REFORMED SYMBOLS

INTRODUCTION
and
NOTES ON THE
HEIDELBERG
CATECHISM

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Preface

For the most part, this booklet constitutes a reprint of notes dictated by the late Rev. Herman Hoeksema for his classes in Reformed Symbols.

A few explanatory remarks are in order concerning the sermon sketches on the Heidelberg Catechism:

First. This set of outlines dates from the early years of our seminary and was reproduced from class dictation by the students at that time.

Second. The original set of notes covered only Lord’s Days 1-48. I have completed the set from my notes.

Third. These sketches (and they are intended to be no more than sketches, not complete outlines) were to serve the double purpose of a study aid for the course in Symbols and a homiletical aid for the fledgling minister. In the latter sense, they were not intended to be slavishly followed, but to serve as a model, or pattern, of sermonizing on the Catechism.

Finally. I believe that here and there in the outlines it will be evident that there was development and correction in the author’s later thought. I have not indicated these points specifically, nor made any changes. The student may, for comparison, refer to the author’s large work on the Heidelberg Catechism, The Triple Knowledge, published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association.

— H.C. Hoeksema
Definition

A symbol is a statement by a church or a group of churches containing a declaration of what such a church or group of churches believes to be the truth of the Word of God.

This definition may be said to be composed of the meanings of the three words that usually are employed to express this idea. We refer to the words: symbol, confession, and creed.

A symbol is really a sign. So we can speak, for example, of a flag or a banner being the sign by which one nation is everywhere distinguished from all other countries. In this way also we can say that a symbol is a sign representing the faith of the church in general over against all the world, or of a particular church over against all other churches.

The word confession means literally “to speak with,” and indicates that the church expresses its faith in unison with one another and with its head, Jesus Christ.

Creed, a word derived from the Latin credere, “to believe,” expresses that its content is the object of the faith of the church.

Taking these three ideas in one, we arrive at the definition given above.

The question arises: how does a symbol originate? In answer to this question, our attention must be called to three steps.

First, the truth of the Word of God reflects in the consciousness of the church organically. This operation is the work of the Holy Spirit of God, accomplished not in any individual apart from the whole of the church, but in the church as organism.

Second, under various influences — of attack, persecution, etc. — that truth is definitely formulated in the mind of the church.

Third, when the time is ripe, this truth, in one way or another, is contracted into a brief statement and expressed in a symbol, a confession.

The Value of Symbols

As far as the value of symbols is concerned, we call attention to the following:

First, they are the means by which the church as a whole can express her faith over against all the world, or by which a group of churches can express their faith over against all other churches. It is, of course, the divine calling of the church to be a living testimony of the grace of God, to let her light shine everywhere, and to give constant expression to what she believes to be the truth revealed in the Word of God.

Second, they are the means to preserve the truth as it is delivered down the line of generations and through all the ages. This is, of course, in perfect harmony with the entire idea of the covenant.

Third, they are the bond of union upon the basis of which churches of one belief can unite.

Fourth, they are wonderful means of instruction.
The Relation of Confessions to Scripture

Even as confessions are historically a reflection of the truth of the Word of God in the believing consciousness of the church, so their permanent criterion is holy Scripture. Confessions and traditions, creeds and symbols must always be based on the Word of God. They may never be placed on a par with holy Writ, and the latter must always be the light in which the confessions must continually be judged. As soon as the church fails to do the latter, confessionism, dead intellectualism, is the result. This, however, does not imply that any member of the church ought to proceed individually in this matter. The confession is not the possession of the individual, but of the church as a whole. Of that church the individual is only a member. He cannot change the churches’ symbol at will. Neither may he simply express his disagreement and leave that particular church. But if he has objections against the confession of the church, it is his calling to make a serious attempt to persuade the church of its error, assuming, of course, that the individuals’ objections are correct. He must make such an attempt in the proper way, that is, along the line of the institution of the church. Again, in the Reformed churches, that proper way is the way of consistory, classis, and synod. If he persuades the church, it is well; if he fails, his way is open to seek other church connections. However this may be, it must always be maintained that the confessions are subject to criticism in the light of the word of God. For this reason a minister preaching from the Heidelberg Catechism should be careful to show the congregation the connection between it and holy Writ, so that the congregation may be sure that their minister is not preaching the word of man, but the Word of God indeed.

Objections Against Creeds

Various objections have been raised against any form of creed and confession. Especially in the modern age it has become the slogan, “Away with creeds.” Many modern churches have inclined their ear to the cry. They have forgotten their proper creeds, changed them, or written alongside of them smaller confessions expressing the merest general doctrines.

The objections commonly brought against creeds are the following:

1) A confession is a human production, and the Bible is sufficient. The church needs nothing else.

It may be replied that historically it is a peculiar fact that very serious objections are raised against creeds when also the contents of the Bible become more and more foreign to the mind of the church. Ignorance of Scripture and its doctrine and opposition to creeds are generally simultaneous. From this it would seem that objectors to creeds are not serious when they claim that Scripture is sufficient.

Secondly, although we too, of course, admit the sufficientia Sacrae Scripturae, yet the connection in which this sufficiency of Scripture is emphasized is false. The statement has no right when used in opposition to creeds. It is used with the same semblance of truth sometimes against the practice and development of theology. “Let us have Scripture,” some individual will say, “and let us set aside all theological sys-
tems.” And the fundamental error of all such reasoning is that it is a denial of the historic-organic development of the church in the world and of the continuous guidance of the Holy Spirit in that historical organism of the body of Christ. It certainly is a sin to set aside the fruit of this guidance of the Holy Spirit in the past. It is the sin of individualism, one of the greatest sins of our day.

In the third place, the church has the calling to confess, also as the organism of the body of Christ, her faith in the midst of the world. The church cannot do that by saying that Scripture is sufficient. For Scripture is no system of truth, neither a compendium of faith; but it is the divinely given source from which the church derives both: the system and the compendium.

2) It is often emphasized that confessions force and bind the conscience.

However, if we view the matter rightly, also this objection fails. Confessions, so we have said, are to be judged in the light of Scripture. The Word of God is the only power that is binding upon the conscience and the heart of man. And as long as a way remains open to the individual member to apply this standard of God’s Word to the confession of his church, his conscience can never be bound by the tenets of men. He is free, except in as far as he voluntarily binds himself by the tie of a certain creed, a tie which he can at any time untie.

3) Especially in our modern age, it is alleged that creeds create divisions. “They are walls of separation between us,” so they say, “and let us break them down.” Conferences are even held of a world-wide nature in order to break down these middle-walls of partition and in order to come to a united Christian church, not even excluding Roman Catholics.

But the conception at the basis of this movement is false. For creeds do not divide the church, but simply express actually existing distinctiveness. And no more than you can change the nationality of any army by downing its flag, or standard, no more do you remove actually existing distinctiveness between different denominations by obliterating the official expressions of such distinctions. All that may be reached by this mistaken movement for union is that the truth itself is impoverished, its contents are generalized, and only a gospel on a thumbnail is left. But it must be remembered that creeds are not the cause, but merely the expression of existing distinctions.

4) The objection is also raised that creeds impede the development of the truth.

This can only be true from the standpoint of dead confessionalism. If the church rests satisfied with the inheritance of the fathers, the creeds that have been delivered to them in the past, it stands to reason that she will no longer develop the truth of the Word of God. The last word has been said. But such is not the right conception of things, neither has the confessing church ever appropriated such a view. And again, provided that Scripture remains a continuous, living source and criterion for our creeds, the latter will be living, growing, and constantly becoming richer and purer in contents.
The Three Forms of Unity

The Reformed churches of the Netherlands, South Africa, and America subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity as their confessions. These are, as we know: the Heidelberg Catechism, the Netherlands or Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordrecht. We will treat only the Heidelberg Catechism in this syllabus, reviewing its history and examining its contents. The other two can be found under separate cover.
History

It is called the Heidelberg Catechism because it was composed in the city of Heidelberg, situated in the Palatinate, of which Frederick III was at the time the Elector. In the Palatinate the Reformation was originally Lutheran in character (about 1546 the first trace of the Reformation appeared in the Palatinate), and the Augsburg Confessions was established as the norm of faith. Under the reign of Frederick III, who succeeded Otto Heinrich in 1559 and was Elector until 1576, a complete reform was accomplished. He himself had become thoroughly Reformed in his own conviction, and it was his desire to establish the Reformed faith in the churches of his dominion. As a basis of the new organization, the Heidelberg Catechism was composed and adopted. For this purpose the Elector Frederick charged Zacharias Ursinus, who was professor of Heidelberg since 1560, and Casper Olevianus, who had been professor in the chair now occupied by Ursinus and who was now minister of the Heidelberg church, to compose such a book of instruction, developing the Reformed line of doctrine. They were aided in their work by fellow faculty members of Ursinus and fellow consistory members of Olevianus. And it is no more than probable that they used as sources Calvin’s Catechism (1541), the catechism of Laski, Bullinger, and of Monheim.

The contents of the Heidelberg Catechism must probably be chiefly ascribed to Ursinus, while the final redaction as well as the translation from the original Latin into high German are from Olevianus. It was accepted by the Synod of Heidelberg at the beginning of the year 1563. Its original edition numbered 128 questions and answers and was not divided into 52 Lord’s Days. The second edition, which appeared in the same year, added the 80th Question and Answer, dealing with the difference between the Lord’s Supper and the popish mass, most probably at the suggestion of Calvin. In the same year the Heidelberg Catechism was edited twice more, and the fourth edition is the official text of the Heidelberger as we now possess it. It was soon introduced into the Netherlands, where it was highly esteemed and adopted by many particular, or provincial, synods, finally ratified by the Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-1619, and officially accepted as one of the Forms of Unity of the Reformed Churches.

Contents

The Heidelberg Catechism is, in general, divided into three main parts, the well-known parts of sin and misery, deliverance, and gratitude.

This division shows that the Heidelberg Catechism does not follow the dogmatical line of the truth, but the subjective, practical, spiritual line. For the same reason it is throughout direct and personal. It addresses the conscious Christian, face-to-face; and it does so frequently in the singular. And that conscious Christian supplies the answers to every question. He does so as the truth of the Word of God is reflected experientially in his believing consciousness.

Furthermore, the Catechism is divided into 52 Lord’s Days, undoubtedly with a view to being used especially on the Sabbath day. These 52 Lord’s Days, after an introductory chapter, treat in 129
questions and answers the following subjects:

1. The Law as a means unto the knowledge of misery.
2. The creation of man and his original righteousness.
3. His fall, and the fall in him of the organism of the human race.
4. His condition after the fall.
5. His liability to punishment, that punishment itself consisting of death in all its significance.
6. The impossibility of man’s saving himself.
7. Faith in the Mediator of God and man as the only means whereby God saves His people.
8. Next it follows along the line of the Apostolic Confession the object and contents of that faith, and treats:
   a. The Trinity.
   b. Creation.
   c. Providence.
   d. The names Jesus, Christ, Lord, and Son of God, and in connection with these, Christ’s natures and office.
   e. Christ’s suffering all His life and at the cross, in the grave, in hell. In this connection a chapter is devoted to the significance and meaning and fruit of that suffering for His people.
   f. In Lord’s Day 17 it begins with the state of exaltation and treats of His resurrection, His ascension, His sitting at the right hand of God, and His return to judgment.
   g. It speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit, of the church, of the communion of saints, and of the final resurrection and eternal life.
9. In Lord’s Day 23 it asks the question, what profit we derive from believing all this and speaks of justification by faith.
10. It then speaks of the means of grace — of the Word, of Baptism, and of the Lord’s Supper — and it closes the second main division with a few questions and answers concerning the keys of the kingdom.
11. In the third part it has a few introductory questions concerning the idea of gratitude and concerning conversion in the sense of sanctification.
12. Then it develops the meaning of the law as the rule of the Christian’s life of gratitude, a discussion which closes with the well-known confession that even the very holiest have but a small beginning of the new obedience.
13. This third main division is concluded by a discussion of the subject of prayer as the chief part of thankfulness, its significance and its contents, this last discussion following the order and content of the Pater Noster.
Brief Outlines of the Lord’s Days

LORD’S DAY 1

Question 1. What is thy only comfort in life and death?

Answer. That I with body and soul [I Cor. 6:19, 20], both in life and death, am not my own [Rom. 14:7-9], but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ [I Cor. 3:23]; who, with His precious blood [I Pet. 1:18, 19], hath fully satisfied for all my sins [I John 1:7], and delivered me from all the power of the devil [I John 3:8; Heb. 2:14, 15]; and so preserves me [John 6:39; 10:28, 29] that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head [Luke 21:18; Matt. 10:30]; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation [Rom. 8:28], and therefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life [II Cor. 1:22; 5:5], and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him [Rom. 8:14; 7:22].

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

Answer. Three [Luke 24:47]: the first, how great my sins and miseries are [I Cor. 6:10, 11; John 9:41; Rom. 3:10, 19]; the second how I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries [John 17:3]; the third, how I shall express my gratitude to God for such deliverance [Eph. 5:8-10].

Lord’s Day 1:
The Christian’s Comfort in Life and Death

I. Its contents
A. General meaning of comfort.
B. The principle of the Christian’s comfort is belonging to Christ.
C. The specific elements of that comfort:
   1. That he is delivered from guilt.
   2. That he is saved from the power of the devil.
   3. That he is safely kept over against all his enemies by the power of his Master.

II. The assurance of this comfort
A. Its contents revealed in the Word.
B. Its testimony wrought in our hearts by the Spirit.
C. Its possession characterized by a sincere willingness to serve the Lord.

III. The parts of this comfort
A. A threefold knowledge:
   1. Misery.
   2. Deliverance.
   3. Gratitude
B. Not successive, but simultaneous:
   1. The knowledge of the Christian contains these three elements at the same time:
      a. He is always conscious of his enemies — sin, the world, Satan — and for a time must walk in the midst of them in the flesh.
      b. By faith he is always conscious of the presence of his Master, and hence of his salvation and his perfect safety.
      c. From the consciousness of these two there always develops, through faith working in love, a desire to walk in gratitude before his new Lord.
   2. This threefold knowledge remains with him till death. His enemies never leave him. But the Lord to whom he belongs is always present. Hence, his comfort is an all-comprehensive one; a comfort in life and death, for body and soul.
LORD’S DAY 2

Question 3. Whence knowest thou thy misery?
Answer. Out of the law of God [Rom. 3:20].

Question 4. What doth the law of God require of us?
Answer. Christ teaches us that briefly, Matthew 22:37-40, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength [Luke 10:27]. This is the first and the great commandment; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Question 5. Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?
Answer. In no wise [Rom. 3:10; I John 1:8]; for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor [Rom. 8:7; Tit. 3:3].

Lord’s Day 2:
The Knowledge of our Misery

I. What is meant by it.
   A. The Christian’s misery: not natural, but spiritual.
   B. The knowledge of that misery.
      1. The spiritual principle of that knowledge is the love of God. Bearing fruit in the spiritual knowledge of sin is characterized by sorrow after God.
      2. The object of that knowledge is, in principle, God. In the light of the knowledge of God, the object is ourselves.
      3. The fruit of that knowledge is:
         a. Self-condemnation.
         b. Humiliation.
         c. Crying for grace.

II. Whence it is obtained.
   A. From the law of God, not in its external form, but in its inner, spiritual principle — love.
   B. As a source of the knowledge of misery, the law reveals what I must be. The law curses when I am not what I should be.

III. How it is obtained.
   A. Not by the natural man. He does not know the law. And he does not want to know the law.
   B. But by grace. The love of God is spread abroad in our hearts. That love causes us to know the law and ourselves. It causes us to agree with the sentence of the law and to long to be like the law.

IV. The contents of the knowledge of our misery:
   A. The law demands love.
   B. You find within yourselves the very opposite.
**LORD’S DAY 3**

**Question 6. Did God then create man so wicked and perverse?**

**Answer.** By no means; but God created man good [Gen. 1:31], and after His own image [Gen. 1:26, 27; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24], in true righteousness and holiness, that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him, and live with Him in eternal happiness to glorify and praise Him [Eph. 1:6; I Cor. 6:20].

**Question 7. Whence then proceeds this depravity of human nature?**

**Answer.** From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise [Gen. 3:6; Rom. 5:12, 18, 19]; hence our nature is become so corrupt, that we are all conceived and born in sin [Ps. 51:5; Gen. 5:3].

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

**Answer.** Indeed we are [Gen. 6:5; Job 14:4; 15:14, 16]; except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God [John 3:5; Eph. 2:5].

Lord’s Day 3:  
The Historical Cause of Our Misery

I. Not in creation.
   A. Man was created good.
   B. Man was created after God’s image.
      1. Meaning of that image.
      2. Elements of that image.
      3. Relation of man to God by virtue of that image (covenant relation).

II. But in Adam’s fall.
   A. Adam.
      1. In relation to God: friend-servant.
      2. In relation to us:
         a. Representative head.
         b. First father.
         c. Organic root.
      3. In relation to the world:
         a. King
         b. Of the *earthly* creation.
   B. Adam’s fall.
      1. Adam’s free will.
         a. Not absolutely free.
         b. But ethically free.
            1) He was not neutral.
            2) But facing God with his whole being.
            3) And with the power to turn himself about.
      2. Adam’s temptation.
         a. Paradise and the trees; significance of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
         b. Satan — the serpent.
         c. His temptation.
   3. Character of the fall
      a. The breach of the covenant on man’s part.
      b. Rooted in hatred, pride, and the lust of the flesh.

III. Result.
   A. For Adam.
      1. Spiritual separation from God.
      2. Corruption of his own nature.
   B. For us.
      1. By virtue of his being our head: guilty. His sin is ours. We are incapable of doing any good, inclined to all evil, and unable and unwilling to deliver ourselves.
      2. By virtue of his being the root of the organism, his sin is a root sin which bears fruit in the actual sins of all men and is not complete till the measure of iniquity is full.
**LORD’S DAY 4**

*Question 9.* Doth not God then do injustice to man, by requiring form him in His law, that which he cannot perform?

*Answer.* Not at all [Eccl. 7:29]; for God made man capable of performing it [John 8:44; II Cor. 11:3]; but man, by the instigation of the devil [Gen. 3:4, 7], and his own willful disobedience, deprived himself and all his posterity of those divine gifts [Rom. 5:12].

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

*Answer.* By no mean; but is terribly displeased s [Ps. 5:5] with our original as well as actual sins; and will punish them [Rom. 1:18; Deut. 28:15; Heb. 9:27] 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” [Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10].

*Question 11.* Is not God then also merciful?

*Answer.* God is indeed merciful [Ex. 34:6], but also just [Ex. 20:5; Job 34:10, 11]; therefore His justice requires that sin which is committed against the most high majesty of God be also punished [Ps. 5:5, 6] with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment [Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23] of body and soul.

**Lord’s Day 4:**

*God’s Righteousness Over Against the Impotent Sinner*

**I.** In maintaining the law.

**A.** God’s righteousness in general.

1. The question here put.
   a. God demands that I love Him.
   b. I, His creature, am devoid of love.
   c. Is not God’s demand unrighteous?

2. General answer: God is righteous.
   a. His being is righteousness.
   b. Hence, all His work is righteousness.
   c. Hence, God’s righteousness must be our starting-point in answering this question.

**B.** In relation to this particular question:

1. God gave man all things necessary to keep the law.
2. Man squandered God’s gifts.
3. Hence, man is still responsible for these gifts and the keeping of the law. God is righteous in maintaining His demand.

**II.** In banishing the sinner:

**A.** Conception in modern times of punishment.

1. God is love.
2. Love cannot punish.
3. Hence, God will not punish the sinner.

**B.** True conception.

1. God loves Himself above all.
2. He is terrible in His wrath that is rooted in that self-love.
3. Hence, punishment is inevitable.

**III.** In manifesting His mercy.

**A.** God is merciful.

1. What is mercy?
2. That mercy is an attribute of God’s Being.

**B.** But with maintenance of justice.

1. God is simple: His attributes are one in Him.
2. Hence, His mercy is essentially justice.
3. Therefore His mercy can only be revealed in the way of justice.
Reformed Symbols/Notes on the Heidelberg Catechism

Lord’s Day 5

LORD’S DAY 5

Question 12. 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 favor?
Answer. God will have His justice satisfied [Ex. 20:5]: and therefore we must make this full satisfaction, either by ourselves or by another [Deut. 24:16; II Cor. 5:14, 15].

Question 13. Can we ourselves then make this satisfaction?
Answer. By no means [Job 9:2, 3; 15:14-16]; but on the contrary we daily increase our debt [Matt. 6:12; Is. 64:6].

Question 14. Can there be found anywhere one who is a mere creature, able to satisfy for us?
Answer. None; for, first, God will not punish any other creature for the sin which man hath committed [Ezek. 18:20]; and further, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God’s eternal wrath against sin, so as to deliver others from it [Rev. 5:3; Ps. 49:8, 9].

Question 15. What sort of a mediator and deliverer then must we seek for?
Answer. For one who is very man [I Cor. 15:21; Rom. 8:3], and perfectly righteous; and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is also very God [Rom. 9:5; Is. 7:14].

Lord’s Day 5: The Possibility of Salvation

I. Only through justice
   A. God’s justice.
   B. Satisfaction of that justice.

II. Not in any creature.
   A. Not in ourselves.
      1. We are not only guilty.
      2. We are also corrupt.
      3. Therefore we can only daily increase our debt.

   B. Not in any other creature.
      1. Cannot suffer human punishment.
      2. Cannot bear divine wrath.
      3. Cannot deliver us and give us life.

III. Only in Immanuel.
   A. A real righteous man.
   B. Very God.
   C. Hence, the condition of the sinner postulates the necessity of the incarnation unto salvation.
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LORD’S DAY 6

Question 16. Why must He be very man, and also perfectly righteous?
Answer. Because the justice of God requires that the same human nature which hath sinned should likewise make satisfaction for sin [Rom. 5:12, 15]; and one, who is himself a sinner cannot satisfy for others [I Pet. 3:18; Is. 53:11].

Question 17. Why must He in one person be also very God?
Answer. That He might, by the power of His Godhead, sustain in His human nature the burden of God’s wrath [I Pet. 3:18; Acts 2:24; Is. 53:8]; and might obtain for, and restore to us, righteousness and life [I John 1:2; Jer. 23:6; II Tim. 1:10; John 6:51].

Question 18. Who then is that Mediator, who is in one person both very God and a real righteous man?
Answer. Our Lord Jesus Christ [Matt. 1:23; I Tim. 3:16; Luke 2:11]: “who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” [I Cor. 1:30].

Question 19. Whence knowest thou this?
Answer. From the holy gospel, which God Himself first revealed in Paradise [Gen. 3:15]; and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets [Gen. 22:17, 18; 28:14; Rom. 1:2; Heb. 1:1; John 5:46], and represented by the sacrifices [Heb. 10:7, 8] and other ceremonies of the law; and, lastly, has fulfilled it by His only begotten Son [Rom. 10:4; Heb. 13:8].

Lord’s Day 6:
Immanuel, the Mediator of God and Man

I. What he must be.
A. Righteous man.
   1. He must be very man.
      a. Not created.
      b. But from us.
   2. He must be righteous man.
      a. Not personally under our guilt.
      b. Neither partaking of our corruption.
   3. The reason.
      a. He must bear our punishment.
      b. He must impart life to us. Hence, he must have human life to impart.
B. Very God in one person.
   1. Because He must bear infinite wrath. A mere creature could never do this and live.
   2. Because He must pay an infinite debt.
   3. Because He must be able to impart life.

II. Who He is.
A. The full image of the Mediator.
   1. The catechism places Him before us at once.
   2. This in accord with the operation of faith.
      a. Faith appropriates Him first.
      b. Then all His benefits, growing in His riches.
B. A gift of God.
   1. In God’s counsel.
   2. In time.
      a. Sent by the Father.
      b. Self-surrender of the Son.
      c. Prepared by the Spirit.
C. For our salvation.
   1. He is our salvation; what we need to be saved is in Him.
      a. Wisdom.
      b. Righteousness.
      c. Sanctification.
      d. Full redemption.
   2. All this He is made unto us.
      a. The elect speaking here through the believers.
b. For their everlasting glory.

III. How He is revealed.
   A. In the holy gospel.
      1. Developing throughout the Old Testament.
      2. Manifest in the Son.
      3. Reaching us through the prophets and apostles.
   B. Through the testimony of the Spirit.
      1. That testimony is in the gospel.
      2. Is in our hearts.
      3. The combination of these two is the revelation of Immanuel to us.

LORD’S DAY 7

Question 20. Are all men then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ?
Answer. No [Matt. 1:21; Is. 53:11]; only those who are ingrafted into Him, and receive all His benefits, by a true faith [John 1:12, 13; Rom. 11:20; Heb. 10:39].

Question 21. What is true faith?
Answer. True faith is not only a certain knowledge [John 6:69; 17:3; Heb. 11:3, 6], whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word, but also an assured confidence [Eph. 3:12], which the Holy Ghost [Rom. 4:16, 20, 21; Heb. 11:1; Eph. 3:12; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:21; Acts 16:14; Matt. 16:17; John 3:5] works by the gospel in my heart [Rom. 10:14, 17; Matt. 9:2]; that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin [Rom. 5:1], everlasting righteousness and salvation [Gal. 2:20] are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ’s merits [Rom. 3:24-26].

Question 22. What is then necessary for a Christian to believe?
Answer. All things promised us in the gospel [John 20:31; Matt. 28:19, 20], which the articles of our catholic undoubted Christian faith briefly teach us.

Question 23. What are these articles?
Answer. The Apostles’ Creed:
I. I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;
II. 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 sin;
XI. The resurrection of the body;
XII. And the life everlasting. AMEN.

Lord’s Day 7:
Saving Faith

I. What it is.
   A. Essentially the spiritual tie with Christ Jesus.
      1. Thus in the Heidelberg Catechism.
         a. By faith we are ingrafted into Him.
   b. Hence, faith is God’s means whereby He unites us with Christ.
   c. Illustration: The ingrafting of a branch on a strange tree. The difference between the living tree and a telephone pole.
The one will draw life, the other will rot in the rich soil.

2. Thus in the Scripture.
   a. Figure of the vine and the branches.
   b. Figure of the body with the members living from the head.
   c. Figure of the branches of the wild olive tree ingrafted into the cultivated tree (Rom. 11).

3. The idea of this.
   a. All things are in Christ.
   b. We must draw them out of Him.
   c. Faith is the God-given power to do this.

