

Introduction

- A. How can one live and die happily?
 - 1. The world seeks to live happily ever after in its own godless ways.
 - 2. The church of Jesus Christ desires by faith true happiness for both life and death, which is only one way.
- B. The believer finds his true happiness in knowing his only comfort.
 - 1. The Apostle certainly did according to II Timothy. He confessed, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."
 - 2. Likewise, what a blessing it is for us to know our only comfort for life and for death.

Knowing Our Only Comfort

I. Knowing What It Is

- A. Our comfort is that we do not belong to ourselves, but belong to our faithful Saviour.
 - 1. By nature, we did not belong unto our Saviour.
 - a. We **were** left to ourselves alone.
 - b. Being lost in sin, we were in bondage also to the Devil.
 - c. By nature, we are sinners. For that sin, we deserve everlasting destruction.
 - d. Yes, by nature, we did not belong to the Saviour.
 - 2. But, we know that now we belong unto our heavenly Father according to His purpose and grace!
 - a. We belong unto Him in the sense that the Father owns us now.
 - b. As importantly, we belong unto our heavenly Father in the sense that He also possesses us.
 - c. What an amazing change! We have perfect rest with our Father in heaven.
- B. What accounts for this blessed & wonderful change of ownership and possession?
 - 1. II Timothy 1:9 teach us that we belong unto our Father because of His purpose and grace!
 - a. The reason that we belong unto the Father is not because of our decision or work. (II Tim 1:9)
 - b. The reason that we belong to the Father is God's electing grace.
 - c. When did God decided to do that? "Before the world began"
 - 2. We belong unto the Father because we have and do belong unto our faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ!
 - a. He was appointed to be our Saviour from eternity, shed His precious blood for us!
 - b. Did the death of Christ accomplish that purpose? The death of Christ satisfied for all our sins.
 - c. The benefits of belonging to Christ are many.
 - d. This ownership and possession is all-inclusive and permanent.
 - e. And, it is a belonging which the Lord causes me to know in order that I may be comforted.

II. Knowing Its Enduring Value

- A. Hence, we know the comfort which alone endures.
 - 1. Our comfort is entirely unique.
 - a. The world tries to find and obtain lasting comfort.
 - b. We learn that there is only one comfort that lasts: the knowledge of belonging to Christ.
 - (1) The reality itself shall endure.
 - (2) And, the true and living knowledge of that truth also will endure.
 - 2. That only comfort lasts because Christ preserves in that unbreakable union.
 - a. We cannot for a moment preserve ourselves in that union of belonging to Christ.
 - b. But, Christ preserves us by His Spirit and grace.
- B. The H.C. shows that this comfort of belonging to Christ **must** endure.
 - 1. It must endure because of this truth: "that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation."
 - a. This comfort must endure because the will of our heavenly Father is all-determinative in our lives.
 - b. In addition to that, God's will makes all things subservient to the purpose of our salvation.
 - 2. That illustrates the certainty and security of belonging to Christ.

III. Knowing Its Present Effect

- A. That has the profound and inevitable effect in us that we will be "ready and willing to live unto Him."
 - 1. The certainty of our belonging to Christ does not produce the effect of wickedness.
 - 2. We confess that having and knowing our only comfort is the spiritual soil out of which grows an abundant life of good works and a life of thankfulness to God.
- B. In that way of living unto Christ in godliness, this glorious comfort also has the effect of **spiritual assurance**.
 - 1. We need to know that we are the children of God and that Christ is with us and the Father loves us.
 - 2. In that way of godliness, we are given that necessary assurance.
 - 3. Do you know your only comfort in life and death? You must know, believe, and live it!

Introduction

- A. The Heidelberg Catechism will lead us through a painful process.
 - 1. We will be instructed in the knowledge of our misery.
 - 2. Such is a painful process for the believer to pass through. It is a spiritual surgery by the Great Physician.
- B. Yet, that spiritual surgery is necessary.
 - 1. We must be reminded of our sinful condition and sinful nature because we easily forget about it and by nature do not really want to know about our basic spiritual problem.
 - 2. It is necessary to establish the background for the glory of God's grace to His elect people, though sinners.
 - 3. This knowledge will also guard us from boasting in self, and promote in us genuine humility, a total dependence and trust in God, and a heart of thankfulness.

The Requirement of the Law

I. What It Is

- A. Christ defined the requirement of the law briefly in Matthew 22:37-40.
 - 1. The first part of that requirement is that we must love God.
 - a. That love for God must be in harmony with the truth that God is love.
 - b. In the knowledge of God's love unto us, God requires us to love Him and to reflect His love.
 - c. The first 4 commandments define the boundaries of what God requires of us in this duty to love Him.
 - 2. The 2nd part of that requirement is that we must then also love our neighbour as ourselves.
 - a. Who is our neighbour?
 - b. We are required to love our neighbours according to the 2nd table of the law.
- B. Concerning the requirement of that law of God, the Scriptures say a few things.
 - 1. That requirement is clear. (Deut 30:11-14)
 - 2. That requirement always applies to our life, nature, heart, mind, soul, and strength.
 - 3. That requirement is complete.
 - 4. That requirement demands everything of us.

II. Whether We Can Keep It

- A. "Can we keep all these requirements and demands of the law perfectly?"
 - 1. Some in Scripture said that man can and some today still persist to teach that there is something we can do of ourselves to meet the requirement of the law.
 - 2. The conclusion for some is that man can in full or to some extent fulfil the requirement of the law to love.
- B. But, what is God's answer? **"In no wise."**
 - 1. That means "absolutely not." God's answer is clear. (Psalm 14:3b)
 - 2. But, then God's answer also means that we "in every wise" we do the opposite of what the law requires.
 - a. God requires love, we hate Him.
 - b. The neighbour must be loved as ourselves, and instead we by nature hate the neighbour.
 - 3. The H.C. makes a very important point regarding what looks like outward conformity to the law.
 - a. Outwardly, it may look like a worldly man may keep the commandments of God.
 - b. But, the law says concerning the unregenerated man who does those outward decent things, that he cannot meet the requirement of the law to love God alone and the neighbour as ourselves.
 - 4. Remember, further, no man, even the regenerated child of God of himself can meet the requirement of the law.

III. What This Works In Us

- A. This works in us the knowledge and desire never to find our righteousness in ourselves.
 - 1. What is that righteousness?
 - a. That righteousness is the complete fulfilment of the requirement of the law.
 - b. That makes that righteousness very precious.
 - c. What is that righteousness which measures up to the requirement now of that law?
 - 2. Shall we find it in ourselves? Often we are prone to do that. This is particularly a problem with chronic, besetting sins. But, the H.C. teaches us never to find our righteousness in ourselves.
 - 3. We are undeserving, unworthy, rebellious, unrighteous enemies of God by nature.
- B. That truth by the sovereign and gracious guidance of the Holy Spirit makes us Christ crucified.
 - 1. This knowledge of our total inability to do the law by nature drives the believer to Christ, Who has fulfilled the law perfectly for us.
 - 2. Therein is the grace of God revealed to us.
 - 3. What a humbling truth. Before the law, I can do nothing good of myself. But, in Christ before the law, I am righteous by faith alone and heir of eternal glory. That deliverance from our sin is ours by God's sovereign grace alone so that we might glory and boast only in God.

Introduction

- A. We now look very carefully at the origin of our depravity and misery from which we hope for deliverance in Christ.
- B. Now, where did this sin and depravity originate? Immediately, the HC, in answer to that, asks, "Did God make man so wicked and perverse?" Can the source and origin of sin in man be traced back to God's creation of man? The answer to that question is important because it lays the foundation for the accountability of man for his depravity and sin before God. Therefore, what we consider today will reflect clearly to us the truth that man is the sinner because of himself, and God did not create man a sinner. This will help us to understand our absolute need for Christ.

"The Creation of Man"

I. Man Made God's Crowning Work

- A. The Bible emphasizes that the creation of man was God's work.
 - 1. Man was created by God in a separate act from the rest of the living creatures and animals.
 - 2. The creation of man took place immediately.
 - 3. Man was the direct and immediate work of the Hand of God.
- B. What did God make man in the beginning?
 - 1. Gen 2:7 teaches us what God made man.
 - a. He was made an earthly creature.
 - b. God made man a spiritual creature when He breathed into his nostrils the Breath of life.
 - c. Man was made with a soul which no other living, earthly creature was given.
 - 2. God made man male and female, and later joined them in marriage.
 - a. God made the animals male and female also.
 - b. Marriage was established by God as His ordinance for man, who was made a covenantal/friendship creature.
 - 3. God made man His crowning work in the earthly creation.
 - a. God gave Adam the highest position of honor and glory in the creation when God made man king over creation and commanded him to have dominion over all creatures.
 - b. Further, God gave man the highest place of honor in the creation by placing man in Paradise.

II. Man Made Originally Perfect

- A. Adam could serve God perfectly because God created Adam in the image of God.
 - 1. That image is not part of man's earthly or physical creation, but it was part of his spiritual side.
 - 2. The image of God was a spiritual mark upon man.
 - a. That image of God in man is that spiritual reflection in man that he was like God originally and that God was Adam's father originally by the work of creation.
 - b. It consisted of 3 spiritual parts: righteousness, holiness, and truth.
 - c. With that image of God, stamped upon his original nature, man could in the beginning meet the requirement of God's law constantly, which was to love God perfectly.
- B. This is emphasized further by the truth that Adam was created as God's Covenant friend-servant
 - 1. Adam was created as a friend of God in a covenant relationship.
 - a. This Covenant relationship was not a covenant of works.
 - b. God placed Adam by his creation in a relationship of friendship.
 - 2. What does it mean that they were friend-servants?
 - a. They were called to serve God in their God-ordained places
 - b. God gave Adam his mandate in Gen 1:28. (Quote).
 - c. Furthermore, as friend-servants, Adam was called to be God's officebearer in the creation: king, priest, prophet.
 - d. In their particular God-ordained station and calling, they were called as God's friend-servants to love God with their whole beings.

III. Man Made with a Divine Purpose

- A. First, God made man originally perfect "to glorify and praise God."
 - 1. What is the whole duty of man? To enjoy fellowship with God, to praise God, to glorify God forever.
 - 2. That original perfection we wilfully threw away in our sin and now is lost.
- B. But, God's purpose in making Adam originally perfect is now also to show us a type of the 2nd Adam, Christ.
 - 1. God created man on the 6th day with a view to Christ.
 - 2. Thus, the creation of man serves 2 purposes.
 - a. It reminds us of how terrible our sin is when we remember what we willingly gave up to fall into sin and reminds us that we cannot trace the cause and origin of our sin back to God. We are the cause and source!
 - b. The Lord calls you also to look to Christ, of whom 1st Adam is a significant type. In that most glorious perfection and redemption of the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, we are given the everlasting and unlosable life and task of loving the Father, living with Him in happiness, and glorifying Him forever.

Introduction

- A. What is one of the most tragic event of all of history to date? That event was the fall of Adam and Eve into sin.
- B. This doctrine of man's fall into sin is important to knowing our only comfort.
 - 1. The knowledge of our only comfort would be grossly lacking without the truth of the Fall.
 - 2. This truth of our Fall into sin keeps us on our guard and faithful in our life.
 - 3. Positively, this truth of man's fall magnifies the righteousness of our God and exalts His great grace to deliver us from our spiritual corruption unto spiritual holiness in Christ.

"The Fall of Our First Parents"

I. Their Great Fall

- A. The fall of our First Parents was instigated by Satan.
 - 1. Although we learn in Genesis 3 that a serpent spoke to Eve, the tempter was Satan.
 - a. Satan's instrument of temptation was a real serpent.
 - b. Satan came to Eve deliberately.
 - 2. Since Satan brought that temptation against Eve, Satan had already fallen into sin.
 - a. He also was created in original perfection (Matt 12:24; John 12:31).
 - b. Although Satan also had original perfection in heaven, God's eternal purpose was not that Satan should keep that original heavenly life forever.
 - c. Thus, Satan and even his fall was in God's sovereign control to serve His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus.
- B. Satan fell from his perfection and went into the earthly creation to lure man through the woman into sin.
 - 1. His first step was to approach her and prepare her for his full temptation.
 - a. Satan could not come to Eve as he does to us, appealing to our lusts and sinful nature, since she was perfect.
 - b. Instead, Satan asked Eve: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"
 - c. As soon as Eve answered the Devil's question, she had at that point began to walk down the road of sin.
 - 2. Having prepared Eve, then Satan bombarded Eve with the full force of his temptation. "Ye shall not surely die!"
 - 3. Having travelled so far down the road of sin, Eve unable and unwilling to turn back, fell completely (Gen 3:6)
 - a. She lusted after that forbidden tree. She saw that the tree was good for food. She saw that it was pleasant to the eyes. In pride, she desired that fruit to make her wiser than God.
 - b. When lust was fully conceived in her heart, it brought forth sin in the actual deed. (James 1:14-15) She ate.
- C. As a slave to Satan and sin, Eve went to Adam "and gave also to her husband with her; and he did eat." (vs 6)
 - 1. Thankfully, God does not reveal what took place in the exchange between Adam and Eve.
 - 2. Nevertheless, in hatred for God and Adam, she lured him into sin with apparently little resistance from Adam. Knowingly, he also ate and died.

II. The Resulting Death

- A. Immediately, Adam and Eve died spiritually.
 - 1. This was God's punishment for their rebellion: they died! They died spiritually in their heart and soul; they later died physically, and they made themselves also worthy of eternal death, hell, or the 2nd death.
 - 2. What was that condition of their death immediately after their Fall?
 - a. How it affected his mind and natural abilities, we are not told exactly.
 - b. Spiritually, his condition was death; life apart from God. He became a rebel, blind, perverse, stubborn in heart and will; impure in all his emotions; all the light in man became darkness; he was a slave to sin. (cf. Canons, III/IV, art. 1; Belgic Conf., art. 14, 17)
 - c. The creation also died with Adam. The curse of death fell upon the creation everywhere. (Rom 8:20-21)
- B. This knowledge of the origin of our sin must be a personal confession.
 - 1. This is our/my "depravity" and "corruption."
 - 2. That depravity corrupts all our earthly relationships and our labours.
 - 3. To embrace the reality of my own depravity and how it mars everything in my life, is the way of knowing our only comfort in life and death.

III. The Universal Effect

- A. The effect of the fall of our first parents was not isolated, but its effect was universal. Though salvation is not universal, yet our depravity and corruption is common and universal.
 - 1. The effect of our first parents' fall in sin is that "we are all conceived and born in sin." (Psalm 51:4)
 - 2. As a result, all that belongs to this world naturally is corrupt and depraved.
- B. What is our hope knowing our own depravity and the impossible calling of remaining godly in an ungodly world? Our only hope is in the Second Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 1. The Second Adam is the Lord from heaven, our Saviour.
 - 2. In Christ alone, there is the hope for that new life and the beginning of that new life even now.

Introduction

- A. LD 3 deals with 3 main subjects regarding our sinfulness and misery.
- B. "How corrupt and depraved are we by nature?"
 - 1. How badly have we fallen into sin? Partially? Almost totally?
 - 2. The answers are significant.
 - a. The correct answers keep us humble before God and others.
 - b. The answers keep us faithful to maintain spiritual separation from the world of unbelievers, sin, and immorality.
 - c. The answers show us the total necessity of God's grace and Christ.
 - 3. The Bible teaches that by nature we are totally depraved so that we may also confess that we need totally the sovereign and particular grace of God in Christ, in order that God and His grace might alone be glorified among us.

