding his word and Spirit from them. See Acts xvi. 6, 7. But the Son of God gathers his church out of the whole human race; he singles out this and that people, this and that person, and brings them to communion with himself and with his church, while he leaves others to themselves. Under the Old Testament he confined himself to the posterity of Seth, Shem and Abraham; but under the New Testament "he hath visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name," Acts xv. 14. See also John x. 16. xi. 52. Rev. v. 9.

3. The Son of God doth this "by his word and by his Spirit." He sends his ministers into the world to call sinners unto him, and to invite them to be reconciled to God, and come to fellowship with him and with his people; but the voice of his ministers is not pow-

erful enough to subdue the stubborn hearts of sinners to the Lord; Jesus nevertheless willing to have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, exerts his power, that he may render them obedient to his word: Mark relates of the apostles, chap. xvi. 20, "that they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them." And thus he makes "his arrows sharp," and wounds with them "the hearts of his enemies, so that people fall under him," Psalm xlv. 5. "The rebellious dwell with him," Psalm lxxviii. 18. And so "he rules in the midst of his enemies, making them a willing people," Psalm cx. 2, 3, by which they also become inclined to "join themselves to the Lord and to his people," Isaiah xlv. 3, 4, 5 lvi. 3—7. And so his calling is effectual and irresistible, since he doth not employ his word only, but also his Spirit, "the exceeding greatness of his power," Eph. i. 18, 19, 20. The Lord doth not however influence all men in this manner, but he bestows on them only a common operation of his Spirit, through which some submit themselves feignedly, and others resist the Spirit, like the Jews, Acts vii. 51. And when this is rightly considered, we see how the calling is external and internal, resistible and irresistible; and so the opinion of the Remonstrants, that this calling can be resisted by freewill, and their objections against our doctrine, fall to the ground.

4. As God worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will, therefore the Son of God also gathers his church according to the plan of eternal election: "The church was chosen for him to everlasting life," that he might gather her: for the Father who chose the church, gave her to the Son in the eternal covenant of redemption, that he might reveal his Father's name to her, which he hath also done, as he himself testifieth, John xvii. 6. This election is God's eternal counsel, by which he decreed, according to his free good pleasure, to favour certain persons with grace, and to save them by Christ, to the glory of his wisdom, goodness and power. He hath certainly not chosen all men, upon condition of their faith and conversion, as the Remonstrants imagine; for this is not an election, which selects some from among others, but a receiving; it is certainly not an election of persons, but only of conditions and qualifications. Eternal election respects particular persons, who are singled out as it were by name, in preference to others, Rev. ix. 13, and "written in the book of life," Luke x. 20. Philip iv. 3, which elected persons are not the most, but the fewest in number; yea, fewer than even those who are called, Matt. xx. 16. xxii. 14. Luke xii. 32. These are elected in preference to others, not on account of their

foreseen faith and good works, as the Remonstrants and Jesuits pretend; for then man himself would "make himself differ from others," contrary to 1 Cor. iv. 7, but they are elected, because it was the free good pleasure of God to elect them; for "he predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will," Eph. i. 5. Election is not from, but unto faith and good works, which flow from election, as Paul showeth, Rom. viii. 29, 30. Eph. i. 4. And it is for this reason, that the Son of God gathers the elect to the church, for "as many as are ordained to eternal life, believe," Acts xiii. 48.

5. Since now it hath not pleased God to bring all men into the world at the same time, but at different periods, therefore Christ also gathers his church "from the beginning to the end of the world." If time would permit, we would show how the Son of God gathered a church for himself in the families of the patriarchs before, during, and after the time of Moses, before he came in the flesh; how he did this, while he was on earth; how after his ascension into heaven, from Jews and Gentiles, and what he will yet do, in order to gather his church. Every person who attends to the word of God, and knows that Christ is the Head, the Lord, and King of his church, knows also that he hath never been without members, and subjects, and that he never will, nor can be without them.

6. This is still more evident, because he protects his church. The church is frequently and most grievously attacked and assaulted by her secret and open enemies; but the Son of God "defends" her. See this Psalm cxxxix. 1—4. Rev. xii. 1—11. He is "a wall of fire to her; he who toucheth her toucheth the apple of his eye," Zech. ii. 5, 8. And he also keeps and "preserves" her so, that she will remain steadfast until the end, and will be saved. She is the bush which burns, but is not consumed: "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved," Psalm xlii. 5. "The purpose of God according to election shall stand," Rom. ix. 11. The satisfaction of the Son cannot be frustrated: "God forgives the sins" of those who are redeemed by Christ, "that he may declare his righteousness," Rom. iii. 25, 26. "The Spirit abideth for ever" with the church, John xiv. 16. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance," Rom. xi. 29. "Jesus loveth his own unto the end," John xiii. 1. "He gives his sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish," &c. John x. 28, 29. "The covenant of grace, all the promises of that covenant, and the foundations of the church are immoveable, Isaiah liv. 8, 9, 10, Matt. xvi. 18. Do any fall away, they are only certain particular members, or churches of this or that

place, who evidence thus, that they never were true members of the church, as the apostle teacheth, 1 John ii. 19, but no true member of the church will ever fall away, much less the universal church.

2. Having thus seen what the church is, we must further know how we are to believe a holy, catholic, Christian church. We do not believe in the church, which consists of men, like the Romanists, who trust in the church unreservedly for their salvation: "For thus saith the Lord, Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm," John xvii. 5. But we believe the church, which we do, (a) when we assure ourselves, that the Son of God gathers such a church for himself on earth, and when we earnestly desire to join ourselves to her. So the spouse acted, when she said, Song i. 7. "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon; for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" (b) When we have a certain knowledge of the true church according to the word of God, so that we abide not in the true church from prejudice, or opinion, but from a discovery, that she hath the approbation of the word of God. Such was the faith of Paul, when he said, Philip. iii. 3, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (c) When we believe upon good and incontrovertible grounds, agreeably to the word of God, that we ourselves are living members of the church, and will always remain such. This was the faith of David, when he said, Psalm xxiii. 5. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

II. We had so much to say on our first head: we proceed now to the second, to wit, the communion of saints. Many ancient creeds did not contain this article, because the communion of saints constitutes the essence of the church, and belongs thus to the church herself. But as the communion is now mentioned distinctly in every creed, as a benefit to the church, we will also explain it, as a distinct benefit. The Lord God, since he loves his church, bestows great benefits upon her, and particularly these four, to wit, two in this life, the communion of saints, and the forgiveness of sins; and two after this life, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Of the two last the instructor speaks in the following Lord's day. The first of the benefits, which God bestows upon his church in this life, is the communion of saints.

Although the saints, to wit, the souls of the blessed and the angels, have a communion with one another in heaven, and even the saints upon earth have also communion with those in heaven; for Paul

saith, Heb. xii. 22, 23, that believers "are come to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect;" nevertheless the creed speaks of the saints upon earth, who are members of the church militant; who are saints, because they are members of the holy church.

These saints have a communion with Christ, and with one another.

1 The saints have a communion with Christ. We believe, as the instructor explains it, "that all and every one who believes, being members of Christ, are in common partakers of him, and of all his riches and gifts." For Christ is a publick person, the Head, the Lord, the Surety and Redeemer of his people, who is whatever he is for his people: which communion imports, (a) the strictest union of believers with Christ, like that of a building with its foundation and corner stone: "Upon this rock I will build my church," saith he, Matt. xvi. 18; like the union of inhabitants with their house; they dwell in him, he is an "everlasting habitation" to them, Deut. xxxiii. 27, "a sanctuary," Isaiah viii. 14, and "he dwells in them," Eph. iii. 17. They are "the house" of the Son of God, Heb. iii. 6. Yea, they are united to him, as the graff is to the stock, John xv. 4, 5. Rom. xi. 17, the wife to the husband, Eph. v. 32. Isaiah liv. 5, the members to the head, Coll. i. 18, and the body to the garments, Gal. iii. 17. (b) This communion consisteth also in that special property which believers have in Christ, and in all his benefits. He hath appropriated them and all theirs to himself; "Ye know," said Paul, 2 Cor. viii. 9, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." And thus he, and all that is his, becomes their property. The believer saith, "My beloved is mine, and I am his," Song ii. 16. Believers being "of God in Christ Jesus, he is therefore made to them of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30.

2. By this communion with Christ believers have also communion with one another: "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus," saith the apostle, Gal. iii. 28. This communion of the saints consists also, (a) in that most intimate union, whereby "they are all of one heart, and one soul," Acts iv. 32. They all possess the same grace, Jer. xxxii. 39. "They are likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind," Philip. ii. 2. Yea, "they speak the same thing," 1 Cor. i. 10. They have all the same religion, the same property, the same enemies and friends; therefore they cleave to one another, as Ruth cleaved to Naomi, when she said, "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy

people shall be my people, and thy God my God," Ruth i. 16. The world knows nothing of this, and therefore wonders at it, "dares not join herself to these persons; but magnifies them," Acts v. 13. Yea, the world, cannot oppose them, without first putting out her own eyes. To express this strict union of the saints, they are likened to the compact stones of Solomon's temple, 1 Peter ii. 5. They are like citizens of one city, inhabitants of one house, Eph. ii. 19, table-fellows, who eat of the same bread, 1 Cor. x. 17, and members of one body, "being reconciled in one body." Eph. ii. 16. This communion consists also, (b) in a mutual property, and a consequent actual exercise of fellowship one with another, by virtue of that union; just as one member of the body hath a property in the other members, and exerciseth fellowship with them. So Paul speaks, Eph. iv. 25. "We are members one of another." He explains this beautifully by a representation of that mutual service and help, which one member affords to another, 1 Cor. xii. 14—27. And this mutual property and exercise of fellowship is manifested by asking concerning each others welfare, and by a fellowfeeling for each other in difficulties. See Neh. i. 2—10. Heb. xiii. 3. Therefore they are forthwith ready to contribute whatever they can to assist each other, either by supporting dejected souls with good comfortable words, or by communicating their goods to the necessitous, in which the primitive church of Jerusalem greatly excelled, although they have not a general community of goods; or by doing every kind office to each other. Do they understand that the saints prosper, they "rejoice with them that rejoice, as they weep with them who weep." See all this, Rom. xii. 4—10, 13, 14. 15. Yea, they exercise this communion not only in private, but also in publick, and they show with whom they hold. They conduct in this manner with respect to the publick administration of the word and sacraments, 1 Cor. x. 15, 17, the assembling of themselves together, Heb. x. 25, and their familiar conversation with the saints, though they be ever so mean, with David, 2 Sam. vi. 20, 21, 22. He was "a companion of all them who feared the Lord," Psalm cxix. 63.

III. We should now proceed to our third general head, to wit, the faith of Christians concerning the forgiveness of sins, as the second benefit, which God bestoweth upon his church in this life: but since we must treat of the forgiveness of sins in order, on the twenty third, twenty fourth and fifty first Lord's day, we will omit this at present.

APPLICATION.

In order that we may now improve all these particulars to our advantage, we will exhibit this church in its lustre. Let every one "walk about Zion, and go round about her: let him tell the towers thereof; let him mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces, that he may tell it to the generation following," as we are exhorted, Psalm xlviii. 12, 13. "Glorious things are spoken of the city of God," Psalm lxxxvii. 3. The members of the church are "the saints of the Most High, who shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever," Dan. vii. 18. The Head of the church is most precious, view him from his head to his feet, as described with respect to his wonderful excellency by her who knew him best and experimentally, Song v. 10—16. The union and communion of the church with him, and of the members with each other is inconceivable: "They are all one, as the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father are one: yea, they are one in the Father, and in the Son." See John xvii. 21. 1 John i. 3. The means by which they have become a church are indeed excellent; for they have by them become "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," 1 Peter ii. 9. And truly the state of the church is unchangeable, she is "like mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever," Psalm cxxv. 1. Who, when he beholds her, must not cry out with Moses, Deut. xxxiii. 29. "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

But what will it avail us, that there is such a glorious church, if we know not where that church is? There are many assemblies, which severally pretend to be the true church, and there is nevertheless but one true church, which God will save. It is therefore necessary, that we inquire which is the true church. The Socinians, as if self-condemned, will not brook this; but the spouse was wiser, when she inquired of her bridegroom concerning the true church, Song i. 7. We must join ourselves to the church, as it was foretold of the Gentiles, that they should do this, Isaiah ii. 2, 3. xi. 10. Zech. viii. 23. Indeed neither grace nor salvation are to be found out of the true church: "For there the Lord commandeth the blessing, even life for evermore," Psalm cxxxiii. 3. "But the rebellious dwell in a dry land," Psalm lxviii. 6.

That we may have a proper knowledge of the true church, God hath proposed a certain mark, or marks in his word, by which we may know her. I will not busy myself with the marks of others, and certainly not with the fifteen or sixteen marks of the Romanists, which are either derived from circumstances, or suit our church, and not the Romish, and those which agree to the Romish are heathen and Antichristian marks. But we will attend to that mark, which the word of God, the only rule of the church, affords us. And this mark is the agreement of the doctrine with the word of God; for "he who is of God heareth the words of God," John viii. 47. "Christ's sheep hear his voice," John x. 26, 27. The church is built on the word of God, Eph. ii. 19, 20. "We must try the spirits thereby, whether they are of God," 1 John iv. 1, 2, 3. "If any man bring not this doctrine with him, we must not receive him into our house," 2 John vrs. 9, 10.

If we now compare the doctrine of our church with the word of God, we will perceive with the utmost evidence, that she agreeth perfectly with the word of God, and that therefore the Reformed* alone are the true church; which appears still more, since we submit our doctrine to the word of God only, and in conformity thereto, humble the sinner to the lowest degree, comfort, sanctify him, and glorify the free grace of God. We know indeed that all other churches, so called, do also claim this mark, as well as we, but we will find them to be liars; for they do all reproach the word of God, and wrest it, either according to natural reason, as all Pelagians and Semipelagians do, or according to enthusiasm, as the Quakers do, or according to lordship, with the Papists. How then can they boast, that they have the pure doctrine, according to the word of God, and so that they are the true church? yea, they decline this mark, and will either have no marks at all, or others. Therefore it is evident, that the true church is found with us.

But, hearers, it will not suffice either you or me, to know that we are in the true church; for we may notwithstanding be still chaff, and vessels of dishonour. They who believe one holy, catholic, Christian church, say also that they are living members of the church, and will always remain such: is this so with you in truth? do ye say, yea? have ye then also true and living evidences? do ye ask,

* By the Reformed our author understands here the Protestants, to wit, the Lutherans and Calvinists, as distinguished into several national churches, or ecclesiastical communities, as the church of Holland, of England, of Scotland, of Sweden, Denmark, &c. and also such other denominations as agree with these in fundamentals. See the Author's preface,

what are the marks of a living member? we will exhibit them to you according to the word of God.

1. He who is a living member is such not only outwardly by profession, but also inwardly, being changed and quickened by the Spirit of God, to serve God inwardly, truly and heartily in the Spirit: he is not satisfied with his outward service, unless it be accompanied with a heart that hath been changed, that is alive, warm and active; therefore he attends to the motions of his heart, bemoans his heartlessness, and excites his soul, and cries to the Lord, "Unite my heart to fear thy name," Psalm lxxxvi. 11. "Incline my heart to thy testimonies," Psalm cxix. 36. That this is a true mark appears from Rom. ii. 28, 29. "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, &c.

2. Such a person is united to the Head, even to Christ, truly, and hath communion with him, hath received him by faith truly, heartily, and in opposition to all besides, and affords him a dwelling in his heart. We see this John i. 12. Eph. iii. 17. See this treated more largely in our discourse on the seventh Lord's day.

3. Such a person agrees also with the true members of the church; he knows, he loves them, and is familiar with them, and regards their profit and disprofit as his own, because he sees the life, the love and image of God in them: and the more these things shine forth in them, the more he loves them; yea, even when they oppose and smite him: "Let the righteous smite me," said that living member of the church, Psalm cxli. 5, "it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities." As he also exhibits this as a mark of a citizen of Zion, when he saith, Psalm xv. 4. "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord."

See now whether ye are living members. Alas! how many "have the name that they live, while they are dead," as many in the church of Sardis were, Rev. iii. 1. For,

1. Many are misshapen members, who are monsters in the church, and deform her exceedingly: is it not thus with you, who are ignorant, irreligious, violators of God's name and day—revengeful, lewd, unjust, gluttons, drunkards, vain, worldly and earthyminded. The Lord may indeed complain now, as he did formerly, Jer. v. 26, "Among my people are found wicked men."

2. How many hurtful members are there in this body of the

church! Alas, that they were cut off! no profit accrues from them to the church, but only disprofit: certainly ye are hurtful to the brethren, who hanker so after new and unheard of things, which are contrary to the word of God, and utter those things: ye also who oppose the communion of saints, and strict and precise godliness, who betray the church and her privileges to unfit persons, and who abandon and trample upon them. He who hath eyes may see that now also "truth faileth" with many, and that "he who departeth from evil maketh himself a prey," Isaiah lix. 15.

3. There are some, who only seem to be living members. They are devout, and have some knowledge of the mysteries of God, they are outwardly moral, yea, they associate with the godly; but their heart within is dead and rotten, and in secret they are as vile as the vilest, as the Saviour describes the Pharisees, saying also of them, that they "cannot escape the damnation of hell," Matt. xxiii. 25, 27, 33. It is true, they conduct so that they escape censure; but are not ye they who will not be detected? Ye hate them who detect you: when ye can only find an opportunity, and will not expose yourselves too much, ye will reproach them, and will strive to render them universally odious. Conceal yourselves as much and as long as ye please, God will one day hereafter detect you, as he discovered Judas.

4. Others are rotten members, who have fallen from the truth, and godliness which they once professed. How zealous were some for the truth and godliness! they could relish these things, they associated with the strictest of the pious, who were pleased with them, and loved them; but as soon as the novelty was over, they abandoned all, and fell away; if they do not join themselves to some apostate church, they abandon themselves to the world, which, like Demas, they begin to love again, 2 Tim. iv. 10. See these also detected, 2 Peter ii. 20—22. Ye who are thus, may be acknowledged members, but ye are not such in reality, any more than those who "said they were Jews, but were found liars," Rev. iii. 9. Flatter yourselves as much as ye please, ye have nevertheless "no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem," Neh. iii. 20. Ye shall neither in this life, nor after this life "stand in the congregation of the righteous," Psalm i. 5.

Doth this render you concerned, and do ye desire to become living members of the church, and to know how ye may become such? Behold, this is the way:

1. Endeavour to become assured that our church is the true church, according to the word of God, that it may be your steadfast

persuasion, that with us alone the salvation of the sinner is proposed. Let it not suffice you, that your parents have told you this, and that ye were educated to it; but endeavour to obtain a proof of it your own selves from the word of God; and do therefore like "the noble Bereans, who received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so," Acts xvii. 11.

2. Separate yourselves from your former companions, as far as they have tended to mislead you, or may yet do it: Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty," 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

3. Join yourselves to the saints, who are upon the earth. in order to seek their portion, and to be directed and conducted by them to the privileges of the church, as it was foretold, that "ten men out of all the languages of the nations should take hold, should even take hold of the skirt of him who was a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you," Zech. viii. 23

4. Remain not by any means estranged from the Head of the church, but endeavour to be united to him, to receive him, and to join yourselves unto him; for "the Lord will give unto the strangers who join themselves unto him, within his house, and within his walls, a name better than that of sons and of daughters," &c. Isaiah lvi. 3—7.