B. Its elements.
   1. A certain knowledge.
      a. Not an added psychological faculty.
      b. But a new spiritual power of the mind whereby:
         1) It sees the necessity of Christ.
         2) It hungers to know Him.
         3) It turns to the revelation of Him in the Scriptures.
         4) It appropriates unto itself all that God has revealed in His Word.
   2. Confidence.
      a. Not another will-power.
      b. But a spiritual renewal of the will whereby:
         1) It ceases from trusting in self.
         2) Feels that Christ is the sure refuge.
         3) Surrenders itself to Him in life and death, for time and eternity.

II. Whence it is.
   A. Not of the natural man.
      1. Thus all the Pelagians and Arminians.
         a. The sinner is not dead in sin, though he is weak.
         b. By his own free will and the persuasion of the gospel he may come to faith.
      2. Not so, according to the Reformed conception.
         a. Man is totally depraved; is only free to sin.
         b. Hence, he can never will to believe.
      3. Nor in Scripture.
         a. Romans 8:5-8.
         b. John 6:44
   B. God’s work.
      1. Thus in the Catechism.
         a. We are ingrafted.
         b. Which the Holy Spirit works in us by the gospel.
      2. Thus in Scripture.
         b. 1 Corinthians 12:3.
         c. Ephesians 2:8.
      3. In what way.
         a. The Spirit regenerates: faith is implied in the life of regeneration in principle and essence.
         b. The Spirit calls to conscious faith.
            1) Inwardly by the power of His grace.
            2) Outwardly by the Word of the gospel.
         c. May vary, and may be either:
            1) Sudden and the work of one moment.
            2) Or gradual, as more generally in the sphere of God’s covenant.
III. Whose it is.
   A. The question.
      1. All men condemned in Adam.
      2. All men not saved in Christ.
      3. Characteristic of the saved is faith.
      4. Faith is the gift of God.
      5. Further question: To whom does He give it?
   B. Answer.
      1. From viewpoint of God’s counsel.
         a. He chose His people in Christ.
         b. He caused His people to die and live in Christ (resurrection).
      2. From the believer’s point of view:
         a. Question: Can we know whether we are in the faith?
         b. Answer: The believer is characterized by:
            1) Knowledge of self.
            2) Knowledge of Christ.
            3) Hunger and thirst after Christ.
            4) Appropriation of Christ, though this may be more or less.
            5) Fruitbearing in Christ.

LORD’S DAY 8

Question 24. How are these articles divided?
Answer. Into three parts: the first is of God the Father, and our creation [Gen. 1]; the second, of God the Son and our redemption [I Pet. 1:18, 19]; the third, of God the Holy Ghost and our sanctification [I Pet. 1:21, 22].

Question 25. Since there is but one only divine essence [Deut. 6:4], why speakest thou of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?
Answer. Because God hath so revealed Himself in His Word [Gen. 1:26; Is. 61:1; John 14:16, 17; I John 5:7; John 1:13; Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14], that these three distinct persons are the one only true and eternal God.

Lord’s Day 8:
The Trinity, or, The Triune Subsistence of God

I. What is meant by it?
   A. A mystery.
      1. Not a contradiction.
      2. But a truth we cannot fathom.
      3. This is very natural when we deal with God and His mode of subsistence.
   B. But a confession.
      1. God is one in Being.
      2. Subsisting in three Persons.
         a. What is a person?
         b. What is the relation of the divine person to the Being?
   c. What is the relation of the Persons mutually?
      3. Thus a covenant God.

II. How it is revealed.
   A. In the way of gradual process.
      1. That revelation is the only way to acquire knowledge of the Trinity.
      2. That there is progress in revelation.
         a. The Old and New Testament are not on a par in this respect.
b. Even in the Old Testament there is a gradually increasing light.

3. This in the nature of the case.
   a. Objectively, because the Word became flesh.

B. That revelation itself.
   1. In the Old Testament.
      a. A suggestion of the plurality (Gen. 1:28).
      b. A reflection of the Trinity in the Aaronitic blessing (Num. 6:24-26).
      c. A pointing to the different Persons in the following texts (Ps. 33:6; 2:12; 110:1).
      d. Revealed in facts, manifestations, prophecies; e.g., Angel of Jehovah, the Spirit of the Lord upon the judges, prophets, and kings; the prophecy of the Servant of the Lord, especially in Isaiah; the outpouring of the Spirit (Joel 2:28).
   2. In the New Testament:
      a. The three Persons are distinct.
         1) The Son is become flesh.
         2) The Father is in heaven.
         3) The Spirit is poured out in the church.
      b. And the entire New Testament is full of the light of the revelation of the triune God.

III. How it is a matter of experience.
   A. In our conception.
      1. We attribute definite works to the several persons.
         a. The catechism points to this: God the Father and our creation, etc.
         b. Thus it is actually in the consciousness of the congregation of the church.
      2. And yet an essential unity.
         a. Faith does not conceive of three gods.
         b. Neither of three persons doing separate works: Father creating; Son redeeming; Spirit sanctifying.
         c. But one God creates, redeems, and sanctifies — of the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit.
   B. In the mystical experience of the church.
      1. The one God the object of all our worship.
         a. We do not pray, trust in, love, etc., only with relation to the First Person.
         b. But the one triune God is the object of our faith.
      2. Yet even here the triuneness.
         a. In the Spirit dwelling in us.
         b. Through the Son revealed to us.
         c. We worship the one God as our Father in heaven.
   C. Conclusion.
      1. The unity of God a very significant truth. Idea: it unifies our whole religious life. No separation, dualism of our spiritual life.
2. The Trinity of God.
   a. Were God merely one, we would not know Him.
   b. Through the Trinity there is both revelation and communication.
   c. And thus is established the covenant of His friendship.

**LORD’S DAY 9**

Question 26. What believest thou when thou sayest, “I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth”?

Answer. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that is in them [Gen. 1 and 2; Ps. 33:6]; who likewise upholds and governs the same by His eternal counsel and providence [Ps. 115:3; Matt. 10:29; Heb. 1:3; John 5:17]) 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 [John 1:12, 16; Rom. 8:15, 16; Gal. 4:5, 6; Eph. 1:5; 1 John 3:1]; and further, that He will make whatever evils He sends upon me, in this valley of tears, turn out to my advantage [Ps. 55:22; Matt. 6:26]; for He is able to do it, being Almighty God [Rom. 8:28; 4:21], and willing, being a faithful Father [Rom. 10:12; Matt. 6:26; 7:9-11].

**Lord’s Day 9:**

*The Fatherhood of God*

I. Within His own triune life.
   A. The idea of fatherhood.
      1. Not essentially that of love.
      2. But of generation.
   B. His generation of the Son.
      1. Eternal.
      2. Infinitely completely.
      3. So that the Son is the perfect image of the Father (John 5:19, 20, 26; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:13).

II. With relation to His counsel.
   A. The idea of that counsel.
      1. Not a dead plan.
      2. But living wisdom; the decreeing God.
   B. The attributes of that counsel.
      1. Eternal.
      2. All-comprehensive.
      3. Efficacious.

III. With relation to His creation.
   A. The idea of creation.
      1. Not a bringing forth out of nothing.

IV. In relation to His people.
   A. The same Father.
      1. In all former relations.
         a. To the Son.
         b. To His counsel.
         c. To creation.
      2. Is my Father.
         a. Of whom I am born.
         b. Of whose love I am object.
   B. For Christ’s sake.
      1. No universal Fatherhood or brotherhood.
         a. There is an organic unity.
         b. But sin and grace cause a division.
Lord’s Day 10

Reformed Symbols/Notes on the Heidelberg Catechism

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Lord’s Day 10

Reformed Symbols/Notes on the Heidelberg Catechism

1. As such.
   A. The idea.
      1. God is immanent in all things.
      2. Yet He is not all things.
      3. But continually operates in every creature.
      4. Hence, the omnipresent power of God.
   B. Necessity.
      1. Follows from the dependence of the creature.
         a. The creature exists.
         b. Hence, continually has its being by virtue of God’s support.
      2. This, versus all Deism — laws of nature — fatalism, etc.
   C. Elements.
      1. God sustains all things; upholds.
      2. God governs all things; works out His counsel.

2. But a sonship of redemption.
   a. Judically adopted for Christ’s sake and in Christ having all the rights of sons.
   b. Organically born of God, and in Christ being partakers of His life.

LORD’S DAY 10

Question 27. What dost thou mean by the providence of God?
Answer. The almighty and everywhere present power of God [Acts 17:25-28]; whereby, as it were by His hand, He upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures [Heb. 1:3]; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought [Jer. 5:24], fruitful and barren years, meat and drink [Acts 14:17], heath and sickness [John 9:3], riches and poverty [Prov. 22:2; Job 1:21], yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by His fatherly hand [Matt. 10:29, 30; Eph. 1:11].

Question 28. What advantage is it to us to know that God has created, and by His providence doth still uphold all things?
Answer. That we may be patient in adversity [Rom. 5:3; Ps. 39:10]; thankful in prosperity [Deut. 8:10; I Thess. 5:18]; and that in all things which may hereafter befall us, we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father [Rom. 5:3-6], that nothing shall separate us from His love [Rom. 8:38, 39]; since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move [Job 1:12; 2:6; Matt. 8:31; Is. 10:15].

Lord’s Day 10:
God’s Providence

I. As such.
   A. The idea.
      1. God is immanent in all things.
      2. Yet He is not all things.
      3. But continually operates in every creature.
      4. Hence, the omnipresent power of God.
   B. Necessity.
      1. Follows from the dependence of the creature.
         a. The creature exists.
         b. Hence, continually has its being by virtue of God’s support.
      2. This, versus all Deism — laws of nature — fatalism, etc.
   C. Elements.
      1. God sustains all things; upholds.
      2. God governs all things; works out His counsel.

3. With a view to the rational creature, this is cooperation.

II. And sin (providence with relation to sin).
   A. With regard to the fact of sin as such.
      1. God’s providence must be explained with relation to a sinful world. We cannot simply regard the world as if it had never fallen.
      2. The relation of God to sinful man.
         a. Man is morally free.
         b. But with a dependent freedom.
      3. Illustrations:
         a. Pharaoh.
         b. The devil with Job.
   B. Hence, God’s providence all-comprehensive.
1. Things small and great.  
2. Things agreeable and disagreeable.  
3. Things good and evil.  
4. Who governs all things unto our salvation.  

B. All things for our good.  
1. All things.  
2. For our good.  
   a. Not according to the flesh.  
   b. But spiritual and eternal good.  
3. Hence:  
   a. Thankful in prosperity.  
   b. Patient in adversity.

**LORD’S DAY 11**

Question 29. Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is, a Savior?
Answer. Because He saveth us, and delivereth us from our sins [Matt. 1:21]; and likewise, because we ought not to seek, neither can find salvation in any other [Acts 4:12].

Question 30. Do such then believe in Jesus the only Savior, who seek their salvation and welfare of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else?
Answer. They do not; for though they boast of Him in words, yet in deeds they deny Jesus the only deliverer and Savior [I Cor. 1:13, 31; Gal. 5:4]; for one of these two things must be true, either that Jesus is not a complete Savior, or that they who by a true faith receive this Savior must find all things in Him necessary to their salvation [Col. 2:20; Is. 9:6, 7; Col. 1:19, 20].

Lord’s Day 11:  
Jesus Savior

I. From what He saves.
   A. From the guilt of sin.
   B. From the power of death.

II. How He saves.
   A. He is Jesus for us.
      1. Took our guilt and blotted it out.
      3. Was raised and exalted to glory.
   B. He is Jesus in us.
      1. By His Spirit.
      2. Realizes the salvation prepared by Him in our hearts.
   C. He is Jesus through us.
      1. He abides in us.
      2. Through His power we bear fruit.
      3. The glory is His.

III. That He is an only Savior.
   A. How this is denied.
      1. Catechism is opposing Roman Catholicism: trust in saints, good works, the church, etc.
      2. Yet true of all Pelagianism.
   B. That He saves completely.
      1. All that pertains to salvation He accomplishes.
         a. Objectively.
         b. Subjectively.
      2. And the expression of our spiritual life is the fruit of His work in us.
LORD’S DAY 12

Question 31. Why is He called Christ, that is anointed?
Answer. Because He is ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost [Heb. 1:9], to be our chief Prophet and Teacher [Deut. 18:18; Acts 3:22; John 1:18; 15:15; Matt. 11:27], who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption; and to be our only High Priest [Ps. 110:4; Heb. 7:21; 10:14], who by the one sacrifice of His body has redeemed us, and makes continual intercession with the Father for us [Rom. 8:34]; and also to be our eternal King [Ps. 2:6; Luke 1:33], who governs us by His word and Spirit, and who defends and preserves us [Matt. 28:18; John 10:28] in (the enjoyment of) that salvation He has purchased for us.

Question 32. But why art thou called a Christian?
Answer. Because I am a member of Christ by faith [I Cor. 6:15], and thus am partaker of His anointing [I John 2:27; Joel 2:28]; that so I may confess His name [Matt. 10:32], and present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him [Rom. 12:1]; and also that with a free and good conscience I may fight against sin and Satan in this life [Eph. 6:11, 12; I Tim. 1:18, 19]: and afterwards reign with Him eternally over all creatures [II Tim. 2:12]).

Lord’s Day 12:
Christ’s Threefold Office

I. The office and our creation.
   A. Man created God’s friend-servant.
      1. The question.
         a. Jesus is prophet, priest, and king.
         b. Why? What is the relation between these offices and our salvation? Why must He function in this threefold way?
      2. Man’s original relation to God.
         a. Was made in God’s image.
         b. And placed in covenant relationship to God.
      3. What this implies:
         a. That he was God’s friend; made to live in God’s communion.
         b. That in that friendship he was His servant.
         c. His calling was therefore to serve God as friend. This was his office. The office is therefore essentially one.
   B. This relation threefold.

   1. The basis in man’s threefold nature.
      a. His mind — understanding — knowledge.
      b. His heart — devotion — love.
      c. His will — and all his strength. His head, heart, hand.
   2. As such he was God’s prophet, friend-servant with his mind.
      a. His mind in fellowship with God’s mind and receiving the knowledge of Him.
      b. His mouth speaking God’s praises, glorifying His name.
   3. As such he was God’s priest, friend-servant with his heart.
      a. His heart filled with the love of God in fellowship with God’s heart.
      b. Consecrating himself and all things to His Friend’s sovereignty.
   4. As such he was to be God’s king — viceroy.
a. His will subject to the Most High.
b. Invested with authority and strength to rule over the earthly creation.

5. Thus Adam in Paradise.
   a. He is not the highest, for he is a little lower than the angels.
   b. But in the earthly sphere he is God’s prophet, priest, king.

II. The office and sin.
A. Sin does not destroy the office.
   1. Man remains man.
      a. Remains a creature made after God’s image originally.
      b. The creature with mind and will and heart.
   2. Hence, he is still prophet, priest, and king.
      a. Man still knows, consecrated himself, rules after the fall.
      b. And in all his action he reveals himself as prophet, priest, and king.
   B. But it changed the spiritual, ethical relation.
      1. He became a prophet of the devil.
         a. The avenues of his mind shut vs. the truth of God.
         b. Open unto the darkness of the lie. God is not in all his thoughts.
      2. He became a priest of the devil.
         a. The avenues of his heart shut vs. the love of God.
         b. Open unto the love of sin, darkness, concupiscence.

   a. Set his will in rebellion vs. God.
   b. Subjected himself to the devil and reigned in his dominion, in his name.

III. The office in Christ.
A. Necessity not plain.
   1. We must be redeemed completely.
      a. As prophets from the darkness of sin to the glory of perfect knowledge.
      b. As priests from the enmity of our heart to the perfection of heavenly love.
      c. As kings from the dominion of the devil to the power of the eternal reign with Christ.
   2. Hence, the Savior must function in this threefold way.
      a. We cannot redeem or deliver ourselves. Hence, we must have Jesus.
      b. We must be delivered in the three sides of our nature. Hence, Jesus must be Christ: prophet, priest, king.
      c. Unto this end He must be anointed, that He may in all things be the Servant of Jehovah.

B. This actually in Immanuel.
   1. He is anointed.
      a. Ordained from eternity.
      b. Qualified in time by the Spirit which He received without measure.
      c. Scriptural proof for this.
   2. His status as the anointed servant.
      a. He must overcome the dominion of sin and the devil.
b. Redeem His people.
c. Restore God’s covenant and raise it to heavenly glory.

C. This realized in Christ in a threefold way.

1. He becomes our prophet.
   a. He knows God as never man knew Him: Immanuel.
   b. He speaks of Him in word, sign, and wonder; glorifies Him.
   c. He makes us prophets of God.

2. He becomes our priest.
   a. He is priest for us and fulfills all things.
   b. He is priest within us and makes us priests.

3. He becomes our king.
   a. For us battles, overcomes, protects, and leads to glory.
   b. Within us, delivers us from Satan’s dominion; establishes His throne within our hearts; makes us victorious over all our enemies.

IV. Christ’s office and ours.

A. We partake of His anointing.
   1. Our name is Christians.
      a. Not Jesuits, for as Jesus He stands alone.
      b. But Christians, for of His office we partake.

   2. Partake in a twofold sense.
      a. Judicially, His office and work are the basis of our right to be God’s friendservants.
      b. Spiritually, through faith, so that Christ lives in us.

B. Hence, our threefold office.
   1. As prophet, to declare the praises of God.
   2. As priest, to consecrate myself and all things to Him.
   3. As king, to have dominion in His name.
   4. All these things now in principle only.
      a. We are still in the midst of the battle.
      b. Presently in perfection.
LORD’S DAY 13

Question 33. Why is Christ called the only begotten Son of God, since we are also the children of God?

Answer. Because Christ alone is the eternal and natural Son of God [John 1:1; Heb. 1:2]; but we are children adopted of God, by grace, for His sake [Rom. 8:15-17; Eph. 1:5, 6].

Question 24. Wherefore callest thou Him our Lord?

Answer. Because He hath redeemed us, both soul and body, from all our sins, not with gold or silver, but with His precious blood [I Pet. 1:18, 19; I Cor. 6:20], and hath delivered us from all the power of the devil; and thus hath made us His own property.

Lord’s Day 13:
The Only Begotten Son Our Lord

I. Christ’s Sonship in relation to ours.
   A. Christ’s Sonship essential.
      1. Catechism is speaking of Christ.
         a. Here not the question of the Trinity.
         b. Neither the question of generation.
         c. But the question: who is Christ? The man Jesus Christ?
      2. He is the Person of the Son.
         a. In respect to His Person Christ is not human.
         b. But the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.
      3. Possessing the divine nature essentially.
         a. One in Being with the Father and the Spirit.
         b. Possessing all the divine attributes.
      4. But always as Son.
         a. Eternally generated by the Father.
         b. Being the infinitely perfect image of the Father.
         c. Loving the Father and being one with Him in His will.
   B. Our sonship.
      1. Originally a created one.
         a. No divine nature. Man is not generated from God.
         b. But the product of an act of God’s will.
         c. Yet likeness — created after God’s image; an impress of God’s perfection in him.
         d. And placed in relation to God as son in positive knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Knowing the Father and loving Him.
      2. This sonship lost.
         a. Sin did not change man essentially; he remained man.
         b. But the relation was lost and changed into its opposite.
         c. And the spiritual character of the child was corrupted; he became a child of the devil. No universal fatherhood or brotherhood.
      3. Restored and raised in Christ.
         a. Judicially. As children adopted for His sake.
            1) Adopted in God’s counsel.
            2) Adopted through the cross and resurrection.
            3) Adopted by faith.
4) The ultimate adoption yet to come.

b. Organically, we are born of God.
   1) Delivered from the spiritual image of the devil.
   2) And become partakers of the life of God in Christ.

c. This is a higher sonship than that in Adam.
   1) Christ is the Immanuel, the only begotten Son in our nature.
   2) Our sonship in him as superior to that of Adam as Christ is superior to him.

II. His Lordship over us.
   A. The meaning of this Lordship.
      1. Lord here signifies Master, Sovereign, Possessor, Ruler.
      2. Such is Christ.
         a. By virtue of God’s election. He was anointed our Lord.
         b. By virtue of His work. He redeemed us and purchased us by His blood.
    c. By virtue of our being ingrafted into Him. He delivered us from the power of the devil and made us His own.

   3. Hence, a Lordship of love.
      a. Rooted in the eternal love of God.
      b. Manifested in the sacrifice of His Son.
      c. Realized by the Spirit of the Son in our hearts.

   B. The realization of this Lordship.
      1. By nature rebels.
         a. Enemies of God.
         b. And therefore enemies of Christ. We will not that He be King over us.
      2. Realized in us by the power of grace.
         d. Discovering unto us the horror of our slavery under Satan as our lord.
         e. Revealing unto us the beauty of Christ as our Redeemer and Deliverer.
         f. Breaking within us the power of rebellion.
         g. Establishing within us the throne of Christ.
**LORD’S DAY 14**

Question 35. What is the meaning of these words — “He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary”?

Answer. That God’s eternal Son, who is and continueth true and eternal God [John 1:1; Col. 1:15; Ps. 2:7; Rom. 9:5; I John 5:20], took upon Him the very nature of man, of the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary [John 1:14; Gal. 4:4], by the operation of the Holy Ghost [Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:35]; that He might also be the true seed of David [Ps. 132:2; Acts 2:30; Rom. 1:3], like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted [Phil. 2:7; Heb. 4:15].

Question 36. What profit dost thou receive by Christ’s holy conception and nativity?

Answer. That He is our Mediator [Heb. 2:16, 17]; and with His innocence and perfect holiness, covers in the sight of God my sins [Ps. 32:1; I Cor. 1:30; Rom. 8:34], wherein I was conceived and brought forth.

Lord’s Day 14:
The Incarnation of the Word

I. The meaning.
   A. Who became flesh.
      1. The Person of the Son of God.
         a. Could not be the Father, neither the Spirit.
         b. But the Son, who is the image of the Father; God revealed.
      2. Possessing the true divine nature.
         a. Being one with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Not a god; God.
         b. But always as Son. As Son He thinks and wills and loves and causes the Spirit to proceed from Him.
   B. The human nature He assumed.
      1. The complete human nature.
         a. With our flesh and blood.
         b. Our soul and all the properties that belong to it. Human mind, will, desires, needs, feeling, experiences, emotions; He lived our whole life.
      2. The “impersonal” human nature.

II. The manner of the incarnation.
   A. From the virgin.
      1. He is *born.*
a. Not a separately created nature.

b. But the human nature of Christ is of us.

2. Without the will of man.
   a. No human father.
   b. God His Father.
   c. The guilt of man cannot be imputed to Him.

3. From the virgin Mary.
   a. Not a general human nature.
   b. Neither a human nature from the periphery. Jesus was no Negro or Greek or Roman.
   c. But of the seed of the children — seed of Abraham, Israel, Judah, David, Mary. In the line of the covenant — the root of the remnant according to election.

B. By the conception of the Holy Ghost.
   1. This is a mystery.
      a. True of the birth of any child.
      b. Much more so of Immanuel.
   2. Thus revealed.
      a. Announced by the angel.
      b. Meaning:
         1) That the Holy Ghost prepared from the flesh and blood of Mary the human nature of Christ.
         2) That the Holy Ghost in a very mysterious way combined the Person of the Son of God with the human nature thus prepared.
         3) That the Holy Ghost kept the human nature of Christ from the defilement and corruption of sin.

III. Significance.
   A. Judicial.
      1. Only thus could He take our sin upon Himself.
      2. Only thus could He atone.
   B. Organic.
      1. God in the flesh raises our nature to glory.
      2. Thus glorified, He imparts His life to us.
      3. And according to Scripture, we partake of the divine nature through Him.
LORD’S DAY 15

Question 37. What dost thou understand by the words, “He suffered”?

Answer. That He, all the time that He lived on earth, but especially at the end of His life, sustained in body and soul the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind [I Pet. 2:24; Is. 53:12]; that so by His passion, as the only propitiatory sacrifice [I John 2:2; Rom. 3:25], He might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the favor of God, righteousness and eternal life.

Question 38. Why did He suffer under Pontius Pilate as judge?

Answer. That He, being innocent, and yet condemned by a temporal judge [Luke 23:14; John 19:4; Ps. 69:4], might thereby free us from the severe judgment of God to which we were exposed [Gal. 3:13, 14].

Question 39. Is there anything more in His being crucified than if He had died some other death?

Answer. Yes [there is]; for thereby I am assured that He took on Him the curse which lay upon me; for the death of the cross was accursed of God [Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13].

Lord’s Day 15:
Christ’s Unique Suffering

I. Unique in character.
   A. The meaning.
      1. That no man ever suffered like Christ.
      2. Necessity to emphasize this.
         a. Frequently Christ’s suffering held up as an example of noble sacrifice.
         b. This comparison deprives us of the atoning suffering of Christ.
   B. How it was unique.
      1. It was a bearing of the wrath of God vs. sin.
         a. This according to the Catechism is the essence of Jesus’ suffering.
         b. His external suffering was the form of it.
      2. That He bore the burden of the wrath of God alone, for all.
         a. The expression “against the sin of all mankind” to be understood:
            1) Not in the Arminian sense.
            2) But organically. All mankind does not mean every individual.
   b. Alone, so that the wrath of God concentrated upon Him. This unique. No man ever did or will bear the wrath of God alone.
   3. In a moment.
      a. Jesus suffered all His lifetime, though especially on the cross.
      b. Yet even so, His suffering is brief, considering it takes the place of eternal suffering.
      c. This is possible because of Jesus’ divinity. The Person of the Son of God suffers in human nature.
   4. Suffers as very God personally, and holy man.
      a. The Son of God in human nature could taste the suffering of death as no man could.
      b. The holy Christ, personally entitled to God’s communion, bore His wrath and was forsaken by Him.

II. Unique in its reason.
   A. The Arminian conception.
1. Many answers to the question: Why did Christ suffer?
   a. He died for His principle.
   b. He died for our example.
   c. He died for our improvement.
   d. He died as a manifestation of righteousness.

2. The implication of this last theory (the Arminian one).
   a. The sinner stands in an unrighteous relation to God. God has a right to condemn him.
   b. The sinner by nature does not acknowledge this. He will not come to repentance and humiliation.
   c. Until he repents, God cannot forgive; for God cannot deny His righteousness.
   d. To bring him to repentance God manifests His righteousness in the spectacle of the cross. The cross no atonement, no payment for sin. A show of what God may righteously do with the guilty sinner.
   e. This for all men. They that see and believe are saved. They that refuse and reject are damned. All free-will theories must lead to this.