"So Corrupt By Nature"

I. The Meaning

- A. Q/A 8 describe the depravity and corruption of man's nature in 2 ways.
 - 1. We are so corrupt by nature that we are "incapable of any good." (Psalm 53)
 - 2. We are so corrupt naturally that we are "inclined to all wickedness." (Ephesians 2:1)
 - 3. Ephesians 2:1 says that we were dead in trespasses and sins.
- B. This corruption of our old nature is TOTAL.
 - 1. That depravity of man's nature is common to all men. (Romans 5:12,14)
 - 2. It extends to all parts of man's nature and being. (Genesis 6:5; Romans 8:7; Romans 3:13ff; Psalm 14)
 - 3. The extent of this corruption is present in man his entire life. (Genesis 8:21)
 - 4. That depravity so governs and fills each separate part of man by nature that it renders him depraved totally: 100% (Genesis 6:5; Romans 8:7; John 3:3; Titus 3:3; Heid. Cat, LD 3)

II. The Significance

- A. That implies the significant truth that being totally depraved by nature, we lost the image of God totally.
 - 1. When Adam and Eve fell into sin, they lost the image of God.
 - 2. Because of the total loss of the original image of God and because of the image of the Devil that replaced it, man cannot do anything good.
- B. This truth promotes in us true humility before God and before men.
 - 1. If ever we begin to think rather highly of ourselves in distinction from other men, then this truth crushes that pride.
 - a. The Lord teaches us this morning that we are by nature evil.
 - b. Apart from Christ we can only produce that which is evil and sinful.
 - 2. By nature we are no better, no more righteous than natural man.
 - a. You have no advantage over the world at God's judgment throne because of who you are by nature.
 - b. Besides that, because of our total depravity, we have absolutely nothing to contribute to our salvation or by which to influence God to save us. All that man could, does, and can now earn and merit from God is the penalty upon sin: death and God's curse.
 - c. Therefore, naturally we are not one sigh or breath better than anybody else.

III. The Only Exception

- A. Are there any exceptions then to the truth that man by nature is totally corrupt?
 - 1. What about the natural man in society, can he not do good?
 - a. Does not man do many good works in society?
 - b. Cannot man do one good thing by his own free-will under the preaching of the Gospel– to accept the (supposed) universal offer of salvation in the preaching of the Gospel and on that basis be saved?
 - c. Do we not at times make exceptions to the truth of total depravity?
 - 2. What do the Scriptures teach? What does the Heid. Cat. teach on the basis of Scripture? No human exceptions.
- B. The one and only exception to this total depravity is the Lord Jesus Christ, our Immanuel, God with us.
 - 1. He is and was always totally and absolutely good.
 - 2. Because Christ is the only exception, only those chosen in Him and then joined to Him by His Spirit through regeneration are freed from this bondage of total depravity and created in Christ Jesus to be the exceptions of God's amazing grace.
 - 3. Because of Christ's new nature in us, we are made in Christ Jesus only capable of doing only good before our God. Soon in heavenly glory we shall express that total goodness of our new nature so that every imagination of our new heart will be only goodness continually. For that blessed hope in Christ Jesus, we give God humble thanks!

Introduction

- A. This Lord's Day underscores God's great displeasure for sin.
 - 1. This is done over against the current trends in the world and church world. The implication one gets from these trends is that sin is not so bad and serious, and there are no eternal consequences for sin.
 - 2. Nevertheless, God will punish sin because He hates sin and the sinner whom He destroys.
- B. This we must understand is true of our own sins.
 - 1. We are prone by nature to minimize our own sin and to ignore our own sinful natures.
 - 2. However, sin and our own sin is terrible and horrible in the sight of God.
 - 3. With that proper understanding of the truth of our sin, we shall then see from another perspective of the truth the need for our Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver us from that inescapable punishment of God even for our own sin and sinful natures.

"God's Punishment for Our Sin"

I. The Reality

- A. God punishes sin.
 - 1. This God had done and continues to do both in the Old Testament times and in New Testament history.
 - 2. Not only does God punish sin, but God also punishes **the sinner**.
 - a. It would not be correct to maintain an idea that God punishes sin, but God does not punish the sinner.
 - b. However, the HC shows that hardly can one separate sin from the sinners punished because of his sin.
 - c. That is also shown in Scripture.
 - d. Therefore, God not only punishes sin, but certainly pours out His punishment upon the sinner.
- B. God's punishment of sin is described in the Heid. Catechism as **God's curse**.
 - 1. The curse is God's declaration that the sinner is worthy to die. He is worthy to die because of his violation of God's law. Since man is totally depraved, he is totally worthy of the curse of the law. He must die.
 - 2. Moreover, the curse not only says that, but actively works that death in the sinner. (Proverbs 3:33)
 - 3. Remember, we are worthy of that curse of the law. (Galatians 3:13)
 - 4. That total punishment for the totally depraved sinner is totally fair.

II. The Fairness

- A. Objections are raised to the truth that God punishes sin which basically charges God with being unfair or unjust.
 - 1. "How can God be fair in demanding of us perfection still and then punishing the sinner?"
 - 2. "Can God be fair in condemning the sinner for something that He knows the sinner cannot do?"
 - 3. "How can God judge us now for *original sin* or the sin of someone in authority over us?"
 - 4. "Can God be fair in requiring perfection of those whom He has eternally ordained to be reprobate?"
- B. Over against those objections of our nature, we believe that God is righteous in the punishment of the sinner.
 - 1. Because God is the Good Creator, God is always righteous in His punishment of the sinner.
 - 2. Because man fell by his own will, God is righteous in the punishment of the sinner.
 - 3. Because God is sovereign, God is also righteous in the punishment of the sinner.
 - 4. Because God is righteous, His punishment is fair.

III. The Necessity

- A. God's glory and perfections make punishment against the sinner necessary.
 - 1. God cannot ignore our sin so that He does not even think about punishment for our sin.
 - 2. God must satisfy His justice and so punish our sin because He must keep His Word.
 - 3. God must punish sin because of its most serious principle.
 - 4. God must punish even our sin because otherwise there will be for God's elect no salvation.
- B. God must punish our sin in order for His glory to be revealed, especially in His mercy unto us.
 - 1. This knowledge of the punishment of the sinner makes us realize our totally hopeless condition apart from Christ.
 - 2. But, God Who is rich in mercy has with respect to His people, punished sin and the sinner.
 - a. He has punished Christ for our sin. God is both righteous and merciful.
 - b. At the cross, the mercy and righteousness of God have met together in Christ by which the punishment of God for your sin has been removed from you and instead you have obtained God's blessings upon you forever.
 - c. What a glorious deliverance, God gives to us! That you must believe! And for that, may you never cease to be amazed and to give constant praise and thanksgiving to God, your Saviour in Jesus Christ.

Introduction

- A. The last Q/A of LD 4 brings to our attention the truth of hell which is met with ridicule from the world.
- B. Before this doctrine of hell, we do tremble.
 - 1. We cannot and may not ignore this doctrine of hell.
 - 2. As necessary as it is to believe, yet we do not speak of hell with joy and great enthusiasm as we do about the glories of heaven. Rather, we speak of this doctrine with great solemnity. Instead, this doctrine works in us an awe for and joy in our Lord and Saviour and His unfathomable love towards us because even while we were His enemies, He died in the sufferings of the everlasting punishment of body and soul on the cross in order that we might be obtain everlasting spiritual comforts in body and soul.

“THE PLACE OF THE EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT OF BODY AND SOUL”

I. Where Is It?

- A. The truth of hell is denied today in different ways.
 - 1. There are several popular and wicked ideas against the doctrine of hell.
 - a. There is the false idea that there is no hell at all for anyone, or almost anyone.
 - b. Another false idea is that eventually there will be no hell at all.
 - c. Another the false idea that is annihilation.
 - d. One world religion even teaches that after death our soul enters into another creature.
 - 2. The avoidances and variations of the doctrine of hell within the church world are based on man-made arguments.
 - a. The rejection of hell is based wrongly on the wrong understanding that God is love.
 - b. This rejection of the doctrine of hell is rooted in man’s foolish wisdom and wicked pride.
 - 3. What do we say about these false ideas?
 - a. The Scriptures teach the necessity of hell in order for God to fulfill His justice.
 - b. The authority and judge on what must be believed about hell is only God’s infallible Word.
- B. L.D. 4 on the basis of Scripture speaks of the place of hell for this extreme punishment.
 - 1. This dreadful place is mentioned in the Bible in many places.
 - a. There is the idea that when the Bible mentions in KJV “hell,” that it always means “grave,” especially in the OT. (Psalm 16:10; Rev. 20:13)
 - b. There is the NT word “Gehenna,” which Jesus used to refer vividly to the place of hell.
 - 2. In harmony with Christ’s teaching, Scripture gives us various graphic descriptions of hell: Matt 25:30; Mark 9:43; Luke 16:22-23b; II Peter 3:7; Jude 13; Rev 20:6, 14
 - 3. These passages and others teach us exactly what the place of hell is.
 - a. It is the place of rejection by God.
 - b. The place where the sinner is left in the guilt of his sin.
 - c. The place of God’s vengeance.
 - d. The place of different levels of punishment.
 - e. The place where the reprobate will be brought as God has ordained.

II. How Long Does Its Punishment Last?

- A. The duration of hell will not be simply a very long time, which some false doctrines maintain.
 - 1. There is the false idea of a Second Probation
 - 2. There is the idea also that Christ will at His second coming abolish hell.
 - 3. Some say “everlasting” only means “a very long time, long enough for the fire to burn and then die out.”
- B. Nevertheless, God says that hell is everlasting.
 - 1. The Bible says that hell is a place with no end to it both as far as time and as far as space.
 - 2. Is this kind of punishment necessary? Is that not a little too extreme?
 - a. That punishment upon the unrighteous is necessary: to that extent and to that extreme. God’s justice requires that the offense against His Most High and Infinite Majesty be rewarded with an appropriate punishment.
 - b. Hell is necessary as the complete revelation of God’s sovereign Righteousness against the sinner.

III. Why is This Important to Know?

- A. This is an important doctrine for us to know because of its significance for the Church of Jesus Christ and the cry of the church, “how long, O Lord!” according to the opening of the 5th seal in Revelation 6.
- B. This doctrine applies to our daily life. It sharply warns us from walking in the broad ways of sin which deceptively lead to that destruction of hell. (Matthew 7:13; Mark 9:42-48)
- C. This doctrine helps us understand the cross of Christ and the magnitude of His love for us.
 - 1. We must remember that we deserve to be cast into hell.
 - 2. But, God in His mercy declares in the amazing Gospel that Christ died our hell on the accursed cross.
 - 3. Because Christ died your 2nd death for you, you have the hope of everlasting life and glory with Him soon.
 - 4. God does that because of His love and His sovereign grace alone to His elect alone in Christ alone.

Introduction

- A. Sin does damage. One of the Hebrew words for sin means “to break in pieces, to destroy, to be hurtful.” (I Sam 25:3)
- B. What is the cure for the damage of sin?
 - 1. There are many cures proposed for such damage of sin. Nevertheless, all of these man-made cures fail.
 - 2. And, yet, is there no way of escape or a cure to the spiritual and physical damage that sin creates? “Yes.” There is, but only in our Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“OUR NEED FOR RECONCILIATION TO GOD”

I. What Is This Fundamental Need?

- A. Our fundamental problem, which then becomes our fundamental need in life, may be described as separation from God because of our sin.
 - 1. The damage of sin is so great that it separates. When Adam sinned, he separated himself from God. When Adam sinned, he was also separated spiritually from Eve. That is true with our sin.
 - 2. The effect of that separation is part of the misery of sin.
 - a. The joy of the holy and righteous life in God’s truth is life, unity, harmony, and fellowship.
 - b. However, the misery of sin in ungodliness, guilt, and corruption, is the separation of death.
- B. In light of the fact that our sin separates us from God and from our fellow sains, we need to be reunited to God and our fellow believers.
 - 1. We need the wedge of sin to be removed which requires the removal of both aspects of sin.
 - a. We need the guilt of sin removed.
 - b. Then, we need the pollution of sin removed.
 - 2. When that sin is removed and taken out of the way, then it is possible for us to receive the blessing of reconciliation to God.
 - a. In sin, we were aliens from God and His presence.
 - b. Now, being reconciled to God, we are brought into the kingdom of God. That reconciliation we need.
 - 3. What we need in our relationship with God, we need also to apply to our relationships in life.
 - a. We need to be reconciled one to another, when separated from each other by the wedge of our sins
 - b. This is required. “Be ye reconciled to thy brother....” (Matt 5:24)

II. How Is It Possible to Obtain?

- A. Reconciliation is possible when several things be done as the Lord’s Day reminds us.
 - 1. Reconciliation to God is possible when four things are fulfilled.
 - a. The debt of our sin must be paid.
 - b. The punishment of our sin must be endured and removed completely.
 - c. Righteousness in the sight of God must be merited for us.
 - d. New life again with God must be obtained.
 - 2. This applies even to our earthly relationships with fellow saints. To be reconciled to one another, we need those 4 things finished. Where those 4 things are obtained, there will be full and joyful reconciliation again.
- B. However, to obtain these things, we need a Mediator.
 - 1. We cannot do these things ourselves.
 - 2. Instead, we need a Mediator Who can do the 4 things necessary for our full reconciliation.
 - 3. We have that Mediator in Jesus Christ alone. He is God with us, Immanuel.
 - 4. Christ has reconciled us unto God by His death and resurrection.

III. What Is the Result of Reconciliation?

- A. For those who are not in Christ Jesus, the result is destruction.
 - 1. For the unrighteous, there is no reconciliation.
 - 2. For the unrighteous, there is only the expectation of the curse and being forsaken by God everlastingly.
- B. But, for the righteous, the result of reconciliation is the favour of God!
 - 1. By the blood of Jesus Christ, we are brought back into the favour of God.
 - a. By the atoning blood of Christ, we are covered in the sight of God.
 - b. By that work of Christ, we are brought now into the blessed position of God’s favour.
 - 2. What is the result of having God’s favour?
 - a. I have peace with God. I have the blessings of God and salvation.
 - b. I begin to understand in this life that all my sufferings are governed and used by God for my good.
 - 3. And, this reconciliation applies to our earthly relationships with those in the Lord.
 - a. When reconciled one to another through repentance, forgiveness, and prayer, we experience a wonderful blessing: the wounds of sin begin to heal, the spiritual separation disappears, and fellowship of heart, mind, and soul is restored. There is peace again, the smiles of fellowship, and assurance of mutual trust.
 - b. Is that not what you need in this life?

Introduction

- A. In LD 6 we confess the truth of our only Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who alone can satisfy for all of our sin in order to reconcile us unto God in the peace and love of His Covenant. The Good News, the Gospel, unto unworthy sinners!
- B. "Whence knowest thou this?" asks the Heidelberg Catechism. The answer is: from of the Holy Gospel of the infallibly inspired Word of God.

The Inspired Revelation of the Holy Gospel

I. Its Only Author

- A. There are varying answers to the question, "Who is the author of the Bible?"
 - 1. Is it man? The man cannot be the author of Scripture because the Bible is holy and pure. (Psalm 119:140)
 - 2. God is the sole author of Scripture in both its production and in its content.
 - a. II Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."
 - b. This is supported by II Peter 1:19-21.
 - c. God must be the sole author because the development and existence of Scripture is a miracle. The Bible was produced over 1,500 years and upon its complete remains one, complete, harmonious Word of God.
- B. How did God inspire Scripture?
 - 1. He inspired the Bible organically, that is through living, sanctified men of God.
 - 2. How precise was this miracle? God inspired the Bible word for word.
 - 3. Was this verbal inspiration true of the entire Bible? All Scripture, without exception.
 - 4. Was the inspiration of Scripture flawless? We believe that the inspiration of the Bible was not only an inerrant process, but the act of God which produced an infallible Bible.
 - a. "Inerrant" = the work of divine inspiration was without any error.
 - b. "Infallible" = the work of divine inspiration "was incapable of making a mistake." God is holy.
 - c. The Bible remains without error, without contradiction, and without inaccuracies. The Bible is pure and holy.

II. Its Amazing Unity

- A. The unity of infallible Scriptures centres in that Holy Gospel.
 - 1. The truth of the Gospel was first revealed in Paradise to Adam and Eve (Gen 3:15).
 - 2. The truth of the Holy Gospel was revealed in the time of the patriarchs and prophets.
 - 3. The truth of the Holy Gospel was represented by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the O.T. law.
 - 4. And, lastly, the Scriptures also reveal the fulfilment of all of the O.T. promises in the only begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. The fundamental and unifying root and centre of all Scripture is the revelation of the Triune God in Christ.
 - 1. That is a fundamental characteristic of the Scriptures which Christ Himself said, "they testify of Me!" (John 5:39)
 - 2. This implies a couple of warnings.
 - a. We not ignore the O.T. as though it is a book only for the Jews.
 - b. All of Scripture speaks of our salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, and all of those Scriptures we need.