5. But ye, who are true and living members of the church of God, maintain diligently the communion of the saints: it is certainly your privilege, and the glory of the church; therefore endeavour to converse familiarly with the Head of the church, and like "Enoch, to walk with God," Gen. v. 22, 24. "Your life must be hidden with Christ in God." Coll. iii. 3, nevertheless in aiming at this, do not wholly separate yourselves from the saints, to which we easily decline, that we may converse and be satisfied in our solitary life with the Lord alone. No, the Lord hath called you for your happiness to his church, and to the communion of saints: the first Christians continued in the doctrine of the apostles, and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers," Acts ii. 42. But we must carefully beware that our conversation with the saints do not degenerate into a mere civil intercourse; we must converse one way with men as citizens, and another way, as saints, whose citizenship is in heaven; but avoid particularly strife and imperiousness, let others see in you that ye are of one heart, lowly, "like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." This Paul required, Philip. ii. 2, 3, 4. Doth the church appear to you to be exceedingly corrupt, do not separate yourselves from her, as long as the truth and the godly are in her, and as long as the Lord hath not separated himself from her. Of this we will speak further on the eighty second question.

6. Let every one promote the prosperity of the church, according to his condition and ability. Let magistrates, if they will be living members of the church, manifest themselves nursing fathers of her, cherishing her, as it was foretold of them, Isaiah xlix. 23. But ye, who have been set as watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem, "be diligent to know the state of your flocks, look well to your herds," Prov. xxvii. 23. See what that great apostle enjoins upon you, Acts xx. 28. Therefore "ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth," Isaiah lxii. 6, 7. Yea, "every one should pray for the peace of Jerusalem," Psalm cxxii. 6, "should warn them who are unruly, should comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men," 1 Thess. v. 14. Yea, even women and maidens, though they ought to be silent in the church, should do what in them lies, both at home and abroad, for the good of the church; as "the daughters of Shallum repaired the walls of Jerusalem," Neh. iii. 12. See also Philip. iv. 3.

7. Manifest yourselves, ye living members of the church, visible by a bright and holy conversation, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world," Philip. ii. 15. Your Head also requires this of you, Matt. v. 16.

8. If it should happen, that the church should be compelled to flee, upon account of grievous tribulation, do ye then always flee whither the saints flee: "Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents," Song i. 8.

Thus ye will not only be happy here, but will also be once translated into the church triumphant, since ye will say in due time with Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Amen.

THE
BENEFITS OF THE CHURCH

AFTER THIS LIFE.

XXII. LORD'S DAY.

Psalm xvii. 15. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness,
I will be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

Q. 57. *What comfort doth the resurrection of the body afford thee ?*

A. That not only my soul after this life shall be immediately taken up to Christ its Head ; but also that this my body, being raised by the power of Christ, shall be re-united with my soul, and made like unto the glorious body of Christ.

Q. 58. *What comfort takest thou from the article of "life everlasting ?*

A. That since I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy ; after this life, I shall inherit perfect salvation, which " eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man," to conceive ! and that, to praise God therein for ever.

" **T**HE gifts and calling of God are without repentance," saith Paul, Rom. xi. 29. " It repented the Lord that he had made man

on the earth," Gen. vi. 6. This doth not betoken that God, properly speaking, is capable of repenting; he is indeed perfectly wise, simple, blessed, and unchangeable; but it means that God would manifest his displeasure by destroying his work, even man. But "his gifts of grace, and his calling are without repentance:" these he doth not change, nor take away; for he hath said to his people, Isaiah liv. 9. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed." His everlasting counsel of grace, from which his gifts of grace and his calling are communicated is unchangeable, and he hath confirmed his promises with an oath by himself, Heb. vi. 17. The covenant of grace is, as it were, an unchangeable testament, rendered irrevocable by the death of the testator Christ, as the apostle teacheth, Heb. ix. 16, 17. Yea, the Spirit, who is the seal and pledge of the heirs, "abides with them for ever," John xiv. 16. Therefore the favourites of God, making their boast in the Lord, on account of his everlasting kindness, say Psalm xlviii. 14. "This God is our God; he will be our guide even unto death." Even death itself doth not interrupt his kindness to them; for "the Spirit pronounceth those blessed who die in the Lord," Rev. xiv. 13. And though their bodies dwell in the dust and in silence, the Lord doth not however withdraw his good hand from them, but he will raise up their bodies, as the bodies of his saints, and satisfy them with the fulness of his salvation. David, trusting in this, saith in the text, "I will behold thy face in righteousness, I will be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness." This the instructor also teacheth us in this Lord's day.

The instructor having spoken in the former Lord's day of the benefits and the gifts of grace, which God bestows upon his church in this life, shows now that they are without repentance, since they are not taken away in death, but are followed by those great benefits, which the Lord will communicate to his church after this life.

These benefits are two:

I. The resurrection of the body, Q. 57.

II. Life everlasting, Q. 58.

I. The first of these two benefits is the resurrection of the body. It is therefore evident, that the instructor doth not speak here of a civil resurrection, by which we are raised up from some bodily affliction, which is also called a resurrection, and a rising, Hosea vi. 1, 2, and which is represented by a resurrection of the body, Ezek. xxxvii. 1—14. Neither doth he make mention here of a spiritual resurrection by regeneration and conversion, of which the apostle speaks,

Eph. v. 14, but of a resurrection of the body, after it hath fallen by death. With respect to this resurrection it is shown in the fifty seventh question, 1. What becomes of the soul, after its separation from the body by death; "That my soul after this life shall be immediately taken up to Christ its Head." 2. What shall become of the dead body: "That this my body, being raised by the power of Christ," &c.

When the instructor saith, "that my soul shall be immediately taken up to Christ its Head," he then supposeth not only that man, yea, that the believer also shall die; for "it is appointed to men once to die," Heb. ix. 27, but also that the body alone dies, and not the soul, which departs from the body; for the soul is immortal. The word of God teacheth us this, Eccl. xii. 7. "The dust shall return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." See also what the Saviour saith, Matt. x. 28. But reason also teacheth us that the soul is immortal; for the soul is a spirit, an active substance, having in itself a principle, and a natural ability to act from itself, and to determine itself by its own free choice and willingly to this or that action; which cannot happen in aught that is material and bodily, for that must be moved by something without itself. From which it therefore follows, that the soul is wholly immaterial, and so that it cannot be dissolved, and therefore cannot die. Add to this, that the soul hath an innate desire to immortality, which cannot be to no purpose. Solomon saith indeed that "a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast" in his death, Eccl. iii. 18, 19, 20, but he speaks then of the outward appearance, according to which "none perceives that the spirit of the sons of men goeth upward, and that the spirit of the beast goeth downward to the earth," as he speaks in the twenty first verse, supposing that the spirit of men, that is, their soul, goeth to God; which is so much the more evident, when we observe that he had taught in the seventeenth verse, that "God will judge the righteous and the wicked." See this opinion of his also, Eccl. xi. 9. xii. 14. We might also say that Solomon recites, Eccl. iii. 18—22, only the language of Atheists, who deny the immortality of the soul: yea, it deserves our consideration, whether the ecclesiastes of Solomon be not a dialogue, in which one while Solomon speaks, and then also a silly youth, whom he introduceth speaking, and who looks upon sensual pleasure as the chief good, and thus denies the immortality of the soul, in opposition to what Solomon had taught him in the seventeenth verse. In what light soever we view this text, we will see that it doth not oppose the immortality of the soul.

From what hath been said we may certainly conclude, that the soul exists, and is active after its separation from the dead body, and that it is not without joy or sorrow, and that it doth not sleep until the day of judgment, as the Socinians and Mennonites imagine; for the souls of the righteous are immediately taken up to Christ their Head, into heaven. "We know," saith Paul 2 Cor. v. 1, "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens." For this he also longed, Philip. i. 23. This the Saviour also promised to the converted thief, Luke xxiii. 43. And so also the souls of the wicked are cast down into hell, as we see in the rich man, Luke xvi. 23. Will souls sleep in heaven or hell? No, in heaven they are active in the highest degree, contemplating God, loving him, praising him, and rejoicing in him; "for they all live to him," Luke xx. 38. They do not sleep in hell, neither without feeling; for "the rich man was tormented in the flame." Luke xvi. 24. "Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them suffer the vengeance of eternal fire," Jude vrs. 7. And if we look into this matter aright, we will find that the opinion concerning the sleeping of souls reduces heaven and hell to a mere fable. The dead are indeed sometimes said to sleep and rest; but this is to be understood either of the body, as the Saviour saith, "Lazarus our friend sleepeth," speaking of his death, John xi. 11, 13, or of resting from tribulation, "their labour," Rev. xiv. 13, or of waiting for a fuller revelation of glory, Rev. vi. 11.

As the sleeping of souls, maintained by the Socinians and Mennonites, is absurd, so the porch of the fathers, and purgatory, maintained by the Papists, is fabulous. These men, in order to vend at a high rate their wares of auricular confession, indulgences, rosaries, selfrighteousness, masses for souls, and other trifles, have invented four different abodes for the souls of the dead, next to, and above each other: the lowest is hell, which is for the damned; next to this is purgatory, which is as hot as hell, and in which the souls, who are not sufficiently purified here by their own satisfaction, or that of Christ, are perfectly purified by a long, though not an everlasting torment: above hell is a receptacle for unbaptized children, and above this is the porch of hell, where the believing fathers of the Old Testament were confined, as in a prison, until Christ descended into hell, and delivered them out of it. Trifles. The word of God knows nothing of this, but saith that the ancient believers, when dying, "waited for the salvation of the Lord," Gen. xlix. 18, and that "after they had been guided by the counsel of God, they were

received into glory," Psalm lxxiii. 24. ' The Captain of salvation had even then brought many souls to glory," Heb. ii. 10. The fathers lived to God after their death, Luke xx. 38. The reflex virtue of the merits of their Surety conveyed them instantly to heaven. See Rom. iii. 25, 26. Heb. ii. 10. ix. 15. Peter saith indeed that Christ preached to the spirits in prison," 1 Peter iii. 19, but those were not the spirits of the believing fathers, but of the disobedient inhabitants of the old world, as appears from the twentieth verse: who were not in prison then, but now, to wit, in Peter's time, when the fathers were delivered out of the prison: moreover, Christ preached not to them in his own person, but by the Spirit, vs. 18, 19, and that not while they were in prison, but while "they were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing," vs. 20. "The pit wherein there is no water," Zech ix. 11, is not the porch, but the misery, spiritual or temporal, from which the people of the Lord are delivered by the blood of the covenant.

As there is no porch of hell, so there is no purgatory, in which impure souls must be purified by a hot flame; for the word of God knows of only heaven and hell, and not of purgatory: believers are immediately taken up to Christ their Head, as we have proved: "The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John i. 7. And the soul no sooner leaves the body, than it is perfectly "justified," and therefore also purified, Rom. vi. 7.

In order that they may have a cloak for their shame, they object here what Paul saith, 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13. "If any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: every man's work shall be made manifest; because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is." But we do not find one word here of a purgatory, which cleanseth souls from sin; this passage speaks of the fire of affliction, which tries, reveals and declares, not the persons, but the good and evil works of the builders, to wit, of the preachers, and not of every believer. We will not recite all the objections of the adversaries, but refute only this one, which they alledge from 1 Cor. xv. 29. "Else what shall they do which are baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" By baptism they understand the baptism of tears, and of making satisfaction by prayers, alms, &c. by which the dead are relieved in purgatory. But from what doth it appear that we must understand by baptism here the baptism of tears and of making satisfaction? that by the dead the souls in purgatory are meant? and that they are purified by such

a baptism? of this there is neither word nor title in the passage alledged. But we must know, in order to understand the sense of these words. that the apostle hath not respect here to any custom, which took place in the church after his time, but to something that happened in his time. And it was this, that when the martyrs were slain, others joined themselves to the afflicted church in their stead, and declared this by submitting unto baptism, which they would not have done, if they had not had a certain hope of a blessed resurrection, which was excited in them, when they saw that the martyrs, animated by such a hope, suffered courageously the most painful death. We conceive that this is the simple and evident sense of the passage; for by the dead we must understand those who had been slain by the death of martyrdom, as appears from vrs. 30. 31, 32. Baptism denotes here water baptism, the publick token, that a person hath received the Christian doctrine: for there occurs no reason here why we should depart from the literal signification of baptism. To be baptised for the dead, in Greek *uper toon nekroon*, signifies in the stead of the dead; for *uper* signifies for, and in the stead of, and thus it denotes that for, and in the stead of the martyrs, who were taken from the church, others joined themselves to her by suffering themselves to be baptised. And so this was a powerful argument in favour of the resurrection of the dead, that these newly baptized persons appeared to be so powerfully convinced of it, in the midst of so much danger; for the hope of the resurrection, which wrought so effectually in their minds, that they professed Christianity amidst so much danger, could not be a vain hope. Therefore the apostle saith, "Else what shall they do, if the dead rise not at all?" shall they deny the profession, of which they have been well assured? this is impossible, would he say.

And thus we see that the souls of believers are immediately taken up to Christ their Head.

2. But what will become of the dead body? this must be thrust into a dark pit, the grave, or be consumed by fire, or be given to the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, or the fishes of the sea for food. But shall the bodies of the saints remain for ever in this condition? No, "this my body" saith the instructor, "being raised by the power of Christ, shall be re-united with my soul, and made like unto the glorious body of Christ." That we may have a proper apprehension of this, we will consider, 1. The nature of the resurrection of the body, 2. The universality of it, 3. The agent, 4. The qualities, 5. The time, 6. The reality and certainty of it. We will treat of each particular briefly.

1. The nature of the resurrection of the body is beautifully explained in the words of the catechism, just now quoted, to wit, (a) That this body shall be raised. The Lord God having a knowledge of, and power over all the scattered parts, even the least, will unite them all again, and produce the former system of the body anew. Thus Ezekiel saw in a vision "a shaking of the dead and dry bones, and that the bones came together, bone to his bone; and sinews and flesh came up upon them, and they were covered with skin," Ezek. xxxvii. 7, 8. (b) This body will be united again to its soul, and so be made alive: Ezekiel also saw that "the breath entered into the bodies and they lived, and stood upon their feet," vrs. 10. (c) It belongs also to the nature of the resurrection, that the dead will go forth out of their graves, as the Saviour teacheth, John v. 28, 29.

2. Not only this and that person will rise again in this manner, but all the dead. Enoch and Elijah, since they never saw death, need not rise again. Those who remain alive at the end of the world will not die, and therefore will not rise; but "they will be changed in a moment," or very quickly, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52, which will be to them instead of death and the resurrection, and will render them immortal and incorruptible. But these excepted, all men will rise, both the wicked and the godly. This some of the Jews and of the Socinians deny. But the word of God teacheth us that all will arise: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake," Dan. xii. 2. We may not say that many are not all, because these many comprehend not only those who "awake to everlasting life," but also those who "awake to shame, and everlasting contempt." Our Saviour teacheth us the same thing, saying, John v. 28, 29, "All that are in the graves," &c. How shall all else "appear before the judgment seat of Christ?" 2 Cor. v. 10. Yea, how else should the justice of God be exercised in punishing the wicked, according to 2 Thess. i. 6, if they rise not to everlasting condemnation? The blessed resurrection of the body is indeed a benefit, and the hope of the church, but it doth not exclude the resurrection of the ungodly, since that is also a benefit and hope of the church, because she will see God glorified thereby in her enemies. Therefore Paul saith, Acts. xxiv. 15. "I have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

3. We will not busy ourselves with the silly notions of the Jews, who fancy that there is an incorruptible joint in the back-bone, which will be moistened with the dew of heaven, and will extend and dilate like leaven, and thus restore the whole man. We believe with the

instructor, the word of God, which informs us, "that we shall be raised by the power of Christ." The Father hath committed this work to his Son, as his dispensation. "This," saith he, John vi. 30, "is the will of the Father which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day." And thus he quickeneth whom he will, as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them," John v. 21. And so "God will raise us up by Jesus," 2 Cor. iv. 14. For which purpose Christ will exert his power and influence upon the dead bodies, that they may be quickened; and this power will be manifested by his penetrating "voice, which the dead will hear," John v. 28, and which will perhaps be "the great sound of the last trumpet that shall sound, in order to raise the dead up incorruptible," Matt. xxiv. 21. 1 Cor. xv. 52, and "the shout and voice of the archangel, with which the Lord himself shall descend from heaven," 1 Thess. iv. 16. And with this voice he will send forth his Spirit, the power from on high, as Paul saith, Rom. viii. 11. "He shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Would ye see a figure of the resurrection, behold the resurrection of Lazarus: "Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth, and the dead came forth." John xi. 43, 44.

4. "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" Thus speaks the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 45, and he answers in a twofold manner: (a) That the body will have different qualifications from what it had before its death; which he shows vrs 36—52, informing us that the body is not glorified, except it first die, by which it becomes in the resurrection a totally different body from what it was before, not in substance, but in qualities, of which he notices four: (1) "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption," vrs. 42. It will be always alike vigorous and healthful, and incapable of any disease; Leah will not be tender-eyed, Bartimeus, will not be blind, Jacob will not be halt, Mephibosheth, will not be a cripple, and Barzillai will not be old. (2) "It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory," vrs. 43. It will be adorned with a wonderful lustre, "like the glorious body of Christ," Phil. iii. 21. "It will bear the image of the heavenly," vrs. 49, and "shine like the sun," Matt. xiii. 43. (3) "It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." vrs. 43. It will be able to endure the immediate revelation of the glory of God, which would dissolve and rend it in its mortal state, like the most brittle substance. (4) "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body," vrs. 44. It will not employ itself any longer with natural things, and it will not subsist by natural food, but will subsist and

act immediately by the Spirit of God, and influenced by the Spirit.

(b) The other part of his answer to the question, which was proposed, is, that the same body, which we have borne about with us here, even the same with respect to substance, will rise; for he saith, vrs. 53, pointing as it were with his finger, to his own body, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." It is indeed "our vile body, which Christ will fashion like his glorious body," Phil. iii. 21. Christ had in his resurrection his own body, we must therefore, if "we bear the image of the heavenly," also have our own bodies in the resurrection; those who remain alive, will then also have their own bodies. The justice of God requireth that each one should receive in his own body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. v. 17. The believers of old also believed and expected the resurrection of the same body, which they bore about with them here, Job xix. 25, 26, 27. Isaiah xxvi. 19. Dan. xii. 2. And so the wicked will likewise arise with their own bodies, which will also have other qualities, immortality and power, that they may be tormented for ever; but their bodies will not partake of the excellency of the godly.

The Socinians, who deny the resurrection of the same body; do in effect deny the resurrection itself: for if the dead body itself arise not, but another, it is not a resurrection, but a creation. They offer indeed reasons, which appear plausible, in order to subvert this truth, but they are not of any force. They say it is impossible that the dust, which hath been long since scattered abroad, should be gathered and united again in a body; that man eaters convert the flesh of others into their own, and that if the same bodies arise, those who have been eaten cannot arise with their own flesh, because that is become the flesh of the man eaters. We need not reply otherwise to this, than our Saviour did to the Saducees, Matt. xxii. 29, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." But we add over and above this, that God being allknowing and almighty, both sees the scattered dust of men, and can also gather it again. Man eaters convert only a small part of the flesh of another person into their own flesh, and God can in the resurrection restore it very easily to the flesh of the person, from whom it was taken; and that which is thus taken from the man eater can be recompensed again from that which had perspired from him, and which he must supply repeatedly by new food: "God will indeed destroy the belly and meats," 1 Cor. vi. 13. and "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. xv. 50. But by the belly and meats we must

understand the use of the belly and meats, and the corruptible flesh; therefore it is added, 1 Cor. xv. 50, "Corruption doth not inherit incorruption."