3. Hence, His condemnation by Pilate.
   a. A condemnation of the world.
   b. A strong proof that He was innocently condemned.
   c. A formal and public judgment.

III. Unique in its fruit.
   A. Redemption from everlasting damnation.
      1. God’s wrath works desolation.
         a. It is the reaction of God’s holy Self-love.
         b. Turning against the sinner, damning him, pushing him away into outer darkness.
   2. Redeemed from it.
      a. Christ stood in that fire of God’s wrath.
         1) Placed there by the Father.
         2) By Himself.
b. Had all the rays of that wrath concentrated upon Him.
c. Stood there till the fire burned out for all whom He covered, because He satisfied God’s righteousness.
d. Thus God paved the way for His eternal love to His people.

B. Eternal life.
   1. God’s favor works life.
      a. His favor is the operation of His good pleasure.
      b. It is His longing to bless, to draw into His communion, to make like unto Himself.
      c. This for the creature made in His image is life.
   2. Obtained through Christ in its highest sense.
      a. Merited by Him. God’s favor cannot reach us except through righteousness.
      b. Present in Him. He is Immanuel and presently glorified according to His human nature.
      c. Bestowed by Him upon all His people.

C. This fruit is ours. That is:
   1. It is for those who embrace Christ by a true and living faith.
      a. Empty self.
      b. Appropriate Him.
      a. Crucified with Him, we are crucified to the world and the flesh.
      b. And raised with Him unto eternal life.

LORD’S DAY 16

Question 40. Why was it necessary for Christ to humble Himself even unto death?
Answer. Because, with respect to the justice and truth of God [Gen. 2:17], satisfaction for our sins could be made no otherwise than by the death of the Son of God [Heb. 2:9, 10; Phil. 2:8].

Question 41. Why was He also “buried”?
Answer. Thereby to prove that He was really dead [Acts 13:29; Mark 15:43, 46].

Question 42. Since then Christ died for us, why must we also die?
Answer. Our death is not a satisfaction for our sin, but only an abolishing of sin, and a passage into eternal life [John 5:24; Phil. 1:23].

Question 43. What further benefit do we receive from the sacrifice and death of Christ on the cross?
Answer. That by virtue thereof our old man is crucified, dead, and buried with Him [Rom. 6:6, 7ff.]; that so the corrupt inclinations of the flesh may no more reign in us [Rom. 6:12]; but that we may offer ourselves unto Him a sacrifice of thanksgiving [Rom. 12:1].

Question 44. Why is there added, “He descended into hell”?
Answer. 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, terrors, 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 [Is. 53:10; Matt. 27:46].
I. The last phases of the suffering of Jesus.
   A. His death.
      1. He tasted the suffering of death.
         a. Especially when He was forsaken.
         b. Of physical death when He gave up the ghost.
         a. In the justice of God.
         b. Demanding payment for sin.
      3. Only possible through the Son’s death.
         a. Sin vs. the infinite majesty of God.
         b. Righteousness satisfied by the death of the Son of God.
   B. Descension into hell.
      1. Not to be taken locally.
      2. But ideally: especially in the hours of darkness.
   C. The burial.
      1. Not to prove that He was really dead. The Catechism is both poor and mistaken here.
         a. This not necessary.
            1) Believers need no proof.
            2) Unbelievers get no proof.
         b. If it were necessary, there is proof abundant.
            1) The soldiers find Him dead.
            2) The spearthrust certainly would have killed Him.
      2. But because Christ must lead the way of the children.

a. The grave is the place of corruption; passage to eternal death with a view to the body.
b. That grave is changed; Christ was in the grave. Shows:
   1) That it is no more a place of corruption.
   2) That it has an exit to eternal glory.

II. The results for us.
   A. The spiritual result.
      1. The old man of sin.
         a. The entire human nature as received from Adam.
         b. Characterized by:
            1) Its condemnation on account of its guilt.
            2) Its corruption on account of its death.
            3) Its increasing daily of its guilt.
      2. Crucified with Christ.
         a. Thus according to Scripture (Rom. 6:4, 6, 8; “We died with Him,” etc.).
         b. Thus in the Catechism (Q. 43).
      3. This realized in the death of Christ.
         a. We are one plant with Him.
            1) Judicially one.
            2) Organically one.
         b. Hence, when Christ died, all the elect died.
            1) All that pertained to our old nature Christ took upon Himself when He took our guilt.
2) By His death He killed the power of that nature. His death is the death of the old man in all His people.

4. Realized in us.
   a. By nature born from Adam.
   b. By grace from Christ. Through that grace the old man of sin spiritually dies in principle.

5. How this is manifest.
   a. Not in a complete disappearance of the workings of sin. Sin often revives when the grace of Christ is wrought in our hearts.
   b. But that we no more live unto sin, finding our proper sphere in it, but unto righteousness.

B. The physical result.
   1. We still die.
      a. Because all the elect shall be glorified together.
      b. Because this must needs wait till the coming of Christ.

   2. But our death changed.
      a. Temporal death is by nature.
         1) A temporal separation of the soul and the body.
         2) A corruption of the body in the grave.
         3) A passage into eternal death.
      b. Temporal death is by grace:
         1) Complete mortification of the old man. When the Christian dies, the new man in Christ separates from the old man in Adam.
         2) A passage into eternal life:
            a) Spiritually into the house of many mansions.
            b) Physically, the resurrection.

**LORD’S DAY 17**

Question 45. What doth the resurrection of Christ profit us?

Answer. First, by His resurrection He has overcome death, that He might make us partakers of that righteousness which He had purchased for us by His death [I Cor. 15:16]; secondly, we are also by His power raised up to a new life [Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1ff.]; and lastly, the resurrection of Christ is a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection [I Cor. 15; Rom. 8:11].

Lord’s Day 17:
The Resurrection of the Lord

I. A victory over death.
   A. The death He overcame.
      1. Generally a wrong conception of death.
      2. Death is the state of opposition and conflict between God and His imagebearers.
   3. In that prison of death we are by nature.
   4. Into that prison Christ had entered.
   5. Its power He broke.
   B. The life He inherited.
      1. Purchased by His death.
2. Brought with Him from the grave.
3. Consisting of:
   a. Not a return to His state and condition before the cross.
   b. Not a return to the state of Adam before he fell.
   c. But the life that is from above: new, eternal, heavenly.

II. A power of a new life.
   A. The head of the church is quickened and enriched.
      1. This has judicial significance.
         a. It proves the efficacy of the cross.
         b. Christ was raised for our justification (Rom. 4:25).
   2. But no less organic.
      a. We need a living Mediator.
      b. For He must impart life unto us.
   B. Our being risen with Christ.
      1. The risen Christ becomes the life-giving Spirit.
      2. Becomes the life-principle in His people.
      3. Hence, by faith in Him:
         a. We die unto sin.
         b. We turn unto the cross.
         c. We experience the power of His resurrection in living the new life.
         d. We look forward to its realization in the city that hath foundations.

III. A pledge of glory.
   A. For the soul.
      1. The resurrection with Christ here only in part.
      2. Yet the new life with Him never dies.
      3. And is glorified with Him after death.
   B. For body.
      1. Christ is the firstfruits.
      2. His Spirit dwells in us (Rom. 8:11).
      3. We shall follow Him in the day of the harvest.

LORD’S DAY 18

Question 46. How dost thou understand these words, “He ascended into heaven”?
Answer. That Christ, in sight of His disciples, was taken up from earth into heaven [Acts 1:9; Mark 16:19]; and that He continues there for our interest [Heb. 4:14; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 4:10], until He comes again to judge the quick and the dead.

Question 47. Is not Christ then with us even to the end of the world, as He hath promised?
Answer. Christ is very man and very God; with respect to His human nature, He is no more on earth [Acts 3:21; John 3:13; 16:28; Matt. 28:20]; but with respect to His Godhead, majesty, grace, and spirit, He is at no time absent from us.

Question 48. But if His human nature is not present wherever His Godhead is, are not then these two natures in Christ separated from one another?
Answer. Not at all, for since the Godhead is illimitable and omnipresent [Acts 7:49; Matt. 24:30], it must necessarily follow that the same is beyond the limits of the human nature He assumed [Matt. 28:20; John 16:28; 17:11; 3:13], and yet is nevertheless in this human nature and remains personally united to it.

Question 49. Of what advantage to us is Christ’s ascension into heaven?
Answer. First, that He is our advocate in the presence of His Father in heaven [Heb. 9:24; 1 John 2:2; Rom. 8:34]; 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 [John 14:2; Eph. 2:6]; thirdly, that He sends us His Spirit as an earnest [John 14:16; II Cor. 1:22; II Cor. 5:5], by whose power we “seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, and not things on earth” [Col. 3:1; Phil. 3:20].
Lord’s Day 18: 
The Ascension of the Lord

I. Its local character.
   A. Significance of the question.
      1. Controversy with Lutheranism in the Catechism.
      2. Abiding principles in the controversy:
         a. Maintains the distinction between the divine and human.
         b. Maintains the local and real existence of heaven.
   B. As revealed in Scripture.
         (The above passages should be explained in their pertinence.)

II. Its significance.
   A. For the Lord.
      1. Necessary because of His heavenly nature.
         a. He arose with heavenly life.
         b. With this heavenly life He belongs in a heavenly place and state.
      2. Necessary as an element in His exaltation.
         a. His ascension is not only a change of place.
         b. But also a further state in His exaltation: He changed.
      c. This was necessary because He must draw us to Himself.
   B. For us.
      1. He takes our place, represents us with the Father.
         a. As our prophet.
         b. As our priest.
         c. As our king.
      2. He receives as the head of the church all the blessings of salvation from the Father.
      3. He bestows them as the heavenly Lord upon His people.

III. Its fruit.
   A. Christ our intercessor.
      1. He prays for us.
      2. We have confidence to approach the Father through Him.
   B. Christ our forerunner.
      1. He opened heaven for His people.
      2. We expect to be where He is.
   C. Christ in heaven an incentive.
      1. Our life is in Christ.
      2. Our mind is drawn toward Him.
      3. The things above we seek.
LORD’S DAY 19

Question 50. Why is it added, “and sitteth at the right hand of God”?
Answer. Because Christ is ascended into heaven for this end, that He might appear as Head of His church [Eph. 1:20-22; Col. 1:18], by whom the Father governs all things [Matt. 28:18; John 5:22].

Question 51. What profit is this glory of Christ, our Head, unto us?
Answer. First, that by His Holy Spirit He pours out heavenly graces upon us His members [Eph. 4:8]; and then that by His power He defends and preserves us against all enemies [Ps. 2:9; John 10:28].

Question 52. What comfort is it to thee that “Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead”?
Answer. 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 has removed all curse from me, to come as judge from heaven [Luke 21:28; Rom. 8:23, 24; I Thess. 4:16]: who shall cast all His and my enemies into everlasting condemnation [II Thess. 1:6-9; Matt. 25:41], but shall translate me with all His chosen ones to Himself, into heavenly joys and glory [Matt. 25:34].

I. In His sitting at the right hand of God.
A. The symbolic expression.
1. Based on Scripture (Ps. 110:1; Matt. 26:64; Phil. 2:9-11; Eph. 1:20-22; Heb. 1:13; Acts 2:34, 35; Luke 20:42, 43; I Cor. 15:25-28).
2. Meaning.
   a. Oriental expression: the raising of a person to the highest place in a kingdom.
   b. Hence, Christ according to His human nature exalted over all things. God rules by Him.
B. Significance.
   1. The subject of this exaltation.
      a. Not the Son of God as such.
      b. But the Person of the Son in the human nature.
   2. The extent of His dominion.
      a. The church.
      b. The world.
      1) All the means of creation in the heavens and on earth.
      2) The enemies: devil, world, powers of darkness.
   3. The nature of this dominion:
      a. Absolute power with relation to the things over which He rules.
      b. Derivative with relation to God from whom He receives the power.
C. Purpose.
   1. Completion of His work: the perfecting of His everlasting kingdom.
   2. Subjection of all things to the Father.
      a. Will also subject Himself.
      b. Yet so, that He will be King under God in the new creation.

II. In His second coming.
A. Meaning of the second coming.
   1. Post-millennial sense.
      a. The danger of this view.
      b. The unscriptural character of this view.
      c. The impossibility of this view.
   2. Not in the pre-millennial sense.
a. Pre-millennialism really has three comings, viz., at the rapture (appearance), at the first resurrection, and after the millennium. Scripture knows nothing of these.
b. The Pre-view has two resurrections. Scripture does not speak of these (John 5:28, 29).
c. The Pre-view places the change of the living before the resurrection from the dead. This is contrary to God’s Word, and that very emphatically so (I Thess. 4:13ff.).
d. The Pre-view excuses the faithful from tribulation. This is dangerous. Scripture would have us expect tribulation.

   a. Christ is coming throughout this dispensation (Matt. 26:64).
   b. The signs of that coming we must see.
   c. Culminates in His final appearance: suddenly, personally, visibly, in power.

B. The time of that coming.
   1. No one knows the day.
      a. Attempts to predict often made.
      b. These to be condemned.
   2. Yet signs of His coming.
      a. The increase of apostasy (I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 3:1-5).
      b. The development of all human power (Rev. 13).
      c. The coming of Antichrist into his kingdom.
      d. Preaching of the gospel over the whole world.

3. Hence, we must watch and pray.
   b. This necessary, to know the world and to keep ourselves from idols.
   c. This natural: it is the hour of our redemption.

C. Significance.
   1. An incentive to walk worthy of the calling.
      a. He is coming to judge.
      b. In the judgment I will be like Him.
      c. Hence, we purify ourselves (I John 3:2, 3).
   2. A comfort in trouble.
      a. Because it is the end of all my sorrows.
      b. Because it is my final justification.
      c. Because it is He who died for me that judges.
      d. Because He shall judge His and my enemies.
      e. Because He shall glorify me with all His elect.
LORD’S DAY 20

Question 53. What dost thou believe concerning the Holy Ghost?
Answer. First, that He is true and co-eternal God with the Father and the Son [Gen. 1:2; Is. 48:16; I Cor. 3:16]; secondly, that He is also given me [Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 1:22], to make me, by a true faith, partaker of Christ and all His benefits [Gal. 3:14; I Pet. 1:2], that He may comfort me [Acts 9:31] and abide with me for ever [John 14:16; I Pet. 4:14].

Lord’s Day 20: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

I. As the Spirit of God.
   A. God’s life a covenant life.
      1. Essential unity.
      2. Personal difference.
      3. On the basis of this unity and difference the divine life of intimate friendship.
   B. The Holy Spirit in that covenant life.
      1. The Father is first, and lives the divine life as Father,
         a. Generating the Son.
         b. Breathing forth the Spirit as the Spirit of the Father.
      2. The Son is second and co-equal:
         a. Revealing the Father, being generated by Him.
         b. Breathing forth the Spirit as the Spirit of the Father.
      3. The Spirit is third, and co-equal with the Father and the Son:
         a. Proceeding from the Father and the Son as Spirit. (Spirit here not in the sense in which God is a Spirit; the word only expressing His proceeding, His being spirated out of Father and Son.)
         b. In Him Father and Son unite.
         c. The Father and the Son are in Him: where He dwells the Father and the Son dwell.

II. As the Spirit of the church.
   A. First of all, the Spirit of Christ, the head of the church.
      1. Christ personally possesses the Spirit.
         a. By the Spirit His human nature is prepared in Mary.
         b. By the Spirit a union between the two natures is accomplished.
         c. By the Spirit Christ offers Himself and accomplishes His work of suffering.
         d. By the Spirit He rises and is exalted at the right hand of God.
      2. He possesses that Spirit as the head of the church.
         a. Christ is according to God’s counsel the head of the body.
         b. At His exaltation He receives the Spirit in all His fullness for the church.
         c. At Pentecost He pours out the Spirit into the church.
   B. The Spirit in the church as His body.
      1. As the Spirit of God through Christ.
         a. God pours out the Spirit.
         b. But through the Mediator.
      2. Hence, through that Spirit the triune God dwells with His people.
a. The Person of the Spirit does not move on Pentecost.
b. But the Spirit of God, who dwells in the Godhead as the Third Person, who fills the glorified Christ, also fills the church.

3. This covenant tie realized.
   a. God in Christ through the Spirit.
   b. Christ in us through the Spirit.
   c. That we may be perfect in one.

III. As He works in the church.
   A. In whom He works.
      1. The choice is with man, say the Arminians.
         a. Christ’s benefits are for all men, for the entire organism as it is in Adam.
         b. He is willing to dwell in all and to send His Spirit into their hearts.
         c. But it is up to man to decide whether he will have the Spirit.
      2. God, say we.
         a. The world knows not the Spirit; its mind is enmity against Him.
         b. Hence, natural man never wills, nor can will to receive Him (John 14:17). He will only oppose Him, spiritually resist Him, harden his heart against Him.
         c. Hence, only in the elect.
            a. The fullness of the head is for the body.
            b. This fullness of the head the body receives through the Spirit.
   c. The body is determined through God’s election.

   B. What He does.
      1. In general, He makes us partakers of the grace of Christ.
         a. He implants the life of Christ in the hearts of the members of the body.
         b. He nourishes that body and keeps it.
         c. He glorifies that life and perfects it.
            1) Spiritually in heaven (at death).
            2) Completely, body and soul, at the resurrection.
      2. Particularly, He gives to each one the grace of Christ according to his place in the body.
         a. No one possesses the Spirit by himself; only as member of the body of Christ.
         b. He receives Christ’s grace according to his particular calling; the hand receives grace to be hand, the foot to be foot, etc.
         c. Hence, we cannot be separate from the body of Christ and partake of Christ.
      3. The Spirit bestows the special gifts upon the church according to time and need.
         a. Gifts of prophecy and miracles in the early church.
         b. Gifts of ministry, charity, instruction, mercy, rebuke, admonition, etc.
**LORD’S DAY 21**

Question 54. What believest thou concerning the “holy catholic church” of Christ?

Answer. That the Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world [John 10:11; Gen. 26:4], gathers [Rom. 9:24; Eph. 1:10], defends, and preserves to Himself [John 10:16] by His Spirit and word [Is. 59:21], out of the whole human race [Deut. 10:14, 15], a church chosen to everlasting life [Acts 13:48], agreeing in true faith; and that I am and for ever shall remain, a living member thereof [I Cor. 1:8, 9; Rom. 8:35ff.].

Lord’s Day 21a:
The Holy Catholic Church (Q/A 54)

I. Its determining cause (or: Its essence).
   A. The church as an object of faith.
      1. Not as we see her.
         a. As such not holy. Often very corrupt.
         b. As such not catholic. Very divided.
      2. But as we believe her to be.
         a. In spite of the much corruption, we believe the church to be holy. Holy in Christ. Holy by virtue of the new life.
         b. And through all the division we believe the church to be one.
      3. As such the church is the body of Christ.
         a. She is no society, gathered by the free will of men; but a living organism or whole, developing out of the common principle of Christ.
         b. She is no mere multitude, but a finished whole in which every part has its place.
      4. May be compared to a building.
         a. Scripture does so frequently.
   b. From the viewpoint of its being a well-designed structure.
   5. Three questions arise:
      a. Who designed it?
      b. Who is its contractor?
      c. Who builds it?

B. The design in God’s election.
   1. God determined upon the church as such.
      a. No two decrees: one that humanity should develop in Adam; another that He would make a church, contingent upon Adam’s choice.
      b. But the eternal determination to perfect all things in Christ and His body.
      c. All things are means to bring this church to light: the fall, sin, Satan included. By these the human race is so trimmed that in the end only the church is left.
   2. Determining upon the individual members of that body.
      a. With regard to their number God determined how many should be members of the church. (No architect leaves it to the bricklayer to determine how
large the building shall be.)

b. With regard to their names: election touches particular individuals.

c. With regard to their place in the whole. Election is so organic: it determines also what place each member shall have in the body.

3. Implies reprobation.
   a. Surely, to reveal God’s justice and wrath in the vessels fitted unto destruction.
   b. But no less to serve the realization of election. The power of darkness is subservient to the building of the church.

II. Its mediating cause.
   A. In the counsel of redemption.
      1. What it is.
         a. An eternal decree of the triune God.
         b. Determining:
            1) That the Father will glorify Himself through the Son in the Spirit.
            2) That the glory of the Son shall be revealed in the flesh. The Son is ordained Christ.
            3) That the fullness of this glory shall be made manifest in a body. This body is given to Christ.
            4) That the Holy Spirit shall be given to this head of the church, that through Him the fullness of Christ may dwell in the body.
      2. Scriptural proof:
         a. We are chosen in Christ (Eph. 1:4).
         b. The church is to the praise of His glory in the beloved (Eph. 1:6).
         c. It pleased the Father that in Him as the head of the body all the fullness should dwell (Col. 1:18, 19).
         d. The church is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:23).
      3. Importance of this conception.
         a. Christ exists for God.
         b. The church exists for Christ.
         c. The reprobate exist for the church.
         d. All things exist for their development.
   B. In its realization.
      1. Realized in the incarnation.
         a. The Son becomes flesh.
         b. That He might be the head of the church.
      2. In His suffering. The Son suffers and dies in order that He may redeem the church out of the world.
      3. Through the Spirit.
         a. The Son receives the Spirit.
         b. Receives all power in heaven and on earth.
         c. That He may complete His church.

III. Realizing cause.
   A. The Spirit builds the church.
      1. The Spirit of Christ.
      2. The Spirit in the church.
3. Works in the elect all the blessings of salvation and gathers the church.
4. Therefore, according to the Catechism, the Son of God gathers the church by His Spirit.

B. Through the Word.

1. The church must become visible.
2. This is possible only through the Word.
   a. Calling the life of Christ into consciousness in the believers.
   b. Enabling them to grow in grace.

Question 55. What do you understand by “the communion of saints”?
Answer. 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 [John 1:3, 4; Rom. 8:32; I Cor. 12:13]; 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 [I Cor. 13:5; Phil. 2:4-6].

Lord’s Day 21b:
The Communion of Saints (Q/A 55)

I. Its spiritual reality.
   A. That it is.
      1. Often confused with the exercise of the communion of saints.
         a. Considered as an act on the part of believers.
         b. And having its source in that act.
         c. This principally Pelagian.
      2. But a real spiritual tie of fellowship.
         a. There is a communion of saints.
         b. And the act of communing is always rooted in that communion.
   B. Its nature.
      1. A communion of life.
         a. That has its source in God.
         b. That has its distributing center in Christ.
         c. That has its distributing agent in the Holy Spirit.
   d. That has its result in the sainthood of the members of this communion.
      2. A communion of spiritual gifts.
         a. General. All the believers partaking of them: faith, hope, love, forgiveness, etc.
         b. Special: gifts of instruction, admonition, charity, etc.

II. Its exercise.
   A. By walking in the light.
      1. It is a fellowship of light.
         a. Not the natural likes or dislikes.
         b. But the spiritual union. We love one another as saints.
      2. Hence, we must walk in the light.
         a. In darkness we do not know one another.
b. In as far as we walk in darkness communion of saints is disturbed.
c. But if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another.

B. By employing our several gifts.
   1. Must understand that we have nothing of ourselves.
      a. Not apart from Christ.
      b. Not apart from the body.

II. The knowledge of it.
   A. By the assurance of faith.
   B. By walking in the light.

Question 56. What believest thou concerning “the forgiveness of sins”?
Answer. That God, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction [I John 2:2; II Cor. 5:19, 21], will no more remember my sins [Jer. 31:34; Ps. 103:3, 4, 10, 11; Rom. 8:1-3], neither 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 [John 3:18].

Lord’s Day 21c:
The Forgiveness of Sins (Q/A 56)

I. Significance.
   A. The sins of the saints.
      1. Are blotted out.
      2. Yet are committed by them.
      3. And are very really their sin.
      4. Threefold:
         a. Their original guilt.
         b. The corruption of their nature.
         c. Their actual daily trespasses.
   B. Forgiveness.
      1. Implies that God does not impute the guilt of sin to us.
      2. Implies that He does not inflict the punishment of sin upon us.
         a. Neither eternal.
         b. Nor temporal.

II. The basis.
   A. Satisfaction of Christ.
      1. Strictest justice.
         a. God cannot act as if sin were not committed.
         b. He cannot deny His justice.
   c. All sin must be punished.
   d. This is accomplished in Christ.
   2. Yet deepest grace.
      a. Though God punishes sin.
      b. He does so in His own Son.

B. Hence, through faith.
   1. I must belong to a new communion.
      a. By nature I belong to the communion of Adam.
      b. The forgiveness of sins is only in the communion of saints.
   2. This is possible only through faith.
      a. By which I am separated from the old fellowship.
      b. And ingrafted into Christ.
      c. And partake of all His benefits, including the forgiveness of sins.
III. The knowledge of it.
   A. By the assurance of faith.
   B. By walking in the light.
   C. In the exercise of the communion of saints.

LORD’S DAY 22

Question 57. What comfort doth the “resurrection of the body” afford thee?
Answer. That not only my soul after this life shall be immediately taken up to Christ its head [Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:23]; but also, that this my body, being raised by the power of Christ, shall be reunited with my soul, and made like unto the glorious body of Christ [I Cor. 15:53; Job 19:25, 26].

Question 58. What comfort takest thou from the article of “life everlasting”?
Answer. That since I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy [II Cor. 5:2, 3, 6; Rom. 14:17], after this life I shall inherit perfect salvation [Ps. 10:11], which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man” to conceive [I Cor. 2:9], and that, to praise God therein for ever.

Lord’s Day 22:
Faith and the Future

I. The house not made with hands.
   A. A reality.
      1. Denied by many.
         a. Roman Catholic conception.
         b. Soul-sleep theory.
      2. Testified in Scripture.
         b. New Testament: God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; parable of the rich man and Lazarus; the second word from the cross (II Cor. 5:1ff.).
   B. A great comfort.
      1. Negatively:
         a. A separation from all things sinful.
         b. A separation from all suffering and consequences of sin.
         c. A separation from all things earthy.
      2. Positively:
         a. Shall live the heavenly life.
         b. Consisting chiefly in the perfected communion with God.