III. Its Ability to Make Us Wise

- A. II Timothy 3:15 teaches that the Holy Scriptures have the ability "to make thee wise unto salvation."
 - 1. Of course, the Bible teaches us the whole counsel of God as it centres in Christ crucified.
 - 2. In addition to that, they also are able to make us wise unto and into the way of salvation.
- B. Who gives that Word have the ability to make us wise unto salvation in Christ crucified?
 - 1. Do we by our act of faith? No, not by our own power or our own will apart from Christ.
 - a. The natural man cannot know the things of God, does not want them. To him, the Bible is a closed book.
 - b. By our own strength, we cannot know the truth of Scripture.
 - 2. The Word Himself, Jesus Christ, by His Spirit makes the Scripture powerful unto our salvation.
 - a. We need Christ do to us what He did to His disciples in Luke 24:45: "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures."
 - b. By the preaching of His infallible Word, He saves us and feeds us unto everlasting life.
 - c. Not only do we rejoice, but then we recognize that the Scriptures are vital and indispensable to our very existence spiritually each and every day.
 - 3. Since that is true, beloved:
 - a. Trust in that solid-Rock of the Word of God. To trust in Scripture, is to trust in Christ, the only Rock of our salvation. And, in the Word of God, therein is our salvation revealed. It is our spiritual food for each day.
 - b. Cherish and search the infallibly inspired Word of God which can make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
 - c. Pray that Christ will open your understanding so that you may understand and believe the Scriptures. **AMEN**

Introduction

- A. We consider one more aspect of the doctrine of Scripture which is implied in LD 6, and in all of the H.C.
 - 1. We believe that the Scriptures are God's infallibly inspired Word.
 - 2. To that belief is closely joined the belief in the supreme authority of Scripture over our life and doctrine.
- B. That fundamental belief in the authority of Scripture, is fundamental to our only comfort in life and death.
 - 1. Without the infallibility of Scripture, we could not be sure of anything in regards to our salvation.
 - 2. It is vitally important that we believe the truth of the authority of Scripture over us for comfort in the misery of life.
 - a. The denial of Scripture's authority will only result unrest in the soul of those who reject Scripture's authority.
 - b. However, those who believe, as the H.C. by implication here in LD 6 teaches, in the Scripture's right to rule over us, will find true blessedness and peace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"The Authority of Holy Scripture Over Us"

I. Its Rule

- A. The origin of the authority of Scripture is Divine, from God alone, by His infallible inspiration. (II Tim 3:16)
- B. Because the authority of Scriptures is from God, its authority is absolute, not conditional, and entire, not limited.
- C. The authority of Scripture demands our submission and obedience.
 - 1. The Scriptures compel us to obey.
 - 2. We remain accountable to God for what we have done with the Holy Scriptures and the Christ of Scripture.
 - 3. Therefore, let us not be like wicked Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 36), but rather let us submit to God's Word.
- D. How is that submission & obedience possible?
 - 1. By nature, we would always be like wicked King Jehoiakim.
 - 2. We confess with the Psalmist that we need God's grace to work in us that obedience and love for His Holy Word.
 - a. Psalm 119:133, "Order my steps in Thy Word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."
 - b. That desire implies our absolute need for the Spirit of Christ to come and write His Word upon our hearts.

II. Its Relevance

- A. That the Holy Scriptures apply sufficiently and completely to the Church today is widely rejected in several ways.
 - 1. The Scriptures are attacked by Satan who has sown in the church world the idea that the Bible is time-bound.
 - 2. There is the wicked idea that the Scriptures are now inadequate today because of how much more man knows today through science and technology.
 - 3. The Bible's relevance is attacked by another evil idea that holds that the Bible is only a springboard to propel us forward to the new truth that we need today.
- B. What does the Word of God say about that?
 - 1. Scripture maintains that its relevancy for the Church today.
 - a. Ps 119:152, "Concerning Thy testimonies, I have known of old that Thou hast founded them forever."
 - b. The evil that the Scriptures are not relevant today is exposed and condemned by II Tim 4:3.
 - 2. Scripture does apply to all areas and issues of our lives. (II Tim 3:17)
 - a. The Word of God is relevant for doctrine and instruction in righteousness.
 - b. The Word of God is relevant for reproof and correction.

III. Its Reliability

- A. Jesus emphasized the reliability of the Scriptures and the truth in Matthew 7.
 - 1. What Christ says in vs 24-27 applies not only to His sayings in His Sermon about the Kingdom of heaven but to all of His Word of the Holy Scriptures.
 - 2. He who hears the Word, but rejects it, he is like the foolish builder, but the one who hears the Word of Christ and does it, is like the wise builder.
- B. The Scriptures are that reliable because, as Christ said, the Scriptures cannot be broken. (John 10:35)
 - 1. Since the Scriptures shall surely stand, build on that foundation alone.
 - 2. You will never be put to shame by the Holy Scriptures. In embracing Scripture by faith alone, you rely upon the Word of Christ which shall never fail you.
 - 3. Do you love the Word of God? Do you rejoice in that Word of God as the most precious possession you have? To those who by the grace of God alone obey the Word of God, there is joyful expectation summed in that promise given to us by the Lord at the end of Scripture:
 - a. "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."
 - b. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." That is the city of the New Jerusalem, where we shall rejoice in the Word face to face forever.

Introduction

- A. The children of Israel were at the foot of Mt. Sinai at the time of Leviticus 16.
 - 1. Jehovah had brought them there after the mighty deliverance from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage.
 - 2. Jehovah had brought them to Mt. Sinai to organize the children of Israel at His holy nation.
- B. What had Jehovah done spiritually and as far as His Covenant is concerned?
 - 1. Jehovah unfolded His Covenant in greater clarity.
 - 2. What God unfolded to Israel is also His Gospel, fulfilled now in Christ, to the Church today.
 - 3. How can Jehovah do that? Are we not sinful and full of iniquity? How can the Holy God dwell among sinners? How can we be brought unto Jehovah? LD 6 reminds us that in Leviticus 16, God reveals, through the O.T. type and ceremony of the scapegoat, the holy Gospel of our Lord and Mediator, Jesus Christ.

“The Holy Gospel Represented by Old Testament Ceremonies: The Scapegoat”

I. Its Divine Selection

- A. The ceremonial law concerning the scapegoat was part of the broader ceremonial law for the day of atonement.
 - 1. On a certain day, Aaron, the High Priest, was required to offer special sacrifices before God.
 - 2. The procedure for the day of atonement was clearly laid out.
 - 3. This was the goat that would be sent outside the camp of Israel, and be left far from the camp to roam and to be lost in the wilderness; and, never to return.
- B. This scapegoat was an OT type of Jesus Christ as our Mediator.
 - 1. We believe that Christ is the fulfilment of the OT scapegoat.
 - a. First, the two goats in Leviticus 16 were part of one sacrifice, the sin offering.
 - b. The Scriptures also tie together the sacrifice of the goats and Christ (Hebr 10:4; Hebr 13:11-12).
 - 2. The selection of the scapegoat and the sacrificed goat by the High Priest signified that the appointment of the 2 goats was directed by God. This was shown by the use of the lot to decide which goat would be the scapegoat. Jehovah from before the foundation of the world appointed Christ to be the special sacrifice for our atonement.
 - 3. This ceremony illustrates the truth that in order for God to foreshadow adequately the atonement of Jesus Christ, one single type could never be sufficient. Many types are needed including this one: the scapegoat.
 - 4. Jehovah shows that not only was blood to be shed by which the atonement would be made, but showed what the death of the Messiah to come would involve in the treatment of the scapegoat.

II. Its Heavy Burden

- A. After sprinkling all of the blood, Aaron took the scapegoat as God had commanded and did 2 things to the scapegoat.
 - 1. He positioned the scapegoat in front of him at the door of the outer court of the tabernacle, and then laid his hands on the goat's head, and confessed the sins of all Israel (not of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, and the world, but just Israel, God's chosen people (Deut 7:6-8)). (vs 21)
 - 2. The result of these actions, according to Lev 16:22, was that “the goat shall bear all their iniquities.”
- B. As our Scapegoat, so upon Christ was laid that heavy burden of all of our sin.
 - 1. Isa 53:6, “...and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” The sin of all of His people, the Church.
 - 2. Unlike the OT scapegoat, Christ also willingly and consciously, with complete knowledge of His position and His work of being our Scapegoat, took that burden upon Himself.

III. Its Desolate Banishment

- A. After the sins of Israel were laid upon the head of the scapegoat, then Aaron had the goat sent out into the desert.
 - 1. There in the wilderness far from the camp of Israel, the scapegoat was let loose to die.
 - 2. For Israel, that was a picture of the curse which Israel deserved to receive on account of their sin.
- B. That is what our Scapegoat has accomplished for us.
 - 1. With the load of our iniquity upon Him, Christ was sent out to His desolate death upon the cross of Calvary.
 - a. Christ was sent by Jehovah “unto that land not inhabited.” (Vs 22)
 - b. With our load of iniquity upon Him, Christ was totally forsaken by God in the wilderness of His curse and wrath.
 - c. What a wonder of God's grace for us, unworthy and undeserving sinners!
 - 2. By doing so, Christ removed from us our sin and the curse due to our sin.
 - a. How far is that exactly? How far did He remove our transgressions from us? (Psalm 103:12)
 - b. That means that our sin and the curse due to our sin have been removed so far away from us by our Scapegoat, that they will never return.
 - c. The result is that God's blessing is laid upon our heads.
 - d. Because of that atonement the Church of Jesus Christ is blessed of Jehovah, and He furnishes us with His great blessings in the wilderness of this life of sin and death. He feeds us with the Manna from heaven, water from the Rock, and dwells with us in His Word and Spirit.
 - 3. Let us humble ourselves before God and rejoice in the good news for repentant sinners, that our Lord Jesus Christ, Who became our Scapegoat, was banished from the presence of God on the cross, so that you might dwell in His house forever and so that His grace and mercy might follow you all the days of your life. Amen.

Introduction

- A. LD 7 begins by repeating the truth that all men perished, or died, in Adam when Adam, our first parent and representative head, fell into sin. Although man has sinned in Adam and obtained a total depravity and corruption, God has provided the Mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ, to reconcile unto Himself His people from their sin unto everlasting life and peace with Him, through His shed blood and resurrection from the dead. That is the Holy Gospel of salvation by God's grace alone which is revealed throughout Scripture.
- B. Now, the HC treats another important and necessary question to clarify in our hearts and minds for whom Christ came and serves as Mediator in the new and everlasting covenant of grace.
 - 1. If Adam was the head of all mankind, is Christ, the New Mediator, the head of all mankind also?
 - 2. The H.C. answers our questions regarding the extent of the atonement of Christ when its says, "No."

"Those Whom Christ Saves"

I. Who Are They?

- A. Are those whom Christ saves all men?
 - 1. It may seem rather appealing to say (the false teaching) that Christ saves all men.
 - 2. Many have gone far beyond what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 9:3 to then teach that Christ actually does save all men, using many texts to prove, supposedly, their idea. (John 3:16, I Tim 2:14, I John 2:2, II Pet 3:9)
 - 3. While rejecting the heresy of a universal atonement, yet a significant number of Christians teach that Christ still desired to save everyone and made satisfaction for the sin of everyone so that salvation for all is possible and for far more than who are actually saved in the end.
- B. What does the Word of God teach about those whom Christ saves?
 - 1. The Word of God teaches that Christ saves only some.
 - a. In Revelation 22:15, we learn that there will be those saved and those who will be destroyed.
 - b. Matthew 25 teaches that Christ does not save all.
 - c. Elsewhere, the Word of God reminds us that not all within the visible church are saved. (e.g. Judas Iscariot, Ananias and Sapphira, etc.)
 - d. Christ saves only some fallen sinners. He saves out of mankind His people.
 - 2. Christ wanted to save only some of those who fell in Adam into sin. God sent His only begotten Son into this world with the specific purpose of the salvation of His people from their sin. In obedience to that purpose of God, Christ then came and also desired to save only the some of His sheep and people. (e.g. John 10; John 17:9)
 - 3. In light of this Word of God, does the Bible teach that Jesus saves and wants to save everyone or almost everyone? (John 3:16, I Tim 2:4, II Peter 3:9, I John 2:2)
 - 4. What shall we say then, "Are all men then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ?" "No, only those..."

II. Why Only Them?

- A. In answer to the question "Why only them?", one might be tempted to conclude from LD 7 that only some are saved because of their believing, which is one of the doctrines treated thoroughly in LD 7.
 - 1. Today, many do teach that a man's believing determines that Christ is Saviour of not all, but only some.
 - 2. To support this false teaching, some turn to at least 2 texts: John 3:16 and Acts 16:31, and maintain that our act of believing or conversion is all-determinative condition for, of, and unto salvation.
- B. However, the Word of God teaches us exactly what the sole cause of our salvation truly is.
 - 1. The sole cause, basis, and ground of our salvation is not and cannot be a child of God's believing or good works.
 - 2. In light of how the H.C. describes faith, the H.C. teaches that the sole cause of the salvation of some and not others is found in Jesus Christ and God. (Acts 15:18, Eph 1:11, Acts 13:48, Eph 1:4) All those whom God has given to Christ, they and only they shall be and shall be surely saved.

III. How Does This Effect Those Saved?

- A. The effect of that truth upon us by the power of the Holy Spirit is humility.
 - 1. When we learn that we are saved by Christ alone, we face the temptation to become proud.
 - a. Easily the believer can begin to think that he saves himself by his own works and believing. In comparison to those who do not believe, we might think that we have made ourselves to differ from them by something we have done or because of who we are.
 - b. Of that pride and unbelief we must daily repent and be converted unto Christ.
 - 2. Humility is the godly effect of Christ's work of saving some by His grace alone. (Romans 11:19-20; I Cor 15:10)
- B. This truth of particular salvation has the effect of II Peter 1:10: to admonish us to make our calling and election sure.
 - 1. Learn and be assured of your election by knowing your calling.
 - 2. That gives us great comfort when we endure much affliction in this life and deal with our great and many sins.
 - 3. Rejoice beloved in that salvation which is in Christ Jesus alone for His church alone. Rejoice and be thankful that your salvation is only of, by, because of, and for Jehovah, who has showed you and saved you by His glorious, sovereign mercy in Christ alone.

Introduction

- A. We confess with the Apostle Paul that Christ is the only source and cause of our salvation.
- B. But now, how do we **receive** all the benefits of salvation in Jesus Christ? Notice, that the word is not “**accept**.”
 - 1. As God works in us that salvation, which is only in Christ Jesus, how do we receive these benefits?
 - 2. LD 7 teaches that we are saved by means of the blessed gift of faith, which is in its essence, the bond of ingrafting.

“Saving Faith: Being Ingrafted Into Christ”

I. God’s Creation of This Union

- A. It is important to understand clearly the 3 distinctions that the HC makes on the basis of Scripture regarding faith.
 - 1. Sometimes faith means faith as the activity of believing.
 - 2. At other times, faith refers to the body of doctrines which we confess.
 - 3. The Bible also speaks of faith in the sense of a spiritual bond that unites us to Christ.
- B. Saving faith has its starting point in us as that living bond by which Christ is united to us.
 - 1. That bond is established in us by the wonder of ingrafting.
 - a. This spiritual work of God is pictured by an ordinary technique used by those who work in apple orchards.
 - b. That is a picture of what God does to us, using the picture of John 15.
 - 2. This ingrafting into Christ is truly a wonder.
 - a. This ingrafting by the Father is a wonder because we are by nature the branches in the tree of mankind.
 - b. The wonder is that our heavenly Father in His mercy took hold of His Church, including you and me.
 - c. That ingrafting itself was earned solely by your Lord & Saviour, Jesus Christ, The Vine, The Tree of Life, the Branch of Righteousness, the Root of Jesse.
 - d. The work of the Spirit of Christ is to establish between Christ and us this living, actual, spiritual union or bond.
 - 3. When are we joined to Christ in this living bond?
 - a. Does this ingrafting take place at the moment we believe? No.
 - b. Hence, we believe that our ingrafting into Christ takes place already at the moment when we are regenerated.
- C. What is the result of the union to Christ?
 - 1. The Sap of the Tree of Life flows into His elect, regenerated people.
 - 2. By this bond of faith, we receive Christ personally and we receive all His spiritual and heavenly benefits.