5. This resurrection is not "past already," as Hymeneus and Philetus said, 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. But it will take place on the last day, as the Saviour and Paul have foretold us, John vi. 39, 40, 54. 1 Cor. xv. 23, when all men shall be raised up in a moment, and at the same time, John v. 28, 29, 1 Cor. xv. 52. And therefore we do not believe that the martyrs will rise before the last day, in order to reign a thousand years with Christ on earth, who will descend in the body from heaven, as the Chiliasts fancy, because John saith, Rev. xx. 4, 5, "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; but the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished." But these words being emblematical, and prophetic, cannot serve to confirm such a singular opinion, which contradicts other passages of God's word. The true and proper meaning of this text is, that the church which had been slain in her martyrs under Antichrist, during the period of the twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days, should obtain a new life, and that her worship should prevail in the world, and that she should thus have "a life from the dead," Rom. xi. 15. In this sense should the two witnesses be put to death, arise and ascend up to heaven to the terrour and annoyance of Antichrist, Rev. xi. 3--13. And thus the rest of the dead, to wit, antichrist and his adherents, did not live again, but were dead, or in a low condition, until the end of the thousand years, when the devil should be loosed, that he might gather all the enemies of the church under Gog and Magog, and compass the camp of the saints, the beloved city, in order, if possible, to destroy it; but the Lord will hinder it in an extraordinary manner, and will destroy the enemies; upon which will follow the general resurrection of the body, and the judgment. Read this whole twentieth chapter, and compare therewith the eleventh chapter of the revelation, and it will appear that this exposition is in no wise contradictory to other passages of scripture.

6. But what comfort will this afford us, as long as we are not persuaded of the reality and certainty of this resurrection of the dead? The Sadducees and Atheists deny the resurrection. It is not necessary to prove it against them; they shut their eyes wilfully: but it is necessary, that we should be certain of it, because we are so attached to visible and present objects, that we cannot represent to ourselves what is invisible and future in a lively manner, unless we be

assured, that such a resurrection is truly to be expected. Therefore that we may have an assurance of it, we must know beforehand that this resurrection of the body is neither impossible nor incredible; "With God all things are possible," Mark xvi. 36. "With God nothing shall be impossible," Luke i. 37. The Saviour appealed to the power of God in this matter against the Sadducees, Matt. xxii. 29. Abraham grounded his faith upon this power, when he was about to slay his son, Heb. xi. 17, 18. He who made the whole world out of nothing, is able to restore the scattered dust of man, which he preserves, to its former state of a living body, as Abraham believed, Rom. iv. 17. It should support our hope the more, that God hath given so many evidences of his power in this respect, when he raised so many from the dead by his prophets, by his Son, and by his apostles, 1 Kings xvii. 22. 2 Kings iv. 32—36. xiii. 31, Matt. ix. 24, 25. Luke vii. 14, 15. John xi. 43, 44. Matt. xxviii. 52, 53. Acts ix. 40. xx. 9, 10. And we are not only certain, that it is possible with God to raise the dead, but also that he will indeed raise them at the last day. Many passages of the word of God teach us this, as Job xix. 25, 26, 27. Isaiah xxvi. 19. Dan. xii. 2. John v. 28, 29. xi. 23, 24. Heb. vi. 2. But we will insist more particularly upon two, because they prove it designedly against those who deny the resurrection. The first passage is, Matt. xxii. 31, 32, where the Saviour saith to the Sadducees. Touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." The force of this proof is so great, that it stopped the mouths of the Sadducees; see vrs. 33, 34, and the emphasis of it consists in this, that the Lord, being the God of the fathers, not only with respect to their souls, but also with respect to their bodies, which were now dead, he must quicken their bodies, or otherwise he would not be their God, because he was not a God of the dead, but of the living. The other passage is 1 Cor. xv. where the apostle produceth several arguments, and particularly, (a) that Christ, the Head of believers, is risen, who will therefore not leave his members under death, vrs. 12—18. (b) That believers are otherwise of all men the most miserable, which is surely impossible, vrs. 19. (c) That Christ is by his resurrection "the first fruits of them that slept," who are therefore, like the whole harvest, sanctified to the resurrection, vrs. 20. (d) That Adam subjected those who were his to death, and that Christ doth not less restore those who are his to life, vrs. 21, 22. (e) That Christ as King, must conquer the last enemy, death, which is not effected, except

by the resurrection of the dead, vrs. 25—28. (f) That this truth was so efficacious, that certain persons suffered themselves to be baptized from a hope of the resurrection, though they saw that others were put to death on account of Christianity, as the twenty ninth verse must be explained, which we have shown before. (g) That otherwise all the sufferings of Christians are vain, which is incredible, vrs. 30. 31, 32. Will we have more, we may add, that “the bodies of believers are the temples of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. vi. 19. Now he will not suffer his temples to remain desolate, as Paul showeth, Rom. viii. 11.

II. All men will rise, not to die again, but to live for ever, some to happiness, and others to misery; for “they shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation,” John v. 29. But we do not speak now of the everlasting life of the wicked in misery, but of the everlasting life of the godly in blessedness. The everlasting life of the miserable is rather a death than a life; on which account it is often called death, and the second death, Rev. xxi. 8. But the life of the blessed is a true and pleasant life; therefore it is said to them, Psalm xxii. 26. “Your heart shall live for ever. We find the same also, Psalm lxix. 32. In order to say something of this everlasting life, we will observe 1, wherein this everlasting life consists, and 2, how it will be communicated to the elect.

1. No mortal can fully comprehend wherein this everlasting life will consist, much less declare it: Paul, who had been in heaven, and was come down thence, saith no more of it, than that “he had heard unspeakable words, which it was not lawful for a man to utter,” 2 Cor. xii. 4. The Lord doth nevertheless reveal something of it to his favourites, when he permits them to taste of the fruits of that Canaan, and “to feel the beginnings of everlasting joy in their hearts.” Therefore the apostle saith, 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things, which God hath prepared for them that love him: “but” (mark well) “God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit.” Surely God discovers something of this in his word, when, accomodating himself to our childish capacities, he calls this everlasting life, “salvation, glory, joy, rest, a kingdom, crown, inheritance, &c. Therefore we will, according to the measure of the divine revelation to us, show (a) from what the blessed will be delivered, (b) what they will enjoy, and (c) what circumstances will increase their blessedness.

(a) The blessed will be delivered from all that is shameful, hurtful, and painful to them, with respect to soul and body. No re-

proach, nor contempt will be offered to them : no anxious poverty will distress their hearts, they will not mourn any more on account of pain, weakness, sickness, or death : sin, darkness, deadness, the hiding of God's countenance, the power of unbelief, the assaults of Satan, the seductions and persecutions of the world, the provocations of the flesh to sin, will be excluded for ever : " They shall not hunger any more, neither shall they thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat," Rev. vii. 16. " God will wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away," Rev. xxi. 4. " Death and hell," that is, all that is to believers like a death and hell, " will be cast into the lake of fire," Rev. xx. 14.

(b) But this alone cannot constitute a perfect blessedness ; for if a man were annihilated, he would also be delivered from all this evil : and therefore it belongs also to everlasting life, that man should enjoy a satisfying good. God hath created him with a rational desire for an everlasting good : and when he enjoys this he is happy. And therefore his everlasting bliss will also consist,

1. In beholding God and Christ. As God is a spirit, he will not be able to see him with his bodily eyes ; but he will behold the Son of God with his bodily eyes, in his glorious and exalted humanity, as his Redeemer. But he will employ his understanding principally with respect to God, in contemplating his perfections, persons, everlasting counsel, and the wonderful way in which the blessed God hath led him to glory. Our text teacheth us this, saying, " I will behold thy face in righteousness ; the pure in heart will see God, and therefore be blessed," Matt. v. 8, and that not only, as they do at present, by the word, which is like a glass, and a dark saying to them, so that they know now only in part, by means of the utmost ends of his ways, and small portions of matters, and as it were, by looking at his back-parts, their understandings being so beclouded by their sinful prejudices, and their mortal body, that they cannot form any other than exceedingly narrow conceptions of God. But they will see God immediately, and as it were, face to face, and they will be so led into the depths of his wisdom, power, goodness, love, and glory by the beams of his splendid essence, that they will be overwhelmed therewith, swallowed up therein, and enraptured with everlasting wonder : " For we shall see him, as he is," 1 John iii. 2. It was the prerogative of Moses above other prophets, that " the Lord spake to him mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches ; and that he beheld the similitude of the Lord,"

Num. xii. 8. Yet his vision was not perfect, as long as he was in his mortal body; but the blessed will enjoy the vision of God in a much higher degree than Moses, even in the highest degree; for they will see him "face to face: they know now in part; but then they will know even as they are known," 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

2. By seeing God thus, they will become perfectly like God in his holy glory, and glorious holiness, even as much as a creature can be like him: "We shall be like him," saith John; "for we shall see him as he is," John iii. 2. This blessed and immediate vision of God will be so efficacious, that it will transfer the image and glory of God to them: for "beholding the face of God in righteousness, they will also be satisfied with his likeness. "When believers are permitted to "behold the glory of the Lord, with open face as in a glass, they are then changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18. When Moses spake to the Lord, his face shone in such a manner, that the people could not look at him, until he put a veil on his face, Exod. xxxiv. 29—35. What a wonderful brightness and lustre will then be transferred to the blessed from the beaming glory of God, when they will behold God immediately in all his splendour! It is said of the blessed, Rev. xxii. 4 "They shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads." Even their bodies will shine wonderfully, and "like the sun," Matt. xiii. 43. If a mortal man s'ould see an inhabitant of heaven, he would not be able to sustain the sight, but would quickly shrink from it, and hide himself. See what is related, Dan. x. 5—3.

3. And is it wonderful, that they will be like him? for they will enjoy the blessed, allsufficient God, until they shall be fully satisfied: "Fulness of joy is in his presence, at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore," Psalm xvi. 11. The believing soul thirsts and pants now for the least communication of his favour, and when she enjoys that, drinking of the river of God's pleasures, she is abundantly satisfied, when she is weary," Psalm xxxvi. 8. Jer. xxxi. 14, 15. But what will it be then, when God will favour the whole and blessed man with the complete enjoyment of himself, and when he will be satisfied with God; for the Lord will fill him full, even as full as he can admit, with his allsufficiency, wisdom, love, and glory; for then "God will be all in all," 1 Cor. xv. 28. How will the happy man then bathe, swim, and lose himself in the unfathomable depth of the allsufficient God! for "he who sitteth on the throne, shall feed him and shall lead him unto living fountains of water," Rev. vii. 15, 17.

4. All this will fill him with a fulness of joy, which will excite him to praise and bless God: "This salvation," saith the instructor, "I shall inherit, and that to praise God for ever therein." He will unite himself with all the blessed men and angels, that he may with them shout forth the glory of God, until the heaven resounds, as the angels proclaimed the glory and holiness of God with such mighty voices, that they made "the posts of the door" shake, Isaiah vi. 3. How then will "the voices of that great multitude," proclaim one to another, "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunderings, Hallelujah; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him," Rev. xix. 6, 7. When believing souls enjoy the lovingkindness of God here on earth, the one excites the other, saying, "Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together," Psalm xxxii. 4. O how will the blessed then, seeing what they have been, what they are now, and how they have been brought into this blessed state. according to the unsearchable wisdom, power, and love of God, by the blood of his Son, cry mightily, day and night without ceasing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come!" They will fall down before him, and cast their crowns before the throne and say with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb which was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," Rev. iv. 8—11. v. 9—14.

(c) Moreover this blessedness will be greatly increased by the circumstances, 1 of society, 2 of place, and 3 of time.

1. A godly person can enjoy a wonderful delight in his holy, lonely life of communion with God; society often disturbs his repose in God: but in that everlasting life he will be in the society of those, who will not lead him from, but up to his full satisfaction. For he will be with all those eminent saints, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who will sit down with him in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. viii. 11. "He will walk" with the angels who stand before the face of God, Zech. iii. 7. There never was a time of so much blissful glory on earth, as when "a multitude of the heavenly host," came down to the shepherds, to praise God to the utmost, and to congratulate men upon the recent birth of the Saviour, Luke ii. 13, 14. But how glorious will it be, when the blessed people will be associated with the many thousands of angels, and unite with them! But can happy men and holy angels, who are mere creatures, satisfy the heart of man, while he is estranged from God? No, but he will not be without God: for "the tabernacle of God will be with men, and he

will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them, and be their God," Rev. xxi. 3. "The Lamb himself will be in the midst of the throne," Rev. vii. 17. "And round about the throne there will be four and twenty seats, and upon the seats four and twenty elders, sitting, clothed in white raiment, and having on their heads crowns of gold," Rev. iv. 4. The church militant is described as so near him, and round about him; what then will be the condition of them, who will be admitted to the enjoyment of perfect salvation!

2. There is no place so strait, so dark and mean, but that God will condescend to reveal himself in it to his favourites; nevertheless a spacious and lightsome place will elevate a spiritual heart: but the place where this glory will be enjoyed, is the high, the spacious and sumptuous heaven, where light, yea, where God himself dwelleth, as in his palace: for "the Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven,," Psalm xi. 4. Look only with David at the outside of heaven, and with him ye will wonder at its splendour, Psalm viii. 4, how then will the inmost rooms transport the soul! No man, while he is yet in this mortal body, can conceive the glory of heaven, and therefore it is exhibited to him only imperfectly, under the figure of whatever is esteemed precious on earth. See Rev. xxi. 9—27. That on which God hath exercised his skill must be fair and glorious indeed, but "heaven is a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, Heb. xi. 10.

3. If there be aught that is disagreeable to the people of God at present, 't is that God's gracious intercourse with them is usually of such a short continuance: but in heaven it will be everlasting without end. It will be an everlasting life: "At God's right hand there are pleasures for evermore," Psalm xvi. 11. "We shall be for ever with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 17. Although the Lord loves the believing soul always, and until the end, there are nevertheless many intermissions in the displays of his love; but it will not be so in glory: the blessed soul will be continually and incessantly laden with the lovingkindness of God, so that she will praise him continually, and "will have no rest day nor night," Rev. iv. 8. Think not, ye prisoners of hope, that ye will be weary of it, as Israel was of the manna, or that ye will not be able to sustain that allsufficient good; for ye will always have something new: "Jesus will drink new wine with you in the kingdom of his Father," Matt. xxvi. 29. Ye will also have more enlarged capacities, and be more able to receive the supreme revelation and influences of the Almighty. Ye cannot now sustain his extraordinary embraces, and the extraordinary influ-

ence of his grace a long time, but it would dissolve you, as the most brittle substance : but "ye who are sown in weakness, will be raised in power, incorruptible and immortal," 1 Cor. xv. 43, 53.

Though all the blessed will be completely filled with the glory of God, there will nevertheless be degrees of glory, and one will enjoy more than another ; " For there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars ; for one star differeth from another star in glory : so also is the resurrection of the dead." Thus speaks Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. For there will be degrees of punishment, as we are taught, Matt. xi. 20—24. Luke xiv. 47, 48, as there are also degrees of sin and sanctification, John xix. 11. 1 Cor. xv. 10.

It is proper to inquire here whether the blessed will know in heaven their friends, whom they knew best in this life. We cannot decide this question positively ; we only know that the relation, which subsists here between parents and children, husband and wife, rulers and subjects, will not have place in heaven ; for " the Lord Jesus will put down all rule, and all authority and power," 1 Cor. xv. 24. We know also that all the blessed will, as blessed, know each other with the sweetest and with a familiar love, on account of the work of grace, as soon as it appears, because " they have one heart, and one way to fear the Lord," Jer. xxxiii. 39. It appears also clearly, that the blessed rulers of the church will be known in heaven ; for they will excel others in glory, Dan. xiii. 3. The Lord promiseth that we shall " sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," Matt. viii. 11. We shall not be able to know whether this promise be fulfilled, unless we know those great saints : this matter appears still more probable, since the apostle knew the glorified Moses and Elias, Matt. xvii. 3, 4.

2. Having seen thus wherein everlasting life consists, it behooves us to know also how it is communicated. But of this we shall not speak at present, because we have shown on the eleventh Lord's day that the Lord Jesus, having purchased salvation by his sufferings and obedience, applies and communicates it also, both in this life by all the blessings and benefits of the covenant of grace, and after this life, first in the death of believers, and afterwards in their blessed resurrection.

The children of God ought to believe and be assured, and present it as it were before their eyes, that such an everlasting life is to be expected, like " Moses, who had a respect to the recompence of the reward by faith," Heb. xi. 26. Great and many are the grounds, on which believers may establish their hopes. All the arguments

which prove the resurrection, may also assure them of everlasting life; but they may be certain of it more especially, "because they now feel in their hearts the beginning of eternal joy," as the instructor speaks. The beginnings of eternal joy are, (a) that clear and heavenly discovery, which the Lord God makes of himself, of his Son, and of his mysteries to the soul, whereby she sees the efficacy of each word and of each matter, and is influenced to wonder, joy and praise on account of it: "The king leads her into his chambers," Song i. 4, and thus Jesus reveals himself in his love to them who love him, John xiv. 21. (b) An actual enjoyment of the heavenly benefits, which proceed from the throne of God, so that the believer "eats of the hidden manna," Rev. ii. 17. He finds a table spread within him, and "he eats with Jesus, and Jesus with him," Rev. iii. 20. And he is wonderfully entertained, satisfied, and, as it were, made drunk with his heavenly viands, Song v. 1. Jer. xxxi. 12, 13, 14, and Jesus bestows on him abundantly the kisses of his love, his caresses, and the embraces of his everlasting arms, Song i. 2. ii. 3—6. The soul seems to herself hereby to be already elevated before the throne of God, and above this mortal scene. (c) Further these first beginnings consist in the assurance which believers obtain of their blessed hope; either the Spirit of God discovereth to them the work of grace in their souls, "showing them the things, which are freely given them of God," and thus "bearing witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God," according to Rom. viii. 15; or the Lord effects in a gentle manner a tranquil peace and calmness in the heart, and so "the peace of God surpasseth all their understanding," Philip. iv. 7, or he influences them in a more exalted and more affecting manner, or in a more rational and less affecting manner by exercises of faith, which sometimes excite in them a joy unspeakable, and full of glory, 1 Peter i. 8.

Since now believers feel these beginnings in their hearts, they may be assured, that they will possess such an eternal life. Because (a) these beginnings are, as it were, the first fruits, which sanctify the harvest of eternal life, as the real property of believers. To this the apostle hath respect, Rom. viii. 23. (b) These beginnings are "those better things, which accompany salvation," as Paul speaks, Heb. vi. 9. (c) They are also the evidences of the love of God and Christ; for thus "the love of God is shed abroad in the hearts" of those whom he loves, and so "their hope" of everlasting life "cannot make them ashamed," Rom. v. 5.

APPLICATION.

That now the resurrection to eternal life may be profitable to us, it will be useful, that each of us should impress upon his mind, that there will also be a resurrection to eternal damnation: and not only this, but that the smallest number will rise to salvation, and the greatest number to damnation, as we have shown on the seventh Lord's day. And therefore it will be necessary, that each one should also inquire concerning himself, what will become of him at the last day. We should show here who will, and who will not be raised up to salvation; but as we have done this largely enough on the seventh and eighth Lord's days, we should forbear at present; yet since the instructor founds his hope upon a feeling of the beginning of eternal joy, and temporary believers also are after their manner "enlightened, taste of the heavenly gift, are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," Heb. vi. 4, 5, and since this greatly weakens the expectation of true believers, and confirms temporary believers exceedingly in their imaginations, we will therefore exhibit the difference between true and temporary believers in this respect.