II. Resurrection of the body.
   A. Heavenly glory not the end.
      1. Scripture fixes our hope on the parousia.
      2. Heaven’s joy not finished and complete.
         a. Because the body is still in the grave.
         b. Because all the brethren have not entered.
         c. Because the public adoption has not taken place.
         d. Because the new heavens and the new earth are not yet.
      3. Hence, our hope is on the resurrection.
         a. The hope of the saints on earth.
         b. The hope of the saints in heaven.
   B. The how of the resurrection.
      1. A resurrection of all the dead.
         a. Not intervened by a millennium.
         b. But of the righteous and wicked simultaneously (John 5:28, 29).
      2. The resurrection of glory.
         a. A perfected body: weakness changed to power.
dishonor to glory, corrup
tibility to incorrup-
tion, etc.

b. A heavenly body: spiri-
tual; we shall bear the
image of the heavenly.

b. In which righteousness
shall dwell.

c. And all things shall be
heavenly.

III. Eternal life.

A. What it is.

1. First of all, another life.
   a. Different from our sinful
      life, from the life of the
      first Adam.
   b. The perfection of God’s
      covenant life in Christ.
      God’s tabernacle will be
      with men.

B. How it is begun.

1. In regeneration.
2. In the experience of the
   heavenly joy and peace.

LORD’S DAY 23

Question 59. But what doth it profit thee now that thou believest all this?
Answer. That I am righteous in Christ, before God, and an heir of eternal life (Rom. 5:1; 1:17; John
3:36).

Question 60. How art thou righteous before God?
Answer. Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:22ff.; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8, 9); so that, though my
conscience accuse me that I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and kept none of
them (Rom. 3:9ff.), and am still inclined to all evil (Rom. 7:23); notwithstanding, God, without any merit
of mine (Rom. 3:24), but only of mere grace (Tit. 3:5; Eph. 2:8, 9), grants (Rom. 4:4, 5; II Cor. 5:19) and
imputes to me (I John 2:1) the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ (Rom. 3:24, 25);
even so, as if I never had had nor committed any sin: yea, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience
which Christ has accomplished for me (II Cor. 5:21); inasmuch as I embrace such benefit with a believing
heart (Rom. 3:28; John 3:18).

Question 61. Why sayest thou that thou art righteous by faith only?
Answer. Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith (Ps. 16:2; Eph. 2:8,
9), but because only the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God
(I Cor. 1:30; 2:2); and that I cannot receive and apply the same to myself any other way than by faith only (I
John 5:10).

Lord’s Day 23:
Justification Through Faith

I. Justification as such.

A. Righteousness.
   1. The idea of righteousness in
general.
   2. Righteousness as an attribute
   of God.

4. Righteousness with relation
to the guilty man.

B. Justification.
   1. Not the infusion of right-
   eousness.
      a. Not sanctification.
      b. But justification is first.
2. The imputation of righteousness.
   a. God declares us free from guilt.
   b. God deals with us as if we had perfectly obeyed.
3. Thus the apparent contrast.
   a. My conscience accuses me.
   b. God declares me righteous.
C. How to be explained.
   1. From the counsel of God: chosen in Christ.
   2. From the obedience of Christ: active; passive.
   3. From our actual unity with Christ: one with Him through faith.

II. Connection with faith.
   A. Faith as a bond with Christ.
      1. God imputes faith as righteousness.
         b. Romans 4:3.
         c. Heidelberg Catechism.
         d. Question: How is this possible?
      2. Wrong views:
         a. God accepts faith instead of works.
         b. God justifies faith because of the works of faith.
   3. Right conception:
      a. Christ is our righteousness.
      b. God unites me with Him by the bond of faith.
      c. Therefore faith is righteousness because of Christ.
   B. Faith as an act.
      1. Wrought by the Word:
         a. Preaching Christ in the fullness of His righteousness.
         b. Over against the sinner in the emptiness of his sin.
      2. Clinging to Christ.
         a. Faith draws from Him.
         b. Appropriates Him.
         c. Hence, becomes assured of the imputed righteousness.
LORD’S DAY 24

Question 62.  But why cannot our good works be the whole or part of our righteousness before God?
Answer.  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 (Gal. 3:10; Deut. 27:26); and also, that our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin (Is. 64:6).

Question 63.  What!  Do not our good works merit, which yet God will reward in this and in a future life?
Answer.  This reward is not of merit, but of grace (Luke 17:10).

Question 64.  But doth not this doctrine make men careless and profane?
Answer.  By no means; for it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by a true faith should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness (Matt. 7:17, 18; John 15:5).

Lord’s Day 24:
Justification and Good Works

I.  Good works a necessary fruit of justification.
   A.  The problem presented.
      1.  Justification absolutely apart from the works of the law.
         a.  Thus the Catechism presents it.
         b.  Thus Scripture (cf. Rom. 5, 6).
         a.  We are righteous without works.
         b.  We can afford to be careless and profane.
   B.  The problem solved.
      1.  Practically the conclusion is impossible.
         a.  The justified Christian will walk in sanctification.
         b.  Thus the Catechism puts it: The Christian must do good works.
         c.  Thus Paul in Romans 6:1, 2.
      2.  Why this is impossible.
         a.  Christ broke the power of sin.  His atonement was designed to condemn sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:1-3).
         b.  By faith I am in living contact with Him.
         c.  The same faith by which I am justified must also sanctify me.
   3.  Conclusion.
      a.  The Christian is ingrafted into Christ.
      b.  It is impossible that he should not bring forth fruit.
      c.  It is impossible that he should be careless and profane.  One who is cannot be justified.
      d.  It is impossible that he should do good works to merit anything; they are fruits of gratitude.

II.  Good works encouraged by the reward of grace.
   A.  Plainly taught in Scripture.
         a.  Self-denial for the kingdom of God’s sake.
         b.  Reward manifold, more now and in the end eternal life.
      2.  Romans 8:17.
         a.  Suffering with Christ.
b. The only way of being glorified together.

   a. The desire for the heavenly country.
   b. A motive for the life as pilgrims and strangers in the world.

   a. Forsaking the treasures of Egypt.
   b. With respect unto the recompense of the reward.

B. Idea of this reward.
   1. Not the works. A Christian in glory shall never say:
      a. I have worked and suffered.
      b. The glory is my merit.

2. But of grace.
   a. Not an arbitrary additional gift.
   b. But grace from beginning to end.
      1) That we are chosen.
      2) That Christ died, rose, and was glorified.
      3) That I am ingrafted into Him.
      4) That I may bear fruit with Him and suffer with Him.
      5) That I may receive a reward with Him.

**LORD’S DAY 25**

Question 65. Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all His benefits by faith only, whence doth this faith proceed?

Answer. From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts (Eph. 2:8; 6:23; Phil. 1:29) by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments (Matt. 28:19; Rom. 4:11).

**Lord’s Day 25a:**

The Word, a Means to Faith (Qu. 65)

I. The faith that is wrought by the Word.

A. Question: Whence is faith?
   1. By the Word.
      a. This is the answer of all in general. Faith is by hearing, and hearing by the Word.
      b. Question: How?
   2. Pelagianism:
      a. Faith is a matter of the will.
      b. The result of persuasion.
      c. This persuasion is wrought by the preacher.
   3. Lutheranism:
      a. The Word itself is living and powerful.
      b. Hence, it works the faith.

B. Reformed conception:
   1. Faith is the bond of life with Christ.
      a. This refers to the power, the faculty of faith.
      b. Is granted in regeneration. May be present in the smallest infants.
      c. Is not dependent on the preacher, but wrought by the Spirit as a gift of God.
   2. Implies:
      a. The faculty to receive all that is in Christ.
      b. The power to hunger and thirst after Him.
c. The power to appropriate all that is in Him.
d. The power to rely on Him for time and eternity.

3. This power of faith brought to conscious belief by the Word.
   a. The Word calls to faith.
   b. The Word strengthens and enriches faith.
   c. As a means of the Holy Spirit.

II. The Word as it works faith.
   A. The Word is a testimony of Christ.
      1. Not in a narrower sense. The Word speaks of much more than the person of Christ.
         a. Speaks of God and His work of creation.
         b. Speaks of sin, death, grace, etc.
      2. But in a wider sense: speaks of all these things but in the light of Christ.
         a. Of creation with a view to re-creation.
         b. Of sin with a view to redemption, etc.
      3. Hence, the proper contents and object of faith.
         a. Faith will appropriate Christ.
         b. This Christ is presented to it in the Scriptures.
         c. Therefore faith cannot live without the Word.
   B. A testimony of the Holy Spirit.
      1. By revelation and inspiration.
         a. God conceived of the whole of Scripture before the foundation of the world.
         b. Realized this counsel in the prophets, apostles, evangelists, etc.; in the history of redemption, through visions, dreams, etc.; through His Spirit.

III. The working of the Word with a view to faith.
   A. Not as a means of itself.
      1. Frequently presented thus.
         a. In the Word is life.
         b. Therefore the Word is powerful to work faith.
      2. But very wrong:
         a. With a view to the natural man the Word only will never work faith in him.
         b. With a view to the regenerated man, the Word alone never calls his faith to consciousness.
   B. But as an instrument of the Spirit.
      1. Assures me of the truth of the Word.
         a. The Word is a divine testimony by the Spirit.
         b. The Spirit witnesses within and unites the testimony of the Word with the testimony in our hearts.
      2. The Spirit prepares a place for the contents of the Word.
         a. The Word brings Christ.
         b. The Spirit makes us hunger and thirst after Him.
      3. The Spirit causes us to appropriate Him.
         a. The Word offers Christ.
b. The Spirit creates confidence that He is for us personally.
c. Thus the Spirit through the Word makes us sure of our salvation.

C. As an instrument, too, for the strengthening of faith.
1. The Catechism might leave a wrong impression.
   a. As if the Word were means for working faith.
   b. The sacraments for upbuilding and strengthening of faith.
2. The Word remains the chief means.
   a. Bringing to us the riches of Christ.
   b. Feeding us with the bread of life.
3. And the sacraments are dependent upon it.

Question 66. What are the sacraments?
Answer. The sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof He may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel, namely, that He grants us freely the remission of sin and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross (Gen. 17:11 Rom. 4:11; Ex. 12; Lev. 6:25; Acts 22:16; 2:38; Matt. 26:28).

Question 67. Are both Word and sacraments, then, ordained and appointed for this end, that they may direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?
Answer. Yes, indeed; for the Holy Ghost teaches us in the gospel, and assures us by the sacraments, that the whole of our salvation depends upon that one sacrifice of Christ which He offered for us on the cross (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27).

Question 68. How many sacraments has Christ instituted in the new covenant, or testament?
Answer. Two, namely, holy baptism and the holy supper (1 Cor. 10:2-6)

Lord’s Day 25b:
The Sacraments in General (Qu. 66-68)

I. Their significance.
A. They are signs.
   1. What is a sign?
      a. The word sacraments means “holy sign.”
      b. A sign is a visible representation of something invisible.
      c. Illustrations from natural life: flag, stars, ensigns, etc.
   2. Signs in Scripture.
      a. Visible manifestations of His invisible grace.
      b. Illustrations: stars, sand on the seashore, Virgin birth, passage through the Red Sea, etc.
   3. In relation to the sacraments.
      a. That they are signs.
         1) The water, bread, wine are visible.
         2) There is a picture in the visible.
         3) And the picture represents God’s invisible grace, cleansing, nourishing, etc.
      b. As such they are signs of God’s covenant.
         1) By the way in which we are incorporated into that covenant.
         2) Of the heavenly blessings God bestows upon us in that covenant.
3) Of our relation to Him in that covenant.

B. That they are seals.
   1. Thus in Scripture (Rom. 4:11).
   2. The idea of a seal.
      a. Visible sign of assurance and authority.
      b. In this case the very authority of God.
   3. The thing sealed.
      a. The righteousness which is by faith. God justifies the believer.
      b. Therefore the eternal and basic blessing of salvation.
      c. And in that one blessing all the blessings of His grace.

C. That they are institutions of God.
   1. This implies that they are divinely appointed.
      a. Bread and wine and water are created pictures of nourishment, quickening, and cleansing.
      b. But only by special ordination of God do they become signs and seals.
   2. That they are permanent institutions to be observed by the church.
      a. All signs are not sacraments; e.g., the starry heavens, the sand, the rainbow.
      b. Sacraments require an action on the part of the church. The church as a whole must observe them.
      c. Therefore through her officebearers and because of their relation to the Word, preferably the ministers.

II. Their operation.
   A. They are means of grace.
      1. For the strengthening of our faith.
         a. Only.
         b. In this respect they differ from the Word.
      2. By directing our faith to Christ’s atonement.
         a. In this respect Word and sacraments are alike.
         b. The difference is: the sacrament appeals to the eye, and the Word to the ear.
      3. Through the Spirit.
         a. They do not strengthen of themselves.
         b. Neither does the church make them strengthen.
         c. But the operation of the Spirit in our hearts.

B. Various effects.
   1. For believers that partake.
   2. For believers that do not partake.
   3. For unbelievers that partake.
   4. For unbelievers that partake not.
**LORD’S DAY 26**

**Question 69.** How art thou admonished and assured by holy baptism that the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is of real advantage to thee?

**Answer.** Thus: That Christ appointed this external washing with water (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38), adding thereto this promise (Mark 16:16; Matt. 3:11; Rom. 6:3), that I am as certainly washed by His blood and Spirit from all the pollutions of my soul, that is, from all my sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3), as I am washed externally with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away.

**Question 70.** What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?

**Answer.** It is to receive of God the remission of sins freely, for the sake of Christ’s blood, which He shed for us by His sacrifice upon the cross (Heb. 12:24; I Pet. 1:2); and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin and lead holy and unblamable lives (John 1:33; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:11).

**Question 71.** Where has Christ promised us that He will as certainly wash us by His blood and Spirit as we are washed with the water of baptism?

**Answer.** In the institution of baptism, which is thus expressed: “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 28:19). “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). This promise is also repeated where the scripture calls baptism the washing of regeneration (Tit. 3:5) and the washing away of sins (Acts 22:16).

**Lord’s Day 26:**

**Baptism as a Sign of the Covenant**

I. **Significance**

A. God’s covenant.
   1. The idea of God’s covenant.
   2. God’s covenant as established with Adam.
   3. God’s covenant as violated in the fall.
   4. God’s covenant as maintained in Christ.

B. Our entering into God’s covenant.
   1. Must be incorporated into Christ.
   2. Must receive from Him:
      a. Remission of sins.
      b. New life and sanctification.
   3. Hence:
      a. Must be separated from the world.
      b. Because the covenant is established in the line of election.

II. **The sign as such.**

A. That baptism is a sign of the covenant.
   1. Follows from circumcision.
      a. Circumcision was the sign of God’s covenant.
      b. Baptism took its place.
   2. Follows from the institution.
      a. Baptized into the Name of the triune God (εἰς).
      b. Signifying: baptized into covenant relation with Him.

B. Of what it is a sign.
   1. That God incorporates us into Christ.
   2. That God forms us as a people of His covenant through Christ.
   3. That God separates us from the world.

C. How it is a sign.
   1. Baptized into Christ (Rom. 6).
a. The bath as such symbol of Christ’s death.
b. In baptism we go under in Christ’s death.
c. To be raised with Him.

2. The water symbol of Christ’s blood.
a. An atoning blood.
b. Wherein we are cleansed and justified.
c. Our sins remain behind.

3. Thus a symbol of separation.
a. Types: the flood, the Red Sea.
b. Separated by the water, from the world, unto God.

III. The obsignated.
A. On God’s part a seal:
1. That He incorporates us into Christ.
2. That He makes us His covenant people.
3. That He separates us from the world.
B. On our part:
1. That baptism assures of the blessings of salvation
2. That baptism calls:
a. To love the Lord our God.
b. To be a peculiar people in the world.
3. That baptism comforts in the battle of faith.

LORD’S DAY 27

Question 72. Is then the external baptism with water the washing away of sin itself?
Answer. Not at all; for the blood of Jesus Christ only, and the Holy Ghost, cleanse us from all sin (Matt. 3:11; I Pet. 3:21; I John 1:7; I Cor. 6:11).

Question 73. Why then doth the Holy Ghost call baptism “the washing of regeneration,” and “the washing away of sins”?
Answer. God speaks thus not without great cause, to wit, not only thereby to teach us that, as the filth of the body is purged away by water, so our sins are removed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:5; I Cor. 6:11); but especially that by this divine pledge and sign He may assure us that we are spiritually cleansed from our sins as really as we are externally washed with water (Mark 16:16; Gal. 3:27).

Question 74. Are infants also to be baptized?
Answer. Yes; for since they, as well as the adult, are included in the covenant (Gen. 17:7; Acts 2:39) and church of God (I Cor. 7:14; Joel 2:16; Matt. 19:14); and since redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them (Luke 1:14, 15; Ps. 22:10; Acts 2:39) no less than to the adult; they must therefore by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, be admitted into the Christian church, and be distinguished from the children of unbelievers (Acts 10:47; I Cor. 12:13; I Cor. 7:14) as was done in the old covenant or testament by circumcision (Gen. 17:14), instead of which baptism is instituted in the new covenant (Col. 2:11-13).

Lord’s Day 27:
Baptism a Sign of God’s Covenant

I. The covenant.
A. In paradise.
1. The idea of the covenant.
a. Many different views: an agreement, a way, a means to eternal life, etc.

b. We emphasize that it is a relation between God and His people.
1) The covenant is God’s: established, maintained, and realized by Him.
2) It is a relation of intimate fellowship, communion, friendship, a revelation of God’s own covenant life; possible because we are created after God’s image.
3) In that relation God is our sovereign Friend; we are His friend-servants.
   c. Antithetically, it follows that as friends of God we are enemies of His enemies. We are God’s party.
2. The first realization in paradise.
   a. Adam made after God’s image.
   b. Is God’s friend-servant according to the three sides of his nature as prophet, priest, and king.
   c. The antithesis in the tree — in the enemy, the devil.
   d. In a certain sense the two trees were signs of the covenant which Adam had to observe.
B. Covenant in Christ:
   1. Sin makes a breach.
      a. God’s enemy lies, slanders, blasphemes.
      b. Man submits himself to the spell of a world of darkness, the lie; takes the side of God’s enemy.
      c. Really goes into a covenant with the devil against God.
      d. Becomes corrupt, a slave of sin.
   2. God maintains His covenant and through sin brings it to greater glory.
      a. Christ ordained from eternity, stands behind Adam.
      b. The relation when the devil is cursed, brought under death and destruction.
      c. Along the line of election God’s covenant is established in Christ, who fulfills all righteousness by His suffering, death, resurrection.
      d. God ingrafts His people into Him, fills them with the blessings of salvation.
      e. In Immanuel the covenant of friendship reaches its highest possible realization.
II. The sign.
   A. Of what?
      1. That we are incorporated into Christ.
      2. That we are partakers of all the benefits of Christ: justification, forgiveness, adoption, regeneration, sanctification.
      3. That we are separated from the world of sin and unto God.
      4. All this abundantly evident in the Word of God:
         a. Baptized into Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:3). Buried with Him by baptism into death; raised with Him unto newness of life (Rom. 6:4).
         b. The washing of regeneration (Tit. 3:5).
c. The types of the flood and the Red Sea (I Pet. 3:21; I Cor. 10:3).

B. Thus a sign of God’s covenant.
   1. God establishes His covenant with us.
      a. By ingrafting us into Christ.
      b. By washing us in His blood.
      c. By letting His sanctifying Spirit dwell in us.
      d. By granting us eternal life.
   2. All this signified in baptism:
      a. The bath as such is Christ’s death. On the one side is the old life of sin. On the other is the new life of the covenant. Passing through it, we are separated from the world and enter into the friendship of God.
      b. The water is Christ’s blood, cleansing and purifying, the sign of that justification and sanctification by which God makes us fit to dwell in His tabernacle.

III. Children as recipients.
   A. The line of continued generations.
      1. All God’s visible covenant people must receive the sign of the covenant.
         a. Here is our difference with the Baptists. They have no continuing church; emphasize that professed faith must precede baptism.
         b. Reformed believers maintain that God’s covenant people as they are manifest in the world, therefore believers and their children, must receive the sign.
   2. The various reasons given.
      a. The basis of supposed regeneration. But this is only a supposition, and there is no proof.
      b. That they are all in God’s covenant as far as God is concerned, but that they must comply with the conditions of the covenant (Heyns; Pelagian).
      c. Children are in God’s covenant because of believing parents, and every time they are baptized the parents are baptized with them (Smit).
   3. Because God’s covenant runs in the line of continued generations. This is evident:
      a. From the fact that God always establishes His covenant with believers and their seed (Gen. 3:15; 17; 9; Ps. 89; etc.).
      b. From the undeniable line of historic realization of God’s covenant: Adam, Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Israel, Judah, Christ, Abraham’s seed.
      c. From the fact that baptism is come in the place of circumcision. This is simply a historic fact. This is definitely taught in Colossians 2:11, 12. Therefore they have essentially the same meaning.
d. From the fact that the apostles baptized houses. Note: It makes no difference whether there were children or no. To baptize houses is only possible in the organic line of generations.

e. Therefore, these generations must receive the sign of God’s covenant. The Baptist is wrong. Not to baptize children is a sin, a violation of the covenant, an ignoring of the continuance of the church.

B. Practical Significance.

1. Not all are Israel.

2. Therefore the carnal seed receive the sign of God’s covenant together with the spiritual seed.

3. Obligation of God’s covenant on all. God brings the generations of His covenant people under the obligation:

   a. To love Him with their whole heart, yea, with their whole being.

   b. To separate themselves from the world.

   c. This is the calling of the visible church, believers and their children, which implies:

      1) That parents bring up their children in the fear of the Lord.

      2) That children seek Him early and confess His name.

4. But with a twofold effect:

   a. Greater condemnation for the children of the kingdom that are cast out.

   b. A blessed comfort in the assurance of the seal of God’s covenant for the faithful covenant people.

**LORD’S DAY 28**

**Question 75.** How art thou admonished and assured in the Lord’s Supper that thou art a partaker of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross, and of all His benefits?

**Answer.** Thus: That Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread and to drink of this cup in remembrance of Him, adding these promises: first, that His body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and His blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup communicated to me; and further, that He feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, with His crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hands of the minister, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ (Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19, 20; I Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23-25).

**Question 76.** What is it then to eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ?

**Answer.** It is not only to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ, and thereby to obtain the pardon of sin and life eternal (John 6:35, 40, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 54); but also, besides that, to become more and more united to His sacred body by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us (John 6:55, 56); so that we, though Christ is in heaven and we on earth (Acts 3:21; 1:9-11; I Cor. 11:26), are notwithstanding flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone (Eph. 5:29-32; I Cor. 6:15, 17, 19; I John 3:24); and that we live and are governed forever by one Spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul (John 6:56-58; Eph. 4:15, 16).

**Question 77.** Where has Christ promised that He will as certainly feed and nourish believers with His body and blood, as they eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup?

**Answer.** In the institution of the supper, which is thus expressed (I Cor. 11:23ff.; Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19): “The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said: Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying: this cup is
the new testament in my blood (Ex. 24:8; Heb. 9:20); this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For, as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come” (Ex. 13:9; I Cor. 11:26).

This promise is repeated by the holy apostle Paul, where he says: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body; because we are all partakers of that one bread” (I Cor. 10:16, 17).

Lord’s Day 28:
The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper as Such

I. The institution.
A. The history of the institution.
   1. Significance.
      a. Because sacraments must be instituted by God.
      b. Because the institution of the Lord’s Supper connects it with the Old Testament Passover.
   2. The last Passover.
      a. On the feast of the last passover the Lamb was sacrificed.
      1) This no mere coincidence.
      2) But divinely ordained.
      b. Therefore at the last passover the Lamb partakes with His disciples of the last typical lamb.
   3. Changed into the Lord’s Supper.
      a. Jesus had sent His disciples to prepare the passover.
      b. These had made the necessary preparations: purchased the lamb, sacrificed it in the temple, prepared the upper room.
      c. The celebration. The first cup with thanksgiving and blessing; washing of the hands of all the guests by the host (here the footwashing instead); the eating of the bread with the bitter sauce; then the second cup, the eating of part of the lamb with bitter sauce; the third cup changed into the cup of the Lord’s Supper, and the bread that was eaten with it changed into the bread of communion. Thus the passover changed into the Lord’s Supper.
   B. Significance of the passover feast.
      1. First of all, a historical feast: redemption from Egypt.
      2. But that redemption itself typical.
         a. Egypt typical of the bondage of sin.
         b. Israel typical of the people of God.
         c. The deliverance from Egypt typical of redemption.
         d. Therefore the people in Egypt covered by the blood of the lamb.
   3. Thus it is evident:
      a. That the passover historically looked back into the past.
      b. That because of it the same passover looked
c. That Christ was very desirous to celebrate this last passover with His disciples.
d. That on the eve of that better redemption He substituted the New Testament supper for the Old Testament passover.

II. Significance of the Lord’s Supper.
A. In distinction from baptism.
1. The close connection between the two.
   a. The sacraments are one.
   b. Only the baptized can partake of the supper.
2. The difference between the two.
   a. Baptism is first. The Lord’s Supper follows.
   b. Baptism can take place only once; the Lord’s Supper repeatedly.
   c. Baptism administered to infants; the Lord’s Supper only for conscious believers.

B. The explanation of this distinction.
1. Baptism is the sacrament of incorporation into Christ.
   a. Therefore can be administered to children.
   b. Must be administered first.
   c. Can be administered but once.
2. The Lord’s Supper is the sacrament of continued nourishment.
   a. Therefore must be administered to conscious believers, to those who can perform the act of eating and drinking by faith.
   b. Must be administered repeatedly.
   c. Must follow upon our incorporation into Christ.

C. The signs and the sacrament.
1. The sign of communion.
   a. The idea of a meal: to sup is to have fellowship.
   b. God is the host; we the guests (believers).
   c. Christ the means of entering into that fellowship.
2. A sign of our righteousness by faith.
   a. The broken bread and the wine signify Christ’s sacrifice.
   b. Our receiving it a confession that we enter into God’s covenant for Christ’s sake, cleansed by His blood, justified through Him.
3. A sign of our being nourished with the bread of life.
LORD’S DAY 29

Question 78. Do then the bread and wine become the very body and blood of Christ?
Answer. Not at all; but as the water in baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ, neither is the washing away of sin itself, being only the sign and confirmation thereof appointed of God (1 Cor. 10:1-4; 1 Pet. 3:21; John 6:35, 62, 63); so the bread in the Lord’s Supper is not changed into the very body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16ff.; 11:20ff.), though agreeably to the nature and properties of sacraments (Gen. 17:10, 11, 14; Ex. 12:26, 27, 43, 48; Acts 7:8; Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:24), it is called the body of Christ Jesus.