II. Some Characteristics of This Union

- A. This is a covenant bond.
 - 1. That it is a covenant bond means that it is a living bond of fellowship.
 - 2. Further, that faith is a covenant bond also means that /Father grafts us into Christ covenantally.
 - a. The promise of salvation is not merely to individual believers, but unto believers and their seed.
 - b. According to His promise, the Lord grafts in a convert and also grafts in his generations the covenant seed.
 - c. When the Father is completed with His work by His Spirit, those grafted into Christ shall number as the grains of sand upon the sea-shore and as the number of stars for multitude, as He promised to Abraham.
- B. This is a union in which we are totally dependent upon Christ.
 - 1. In our hearts and minds, we are tempted often to get that turned around.
 - 2. That we are united to Christ by the bond of spiritual ingrafting underscores again that we are totally dependent upon Christ alone. Christ does not need us, we need Him for everything! Absolutely everything, even to work in us the faith to believe.
- C. One of the most comforting characteristics of this bond of faith is that it is unbreakable.
 - 1. The Devil works daily to break this bond of faith between Christ and His people.
 - 2. Will Satan or any power in the kingdom of darkness succeed? Can the elect themselves so sin and deny Christ in their unbelief that they will be cut loose from Him and so perish everlastingly? Jesus said to Peter and to you, “I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.” He in unbelief denied Christ, but because of Christ his faith failed not.

III. The Blessed Purpose of This Union

- A. The purpose of this union is that you might bear fruit.
 - 1. That fruit that the Lord has in mind is spiriutally, good fruit.
 - 2. In order that you might produce good fruit, the Lord works in you and through you.
 - a. He comes to you with all the means necessary to produce that fruit.
 - b. In order to bear fruit, the Lord will even prune you.
- B. That fruitfulness is important for the ultimate purpose of the glory of our heavenly Father.
 - 1. Our life is to glorify God.
 - 2. In that life, there is true peace and prosperity.
 - a. Blessed is he who is graciously given this bond of faith! Blessed are they who are planted & rooted in Christ!
 - b. For “he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Ps 1:3)

Introduction

- A. There are many examples in the Bible of the true believing of God's people (Mark 9; Hebrews 11).
- B. The HC teaches us about this activity of believing faithfully and Scripturally.
 - 1. The H.C. avoids extremes and errors.
 - 2. It describes the activity of true believing as worked by the Spirit of Christ and experienced fully by the regenerated, called child of God. He works in us the knowledge and the assurance that we belong unto the Lord Jesus Christ, our faithful Saviour because of His work alone.

Saving Faith: Our Activity of True Believing

I. Its Certain Knowledge

- A. The knowledge of true faith is a living knowledge.
 - 1. True believing then is not to be confused with the limitations of true believing.
 - a. True faith is not to be confused with a mere intellectual agreement with Scripture.
 - b. True believing is not the same as a mere temporary belief in the truth of God.
 - c. Finally, true believing is not to be confused with those in the N.T. who merely believed that they could or God could through them do a miracle. Judas Iscariot was convinced that Jesus could do miracles, but that understanding of Christ was not true faith for salvation. He did not trust in Jesus at all for salvation.
 - 2. True believing is a full, living knowledge of Christ into whom we have been ingrafted.
 - a. It is the knowledge of the Triune God
 - b. It is the knowledge of conscious, covenant communion with God, a spiritual & heavenly knowledge.
 - 3. This spiritual knowledge serves as the foundation for our spiritual trusting in God. When we sojourn through life, we do so trusting in Jehovah as our solid Rock.
- B. This knowledge is certain.
 - 1. This is precise knowledge: real and definite. (e.g. Hebrews 11 re: Abraham offering up Isaac)
 - 2. This living knowledge of faith is also antithetical. (e.g. Noah)
 - 3. This knowledge of faith has its source in the Word of God. (e.g. Hebrews 11:35)

II. Its Assured Confidence

- A. This "assured confidence" is also a necessary part of true believing.
 - 1. This aspect of true believing may not be separated from it. It is not correct to think that one can "know" Christ, but not be "assured" that he is his Saviour & Lord. Doubt is unbelief and an enemy of true believing.
 - 2. Confident assurance is part of true believing.
 - a. It is part of our faith as a bond.
 - b. That fundamental and basic nature of that union to X must come to real expression now in this life already.
- B. Now, what is this necessary assured confidence?
 - 1. Confidence is that conscious activity of confiding in our Friend-Sovereign, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 2. In that knowledge and confidence of faith, the patriarchs sojourned according to Hebrews 11. (Hebr 11:13; Ps 56:4)

III. Its Divine Worker

- A. From whence cometh that blessed believing?
 - 1. Can we produce this knowledge & confidence in ourselves? No. Daily we must cry out to our heavenly Father, "Help thou my unbelief!" and "Lord, increase my faith!"
 - 2. The Holy Spirit of Christ is the author and worker of this faith.
- B. The Spirit uses means to bring us to conscious faith of believing.
 - 1. The Spirit causes us to believe by means of the Gospel preached and the sacraments administered.
 - 2. That implies we must be faithful in the use of the means of grace for the spiritual health of our believing.
 - 3. By such means, the Lord is pleased to preserve us as faithful pilgrims and strangers in the earth and to work in us wholehearted certainty of our salvation and the certainty of belonging to Christ, as it is declared by the Apostle Paul: "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in XJ our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39).

Introduction

- A. Everyone believes in something for their happiness, health, and hope in this life.
- B. What must the Christian believe for our true happiness, everlasting health, and sure hope? The HC answers that question pointedly: "All things promised us in the Gospel, which the articles of our catholic undoubted Christian faith briefly teach us."

"Saving Faith: The Necessity of Knowing the Faith"

I. What Faith Must We Believe?

- A. There are many things which we must not believe.
 - 1. We must not believe the world religions.
 - 2. We must not believe in superstitions.
 - 3. We must not believe the false Gospel.
 - 4. We must not believe cult religions who deny that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God and teach other heresies and man-made traditions which are contrary to the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 5. We must not believe in ourselves or in someone else.
- B. We must believe only and all those things promised us in the Gospel.
 - 1. We must believe what the promise of God declares in the Gospel.
 - 2. We must believe what the infallibly inspired Scriptures from beginning to end declare about this Gospel.
 - a. The Gospel and its truth are not found anywhere else.
 - b. The Gospel is only found in the Holy Scriptures in which is infallibly inspired the Word of God about our salvation by His grace alone. Through the Gospel, the Lord declares, "Fear not, for behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy!"
 - 3. That Gospel is more fully developed and summarized in the "articles of our undoubted Christian faith."
 - a. Those articles of our faith are similar to what the Apostle mentions in II Timothy 1:13, "the form of sound words." These are the formulations or statements about the truth of Gospel concerning our salvation which the Church should believe.
 - b. For us the form of sounds words are the articles of all of our confessions.
 - c. In all of these confessions, we have the full summary of the truth of the Reformed Faith.
 - 4. This Holy Gospel as summarized in the Reformed Creeds, and what we call the Reformed Faith we must believe, and in believing that we believe in our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Why Must We Believe This?

- A. We must believe the truth of the Reformed Faith, but not because of several things.
 - 1. We must believe this truth, but not because upon it depends our salvation.
 - 2. We must not think that we should believe this Reformed Faith because of carnal reasons.
 - 3. We must believe the Reformed Faith, but not with the reason that our life will become easier and we will become instantly wealthier.
- B. We must believe the Reformed faith for several Biblical reasons.
 - 1. God commands that we believe in no other God than Him.
 - 2. God commands that we worship God and believe in Him just as He has revealed Himself to us in His Word.
 - 3. We must believe the holy Gospel because of the truth that apart from Christ there is no salvation. (Acts 4:12)
 - 4. We must believe the truth of the Gospel because that is our only comfort in life and death.
 - a. "Comfort ye, Comfort ye my people, saith your God." (Isaiah 40:1)
 - b. We must believe the truth of the Gospel because Jesus said that the truth shall make you free. (John 8:32)
 - c. Thus, believing this Gospel we are led to the true Rest-Giver. Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

III. How Is It Possible to Believe This?

- A. But, we and no man could ever believe that on our own.
 - 1. Paul taught in I Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."
 - 2. Jesus confirmed the same thing when he said in John 6:44, "No man can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."
- B. Nevertheless, and this *is* the Gospel, what is impossible for us by nature, is possible with our heavenly Father.
 - 1. Jesus said in John 6:44, "except the Father which hath sent Me draw him."
 - 2. Again, Jesus said in Matthew 16:17 to Peter and to all of us when we believe in Him, "Blessed art thou, simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."
 - 3. Jesus healed many blind people in His ministry.
 - 4. Christ works in us what he worked in Thomas according to John 20:23. Having faith worked in him by the Lord, Thomas could believe the truth of the Gospel, could see Christ, and declare with joy, "My Lord and my God!" Do you believe the truth of the Gospel according to the Reformed Faith? This is what we must believe. AMEN

Introduction

- A. The first and most fundamental truth of Scripture that we must believe is the truth of the Trinity. That is taught by the Athanasian creed in a few places.
- B. Our forefathers recognized the truth of the Trinity as the bedrock truth undergirding all of the rest of the truth both from an organizational viewpoint and also from a spiritual viewpoint.
- C. Jesus said in John 17 to know God Triune is to have everlasting life.

“Knowing God Triune”

I. His Oneness

- A. We must believe that God in His Being and Essence is not many, but one.
 - 1. The fundamental lie of idolatry teaches just the opposite: there are many gods, including man.
 - 2. But, God in His mercy sent Christ to redeem and deliver us from that accursed idolatry and to learn the truth that there is only one true God.
 - a. Christ is the Word of the One True God.
 - b. By His death on the cross, Christ earned for us the privilege of knowing our one, only True and Eternal God.
 - c. That life of knowing God is eternal life, a very personal, face to face relationship and life together.
- B. The One God enjoys blessed unity and oneness within Himself.
 - 1. We see that oneness of God in three areas.
 - a. God is One in His glory. (I John 1:5)
 - b. God is One in His life. (Matt 22:29ff)
 - c. His Oneness also extends to works and goal outside of Himself.
 - 2. We must believe this Unity of God with respect to us.
 - a. His mercy for us in Christ has an eternal continuity with His glory. (Psalm 136)
 - b. That mercy remains one mercy and a constant mercy. (Mal 3:6)
 - 3. Beloved, your God is One God, One Jehovah!

II. His Threeness

- A. Thy God, O Zion, is also Three Persons.
 - 1. This truth is revealed throughout Scripture.
 - a. Already in Genesis 1, we find the Triune God busy in the work of creation.
 - b. In the truth of our redemption, the Triune God is revealed. (Matt 3)
 - c. In sanctification, we believe that God is One Being, Three Persons. (John 17; Titus 2:13ff; II Thess 2:13)
 - 2. We learn that in the Godhead there are Three Persons. (Matt 3:16-17)
 - a. There is the Father, the First Person.
 - b. There is the Son, the Second Person.
 - c. There is the Holy Spirit, the Third Person.
- B. Yet, these Three Persons are The One God.
 - 1. How can that be true without violating the Unity of God?
 - 2. We believe in only one God, Who is the one single Essence, in Whom are the Three Persons. Jesus taught in 17 that there is complete unity within the Trinity because God is in Himself the Covenant God. In John 17: 21, Jesus said, “That they all may be one; as Thou Father, art in Me, and I in Thee.” How do They live in or in-dwell Each Other? In the Holy Spirit.

III. The Significance for Us

- A. This doctrine teaches us a proper perspective about marriage.
 - 1. Marriage is not what many suppose today: an invention of ancient peoples, a contract or agreement.
 - 2. Rather, marriage was instituted as a living, covenant union between one man and one woman, between one husband and one wife, who in marriage become one flesh as a reflection of the covenant life of God.
- B. This doctrine is significant for our Reformed instruction of our covenant seed.
 - 1. Because God is Triune, there is science, mathematics, history, language, music, and other subjects to be taught.
 - 2. The Trinity affects the content of the education of our children (science, math, geography, history, language, etc.)
 - 3. The doctrine of the Trinity motivates us to teach our children.
- C. God Triune is the origin, source, cause, and possibility that He has an everlasting covenant of grace with us.
 - 1. God reflected His Trintarian Covenantness when He made the creation.
 - 2. But, that Trinity is clearly revealed in the Covenant of grace in Christ Jesus.
 - 3. This truth of the covenant Trinity gives us hope and comfort. God shall not only be with your through all of your earthly pilgrimage, but also continuously ***dwelt in you*** by His Spirit until the very end. In that day of the Lord, there shall be fulfilled by the Spirit of Christ what Christ prayed in John 17: “That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them, and I in them.”

Introduction

- A. Our Triune God is Father.
 - 1. Already in the O.T., Jehovah refers to Himself as Father. (Isaiah 63:16; Isaiah 9:6)
 - 2. Again in the N.T., Jesus speaks of our Triune God as Father. (Lord's Prayer; John 20:17)
 - 3. Therefore, "Father" is not only the Name of the First Person of the Trinity, but the Name of God Triune also.
- B. Our Triune God reveals His Fatherhood to us according to LD 9 in 3 different ways.
 - 1. First, His Fatherhood is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 2. Second, the Fatherhood of God is revealed in creation.
 - 3. Finally, the wording of LD 9 focuses our attention on the Fatherhood of God as it is revealed in His relationship to His people, His spiritual children, whom He has "begotten... again unto a lively hope."

"God's Special Relationship Unto His People"

I. What That Relationship Is

- A. Our Triune God is Father to us because He has begotten us as His children.
 - 1. That is true in the fullest sense of the word.
 - a. God has begotten us as His children physically.
 - b. Because we lost our original perfection in Adam and fell into sin, it is much more delightful to know that our Triune God has also begotten us as His spiritual children in the life of His Covenant of grace.
 - c. It is truly a glorious relationship to be the children of our Father. He calls us by name: "My sons, daughters."
 - 2. From the moment we are begotten of the Father until the day we fill our room in house of many mansions, and throughout that glorious life with the Father, the H.C. explains that we remain entirely dependent upon the Father.
 - a. This is taught when we read: "... on Whom I rely so entirely..."
 - b. That reliance and dependence is total. Do you confess that, beloved? What a privilege it is to do know and confess in your hearts: "I am the Father's little child, totally dependent upon Him for forgiveness, for blessings, for eternal life with Him in His eternal bosom!"
- B. But now, what caused the Father to make you His sons and daughters? Can the cause be found in us?
 - 1. The deepest cause is God's foreknowledge. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." (I Peter 1:2)
 - 2. Was that election of God's foreknowledge based upon something that God foresaw in us which we would do?
 - 3. All that we are as God children, even as God conceived of us as His children in eternity, is all of Him.
- C. How is it possible that the Father would beget you as His children?
 - 1. Because God is Himself Triune.
 - 2. Because the Father has begotten His only begotten Son in our flesh.
 - 3. Because the Father atoned for our sin by the death of His only begotten Son.
 - 4. Because the Father has "begotten us again unto a lively hope." (I Peter 1:3)

II. Some Of Its Characteristics

- A. We must understand that this blessed relationship is exclusive and particular.
 - 1. It is not true that all are children of our heavenly Father.
 - 2. The number of those whom our Father has begotten unto Himself is limited according to His good pleasure.
- B. This Fatherly relationship is unbreakable.
 - 1. The earthly relationship of father and child is breakable by death and by sin.
 - 2. Not so with that Fatherly relationship of our Triune God unto you, His little children.
- C. As a result of its unbreakableness, this Fatherly relationship is enduring.
 - 1. This is a glorious characteristic of this relationship of the Triune God unto us because He is Faithful.
 - 2. This is particularly important to know because of our own sin. (Psalm 103:13; Isaiah 49:15)

III. The Encouragement This Provides

- A. That, beloved, ought to encourage you in this earthly life as you bear your spiritual burdens and trials.
 - 1. The H.C. teaches us that concerning our nurture and care as His children, the Father is willing and able.
 - 2. What does that mean in practical terms concerning our daily lives?
 - a. He is able and willing to provide for us all things necessary for body and soul.
 - b. Even He is able and willing to turn all things to our profit.
- B. Where is the proof of that care over you and me?
 - 1. We need that proof because of what LD 9 speaks of: "doubt"
 - 2. Well, we have proof of the Father's faithfulness and enduring care for us. (Romans 8:31-32; I Peter 1:3)
 - a. "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His only begotten Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with Him also freely give us all things?"
 - b. He has "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

Introduction

- A. What are the answers to all those questions of Jehovah in Job 38?
 - 1. Is the creation ruled by chance, luck, fate, coincidence, or mother earth?
 - 2. Is the creation and history governed by man? or gods?
- B. The Reformed believer faithfully confesses that the Triune God, rules over all things.
 - 1. This confession follows closely from the truth of LD 9. In the treatment of the truth of the Father hood of God, the LD mentioned that the Triune God, Who is Creator, is also the upholder and governor of the creation.
 - 2. To this truth that LD 10 focuses our attention: God's providence. We need that reminder because we are not always so faithful as we should be to the truth of God's providence and because we need to be reminded frequently of our Father's hand of providence for our unspeakable consolation.