1. The true believer, feeling the beginning of eternal joy in his heart, becomes humble and lowly, abases himself, and sinks into nothing in his own estimation; he wonders and is amazed, that God will even look at such a base and vile wretch, as he sees himself with shame to be: he saith with Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. "I am not worthy of the least of all these mercies, and of all this truth;" and with David, 2 Sam. vii. 18. "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" But the temporary believer becomes proud and haughty in consequence of his exercises, and thinks that he must be some great one; he speaks therefore loftily, is too wise for every one, he behaves himself imperiously, and requires that every one should esteem him an exceedingly spiritual and advanced Christian. Such a puffer Caiaphas showed himself to be, when "he prophesied that Jesus should die for the people," John xi. 49, 50, 51.

2. The true believer feels this beginning of eternal joy in his heart, that is the seat of his work of grace and joy, and from that do all his good motions proceed to the praise of the Lord; yea, on this account he endeavours to converse with his heart, that he may abide in the love of God: "The peace of God which passeth all understanding, keeps his heart and mind," Philip. iv. 7, yea, "it rules

in his heart." Coll. iii. 15. But the temporary believer derives his joy from superficial matters, the contemplation of the lovely mysteries of God tickles him, and excites an agreeable emotion of his blood and spirits; but the word never penetrates into his heart, so as to captivate and possess it: "he receives the word indeed anon with joy; yet hath he not root in himself," Matt. xiii. 20, 21.

3. The beginning of eternal joy is wrought in the true believer by the Spirit of God: "His hope doth not make him ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto him." Rom. v. 5. He knows not how to enlighten, or to enliven himself, but he seeks, calls, and waits for the Spirit, like David, Psalm li. 8, 12. "Make me to hear joy and gladness; restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." It must be just the fire of God's altar that kindles him, and causeth him to flame forth with joy. On the contrary, the joy of the temporary believer is a work of his own, he imagines this and that precious frame of the people of God, he urges and forces his passions thither, and so a certain self-wrought joy, or rather imagination of joy ariseth in him; or he imagines without foundation that he is a believer, a favourite of God, and a partaker of heaven, with which he is wonderfully tickled and pleased. And so "he kindles a fire himself, compasses himself about with sparks, walks in the light of his fire, and in the sparks which he hath kindled:" but "this he shall have of the Lord's hand," and a judicial blindness, "he shall lie down in sorrow," Jer. i. 11.

4. The beginning of this joy of the true believer is in God, and in his favour: "My soul shall rejoice in the Lord," said David, Psalm xxxv. 9. It wafts his soul to God, unites it to him, it finds its rest, quiet and satisfaction in him, and in his love, and in nought else: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever," said Asaph, Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26. We see this also, Heb. iii. 17, 18. But the temporary believer rejoices in himself, because he is so wise, virtuous and accomplished, and all his exercises are without God; he wonders at himself, like Balaam, Numb. xxiv. 3, 4. "He took up his parable and said, Balaam the son of Beor, hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said; he hath said, who heard the words of God, who saw the visions of the Almighty, falling into a trance but having his eyes open."

5. Finally, this joy renders the true believer also holy; he sees nothing now but holiness in God, and he will be holy, as the Lord is holy; the discovery which God makes of himself to him, pro-

duceth a likeness to God in his soul : " he is changed into the same image," 2 Cor. iii. 18. Because he knows that indulging himself in sin would cause God to hide his countenance from him, therefore he is exceedingly careful of defiling himself. Yea, this delight, and this feeling of the beginning of eternal joy detaches him from sin, and transports his soul into heaven, that he may have his conversation there only, Philip. iii. 19. Observe the temporary believer, he is sinful and vain in proportion to his joy ; he can now do any thing, though ever so sinful, without any anxiety, if others do not see it, and reproach him for it : doth his conscience fly in his face, he stifles it, and endeavours to silence it, he will not allow himself to suspect his state of grace, but thinks, once a gracious person, always a gracious person. And so he is brought, though not immediately, to the greatest and vilest sins in publick, waxing worse, and becoming more impenitent than before. See this, Heb. vi. 6, 7, 8. x. 26—29. 2 Peter ii. 20, 21, 22.

Alas ! ye who hear this, and have not yet a true, but only a fancied foretaste of heaven, a shadow, a waking dream, see, we pray you, how dreadfully ye deceive yourselves ; and " recover yourselves yet out of the snare of the devil, in which ye are taken captive by him at his will ;" for if ye remain as ye are, ye " will awake to shame and everlasting contempt," Dan. xii. 2. How grievous will it be for you to fall short of that blessed life, for which ye had hoped, though in vain ! friends, what a dreadful mistake will it be, to expect to go to heaven, and to be sent to that bottomless gulph of perdition, with a Balaam, a Judas, and all the hypocrites ! how intolerable will it be ! Therefore return, we beseech you ; " let him who thinketh that he is wise become a fool, that he may be wise," 1 Cor. iii. 18.

But shall not these wise, enlightened, and apparently virtuous persons be raised up to salvation, how then, think ye, will it fare with you, who are ignorant, worldly-minded, ungodly, and at best only civil, and outwardly religious ? can ye think that God will raise you up to salvation, if he should deal with you according to his word, as he will deal with you ? do ye hope that he will ? have ye any ground for your hope ? are ye born again, and converted ? do ye believe, and are ye holy ? for such, and no others, shall, according to the word of God, see his kingdom. Therefore be solicitous to know how ye may be saved, be more concerned, we pray you, about your salvation and damnation, and " labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life," John vi. 27. Surely, everlasting life is worthy, that ye should do more for

it, and think more of it than ye have hitherto done : therefore recover from your carelessness : "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," Eph. v. 14.

But, true believers, who have this great expectation of a blessed resurrection to an everlasting life with God, manifest it in your conversation. And therefore.

1. Believe that there will indeed be such a resurrection and everlasting life for those who seek the Lord. It is not enough to suppose this as a truth : no, we must with elevated minds assure ourselves of it, and obtain a clear apprehension of it from the testimony of God, so that these two great benefits, which are yet afar off, may beam, in a lively manner, and as if present, in our eyes : for "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1. So "Moses had by faith respect to the recompence of the reward," Heb. xi. 8. Because we attend so little to this, therefore all our exertions, with respect to this great future salvation are so languid, slothful, and sluggish, so that they have no influence upon the exercises of the soul.

2. Believe for yourselves, O believers, that ye yourselves will be raised up, in order to enjoy everlasting life. So Job and Paul acted, Job xix. 25, 26, 27. 2 Tim. i. 12. Ye cannot otherwise rejoice, or praise the Lord, or conduct worthily of that glory which shall be revealed in you. Do ye think that it is safest for you to doubt, that ye may not become careless, nor deceive yourselves in a matter of such great importance, let the Papists say that such an assurance would render a person careless, but do not ye, who profess a different doctrine according to the word of God ; for this assurance would stir you up to love and serve God, and would render you fervent in spirit. It is true, we ought not to assure ourselves of our blessed resurrection, and everlasting life upon slender foundations. that we may not deceive ourselves with vain imaginations : but when we have truly, heartily and frequently received Christ for sanctification, as well as for glorification, then there is no danger ; but ye say, I have never had a foretaste of everlasting life. Consider well, is this indeed true ? is it not a prejudice proceeding from unbelief that the consolations of God are small with you ? do ye know nothing at all of the discovery of grace in your souls, that ye do truly hate, and oppose whatever is sinful, that ye do earnestly call on and seek the Lord, so that this manifestation enlivened you, and gave you hope ? are ye utter strangers to that calm and agreeable peace of soul ? and though ye have not obtained such a measure of grace, as fills the heart, this is no evidence that ye are not interested in the

divine favour. Many heirs of everlasting life have not that measure. It is indeed a sure evidence of a blessed hope to those who enjoy, or have enjoyed it, because the Lord doth not grant it to any except his favourites; but it is no evidence, that others have no right to this blessed expectation, if they have not experienced such a power of the divine favour; for then other true believers, like Heman in the eighty eighth psalm, would have been without hope; and who can think this? Therefore, believers, inquire only whether your sins excite sorrow in you, whether Jesus be not truly and actually precious to you, and whether ye do not love the brethren, and thus manifest, that ye have passed from death to life.

3. Wonder, triumph and rejoice now in this hope and expectation of such a future glory. So David acted, when he said to the Lord, Psalm xxxi. 19. "O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!" Paul speaking in the name of all the saints, saith, Rom. v. 2. "We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." Peter said to the believers of his time, "In whom," namely Jesus Christ, "though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls," 1 Peter i. 8, 9. Is not the blessed resurrection and everlasting life worthy of our wonder, triumph, and joy? Consider only what such unworthy beings as ye are shall enjoy, and will it not ravish you, and transport you so that ye will shout and give thanks to God in the most exalted strains?

4. Let this great expectation also render you courageous in your duty. It becomes you to deny yourselves, your inclinations, all that is earthly, and selfish. It is no more than proper that ye should bear willingly every cross and affliction, which the Lord layeth upon you; and it is your duty to conduct yourselves in all things according to the will of God. And is not this glory, which we expect, worthy of our utmost doing and suffering? must an heir of such a salvation have his own will also, that which is earthly, his ease, and his sins? No, Moses was wiser than this? Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26. "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." This glory ought surely to encourage you in every condition; "for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal;

but the things that are not seen are eternal," 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. "Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear;" so I speak with Paul, Heb. xii. 28.

5. Long for that blessed resurrection, and that everlasting life: "My reins," cried Job, "long exceedingly within me," chap. xix. 27. "He who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus," Rev. xxii. 20. The apostle saith of himself, and of believers, 2 Cor. v. 3. "In this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." Why should a Christian cling to aught that is here? this country shall not be his rest; his goods, his life is not here: let the worldling, who hath no hope in futurity, settle himself here; but citizens of heaven, saints of the high places, "ye have no continuing city here, but must seek one to come," Heb. xiii. 14. There, even there will ye be delivered from whatever afflicts you now, and enjoy the only satisfying good. This loadstone should draw your desires and longings toward it: therefore "look for and hasten to the coming of the day of God," 2 Peter iii. 12. Let your longing nevertheless be accompanied with, and moderated by patience: your longing ought not to be a peevish fretfulness on account of your adversities, but an earnest desire, arising from the greatness of the goodness which the Lord hath laid up for them who fear him, and submit themselves to him, who hath the times and seasons in his own hands. Be willing therefore "to serve the counsel of God," with David, "before ye fall asleep," in hope of a resurrection to everlasting life, Acts xiii. 36.

6. In the mean time endeavour to obtain a foretaste, and a feeling of the beginning of eternal joy, and to enjoy it often, and more and more. This was the petition of the church, Psalm cvi. 4, 5. "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation; that I may glory with thine inheritance." There cannot be a sadder case, than that the heirs of that fruitful country dwell, like the rebellious, in a barren land. Let then your "souls thirst for God, for the living God," as the soul of David did, Psalm xlii. 1, 2. Believe in, and improve your title to the exceeding great and precious promises of the covenant of grace, suck from them, and breathe in him, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of grace; yea, live and feast on all the blessings which he hath purchased and promised you, that your "souls may be satisfied with marrow and fatness, and your mouths may

praise him with joyful lips," Psalm lxxiii. 5. And when ye enjoy good in the days of prosperity, remember then also the days of adversity, laying up something against them, and feeding then on it, "considering the days of old," with Asaph, Psalm lxxvii. 6. It will also be good to endeavour to continue in the enjoyment of the lovingkindness of the Lord, and to "abide in his love, and thus to expect the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to everlasting life." It behoves you therefore to conduct yourselves tenderly and circumspectly, that he may not depart from you with his goodness: "Let your conversation be in heaven, from whence ye look for the Saviour," Philip. iii. 20. And endeavour in all things to know the will of the Lord, and to do his commandments, that he may continue to favour you with his kindness. This our Saviour requireth, John xv. 9, 10. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

7. Do not sorrow too much, when your godly friends die, as though they were lost for ever. They are not dead with respect to their best part, their soul; no, that was immediately taken up to Christ their Head: will ye then mourn so much on account of their happiness? have ye nevertheless lost them; ye will recover them again for ever; they have died, not to remain dead, but to live, to live a better life, than before their death; for they will be raised up in a conformity to the glorious body of your Lord, and then live for ever. So Paul comforts those who remain, when he saith, 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Finally,

8. As ye ought not to sorrow too much for the death of your godly friends, so ye ought not neither to dread your own death too much. Death is not a king of terrors to the heirs of the promises, as he is to the ungodly, but he must show a smiling and friendly face to you. He will come only to loosen your cords of sins and miseries, that he may let you fly free out of your cage in the open air of the third heaven. Ye say, it is nevertheless a bitter thing to die; it is true, but it is not always so, neither doth it endure long:

and although it may be exceedingly grievous, the dying person can strengthen himself against it by the consideration, that this mortal must be dissolved in such a manner, in order "to put on incorruption, and immortality," that it may live for ever, and that "then," according to 1 Cor. xv. 54—57, "shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where, is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, which giveth us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord," Amen.

THE
JUSTIFICATION
OF THE
SINNER BEFORE GOD.

XXIII. LORD'S DAY.

Rom. iv. 5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Q. 59. *But what doth it profit thee now, that thou believest all this ?*

A. That I am righteous in Christ before God, and an heir of eternal life.

Q. 60. *How art thou righteous before God ?*

A. Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ ; so that though my conscience accuse me, that I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and kept none of them, and am still inclined to all evil, notwithstanding God, without any merit of mine, but only of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ ; even so, as if I never had had, nor committed any sin ; yea, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience, which Christ hath accomplished for me, inasmuch as I embrace such a benefit with a believing heart.

Q 61. *Why sayest thou, that thou art righteous by faith only?*

A. Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith; but only because the satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God, and that I cannot receive and apply the same to myself any other way than by faith only.

AMONG the various titles, with which faith is adorned in the word of God, the most goodly is that of "precious faith," 2 Peter i. 1. Faith is precious, inasmuch as it doth not belong to all men, but only to the precious elect of God, for "all men have not faith," 2 Thes. iii. 2, but only "the elect of God," Titus i. 1. Faith is precious in itself, for it denies its own ingenuity and reason, that it may acknowledge the invisible God upon his single declaration to be true, and may rest in his revelation with respect to future and invisible things. It "receives the testimony of God, and sets to its seal that God is true," John iii. 33. "It is the substance of things hoped, for, and the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1. Moreover, faith is precious, because it hath the most precious objects of its holy nature, exceedingly great and precious promises," 2 Peter i. 4. The Triune God, all his blessed and profound mysteries, "all things which are written in the law and the prophets," Acts xxiv. 14, which the believing soul contemplates and embraceth, and which fill her full, with "all the fulness of God," Eph. iii. 18, 19. And will ye have more? Faith is precious also, because it is so profitable and advantageous to the person who possesses it. It unites him to God and Christ, whom it causes to "dwell in his heart," Eph. iii. 17. "It gives him power to become a son of God, John i. 12. "It cleanses the heart," Acts xv. 9. It renders prayer effectual, so that "it saves the sick," James v. 15. "It overcomes the world," 1 John, v. 4. It can do all things; "all things are possible to him who believeth," Mark ix. 23. See what all the saints of God have done by faith, Heb. xi. And that which is the greatest and most precious is, that "it justifieth" the guilty sinner "before God in Christ, and renders him an heir of everlasting life." Thus speaks the instructor, and thus also the word of God speaks, as we will show anon.

The instructor doth not deem it sufficient, in order to excite in his pupil a relish for precious faith, to declare the necessity and nature of it in the seventh Lord's day, and the great object of it from the eighth to the twenty-second Lord's day; but he proceeds also to exhibit the greatest advantage of faith, to wit, the justification of

the sinner before God by faith ; which he first explains in this Lord's day, and then defends in the following.

In order to explain this justification of the sinner before God, the catechism exhibits four particulars :

I. It speaks of it in general, Q. 59.

II. It explains the manner, in which the sinner is justified by God, Q. 60.

III. It shows how we are justified by faith only, Q. 61. We will add to this,

IV. The circumstances and qualities of justification.

I. We say, the catechism speaks first of justification in general, showing " that a person is righteous before God, and an heir of eternal life by faith in Christ," as it speaks in the fifty-ninth question. In order to understand this rightly, we must observe beforehand concerning the word " justify," that we must not attend so much to the literal signification of the word in our (Low Dutch) language, nor to that of the Latin word *justificare*, as though it intimated the making of a sinful person righteous and holy, by an infusion of holiness into him, as the Papists speak, when they assert a first and second justification, that is, according to their opinion, a first and second conversion ; for we must seek for the proper import of this word and matter in the word of God, to which we must submit ourselves in every doctrine. We find there in the Hebrew, the word *hitzdik*, and in the Greek *dikaion*, both signifying to acquit, and pronounce a person righteous before a tribunal. For these words are derived from judicatures, and are therefore opposed to accusing and condemning ; this we see, Prov. xvii. 15, " He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, even they both are an abomination to the Lord." And in this sense must we understand this word in all its significations, whether a man justify God, Luke vii. 29. Rom iii. 4, or whether God justify his Son, 1 Tim. iii. 17, or whether he justify man, as well with respect to his actions in themselves, Psalm cvi. 30, 31, in comparison with others, Ezek. xvi. 51, 52, and in opposition to others, 1 Kings viii. 32, as with respect to his condition, approving it from his works, James ii. 21—25. And so " Abraham and Rahab were justified by works." But we will not enlarge upon this subject ; we refer the curious reader to Witsius's œconomy of the covenants, in the chapter on justification, where he treats of this matter both largely and clearly. We would only show that the words justifying, and justifying the sinner before God, signify no more than declaring him to be righteous, and acquitting him of his guilt, on account of the righteousness of the Son of

God, since it is opposed here also to accusing and condemning. This the apostle teacheth us, Rom. viii. 33, 34, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died." As therefore accusing and condemning is not an infusion of guilt, and of that which deserves condemnation, into a person, so justification is not a making of a person just or righteous, or an infusion of righteousness and holiness into him. Will any man insist upon the word justify, and say that it signifieth literally the making of a sinner righteous, we will allow that God makes the sinner righteous by justification, not by infusing righteousness and holiness into him; for that is done by sanctification, but by imputing to him, and rendering him a partaker of the righteousness of his Son, by which he, who was guilty, is acquitted, and declared to be entitled to eternal life. And that this word must be understood so here, appears still more, since to justify the sinner is to impute righteousness to him, and to forgive his sins: "Even as David also," according to the words of Paul, Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8, "describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

But that we may understand the matter itself, we must know that man, in order to be declared righteous by God, must have either a righteousness of his own, or the righteousness of Christ. Which we apprehend thus:

God had entered into a covenant of works with man, and had demanded of him a perfect obedience, according to his law, and had promised that he would bestow life upon him, if he obeyed; but if man did not obey, he should die: now if man had obeyed perfectly, he would have had a righteousness and a right to demand life of God, on account of his promise annexed to perfect obedience; and thus God would have justified him according to his law. And this is the justification of the law by works; "for Moses," saith the apostle, Rom. x. 5, "describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man who doth those things shall live by them." Since now man hath transgressed the law of God, he cannot be justified by his works, because he hath no righteousness, upon which he can demand life: "For this the law could not do," saith Paul, Rom. viii. 3, "in that it was weak through the flesh." The law condemns and curseth him: "Now we know," saith also the same apostle, Rom. iii. 19, 20, "that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped,

and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." See also how he speaks, Gal. iii. 10. The Lord God having nevertheless not created all men in vain, made his Son under the law for the elect sinner, caused him to sustain the curse by his sufferings, and to fulfil the demand of the law by his obedience, that he might satisfy the justice of God, according to the demand of the law: and so the Son of God merited a righteousness before God for the sinner, in order to discharge him from the curse, and give him a right to life. See Rom. viii. 3, 4. When God renders the sinner a partaker of this righteousness of his Son, and imputes it to him, and he receives it by faith, then God justifies him. And so the instructor saith, "that he is righteous in Christ before God, and an heir of eternal life." This is the righteousness of the gospel and of faith, of which Paul speaks, Philip iii. 9, "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." See also, Rom. iii. 21, 22.