Question 79. Why then doth Christ call the bread His body, and the cup His blood, or the new covenant in His blood; and Paul the “communion of the body and blood of Christ”?
Answer. Christ speaks thus not without great reason, namely, not only thereby to teach us that as bread and wine support this temporal life, so His crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink whereby our souls are fed to eternal life (John 6:51, 55, 56); but more especially by these visible signs and pledges to assure us that we are as really partakers of His true body and blood (by the operation of the Holy Ghost) as we receive by the mouths of our bodies these holy signs in remembrance of Him (1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:26-28; Eph. 5:30); and that all His sufferings and obedience are as certainly ours as if we had in our own persons suffered and made satisfaction for our sins to God (Rom. 5:9, 18, 19; 8:4).

Lord’s Day 29:
The Sacramental Operation in the Supper

I. That operation as such.
A. What is wrought?
1. Not a separate communion grace.
2. But strengthening of faith.
B. Wrought from Christ.
1. In Christ is all our salvation.
2. Therefore we must be nourished by Him, eat and drink Him.
C. Wrought how?
1. In us as the members of the body of Christ.
2. By the Holy Spirit.
3. Through faith.
4. By the means of grace.

II. Connection between the thing wrought and the sacrament.
A. Not like the Roman Catholic or the Lutheran conception.
1. Zwingli can be left out: he had no sacrament.
2. The Roman Catholic conception:
   a. The Spirit works in the signs, through the church, i.e., the priest.
   b. And these signs become grace which any one may eat.
3. The Lutheran conception principally the same as the Roman Catholic conception, only the body of Christ accompanies the signs instead of being changed into them.
B. But an operation of the Spirit in the believers.
1. The Holy Spirit stimulates the faith through an appeal in the signs.
2. The Spirit sanctifies the signs and seals unto that faith.
3. The Spirit seals the faith that we are heirs of the righteousness of God.


**LORD’S DAY 30**

Question 80. What difference is there between the Lord’s Supper and the popish mass?

Answer. The Lord’s Supper testifies to us that we have a full pardon of all sin by the only sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which He Himself has once accomplished on the cross (Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 26; Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:19, 20; II Cor. 5:21); and that we by the Holy Ghost are ingrafted into Christ (I Cor. 6:17; 12:13), who according to His human nature is now not on earth, but in heaven at the right hand of God His Father (Heb. 1:3; 8:1ff.), and will there be worshiped by us (John 4:21-23; Col. 3:1; Phil. 3:20; Luke 24:52, 53; Acts 7:55) — but the mass teaches that the living and dead have not the pardon of sins through the sufferings of Christ, unless Christ is also daily offered for them by the priests; and further, that Christ is bodily under the form of bread and wine, and therefore is to be worshiped in them; so that the mass, at bottom, is nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and sufferings of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry (Is. 1:11, 14; Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:22, 23; Jer. 2:13).

Question 81. For whom is the Lord’s Supper instituted?

Answer. For those who are truly sorrowful for their sins (Matt. 5:3, 6; Luke 7:37, 38; 15:18, 19), and yet trust that these are forgiven them for the sake of Christ, and that their remaining infirmities are covered by His passion and death (Ps. 103:3); and who also earnestly desire to have their faith more and more strengthened, and their lives more holy (Ps. 116:12-14; I Pet. 2:11, 12); but hypocrites, and such as turn not to God with sincere hearts, eat and drink judgment to themselves (I Cor. 10:20ff; 11:28ff; Tit. 1:16; Ps. 50:15, 16).

Question 82. Are they also to be admitted to this supper, who, by confession and life, declare themselves unbelieving and ungodly?

Answer. No; for by this the covenant of God would be profaned, and His wrath kindled against the whole congregation (I Cor. 10:21; 11:30, 31; Is. 1:11, 13; Jer. 7:21; Ps. 50:16, 22); therefore it is the duty of the Christian church, according to the appointment of Christ and His apostles, to exclude such persons (Matt. 18:17, 18), by the keys of the kingdom of heaven, till they show amendment of life.

**Lord’s Day 30: The Lord’s Supper**

I. Corrupted in the popish mass.

A. The mass.

1. Part of the Roman Catholic celebration of communion.
   a. Mass not the same as communion. The Roman Catholic celebrates the Lord’s Supper: receives the wafer only, no wine.
   b. But mass precedes. Mass and communion belong together, but are distinguished.

2. The mass a necessary introduction, consisting of:
   a. Consecration of the signs — the signs on the altar — the formula of consecration — change into the body of Christ.
   b. The sacrifice. Christ is offered on the altar by the church for living or dead.
   c. The worship. The congregation kneels down in adoration before the Christ on the altar.

B. Its real nature.

1. A denial of Christ’s only sacrifice.
   a. Never admitted by the Roman Catholic.
   b. Nevertheless a fact: the sacrifice of Christ must be repeated in a bloodless way in order to be of effect. The church brings its sacrifice for sin
c. Over against this, God brought the sacrifice once and for all His people.

2. Accursed idolatry.
   a. Not according to the Roman Catholics. They worship Christ on the altar.
   b. But in reality. Reality is that Christ is not there, but wine and bread.
   c. This idolatry practiced also by us if we expect a spiritual blessing from a form of external celebration of the Lord’s Supper.

II. Observed by believers.
   A. An obligation of the covenant.
      1. Thus according to the institution.
         a. The passover in the Old Testament is obligatory.
         b. The Lord enjoins upon His church, “Do this in remembrance of me.”
      2. Thus also according to the idea:
         a. Our covenant God has prepared His table, calls us into the fellowship of His friendship.
         b. Separation from the world and communion with the saints.
         c. This certainly an obligation; not to partake is a great sin.
   3. Alleged excuses.
      a. One cannot come to the Lord’s Supper as he is. Answer: Certainly not; must come as he ought, in repentance, contrition, conversion of heart.
      b. Like to enjoy the world a while; feel if they partake of the Lord’s Supper they must separate. Answer: Baptism demands the same thing. By refraining from the Lord’s Supper no more liberty to serve the world.
      c. The brother will not reconcile. Answer: Reconcile thou with thy brother.
      d. The Lord’s Supper is a holy communion. Answer: The Lord’s Supper is for sinful saints, for all who are contrite in heart, not for perfect people.

   B. But for conscious believers.
      1. Question: Who are able to fill this obligation?
         a. An obligation for the whole congregation.
         b. But not all are able to partake.
      2. Only the conscious believers.
         a. No unbelievers.
         b. Neither the small children.
      3. This is the very nature of the sacrament.
         a. It is a coming to the table of the covenant.
         b. An act of appropriating Christ.
         c. In man’s conscious faith.
      4. Does not exclude the weak.
         a. A conscious faith is not necessarily a strong faith.
         b. The weak in faith certainly have a place at the table.

III. Kept holy by the church.
   A. Not entirely possible.
      1. There are hypocrites.
      2. The church cannot banish them.
3. Neither has any such calling. The visible sacraments are not desecrated by the hypocrites.

B. But in regard to public impenitence.

LORD’S DAY 31

Question 83. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:19)?

Answer. The preaching of the holy gospel, and Christian discipline (John 20:23), or excommunication out of the Christian church (Matt. 18:15-18); by these two, the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers, and shut against unbelievers.

Question 84. How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the holy gospel?

Answer. Thus: when according to the command of Christ (Matt. 28:19) it is declared and publicly testified to all and every believer, that, whenever they receive the promise of the gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God, for the sake of Christ’s merits (John 3:18, 36; Mark 16:16); and on the contrary, when it is declared and testified to all unbelievers, and such as do not sincerely repent, that they stand exposed to the wrath of God and eternal condemnation, so long as they are unconverted (II Thess. 1:7-9; John 20:21-23; Matt. 16:19; Rom. 2:2, 13-17); according to which testimony of the gospel God will judge them, both in this and in the life to come.

Question 85. How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by Christian discipline?

Answer. Thus: when according to the command of Christ (Matt. 18:15), those who under the name of Christian maintain doctrines, or practices inconsistent therewith (I Cor. 5:11, 12), and will not, after having been often brotherly admonished, renounce their errors and wicked course of life, are complained of to the church (Matt. 18:15-18), or to those who are thereunto appointed by the church (Rom. 12:7-9; I Cor. 12:28; I Tim. 5:17; II Thess. 3:14); and if they despise their admonition, are by them forbidden the use of the sacraments (Matt. 18:17; I Cor. 5:3-5); whereby they are excluded from the Christian church, and by God Himself from the kingdom of Christ; and when they promise and show real amendment, are again received as members of Christ and His church (II Cor. 2:6-8, 10, 11; Luke 15:18).

Lord’s Day 31: The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven

I. The kingdom of heaven.

A. What it is.

1. A kingdom of heavenly origin.

2. A kingdom of heavenly character.

3. A kingdom with a heavenly king and subjects.

4. A kingdom with heavenly blessings and obligations.

B. The history of that kingdom.

1. Announced all through the old dispensation.

a. In prophecy, from paradise on.

b. And all the old dispensation stands in the sign of the hope of that kingdom.

2. Comes with Christ.

a. Lays the foundation in His own blood; rises, is glorified and receives all power.

b. Pours out His Spirit, and thus establishes the spiritual reign of God in the hearts of all His people.

3. Still expected in a sense: not yet revealed in its outward glory; this when Christ comes again.
II. The keys of that kingdom.
   A. The idea of the keys.
      2. What these expressions teach:
         a. That the key power is identical to forgiving or retaining sin.
         b. That this power is given to the apostles.
         c. Given to the church.
         d. That the proper exercise of these keys is valid before God.
   B. Purpose.
      1. Represents the kingdom of heaven in the world.
         a. The gates of the heavenly Jerusalem are never shut; there is no night there.
         b. But here an antithesis; not all belong to that kingdom.
      2. The keys must open and shut.
         With a fourfold purpose:
         a. To cast out through the open gate those who are within and belong without.
         b. To draw in those who are without and belong within.
         c. To shut the gate against those who are without and belong without.
         d. To shut the gate to those within who are inclined to go without but belong within.
   III. The exercise of that key.
      A. Absolutely only with Christ.
         1. The gate of that kingdom.
            a. Nothing but Christ’s righteousness.
            b. Hence, forgiveness of sin.
      2. Opened and shut essentially by Christ only.
         a. He has the key of David.
         b. He opens and shuts (Rev. 3:7).
         c. He only forgives and justifies; no church or priest can ever assume that power.
      B. Yet exercised by the church.
         1. In the Word.
            a. Given infallibly to the apostles.
            b. Given through the apostles to the church.
            c. Exercising authoritative key power upon the consciences of men; declaring men within or without the kingdom of heaven.
            d. Hence, through the office the church exercises the key power; not at random, but through the institute.
            e. Hence, the preaching of the Word may not be a universal offer; it must expel as well as draw.
         2. In Christian discipline.
            a. Personal admonition.
               The approach must be by the offended brother.
            b. Repeated personal admonition under witnesses.
            c. Finally, the church with its different steps of admonition and discipline.
            d. This only for those who are within with the purpose to keep within and to save if possible. In the spirit of love, according to the rule that he who repents is saved.
LORD’S DAY 32

Question 86. Since then we are delivered from our misery merely of grace, through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we still do good works?

Answer. Because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image; that so we may testify by the whole of our conduct our gratitude to God for His blessings (I Cor. 6:19, 20; Rom. 6:13; 12:1, 2; I Pet. 2:5, 9, 10), and that He may be praised by us (Matt. 5:16; I Pet. 2:12); also, that every one may be assured in himself of his faith by the fruits thereof (II Pet. 1:10; Gal. 5:6, 24); and that by our godly conversation others may be gained to Christ (I Pet. 3:1, 2; Matt. 5:16; Rom. 14:19).

Question 87. Cannot they then be saved, who, continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, are not converted to God?

Answer. By no means; for the Holy Scripture declares that no unchaste person, idolator, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9, 10; Eph. 5:5, 6; I John 3:14, 15; Gal. 5:21).

Lord’s Day 32:

The Relative Significance of the Doctrine of Gratitude

I. Errors with regard to this doctrine.
   A. A difficult doctrine.
      1. Catechism speaks of the relation between this and the preceding. Plain from the question.
         a. We are saved by grace.
         b. Why then must we do good works?
      2. This is a very careful introduction. The treatment of gratitude leads to many errors.
         a. Often a Reformed view of misery and redemption is developed.
         b. And a Pelagian or Antinomian error is started right here.
      3. Therefore the relation must be shown of this part to the preceding.
         a. The former may not be separated from the latter.
         b. May not be presented as though here the work of man begins.
   B. Danger from two sides.
      1. The Antinomian.
         a. We are saved by grace. Christ paid for our sin. Christ also fulfilled the law.
         b. Therefore, no good works. Would be an insult to Christ, a denial of His work, an attempt to get back to the law after all.
         c. The wrong of it.
            1) Granted all is grace; cannot do the least to add to our salvation, to merit heaven.
            2) But it can be shown that good works follow with necessity from this work of grace.
      d. This Antinomian error no great danger in our day. Our age lies in the other direction, namely:
2. The Pelagian error.
   a. Always emphasizes good works. Speaks very little of sin. Hurries through redemption, but elaborately develops the third part.
   b. Because here is the opportunity to show what man can do for God. Gratitude is presented as the works of man.
   c. So also true of all synergistic tendencies. God works partly in sanctification, and so do we.
   d. And of those views that regard gratitude as remuneration. God did so much for us; what shall we do for Him?
   e. Over against all this: gratitude is the work of God in us.

II. The true conception.
   A. Good works demanded by the purpose of salvation: God’s glory.
      1. To His glory He made all things.

2. Sin subverted this apparently.
3. Redemption reaches this in the higher sense.
4. Therefore gratitude demanded by the preceding part of the Heidelberg Catechism.

B. Gratitude demanded by the nature of redemption.
   1. Through redemption we are dead unto sin.
      a. Sin is not dead in us.
      b. But we live no more unto her.
   2. Through redemption we are ingrafted into Christ.
      a. In Him as the head is the new life.
      b. By His Spirit in us as in His members.
   3. Therefore good works follow necessarily.
      b. He is heartily willing to live unto Christ.
      c. Therefore he will fight the good fight.
      d. But all of grace.
LORD’S DAY 33

Question 88. Of how many parts doth the true conversion of man consist?
Answer. Of two parts: of the mortification of the old, and the quickening of the new man (Rom. 6:4-6; Eph. 4:22, 23; Col. 3:5; I Cor. 5:7).

Question 89. What is the mortification of the old man?
Answer. It is a sincere sorrow of heart that we have provoked God by our sins, and more and more to hate and flee from them (Ps. 51:3, 8, 17; Luke 15:18; Rom. 8:13; Joel 1:12, 13).

Question 90. What is the quickening of the new man?
Answer. It is a sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ (Rom. 5:1, 2; 14:17; Is. 57:15), and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works (Rom. 6:10, 11; I Pet. 4:2; Gal. 2:20).

Question 91. But what are good works?
Answer. Only those which proceed from a true faith (Rom. 14:23), are performed according to the law of God (I Sam. 15:22; Eph. 2:2, 10), and to His glory (I Cor. 10:31); and not such as are founded on our imaginations or the institutions of men (Deut. 12:32; Ezek. 20:18; Matt. 15:9).

Lord’s Day 33:
The Conversion of the Child of God

I. Its spiritual character.
   A. Conversion vs. regeneration.
      1. Conversion a pet word in some circles: Methodism.
         a. Identify regeneration and conversion.
         b. Deny that an unconverted man can be regenerated.
         c. Hardly ever speak of regeneration; love to speak of conversion; present it as the work of man.
         d. This is quite natural in Pelagian circles. They cannot do anything with regeneration. Must lay all emphasis on conversion.
      2. Therefore we must draw the line.
         a. The mere natural man has no free will to do good. He can only freely refuse to obey the call to conversion, although that is his obligation.
         b. Therefore, conversion, in the nature of the case, cannot be first. Neither can it be the whole of the change which must take place in him.
            1) The very nature is corrupt; the tree is evil.
            2) The very being of that nature must be spiritually charged; the tree must be made good to show the fruit of conversion.
         c. Therefore regeneration is always first.
         d. Distinction:
            1) Regeneration is the spiritual change of man’s being, his inner nature. Conversion takes place in the consciousness.
            2) Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit upon the sinner; conversion works through him, and he becomes active.
3) Regeneration is an act of one moment; conversion continues to the end of our life.

4) Regeneration in this sense is immediate; conversion is always mediate.

B. Conversion as such.

1. Meaning of the word.
   a. Both in English and Dutch = a turning around with respect to God.
   b. In the Old Testament the word is used that simply means “to turn.”
      1) God’s people must walk after God.
      2) When they follow after other gods, the call is to turn, face about.
   c. In the New Testament, two words:
      1) A turning of the mind — metanoiein.
      2) A change of the walk, including change of will — apostrephoo.
   2. The meaning is clear.
      a. In paradise man’s mind and will and walk were turned around to the devil.
      b. In regeneration the principle of a new life is implanted.
      c. That new life is brought to control the mind and will and walk in conversion. Man must think and will and long and speak and walk after God.
   3. Thus the Catechism. Conversion is:
      a. A sorrow over and hatred of sin.
      b. Joy in Christ and a desire to live according to God’s precepts.
      c. Therefore thoroughly spiritual.
         1) No mere outward conversion.
         2) Neither perfection.
         3) But a hatred of sin and a striving for perfection.

II. The Author

A. The Holy Spirit.

1. Impression often left: Man is the author.
   a. Regeneration is the work of the Spirit.
   b. Conversion is the work of man.
   c. But he is incapable of himself to comply.

3. The Spirit, the author (Jer. 31:19; II Tim. 2:25; Acts 5:31).
   a. The Spirit who regenerates remains with us.
   b. That Spirit remains the author even to the moment of glorification.

B. The manner of His work.

1. It is first.
   a. He quickens the new man, turns our mind and will.
   b. We turn the issues of our heart away from sin to Christ. We see, hear, think, speak, etc., differently.

2. Through the instrumentality of the outward call.
   a. Not in a narrow sense, as a great many think. The preaching of the fullness of sin and Christ they
think rather dry. But the mere word, “Repent, come!” they conceive to be the call.

b. But in the healthy sense. Preaching of the full counsel of God. The covenant child lives in the sphere of his calling. Therefore his conversion gradual.

III. Its fruit
A. Good works.
   1. Must proceed from faith.
   2. Must be in harmony with God’s law.
   3. Must be to the praise of His glory.

B. But no perfection.
   1. The old nature does not disappear.
   2. Therefore continual struggle.
   3. Revealing itself in:
      a. Sorrow over sin.
      b. Joy in Christ.
      c. Longing to walk after God.
      d. Thus conversion is the test of our life.

LORD’S DAY 34
Question 92. What is the law of God?
Answer. God spake all these words (Ex. 20, Deut. 5) saying….

Question 93. How are these commandments divided?
Answer. Into two tables (Ex. 34:28, 29): the first of which teaches us how we must behave towards God; the second, what duties we owe to our neighbor (Deut. 4:13; 10:3, 4).

Lord’s Day 34a:
The Law of the Lord in General (Q/A 92, 93)

I. Its form.
A. The law-giving as such.
   1. Different laws given.
      a. Civil.
      b. Ceremonial.
      c. The Decalogue.
         1) Spoken by God in the ears of all the people.
         2) Engraved in the two stone tables by God’s own finger.
   2. Difference in character.
      a. Civil and ceremonial laws finished in Christ.
      b. Moral law fulfilled by Him, but not finished. Is essentially eternal.

B. Form expresses completeness.
   1. Expressed in the number ten.
   2. Expressed in its being engraved in stone tables.
   3. Expressed in the tables being covered on both sides; cannot add to it.
   4. Complete in the sense that the ten commandments are representative of ten spheres of our life.
      a. Not in the narrower, literal sense.
      b. But in the broader sense that they cover our whole life in relation to God and man.

C. Form is old dispensational, negative.
   1. Much in the law applies to Israel as such, as a nation;
think of the fifth commandment, the tenth, the fourth.

2. Negative form points to our imperfect life.
   a. The law is prohibitive: “Thou shalt not.”
   b. Points to the inclination of our sinful nature to violate the law.

II. Its spiritual contents.
   A. Not expressed in its prohibitive form.
      1. Prohibition is sufficient for the civil law.
         a. The magistrate bears the sword.
         b. That sword is prohibitive.
         c. If you listen to the prohibition the civil law is satisfied. Example: “Thou shalt not murder.”
      2. Not so the law of God.
         a. The Lord is our Sovereign. Hence, He has the right to demand that we serve Him. (Even in our earthly life an employer cannot be satisfied when his employee refrains from doing some things. He might not break things in the shop, or maltreat and kill his fellow servants, but sit down on the bench all day; and he will be discharged.)
         b. Hence, the law of God is positive essentially.

   B. The positive idea is love.
      1. Negatively expressed the law would say:
         a. Thou shalt not hate the Lord thy God, thy neighbor.

      2. But positively the law demands love.
         a. Cannot be neutral over against God. He is God; we are made after His image.
         b. Hence, not to hate Him is to love, as not to love Him is to hate.

   3. Relation of the two tables in this respect.
      a. First table pertains to God: love Him.
      b. Second table pertains to the neighbor: love him.
      c. Intimately related. The first is not the greater, but the great commandment. The second is like unto it, rooted in it. Love of the neighbor must be love of God essentially.

III. Necessity for the Christian.
   A. Not as a certain covenant of works.
      1. Many object to the preaching of the law.
         a. Christ has fulfilled the law.
         b. The Christian has inner light; he is free from the law.
         c. Anyway impossible to keep the law.
         d. Cultivates Phariseeism. Hence, let us have no law-preaching.
      2. This not the purpose, as is plain from the introduction, “I am the Lord thy God,” etc.
         a. Egypt is the slavery of sin.
Question 94. What doth God enjoin in the first commandment?

Answer. That I, as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my own soul, avoid and flee from all idolatry (I Cor. 6:9, 10; 10:7, 14), sorcery, soothsaying, superstition (Lev. 18:21; Deut. 18:10-12), invocation of saints, or any other creatures (Matt. 4:10; Rev. 19:10); and learn rightly to know the only true God (John 17:3); trust in Him alone (Jer. 17:5, 7), with humility and patience (Heb. 10:36; Col. 1:11; Rom. 5:3, 4; Phil. 2:14) submit to Him (I Pet. 5:5, 6); expect all good things from Him only (Ps. 104:27; Is. 45:7; James 1:17); love (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37), fear (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 10:28), and glorify (Matt. 4:10) Him with my whole heart; so that I renounce and for sake all creatures (Matt. 5:29, 30; Acts. 5:29; Matt. 10:37), rather than commit even the least thing contrary to His will (Matt. 5:19).

Question 95. What is idolatry?

Answer. Idolatry is, instead of, or besides that one true God who has manifested Himself in His Word, to contrive or have any other object in which men place their trust (II Chron. 16:12; Phil. 3:18, 19; Gal. 4:8; Eph. 2:12).

Lord’s Day 34b:
The First Commandment (Q/A 94, 95)

I. Prohibiting idolatry.

A. Man must serve some God.

1. Many imagine three possibilities.
   a. Serve the true God.
   b. Serve an idol.
   c. Serve no god at all.

2. This is not true.
   a. Practical atheists impossible. Man cannot change his nature; the image of God postulates that he is a servant.
   b. Hence, he always serves some God, whoever he may be.

3. This is presupposed in the first commandment.
   a. It is either other gods or Me.
   b. The presupposition is: if ye do not serve other gods, ye serve Me.

B. The reason for this.

1. He is made after God’s image.
   a. Implies that he is adapted to God.
   b. The indelible consciousness that there is a God belongs to his nature.
   c. He needs a God; his nature cries out for one.
   d. Hence, his inclination to seek another god if he departs from the true God.

2. He was made a servant.
   a. To be a servant belongs to his nature.
   b. Sin did not change his nature essentially.
   c. Hence, even evil man will seek some god to serve.

3. All things proclaim his dependence.
   a. Man neither made nor sustains the world.
b. He is dependent on all things over which he has no control.
c. Impresses upon him the fact of a power stronger than he.
d. Hence, he seeks a god to rely on, trust in.

4. There is the fact of the curse.
a. The powers stronger than he turn against him.
b. Thus, in fire and water, the wild beasts, destructive forces of nature, sickness, death, pestilence.
c. The sinner seeks protection, feels helpless.

C. The practical significance of this.
1. Idolatry is not simply the bowing down before a visible object.
a. We might have that impression.
b. Look for idolaters among heathendom, not in your own heart.

2. But the acknowledgement of some power:
a. Within me or outside of me.
b. On which I rely, absolutely or next to God.

c. Is idolatry as really as actual polytheism.

II. Demanding service of God only.
This implies:
A. That we serve the one true God.
   1. Know Him rightly.
   2. Trust in Him alone.
   3. Submit to Him.
   4. Glorify Him.
B. That we serve Him with our whole heart.
   1. No division of life.
      a. A small part religious.
      b. A larger part having nothing to do with religion.
      c. Life cannot so be divided.
   2. But our whole life.
      a. As individuals, with body and soul.
      b. In our various relationships: home, church, the world, everywhere.
C. Antithetically as of God’s party.
   1. Live in the world of sin.
   2. Must be God’s witnesses.
D. In the shade of the cross.
   1. Law teaches our many imperfections and shortcomings.
   2. Redemption and forgiveness in the blood of Christ.
LORD’S DAY 35

Question 96. What doth God require in the second commandment?
Answer. That we in no wise represent God by images (Deut. 4:15; Is. 40:18; Rom. 1:23ff.; Acts 17:29), nor worship Him in any other way than He has commanded in His Word (I Sam. 15:23; Deut. 12:30).

Question 97. Are images then not at all to be made?
Answer. God neither can nor may be represented by any means (Deut. 4:15, 16; Is. 46:5; Rom. 1:23). But as to creatures, though they may be represented, yet God forbids to make or have any resemblance of them either in order to worship them or to serve God by them (Ex. 23:24; 34:13, 14; Num. 33:52; Deut. 7:5).

Question 98. But may not images be tolerated in the churches as books to the laity?
Answer. No; for we must not pretend to be wiser than God, who will have His people taught, not by dumb images (Jer. 10:1ff.; Hab. 2:18, 19), but by the lively preaching of His Word (II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:19).