"Knowing Our Father's Hand of Providence"

I. His Power and Control

- A. God's providence means that God is everywhere upholding and governing His creatures.
 - 1. God is omnipresent in His almighty power and sovereignty.
 - a. Not only did God create all things, but He continues to be present with all His creatures.
 - b. God is with His creatures as the King Supreme, having absolute sovereign control over the whole creation.
 - c. That sovereignty of God is pictured by the H.C. when it speaks of the Father's "hand."
 - 2. By His everywhere present hand of sovereign power, the Father upholds all His creatures.
 - a. This implies that Father created all things in the beginning so that He is Jehovah of hosts.
 - b. From that moment of creation till the present, God continues to hold up His creatures.
 - 3. At the same time that He upholds all things, the Father governs or moves His creatures.
 - a. The Father puts into the creatures its energy and puts them into motion.
 - b. The Father moves the creature to fulfill its function and purpose.
 - c. All the movement we observe and experience in the creation is God's providence in action. (Job 38)
- B. There is no place, no time, no creature which can exist beyond the control of the Father's hand of providence.
 - 1. That the providence of God is absolute, is often challenged and denied.
 - a. The world rejects God's providence.
 - b. In the church world, there are similar strange answers to catastrophes and wars.
 - c. In our sin, we do not believe the truth of God's providence.
 - 2. Nevertheless, God's providence remains absolute.
 - a. His Hand is so powerful and sovereign that He upholds all creatures.
 - b. God's hand upholds all His creatures all the time.

II. The Purpose of His Providence

- A. That the Father works towards His purpose will help avoid confusion about His works of providence and His grace.
 - 1. It is easy to confuse the two: God's providence and His grace. (Psalm 73)
 - 2. However, God's works of providence in themselves are not equal to His grace and mercy.
 - a. We do not measure God's goodness to us by how much is in our bank accounts or how healthy we may be.
 - b. Man's earthly existence is due to God's providence, but in that providence, God is not gracious to every man.
- B. But, whether God is gracious to someone through His works of providence depends upon His purpose in Christ.
 - 1. Some in the church world object to connecting God's providence and His eternal purpose in Christ.
 - 2. Though man tries to disconnect God's works of providence from His eternal decree, they remain inseparably united.
 - a. Colossians 1 teaches us that God has created all things by Christ and for Christ.
 - b. In His providence, God works all things after the counsel of His own will in Christ Jesus.

III. The Advantage of Knowing This

- A. First, the God Who is the God of providence is my Father. The advantage of knowing that God is the God of providence is that we are assured that He can fulfil His promise.
- B. Second, all things in our lives are controlled by our heavenly Father.
- C. Third, we may know that the Father through His works of providence will always bless us for Christ's sake alone.
- D. Fourth, this works in us humility which we need each day to enjoy fully our only comfort in life and death.
- E. Finally, it assures us that the promises of Christ concerning His Church can be fulfilled and will be fulfilled just as God has promised and prophesied in His Word.

AMEN

Introduction

- A. According to Matthew 1 and Luke 1, the Name "Jesus" was not of human origin, but His Name from heaven.
- B. That Name of Jesus is indeed unique.
 - 1. Generally speaking, concerning Jesus Names, His Names are not like our names at all. Jesus is His Name.
 - 2. As a result, the names of our Mediator are very precious to the believer. The names of the Savior shine forth with the glory of God's grace to us.

"Knowing Our Only Saviour"

I. Knowing Who He is

- A. There is no other Saviour than Jesus.
 - 1. Many saviours are proposed by man.
 - a. The world has its many saviors among men in areas of its pagan religions, medicine, technology, money, education, socialist governments, and military power.
 - b. Even in the church world, many saviors other than Christ are taught.
 - 2. All these man-made saviours only fail.
 - a. They cannot address the root problem of man in relationship to God, which is man's SIN and unrighteousness.
 - b. Man-made saviours cannot make complete satisfaction for his sin with God, cannot pay for sin, remove the curse, and merit everlasting life with God.
 - c. Sadly, man by nature does not want that Savior who can satisfy God's justice and establish real salvation.
 - 3. That man cannot save himself is Scriptural.
 - a. Jehovah taught Gideon this same truth. (Judges 7:2)
 - b. King Jehoshaphat confessed the same truth in prayer unto Jehovah. (I Chron 20:12)
- B. There is no salvation and no Savior apart from JESUS.
 - 1. Jesus is the only source and foundation of all of our salvation. (Acts 4:12; Rev 4:9)
 - 2. Scripture teaches that **only** Jehovah saves. This condemns the error of those who say that Jehovah saves, but then by their daily actions look and pray to others, such as "saints," for salvation. The H.C. says, "...we ought not to seek, neither can find salvation in any other." (Jonah 2:9; Isaiah 43:11) We may not deny Jesus as our only Savior.

II. Knowing For Whom He is Saviour

- A. Is Jesus this glorious Savior to every man?
 - 1. Many declare that Jesus is the Savior for every man or almost all men.
 - 2. The problem with that heresy is that if Jesus is the Savior of every man, how can He be **Savior** then? If Jesus were the Savior of every man, He would be Savior of none.
- B. **Jesus** is Savior only to some men, a specific number.
 - 1. That is what His Name means (Matthew 1:21) "for He shall save his people from their sin."
 - a. Who are "the people" to whom Jesus is Savior?
 - b. The people to whom Jesus is Savior are **His** people.
 - c. We must also understand Matthew 1:21 in terms of Gen 3:15.
 - 2. Who has determined that Jesus is Savior only to His people?
 - a. Does man determine that by His own free-will? Does man determine that by his faith even?
 - b. **Jehovah Himself, Whom Jesus is**, has determined that He is Savior only to those and those alone He has chosen. (Eph 1:5; Rom 8:29ff; John 6:39; John 10; Acts 13:48)
 - c. Christ is the Savior of His elect people for whom and whom alone He is the Complete Savior.

III. Knowing How Complete The Saviour He Is

- A. He is our complete Saviour in all the aspects of of our salvation.
 - 1. He is our complete Saviour in His work obtaining our salvation **for us**.
 - a. He satisfied the justice of God completely for us.
 - b. He performed this perfectly as our Substitute in our place and for our benefit.
 - 2. In addition to that, Christ is our complete Saviour in the application of our salvation **into us and through us**.
 - a. Our salvation is applied to us in many steps and many aspects.
 - b. In the application of that salvation, there is no one area left undone by Christ, but fully finished.
- B. He is our complete Saviour in all individual parts of the work of our salvation. Totally and 100% our Savior.
- C. He is our complete Saviour to every one of His elect children.
- D. He is our complete Savior all the days of our earthly life and then on into eternity.
 - 1. What a comfort to know when we can behave ourselves to unfaithfully towards Him.
 - 2. Even so, Jesus is that Saviour Who is our Faithful Friend. At the end of our earthly life, we will know Jesus and experience the full reality of what it means that Jesus is our Complete Saviour. He will bring us to the full salvation from from sin, our old corrupt nature, death, the grave, the world, the unbelieving wicked, the kingdom of darkness, the curse in this earth, and all the rest, unto everlasting life, glory, and righteousness in the new heavens and earth with our everlasting Father.

Introduction

- A. There be many anti-Christ whereby we know it is the last time. (I John 2:18)
 - 1. Such is what Christ prophesied would come to pass (Matt 24:23-24).
 - 2. The Lord commands us, "believe it not!" Rather, "believe in Me! Jesus, the Christ, The son of the Living God." May our response be only of faith: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we know that thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God!"
- B. To grow in that confession, the HC instructs us in the doctrines of the true Christ.
 - 1. The Name "Christ" (Messiah) is the Name of our Saviour which means "Anointed One."
 - 2. Because He is anointed, Jesus is the Christ, with a 3-fold office.
 - 3. As our Royal Priest of Jehovah Who speaks Jehovah's Word, He has the right and ability to save us from sin unto everlasting peace with Jehovah.
- C. Let us now consider the official work of Christ as our Chief Prophet and Teacher.

"Christ: Our Chief Prophet and Teacher"

- I. His Work as Our Prophet
 - A. Different aspects of the work of Jesus as prophet is revealed in John 8.
 - 1. Jesus was called to the work of speaking the word of Jehovah.
 - a. The manner and intensity of that work is described by the very word "prophet" itself.
 - (1) "Prophet" literally means "to boil over or to bubble forth like a fountain of water."
 - (a) When the Word of God was laid upon a prophets heart, it burned in him like a fire.
 - (b) Being not able to contain himself with that Word, he burst forth or bubbled over with the message of Jehovah.
 - (2) By so doing, Jehovah made the prophet His earthly mouthpiece.
 - (a) The prophet spoke God's Word.
 - (b) The people of God knew that not merely was a prophet speaking, but Jehovah was speaking to them.
 - b. Jesus was anointed to be the Prophet to bear record of Jehovah.
 - (1) Jesus reveals that such is His work.
 - (a) His work was to bear witness of the Father. (vss 14-18)
 - (b) His work was "to speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him." (vs 26)
 - (c) Again, "But as my Father hath taught Me, I speak these things." (vs 28)
 - (d) The Word which Jesus speaks is the truth which shall make us free. (vs 31-32)
 - (e) "I speak that which I have seen with my Father..." (38a)
 - (f) Then again, "But now ye seek to kill Me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham." (Vs 40)
 - (2) His will and work was not to speak His own Word, not to glorify and honor Himself, but to speak the word of the Father and so to glorify the Father in heaven.
 - (a) Jesus did as the heralds did in ancient kingdoms: they ran with the message of the king and then delivered the message to whomsoever the king wanted, and spoke that message adding nothing to it, subtracting nothing from it.
 - (b) Similarly, Christ was sent from God with and as His Word.
 - (3) This makes Jesus, our Prophet, Chief!
 - (a) He is pre-eminent in the sense that He prophesied what He has seen of the Father in glory before He came into our flesh and what He had seen of the Father in the flesh. That no other prophet did.
 - (b) He has that pre-eminence among His prophets because He is the Son of God, being the Word, Wisdom, & Knowledge of God Himself.
 - (c) He is Chief because as Isaiah prophesied, Jesus is the Counsellor. (Isa 9:6)
 - 2. All that Christ prophesied of God is summarized by Jesus in John 7:16, "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me."
 - a. Doctrine is a teaching. Christ's work as prophet is to teach us the teachings of the Father.
 - b. Those teachings set forth the truth of the Father.
 - (1) The doctrine Christ preached is the unchangeable truth of the power, knowledge, goodness, and perfection of God, which we know in the Reformed faith.
 - (2) That is the living doctrine of the Father which sets us free from the bondage of sin and death into the liberty of Jesus Christ and His covenant life of peace
 - (3) As our Prophet, Christ speaks all the truth of the Father as it applies to the past, the present, and the future of His Church.
 - c. The doctrine of "the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption."
 - (1) What are these 2 things?
 - (a) Christ sets forth the secret counsel of God which is the glorification of Christ to the Father's right hand and the Ch unto glory with Him in heaven.
 - (b) Christ also speaks of the will of God, which is the way in which the secret counsel of God must be accomplished.

That way is **the way of the Wonder of sovereign grace.**

- i) Our salvation is accomplished not by man, or man's will, or work. Impossible for man to come to Christ and salvation.
 - ii) God has ordained that the way of salvation is the way of the Wonder, the Miracle of grace; be accomplished in the way past human understanding and for those who are entirely undeserving, unworthy, and totally helpless.
- (2) There are many things which are kept secret from us.
- (a) We do not know what tomorrow will bring.
 - (b) We do not know all there is to know about the angels and saints in heaven right now.
- (3) But, Christ has unfolded to us the secret things of the counsel of God re: our redemption in the Gospel each LD.

B. Now in this work, the HC teaches us that Christ is our **CHIEF** prophet and teacher.

1. This does not mean Jesus is one prophet among equals.
 - a. Many in Jesus day merely regarded Jesus as another prophet on a level with Elijah or even John the Baptist.
 - b. However, He is not chief among many others who could potentially be chief, but He occupies an absolute pre-eminence.
2. That He is Chief means that Christ is the principal prophet of Jehovah throughout all ages. Whenever the Word of God has been, is, or shall be spoken officially and authoritatively in the Name of God, it is Christ Who speaks.
 - a. That was true in OT.
 - (1) The OT prophets did not speak independently of Christ so that when Christ came on the scene in the fulness of time, Christ merely added to what had been already prophesied.
 - (2) Rather, the OT prophets were sent by Jehovah and Christ to speak the Word of God.
 - (3) Jesus is the Prophet of the Prophets, Who Jehovah has given to His people throughout all ages.
 - (a) The Prophet who owned the faithful prophets of the OT.
 - (b) The origin of what they spoke and the content of what they spoke.
 - (c) He was the power by His Spirit to speak His truth.
 - (d) He is also the fulfilment of what they prophesied.
 - b. That continues to be true in the NT: Christ is the Chief Prophet.
 - (1) He is the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. He holds office in His church.
 - (2) The NT prophets of the Apostles and pastors/teachers are sent by Christ in His Name in the service of His Gospel to prophecy of the doctrine of the heavenly Father revealed centrally in Christ crucified.
 - (3) It is He Who equips and appoints them by His Spirit to speak His Word so that His prophecy continues to run its course through the earth causing His day to come quickly.
 - (4) Yes, although He is at God's right hand, the white horse and rider must continue to run its course through the earth for the fulfilment of His prophecy of His appearing again soon on the clouds of glory.
 - c. To that goal, Christ has made known the doctrine of the Father perfectly.

II. His Perfection as Our Prophet

A. **Fully**

1. Christ has revealed fully all the doctrines of sovereign grace.
 - a. Jesus finished the work which the Father gave Him to do.
 - (1) He spoke the Name of the Father completely.
 - (2) Even in His miracles, Christ left no stone unturned in the proclamation of His Word.
 - b. Thus, one finds in all of Christ's preaching all the doctrines which we confess in the Reformed Faith.
 - (1) preached about His Covenant and its un-conditionality.
 - (2) preached about double predestination.
 - (3) preached that His atonement is substitutionary and particular.
 - (4) preached that we His people are by nature dead in sin
 - (5) He preached that His grace and Spirit are irresistible.
 - (6) preached that we are preserved surely unto the end by His grace.
2. Christ continues to fully reveal to us all the doctrines of His heavenly Father by means of the faithful preaching of the Gospel.
 - a. The Holy Scriptures fully declare His doctrine.
 - b. He speaks all that the Father told Him to speak and to reveal to us.
 - c. The whole counsel of God is revealed therein.