II. In order to explain more particularly the manner in which God justifieth the sinner, we must observe that the word justification, being a forensic term, intimates that God deals in justification agreeably to the customs of courts of justice, in which the judges, when they find that the cited and accused person is righteous, acquit, and pronounce him righteous. And therefore we will consider in God's judiciary procedure with the sinner, in order to justify him, 1, the Judge, 2, the persons cited, 3, the accusers, 4, the advocate, and 5, the sentence.

1. God alone is the judge; for he alone hath the supreme right to prescribe laws to man: "For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us," saith the church, Isaiah xxxiii. 22. "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy," James iv. 12. Against him only do we sin, as David confesseth, Psalm li. 4. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned." And therefore he alone forgives sins, as he himself declares, Isaiah xliii. 25, "I even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake." It is therefore blasphemous in the Romish priests to forgive sinners their sins, and to justify them, according to Mark ii. 7. Is it said that the preachers "justify many,"* Dan xii. 3, and that they "remit sins," John xx. 23, we must understand it only of a ministerial power, by which they, as messengers of God, make

* This is according to the Dutch translation.

known his gracious sentence of absolution to penitent sinners, by proffering them pardon, if they will "be reconciled to God," 2 Cor. v. 20, and by assuring them that God hath forgiven their sins, as the preachers are commanded to do, Isaiah xl. 1, 2. For they forgive sins, when they preach repentance and forgiveness of sins, in the name of Christ, as appears from Luke xxiv. 47, compared with John xx. 23. Although justification is the work of the whole divine Trinity, nevertheless it is especially appropriated to the Father, as it is the dispensation of the Son to be the advocate, and as it is the special work of the Holy Spirit to make the sentence known, and to suggest it to believers. Therefore we read, Rom. viii. 33, 34. "Who shall lay any think to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died." In the distribution of the work of grace among the divine Persons, the exercise of justice is assigned to the Father as Judge," who hath set his Son forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins," as we see, Rom. iii. 25. But as God could not declare his righteousness in justifying sinners, and forgiving their sins, unless he also exercised his grace, he hath therefore sitten down, not only on his throne of justice, but also on his throne of grace, to which the sinner must therefore "come with boldness, that he may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," as the apostle speaks, Heb. iv. 16.

2. The person who is cited is a sinner, "who hath sinned grievously against all the commandments of God, and hath kept none of them, and is still inclined to all evil." Not all who are such, but "those whom God hath foreordained, and also called" to justification, Rom. viii. 29, 30, 33. Neither do they remain so abominable, but they are also "washed and sanctified, when they are justified," 1 Cor. vi. 11. But we only say, that man is considered in justification, as such a sinner. The Remonstrants deem the words, "that he is still inclined to all evil," to be a hard saying, and contrary to the sixty fourth and hundred and fourteenth questions, which teach, that believers delight in all righteousness, and that it is impossible that they should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness." But we need not wonder that those men manifest displeasure at this assertion, for they imagine that man hath lost nothing by the fall, but his supernatural gifts, and that he is not become so corrupt; they also will have that God doth not justify man, before he perceives a good inclination of his will in him; but we need not concern ourselves about what they say, since this answer agreeth with the word of God; our text saith "he that worketh not, but believeth on him that

justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." And can a man be considered differently from this in justification, which is a forgiving of sins? must not a man appear then to God as a sinner? yea, when the sinner comes to God in order to be justified, must he not with the deepest humility accuse himself before God? is not his mouth stopped? would he then dare to speak of his good inclinations, and of his free will? no, the prodigal son spoke only of his sins and unworthiness, Luke xv. 17, 18, 19. The Pharisee spoke like a Remonstrant, he thanked God in a flattering manner, that he was not so abominable, but had many good qualifications; but the publican spoke and acted differently from this, and more humbly; for "standing afar off, he would not so much as lift up his eyes toward heaven, but smote on his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner. And this man went down to his house justified rather than the other," Luke xviii. 10—14. When therefore the instructor saith, that "I am still inclined to all evil," he understands it of a sinner considered in himself, who comes, that he may be justified; and that such an one is inclined to evil Paul teacheth us, Rom. iii. 9—20, and therefore the sixty fourth, and hundred and fourteenth questions do not contradict this assertion, inasmuch as they speak of man in his state of sanctification, as a fruit of his justification. And if we did say that a sanctified person was still inclined to all evil, would we then contradict the word of God? Verily, sanctification is not perfect: is there a new man, who delights in all righteousness, and brings forth fruits of thankfulness, there remains still an old man, and a great power of corruption: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit," Gal. v. 17. Can the flesh lust against the Spirit, without being inclined to all evil? Was not Paul obliged to bemoan himself on account of those evil inclinations? Rom. viii. When the saints were hurried to evil sins, did that happen without an inclination to evil? The reason why those evil inclinations do not always mislead the soul, is not because they do not exist in the soul, but because God restrains them by his grace, and the old man hath not always an opportunity to bestir himself. Peter thought that he would by no means deny his master; but when he was in the hall of Caiaphas, he then showed how strongly he was urged by his evil inclinations to deny his Master thrice, and to curse himself in a grievous manner, in order to save his life.

The sinner, seeing himself to be such an one, is seized with terror, and will endeavour, like Adam, to hide himself from the Lord; but he is called and cited to God's throne of grace, that he may receive a gracious sentence; "God sets his Son forth to him to be a

propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins," Rom. iii. 25. 'The Son of God cries, "Look unto me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth," Isaiah xlv. 22. "The Holy Spirit affords," and effects for him "an access to the Father," Eph. ii. 18, so that he "goes with" a humble "boldness to the throne of grace, that he may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," Heb. iv. 16.

3. But while he stands there, his accusers bestir themselves against him, and set themselves at his right hand, to resist him. The accusers are, (a) the law: "Moses accuseth him to the Father," John v. 45. For the law saith to him in his face, that "he ought to have done those things," all that was commanded, "if he would live," Rom. x. 5. The law saith also to him, that he hath not done those things; for "by the law is the knowledge of sin," and that therefore "no flesh can be justified before God by the deeds of the law," Rom. iii. 20, and it denounceth the curse against the sinner, Gal. iii. 10. The Holy Ghost, convincing him of this by the law, according to what the Saviour saith, John xvi. 8, the sinner's "mouth is stopped by the law," Rom. iii. 19. The sinner cannot allege aught against this accusation of the law: with Paul he acknowledges that "the law, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good," Rom. viii. 12. He confesses that he hath not kept any of those commandments, and that therefore, if the Judge will deal with him according to the demands of the law, "he cannot stand," Psalm cxxx. 3, and thus he "dies to the law through the law," Gal. ii. 19. (b) And so his conscience is also his accuser, "which accuseth him that he hath grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and hath kept none of them, and is still inclined to all evil," which he therefore confesses with shame and detestation of himself before the Judge, crying out, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for mine iniquities are increased over my head, and my trespass is grown up unto the heavens," Ezra ix. 6. But being come to the throne of grace, he pleads mercy, and not right, like the publican, Luke xviii. 13, and like David, Psalm cxliii. 2. (c) Satan, knowing the unfathomable grace and mercy of the Lord, strives to prevent the sinner from finding grace, and he therefore also sets himself as an accuser at his right hand, in order to resist him," Zech. iii. 1. He endeavours to persuade the sinner, that it is not possible, that such a vile wretch as he is, should obtain grace; yea, he seeks to stir the Judge himself up against the sinner, as though he were a hypocrite, as he did, Job. i. 9, 10. ii. 4, 5.

4. This would sink the poor and exceedingly burthened sinner

into a total despair, it would cause him to "take his flesh in his teeth, and to put his life in his hands," if Jesus the Mediator and Advocate at the throne, did not interpose between God and him. Therefore John saith, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins," 1 John ii. 1, 2, and Jesus, when he pleadeth, saith to his Father for the sinner, Job xxxiii. 24. "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." He represents to the Father his satisfaction, righteousness and holiness, and that he hath accomplished a perfect obedience for the sinner. Do the accusers allege, that the sinner is accursed, "because he hath not continued in all things written in the book of the law to do them," according to Gal. iii. 10. the Advocate shows that "he hath delivered him from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for him," Gal. iii. 13. Do they say that the sinner cannot live, because he hath not done those things, which are commanded, as the righteousness, which is of the law required of him, according to Rom. x. 5. Jesus sets his active obedience against this, that the sinner may be made righteous," as Paul speaks, Rom. v. 19.

5. The Judge of the whole earth, determined to do right, passeth sentence in favour of the sinner. That we may have a proper idea of the nature of this sentence, we will consider, (a) the import of this sentence, (b) the causes of it, and, (c) the manner in which the sinner obtains an interest in it.

(a) The import of the sentence is favourable to the sinner. This doth not imply that the Judge saith, 'Thou hast not had, and thou hast not committed any sin, the accusations which have been exhibited against thee are false; for then "God's judgment would not be according to truth," contrary to Rom. ii. 2, and "God will not justify the wicked," in this manner, as he himself declares, Exod. xxiii. 7. But this sentence imports, (1) that God discharges and acquits the sinner from his deserved guilt by forgiving him his sin, and not imputing it to him: "As David also describeth the blessedness of the man, to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin," this Paul teacheth us, Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8, from Psalm xxxiii. 1, 2. Therefore the Lord also saith to the sinner, Isaiah liv. 9, "I have sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee," (2) This sentence consists also in adjudging to the sinner a right to life, which he had forfeited by his sins; for when "he obtains forgiveness of his sins, he also receives an inheritance among them who are sanc-

tified," Acts xxiv. 18. Being justified, he becomes "an heir according to the hope of eternal life," Tit. iii. 7. And he thus also obtains a right to all the benefits of that great covenant of grace: for "Christ is made to him of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30. And he is thus as perfectly justified, "as if he had never had, nor committed any sin; yea, as if he had fully accomplished all that obedience, which Christ hath accomplished for him," as the instructor speaks, according to the word of God; for Paul saith, 2 Cor. v. 21, "Him who knew no sin hath he," to wit, God, "made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," By which means the accusers are silenced, according to what Paul saith, Rom. viii. 33, 34. "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the sinner," by his Surety, Rom. viii. 4, and Satan is rebuked. All this is beautifully exhibited to us in Joshua the high priest, as a pattern, Zech iii. 1—5.

(b) But what influenceth the great Judge to this? what are the causes which move him to deal so favourably with such a vile sinner? Paul tells us this in one word, Rom. iii. 24. "They are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." On the part of the sinner it is "freely." The sinner hath nothing to move the Lord; all that he hath is abominable, hateful and loathsome. His misery would not move God to mercy, for his misery is not adapted to excite compassion, but abhorrence; his misery demands the righteous aversion of God, and the vengeance of God upon him, as we have shown upon the first part of the catechism. We think therefore that no doctrine can be more detestable in the sight of God and of his saints, than that a man is justified for aught that is in him, whether it be called good works, or faith; but we will speak more fully to this on the following Lord's day. What therefore moves the Lord? the apostle saith in the passage before cited, that on God's part it is "his grace," that is, his unmerited goodness to the unworthy sinner, by which he is moved from and of himself to manifest himself glorious in his incomprehensible kindness to the vilest. It is "the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness which the sinner receives," Rom. v. 15, 17. Doth any one think, it is impossible for God to clear the guilty, and that such grace would be dishonourable to God, and would injure his justice? the apostle will satisfy him in the passage which we have quoted, when he saith, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." This he accomplished by his satisfaction to the justice of God, through his active and passive obedience, whereby the justice

of God is satisfied. And therefore the manifestation of this grace to the sinner, is not dishonourable to God, but tends to the declaration of his righteousness, agreeably to what we have often cited from Rom. iii. 25, 26; for this must exhibit the glory of God in the most illustrious manner, that such a wonderful union hath been effected between the grace and the justice of God in his conduct toward the guilty sinner. And therefore it is an idle assertion of the Socinians, that if it be of grace, it cannot be by the righteousness and sanctification of Christ; for it is grace in God to admit a Surety. to bestow one himself, and indeed his Son, and that on this and not on that and the other sinner. Therefore grace and satisfaction are very often joined together. See Rom. iii. 24, 25. Eph. i. 7. Coll. i. 13. And so the sinner is justified on the part of Christ upon account of his righteousness, according to the language of Paul, Philip. iii. 9, "Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." This righteousness of God, on account of which the sinner is justified, is not his divine and essential righteousness infused into the sinner, and so inherent in him, according to the opinion of Osiander; for this righteousness is infinite, and cannot be communicated to man; but it is the righteousness which he hath merited and obtained, and therefore his mediatorial righteousness, whereby "he is made righteousness to us," 1 Cor. i. 30. Further, the sinner is justified, not only on account of Christ's passive righteousness, but also on account of his active and obediencial righteousness, as Paul teacheth us, Rom. v. 19. "By the obedience of one many shall be made righteous." Christ hath satisfied the justice of God by his obedience, as well as by his suffering, and the righteousness of the law required of the sinner obedience, as well as the suffering of punishment. Yea, Christ suffered in obedience to his Father, and this rendered his suffering a virtuous suffering. See Philip. ii. 8. And this is the meaning of the instructor, when he speaks of "the satisfaction, righteousness and holiness" of Christ, on account of which man is justified, as the satisfaction was effected by his righteousness and holiness.

(c) But how doth the sinner obtain an interest in this favourable sentence? It is effected, (1) by God's imputation of Christ's righteousness to man, (2) By the faith of man, whereby he appropriates that sentence and the righteousness of Christ to himself.

1. When God justifieth man on account of the righteousness of Christ, he imputes that righteousness to man as his righteousness, that is, he bestows it on him, by which therefore Christ's satisfaction,

righteousness and holiness becomes his righteousness before God, as the instructor speaks in the sixty-first question. And thus the sinner is considered as perfectly righteous by this imputation, as if he had never committed any sin; yea, as if he had fully accomplished all that obedience, which Christ hath accomplished for him." The Papists and Remonstrants deny this imputation of Christ's righteousness, that they may teach justification on account of our own works and faith; but we maintain it, because David, as Paul teacheth us, Rom. iv. 6, "pronounces the man blessed, to whom God imputeth righteousness without works." See also vrs. 4, 9, 11, concerning the imputation of righteousness. This righteousness cannot be any other than the righteousness of Christ, because all our own righteousness is excluded there, as also Philip. iii. 9. Surely this imputation is not so absurd, as our adversaries pretend, since the sins of believers were imputed to Christ, "that they might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21, and that "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in them," Rom. viii. 3, 4. Why should not the righteousness of Christ be imputed to us, as well as the sin of Adam is imputed to us? Paul shows this consequence very clearly, Rom. v. 15, 19. In what other way doth the righteousness of Christ become ours? for "he is the Lord our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6. And "he is made of God to us righteousness," 1 Cor. i. 30. Do not the Papists teach that the supererogatory works of the saints are imputed to others? and cannot the righteousness of Christ be imputed to the sinner? do not the Remonstrants acknowledge that the merits of Christ are advantageous to believers? but how can they be so, except by imputation?

2. We obtain an interest in this sentence and this righteousness also by faith, whereby we make these things our own. And indeed by faith only, without works: "We conclude then," to adopt the words of Paul, Rom. iii. 28, "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." The apostle teacheth the same also, Gal. ii. 16. Faith is indeed not without works; or "it is dead, when it is alone," James ii. 17, 18, and it is itself a good work, John vi. 29, but it is not considered so here, because it is very carefully distinguished from works, yea, set in opposition to them, as we see in the text, and Rom. iii. 28, and Gal. ii. 16.

III. We obtain an occasion of discussing this matter more fully in the sixty first question, which demands of the pupil his reason for saying "that he is righteous by faith only." This question is asked, because the Papists conceive that we are acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of our faith, which possesseth so great a

worthiness, because it is the root of other virtues, and produces others. The Remonstrants will have that faith justifieth man, because God reckons it by a gracious estimation, as a perfect observation of his law. But the instructor saith, "that I am not acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith:" and he proves it, when he saith, "that only the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ is his righteousness before God," which he had explained in the sixtieth question, and which hath been proved by us. Therefore the believing sinner cannot be acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of his faith. This appears so much the more, because faith denies its own work and worthiness, and seeks all its worthiness in the righteousness of Christ. See this, Phil. iii. 8, 9. The Remonstrants will not indeed seek any worthiness in faith, but only a gracious estimation of God, whereby he reckons faith a perfect observation of his law: yet then their righteousness is not in Christ, but in faith, which God esteems so worthy; but when they speak thus, they deny the whole gospel, which doth not place the righteousness of the sinner in faith, as the work of the sinner, but only in Christ. It is also impossible, that God should esteem faith a perfect observation of the law; for then "the judgment of God would not be according to truth," contrary to Rom. ii. 2. Paul saith indeed, that "faith is counted for righteousness," Rom. iv. 5, but in that passage, faith is put by a metonymy for Christ, because he is the object of faith, we unite ourselves to him, and seek our righteousness in him by faith. And thus faith is spoken of in other passages in such a manner, that we must understand by it the object of faith, either the doctrine of faith, or Christ; so Paul saith, Gal. iii. 23, 25. "Before faith came, we were kept under the law: but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." And Paul considered the matter thus also in Rom. iv. 5. He would otherwise contradict himself, for he speaks of an ungodly person, who worketh not, and to whom righteousness is imputed without works. See vs. i. 8.

But the difficulty still remains, how faith acts in justification. The instructor explains this, when he saith, "that I cannot receive and apply the same to myself any other way than by faith only." For faith serves here like an instrument, with which we do something, like a hand, with which we lay hold on that which is offered to us, make it our own, and unite it to ourselves. That faith hath such a power, we have shown from John i. 12, on the seventh Lord's day. We are to understand this so, that the Judge proffering his Son, his righteousness, and the gracious sentence in him, the sinner accepts

and lays hold on Christ, and all grace in him, and thus submits to the righteousness of God," Rom. x. 3. It is indeed the nature of love also to accept of Christ, to embrace and unite him to ourselves; but we are not therefore justified by love, because love acts not like faith, since it doth not seek to obtain an interest in Christ, as Surety, but, as having an interest in him, to exercise friendship and fellowship with him. This is evident, because we do by a justifying faith, as by an assent to the wooing voice of Christ, say yea to him, conclude a match with him, and thus obtain an interest in him, and his righteousness to justification; but by love we exercise fellowship and friendship with him, as our Bridegroom. The sinner, as a sinner, in which respect he is justified, cannot love God, until his guilt is first taken away in justification; but when that is once taken away, his soul then opens and expands in love to God; and so "faith worketh by love," Gal. v. 6.

IV. In order to illustrate the mystery of justification more particularly, we must consider the circumstances and qualifications which accompany it. To this pertains.