Lord’s Day 35:
Image Worship

I. What it is.
A. In distinction from idolatry.
1. Evident that there is distinction.
   a. From the fact that there are two commandments.
   b. From the addition: “I am a jealous God,” etc.
2. What is the distinction?
   a. First commandment deals with God in His Being; the putting of another God instead of Him.
   b. The second commandment deals with His revelation; the construing of a false conception of God.
B. As such.
   1. You make an image.
      a. The idea of which is derived from the creature: in heaven, on earth, or under the earth.
      b. Either materially or spiritually (mentally).
   2. You assert that God is as your image.
      a. Deprives God of the glory of His attributes.
      b. Draws Him down into the sphere of the creature.
C. How to explain.
   1. A refusal to listen to God’s revelation: in nature, in Scripture, or in both.
   2. An attempt of man’s foolish mind to determine how God must be; hence, pride, self-exaltation.

II. Its positive contrast.
A. Submit to God’s revelation.
   1. God only can determine how He is.
   2. Our mind must be submissive.
   3. Our will must be in subjection.
B. In the highest sense in Christ.
   1. Certainly also revealed in nature: the heathen image worshiper sins against it.
   2. Yet centrally in Christ.
   3. And only through His grace we receive that revelation.

III. Its punishment.
A. What it is.
   1. Causing God’s holy jealousy to maintain His glory.
2. This glory trampled down by image worship.
3. This sin revenged by a punishment of sin with sin (Rom. 1).
4. In generations.
   a. Not as if the sin of the fathers were visited upon the children.
   b. But “upon them that hate me.” Sin develops organically in generations.
B. Its contrast.
   1. God loves His people for His name’s sake.

LORD’S DAY 36

Question 99. What is required in the third commandment?
Answer. That we, not only by cursing (Lev. 24:11; 19:12; Matt. 5:37; Lev. 5:4) or perjury, but also by rash swearing (Is. 45:23, 24), must not profane or abuse the name of God; nor by silence or connivance be partakers of these horrible sins in others; and, briefly, that we use the holy name of God no otherwise than with fear and reverence (Matt. 10:32); so that He may be rightly confessed and worshiped by us (I Tim. 2:8), and be glorified in all our words and works (I Cor. 3:16, 17).

Question 100. Is then the profaning of God’s name by swearing and cursing so heinous a sin that His wrath is kindled against those who do not endeavor, as much as in them lies, to prevent and forbid such cursing and swearing?
Answer. It undoubtedly is, for there is no sin greater or more provoking to God than the profaning of His name (Lev. 5:1); and therefore He has commanded this sin to be punished with death (Lev. 24:15).

Lord’s Day 36:
God’s Will Concerning His Name

I. The name.
   A. Relation between this commandment and the preceding.
      1. The first commandment dealt with God Himself.
      2. The second commandment dealt with God’s revelation.
      3. The third commandment deals with our attitude: for in His name He stands before us.
   B. What is the name?
      1. In a very general sense all that is revealed of God (Ps. 8:1; Ex. 23:21).

II. Its vain use.
   A. Significance.
      1. In your use of God’s name you express the inmost atti-
tude of your heart over against God.

2. To use God’s name in vain is to use it in the sphere of vanity.
   a. Vanity is that which is empty, idle, without reality.
   b. Hence, used for wickedness, darkness, sin.

3. Vain use of God’s name is either:
   a. To use God’s name as if it belonged in the sphere of darkness.
   b. Or from a sinful motive in our own hearts.
   c. A terrible sin.
      1) No fear of God before our eyes.
      2) Filled with contempt and hatred toward God.

B. How explained.
   1. Man is prophet of God.
      a. He was created to take the name of God upon his lips.
      b. To speak about Him in reverence.
      c. To address Him in covenant communion.
   2. Sin is the spiritual antithesis to this.

   a. The carnal mind is enmity against God.
   b. But still speaks.
   c. And hence curses and swears in bitter hatred.

C. The forms it assumes.
   1. Thoughtless expression of God’s name.
   2. Positive swearing for emphasis in madness, drunken revelry, silly hilarity, etc.
   3. In the false oath.

III. Its proper use.
   A. What it is.
      1. That we express the name of God as His covenant people.
      2. That we are eager to learn of His name and its glory.
      3. That it is our delight to glorify that name.
      4. That we confess His name.

   B. Possible only by grace.
      1. By nature in darkness.
      2. But Christ is our prophet.
      3. And we are prophets through Him.
      4. Only a small principle. Hence, also here we keep this commandment in the shade of the cross.
LORD’S DAY 37

Question 101. May we then swear religiously by the name of God?
Answer. Yes; either when the magistrates demand it of the subjects, or when necessity requires us thereby to confirm fidelity and truth to the glory of God and the safety of our neighbor (Ex. 22:11; Neh. 13:25); for such an oath is founded on God’s Word (Deut. 6:13; Heb. 6:16), and therefore was justly used by the saints both in the Old and New Testament (Gen. 21:24; Josh. 9:15, 19; I Sam. 24:22; II Cor. 1:23; Rom. 1:9).

Question 102. May we also swear by saints or any other creatures?
Answer. No; for a lawful oath is calling upon God, as the only one who knows the heart, that He will bear witness to the truth, and punish me if I swear falsely (II Cor. 1:23); which honor is due to no creature (Matt. 5:34, 35).

Lord’s Day 37:
The Oath

I. The oath as such.
   A. What it is.
      1. Definition:
         a. It is the using of God’s name for the purpose of attesting to the truth of one’s statement.
         b. Hence, in the oath one expresses:
            1) That he stands consciously in the presence of God.
            2) And that he takes God to witness and to corroborate his statement.
      2. How it is used.
         a. Often in a trivial way. Some people always ready to swear an oath whether required of them or not. Are not to be trusted; vain persons. Superficial. Wicked.
         b. In perjury. False oath is terrible. An attempt to make God witness to the lie.
         c. Oaths sworn to what is secret. To establish a pledge to what is unknown, as in secret societies. Reckless. Would have God to corroborate a surrender to the power of sinful men. All such oaths and similar ones to be condemned.
   B. The oath as such not sinful.
      1. Anabaptists and Quakers claim it is.
         a. The oath is always wrong; inherently sinful.
      2. Yet evident from the Word of God that the oath in itself cannot be sinful.
         b. Christ allowed Himself to be placed under oath (Matt. 26:36, 64).
         c. The oath was commanded in the law in the old dispensation (Ex. 22:11; Num. 5:21).
         d. The saints swear an oath repeatedly. Abraham takes an oath of Eliezer; Joseph of his brethren; Paul swears an oath (II Cor. 1:23).
      3. Conclusion:
a. It is not sinful to swear an oath. The sinfulness is not in the oath as such.
b. This the basis of our contention that in some instances it may be used to attest the truth.

II. The oath in God’s kingdom.
A. How the objections of the Quakers, etc., have been met.
1. Their objections:
   a. They object to the oath absolutely, claiming it is sinful.
   b. They refuse absolutely and are exempt from swearing an oath even before the magistrates.
   c. And they claim that Scripture literally forbids it. Swear not at all. The statements in Matthew and James seem to be conclusive.

2. How these objections have been met.
   a. It is said that Jesus and also James forbid to swear by other objects outside of God: heaven, earth, Jerusalem, our head. But:
      1) The argument is exactly that all these stand in relation to God. The Jews tried to avoid the real oath by swearing by something else. Jesus teaches that this is impossible. They swear by God just the same; and He says, “Do not.”

   2) Besides, the statement is emphatic: swear not at all, and instead let your yea and nay be sufficient.

   b. Another explanation is that Jesus warns against trivial swearing only. The Jews swore easily on the most trivial occasions. Jesus reacts against this evil custom. But:
      1) Plainly against the text. The reaction is surely absolute: “Swear not at all.”
      2) Does not explain the text in James.

B. Our explanation.
1. Jesus in the sermon on the mount and James in his epistle speak to the church, the subjects of the kingdom.
   a. They are described as pure in heart, poor in spirit, mourning ones, etc.
   b. And their life in relation to God and to one another in the world is circumscribed.

2. Jesus lays down the spiritual law of the kingdom for them.
   a. Not another Decalogue. They have the law of God written in their heart.
   b. But a spiritual law, i.e., a description of the proper manifestation of the life of God that is in their hearts.

3. According to this spiritual law, there can be no oath.
   a. The oath presupposes sin though itself is not sinful.
      1) It presupposes the lie. No room for the oath
in perfection because there is no possibility of the lie.

2) It presupposes lack of confidence in one another. Where love is perfect, an oath can have no place. Yea and Nay must always be sufficient.

b. Besides, it presupposes that we do not always live in communion with God.

1) If we were, Yea and Nay would have the same value as an oath. God would always be present.

2) The oath expresses that we are not, except when we intentionally call upon Him.

c. Conclusion: Hence, swear not at all, i.e., let the lie, lack of confidence, of love and trust, of consciousness of God’s fellowship not be found among you. Then the oath will disappear from your midst as children of the kingdom.

III. In public law.

A. The mistake of the Quakers, etc.

1. Twofold:

a. That the oath is in itself sinful. This not so.

b. That they apply the spiritual precepts of the kingdom of God to the world. This is not possible.

2. The magistrates bear the sword.

a. Presupposes sin.

b. Their calling:

1) To protect the good.

2) To punish evil doers.

c. This does not mean that they actually do it, but their calling it is.

3. Hence, the magistrate must expect the lie and other forms of sin.

a. In God’s kingdom there must be the truth, mutual confidence, love, etc., and there it may be expected.

b. Not so with the magistrate. Its sword expects that all men are liars and certainly is not token of mutual confidence.

B. Hence the oath:

1. May be demanded by the magistrate.

a. Not simply because it is the magistrate. If the oath in itself were sinful, no magistrate could have the right to demand it.

b. But because he is God’s revenger in a sinful world.

c. Of course, the magistrate remains responsible for the manner in which and the occasion for which the oath is required.

2. And the child of God may take the oath.

a. For the oath is not sinful.

b. Because he submits to the sword.

c. Because he of all men can take an oath.

C. Conclusion.

1. Swear not at all.

a. This must be the ideal for the church of God.

b. And this implies:
1) Walk in the light. Let the lie, slander, secret conspiracy, backbiting, distrust, bitterness, and such like not be found among you.

2) Love one another. Love neither lies nor distrust.

3) Let your life continually be in communion with God. Live before His face.

2. And in the world.
   a. When God’s glory;
   b. Our faith;
   c. The well-being of the neighbor;
   d. The magistrate demand it;
   e. Let the oath be a confession of the name of your covenant God.

**LORD’S DAY 38**

**Question 103. What doth God require in the fourth commandment?**

**Answer.** First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained (Deut. 12:19; Tit. 1:5; I Tim. 3:14, 15; I Cor. 9:11; II Tim. 2:2; I Tim. 3:15); and that I, especially on the Sabbath, that is, on the day of rest (Lev. 23:3), diligently frequent the church of God (Acts 2:42, 46; I Cor. 14:19, 29, 31; 11:33), to hear His word, to use the sacraments, publicly to call upon the Lord (I Tim. 2:1), and contribute to the relief of the poor (I Cor. 16:2), as becomes a Christian. Secondly, that all the days of my life I cease from my evil works, and yield myself to the Lord, to work by His Holy Spirit in me; and thus begin in this life the eternal Sabbath (Is. 66:23).

Lord’s Day 38:
The Celebration of the Lord’s Sabbath

I. Its ideal.
   A. The idea in general.
      1. God rests.
         a. The central idea of the Sabbath is rest.
         b. Reflection of God’s rest (Gen. 2:2, 3; Fourth Commandment; Heb. 4:1).
      2. Significance of God’s rest.
         a. It cannot be that God is idle. God’s work is rest, and rest is work.
         b. But two things:
            1) That He finished a certain handiwork.
            2) That He rejoices and glorifies Himself in that finished work.
   3. Our entering into that rest.
      a. Thus the idea of the Sabbath repeatedly expressed in Scripture (Ps. 95; Heb. 4).
      b. Hence, man’s purpose is:
         1) To labor and work God’s work.
         2) To enter into His rest.
   B. Idea of our weekly Sabbath.
      1. First of all a picture.
         a. Causes a constantly returning six plus one in our lives.
         b. Symbolic of our whole life. Laboring to enter into the final rest (Heb. 4).
      2. Secondly, a preparation.
a. While we are still expecting a final rest, we are laboring.
b. We must rest one day of the seven of these labors.
c. Specially to prepare for the entering into God’s rest.

3. Foretaste of the eternal rest.
   a. We literally withdraw from things earthly.
b. And lift up our hearts to the things heavenly.

4. Conclusion:
   a. We must enter into the rest of God.
b. With respect to this rest, our weekly Sabbath is a symbol, preparation, and an earnest.

II. Celebration.
   A. As to the day. Scripture speaks of different Sabbaths.
      1. Before the fall.
         a. Adam was to enter into God’s rest in the way of obedience.
b. Hence, the Sabbath at the end of the weekly period of labor.
      2. The Sabbath of salvation.
         a. Adam falls, and God begins a new work, the work of salvation.
b. This work is not completely finished until Christ returns. Then the final Sabbath.
c. But there is a historical development in different stages.
   1) God prepares Israel a rest in the land of Canaan. This still a typical rest.
   2) God finishes principally the work of salvation in Christ’s resurrection.
   3) Into that finished work we now enter. Hence we celebrate no more the Sabbath of creation. Adventism is wrong, cannot see the development in God’s work.

   B. As to the manner.
      1. Its positive element.
         a. Our celebration of the Sabbath must be such that in a particular way we live the life of the risen Lord, seek the things that are above, not those that are on earth.
b. With a view to the final rest we must so celebrate the weekly Sabbath that:
   1) It is an image of the eternal.
      2) It prepares for it.
      3) Gives us a foretaste of it.
c. For that reason assembling in communion of saints, meeting our covenant God in the sanctuary, being instructed from His Word, receiving the blessing of His covenant, caring for the things of His kingdom and His church. These belong to our sabbath works.

      2. Negative elements.
         a. Cessation from earthly labors.
b. The reason is:
1) Not that these labors become sinful on special days.
2) But that cessation from them must create room for the exercise of the heavenly things.
c. Good practice to extend this cessation till early Saturday afternoon. Bad to labor so late Saturday night that we carry the effect of it all through the Sabbath.

III. Importance.
A. For our life here.
1. Prepares us to do God’s work.
2. Will have a heavenly influence upon our whole life.
3. Hence, desecration of the Sabbath a bad sign.
B. Prepares for heaven.
1. Quickens the new life.
2. Strengthens our hope.
3. Fixes our eye on the things to come.

LORD’S DAY 39
Question 104. What doth God require in the fifth commandment?
Answer. That I show all honor, love, and fidelity to my father and mother and all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction with due obedience (Eph. 6:1, 2, ff.; Col. 3:18, 20; Eph. 5:22; Rom. 1:31); and also patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities (Prof. 23:22), since it pleases God to govern us by their hand (Eph. 6:5, 6; Col. 3:19, 21; Rom. 13:1-8; Matt. 22:21).

Lord’s Day 39:
Authority and Obedience

I. The meaning of these.
A. Their idea.
1. The Catechism conceives of the fifth commandment in a very general sense.
   a. All that have authority over me.
   b. I must show honor, love, and faith.
   c. And submit to them.
2. This also in Scripture. Emphasizes various relations and authority and obedience.
   a. Children with regard to their parents.
   b. The wife in regard to her husband.
   c. The believer in relation to the elders.
   d. The subject with relation to the magistrate
   e. The servant with relation to his master. All these relations covered by the fifth commandment.
3. The relation as such implies:
   a. The power to command on the part of one man with relation to another and to expect obedience.
   b. The power to forbid.
   c. The power to punish and the obligation to submit to that punishment.
B. The ground or basis.
   1. Cannot be in man.
      a. Are in themselves all equal. Equal in creation, equal in sin.
      b. There can be no ground of authority in him.
         1) Cannot be found in the fact that he brought me forth and is my father.
         2) Nor in the fact that he is older and of more experience.
         3) Still less in the fact that he is stronger and can force me into submission.
         4) Nor even in a mutual contract or in the will of the majority.
      c. Nor is obedience for any of these reasons the keeping of God’s law.
   2. But only for God’s sake and from Him.
      a. God is the sole sovereign and source of all sovereignty.
      b. He only has the power to clothe some with authority and demand obedience of others.
   3. Hence, the proper principle.
      a. One who exercises authority must do so from love of God, for God’s sake, according to His precepts. Only then does he obey the fifth commandment.
      b. One who is in subjection must obey his superiors for God’s sake and hence as long as it does not bring him into conflict with God’s will. In the latter condition he refuses to obey and submits to their punishment, leaving his case with God.

II. With application to various spheres in life.
   A. The family.
      1. The right relation.
         a. Parents must exercise authority for God’s sake, as before God’s face, and in His fear.
         b. Children must obey, honor, and show fidelity, not because they are small and weak, but in the fear of the Lord.
      2. Many evils.
         a. Parents are frequently from home. Parties, company, theaters, etc. Hardly see their children. Left to nurse-maids. Positive instruction in the fear of the Lord very little. Even on Sunday they must still go to Sunday School instead of keeping them at home.
         b. Or the child is worshiped. The child on the throne and the parent on his knees asking, “Lord, what wilt thou have me do?” child must first judge whether anything is good before it obeys or must be coaxed with promises and presents.
         c. Over against this all the principle must be maintained: exercise of authority and obedience for God’s sake only and from
the principle of the love of God.

B. In regard to the magistrates.
   1. The authority of the magistrate is also derived from the fifth commandment.
      a. The family is the organic basis of all life in the present world.
      b. From the family develop all the various relationships, also the relation of subject and magistrate.
      c. Hence, parental authority is fundamental for all authority.
   2. This verified in history.
      a. Government was not instituted at a certain period.
      b. But the father became the head of the clan, ruler of the tribe, king of the nation. Organic development.
   3. The influence of sin.
      a. Government does not exist for sin’s sake, no more than the authority in the home was created because of sin.
      b. But the sword is given to the government because of sin.
   4. Hence, the calling of the magistrates.
      a. To punish evil doers.
      b. To protect the good (Rom. 13).
      c. For God’s sake, in God’s name, according to God’s precepts and from love to God.
   5. And the calling of the Christian citizen.
      a. To show all honor, obedience, and fidelity to those who are in authority over them.
      b. Again from the same principle of the fear of God and limited by God’s own precepts. He obeys, providing there is no conflict with the expressed will of God. He submits to their punishment when he refuses to obey.

C. In the church.
   1. God establishes a new kingdom.
      a. He anointed His King over Zion.
      b. This King establishes this kingdom by His own blood.
      c. Rules the kingdom by the spiritual power of His Word and Spirit.
      d. And the subjects acknowledge Him as King and desire that all things shall be according to His Word.
   2. This kingdom is still in this world.
      a. From a natural point of view the subjects are one with the human race and live the whole life of that race in all its relationships.
      b. It is their purpose:
         1) To maintain their identity as church of the living God. As such it has an institute, has its own government, and maintains to be sovereign in its own sphere. It
does not submit the key-power to the sword-power, but handles the keys only in the name of Christ.

2) That the government shall reveal itself according to God’s ordinances in the world. It must demand that the magistrate be Christian, and it must condemn the magistrates, etc., who are not.

3. The development.
   a. The sinful world most generally possesses the world power.
   b. Hence, inevitable persecution.
   c. Culminating in the persecution of the Antichrist.
   d. But Christ possesses all power. He rules, protects the good, His people; punishes the evil doer; is King eternal.

LORD’S DAY 40

Question 105. What doth God require in the sixth commandment?

Answer. That neither in thoughts, nor words, nor gestures, much less in deeds, I dishonor, hate, wound, or kill my neighbor, by myself or by another (Matt. 5:21, 22; Prov. 12:18; Matt. 26:52); but that I lay aside all desire of revenge (Eph. 4:26; Rom. 12:19; Matt. 5:39, 40); also, that I hurt not myself, nor willfully expose myself to any danger (Matt. 4:5-7; Col. 2:23). Wherefore also the magistrate is armed with the sword to prevent murder (Gen. 9:6; Matt. 26:52; Rom. 13:4).

Question 106. But this commandment seems only to speak of murder.

Answer. In forbidding murder, God teaches us that He abhors the causes thereof, such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge (James 1:20; Gal. 5:20; Rom. 1:29; I John 2:9); and that He accounts all these as murder (I John 3:15).

Question 107. But is it enough that we do not kill any man in the manner mentioned above?

Answer. No; for when God forbids envy, hatred, and anger, He commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:39; 7:12); to show patience, peace, meekness, mercy, and all kindness towards him (Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:2; Gal. 6:1, 2; Matt. 5:5; Rom. 12:18; Ex. 23:5), and prevent his hurt as much as in us lies (Matt. 5:45); and that we do good, even to our enemies (Rom. 12:20).

Lord’s Day 40:
Love to the Neighbor’s Person

I. Destroyed by sin.
   A. Mentioned in the Catechism.
      1. As follows:
         a. Consisting in hatred, envy, wrath, revenge.
         b. Characterized as being very murder.
         c. Pictured as belonging to our sinful nature to be put off by the Christian.

   2. Thus in harmony with Scripture.
      a. I John 3:15, “One who hates his brother is a murderer.”
      b. Titus 3:3, “We were one time hateful and hating one another.”
      c. Romans 3:14-16, “Our mouth full of cursing and
bitterness, feet swift to shed blood.”

3. The sinner as such is a murderer, actually destroys the neighbor’s life.

B. How to be explained.
   1. Love is of God.
      a. God is love in Himself. Lives a life of perfect love.
      b. Is the source of love for man who is created to reflect God’s life.
      c. Was such for man in the state of righteousness.
         Hence:
         1) He loved God above all.
         2) The neighbor for God’s sake.
         3) For also that neighbor was child and image of God.
   2. Destroyed by sin. Changed to hatred.
      a. He not only separates himself from the source of love, but turns about against God.
      b. Thus he becomes a hater of God (Rom. 8:5-8).
         Hence:
         1) A hater of the image of God.
         2) A murderer of man.
         3) Especially of God’s child.
         4) In the highest sense, of Christ.
   C. How it reveals itself in different forms.
      1. As homicide, manslaughter.
         a. For gain.
         b. For revenge.
         c. Or even for the pleasure of murdering.
         a. As practiced in the civilized world.
         b. Whether in the destruction of the underdeveloped seed or in the prevention of birth.
   3. Indirectly in many ways.
      a. A mad ox among Israel; the owner held to be the murderer if he knew the character of the ox.
      b. Examples of this nature can be multiplied in modern life.
   4. Murder with the tongue.
   5. Murder in thought.

D. In respect to the magistrate.
   1. He has the calling to use the sword.
      a. Versus the personal murderer (capital punishment).
      b. Versus the national murderer (war).
   2. The magistrate turns murderer:
      a. When he kills the righteous knowingly.
      b. When he seeks war for various unrighteous reasons.

II. Restored in Christ.
   A. Christ changes the root.
      1. This is necessary.
         a. The external means incompetent to fight murder.
         b. Not even the law is able to check it.
            1) First because it is not called to check, but to punish.
            2) Because it can punish only the external
III. Manifested in a sinful world.
   A. Imperfection of this present time.
      1. In perfection no more problems.
         a. Because the church itself will be perfect.
         b. Because no more an evil world.
      2. Such perfection not yet reached.
         a. Church characterized by much sin.
         b. And exists in a sinful world which hates and kills.
   3. Hence, a threefold question: how must the sixth commandment be applied:
      a. To our relation to those that do us evil?
      b. To our relation to those in misery and suffering?
      c. To those who hate God?

B. The keeping of this commandment in the midst of this imperfection.
   1. The exercise of meekness.
      a. Versus those that hate you.
      b. Doing well to them that persecute you.
   2. Exercising of spiritual hatred (Ps. 139).
   3. Exercise of peace because of the peace of God being in our hearts.
   4. Exercise of mercy because you have obtained mercy.

B. Hence, the root is destroyed.
   1. Love of God is first.
      a. Love wherewith God loved us.
      b. Is spread abroad in our hearts.
      c. Responds principally in love to God.
   2. From it flows the love to one another.
      a. According as we walk in the light.
      b. The relation is radically changed.
         1) Instead of destroying the life of others,
         2) We will give our lives for our brethren.
LORD’S DAY 41

Question 108. What doth the seventh commandment teach us?
Answer. That all uncleanness is accursed of God (Lev. 18:27); and that therefore we must with all our hearts detest the same (Deut. 29:20-23), and live chastely and temperately (1 Thess. 4:3, 4), whether in holy wedlock or in single life (Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 7:4-9).

Question 109. Doth God forbid in this commandment only adultery and such like gross sins?
Answer. Since both our body and soul are temples of the Holy Ghost, He commands us to preserve them pure and holy; therefore He forbids all unchaste actions (Eph. 5:3; 1 Cor. 6:18), gestures, words, thoughts, desires (Matt. 5:28), and whatever can entice men thereto (Eph. 5:18; 1 Cor. 15:33).

Lord’s Day 41:
Marriage for God’s Sake

I. The covenant bond and the bond of matrimony.
   A. The relation between the two maintained in Scripture.
      1. The Old Testament: Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 3:14; Hosea 2:19, 20; Psalm 45; Song of Solomon.
   B. Explanation of this relation.
      1. Covenant is a communion of life.
         a. Such in the triune God.
         b. Such between God and His people.
         c. Such between man and wife.
      2. Based on likeness.
         a. The essential likeness in the Godhead.
         b. The image-likeness in man.
         c. The natural image-likeness of the woman taken out of the man; bone of his bone.
      3. An exclusive relation.
         a. Thus in the Trinity; an exclusive divine love.
         b. Thus in God’s covenant with us; we cannot serve God and Mammon.
         c. Thus in matrimony: love of another is adultery.

II. Covenant-breaking and adultery.
   A. Thus in Scripture.
      1. Adultery begins in the covenant between God and man.
         a. Because that covenant relation is fundamental.
         b. Because faithlessness in that covenant affects our whole life, causing adultery in matrimony too.
      2. Thus emphasized in the Word of God.
         a. The Old Testament Israel is a harlot, whoring after other gods.
         b. In the New Testament the apostate church is the great harlot, Babylon.
   B. Explained principally.
      1. Sin is adultery.
         a. Man violates the covenant bond of God.
         b. Establishes a covenant bond with the devil, whores after him; spiritual adultery.
      2. This spiritual adultery becomes reflected in the natural adultery.
a. Normally, the principle of matrimonial life is the love of God.
b. From this principle, marriage will be a reflection of God’s marriage with us.
c. Sin destroys both: the principle and the reflection of it. Changes it into adultery.