B. **Clearly**

1. Jesus prophesied in such a way that His doctrine was clearly set forth to all who heard, both elect and reprobate alike.
2. Jesus testified of the fact that He had spoken openly and clearly when questioned by the high priest in John 18.
 - a. The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his doctrine. the high priest was questioning Jesus work as the prophet of God, and what He prophesied and preached.

- b. Jesus answered him, "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; an in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard Me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said." (John 18:20-21)
- c. And, later in the book of Acts, the Apostle Paul reminded King Agrippa about what had happened to Christ that "these things are not hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner." (Acts 26:26)
- 3. Whether one understands the clear prophecies of Christ depends, of course, upon election & grace.
 - a. From the viewpoint of election and salvation, the things of the kingdom of heaven were hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed only unto babes.
 - b. That means that Christ only opened the understandings of His elect to know the mysteries of the Kingdom through His parables.
 - c. But, unto the reprobate and the natural mind, those things of the kingdom of heaven are hid and withheld by God's decree.
- 4. Because of Christ's clearness in His teaching, that means that in the judgment day, the unrighteous who have heard the Gospel cannot argue in the day of judgment that the Gospel was not clear. They heard it outwardly, but in unbelief straightway rejected it. They could not hear it in their hearts. They had not the spiritual ears and the spiritual mind of the Spirit to know and believe.
- 5. But, for the righteous, Christ's Word is clear, comforting, beautiful, uplifting, edifying.
- C. **Truly:** His Witness is true.
 - 1. In John 8, that witness was questioned and rejected.
 - a. The Pharisees did not regard Jesus as a true prophet.
 - (1) But, they also charged that Jesus' prophecy was not a true record. He had not independent witness of his prophecy whether it was true or not.
 - (2) They argued that as long as Jesus did not have an independent outside witness to verify His record, Jesus was not a true prophet.
 - b. Jesus in response shows that He is the true prophet of God.
 - (1) In John 8, He states that He would be a liar if He said that He did not know the Father. He knew the Father perfectly and fully.
 - (2) That which the Father told Him and revealed, He spoke.
 - (3) And, to verify that His record and prophecy was true, the Father gave witness of His teachings through His many miracles.
 - c. Thereby Christ defended the truthful perfection of His work: One of the marks of a true prophet is that His prophecies come to pass. Christ's Word came to pass, and is always very effective.

III. His Effectiveness as Our Prophet

- A. The Word of Christ is powerful.
 - 1. This also distinguishes Christ from any ordinary prophet.
 - a. The prophets of Christ themselves did not have the power to make their words effective. (Elijah, Elisha, Peter)
 - b. Man's word itself is powerless.
 - c. But, our Prophet, Christ's Word always produces an effect.
 - (1) The power of His word was demonstrated in the night of his betrayal.
 - (a) Christ asked Judas whom they sought to capture.
 - (b) They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth."
 - (c) Jesus said, "I AM!" Before the Word of the Prophet of Jehovah, they fell down backwards as dead men.
 - d. Such is the power of Christ's prophetic work in revealing to us the whole counsel of God re: our redemption.
 - (1) Christ's Word reveals that counsel of God. And, Christ speaks the Word of God's counsel to fulfill it as well.
 - (2) Christ not only explains to us what He is doing in His work of redemption and not only shows us all the teaching and doctrines of His being and work, but He also speaks to make it come to pass.
 - 2. Christ has that power in His prophecy because He is the Son of God in the flesh.
 - a. He comes with the power of judgment.
 - (1) He comes with the power to speak the curse upon the unrighteous.
 - (2) He comes with the power to speak blessing and peace upon the righteous.
 - b. That is why Jesus could say that the truth shall make you free.
 - (1) Th Truth is not merely information.
 - (2) The Truth of the Word of Christ, the Prophet of Jehovah, is that Word which not only reveals our salvation but also is the power of God unto our salvation.
- B. Thus, the work of Jesus as our Chief Prophet and Teacher always in history is effective to produce a 2-fold fruit.
 - 1. Christ as prophet speaks the Word of God to harden the unrighteous.
 - a. Christ actively seeks the destruction of His enemies.
 - b. That He does is shown in His prayer in Matthew 11:25-27.

- (1) He thanked the Father in heaven for hiding from the wise & prudent the truth and so hardening them in their unbelief.
- (2) He thanked the Father in heaven that He had revealed the truth unto babes only.
- c. In His work of prophet, Christ reveals that counsel of God, that decree also of reprobation.
 - (1) His word aggravates the unrighteous to harden themselves in unbelief.
 - (2) The more that Christ fully reveals to them the truth of the Gospel, the more they seek to destroy Him.
 - (3) That is what happened in John 8 when His enemies after hearing the Word of Christ wanted to stone Him to death.
- d. His cross then is not salvation for all, but that Word of Christ does cut and destroy.
- 2. The work of Christ as prophet is for your salvation.
 - a. Under our chief prophet and teacher, He effectively teaches us all we need to know about our salvation.
 - (1) He teaches us we are sinners.
 - (2) He teaches us that our only righteousness and salvation is in Jesus Christ alone.
 - (3) He teaches us the way of thankfulness and obedience.
 - b. That Word of Christ is effective by His Spirit and grace.
 - (1) His Word brings us to our knees in repentance.
 - (2) His Word brings us to find all our salvation in the cross of Christ and His resurrection.
 - (3) His Word moves us unto thanksgiving.
 - c. And, as our Prophet, He is ever faithful.
 - (1) He has promised to lead us into the knowledge of the truth.
 - (2) He has sent us His Spirit to fulfil His promise so that we might know, believe, and confess His truth.
 - (3) Although we are sinners, yet He continues to speak the Word of grace and mercy unto us in order that we might be saved according to God's counsel.
 - d. And, as our Prophet, His powerful Word leads us day by day in the way of our salvation.
 - (1) not an easy way, to be sure. Way of trial, suffering, affliction, heartache, pain, disappointments, setbacks, and all the rest.
 - (2) Yet, even then, the Prophet never forsakes us nor leaves us.
 - (a) He speaks His Word.
 - (b) When the Great Shepherd speaks, we His sheep are given spiritual peace. We hear His blessed voice!
 - i) We fear not.
 - ii) For our chief Prophet is with us in His powerful Word, which shall save us, keep us, preserve us, and finish in us the glory of that salvation He has begun already now in us.

Introduction

- A. The Old Testament showed that our Saviour would be not only a prophet, but also a priest.
 - 1. That office of His priesthood was reflected in the priesthood of Aaron and his sons.
 - 2. However, Aaron or any of his sons who became high priest could not redeem Israel. Israel looked beyond the earthly high priests to the better High Priest to come who would redeem Israel.
- B. God provided that Better Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 1. Hebrews shows repeatedly and thoroughly the super-excellency of Christ as our High Priest.
 - 2. Believing that Christ is our only High Priest, brings great happiness. We confess personally, "He is mine!"

"Christ: Our Only High Priest's One Sacrifice"

I. Divinely Necessary

- A. We need a high priest to redeem us from our sin and bring us into life with God.
 - 1. We became in Adam's fall into sin a corrupt priesthood before God.
 - 2. The consequences of our sin are great, including our loss of the right and life to live and serve as priests in God's temple. To overcome that and the penalty of our sin, we need the High Priest, Jesus Christ.
- B. He is necessary because there is only one way to be redeemed unto God as His priests again in His heavenly temple.
 - 1. The only way back to the Temple of God and being His priests again was pictured by the flaming sword which protected the Tree of Life and by the altar of burnt offering in the Temple in Jerusalem. But, who will go before us to do that and redeem us unto God as His priests again?
 - 2. We need Christ, Our Only High Priest. This is the priest after the order of Melchizedec and Who alone is High Priest.

II. Completely Sufficient

- A. For that purpose Christ offered a completely sufficient sacrifice.
 - 1. He did that at the cross.
 - a. There Christ brought the spotless sacrifice of Himself, the Righteous One personally.
 - b. There Christ offered Himself willingly in love to God and love for only His people.
 - c. There Christ came clothed in perfect holiness, even as at the same time He died for the shameful guilt of our corruption which was laid upon Him.
 - d. He was totally capable as the only begotten Son to offered a completely sufficient and spotless sacrifice.
 - 2. The HC reminds us that Christ offered Himself as that sacrifice.
 - a. He had His own body nailed to the cross.
 - b. He so consciously died on the cross for us that He knew exactly when that work of redemption was completed.
 - 3. So finished was that sacrifice of Christ, that Christ only need to do it once. (Hebrews 10:10)
 - a. That sacrifice may not and need not be repeated.
 - b. The truth is that Christ offered Himself once and sufficiently for His people. (*Canons*, II, art. 3)
- B. That completely sufficient High Priest and His sacrifice is ours because Christ was appointed by God to be our substitute in this high priestly work.
 - 1. That truth is taught by what the O.T. high priest wore when he did his work in the temple.
 - a. The High Priest was commanded to wear 2 items that prove that Christ did His work for us. (Exod 28:12,29)
 - b. By doing so, the HP showed that he represented Israel in his work.
 - 2. This Christ fulfilled perfectly in His substitution work.
 - a. Christ bore the weight of the responsibility of us as sinners.
 - b. Christ fulfilled that work in a sovereign and wondrous love for us.
 - c. Therefore, we have no other High Priest and Mediator capable of redeeming us, forgiving our sin, reconciling us to God, redeeming us, and earning for us righteousness and everlasting life.

III. Personally Encouraging

- A. Was my name written upon the shoulders and upon the heart of our only High Priest?
 - 1. That I need to know.
 - a. Not enough for me to know that Christ worked as High Priest to offer up a spotless sacrifice.
 - b. I need also to know that He has done this glorious work also for each of us personally.
 - 2. Our HP does not leave us to guess about his work for us.
 - a. The faith that Christ works in us is the faith of the knowledge and assurance of His work
 - b. Christ, our merciful High Priest, works this faith in us because He is ever merciful.
- B. Our HP then also applies to us the great comfort of His atoning wounds and shed blood.
 - 1. He comes to us each day and especially in the Gospel preached as the Great Physician.
 - a. He finds us in our sin and unbelief. In His mercy, He heals us.
 - b. Do we have the right now to go back to the presence of God and show our praise to Him?
 - 2. The miracle is that in and because of Christ we are brought back into the presence of God. We have access again unto His temple and His throne. We have access unto the presence of God's glory. That is our hope, too.

Introduction

- A. We continue to consider the truth of Jesus Christ as our merciful High Priest.
 - 1. The work of Jesus as our High Priest was, of course, foreshadowed by the Old Testament priests.
 - 2. However, Christ continues to serve as our High Priest. His work did not stop when He offered Himself on the cross for us, but His work at God's Right Hand in heaven continues. There He continues to work as our Intercessor.
- B. Christ's work as our Intercessor (Advocate) is of great importance and lasting value to us.
 - 1. Its great importance is illustrated in the Belgic Confession, art. 26. At length it explains the truth of the intercession of Jesus. In fact, it is one of the longest articles in the confession because of the necessity to oppose the denial of this truth by the false doctrine and practice of the Romish church with prayers to the saints.
 - 2. This truth of Christ's intercession is important for several reasons.
 - a. This truth affects our daily prayer life and our weekly worship as a church.
 - b. This truth affects our spiritual outlook on day to day living.

"Christ: Our High Priest's Continual Intercession for Us"

I. The Meaning of His Intercession

- A. As our HP, Christ intercedes for us.
 - 1. Of course, this work of Christ was also foreshadowed in the Old Testament.
 - a. The manner in which Christ would do this work was yearly foreshadowed on the day of atonement. After the performance of the necessary sacrifices, the high priest took blood past the veil and sprinkled blood upon the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies.
 - b. Further, the pleading of Moses on behalf of Israel before God in Mt. Sinai represented this intercession. (Exod 34)
 - 2. Christ fulfilled those OT types.
 - a. Christ performed that 2nd distinctive act of the high priest on the day of atonement when He ascended up into heaven to the right hand of God.
 - b. While He remains there, Christ is busy doing the work of intercession for His church with continual prayers so that we do receive what we need day by day.
- B. Because the HC teaches that Christ is our only High Priest, Christ is our **only** Advocate.
 - 1. We may not seek after another advocate or intercessor before God. Condemned is the practice of praying to other saints for blessing, help, and salvation; or, attempting to pray to God on the basis of our faith or obedience.
 - 2. Jesus Christ is our **only** advocate, intercessor, and mediator before God.
 - a. He is the only Advocate simply because God gave only Christ to us as our Advocate and Intercessor.
 - b. He is our only Advocate because only He can fulfil that work.
 - c. He is our only Advocate because He is everlastingly loyal to us.
 - d. He is our Advocate of almighty power and great majesty.
 - e. Is it even remotely possible that the Father might not answer Christ's intercession?

II. The Time of His Intercession

- A. Will that be true always: each day and moment of your life?
 - 1. Perhaps we might question whether our Advocate remembers us.
 - 2. The fact is that Christ's intercession is **continual**.
 - a. Christ is that priest after the order of Melchizedec.
 - b. According to Romans 8:34, Christ makes intercession for us continuously.
 - c. For Christ, it is a non-stop labor of sovereign love that He prays for His church.
- B. That intercession is **continual** for several reasons.
 - 1. He is at the throne of God as the Lamb.
 - 2. The cause of His people is always presented before God because we are written upon His shoulders and heart.
 - 3. There at the throne Christ must remain; and, as a result, remains as our Mediator in prayer for us.

III. The Benefits of His Intercession

- A. That we may know and be assured that God does care for us.
 - 1. Many cares and concerns we have in life.
 - 2. The Father can care for us and does care for us through our merciful High Priest, Jesus Christ.
 - 3. He continuously pleads for our blessing in the midst of our cares, concerns, pains, problems, trials, afflictions.
- B. Because Christ intercedes for us, there is no condemnation unto you.
 - 1. Yes, we are sinners, **worthy** of condemnation.
 - 2. But, Christ has died and we are justified in Him so that there is no condemnation unto God's people.
 - 3. The great benefit of that is that the Devil is silenced. (Romans 8:33-34)
- C. We have the confidence then that with Christ as our Advocate we may appear before God's throne ourselves. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in time of need."
- D. That gives us the benefit of great, sure hope for our future life. (Psalm 23:5)

Introduction

- A. When Christ's birth was announced to the Virgin Mary, it was a dark time in Covenant history. Yet, the Lord's promise could not fail. The King would and did come. His kingdom is everlasting, spiritual, and heavenly.
- B. The kingly office of Christ is an important part of our confession of the work of our Saviour.
 - 1. This truth is important to know clearly because of the false teachings concerning the kingship of Christ.
 - 2. The H.C. makes clear that Christ's Kingship is particular. Christ's Kingship has to do with His sovereign and particular grace. That means Christ's kingship over and in us is a wonder of grace, which gives us bright hope while we live now in a dark world and church world, similar to the days in which Christ was born in Bethlehem.

"Christ: Our Eternal King"

I. His Conquest of His Territory

- A. Our King had to obtain His territory in which He has dominion.
 - 1. Every king has a kingdom and a territory over which he rules, and the territory of Christ's rule was of itself actually not very appealing and not worth anything of itself. (Isa 55:13, Isa 35:1)
 - 2. What are the boundaries of this territory of Christ?
 - a. Are the boundaries of this territory of Christ very broad? It is earthly? Is it a universal territory?
 - b. The boundaries of that territory over which Christ is the spiritual King have been drawn by God from eternity.
- B. This territory of His people Christ has purchased and conquered for His own.
 - 1. Christ came into our flesh for the purpose of purchasing or redeeming His territory.
 - a. What did this great purchase require of Christ?
 - b. When Christ went to the cross of Calvary, Christ made that payment and atonement in His own shed blood.
 - 2. Having obtained the right to rule over His people, Christ conquered the Devil to take possession of His people.
 - a. He crushed the head of the serpent at the cross as promised by God in Genesis 3:15.
 - b. In His death, Christ, the King, took legal possession of His territory, His elect.
 - 3. This work of Christ reveals the great grace of God.
 - a. Who would want to purchase us: swamp land, land of death, capable of only sin, and worthless?
 - b. Yet, Christ in His great grace purchased that part of the swampland and the desert of mankind destined by the Father to be the territory of His everlasting and glorious kingdom.