(a) The time when God justifieth the sinner. We cannot say that he doth this in his eternal decree, for that was the purpose of God to justify him, and justification follows from that decree. Moreover, the satisfaction of Christ is not justification, but the meritorious cause of it: we may say that God justified all the elect in general so far, that he would never demand a satisfaction for their guilt, of them when he appointed his Son to be their Surety, and transferred their sins on him, as he took all their sins upon him, in order that he might satisfy for them, and hath also actually satisfied for them by his sufferings; for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them." 2 Cor. v. 19. Moreover, all the elect were justified in Christ, when God raised him from the dead, and declared, as it were, by an instrument of acquittance, that Christ had satisfied him for them all, for "Christ was justified in the Spirit," 1 Tim. iii. 16, and so all the elect likewise in him; but this is not properly speaking, the justification of the sinner before God, of which we speak here: neither do we know that this is ever called justification in the word of God. Justification is indeed a benefit, of which every believer becomes a partaker by himself, whereby the righteousness of Christ is applied and communicated to him upon his act of faith. And so we see that justification takes place, when the elect sinner, being convinced of his guilt by effectual calling, being cited before the throne of grace, and appearing there, lays hold on the Surety and his righteousness,

and thus receives this gracious sentence. We see this represented to us in Joshua the high priest, Zech. iii. 1—5. We add to this,

(b) The different considerations of justification. Justification is considered as active or passive. The active takes place before the tribunal of God, where the sinner appears; where God actually absolves him from his guilt, and awards to him a right to life, upon the direct act of his faith. The passive takes place in the mind of the sinner, whereby the sentence of God is made known to his mind, so that he becomes conscious that he is justified before God; which takes place upon the reflex act of his faith, whereby he sees in himself the indisputable evidences of his justification. In order to illustrate this we will explain,

(c) The manner in which the sentence of justification is made known to the believing sinner. This is done either externally or internally. God makes known to the believing sinner that he hath justified him, externally by his word: the scripture is, as it were, the certificate of his pardon; for "all the prophets bear witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins," Acts x. 43. See also Gal. iii. 8. The Lord sends also for this purpose his messengers of peace, "who comfort his people from his mouth, speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned," Isaiah xl. 1, 2. These, as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by them, "invite, call and pray" the sinner "in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God," 2 Cor. v. 20, 21. When the sinner consents to this by receiving the Surety, the preachers are then empowered to assure him, that he hath peace with God: "I create the fruit of the lips: peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord," Isaiah lvii. 19. And in this manner do the preachers justify many "sinners, Dan. xii. 3. Yea, that the believer may be certain of this, God gives him not only his oath, "swearing that he will not be wroth with him, nor rebuke him," Isaiah lvii. 9, but also his sacraments, or the seals of his covenant: thus "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith," Rom. iv. 11. In the same manner do baptism and the Lord's supper also seal justification: see Acts ii. 38. Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. But the reflex act of faith, being yet very weak, and the heart being too much disturbed on account of the sentence of death, which the sinner had already in himself, this external assuring doth not much affect the mind, and therefore the Judge gives him also his Spirit to be a pledge and seal, whereby he is effectually sealed, as Paul showeth repeatedly, 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph.

i. 13, 14. iv. 30. The work of the Holy Spirit here is, (a) that he teaches the believing sinner to form a conclusion from the word, and from his heart; for he assures him of the truth of the word, which saith, that every one who believeth in Christ hath the forgiveness of sins; "the Spirit beareth witness that the Spirit is the truth," 1 John v. 6. The Holy Spirit also enlightens his soul, and enables him to "know the things," to wit, faith, and the fruits thereof, "which are freely given him by God," 1 Cor. ii. 12. Whereupon he determines the soul to conclude that she is justified, for "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," Rom. viii. 16. (b) The Holy Spirit also effects a peaceful frame of mind, and a calm tranquility of soul, whereby the former perturbation and agitation, which had seized her, is composed, and she enjoys thus "righteousness, peace and joy through the Holy Ghost," according to Rom. xiv. 17. See also Philip. iv. 7. Rom. v. i. (c) The Holy Ghost works in a higher and in a more effectual manner, in order to assure a person, when he suggests the sentence of absolution to the soul, with much clear and sensible grace, speaking secretly, but very powerfully to the soul, in this or that manner, "Moses, thou hast found favour in my sight, Daniel, thou art a man greatly beloved; son, or daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee;" which is then conveyed with so much light and power to the soul, that she sees clearly, that it is a word, which is sent to her from the throne; and so much the more, because "the Holy Ghost sheds" also "the love of God abroad in her," Rom. v. 5. Yea, he causeth her to taste the power and the fruit of this benefit with great joy, so that she saith from Isaiah lxi. 10. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

(d) We say furthermore, that justification is a complete act. Sanctification is only in part, but justification is perfect in this life; for the righteousness of Christ is wholly imputed to the sinner, in consequence of which all his sins, past and present, are forgiven him; and also his future sins so far, that God will never condemn him on account of them, but will always forgive them; for God saith that "he will never be wroth with him, nor rebuke him," Isaiah liv. 9, and that "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1. Moreover, believers are justified daily, since they must pray daily, that their sins may be forgiven them, Matt. vii. 12. Therefore it is also said, Rev. xxii. 11. "He that is right-

eous, let him be justified still."* See this exhibited more largely upon the fifth petition.

(e) That our exposition may not be too diffuse, we say lastly, that this is a benefit of the church, not only of the New, but also of the Old Testament. How the Socinians deny this we have shown on the sixth Lord's day, where we have also refuted them. We have likewise evinced there that it is a mistake, that the fathers under the Old Testament were subject to guilt, to wrath, to the curse, to a restless conscience, and the fear of death, which disproves withal the assertion, that they had not then the perfect forgiveness of their sins. They had certainly the perfect forgiveness of their sins, as well as the believers of the New Testament. David surely saith this in the thirty second psalm, and Paul proves from that psalm the forgiveness of the New Testament, Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8. We do not however deny, that there is a great difference between the justification of the Old, and of the New Testament; for the believers under the Old Testament were justified upon the ground of the future satisfaction of the Surety, their justification was administered to them in a dark and legal manner by the law of ceremonies, it was made known to them by the Holy Ghost in an exceedingly scarce manner, and it was the peculiar privilege of Israel, confined within the narrow limits of Canaan: but under the New Testament believers obtain this benefit by the accomplished satisfaction of the Mediator, it is administered to them in a clear and easy manner, and with a greater assurance of the Holy Ghost, and even to the Gentiles. And so "God is no longer a God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith and uncircumcision through faith." Thus Paul speaks, Rom. iii. 29, 30.

APPLICATION.

It is time to contemplate this matter more precisely for our advantage.

What think ye, hearers, have not we reason to boast, that we alone possess the pure doctrine according to the word of God, when we teach that the sinner is justified before God by faith only, on

* We have quoted this passage according to the Dutch translation.

account of the perfect righteousness of Christ, through the free grace of God? Is not this doctrine the only foundation, and the principal article of the whole gospel? Can we apprehend... rightly the meaning of Paul in his epistles, without this doctrine of ours? What can we understand of the righteousness of Christ, of the grace of God, and of faith, if we do not make use of this our key? Is the efficacy of the sacrifices of atonement, and of the trespass offerings intelligible without this fundamental article? What can quiet the guilty mind, and glorify God on account of his righteousness and grace in saving sinners, but this opinion of ours? can the good inclination of the sinner's will, his good works, and evangelical obedience, according to the law of Christ? Whose disturbed mind will be quieted by these means? The convinced sinner, despairing of himself must find a perfect, a divine, and an eternal righteousness without himself, if he shall be able to support himself with a hope, that God will be favourable to him. And how shall the Lord obtain his honour, as long as the sinner gazes on himself, and his virtues? And therefore we may safely conclude, that we possess the pure doctrine of truth, and that the Pelagians and Semipelagians do not. The revelation of God is on our side.

But what will this boasting avail us, if we ourselves do not make a profitable, comfortable, and sanctifying use of our doctrine? Permit me therefore to exhibit this benefit of justification to you in its proper lustre, that we may urge you the more to a suitable improvement of it, Consider then,

1. Whom God justifieth, and so graciously acquits. Is it not a sinner, yea, one of "the chief of sinners," with Paul? 1 Tim. i. 15, who hath sinned against all the commandments of God, and hath not kept one of them; yea, who hath transgressed most grievously against God, who hated God and his neighbour, was "sometimes foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts, hateful, and hating others," as Paul confesses of himself, and other justified persons, Titus iii. 3. Yea, who is still inclined to all evil, "carnal, sold under sin, in whose flesh there dwelleth no good thing," Rom: vii. 14, 18, who is self-condemned, hopeless, and knows of no remedy, saying "there is no hope," Isaiah lvii. 10, and whose mouth is stopped, being unable to excuse himself in the least. When the Lord God shows favour to such an one, and admits him to grace, must it not be a great thing, and cause the sinner to humble himself to the uttermost, and to lose himself in the grace of God?

2. It is inconceivable that his Judge, whom he hath injured in the highest degree, and who might therefore proceed against him with

the utmost severity, favours him with the greatest grace. This, this must exhibit the Judge as incomparably good to the sinner, so that he may cry out with the church, Micha vii. 18, 19. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion on us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." He descends from his throne of vindictive justice, and sits upon his throne of grace, and that without injuring, yea, to the glory of his justice; a wonder, before which "Moses bowed himself with his head to the earth," when the Lord proclaimed it before him, saying, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty," Exod. xxxiv. 5, 8.

3. Is not this a wonderful benefit, that God himself bestows his Son to be a Surety, Mediator and Advocate? The sinner must have been condemned according to the law, and the testimony of his conscience: but the bowels of the tender mercy of God made his Son to be sin, that the sinner might be the righteousness of God in him. He cannot be condemned now upon the allegations of his accusers, although their accusations be ever so just; they themselves must be condemned; for according to the words of Paul, Rom. viii. 3, 4. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." This is the great promise of God, who justifieth the sinner, that he saith, Isaiah liv. 17. "Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Do the accusers renew their complaints with his daily offences, "Jesus Christ the righteous is his Advocate with the Father, and he ever liveth to make intercession for him," agreeably to the testimony of John and Paul, 1 John ii. 1. Heb. vii. 25.

4. Will ye have more, look at the sentence. How precious is it, and like cold water to a thirsty soul, bowed down under the burthen of so many and just accusations! Can aught be more joyful, than that a justly, and a self-condemned malefactor is informed, that he hath obtained pardon? How soul enrapturing is it to a sinner, who bears with the greatest anxiety the sentence of everlasting condemnation in his bosom, to hear the Judge say, Thou shalt not die, but

live: I will seat thee upon the throne of my Son, I have set my heart, my love on thee, and when his Judge gives him the kiss of reconciliation! How must such a poor heart revive, as it were, from the pangs of death, with the greatest pleasure! Such a soul saith straightway, "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back," Isaiah xxxviii. 16, 17. Once more:

5. Why doth God do such great things for such a vile child of hell? It cannot be, because he saw so much moral goodness in him; not only God, but the sinner himself, knew better. Nothing, nothing but grace moved the Lord to glorify himself in such a subject of conuersion. It is "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved," saith the apostle, Eph. i. 6. Yea, the sinner doth still do nothing to obtain this sentence, he only assents to it, that he may obtain grace and peace, agreeably to the method and wisdom of the King: his Advocate saith, "Fear not, only believe," Mark v. 36.

What think ye, hearers, is not David in the right, when he pronounces a sinner, who is justified in this manner, blessed? Psalm xxxii. 1, 2. Surely yes. But what will this avail you and me, if we ourselves have no interest in this great benefit? ought we not then to inquire thoroughly in what state we are with regard to this particular? what think ye, are ye already acquitted before the tribunal of God? or do ye not concern yourselves with this important matter? This would indeed be wretched. Or do ye say, We hope that we do, and we trust that all our sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ's merits? Have ye any ground or proof of this? Surely this is a matter of too great importance to be trifled with in such a manner. Permit me to inform you what are the marks of a justified person, and let each of you examine himself by them, and see whether they can be found in him.

1 The person who hath been justified before God, "his conscience hath accused him that he hath grossly transgressed all the commands of God, and that he hath kept none of them, and is still inclined to all evil." He knows this, not merely from hearsay, but he looks back, and sees that his whole life hath been without God, he sees even now clearly and plainly every evil inclination rise up in him against God, and his ways, and against his neighbour. This distresses him, and affects him with shame and concern, and he

earnestly desires to find grace only ; this urges him to prayer, and to seek God, that, like such a vile wretch, he may find grace and mercy with God. See this in the publican, Luke xviii. 13, 14.

2. Such a person seeks his righteousness and pardon only in Christ. At first he seeks relief for his distressed heart in forsaking evil and doing good ; but he is soon driven from this, for he sees that whatever he doth is so mixed with sin, that the more he strives to do any thing, the more his evil inclinations appear, and the more distress of mind he experiences on account of them, until his soul, entirely perplexed, hears the good report of the ability and willingness of the Mediator, whereupon being driven out of himself he turns himself to him, surrenders himself to him, chooses, and accepts of him, that he may be justified by him before the throne. How exceedingly low doth he now rate his virtues, although he once valued them so highly ! and how is Jesus risen in his esteem ! Like Saul he saith with his whole heart, “ Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,” Philip. iii. 8, 9. Once more :

3. The person who is justified before God is also sanctified. These two benefits always accompany each other ; see 1 Cor. vi. 11. “ With God there is forgiveness, that he may be feared, Psalm cxxx. 4. David saith also that in the spirit of the justified person there is no guile, Psalm xxxii. 2. Indeed faith alone justifieth, but it doth not by itself prove that a person is justified, unless he also prove it by good works. James demonstrates this by the most forcible arguments : see his epistle, the second chapter, vrs. 14—26. It is also the nature of the justified person to be holy. He knows, he hates, and opposes the wicked inclinations of the old man ; he knows and loves the holy will of God, and seeks to do it, and for this purpose surrenders himself to the Lord ; love to God hath captivated his soul, and urges him to conduct himself according to his will, and with justified Paul he strives to be conformed to Christ, and to be perfect, Philip. iii. 10—14.

If ye, who hear this, examine yourselves by it, ye will see how it is with you in this respect ; if we were not to speak of justification on the following Lord's day, we should show you now how many are yet estranged from this great benefit, and how wretched their condition is ; but this we must do on the twenty fourth Lord's day.

But with respect to you, whose souls are humbled under sin, who have sought and found your righteousness in Christ only, and pursue after holiness, be active and zealous in your improvement of this matter. And particularly.

1. Let this truth be precious to you, and do all that in you lieth to retain it in the church; and therefore endeavour to understand it thoroughly, and to teach it to others; suspect and oppose those who cavil at it in the least. Applicable are here the words of holy Jude in his epistle, the third verse, "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." The doctrine of the justification of the sinner, before God is the chief truth of Christianity: with this article the church either stands or falls. No doctrine can remain unviolated, when this is impaired. He who doth not hold this truth pure, cannot have a pure opinion of the satisfaction of Christ, nor of the state of grace; his humility, his faith, his hope, his charity and sanctification is vain. He cannot "serve God in the Spirit, while he doth not glory in Christ Jesus, and hath confidence in the flesh," as Paul speaks, Philip. iii. 3.

2. Let this truth possess and captivate your souls so, that it may ravish and transport you with wonder, joy and thanksgiving to the Lord. Think what hath been done to you, that ye, who were so vile and guilty, have been raised up out of the bottomless pit of misery, and compassed with joyful songs of deliverance, on account of the righteousness of the Son of God, by such an exalted grace, upon the consenting act of your faith, that ye might receive and praise for ever grace for grace. How should your souls now be filled with the praises of God, with his honour all the day! Have ye not greater reason than Hagar, to say with her, "Have I here also looked after him that seeth me?" Gen. xvi. 13. See only how David strove to do this, when he said, Psalm ciii. 1—5. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

3. Be and remain lowly and humble. Remember what ye were, (and yet are in yourselves,) surely a Magor missabib, a terrour round about to yourselves and to all who beheld you with a discerning eye. Ye know how loathsome and hateful ye were in your own eyes, when God first laid his hand on you; there was none so filthy, so wicked and damnable as ye were in your own opinion. Will ye now exalt yourselves on account of the excellency of your revelation?

will ye forget yourselves, because ye are believers, and beloved? "Who maketh you to differ? and what have ye, that ye have not received? and if ye have received it, why do ye glory, as if ye had not received it?" thus I ask you with Paul, 1 Cor. iv. 7. Do ye no longer know what ye have been, know then what ye are now still, through the evil inclinations of your hearts; if this will not humble you, and render you lowly, the Lord will "give you a sharp thorn in your flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet you." And why not you, as well as Paul, "that ye may not exalt yourselves?" 2 Cor. xii. 7. Why did the Lord withdraw his hand, and suffer the greatest saints to fall into exceedingly grievous sins? was it not that they might remain humble?

4. When ye have sinned against your great Benefactor, Judge and Father, be grieved and sorry for it. Shall one, who hath been delivered from so great a death, behave himself unthankfully, basely, and like a degenerate child toward him, who hath delivered him, and who hath been so inconceivably kind to him? "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" thus speaks Moses to Israel, Deut. xxxii. 6. Let your hearts bleed on account of this, and bewail it with briny tears, like David and Peter, Psalm li, and Matt. xxvi. 75. Do not however sink down in discouragement, but seek pardon for your ill behaviour with humility; draw near unto God, as a Father, whose gracious gift of righteousness is without repentance, and who will never more be wroth with you, as a Judge; he sits yet upon his throne of grace, to afford grace, help and mercy in time of need. Your Surety hath brought in an everlasting righteousness for you, and hath been made righteousness to you of God, ye have still a right to it, it is imputed to you entirely, and for ever. He hath justly turned his face away from you, but ye have not lost your title to his righteousness by your iniquities; have ye been unfaithful, he remains faithful: therefore lay hold anew on the righteousness of your Surety for reconciliation, come with it to the throne, and plead upon "his resurrection, with the answer of a good conscience," as Peter requireth, 1 Peter iii. 21. And rest not, until your souls be really and actually at peace again with the Father.

5 Conduct yourselves worthily of the great favour, that hath been shown to you. This Paul enjoins, when he saith, Philip. i. 27. "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ." The benefit of justification is the great theme of the gospel; and to what, think ye, doth so great a benefit oblige you? doth it not to

fight against sin, to mortify it, to live for God, according to his will, to be filled with fruits of righteousness, self-denial, weanedness from the world, to be heavenly-minded, to burn with love to God and your neighbour, and that as those, who belong to God and Christ? Hear what Paul saith, Tit. ii. 14. "Who," namely Christ Jesus, "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Show yourselves then to be of "the righteous people, which keepeth the truth."

Thus will ye have the testimony, that nothing can be laid to your charge, because God hath justified you, Christ hath died for you, and sitteth at the right hand of God to make intercession for you, until he shall at length appear on the great day, to execute judgment, that he may perfect and complete your whole state, by absolving you in the sight and hearing of the whole world from every sin, and punishment, and adjudging you to eternal life, yea, even instantiating you in it, when he will say to you from Matt. xxv. 34. "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Amen.

THE
DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

DEFENDED.

XXIV. LORD'S DAY.

Rom. iii. 27, 28. Where is boasting then? it is excluded. By what law? of works? nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Q. 62. *But why cannot our good works be the whole, or part of our righteousness before God?*

A. Because, that the righteousness, which can be approved of before the tribunal of God, must be absolutely perfect, and in all respects conformable to the divine law: and also, that our best works in this life, are all imperfect, and defiled with sin.