C. The practice of it in actual life.
   1. Outside the tie of matrimony.
      a. Young men and young women before marriage.
      b. Living a devilish imitation of the matrimonial covenant bond.
   2. Breaking the tie of matrimony.
      a. Principally a turning from the one husband by the one wife, and vice versa.
      b. Either by:
         1) Divorce.
         2) Legally maintaining the one and having intercourse with the other.
   3. Sins unspeakable which yet must be mentioned.
      a. Men with men doing that which is unseemly.
      b. Self-pollution of men and women, etc.
   4. Thus an adulterous world.
      a. Both spiritual and natural.
      b. In lower and higher society.
      c. Manifest not only in actual deed, but in speech, dress, gesture, pictures, suggestions, colors, plays, and general manifestations of life.

III. Grace and the marriage bond.
A. Principally restored.
   1. God maintains His covenant.
      a. His love everlasting.
      b. Does not divorce His people though they are adulterers.
      c. Looks up his adulterous wife, cleanses her, and restores the bond forever.
   2. In Christ Jesus.
      a. In whose incarnation God unites Himself with us.
      b. In whose death God reconciles us unto Himself.
      c. By whose Spirit He draws us into union with Himself.

B. Controls our marriage life.
   1. A reflection again of the communion of life between Christ and His church.
   2. A reflection of that communion of love existing between Christ and His church.
      a. Also revealing itself in willingness to forgive one another.
      b. Divorce not necessary, though allowable on the basis of adultery.
   3. A reflection of the exclusive union in the one man and the one woman.
   4. A reflection of the purity of that union. Our body a temple of the Holy Spirit. Desire to flee from all uncleanness as Christ loves His church in purity.
   5. Finally, a means for the realization of the spiritual union between Christ and His church.

C. Practically a battle.
   1. Not perfectly delivered.
2. Therefore we must fight.
   a. Inwardly; watch and pray.
   b. Outwardly; versus an adulterous world; selection of friends, of literature, of speech, dress, gesture, suggestions, etc. Avoidance of whatever smacks of sin. Let it not be named among you.

3. In the shadow of the cross.
   a. Though your sins be as scarlet, there is forgiveness there.
   b. And if you have sinned in this respect, sin no more.

**LORD’S DAY 42**

**Question 110. What doth God forbid in the eighth commandment?**

**Answer.** God forbids not only those thefts (I Cor. 6:10) and robberies (I Cor. 5:10) which are punishable by the magistrate; but He comprehends under the name of theft all wicked tricks and devices whereby we design to appropriate to ourselves the goods which belong to our neighbor (Luke 3:14, I Thess. 4:6), whether it be by force, or under the appearance of right, as by unjust weights (Prov. 11:1), ells, measures (Ezek. 45:9-11; Deut. 25:13), fraudulent merchandise, false coins, usury (Ps. 15:5; Luke 6:35), or by any other way forbidden by God; as also all covetousness (I Cor. 6:10), all abuse and waste of His gifts.

**Question 111. But what doth God require in this commandment?**

**Answer.** That I promote the advantage of my neighbor in every instance I can or may, and deal with him as I desire to be dealt with by others (Matt. 7:12); further also that I faithfully labor, so that I may be able to relieve the needy (Prov. 5:16; Eph. 4:28).

**Lord’s Day 42:**

The Christian’s Attitude Toward the Goods of this World

I. Living as possessing nothing.
   A. God is sole possessor.
      1. Because He is Creator.
      2. Because He alone preserves all things.
      3. Because such is His ordinance. He did not abdicate.
   B. Man never more than steward.
      1. This denied by Socialism of all forms.
         a. It says: no private property.
         b. But claims that all things belong to man in common.
      2. And is the basis for the true conception.
         a. No absolute property, either of individual or community.
   b. But stewardship.
   C. This relation denied by sin.
      1. Sin a denial of God’s sovereignty.
      2. Hence, man is a thief in relation to God first. The steward acts as the proprietor.
      3. Therefore the sin against the eighth commandment in all its forms:
         a. As it is punished by the magistrate.
         b. As it is not punished by the magistrate.
         c. As the magistrate himself steals.
   D. The relation restored by grace.
      1. The Christian by grace confesses to be God’s property.
2. Confesses that all things he possesses are God’s property.
3. Therefore it follows:
   a. That the Christian will receive earthly things only in God’s way.
   b. That with relation to them he is a faithful steward.
   c. That he consecrates himself and all things to God.
   d. That he is confident that his heavenly Father will care for them. No social problem.

II. Living as expecting all.
   A. The heavenly things are ultimate.
      1. Man created with a view to eternity.
      2. His calling:
         a. Temporally: to stand in God’s battle.
         b. Stretch himself to the heavenly good of the eternal covenant.
      3. Therefore all earthly things are means to an end.
   B. This relation marred through sin.
      1. Man separated himself.
         a. From spiritual things.
         b. From eternal things.
      2. He has his part in this world.
         a. He desires nothing else.
         b. He strives for nothing else.
      3. Therefore he steals.
         a. Each individual seeks the things below.
   C. Restored in a higher sense through Christ.
      1. The child of God lives in hope.
         a. God prepared him a city.
         b. Of that eternal city he is citizen.
         c. It is the object of his hope.
      2. Therefore he seeks:
         a. Not the things that are on the earth.
            1) Not as if they were sinful in themselves.
            2) But they are not his treasure.
            3) Therefore they serve him simply as a means to an end.
         b. But things that are above.
            1) He expects to be heir of all things; that eternal kingdom is the object of his aspiration.
            2) Therefore he does not steal. Is willing to suffer loss, yea, even of all things, and counts them but dung for the excellency of Christ.
**LORD’S DAY 43**

**Question 112. What is required in the ninth commandment?**

**Answer.** That I bear false witness against no man (Prov. 19:5, 9; 21:28), nor falsify any man’s words (Ps. 15:3); that I be no backbiter, nor slanderer (Rom. 1:29, 30); that I do not judge, nor join in condemning any man rashly or unheard (Matt. 7:1ff.; Luke 6:37); but that I avoid all sorts of lies and deceit (Lev. 19:11) as the proper works of the devil, unless I would bring down upon me the heavy wrath of God (Prov. 12:22; 13:5); likewise, that in judgment and all other dealings I love the truth, speak it uprightly, and confess it (I Cor. 13:6; Eph. 4:25); also that I defend and promote, as much as I am able, the honor and good character of my neighbor (I Pet. 4:8).

Lord’s Day 43:
The Power of an Evil Tongue

I. Its cosmopolitan wickedness.
   A. As described in James 3.
      1. The tongue:
         a. Mentioned as the instrument of human speech.
         b. Used here as a figure of all that is implied in human language: the spoken word, the printed page.
      2. A world of iniquity.
         a. The figure. We sometimes speak of a microcosmos, of a world, a city.
         b. Meaning: the whole world in all its phases is represented from the point of view of its iniquity.
         c. Therefore the tongue a world of iniquity. Expresses that there is no iniquity conceivable which cannot be committed by the tongue. It is cosmopolitan.
   B. In actual life.
      1. In general. By the tongue one expresses:
         a. His hatred of God and the neighbor.
         b. His adoration of other gods.
         c. His spirit of revolution, disobedience, and strife.
         d. His lust and vile passions, deception and covetousness.
      2. Particularly with a view to the subject in the ninth commandment:
         a. False testimony in judgment.
            1) By the witnesses.
            2) By lawyers. So famous for this that their names are sometimes pronounced “liars.”
            3) By the judge.
         b. In private life.
            1) As in backbiting, talking in the dark, serpent-like, writing of unsigned letters.
            2) Slander, by simply creating an untruth; by telling the truth in a wrong setting; by adding to or subtracting from the truth. Or even by a gesture, a smile, a shrug of the shoulders. By silence when we should speak.
3) In the forms of our conventional life: a polite welcome with a hateful heart, a social smile, etc.

4) In business: cutting down the prices that are first raised; the biggest strawberries on the top of the box; an agent pretending to seek your interest, but meaning his own pocketbook. Surely a cosmopolitan wickedness.

II. Its universal influence.
   A. Meaning of the text in James.
      1. The course of nature.
         a. Literally meaning, as the Dutch has it, “the wheel of our birth.”
         b. Meaning (though there are many interpretations), the wheel that is set revolving at our birth. Therefore the entire course of life, individually, religiously, socially.
      2. Set on fire by the tongue.
         a. The tongue is a fire.
         b. Causes conflagration.
         c. Sets fire to the entire course of life. Corrupts it morally and spiritually in all its relations.
   B. In actual life.
      1. In general.
         a. Think of the spoken words in a Christless pulpit, a godless school, an infidel university, etc.
         b. Here the tongue sets fire to life.

III. Its hellish origin.
   A. In the beginning.
      1. Originally not so.
         a. Apostle does not mean to say that the tongue as such is an evil instrument.
         b. Man was made in God’s image, in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.
         c. The tongue employed in His service. He was God’s prophet and spoke the truth in love.
      2. But through a covenant with the devil.
         a. He is a liar whose name is “slanderer.” He speaks of himself when he lies.
         b. In paradise he wagged his serpent tongue. Man heeded his word, rejecting God’s.
         c. Became a liar by nature. His tongue was lit from hell and became a world of iniquity.
   B. Continually.
      1. He is a friend of the devil.
a. There is spiritual fellowship between the wicked and their father the devil.
b. A continual influence from the father of lies.

2. A continual burning.
a. Of hatred of God and of one another.
b. Of the fire of envy at another’s welfare.
c. Of malice, wishing one’s evil, and all vile passions of sin.

3. The tongue in the service of that all.
a. Is continually set on fire from hell.
b. And continually spreads the conflagration.

IV. Its only cure.
A. Necessity.
1. Worldly cures inefficient.
a. Such as: education, social reform, mutual well-being, necessity of trust in business.
b. Inefficient: do not touch the cause. You cannot check a flood pouring through a break in the dike by dipping water out of it. Neither sweeten the well by painting the pump handle.

2. The source must be cut off.
a. Back of the tongue lies the heart filled with evil.
b. Back of the heart lies hell, spiritual communion with the devil.
c. The supply from hell must be cut off.

B. Reality in Christ.
1. He cut the connection.
a. By paying the price of redemption.
b. By actually delivering us by the power of His grace.

2. He establishes a new connection.
a. He is the truth and the life.
b. And unites us to Himself.

3. Conclusion:
a. An evil tongue a bad sign. Suggests intimate fellowship with the devil.
b. All guilty, but forgiveness in Christ’s blood.
c. Our calling to fight. The evil tongue must not walk among us; must speak the truth in love.
LORD’S DAY 44

Question 113. What doth the tenth commandment require of us?
Answer. That even the smallest inclination or thought contrary to any of God’s commandments never rise in our hearts; but that at all times we hate all sin with our whole heart, and delight in all righteousness (Rom. 7:7ff.).

Question 114. But can those who are converted to God perfectly keep these commandments?
Answer. No; but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience (Rom. 7:14); yet so, that with a sincere resolution they begin to live not only according to some, but all the commandments of God (Rom. 7:22, 15ff.; James 3:2).

Question 115. Why will God then have the ten commandments so strictly preached, since no man in this life can keep them?
Answer. First, that all our lifetime we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature (I John 1:9; Rom. 3:20; 5:13; 7:7), and thus become the more earnest in seeking the remission of sin and righteousness in Christ (Rom. 7:24); likewise, that we constantly endeavor, and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may become more and more conformable to the image of God, till we arrive at the perfection proposed to us in a life to come (I Cor. 9:24; Phil. 3:12-14).

Lord’s Day 44:
A Parting Glance in the Mirror of the Law

I. Revealing our imperfection.
   A. In the light of the commandments.
      1. In the narrowest sense.
         a. The tenth commandment refers to the sin of covetousness.
         b. As such it implies:
            1) You shall not yearn after worldly goods given to your neighbor.
            2) You shall be satisfied and live in thankful trust.
      2. Somewhat wider.
         a. You shall not seek the things on earth.
         b. But the things in heaven.
      3. In its widest sense.
         a. Refers to our whole inner life in distinction from our outward action; to our thinking, willing; ultimately to our heart, whence are the issues of life.
   b. From the viewpoint of its spiritual condition.
      1) The condition of our heart is determined by the spiritual, ethical condition of our very nature.
      2) According to the tenth commandment, the law requires that our inner nature and all that proceeds from it shall be pleasing to God.
   B. Our own heart in the light of it.
      1. According to the testimony of Scripture.
         a. The apostle John declares two things.
            1) Whosoever is born of God does not sin.
            2) He who says that he has no sin deceives himself.
         b. The same in Romans 7.
            1) The Christian has a desire after God’s law.
2) Yet in him, i.e., in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing.

   a. That there is a principle, for there is a desire to live according to God’s precepts.
   b. That this principle concerns the whole law.
      1) We love all God’s precepts.
      2) We hate all sin.
   c. That it is only a principle. The very holiest possesses but a small beginning.

3. Conclusion.
   a. The child of God seeks no excuse in grace — let us sin that grace may abound.
   b. But he knows of a struggle. He possesses the new life. In the light of it he condemns self and fights the good fight.

II. Kindling a strong desire for perfection.
   A. Perfectionism condemned. It:
      1. Presupposes a superficial knowledge of the law.
         a. The outward letter.
         b. External obedience.
      2. Rooted in a false conception of our own heart.
         a. No knowledge of spiritual things.
         b. And of hidden things.
   b. Leads to:
      a. Self-righteousness.
      b. Lack of watching and prayer.
      c. Life of sin and licentiousness.

B. But the desire for perfection kindled. The preaching of the law:
   1. Creates a profounder knowledge of sin.
      a. The light of the law shines more brightly.
      b. The dark places in our sinful nature exposed.
   2. Works in us:
      a. Daily humiliation.
      b. Continual realization of the need of the cross and of the grace of Christ.
      c. A richer realization of the abundance of His grace.
      d. A deeper feeling of gratitude that we are delivered from so deep a misery.

3. Leads to prayerful battle.
   a. A realization that we are debtors to live after Him.
   b. A feeling of weakness to live without Him.
   c. A continual battle while clinging to Him.

4. Quickens the life of hope.
   a. A longing to be delivered from the body of this death.
   b. A certainty of our calling and election.
   c. A stretching of ourselves to heavenly perfection.
Question 116. Why is prayer necessary for Christians?
Answer. Because it is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us (Ps. 50:14, 15); and also, because God will give His grace and Holy Spirit to those only who with sincere desires continually ask them of Him, and are thankful for them (Matt. 7:7, 8; Luke 11:9, 13; Matt. 13:12; Ps. 50:15).

Question 117. What are the requisites of that prayer which is acceptable to God and which He will hear?
Answer. First, that we from the heart pray to the one true God only, who hath manifested Himself in His Word (John 4:22, 23), for all things He hath commanded us to ask of Him (Rom. 8:26; I John 5:14); secondly, that we rightly and thoroughly know our need and misery, that so we may deeply humble ourselves in the presence of His divine majesty (John 4:23, 24; Ps. 145:18); thirdly, that we be fully persuaded that He, notwithstanding that we are unworthy of it (II Chron. 20:12), will, for the sake of Christ our Lord, certainly hear our prayer (Ps. 2:11; 34:18, 19; Is. 66:2), as He has promised us in His Word (Rom. 10:13; 8:15, 16; James 1:6ff.; John 14:13; Dan. 9:17, 18; Matt. 7:8; Ps. 143:1).

Question 118. What hath God commanded us to ask of Him?
Answer. All things necessary for soul and body (James 1:17; Matt. 6:33), which Christ our Lord has comprised in that prayer He Himself has taught us (Matt. 6:9, 10ff; Luke 11:2ff).
Therefore prayer is a necessity for the Christian.

B. As the opening of the soul to God.
   1. The Christian lives from God through Christ.
      a. His life is in God. Not only in its first reception, but continually.
      b. He must live from Christ as the branch from the vine.
   2. Continually needs:
      a. The Spirit of God through Christ.
      b. The grace of God realized in him through that Spirit.
   3. This Spirit and grace given to those who pray.
      a. God draws the soul and gives it grace.
      b. Through grace the soul hungers and thirsts after perfect righteousness.
      c. In that hunger that soul opens itself in prayer.
      d. God fills that petitioning soul with His Spirit and grace.

II. Our attitude in prayer.
   A. The controlling principle: in Christ’s name.
      1. Does not mean:
         a. That we simply close our prayer with the phrase “in Jesus’ name.”
         b. Neither that we simply pray upon the authority of Jesus.
      2. Does mean:
         a. That we are ingrafted into Him.
         b. That in our inmost mind we are controlled by His Spirit.
         c. That thus we live in Him.
         d. That from this consciousness of our life in Him we pray.
   B. From this follows the true attitude.
      1. That we pray to the true God only.
      2. That we pray according to His Word.
      3. That we pray from the heart in sincerity and truth.
      4. That we pray in humility.
      5. That we pray in the assurance of being heard.

III. The contents of prayer (embodied in the Lord’s Prayer).
   A. Significance of the Lord’s Prayer.
      1. Designed to teach us how to pray.
         a. The disciples asked, “Lord, teach us to pray.”
         b. The Lord’s Prayer is an answer to that petition.
      2. Hence, a model prayer.
         a. Not simply to copy.
         b. But to study the principles embodied.
         c. And thus to learn the art of prayer.
   B. Its principles.
      1. Teaches the true knowledge of God.
         a. Our Father.
         b. But in heaven.
      2. Teaches to seek God and His cause.
         a. The first three petitions devoted to God: His name, His kingdom, His will.
         b. Then half of the prayer is finished.
3. Teaches not to seek the things below.
   a. Daily bread.
   b. For this day.
   c. Tomorrow will take care of itself.
4. Teaches to seek the things of the Spirit.
   a. A longing for forgiveness.
   b. For perfection, deliverance from evil.
5. Teaches calm assurance.
   a. For God’s is all the power.
   b. And that forever.
C. Conclusion. Thus praying:
   1. We shall grow in grace.
      a. For in such prayer our soul is open unto God.
      b. And He will give us His grace and Spirit.
2. Thus we shall grow assured.
   a. God always hears prayer.
   b. That we do not always experience this is largely due to imperfections of our prayer.
   c. The more we pray in harmony with His will, the more we shall find Him as a God who heareth prayer, who never casts off those who come unto Him.

LORD’S DAY 46

Question 120. Why hath Christ commanded us to address God thus: “Our Father”?
Answer. That immediately, in the very beginning of our prayer, He might excite in us a childlike reverence for and confidence in God, which are the foundation of our prayer, namely, that God is become our Father in Christ (Matt. 6:9), and will much less deny us what we ask of Him in true faith than our parents will refuse us earthly things (Matt. 7:9-11; Luke 11:11; Is. 49:15).

Question 121. Why is it here added, “Which art in heaven”?
Answer. Lest we should form any earthly conceptions of God’s heavenly majesty (Jer. 23:24), and that we may expect from His almighty power all things necessary for soul and body (Acts 17:24; Rom. 10:12).

Lord’s Day 46:
The Address

I. Expressing filial love.
   A. Our Father.
      1. Who is addressed.
         a. Not only the First Person.
         b. But the triune God.
      2. How He is our Father.
         a. First by adoption.
         b. Secondly, by birth, regeneration.
         c. All for Christ’s sake.
      3. The meaning of the plural.
         a. Inclusive of all the brethren. We do not pray individually, but in communion of saints.
         b. Exclusive of all the world. You cannot recite the Lord’s Prayer in various gatherings, as in public schools, congress, and other mixed assemblies. Here no universal Fatherhood, but the Fatherhood in Christ.
      4. The attitude expressed.
1. Consciousness of our sonship.
   a. In the judicial sense.
   b. In the spiritual sense.
2. Consciousness of our communion with the brethren.
   a. Cannot separate ourselves.
   b. And express this address.
3. Consciousness of our separation from the world.
4. The assuming of the right attitude toward God and toward one another.
   a. Child-like love.
   b. Humble trust.
   c. Longing after His fellowship.
   d. A pledge of obedience.
   e. Love of the brethren; unless one can assume this attitude in principle and in this sense begin his prayer by “Our Father,” he cannot pray.

II. Profound reverence.
   A. Who art in heaven.
      1. God is omnipresent.
         a. He fills all things.
         b. Is far above all things.
         c. In Him we live and move and have our being.
         d. Must never put Him far away in our prayers.
      2. Yet He is in heaven.
         a. The reference is to the heaven of glory.
         b. Where God reveals Himself in all the beauty of His majesty.
         c. Where the angels see His face.
      3. Hence the meaning:
         a. That we may not think God earthly, limited, our equal.
         b. But heavenly, infinitely above us in majesty and glory.
         c. And as having the power to fulfill all our petitions.
   B. The attitude expressed.
      1. A proper contrast.
         a. “Our Father” brings Him very near, causes us to dwell in His tent.
         b. “Who art in heaven” exalts Him very highly and causes us to bow down in the dust.
      2. Hence, humility and fear.
         a. With Him dwell the lowly.
         b. The contrite of heart.
         c. But He resisteth the proud.
         d. And we must not speak to God as to our next-door neighbor.
      3. But also peace and trust.
         a. Our Father is in the heavens.
         b. He does all His good pleasure.
         c. I may well surrender myself to Him.
   4. Conclusion:
      a. Thus a preparation for true prayer.
      b. Placing us in the proper attitude toward Him.
      c. Filling our hearts with the expectation that all our petitions shall be heard.
LORD’S DAY 47

Question 122. Which is the first petition?
Answer. “Hallowed be Thy name” (Matt. 6:9); that is, grant us, first, rightly to know Thee (John 17:3; Jer. 9:23, 24; Matt. 16:17; James 1:5), and to sanctify, glorify, and praise Thee in all Thy works, in which Thy power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy, and truth are clearly displayed (Ps. 119:137, 138; Luke 1:46; Ps. 145:8, 9); and further also, that we may so order and direct our whole lives, our thoughts, words, and actions, that Thy name may never be blasphemed, but rather honored and praised on our account (Ps. 115:1; 71:8).

Lord’s Day 47:
The First Petition

I. The meaning.
A. God’s name.
   1. The first petition begins with God in His revelation.
      a. Our prayer concerns God above all.
      b. Hence, the true knowledge of Him is first.
      c. And His glory must be supreme.
      d. Hence:
   2. The name of God.
      a. The name is the revelation of the nature or being of anything.
      b. God’s name is the expression of all that is within the infinite God.
      c. As it is revealed to us.
         1) Whether it be in the proper names.
         2) Or in the works of His hands.
         3) Or in the Word of His truth.
      d. Absolutely unique. There are many creatures, but there is no god beside Him.
      b. Blamelessly good.
         1) In Himself.
         2) For all His creatures.
      c. Perfectly glorious.
   3. Expresses that He is God.
      a. Absolutely unique. There are many creatures, but there is no god beside Him.
      b. Blamelessly good.
         1) In Himself.
         2) For all His creatures.
      c. Perfectly glorious.
   d. Worthy to receive all the adoration. Hence, the Christian is taught to pray that this name:
B. Be hallowed.
   1. Meaning:
      a. To hallow is to set aside.
      b. God is unique and separate from all creatures in His infinite virtues.
      c. His name must not be confused or mentioned together with that of any creature.
      d. To hallow that name is to attribute to God all His distinct glories.
   2. Implies:
      a. That I rightly know Him.
         1) Not simply with a theoretical knowledge.
         2) But with a spiritual knowledge of love.
      b. That I may praise and glorify Him.
      c. That I may speak with reverence of all His wondrous works.
      d. And that I may do this in word and deed.

II. The realization.
A. Not by nature.
   1. Carnal mind is enmity against God.
   2. Cannot know Him.
a. May know many things of God.
b. But does not know Him in love.

3. Will not hallow Him and sanctify His name. Takes His name in vain.

B. But God sanctifies our mind.

1. Through Christ our great prophet.
   a. Who as the Son entered into our flesh.
   b. Atoned for all our sins and guilt and for the darkness of our mind.

2. By the Spirit of grace.
   a. Christ is glorified and received the Spirit.
   b. And by this Spirit operates in the church.

3. He makes our hearts a sanctuary for His name.
   a. Dissipates the darkness.
   b. Uproots the enmity.
   c. Reveals the beauty and glory of His name in Christ.
   d. Causes us to sanctify that name over against our own sin in sorrow and contrition.
   e. Pours out the love of that name in our hearts.

4. And thus we hallow that name.
   a. Not in perfection but in principle.
   b. Hence the prayer: make me more and more to sanctify and glorify Thy name.

III. The spiritual attitude expressed.

A. Love of God.

1. Can only rise from the regenerated heart.
   a. True, it petitions that we may hallow His name.
   b. But presupposes that we in principle already do this.
   c. Hence, this no prayer for unsanctified lips.

2. And the deepest motive is love.
   a. God is all for him who prays this petition.
   b. Hence, His name must be made great. Through Himself, about Him, in all things, till all that blasphemes and desecrates that name be destroyed, and all things speak of His glory.

B. Humiliation.

1. Remember this is a prayer.
   a. Not simply a statement or a pious wish.
   b. But an earnest petition.

2. And therefore a humble confession.
   a. In myself undone, incapable of sanctifying Thy name.
   b. Even after I receive grace, inclined to dishonour Thee.
   c. Hence, Lord, give Thou me grace and make my heart Thy sanctuary, that I may hallow Thee.
LORD’S DAY 48

Question 123. Which is the second petition?
Answer. “Thy kingdom come” (Matt. 6:10); that is, rule us so by Thy Word and Spirit, that we may submit ourselves more and more to Thee (Ps. 119:5); preserve and increase Thy church (Ps. 51:18); destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8; Rom. 16:20) and all violence which would exalt itself against Thee; and also, all wicked counsels devised against Thy holy Word; till the full perfection of Thy kingdom take place (Rev. 22:17, 20), wherein Thou shalt be all in all (I Cor. 15:15, 28).