II. His Government over His Citizens

- A. Christ's actual government over the Church, His spiritual territory, begins with His work of regeneration.
 - 1. This clearly teaches us that entrance into the Kingdom of heaven is not man's work.
 - a. Our act of conversion is not how we bring ourselves from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of heaven.
 - b. Jesus taught that the entrance of the child of God into the Kingdom of heaven is not man's work or due to man's will when He described the regeneration of a child of God as being "born again."
 - 2. By His sovereignly gracious and miraculous work of regeneration, the Spirit of Christ gives us life.
 - a. We may think of the Spirit of Christ's work in regeneration as water being poured out upon desert wasteland.
 - b. Similarly, Christ pours out His Spirit upon His people by Whom they are raised out of death into new life.
 - c. That implies that in the work of regeneration Christ establishes His throne in our new hearts!
- B. Having established His throne in us, Christ then governs us spiritually by His Word and Spirit.
 - 1. This means that Christ exercises His rule over us by the Word preached and worked in our hearts by His Spirit.
 - a. To understand this, we can think of the illustration of the desert.
 - b. Likewise, having established His life in us by His Spirit, Christ also works within us to produce fruit.
 - c. Therefore, when Christ rules over us daily, He rules over a Living Kingdom.
 - 2. Christ rules over us day by day.
 - a. He rules over us closely.
 - b. He rules over His territory, His spiritual land, with all authority and sovereignty.
 - c. He rules over us as King in mercy and grace. (Isa 42:3)
 - d. Under His Kingship, we are given the blessed privileges

III. His Defence and Preservation of His Church

- A. That faithful preservation is absolutely necessary.
 - 1. The kingdom of darkness is still present in this life and we are totally unable without Christ to fight it.
 - 2. We need our King to protect and defend us. He encamps around us. He fights for us and through us by faith.
- B. Unto that final goal, Christ preserves His Church faithfully.
 - 1. Are we always faithful to Christ? We have to confess that we are not. What do we deserve for that?
 - 2. But, beloved, with the King there is forgiveness! His mercies never end! Because His mercy is everlasting, His throne is an everlasting throne in you and all His saints according to His covenant promises. He will finish that which He has begun in you so that soon you shall also enjoy the glory, the peace, the finished rest, and the marvellous joy of His everlasting, heavenly Kingdom in the new creation.

Introduction

- A. This name “Christian” was first used during the time of the Apostles at the city of Antioch. The people of God were first called Christians there.
- B. Do you know what it means to be a Christian and do you desire to be a true Christian?
 - 1. “Christian” itself means that one partakes of the anointing of Christ.
 - 2. This is true of every one in whom Christ works faith and the blessings of salvation. Now, we examine the truth that the Christian is a prophet under Jesus Christ, our Chief Prophet and Teacher.

“A Christian: A Prophet”

I. His Important Duty

- A. The duty of the believer as prophet is to prophesy about, speak about, or confess the Name of Christ.
 - 1. A prophet was given the duty to declare the truth about God.
 - 2. Still today, the duty of the believer is to speak the Name of the true Christ.
 - 3. This is the true Christ revealed in the infallibly inspired Holy Scriptures.
 - 4. Our prophecy of Christ is much more than just saying the Name, “Christ.” His Name reveals all the truth of God.
 - 5. Because the Christian lives today after many hundreds of years of history in which the church has fought valiantly in defence of the truth of the Name of Christ, the Christian today must also speak of the Name of Christ as that is set forth by the Church in the Reformed confessions.
- B. The Name of Christ in all its fullness and clarity, we Christians must confess. (Romans 10:8-10)
 - 1. This we must do in word & deed.
 - 2. Our confession of the Name of Christ should be motivated by true love for God.
 - 3. Our confession of the Name of Christ is an antithetical duty. (I John 4:1-3)

II. The Spirit-Given Ability

- A. The Holy Spirit, by Whom we are anointed to be Christians, is indispensable for our duty.
 - 1. Implies something quite sobering regarding ourselves: by nature we were not prophets of truth and good.
 - 2. That we are prophets of Christ is a wonder of God by Christ alone, rooted in God’s sovereign election, and fulfilled by God in the way of sin and His saving grace. (I Peter 2:9).
- B. The Holy Spirit sustains, preserves, & increases us in our office of prophet through the preaching of the Word where we come into living contact with the Office of Christ as our Chief Prophet.
 - 1. This important relationship between our prophet-hood and the preaching of is taught in Romans 10:14-15.
 - 2. Is the preaching of the Word and the sacraments that important for our duty as Christian prophets? With the spiritual food of our Chief Prophet and Teacher, we are strengthened to confess the Name of Christ faithfully.

III. The Necessary Fulfilment

- A. Because of the enemies that surround us, it is necessary that we be faithful prophets in our everyday life towards our family members, friends, and fellow church members.
 - 1. Negatively, we must not use our mouths, lips, & hearts for speaking evil. (Eph 4:29)
 - 2. Positively, we are called to exercise our office as prophet for edification. (Eph 5:19-20; Malachi 3:16)
- B. We fulfil our duty as prophets when we speak the Name of Christ for our mutual comfort when we are in affliction. (I Corinthians 1:3-4; I Thessalonians 4:18)
- C. Romans 10 implies the necessity of public confession of faith in the church so that we may partake of the Lord’s Supper and full communion in the congregation.
- D. What is the ultimate blessedness of fulfilling this calling as prophet?
 - 1. It is earthly happiness? Not always.
 - 2. But, spiritually what is the sure and expected reward of faithfulness as a prophet of Christ? (Matt 10:32; Revelation 3:12) Beloved, hold fast to a faithful confession of the Name of Christ in order that no man take your crown!

AMEN

Introduction

- A. What are the marks of a Christian? The distinguishing marks of a Christian are spiritual. The Belgic Confession, art. 29, states the marks of a Christian. The mark which distinguishes a Christian from the unbelieving and ungodly is the mark of daily repentance, conversion, and the thanksgiving of self-denial and self-sacrifice
- B. We confess together in LD 12 that a Christian is also a priest.
 - 1. We belong to that priesthood of all believers because we share in the saving anointing of Christ.
 - 2. We are incorporated into a glorious priesthood.
 - a. Our priesthood is not inferior, nor earthly, but that which surpasses even the glory that Adam had originally.
 - b. We have the privilege and gift of grace to serve the Lord as His priests. The work is demanding. It encompasses many parts of our life. And, there is blessed hope in being faithful priests of our God, Jehovah.

“The Christian: A Thankful Priest”

I. His Work of Thanksgiving

- A. The work and duty of the believing priest of Christ is nothing other than thanksgiving to God.
 - 1. The nature of our work as priest is not to pay or atone for our sin in any way. (Revelation 1:5b-6)
 - 2. The motive for doing our work may never be to merit something with God.
 - 3. Our standard for conduct in our work may not be our own will. (Matt 11:30)
- B. In thanksgiving to God, the believer must fulfil his work as priest in 3 areas.
 - 1. Our work as priests is to sacrifice. (Romans 12:1; I Peter 2:5)
 - 2. Our work as priests is to intercede. Even as Christ, our HP, intercedes for us, so we as priests must intercede for one another. (Psalm 21:1-3; Ephesians 6:18-10; Matthew 5:44)
 - 3. Our work is to bless. (Romans 12:4; III John vs 2; II John vs 4b)

II. The Fulfilment of That Work

- A. Chiefly, we fulfil our duty as priests of God in His house of worship.
 - 1. Here in God’s house we assemble together as priests of the Most High God.
 - 2. Our work as priests continues in our homes in our devotions and prayers.
 - a. We function as priests in our homes when we sacrifice our time and hearts to worship God around our tables.
 - b. Fathers are required to take the lead in this. (Job 1:5)
- B. Our work as priests is fulfilled in connection with the office of deacon in the church.
 - 1. The priesthood of the believer also functions in the church through the office of deacon.
 - 2. That means that our offerings are an exercise of our priesthood.
 - a. In worship, God gives us the privilege but also the obligation to offer up unto Him in thanksgiving ourselves.
 - b. We sacrifice our offerings for the various causes of God’s Kingdom as servants of God.
 - c. Do you we that? Scriptures requires us to do that willingly, liberally, thankfully. Remember, God loves a cheerful priest, who gives to the Lord in the church offerings with a liberal and thankful heart.
- C. Finally, our work as priests is also fulfilled within the communion of the saints.
 - 1. This is emphasized in Galatians 6:2, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”
 - 2. The priest of Christ is called to be faithful to his fellow priests. That is our duty. Requires the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to do, to be a servant of the LORD, to sacrifice self for His sake and for the sake of our fellow-saints.

III. Our Hope for Faithfulness

- A. That reminds us that this calling to be faithful priests of Jehovah is humanly impossible.
 - 1. There is our sinful natures.
 - 2. Besides that, we must fulfil our calling in the midst of tribulation and afflictions.
- B. We have the hope that we have a glorious and merciful High Priest.
 - 1. Our High Priest is our Redeemer.
 - a. He has bought us with His blood, has washed us from our sin in His own blood, and has made us new in Himself, and made us priests forever of God, clothed in His righteousness.
 - b. Though we daily sin against Him, He will not cast us off, but sanctify us in His mercy from the power of sin.
 - 2. In every tribulation, He will be merciful in order to sustain us in His priesthood and call us powerfully to live a thankful life unto Him.
 - 3. On that basis, while we sacrifice ourselves in thanksgiving unto the Lord in this life, we have the sure expectation that soon we shall sacrifice ourselves fully and perfectly in the new and glorious temple of God in the new heavens and earth. We shall worship Him that liveth forever and ever to whom is all glory, dominion and power, now and forever.

Introduction

- A. The believer has a 3-fold office.
 - 1. He has really one office as a redeemed servant of God with 3 inter-related parts of prophet, priest, and king.
 - 2. We fulfil our office in three distinct ways. (1) We must confess the Name of our Lord purely and antithetically. (2) We must present ourselves a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him. (3) We must with a free and good conscience fight against sin and Satan in this life, and afterwards reign with Christ eternally over all creatures.
- B. It is necessary that the believer exercise the royal aspect of his office in this life.
 - 1. That is necessary in light of modern trends in the church world that the Christian no longer contend for the faith.
 - 2. Nevertheless, the King issues His call of the Gospel, which includes the call of Gideon's trumpet. He calls you to prepare for battle and to war a good warfare in this life. He calls you to fight in His armour, His strength, and in faith in Him. He calls you to fight in His victory in order that ye might overcome!

“The Christian: A Royal Warrior”

I. His Battle and Enemies

- A. The believer fights a spiritual warfare.
 - 1. Our war is not an earthly war, nor is the cause for which he fights to be fought in an earthly way. In II Corinthians 10:3-5 we read of that very truth. What does the apostle mean to teach? Our battle is against the spiritual enemies of the kingdom of sin.
 - 2. The war is spiritual because the cause for which we fight and by whose power we fight is the spiritual cause of Christ's Kingdom. That kingdom is heavenly and spiritual. That governs our motive in our warfare.
- B. The believer fights under a spiritual banner, which Christ has given His king-servants. (Psalm 60:4) We have a banner also in the army of Christ. Today, God has given the Christian warrior a spiritual banner of the Reformed Faith.
- C. As much as royal warrior loves that flag of Christ, the wicked enemies hate it, and it is a target for their attacks.
 - 1. The devil marks you and lies in wait. (Ephesians 6:11)
 - 2. The world also marks you.
 - 3. We are warned in II Peter 2 by the Apostle Peter about false prophets in the last days.
 - 4. Finally, there is the enemy of our own every present sinful nature.

II. His Armour and Strategy

- A. With what? The Lord has given us spiritual instruments to fight.
 - 1. The Lord has given us a complete set of protective, fail-proof armour. The armour of God. (Ephesians 6:10,14-18)
 - 2. The Lord gives us one offensive weapon: The Sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, of Christ crucified.
- B. We must fight as kings by first using that the sword of the Spirit to slay our pride and unbelief.
 - 1. Our warfare begins in our hearts in the activity of daily conversion. What is that?
 - 2. Where there is that daily conversion, there is the beginning of faithful warfare against the other enemies.
 - a. Failure to live in daily conversion or daily repentance will result in unfaithfulness and spiritual failure.
 - b. We are called to fight the other enemies of Satan and the world with a free and good conscience.
- C. Our secret strategy of victory is that we fight by running to a safe refuge.
 - 1. Now, that might sound like a strange thing to do in warfare. Successful generals do not advise their troops to retreat when they are headed for victory. Yet this is what our General commands.
 - 2. And, it is strategy that never fails to keep us safe and victorious.
 - a. It is exactly by running to the refuge that we can fight the enemy face to face.
 - b. This the Biblical strategy. (Psalm 62:6-8; Ephesians 6:18)

III. His Goal and Hope

- A. There is an immediate goal which is implied in the the H.C.
 - 1. Our desire is that we might overcome now in the spiritual warfare. (I John 2:14b)
 - 2. Shall we overcome in this life?
 - a. Many battles we will lose because we are sinners, but by faith will overcome.
 - b. We have in principle already overcome in Christ crucified.
 - c. Based on His kingship and the grace of His spiritual rule in us, we must fight our enemies, looking to the goal in which now and forever we shall overcome and enjoy our complete victory in our Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. Ultimately, we long for the end of this present warfare at the divinely appointed time.
 - 1. That end comes for us personally in our death, but also for the entire church at the return of Christ at the end.
 - 2. That end marks the beginning of our complete victory and peace forever.
 - a. In that life all our enemies shall be cast away into the lake of fire.
 - b. There in heavenly glory in the new creation we shall reign with Christ in His glorious kingdom.
 - c. That is the Royal Warrior's hope. Is it yours? May God grant us the grace to be faithful warrior's of the finished redemption of Christ crucified.

Introduction

- A. We believe that the Person of Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God.
- B. In addition, we confess in the Athanasian Creed concerning Jesus Christ: "For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man."
 - 1. When we confess that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, we mean not only that His person is the 2nd Person of the Trinity, but also that Jesus possesses a divine nature. He is not only the Son of Man but He is also the Son of God, possessing a divine nature.
 - 2. LD 13 calls our attention to that fundamental truth of Christ's Divinity.
 - a. This is necessary because it is still attacked today and viciously denied by false prophets and anti-Christ.
 - b. Nevertheless, we believe that this truth is fundamental to our redemption. If Christ is not divine and God, He cannot be our Saviour.
 - 3. We with Peter confess, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life! And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God." (John 6:68-69)

"THE GODHEAD AND SOVEREIGNTY OF JESUS CHRIST"

I. His Wondrous Glory

- A. The H.C. in its instruction about Jesus as the only begotten Son of God teaches us of His nature and glory.
 - 1. Jesus possesses a divine nature.
 - a. According to His divine nature, He is God. ("I AM")
 - b. Because He has that divine nature, Jesus possessed all the attributes of God. (John 8:58; John 10:28ff)
 - c. Because He has that divine nature, Christ is also one with the Father in all His works. (Colossians 1:16)
 - d. Indeed, Jesus is truly the only eternally begotten Son of God. (John 3:16)
 - 2. Because of His divine nature, Christ is Lord.
 - a. He is Sovereign One.
 - b. This Sovereignty Christ exercises according to His divine essence.
 - c. That is important to remember when we consider that Jesus is exalted at God's Right Hand.
- B. Even so, we acknowledge that Christ is the Wonder. (Isaiah 9:6)
 - 1. This is expressed in Isaiah 9:6 where Jesus is called the Wonderful.
 - a. That means that He is both Wonderful and the Wonder.
 - b. He is the Wonder Who joins together what is humanly un-joinable: the human and the divine in one Person.
 - 2. Christ joins together those 2 natures marvellously.
 - a. Those two natures remain 2 and remain divine and human: without confusion, without change to either nature, without division, and without separation.
 - b. This means that they remain perfectly united together, but in that union in His Person, Christ's 2 natures do not mix together, nor are they separated at any time, nor are they so divided at any moment in time so that there is no union between the two.
 - 3. That Wonder we can only understand by the faith, worked in us by the Holy Spirit and grace.