Q. 63. *What! do not our works merit, which yet God will reward in this and in a future life?*

A. This reward is not of merit, but of grace.

Q. 64. *But doth not this doctrine make men careless and profane?*

A. By no means: for it is impossib'le that those who are implanted into Christ by a true faith, should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness,

WHEN " Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking, she said unto Abraham, Cast out

this bond-woman and her son ; for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." This Moses relates to us, Gen. xxi. 9, 10. Paul having respect to this, saith Gal. iv. 22, 23. "It is written that Abraham had two sons ; the one by a bond-maid, and the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bond-woman was born of the flesh ; but he of the free woman was by promise." When the bondwoman would have that her son should inherit, and the lad mocked, Sarah said, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son : for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. These things are an allegory, for these are the covenants," &c. saith the apostle, Gal. iv. 24—31. It appears very plainly, that by these two covenants he understands, (a) the covenant of works, the sum of which, together with the covenant of grace, which was administered in a legal manner under the Old Testament, was proposed at mount Sinai, and often exhibited for the condemnation of sinners, and in order to urge them to the Messiah, who was to come ; and therefore the Jews, the Jerusalem of Paul's time, seeking their righteousness and the inheritance by this covenant, showed that they, being born after the flesh, of the servile covenant of works, were also servile with their children, since they, like Ishmael, mocked and persecuted them, who were born after the Spirit. (b) The second covenant, which Paul mentioneth, is the covenant of grace, which is established only in promises ; and therefore all who believe, the Jerusalem that is above, the true church, being born like Isaac, after the Spirit, of this covenant, are free, and obtain the inheritance by promise. When now the carnal Jews sought a right to the inheritance by the servile covenant of works, through their own doings, yea, when they mocked the free children, who sought their inheritance by the promises, "saying blasphemously that they said, Let us do evil, that good may come," Rom. iii. 18. We say, when they did this, the true Sarah, the believing church, after she was become fruitful, according to Isaiah liv. 1, compared with Gal. iv. 17, cried to her Abraham, her Maker, the Lord of hosts, who is her husband, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son ; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son : " and so this Hagar was called by the Lord, "Loruhama, not having obtained mercy, and Lo-ammi, not my people." See Hosea i. 6, 9. And the Lord hath ordered that it should be said to her, "Thou art not my wife, and I am not thy husband," Hosea ii. 1. And thus "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore ? because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law ; for they

stumbled at that stumblingstone." Thus Paul speaks, Rom. ix. 31, 32.

How long was the free Sarah, the true church with her children of promise, obliged to sigh, on account of grievous mockings and persecutions among the Popish Hagarenes, who sought the inheritance by the law ! but when the church cried, Cast out the bondwoman with her son, the Lord drove those Hagarenes out of the house of Abraham, his church, in the time of the reformation : by which means the doctrine of justification by the promise through faith without works, having been brought to us, hath continued with us until now, and is defended, when we are taught that the righteousness of Christ, and no other, is our righteousness before God, in the foregoing Lord's day ; and that our works cannot be our righteousness before God, nor a part of it, as we are now taught in this Lord's day, in the sixty-second question. These Hagarenes set themselves against this doctrine, and insist on a reward according to the merit of their works ; but being opposed in the sixty-third question, they show the temper of Ishmael, by mocking us, when they blasphemously say in the sixty-fourth question, that our free doctrine makes men careless and profane.

In order that we may silence them, we will, agreeably to this clue, illustrate somewhat more particularly these three general heads :

I. That our works cannot be our righteousness before God, nor a part of it, Question 62.

II. That though God rewards the works of his children, they nevertheless do not merit, Question 63.

III. That our doctrine cannot with any propriety be reproached, as making men careless and profane, Question 64.

I. In order to render it evident that our works are not our righteousness before God nor a part of it, we must first exhibit the state of the controversy, and then produce our arguments against the erroneous opinion.

In order to represent the state of the controversy, we must show that not only the Papists, but also many others, both now and of old have erred in this matter. All men, being children of the broken covenant of works, are by nature infected with this evil, that they imagine that their own works are their righteousness before God, either in whole, or in part.

We see this in the heathens ; those at least among them, who were in any measure solicitous to enjoy the favour of the gods, sought the atonement of their sins in their sorrow for their sins. in their prayers, their washings and sacrifices, either of beasts or men :

also in afflicting their bodies, yea, they sometimes bereaved themselves of their lives; they thought they should obtain a right to life by their good and virtuous actions.

The carnal Jews, though they had been taught better from the word of God, would nevertheless seek their righteousness even of old, in their repentance, sacrifices and virtues; "they exacted all their labors," Isaiah lviii. 3. See what the apostle saith of them, Rom. ix. 31, 32. x. 2, 3. The Jews had declined to this error especially in the time when Jesus came in the flesh, as appears sufficiently in the writings of the New Testament. The Jews of later times, abandoned to hardness of heart, have smuggled up this unsuitable notion exceedingly. And indeed thus, seeing that they all without exception, though ever so virtuous, needed forgiveness, they have placed a right to forgiveness of sins in repentance, alms-givings, prayers, a changing of their name, (whereby, as they imagine, a Jew becomes another person, and is thus reckoned free from his former guilt,) a change of work, patience under sufferings, observing the ecclesiastical law of Moses, as circumcision, washings, and sacrifices, and especially on the great day of atonement. Is there aught else wanting, they think that they shall atone for that by their death, or by suffering the pains of hell during one year. They seek a right to eternal life in their good works; they speak indeed of faith, but they mean by it a fulfilling of the whole law. If they mention aught of the mercy of God, it is without respect to the righteousness of the Messiah, and it only effects that God accepts of the penitent, who satisfy for their sins. Doth any one desire a fuller account of these things, let him read H. Witsius's discourse on justification, prefixed to the apostolical antiquities of William Cave.

Is it matter of wonder, that the Jews, the proper people of God, are so silly, it is matter of still greater wonder, that the majority of Christians, who have a clearer discovery of the righteousness of faith in the writings of the apostles, do, like those who are blind, grope here in the dark: this appears in all those, who are not of our communion, or of the Lutheran.

The Socinians, who deny the righteousness of works according to the law of Moses, and say that Christ is a new Lawgiver, who hath enlarged and improved the law of Moses, assert indeed, that we are justified by faith; but they imagine that faith consists in keeping the commandments of Christ, and in confiding that our sins are forgiven, and that we will obtain eternal life, not through the satisfaction of Christ, for they do not believe in that, but through a com-

man goodness of God, who promiseth that he who doth good, shall receive a good reward.

The Remonstrants pretend that Christ hath merited a general covenant of grace for all men, the condition whereof is faith, perfected by the power of freewill; which is indeed an ignoble act, but is nevertheless considered and accepted of God by a gracious estimation, as a perfect fulfilment of the whole law.

The Mennonites unite either with the Socinians or Remonstrants. But as the instructor opposes more particularly the Papists, we must declare their opinion also. Justification consists, according to them, not in the forgiveness of sins, and in granting a right to life, but in an infusion of holiness, by which they obtain the forgiveness of sins, and a right to life through the merit of works. They say, this justification is either of the ungodly, by which an ungodly person becomes holy; or of the godly, by which a godly person becomes more holy. Works are either before regeneration, and proceed from the power of freewill, which merit the justification of the ungodly *ex congruo*, from a certain fitness and suitableness, that God should further in some measure the conversion, that is, the justification of the ungodly: or works are such as are done after regeneration by faith and grace, which assist freewill, and merit the justification of the godly, *ex condigno*, from an equal value of the work with the reward. If they have need of any works in consequence of their coming short in some measure, and have thus only a part of their righteousness, they will then betake themselves to the supererogatory works of other saints, who were more than perfect, or they will supply the defect, either in this life by penance, or after this life in purgatory. They speak also of the merits of Christ, but these do no more than obtain that their works merit. They allow that they are justified also by faith, but not otherwise than that faith is the root of other virtues, which producing others, and therefore being accompanied with others, justifieth on account of its superior excellency above other virtues, and merits justification.

In opposition to this, we teach that the satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ, received by faith, is the righteousness of man before God, as we have declared and proved on the foregoing Lord's day. We do not deny that good works are highly necessary to salvation, but we assert that they cannot be our righteousness before God, nor a part of it. And therefore the controversy is, whether our good works can be our righteousness before God, or a part of it; which our adversaries affirm, but we deny.

That our good works cannot be our righteousness before God, appears.

1. Because the holiest persons, and those who had done the most good works, have with humility acknowledged that they had no righteousness at all, but sought their salvation only in the mercy of God, and in the righteousness of his Son. Job, who had the testimony of God that there was none like him in the earth for integrity, uprightness, fearing God and eschewing evil, said, chapt. ix. 2, 3, "how should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand." David, the man after God's own heart, said, Psalm cxxx. 3, 4, "if thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." He prayed, Psalm cxliii. 2, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." Daniel, the man greatly beloved, spoke also in the same manner, chapt. ix. 18. "We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies" If there ever was a man that excelled in holiness, it was Paul; but even he also "sought not his own righteousness, which was of the law, but only the righteousness of Christ, which is by faith," Gal. ii, 16. Phil. iii. 8, 9. Surely if the good works of these saints could have been their righteousness before God, or a part of it, they would not have spoken thus.

2. The word of God teacheth us that there is no righteousness at all in good works for justification, since works are in every respect opposed to justification, as inconsistent with it. For (a) the judge doth not "set" works, but "his Son forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins," Rom. iii. 25, 26. (b) The person cited is one who is "ungodly, who worketh not," Rom. iv. 5. (c) The Advocate doth not plead the righteousness of the sinner, which is of works, but the ransom, which he himself hath found. Job. xxxiii. 24. Isaiah liii. 12. 1 John iii. 1, 2. (d) The sentence is pronounced "freely by the grace of God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus," Rom. iii. 24. (e) Works are not imputed to the sinner, but only the righteousness of Christ without works, as Paul speaks from the opinion of David, Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8. (f) Faith which receives the sentence of grace, is also set in opposition to works. See this in the text.

3. Our righteousness, which is of works, cannot endure the judgment of God. In order to show this, we must prove, (a) that the righteousness, which shall endure the judgment of God, must be

perfect, and in every respect commensurate with the law of God. This is evident, because "Moses, describing the righteousness of the law, saith, The man which doth those things shall live by them," Rom. x. 5. And what are those things? the perfect love of God, and of our neighbour, as the Saviour explains the demand of the law, Matt. xxii. 37, 38, 39. We must keep the law perfectly, if we shall have the righteousness which God approves, or we are cursed, as Paul saith, Gal. iii. 10 Deut. xxvii. 6. This is still more evident, if we consider that God, who will judge men according to their works, must judge them according to the law: "The judgment of God is according to truth," as Paul speaks, Rom. ii. 2. Now he cannot justify man, unless he have a perfect righteousness, according to the law; for if a man incur guilt in any respect by his misconduct, "God will not hold him guiltless," as he saith himself, Exod. xxxiv. 7. Did not the Lord himself show that he would not approve of any righteousness in his judgment, but that which was perfectly conformable to his law, when he appointed his Son to satisfy his justice according to the complete demand of the law, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," as Paul saith, Rom. viii. 3, 4. The matter of the greatest importance here, is, whether our works are so perfect: but we will also prove (b) that our works are not so perfect, but that "even our best works in this life are all imperfect, and defiled with sin," as the catechism speaks. Is not this true? surely it is; for there is "not one man who sinneth not," as the word of God repeatedly testifieth. See 1 Kings viii. 46. Prov. xx. 9. Eccl. vii. 20. Matt. vi. 12. James iii. 2. 1 John i. 8, and the good, yea, even the best works of men are defiled with sin, and imperfect. The prophet confesseth this of the church, of which he was a member, and therefore also of himself, when he saith, Isaiah lxiv. 6, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." This doth not denote that they were sins; for then they would not be good works, or righteousnesses, but it denotes that they were imperfect, and proceeded from a heart that was not perfectly purified: the old man and the flesh hinders and withstands the new man and the spirit, "so that he doth not do what he would." Thus speaks Paul concerning believers and himself, Gal. v. 17. Rom. vii. 14, 25. The saints "did not indeed defile their garments," according to Rev. iii. 14. but this doth not denote that their works were altogether pure and free from sin; for they would not then have had need "to wash them, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb," Rev. vii. 14, but it only means, that they did not pollute themselves with the abominable conduct, and the false

doctrines of the pretended Christians of Sardis. If we will now deduce a conclusion from these premises, we will discover that our works cannot be our righteousness before God ; for if our righteousness must be perfect, and if our best works be imperfect, it is evident that our works cannot be our righteousness before God, but deserve that we should be banished from his presence, and that he should cast them, as the filth of our holy things, in our faces.

Say not, the good that is in our good works may be a part of our righteousness, and God may graciously reckon it as perfect ; for imperfect works do not lessen our guilt, but increase it. He who keeps the law in part, by imperfect good works, sins also in part, yea, renders himself altogether guilty : " For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all," as we are taught, James ii. 10. Yea, if our good works were a part of our righteousness before God, and the righteousness of Christ, or the gracious estimation of God supplied their deficiency, then would our works form an unsuitable connexion with the righteousness of Christ and the grace of God, and we should be justified partly by works and partly by grace, which is contrary to the doctrine of Paul, Rom. xi. 6, " If it be by grace, then is it no more of works ; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace ; otherwise work is no more work." Further, our adversaries cannot say with any reasonableness that our good works are a part of our righteousness and not the whole of our righteousness : for they who oppose us say that a man can keep the law of God perfectly ; yea, the Papists will have that a man may be more than perfect by works of supererogation, and so afford a portion of his righteousness to another. The Socinian thinks that he doth more by his obedience to the improved law of Christ, than God demanded in the law which he gave by Moses. what remains then for the righteousness of Christ to do ? nothing but to effect, as the slave of man, that his works should merit, and that he should do more works than Moses required, and that Christ should merit a general grace, by which man should be enabled to will, not be rendered actually willing to keep the law of God perfectly, and that God should esteem the faith of man, a perfect observation of the law. And thus they place their righteousness altogether in works, and all that is divine must subserve this purpose, that the sinner may find a righteousness in his works. Abominable !

4. Add to this, that the works of the sinner cannot be his righteousness, because he must have a righteousness, and be justified by it, before he can either have, or do works that are acceptable to

God. For "the ungodly who worketh not is justified," according to the language of Paul, Rom. iv. 5. All his works, as long as his person is not justified, reconciled to God, and thus acceptable to him, are disagreeable to God: "The Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering: but when he had not respect to Cain, he had not respect to his offering neither," Gen. iv. 4, 5. With this agrees wise Solomon, when he saith, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is his delight," Rom. xv. 8. All the good works of men are wrought in them by the Lord through his Spirit, as we have shown from Philip ii. 14. Eph. ii. 8. Now God doth not bestow his Spirit for sanctification, except on account of the righteousness of Christ: he is first made righteousness to the sinner, and then sanctification. See 1 Cor. i. 30. For by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ he obtains a right to life, and thus also to all the benefits, and the sanctification of the covenant of grace. If the sinner must now be justified before he can either have, or do good works, he cannot then obtain righteousness by his works; for he hath it before his works, and his works are the fruits of it.

5. The doctrine, that our works are our righteousness before God, is replete with absurdities. For (a) "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ died in vain," Gal. ii. 21. (b) Grace, which alone the Spirit of God commends here, hath then no place, according to Rom. xi. 6. (c) We have then no need of forgiveness of sins, contrary to Psalm xxx. 4. (d) "If they who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect," Rom. iv. 14. (e) Humility, the greatest virtue of Christianity, is then banished out of the church, and pride and boasting of our works obtain the chief place in it, contrary to Rom. iii. 27, 28. iv. 2. Eph. ii. 8, 9. We see Luke xviii. 11, 12, 14, how ill the Pharisee fare; by boasting of his works. (f) If the sinner can merit so much by works, he needs not then beg at the throne of grace for his daily bread. (g) No sinner, who hath a sense of his sins, and sees that his works are like filthy rags, can then have any hope of grace, but he must abandon himself to despair, must hide himself with Adam, run from God with Cain, and flee to the halter with Judas. Many of the Papists, seeing this absurdity, have borne witness to the truth, especially at their death. The time would fail me if I should speak of the cardinals Contarene, Bellarmine, Pope Adrian the sixth, the emperor Charles the fifth, and George, duke of Savoy. (h) Suffer me to add this also, if righteousness come by works, then the righteousness of the gospel is wholly made void,

the covenant of works is established, the covenant of grace denied, and the doctrine of Paul, in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians, in which he excludes all works, is enervated, and rendered absurd.

Our adversaries, in order to disentangle themselves out of these snares, which they lay for themselves, seek various evasions, and say,

1. That the apostle excludes works done only by the power of freewill, without the assistance of grace, but not those that are done by the assistance of grace. But thus our adversaries condemn themselves, because they assert a justification of the ungodly by the merits of their works, which are performed before regeneration by freewill, as we have shown before: Paul needed not to exclude works, which are done without grace, because they are only shining sins, and therefore evil works, which, as all know, deserve death. He excludes all works without any exception; we may not then make him speak of an exception, where he himself is silent. Yea, he excludes the works of godly Abraham and David, Rom. iv. 1—8.

2. They say further that he excludes only the works of the ceremonial, or ecclesiastical law: but this also is an invention, which is beside Paul; for he speaks of the law that was innate to the Gentiles, Rom. ii. 14, 15, which forbids stealing and adultery, Rom. ii. 21, 22, which is opposed to circumcision, Rom. ii. 25—27, which accuseth and condemneth Jews and Gentiles, and discovers their sins to them, Rom. iii. 9—20. Yea, he speaks of the law which Abraham had, and which he observed, before the ceremonial or ecclesiastical law was imposed on him by circumcision; and nevertheless his works according to the moral law are also excluded. See Rom. iv. 1, 2, 3, 9—12. It is true, the apostle hath respect in his epistle to the Galatians chiefly to the law of the fleshly commandment, since he therein manfully opposes the false apostles, who taught justification by works according to that law; but he doth this, because those false apostles looked upon those ceremonies, as the demand of the covenant of works, and as the proper performances to obtain life; for he alleges, in order to silence them, the promise and the threatening of the covenant of works. See Gal. iii. 10, 12. And he doth this, in order to show that we cannot be justified by our own performances, either according to the moral, or the ceremonial law. Therefore when he excludes the ceremonies according to the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, he then also excludes all kinds of works.

3. In this manner do the Papists endeavour to disentangle them-

selves, but the Socinians pursue another method. Christ, according to them, preached a different doctrine and law from that of Moses. Paul, as they say, excludes from justification works done according to the law of Moses, but not works done according to the law of Christ, which they call the gospel. The Remonstrants differ not much from this, when they say that we are now justified by the faith of the gospel; for they consider faith as a work done according to the law of Christ, containing every virtue according to the commands of the gospel. But faith is a virtue by itself, distinct from other virtues, and may not be considered in justification as a work, but as an instrument and hand, by which we receive Christ, and Paul excludes all our own works, and besides this, we say, it is not true that Christ preached another, and a new law, as we will show in the proper place. God the Lord would then have abrogated the law of Moses; but how was this possible, when it expressed the image of God, and his demand against the sinner? he would then have dispensed with his right, which was impossible, as we have proved on the fifth Lord's day. If Christ had preached a new law, with a design, that men should be justified by works according to that law, then would that law have been "able to give life, contrary to the promise," and so "righteousness would come by the law," contrary to the doctrine of Paul, Gal. iii. 21.

II. The adversaries of the light, not willing to be convinced of their erroneous opinion, think that they will strengthen themselves by the word of God, which promiseth a reward to works. We cannot gainsay this, verily "in keeping God's commandments there is a great reward," according to the language of David, Psalm xix. 11. God will reward good works, not only in this life, but also in that which is to come, Heb. vi. 10. Matt. vi. 4, 6, 18. Yea, the people of God encourage themselves by the consideration of the reward to greater diligence in doing good works. Moses "had respect to the recompence of the reward," Heb. xi. 26, but good works do not therefore merit: for (a) we owe good works, and we are naturally bound to keep the law of God perfectly. How can we merit by doing our duty? Hear what the Saviour saith, Luke xvii. 10 "When ye shall have done all these things, which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." (b) If good works did merit that great reward, then we ought to do them of and by ourselves; for we cannot merit by the work and assistance of another; but good works are not of man himself, but of God: "Faith is not of yourselves; it is the gift of God," saith the apostle, Eph. ii. 8. "It is God, which worketh in

you both to will and to do," so the same man speaks, Philip. ii. 15. (c) Works ought to be equal in value with the reward, if they shall merit the reward; but "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 17. (d) Can good works profit God, for this is required in order that they may merit? no! "Can a man be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?" These questions are rightly asked, in order to deny the assertions, Job. xxii. 2, 3

Do evil works merit perdition, because they are perfectly evil, good works do not therefore merit salvation, for they are not perfectly good. And if they were perfect, as they might have been before the fall, they would not however merit by their worthiness, but only by the promises of God in the covenant of works.