Lord’s Day 48:
Prayer for the Kingdom’s Coming

I. The idea of the kingdom.
A. A kingdom of God.
   1. The second petition prays for the kingdom’s coming in its finality.
   2. It will be a kingdom in which God is King supreme.
   3. A kingdom in which He will reign in love.
   4. A kingdom in which all shall be willing to be subject to Him.
B. A kingdom of Christ.
   1. Christ shall continue to reign.
   2. But under God.
   3. And this in harmony with I Corinthians 15:28.
C. It will be a kingdom of God’s people.
   1. Abundantly taught in Scripture.
      a. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
      b. They shall inherit the kingdom.
      c. They shall sit on thrones, in Christ’s throne.
      d. They are a royal priesthood.
   2. As king-servants.
      a. Kings with relation to all things.
      b. Servants with relation to the living God and Christ.
D. A kingdom of heaven.
   1. Universal.
   a. Not simply in heaven.
   b. But from heaven, in all the universe.
   c. For we expect new heavens and a new earth, united in Christ.
   2. Yet heavenly.
      a. Must not think earthly of the future state.
      b. For all things shall be made heavenly in their final regeneration.
   3. Conclusion:
      a. God all in all.
      b. Through Christ.
      c. With us.
      d. In heavenly glory.
      e. Reigning forever. Such is the kingdom for which we pray.

II. The coming of that kingdom.
A. Earthly picture of it in Paradise.
   1. God made the world a kingdom.
   2. He made man king-servant.
   3. But the king with his kingdom were earthy; Adam was a little lower than the angels.
B. Established after the fall.
   1. A kingdom of darkness established through sin.
      a. First among the angels.
      b. Through them among men.
2. But God executes His counsel.
   a. God has anointed His Son King over all.
   b. To break the dominion of the devil and through the way of sin and grace establish the kingdom of heaven.
3. This revealed.
   a. Immediately after the fall; enmity against the serpent.
   b. All through the old dispensation in the children of the kingdom. Abel, Enoch, Noah, the patriarchs.
   c. In Israel’s theocracy as a type and shadow.
C. Centrally realized in Christ.
   1. In the incarnation.
   2. In the atonement, in the founding of His kingdom.
   3. In His glorification the receiving of the kingdom.
D. Spiritually realized in our own hearts.
   1. Christ sends out His Spirit, the kingdom Spirit.
   2. This Spirit creates within us the kingdom life.
   3. In the principle of this Spirit of kingdom life we reign with Christ.
   4. And this reign reveals itself antithetically in the world.
E. Will complete the kingdom in His day.
   1. Christ shall come again.

2. Shall appear as Judge.
3. Shall finish His work.
4. Shall make all things new.
5. Shall subject Himself to the Father as King over all.

III. The prayer for its coming.
A. A personal prayer.
   1. The standpoint of him who prays.
      a. He possesses the life of the kingdom.
      b. Yet all is imperfect.
         1) Sin within.
         2) Reign of darkness without.
         3) The church still in the battle.
         4) The heavenly things not yet revealed.
   2. Hence, first of all, personal.
      a. Let not the kingdom of darkness reign over me.
      b. But Thy kingdom prevail in my heart.
B. A prayer for the church.
   1. Which is still in the heat of the battle.
   2. Which must be preserved in the midst of the battle.
   3. Which must be extended through the battle.
C. A prayer for ultimate glory.
   1. Expressing the desire that the Lord may now reign.
   2. That He may quickly come through all the events of this present time.
   3. That He may finally come in the power of His glory.
**LORD’S DAY 49**

Question 124. Which is the third petition?

Answer. “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10); that is, grant that we and all men may renounce our own will (Matt. 16:24; Tit. 2:12), and without murmuring obey Thy will (Luke 22:42), which is only good; that so every one may attend to and perform the duties of his station and calling (I Cor. 7:24; Eph. 4:1) as willingly and faithfully as the angels do in heaven (Ps. 103:20).

**Lord’s Day 49: Oneness With God’s Will**

I. His will in relation to us.

A. With a view to God’s counsel.

1. God and man possess a will.
   a. It is plain that this prayer arises from the fact that there is a will in God and also in man; this prayer deals with the proper relation between the two.
   b. By “will” we understand that property of any being or nature whereby it can freely and consciously decide and act (compare, e.g., a tree and a man).
   c. Thus with God: God is a willing Being; free, determining, acting according to His free determination.
   d. Thus man. Made after God’s image. Possesses a rational nature. A will. And in this petition we are concerned with the attitude of our will in relation to God’s will.

2. Distinguished:
   a. God’s will of decree, His counsel.
      1) Also called His secret will.
      2) But less correctly so.
   b. His will of command.
      1) His will for us.
      2) In spiritual, ethical sense.
   c. His will over us:
      a. First, all-comprehensive.
      b. Secondly, efficacious and irresistible.
      c. Thirdly, absolutely free and sovereign.
      d. Hence, with relation to that will of God’s counsel, our will is passive. The realization of this will of God does not depend on our choice.

B. As will of command.

1. Man also possesses a free will.
   a. Not in the absolute sense.
      1) Not so that he can also determine what is good and what is evil.
      2) Neither thus, that he is not dependent even in his will; he is.
   b. But in the sense that what man does he performs according to the conscious choice of his heart and mind. He is a free acting agent.

2. God alone, however, determines:
   a. First of all, God alone is sovereign.
   b. God alone is good.
   c. Hence, He alone can determine what is good and evil.
   d. He commands and wills that His servant freely choose that which He de-
clares good, and reject that which He declares evil.

3. History.
   a. In Paradise man was free in a peculiar sense; could choose the good and also the evil.
   b. Through the Fall man is become a slave of sin, so that he can only freely choose for sin and not for good.
   c. By grace he is principally delivered, but with the flesh battling against the new principle of life in Him.

II. Our will in relation to Him.
   A. With regard to the will of God’s counsel.
      1. Some think that this petition can apply only to God’s will of command.
         a. Because the will of His counsel He executes and we have nothing to do with it.
         b. Because this will of God’s counsel is surely executed always. No need of praying “Thy will be done.”
         c. Hence, impossible of application here.
      2. Yet a mistake.
         a. True, we do not carry out the will of God’s counsel; He does it.
         b. But this does not mean that our own will is in no way concerned with that will of God’s decree in as far as it touches us.
         c. We feel this:

   1) Not when all things are smooth and in harmony with our own desire.
   2) But when things turn against us: adversity, suffering, sorrow, grief.
   3) Then passively disobedient: maintain our own judgment, our own desire, our own will against God’s will. And the result is: distrust, rebellion, dissatisfaction with the way, envy and fretfulness.

   3. Hence, this prayer with regard to God’s will of decree perfectly in order.
      a. Implying first, that we may renounce our own will.
      b. That thus we become passively obedient, receiving confidently and contentedly from the hand of our Father in heaven that which He gives us and determines over us.

      a. His wisdom: He knows the way and knows at all times what is best for His children.
      b. Power: He is God alone, and controls all things, even the enemy. Nothing evades or frustrates His power.
      c. Love: He loved us with an eternal love. So, that He gave His only begotten Son. Shall we then
distrust Him, or place our own will over against His? Shall He not freely with Him give us all things? Then: My soul in silence waits for God!

B. In relation to the will of command.
1. From a Pelagian point of view not less strange.
   a. God commands; reveals what is good and what is His will concerning our walk and conversation.
   b. And now we turn to Him with the prayer: Grant that I may do Thy will. Yes, also others. But first: we.
   c. Will not God send us back and say: Yes, that is your business; you better see that you carry out my precepts?
2. Yet correct:
   a. First of all, it is the Christian praying:
      1) Possesses a beginning of new obedience.
      2) But that Christian is still far from perfection.
      3) The very desire for the contents of this petition, therefore, a sure sign that one is a Christian. The natural man surely does not pray this.
   b. Secondly, that Christian surrounded by enemies:
      1) The devil.
      2) The temptations of this world. These intend to lead him astray.
3. Expresses:
   a. The strong desire that God’s will may be done:
      1) By me; not only outwardly, but with heart, mind, soul, strength.
      2) By the church in the world.
      3) By all that breathe, in the entire earth; for I hate them that hate Him.
   b. As perfectly as in heaven.
      1) There the angels.
      2) But there also the redeemed in perfection.
      3) And there above all: Christ Himself, the Son. In heaven all is doing the will of the Father; there is no rebellion or opposition.
   c. Realization of:
      1) Weakness and sin within, the subtlety of my own sinful heart.
      2) Enemies and dangers from without.
   d. Hence: Our Father in heaven, wilt Thou through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ so dwell in our hearts and minds that we may be more and more delivered and kept from the wiles of the devil.
      1) That all that opposes Thee and Thy will may be destroyed.
      2) That thus the state of final perfection may come in which Thou shalt be all in all.
LORD’S DAY 50

Question 125. Which is the fourth petition?
Answer. “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matt. 6:11); that is, be pleased to provide us with all things necessary for the body (Ps. 145:15; Matt. 6:25ff.), that we may thereby acknowledge Thee to be the only fountain of all good (Acts 17:25; 14:17), and that neither our care nor industry, nor even Thy gifts, can profit us without Thy blessing (I Cor. 15:58; Deut. 8:3; Ps. 127:1, 2); and therefore that we may withdraw our trust from all creatures and place it alone in Thee (Ps. 62:11; 55:22).

Lord’s Day 50:
The Fourth Petition

I. An expression of satisfaction.
A. Meaning of the prayer.
   1. Earthly bread.
      a. This sometimes denied. There are people, falsely spiritually minded, who imagine that it would be far beneath the Christian to pray for things earthy. Hence: spiritual bread, the bread of life is here meant.
      b. But this wrong. Here plainly bread, earthly bread, is referred to. The following two petitions are for spiritual needs.
   c. Nor anything wrong in this. All things we receive. And bread we need.
   2. Bread:
      a. Includes all our necessities: food, drink, raiment, shelter, and all our earthly care and provision.
      b. And at the same time: no luxuries.
         1) Not because we may not have them.
         2) Neither because the Lord does not richly provide for his children.
   3) Neither because we have a right to bread and water, as it is sometimes put. Have no right to anything in self; have a right to all things in Christ.
   4) But surely because it is wrong to set our heart on it and to pray for it.
B. Hence, no seeking of things below.
   1. The wrong state of mind.
      a. With our hearts filled with covetousness and our mind filled with the things of the earth, aspiring after earthly treasures. Then these things become the main thing in our life, an end in themselves.
      b. We surely then will not be able to send this petition to the throne of grace: Give us this day bread.
   2. The right state:
      a. The pilgrim, traveling, seeking the city that hath foundations; lives in hope, his eye on the glorious future.
b. All things subservient to that. He must live as a citizen of the future city. And therefore, on the way he must have care — so much that he may be able to journey on.

c. Hence, he prays for:
   1) Bread.
   2) For this day. Not for many years. He does not even know whether he needs it. This day is sufficient.

II. An expression of perfect trust.

A. This day.
   1. Take no thought for the morrow.
      a. Thus the Lord teaches in His sermon on the mount
      b. Thus the apostle Paul tells the congregation at Philippi: Be anxious for nothing.
   2. Does not mean: “we should worry!”
      a. This worldly carelessness. The world just indifferently shakes its head and says, “We should worry.”
      b. Neither that we may not provide according as the Lord gives us means. The Lord does not mean to teach anywhere to live as some do: by the day, in the sense that they spend every last penny every day they receive it.
   3. But: no worry:
      a. If he happens to be in circumstances that he has enough just for today.

b. The Lord does not want His child to go to bed with a heart full of worry for tomorrow.

B. Because He desires child-like trust.
   1. God loved them with an eternal love.
      a. He began His prayer, “Our Father.”
      b. This implies that he has learnt to know his God as the One who loved them before the foundations of the world.
      c. And that with a love that is measured only by the death of His Son.
      d. How shall He not freely give us all things with Him?
   2. And He is mighty.
      a. Bread comes from Him.
      b. He is never unable to provide for His children
      c. If He thinks that you must have bread, so He will give it every day.
   3. And Father cares:
      a. He knows our every need.
      b. He knows that you need all these things.
      c. And He lives tomorrow as well as today.
   4. How it behooves us, then, to trust:
      a. We must have all our attention on the kingdom of God.
      b. But then we must also trust that the Lord will take care of the rest.

III. An expression of dependence.

A. Acknowledgement that God must give it.
1. Not only for the poor.
   a. It would seem so.
   b. Only when the bread-basket is empty is there need to pray this petition.
   c. And it is undoubtedly true that in abundance we are apt to forget our God.
2. But also for the rich.
   a. God is sole possessor of all things. We have nothing of ourselves.
   b. Hence, He must give it to us; we must receive it from Him.
   c. The world does not acknowledge this.
   d. The child of God knows different by grace, and, therefore, rich or poor, kneels down and prays: Father, give me this day my daily bread.

B. Father must bless it.
   1. Possible to be filled unto destruction.
      a. Man shall not live by bread alone; must receive bread in His favor.
      b. Grace is not in things, not in bread either.
   2. Hence, the Lord must make our bread a blessing.
   3. Thus a beautiful prayer. It teaches us:
      a. Not to seek the things below, but the things above.
      b. To trust perfectly in our heavenly Father with regard to all things.
      c. To acknowledge Him in all things, and to profess: God’s favor is more than meat, His lovingkindness to me is more than life.

LORD’S DAY 51

Question 126. Which is the fifth petition?
Answer. “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matt. 6:12); that is, be pleased for the sake of Christ’s blood, not to impute to us poor sinners our transgressions, nor that depravity which always cleaves to us (Ps. 51:1; I John 2:1, 2); even as we feel this evidence of Thy grace in us, that it is our firm resolution from the heart to forgive our neighbor (Matt. 6:14, 15).

Lord’s Day 51:
The Prayer for Forgiveness

I. Its contents.
   A. Sins.
      1. Meaning of the terms.
         a. In Matthew 6 the term “debts.” That which we owe and have not paid.
            In arrears.
      2. Relation.
   a. We owe to God to love Him with all our heart, etc., to aim at His glory, by walking in the way of His precepts.
   b. Not to do this is the very opposite.
      1. Hatred of God.
      2. Dishonoring His name.
      3. Walking in ways of iniquity.
c. So that: we miss the mark, are in debt to God, become worthy of death.

d. And the meaning of the prayer is: cancel the debt!

3. Plural:
   a. Emphasizing that we have many sins: more than we can count.
   b. But also bringing before our mind our sins very concretely.
   1) Not in the abstract, as a doctrine.
   2) But concretely: sins of thought and desire — malice, envy, covetousness; sins of the tongue; sins of outward walk. And all sin.

4. Depravity of our nature.
   a. Responsible.
   b. In Adam.

B. Forgiveness.

1. Objectively:
   a. Do not impute to us:
      1) To dismiss.
      2) From the mind.
      3) Not as a fact, but the guilt of sin.
   b. Hence:
      1) Do not think of me as a sinner.
      2) Be not displeased with me as a sinner.
      3) Do not deal with me as a sinner.
   c. Let Thy favor rest upon me.

2. Subjectively:
   a. Give it me.
   b. Dismiss also from my mind.

3. Disposition:
   a. Sorrow, not of the world, but after God.
   b. Hence, love of God.

II. Ground.

A. The blood of Christ.

1. God cannot cancel debt.
   a. He is righteous.
   b. And just.

2. Hence:
   a. Sin must be paid and blotted out.
   b. By satisfying the justice of God.
   c. By bearing voluntarily, in love of God, the punishment for sin.

3. This in Christ.
   a. Could never do this ourselves.
   b. But Christ:
      1) The Son of God.
      2) The Sinless One.
      3) The head of the elect.
      4) By His perfect sacrifice.
      5) Blotted out our sins forever.

B. Hence: faith.

1. Not unbelief:
   a. Thus some:
      1) Sins are blotted out.
      2) To pray for forgiveness is unbelief.
   b. Prayer taught before the crucifixion. No longer necessary.

2. But faith:
   a. Surely, I believe that my sins are blotted out.
   b. That is the ground on which I can, may, will, and must pray:
      1) That God may apply by His Spirit and grace,
2) The blood of Christ to me.
3) So that I may have peace and by faith experience the favor of God upon me.

III. The Possibility.
A. By forgiving the brother:
   1. Because:
      a. Prayer for forgiveness is a gift of grace.
      b. But grace is not divided.
         1) The same grace that impels you to ask for forgiveness,
         2) Works in your heart to forgive the brother.
      c. You feel that grace in your hearts?
         1) Then you can pray.
         2) Otherwise you are in the position of reprobates.
   2. Because:
      a. This prayer is the expression of the love of God.
      b. Impossible without loving the brother.
   3. Because of the “us”:
      a. Will you pray for forgiveness
      b. Of those whom you will not forgive? Hypocrite!
B. As:
   1. As:
      a. God forgives.
      b. So we forgive.
   2. How:
      a. In sorrow and repentance.
      b. And confession.
      c. In the way of prayer.
      d. Completely.
      e. And without limit.
   3. Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children!

LORD’S DAY 52

Question 127. Which is the sixth petition?
Answer. “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matt. 6:13); that is, since we are so weak in ourselves that we cannot stand a moment (Rom. 8:26; Ps. 103:14); and besides this, since our mortal enemies, the devil (I Pet. 5:8), the world (Eph. 6:12; John 15:19), and our own flesh (Rom. 7:23; Gal. 5:17) cease not to assault us, do Thou therefore preserve and strengthen us by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may not be overcome in this spiritual warfare, but constantly and strenuously may resist our foes (Matt. 26:41; Mark 13:33), till at last we obtain a complete victory (I Thess. 3:13; 5:23).

Lord’s Day 52a:
The Sixth Petition (Qu. 127)

I. Its meaning.
   A. Temptation:
      1. As such:
         a. Definition: temptation is the attempt to lead us astray from the path of righteousness and cause us to fall into sin, usually by means of causing the way and service of sin to appear right and attractive.
         b. Motive and purpose:
            1) Enmity against God.
            2) To cause to sin.
         c. Agent:
            1) The devil.
            2) Through the world, which in an ethical sense is his kingdom.
3) And appealing to the flesh.

2. In distinction from trial:
   a. Agreement:
      1) They are related.
      2) Trial also consists in making it difficult for the flesh to walk in the way of God’s covenant.
   
   b. Different:
      1) Trial does not lie, never consists in causing the way of sin to appear attractive.
      2) Trial does not purpose our fall into sin, as does temptation.
      3) The motive of trial is not enmity of God, but love.
      4) In trial God afflicts, but also sustains and strengthens.
      5) Trial is always for the good of them that love God and for the good of the church.

B. Lead into:
   1. Not: do not bring me into tempting circumstances.
      a. Thus usually.
         1) God cannot be tempted with sin and Himself tempts no one.
         2) Hence, He could not possibly lead His children into temptation, so that they succumb.
      
      b. Yet:
         1) Quite impossible that the Lord here should mean to teach us: bring me not into circumstances of temptation. For the whole world is full of temptation.
      2) Besides, this is the Lord’s purpose with His people. The antithesis. You cannot serve God and Mammon.
      3) This not the contrast in the prayer: But deliver me from evil. The meaning is evidently: deliver me from evil, so that I am not led into temptation any more.

   2. But surely: the meaning is: lead into:
      a. So that the Evil One really has dominion over me.
      b. And my heart is seduced.
         1) The contrast in this petition is that of a positive and negative statement.
         2) So deliver me from the Evil One, and from evil in my heart.
         3) That I may at all times be able to stand in the midst of temptations and overcome the devil.

C. But how possible?
   1. God does not tempt anyone.
      a. He cannot be tempted, cannot love evil, and, therefore, temptation to evil has no effect on Him.
      b. And for the same reason, He cannot tempt, for
temptation is rooted in the love of sin and darkness.
c. Hence, He is not the author of temptation.

2. Yet, He leads into temptation sometimes, often:
a. This evident from Scripture:
   1) David was stirred on by God to count the people.
   2) Peter was lead into temptation to deny the Lord.
   3) Israel complains: why dost thou cause us to err from thy ways?
b. Explanation:
   1) We live not of ourselves.
   2) But of the grace of the Lord. He must keep and sustain us every hour.
   3) Hence, if in the world full of temptation the Lord sets us adrift on our own strength, we must succumb.

3. And necessary:
a. When we stand in our own imagination: he that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall.
b. When we live carelessly, not watching and praying — playing, perhaps, with evil and the Evil One.
c. Then the Lord leads into temptation to the bitter end, that He may restore us and teach us,
   1) To know ourselves in our sin and weakness.
   2) To watch and to pray and to trust in Him.

4. Hence, the prayer:
a. Lord, grant that this may never be necessary. Lead me not into temptation.
b. But, instead, deliver me from that evil heart; sanctify me more and more.
c. And thus deliver also from the clutches and dominion of the devil, that I may at all times overcome him.

II. Significance for our prayer:
A. The spiritual attitude presupposed:
1. Longing to be pleasing to the Lord at all times in the midst of the world.
   a. True hatred of sin, for God’s sake.
   b. And a desire to be pleasing to Him.
2. Knowledge of our deceitful heart:
   a. Not only knowledge of sin.
   b. But knowledge of that deceit of our heart whereby we are always inclined to seek evil.
   c. Knowledge that I cannot trust myself for one moment.
   a. I am evil.
   b. The only thing that is good in me is that which is of grace.
   c. And only by that grace I will be able to stand: in the power of God, through faith.
4. Longing for final deliver-ance:
   a. I shall not be perfectly delivered from the Evil One till I am delivered from evil.
   b. And this shall not take place till I shall enter into the perfection of the heavenly kingdom.
   c. For this perfection I here profess to long.

5. Acknowledgement of God’s sole sovereignty.
   a. The devil may tempt.
   b. But God must lead me into temptation, otherwise he can do nothing.

B. Reality:

Question 128. How dost thou conclude thy prayer?
Answer. “For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever” (Matt. 6:13); that is, all these we ask of Thee, because Thou, being our King and almighty, art willing and able to give us all good (Rom. 10:12; II Pet. 2:9); and all this we pray for, that thereby not we, but Thy holy name, may be glorified for ever (John 14:13; Ps. 115:1; Phil. 4:20).

Question 129. What doth the word Amen signify?
Answer. Amen signifies, it shall truly and certainly be; for my prayer is more assuredly heard of God than I feel in my heart that I desire these things of Him (II Cor. 1:20; II Tim. 2:13).

Lord’s Day 52b: The Doxology of the Lord’s Prayer (Qu. 128, 129)

I. As an adoration.
   A. As such it is meant in the first place.
      1. This after all the deepest meaning of prayer.
         a. It is not first of all to receive something.
         b. But chiefly to adore the Lord.
      2. How we adore God:
         a. Simply by:
            1) Receiving again in our own consciousness an impression of the glory, of the goodness, of all the wonderful virtues of the Lord Most High.

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   A. As such it is meant in the first place.
      1. This after all the deepest meaning of prayer.
         a. It is not first of all to receive something.
         b. But chiefly to adore the Lord.
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         a. Simply by:
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I. As an adoration.
   A. As such it is meant in the first place.
      1. This after all the deepest meaning of prayer.
         a. It is not first of all to receive something.
         b. But chiefly to adore the Lord.
      2. How we adore God:
         a. Simply by:
            1) Receiving again in our own consciousness an impression of the glory, of the goodness, of all the wonderful virtues of the Lord Most High.
call upon the name of the Lord.

3. Thus is this doxology:
   a. It still addresses our Father which is in heaven.
   b. Yet no more in humble petition.
   c. But in adoration.

B. Meaning of the adoration:

1. Meaning of separate terms:
   a. Kingdom may mean two things:
      1) It may refer to the dominion.
      2) Or it may mean the right and actual exercise of ruling.
      3) Here neither excluded. The Christian here expresses, therefore, that God alone has authority, that He alone has the prerogative to rule, and also that His kingdom extends over all. Thine is the kingdom.
   b. Power is
      1) Might. Strength of mind and will and arm. Ability to execute His counsel.
      2) And therefore ability to rule. The Lord not only has the right and privilege to rule. It is not only proper that He should rule. But He also possesses the power to maintain His kingdom.
   c. Glory:
      1) God is good and beautiful.
      2) The radiation of His virtues, of the goodness and beauty of His Being is His glory. Whenever God reveals Himself, it is a revelation of His glory.

2. The unique character of this:
   a. Notice that all dualism is here excluded. The kingdom, the power, the glory.
   b. This implies that there is no God beside Him: no other kingdom, power, and glory beside His.

3. What follows from this:
   a. That we are not afraid, but completely trust in our heavenly Father.
   b. That we consecrate our all to Him only.

II. As a motive for our prayer.

A. First of all for the prayer as such.
   1. Notice the connection:
      a. The doxology is not simply placed alongside of the prayer.
      b. But connected by “for.” Hence, a reason.
   2. First of all, for the fact of prayer as such.
      a. The real character of our prayer is always acknowledgement of God as God in thankful love.
      b. Here the reason stated:
         1) Why did I bow my knees and humbly pray?
         2) Because God’s is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever!
   3. This plain:
a. If God’s is the kingdom, then it is proper that I kneel in worshipful adoration for this King of kings.
b. If God’s is the power, then it is plain that all things must come to me through Him and that it behooves me to fall down in humble petition.
c. If God’s is all the glory, then I must give glory of trust and adoration to no other.

B. Then also for the separate petitions:

1. First we remembered Him:
   a. His name; His kingdom; His will.
   b. And this order of the petition is motivated in the doxology at the end. We thus prayed, for Thine is the kingdom, etc.

2. Secondly, for our own needs:
   a. I ask of Him my daily bread, because His is the kingdom and power, and He must and does control all the forces that must bring my daily bread to me, and His must be the glory of that daily bread.
   b. I ask of Him forgiveness, for I owe my all to Him and my shortcomings are many. I feel how I stumble and do not give Him the glory due to His name.
   c. I ask of Him that He lead me not into temptation, for He alone rules and is powerful, and but by His will I cannot be led into temptation. His must be also the glory of my deliverance from evil.

III. Thus the ground of assurance.

A. What.

1. He is able:
   a. If His is the power and the glory and the only dominion that is,
   b. The He is able to grant my petition and I can approach Him in perfect confidence.

2. But this powerful God is also willing:
   a. For He is our Father.
   b. He loved us with a love that is manifested in the marvelous gift of His love.
   c. How shall He not freely give us all things?

B. Thus, Amen:

1. Amen is:
   a. It is firm, established, faithful, true.
   b. The same word Jesus uses often: “verily, verily.”

2. At the close of my prayer:
   a. Often simply indicates that the prayer is finished.
   b. But ought to mean:
      1) I am assured that I prayed a prayer pleasing to the Lord.
      2) That therefore He is willing to grant my petitions.
      3) That He certainly is able to fulfill all my needs.
      4) It is firm and established that God will hear me.
3. But then it must be a prayer of faith:
   a. There must be the serious struggle to conform our prayers to His will.
   b. Hence, to walk in the light, in sanctification of life.
   c. Then we will more and more be able to say from the heart: Abba, Father, Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. I pray and believe that Thou hearest and grantest all my petitions. Amen, yea, Amen!