How doth God then reward works, if they do not merit the reward? Paul will declare, when he teacheth that there is not only "a reward of debt," but also "of grace," Rom. iv. 4. The reward of debt is bestowed on account of the perfection of the work, which obligeth the Lord to bestow on his servant the promised recompence: the reward of grace is bestowed in consequence of certain endeavours, and a certain defective work, from kindness, and it is of more value than the work, and is therefore not merited. Say not, How can this be a reward? for thou shouldest not inquire wisely concerning this. Can any man "buy without money, and without price?" yet this is asserted, Isaiah lv. 1, there can then be a reward of grace. Although a son owes his father obedience, his father can nevertheless reward him from kindness; especially if his obedience be not perfect, and nevertheless sincere. Thus also the Lord, when he beholds the sincere endeavours of his children to please him by good, although defective works, rewards them. Is the recompence of God from grace called a reward without reason? no: for as a proper reward is bestowed in consequence of a promise upon the work, as it encourageth the worker, sweetens the labour, and follows the work, so also is the reward according to grace bestowed.

They will nevertheless have that God bestows a reward of merit and debt upon works, since "the few at Sardis, who had not defiled their garments, should walk with the Saviour in white, because they were worthy," Rev. iii. 4. But their works were not worthy of this, for they should be "washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb," Rev. xii. 14. But their persons were worthy of it, because they were "found" in Christ, and so were "perfect in him," ac-

according to Phil. iii. 9. Coll. ii. 10. And their good works were evidences of this, since "they had not defiled their garments," and so "he will reward according to works," as evidences of a person's good state, agreeably to the words of Christ and of Paul, Matt. xvi. 27. Rom. iii. 6, 8.

"Was Abraham justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" as James asks, James ii. 21. This doth not militate against us, because it cannot militate against Paul, who had said, that "Abraham was not justified by works." Rom. iv. From which nominal Christians took occasion to boast largely of their faith, and conceived that if they had faith, it was enough, although they had not works. James sets himself against these, and he shows that faith without works is not good, and that it must be manifested by works: in order to demonstrate this to them, he alleges the example of Abraham, who was justified by works, when he had offered his son Isaac. And he speaks not therefore of the justification of Abraham as a sinner, as Paul doth, Rom. iv. but as a godly person, by which the Lord God declares of him to his posterity, that he had proved himself to be a righteous and godly person. Abraham was justified by faith, before he had offered his son, for so it is said Gen. xv. 6. "Abraham believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness." But when he had offered his Son, it appeared, and God declared in consequence of his work, and because he feared him, that he was righteous: the Lord said, Gen. xxii. 12, "For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy Son, thine only son from me."

III. When our adversaries can do no more, and we have disarmed them, they betake themselves to slandering, reproaching and scoffing, saying, that the doctrine of justification without works "makes men careless and profane." But why need we regard this? it is indeed an ancient slander, which was cast also upon Paul's doctrine of justification in his time, but which was manfully opposed and repelled by him. See Rom. iii. 8. vi. 1. Our adversaries show thus, that they are in their temper exceedingly like Ishmael, who scoffed at the freeborn Isaac, who was intitled to the inheritance by promise. But that we may show them that our doctrine cannot justly be reproached in this manner, we say with the instructor, that it doth not make men careless and profane, but exceedingly serious, fervent and godly, for no doctrine excites and influenceth more than this to zealous godliness, as we will show at large upon the thirty second Lord's day. We say no more at present, than "that it is impossible, that those who are implanted into Christ by

a true faith, should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness." It is frequently declared in the word of God, that they who are justified are implanted and ingrafted into Christ, and thus most intimately united to him, as the graft is united to the stock. Being thus united and ingrafted into him, "they partake of the root and fatness of that olive tree," Rom. ix. 47. Is it now possible that they should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness? the Saviour saith, John xv. 5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit," If our doctrine make men careless and profane, then the doctrine of the legalist ought to make men exceedingly zealous and godly; but how doth this appear, when they are so ignorant, wanton and exceedingly riotous on their holydays so called, unless we will acknowledge that it is godliness to present God with a certain number of mumbled prayers, paternosters, avemarys, with hearing masses, abstaining from meats, neglecting the body, and I know not what other bodily exercises; but "these things are not of any profit, but only a satisfying of the flesh," Coll. ii. 23. And what is the Socinian and Arminian godliness? is it a "worshipping of God in the Spirit?" no, for they "rejoice not in Christ Jesus, but have confidence in the flesh." See Phil. iii. 3. The whole morality of those men doth not exceed the decent conversation of the most moral heathens. And how can they say that our doctrine renders men careless and profane? this truly the doctrine of the Hagarenes, the hirelings, and the servants who labor for a reward, doth, and no other. Have not the Papists proffered for sale indulgences of sins, heaven and all that is holy? what will induce me to pursue sanctification, if my money, my skill in reckonin^g bodily exercises can obtain for me the pardon of my sins, and every other advantage? Every legalist teaches that a man may be perfect in this life, if he will only exert his free will: why then are not all those men perfect? is it not because they conceive that they can offer to God a righteousness by their own works for their sins, or that he will wink at them, if they only perform penance, and amend their conduct? See to what all this tends.

APPLICATION.

Hearers, ye who attend to these things, will any one of you contradict us? and will he not manifest his aversion from that impi-

ous opinion, that a man is justified by his works? I believe he will. But do ye know that the most of you, while they know not what they do, walk in the paths of the legalist, and seek their righteousness by their works; and thus justify by their conduct, the false doctrine of our adversaries? it is certain, that all men are by nature children of the covenant of works, born under the law, and after the flesh, and that they do therefore seek life by their own works. Our living under the ministration of the covenant of grace, of the gospel and of the Spirit, doth not translate us into the state of grace, and into Christ, and it doth not furnish us with a justifying faith; and we cannot all say, that "we are not under the law, but under grace," as Paul speaks of believers only, Rom. vi. 14. Now it cannot be otherwise, but that those, who are yet under the covenant of works, under the law, and after the flesh, must work agreeably to their nature and state, and therefore seek righteousness by works. Luther, considering this, said that every man had a Popish priest in his own bosom.

Many will not believe this concerning themselves, because they are not Papists; but suffer me to discover it to you, that ye may have a palpable demonstration of it.

1. Ye know that ye have sinned against God, and have deserved death and hell; why are ye not concerned and disturbed at this, and fearful that the wrath of God will light on you every moment? is it not because ye think that ye are not so ungodly as this and that person, that ye do many things, are civil, honest, devout, and zealous after your manner? have ye committed a sin, for which your conscience reproves you, ye soothe yourselves with a little sorrow, and with a purpose to amend your conduct, and to repent, and upon this ye bless yourselves, and think that God will forgive your sin. Is it not then your own doing and work, that renders you so unconcerned, and banishes fear out of your hearts? do Papists seek righteousness by their works otherwise than ye do? Surely the Pharisee did not act otherwise, Luke xviii. 11, 12.

2. Ye say, we know indeed that we must not be justified by our works, but only by the merits of Christ. It is true, ye know this, but doth this knowledge influence you so, that it effects a change of your condition and behaviour, that it drives you, from a concern on account of your damnable condition, out of yourselves to the Mediator; and that ye accept of him and his righteousness truly, heartily, and frequently, and that to be sanctified, as well as justified and saved, and are ye urged thereby to "pursue after perfection," with Paul? Phil. iii. 7—14. Is it true, that ye are implanted into Christ

by a sincere faith, and that it is impossible for you not to bring forth fruits of thankfulness; ye are then surely justified by his merits. But how few are there, who conduct in this manner! Many have heard others speak concerning Christ, and his merits, and they depend upon this, especially when they are moral, civil and devout, thinking that though their works are not perfect, they will not however be condemned on account of that imperfection; that God will wink at their defects, as the Socinians talk; or that Christ will supply that which they lack with his merits; and so they have a part of the righteousness, as the Papists speak. In this manner the Jews also had "a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge; for they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God," Rom. x. 2, 3. Once more:

3. To what doth it lead many of you, that they know that they are not justified by their works, but only by the merits of Christ? Our doctrine doth not make men careless and profane, but your imagination, that ye are justified through Christ, although ye have never truly passed into him, nor been implanted into him, makes you careless and profane. If ye did not imagine this, but were convinced of your damnable condition, would ye not be more engaged, and bestir yourselves more for your souls, that ye might not by any means perish, but be saved? But now ye have heard of Christ and his merits only with the hearing of the ear, therefore ye leave all to him without concern, and busy yourselves only with the things which are visible, and with your lusts, yea, many indulge in excess of riot, every one for his own ends. And when they must die, then Christ must save them, and take them to heaven. But is not this "making Christ a minister of sin?" Gal. ii. 17, is it not allowing the slander of our adversaries, when they rail at our doctrine, and say that it makes men careless and profane? And tell us, what is the reason of your reproaching and slandering as legalists and Pharisees, persons who separate themselves from the world, and pursue a different conduct from the generality, and who endeavour to shine as lights in a crooked and perverse generation? is it not, because their behaviour convinces you? because ye cannot endure such goads in your sides, and such thorns in your eyes? because ye wish to become careless and profane by this doctrine, at least, because ye endeavour to persuade yourselves that men need not be so precise? What think ye, shall a person, who is implanted into Christ; conduct only like a civil person, and a man of common morality? ought not the image and Spirit of Christ to shine forth in him? And why do

ye look upon such persons as hypocrites, legalists and Pharisees? is it not not on account of their modest appearance, their discourse, which is agreeable to godly persons, and seasoned with salt, or their decent behaviour? must justified persons then conform themselves to the world, be loose and disorderly? Ye will say, No, but we hate their hypocrisy, and those outward things are the whole of their religion and merit. How do ye know this? do ye know the heart? no, but ye are not willing that their behaviour should shame and condemn you; therefore "judge not, that ye be not judged," according to Matt. vii. 1.

Let each one now inquire how he conducts with respect to these matters. Do ye rest in your own works? is your religious zeal the foundation of your hope, and would it appear strange to you, if God should not bestow heaven upon you, and do ye with the Jews "exact all your labours?" Isaiah lviii. 3. Know then that ye are yet under the law and the broken covenant of works, and therefore "under the curse," Gal. iii. 10. And so God "will not clear you," according to Exod. xxxiv. 7. Do not flatter yourselves with the merits of Christ, for ye have surely no interest in them by an active faith, which would implant you into him; for ye would then reckon all your own doings as loss and dung; but ye are now so exceedingly pleased with your own works; and therefore ye are yet without the Mediator; "Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace," Gal. v. 4. When God will enter into judgment with you, consider whether all your works will then justify you.

Do ye say, We trust not in our works, but in the merits of Christ through faith? But are ye implanted into Christ by faith, and do ye therefore bring forth fruits of thankfulness? this is well; but do ye think that works will not avail to save you, but faith only and do ye therefore live as ye list, ye are then a reproach to our holy doctrine, and "the name of God is blasphemed through you, as it is written," Rom. ii. 24. Your faith is without works, is a dead faith, as James speaks James ii. 17. Verily, your outward ado, and saying, Lord, Lord, will not procure you an entrance into the kingdom of God: "Faith only, which worketh by love, avails in Christ Jesus," Gal. v. 6.

O that ye would all of you see your misery with anxiety, and that ye cannot deliver yourselves, that ye might cry out with concern. "What shall we do?" as those did, Acts ii. 37. Rest not, before ye are in the Son of God; he is willing and able to bestow a sufficient righteousness on you. Hear him cry to you, Isaiah xlv. 22 "Look

unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth : Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength : to him shall men come."

But, believers, who, according to your evidences exhibited in the former Lord's day, have indeed been justified before God freely, without works, by faith, and who must still daily seek justification and reconciliation for your daily offences, this leaven of working with your own righteousness is not wholly purged out of you, any more than your natural depravity is wholly rooted out of you : for ye also are frequently driven to pursue your own righteousness. This is evident, (a) because ye often dare not believe, that ye have grace, and are justified, unless ye have just such a measure of holiness. If ye depended only upon the righteousness of Christ, would ye suffer yourselves to be shaken on account of the degree of your sanctification ? it would humble you, that ye had not made a greater progress, but it would not cause you to reject your state, since your justified state is not founded upon any measure of sanctification, but upon the perfect righteousness of the Mediator. (b) It appears also from this, that a greater or less progress in virtue causes you to draw near more or less boldly to the throne. When ye have done your duty tolerably well, ye will then venture to draw near ; but when ye have behaved improperly, ye then wander about, and seek for excuses, only in order to remain aloof : and when ye dare not neglect to draw near, ye are possessed with a prejudice, that God will not hear you, ye dare not persevere, but make short work, and wait until ye have behaved yourselves better. It is proper to go to God, with a holy awe, with a deep humility and shame, on account of your misbehaviour ; but to forbear altogether to draw near, or to draw near only with such an unbelieving trembling, when we have misbehaved ourselves, and courageously only when we have done well, evidences that we found our right to draw near, not upon the righteousness of Christ, but on our own works. (c) This is also evident, because men are often urged to holiness by fear, as if they stood near mount Horeb. "The Lord hath delivered you, that ye might serve him without fear," Luke i. 74. But a slavish fear, proceeding from the covenant of works, sometimes possesses the soul, and urgeth her to do this or that, as a command of God, as if every misdeed subjected her to the curse. Yea, this renders the soul so scrupulous and anxious, that she sometimes looks upon certain actions to be sinful, which a Christian may perform freely. (d) This is still more evident, because men sometimes pursue holiness, in order to seek and find rest for their souls. They have made a breach in their spirits by

sin, this they will heal, what do they do? embrace the righteousness and atoning blood of Christ, in order to pacify their minds? no, they will bewail it, and reform, and thus their work, and not Christ will afford them rest. Further, (e) Men dare not embrace the proffered and promised grace, and Christ, because they are not so contrite as they imagine beside the word of God that they ought to be. And thus they attend to their own doings, and not to the perfect righteousness of Christ, and they do not surrender themselves to him, as altogether wretched, and seek his favour only. It appears also, (f) because they sometimes become impatient, when they do not obtain their desire, after great earnestness: what doth this denote but that they imagine, that their earnestness obliges God to be favourable to them.

But God doth not approve of all this self-tormenting, it dishonours Jesus, it keeps the soul from her rest, and confounds the grace and righteousness of God and Christ with our unclean and filthy works: "If it be by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work;" thus speaks Paul, Rom. xi. 6. A Christian must part with all that is his own, he must count it loss and dung, that he may be found wholly in Christ: he must be stripped, naked and bare, as one who is dead, and he must surrender all that is his own, as one who is become a bankrupt, that he may be completely clothed and enriched with the righteousness of Christ only. All that he hath in himself is but rags and tatters, it can neither clothe nor feed him.

Shall a Christian then, as if he were not obliged to any duty, sit still, and be careless, and think now I have nothing to do. Christ hath done all for me? No, this is impossible: his looking off from his own righteousness doth not teach him this. Justification by the righteousness of Christ alone through faith obligeth him to prize this truth, to thank the Lord for it, to conduct himself humbly and worthily of this truth by a diligent pursuit of holiness, which we have urged on the foregoing Lord's day. But we must see that we pursue sanctification, as those who are implanted into Christ, and therefore,

1. As justified persons in him by faith: for how can sanctification be acceptable to God, as long as he hath aught against the soul on account of her guilt, by which the Father is justly incensed against her? How can she draw near him boldly with her sacrifice of thanksgiving, except she be delivered from doubts, and able to acquit herself? We must "draw near with a true heart, and a full

assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water," Heb. x. 22. It behooves you therefore, believers, to labour first and mostly for justification, in order to pursue sanctification therefrom. Endeavour then to obtain an assurance, that ye have been already justified before God, as sinners, and have thus a right to request sanctification on account of the merits of the Lord Jesus: for since he is made righteousness to you, he is also made sanctification to you," as Paul saith, 1 Cor. i. 30. Labour then, after any misbehaviour in future, not first and mostly to amend your conduct, but to be justified and reconciled to the Father, and to make your peace with him by accepting your Surety, and pleading on your title to him before the throne, that ye may pursue sanctification from such a justified, pacified and reconciled mind, and thus begin your former holy conversation anew.

2. Pursue sanctification by all means from, and in union with Christ: "Your life must be hidden with Christ in God," according to Coll. iii. 3. Believers being implanted into Christ, bring forth fruits of thankfulness: "Having been planted together with him in the likeness of his death, we must also be so in the likeness of his resurrection," as the apostle requireth, Rom. vi. 5, "Our good conversation is in Christ," as Peter saith, 1 Peter iii. 6. It must necessarily be bitter fruit that grows upon a wild tree, but the fruit of a grafted tree is pleasant. No action can be agreeable to God but that which is performed in, and from the union of the soul with Christ: "The fruits of righteousness are to the praise and glory of God" only "through Jesus Christ," as Paul teacheth, Philip i. 11. Hear also what Peter saith, 1 Peter ii. 5. "Spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Ye must therefore not reckon it enough that ye have been implanted into Christ by faith, but ye must also abide in and near him continually, and operatively.

3. Strive to do all your works by his Spirit, influence, virtue and power, as the graft bears no fruit, unless it derive its sap from the tree. As long as we exert, fatigue and afflict ourselves without the Spirit, in order to do our duty, we will never perform aught that is acceptable to God: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts," Zech. iv. 6. We have shown on the eighth and ninth question how often the soul labours in her own and not in Christ's strength, and thus mars her work. If the soul shall labour rightly, she must abide near and by her stock Jesus, sucking incessantly through the pipes and conduits of the promises

from his fulness, grace for grace. Therefore the Saviour saith to you, John xv. 4, 5, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing."

4. Look nevertheless at the reward, in order to encourage and animate you in your work. The Lord offers a crown at the end of your race, to urge and induce you to strive for it, namely, an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance, which fadeth not away. When "the prophet Azariah said to king Asa, and to all Judah and Benjamin, Be strong, and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded: Asa encouraged himself with all the people" to effect a great reformation and amendment among themselves, 2 Chron. xvi. Moses having respect to the recompence of the reward, esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure in Egypt," Heb. xi. 26. The Lord is in himself worthy of your universal obedience, faith, love, fear and service; he hath also deserved all this at your hands: yea, believers, ye are yourselves earnestly desirous to please him, and pleasing him is a sufficient reward for you. The Lord will nevertheless be abundantly good to you, since he will excite you by a reward. Improve this therefore by stirring yourselves up thereby to greater activity in your way. Look not however on the reward, as an equivalent compensation of your work, but have respect to it, as the fruit of the righteousness of Christ, which was purchased for you by him, that it should be given to you upon your work; for "eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ," Rom. vi. 23.

Do ye lament that your work is so imperfect, it doth not please the Lord yet to render you perfect, that ye may seek your perfection in the righteousness of his Son. How good is it therefore, that it is not necessary for you to seek your righteousness in your works, but in him, who hath obtained a perfect righteousness for you, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in you," according to Rom. viii. 3, 4. Do others scoff at you, on account of your zeal, why should ye regard what the despicable slaves, the Hagarines and Ishmaelites do? Look upon it to be of greater importance what your Saviour saith, Matt. v. 11, 12. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Say not with Asaph, Psalm lxxiii. 13, 14. "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency; for

all the day long have I been plagued; and chastened every morning." For would ye, though ye should suffer ever so much, exchange your condition with an ungodly person, who enjoys the greatest property? although it were even so, that the condition of the ungodly was better in this life than that of the godly, will not their comforts end with their lives, and will not their sorrows begin then? But how will it be then with you? Peter informs you, 1 Peter v. 4. "When the chief shepherd shall appear, then shall ye receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away." Amen.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

