II. Its Clear Revelation

- A. The Old Testament prophesied that Christ would be divine. (Isaiah 7:14 and Micah 5:2)
- B. Jesus confirmed as much Himself in His earthly ministry.
 - 1. He taught the people that He was the Son of God.
 - 2. He showed that He is the Son of God: His miracles, in Gethsemane, and at the cross.

III. Its Blessed Comfort

- A. That truth assures us that then we are the property of Christ.
 - 1. This means 2 things.
 - a. We were purchased by Him Who is the only begotten Son of God.
 - b. Then, we have been possessed by Him actually.
 - 2. One implication of this truth is that because we are His property, His life and will are ours.
 - a. Our will is not our own.
 - b. Our life, will, and purpose and life is His. We are His servants, His citizens.
- B. Therefore, as His property, we have great comfort.
 - 1. We are assured of His protection from our mighty enemies.
 - 2. We are assured that He will work all things together for our good. (Romans 8:28)
 - 3. That means we may be assured that the Lord will work all things to the goal of revealing in us His great glory!

Introduction

- A. For the Christian, this time of the year can become a spiritually difficult time because of the unbelief, heresy, and superstition that is commonly associated with the birth of Jesus at the end of the calendar year. Although the Christian faces a spiritual struggle concerning the truth of Jesus' birth, it is part of the larger battle for the faith since all the doctrines of the truth are attacked by the world, not just the birth of Jesus.
- B. In spite of the spiritual battle, we may yet rejoice in the real truth of the lowly birth of Jesus.
 - 1. It is a delight to us because of the close relationship of Jesus' birth to His redeeming work on the cross.
 - 2. Standing before that truth by faith, we rejoice because this is part of the truth of the Holy Gospel of salvation by God's sovereign and particular grace alone.

"The Lowly Birth of Jesus"

I. The Amazing Wonder

- A. Jesus is "God's eternal Son, who is and continueth true and eternal God."
 - 1. Indeed, this Christ born in Bethlehem is the Lofty One!
 - a. He is the true and living God!
 - b. He possesses all the glory of God and performs all the works of God according to His own will.
 - 2. This Lofty One is also called, in Colossians 1:15, the Firstborn.
 - a. Luke 2 teaches us that our Saviour was the firstborn of the Virgin Mary: the Son of Man.
 - b. The fact that He was the firstborn of the virgin Mary, also clearly marks Him as the Firstborn of God.
- B. This Lofty One willingly became the Lowly One through His conception and birth by the Virgin Mary!
 - 1. The true and eternal Son of God took upon Him a human nature and became a dependent, dying man.
 - 2. When Christ did this, He came into the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom 8:3) and in the likeness of men (Phil 2:9).
 - a. He possessed a true and complete, human nature.
 - b. What is important about this description is that from the viewpoint of God's sight, He was also in the likeness of sinful men. (II Corinthians 5:21)
 - 3. He Who is the true and eternal God when He became a man, began His sojourn in the state of humiliation.
 - a. Christ's birth was part of that humiliation.
 - b. He was the object of God's curse from the moment of His incarnation.
 - c. Therefore, the Lofty One became the Lowliest One.

II. The Divine Motivation

- A. Jesus did that for the sake of "His Brethren."
 - 1. Jesus came into our flesh as that firstborn among many brethren!
 - a. Christ came as our Elder Brother in the Father's House.
 - b. When Christ came into our flesh, Christ had in mind and heart His brethren.
 - c. He came to perfect the covenant of God.
 - 2. That He came into our flesh for us to do that, does not mean that He came on the ground or basis of ourselves. He did not come for our sake because He needed us or because we did something that compelled Him to come.
- B. The reason for His coming willingly into our flesh was His eternal and almighty goodness alone.
 - 1. In His sovereign and electing grace and love, He came into that first step of humiliation.
 - 2. Hence, because of that mercy in Jesus toward us, the Son of God, the Lofty One, stooped so low that He became the Lowly One to bear our sin, to remove our curse, and to earn for us eternal salvation.
 - 3. In His grace, the true and eternal Son of God came powerfully by the wonder of the virgin birth into our flesh.
 - a. Satan and man did all that they could to prevent the coming of the Seed of the Woman.
 - b. Even though His brethren were undeserving and totally unwilling, Christ came!
 - 4. Nevertheless, for His goodness' sake, Jesus came in a birth which He himself did not deserve, but which He willingly endured for His brethren.

III. The Personal Profit

- A. There is in that truth blessed profit for us who are sinners.
 - 1. The humiliation of Jesus' lowly birth declares clearly that we deserve to be cursed.
 - 2. We deserve all of that because we are spiritually conceived & born in the nakedness of sin.
 - 3. In the knowledge of that, we cry out before God, "Be merciful to me, the sinner!"
- B. Jesus declares the answer to the cry of His Church, "In My mercy, I came into your flesh in order to cover you in the sight of God with clothes of My innocence and holiness!"
 - 1. Jesus came into our flesh in Bethlehem for your redemption with perfect righteousness.
 - 2. By His being clothed in our guilt, He became our covering so that before God we are clothed in His righteousness.
 - 3. In that we have the assurance that all the days of our life, in His sight I am the object of His goodness!

Introduction

According to Isaiah 53, Christ was for His 33 year life upon earth, the man of sorrows. He was that man of sorrows and was acquainted with grief in an entirely unique way. We suffer as well. We suffer mentally, bodily, and spiritually. However, Christ's suffering we cannot duplicate nor can we comprehend. The Lord gives us this truth to assure us of the forgiveness of our sins and spiritually to soothe our souls as we must pass through necessary afflictions and tribulations in this life for our heavenly good.

"THE SUFFERING OF JESUS"

I. What Did He Suffer?

- A. The historical fact is that Christ suffered in body and soul His whole life upon earth.
 - 1. In fulfilment of Isaiah 53, Christ according to His weakened human nature suffered much bodily affliction.
 - 2. Also, in fulfilment of Isaiah 53, Christ suffered according to His weakened human nature in His soul.
 - 3. In all His sufferings, Christ suffered the effects and the results of sin.
- B. However, His sufferings were entirely unique.
 - 1. He suffered as the only begotten Son of God in our human nature.
 - 2. The uniqueness of Christ's suffering also lies in the truth that He was Righteous.
 - 3. Christ's sufferings were unique because He sustained them.
 - 4. Christ's sufferings are totally incomprehensible.

II. What Was The Cause of It?

- A. He suffered for the cause of our sin.
 - 1. "He sustained in body and soul the wrath of God."
 - 2. What was the cause of the wrath of God upon Him which made Him to suffer?
 - a. That wrath came upon Him against "the sins of mankind." (i.e. "against the sins of the whole human race")
 - b. Because our sin was upon Him, our curse was laid upon Him.
 - c. With that curse laid upon Him, Christ was marked as the one to suffer God's eternal wrath for our sin.
- B. What was the ultimate cause of Christ having to bear the eternal wrath of God for us?
 - 1. That is God's eternal counsel and good pleasure. (Acts 2:23, 1 Peter 1:20)
 - 2. To that will of God, Christ learned and exercised complete submission.

III. What Was The Purpose of It?

- A. Thereby Christ achieved for His church the goal of a perfect "propitiatory sacrifice." (A. 37)
 - 1. The propitiatory sacrifice is one that achieves 2 objectives.
 - a. That kind of sacrifice covers in the sight of God the sins of His people.
 - b. Further, that propitiatory sacrifice appeased God's wrath by the complete removal of our sin and the curse.
 - 2. Christ by His suffering accomplished that purpose.
 - a. He has covered us in the sight of God with His perfect righteousness and holiness as revealed in all His sufferings but especially when He shed His blood on Calvary.
 - b. Christ by His covering also removed the wrath of God.
- B. Christ achieved the purpose of the "freeing us from the severe judgment to which we were exposed." (A. 38)
 - 1. We were like the Israelites in Egypt in terrible and inescapable bondage.
 - 2. But, Christ by His redemptive sufferings His whole lifelong has freed us from God's curse and hell and God's blessing and heavenly house as His children.

IV. What Are The Benefits Of It For Us?

- A. Negatively, the redemptive sufferings of Christ emphasized and assure us that the curse has been removed from us.
 - 1. We learn by the Spirit through faith that we deserve to have the curse attached to us permanently.
 - a. There are many whom God does curse.
 - b. But, we also deserved to be cursed because of all of our sins and iniquity.
 - 2. Yet, Christ's sufferings assure us of the great, undeserved miracle that the curse has been taken away from us.
 - a. The curse of the law has no power over us to condemn us and to render us worthy of God's wrath.
 - b. The curse has been totally removed which provides us true relief in the miseries of this life.
- B. Positively, Christ by His lifelong redemptive sufferings have obtained for us wonderful things.
 - 1. He has obtained for us 3 benefits: the favour and grace of God; complete righteousness before God; and, the hope of eternal life.
 - 2. Hence, the sufferings of Christ have obtained for us wonderful comfort in this life of suffering.
 - a. Yes, you and I must suffer our lifelong also. However, the benefit of the redemptive sufferings of Christ is that Christ has removed the curse out of our afflictions. He has taken the sting out of death, and in this life God's blessing rests upon His church.
 - b. Therefore, let us believe with all our heart that, for the sake of Christ's redemptive sufferings, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Introduction

- A. "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." (II Cor 5:4) That text illustrates that our citizenship today is in heaven. That fact that our citizenship is in heaven with Christ, makes us desire to be with the Lord in glory everlasting.
- B. Q/A #42 reminds us of inevitable event at the end of our earthly sojourns.
 - 1. What lies at the end of our sojourn is what the Apostle Paul in I Cor 15:26 calls "the last enemy."
 - 2. Yet, while we all face the last enemy, Christ commands us in John 14, "Let not your hearts be troubled!"
 - a. "Ye, believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also. And, if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also."
 - b. How shall we get there? For the people of God it is normally through the way of facing and battling the last enemy death by faith in Jesus Christ alone, our sure victory even over death.

"OUR BATTLE WITH THE LAST ENEMY"

I. A Certain Battle

- A. Death began after Adam fell into sin.
 - 1. Prior to his sin and God's judgment upon that sin, there was no death in God's creation.
 - 2. Only until Adam sinned did death pass upon all the creation and upon all men after him.
 - a. That death was God's judgment.
 - b. When God judges sin with death, that judgment comes in 3 different forms. Most receive all 3 forms of death as God's judgment upon their sin; but, only His people receive the first 2 forms of death.
- B. That death at the end of our earthly life is called in I Corinthians 15:26 "the last enemy."
 - 1. It is true that this last enemy of death casts its long, powerful shadow upon us already at birth.
 - a. The baby conceived and born is already surrounded by death and has death.
 - b. That battle against death continues our whole life long.
 - 2. We must especially wrestle with death at the end of our earthly sojourn.
 - a. We have observed or heard about fellow saints pass through that last battle.
 - b. The battle against death is not just for them, but those left behind battle against death, too.
 - c. But, then there comes the day when we must fight by faith against the last enemy face to face.
 - d. That battle continues for God's saints throughout the ages. It is a continual battle for the Church because, as we sing in Psalter 247, "Time like an ever rolling stream, bears all its sons away...."
 - 3. We must all pass through the valley of the shadow of death to get to the heavenly Canaan. Why, this way?

II. A Necessary Battle

- A. Why is that battle with the last enemy death necessary?
 - 1. Our death is not necessary for 2 reasons.
 - a. Our battle with the last enemy is not a payment for sin or an entrance into a state of purgation for the full removal of guilt and sin.
 - b. Our battle with the last enemy is not Divine cruelty or punishment upon us.
 - 2. As a result, we learn that death is necessary for several reasons.
 - a. We need to die in order to abolish our sin.
 - b. We need to die because by faith we see death is the only passage way to eternal life.
 - c. Finally, we need to do battle with the last enemy in order that the glory of God's grace be revealed.
- B. Still, a question lingers: "why must we go on this way to that glory?"
 - 1. The ultimate answer is because God is sovereign and His ways and thoughts are above ours.
 - 2. In submission to the will of the Father, Christ leads us God's sovereignly good way through death to glory.
 - 3. In submission to the Father and Christ, we learn that this way of death to glory is total gain. Therefore, "Let not your hearts be troubled!"

III. A Victorious Battle

- A. By death we are easily troubled. The battle of battles against the last enemy is not so much the battle to maintain earthly life, but the battle is a struggle for assurance, submission, and contentment. Are all of my sins forgiven? Is death good? Is there glory on the other side of death? Is there a room for me in the Father's house of many mansions?
- B. Yes, be not troubled, for you in Christ Jesus have the victory over death.
 - 1. Sure, outwardly there is loss; but, spiritually there is gain, there is victory in Christ and comfort in His Comforter.
 - 2. There is this sure victory because through life and death, you belong unto your faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.
 - 3. Therefore, as you do battle with the last enemy, Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in Me! For in my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also soon, saith your Lord.

Introduction

- A. The HC considers another benefit of the death of Christ on the cross. The HC has taught and emphasized that Jesus Christ has established our salvation **for us**. But is that all that the suffering and death of Christ has accomplished? Does Christ by His death establish only the possibility of our salvation and make it available to whomsoever because of their free-will or act of daily believing make it a reality in themselves?
- B. The HC teaches in Q/A 43 that there is more that the redemptive sufferings and death has accomplished.
 - 1. This is necessary to combat the false teachings that attack our knowledge of the truth, such as Arminianism and the error of the well-meant offer of the Gospel. The truth is that the power of the death of Christ also makes salvation a reality in us through the inner working of the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. The HC illustrates a very important relationship between justification and sanctification. Christ's death not only established our justification, but also the necessity of our sanctification and all of the other blessings of salvation.
 - 3. Therefore, the death of Christ was powerful not only for the forgiveness of our sins, but also to overthrow and to deliver us from the terrible power of our sin.

"The Overthrow of Our Old Man of Sin"

I. The Meaning

- A. The HC reminds us of the presence of an old man of sin within us.
 - 1. The old man of sin is mentioned in the Bible in several places. (Col 3:9b; Eph 4:22)
 - 2. When the Scriptures speak of the old man, it is referring to our inborn sinful nature, our sinful flesh.
 - a. The "old man" the the child of God from the viewpoint of his sinful nature.
 - b. Of course, that old man is the antithesis of the new man within the child of God.
 - c. Within the regenerated and converted child of God, there exists these 2 principles, these 2 natures.
 - 3. However, before the new man is established in the child of God by regeneration & calling & sanctification, the old man rules the child of God in rule which can be described as a reign of terror.
 - a. Some of God's people experience this subjectively when converted later in life. (e.g. Rahab and Paul)
 - b. According to Q/A 43, prior to the grace of God working in us salvation, the old nature is the ruler, the dictator.
- B. But, for those saved by Christ, a great miracle has taken place: that old nature has been overthrown!
 - 1. The influence of the old nature and our battle against it remains lifelong, even until our death.
 - 2. Though it is still present, yet the child of God has been delivered from the cruel reign of our old man of sin.
 - a. The sceptre of our old man has been broken because it by Christ has no right to rule over us. Christ does.
 - b. The throne of the old man has been demolished because Christ has established His throne in us to rule us.
 - c. No longer are we married or bound as slaves to that old nature because Christ has cut us loose from it.
 - d. That is why we can say that by God's grace, "the corrupt inclinations of the flesh may no more reign in us."

II. The Possibility

- A. The suffering, death, and burial of Christ is effective for us and in us because Christ is our representative Head.
 - 1. That He is our representative head means
 - a. Christ has been appointed by God to represent His entire church in all of His work as Mediator.
 - b. Christ was appointed to perform several things in our behalf and for our benefit.
 - 2. That Christ, our Representative Head, has suffered, died, and been buried, applies to us.
 - a. When Christ suffered and died, we suffered and died.
 - b. When Christ was dead and buried, we were dead and buried with Him.
 - 3. Because of that, we are redeemed and saved. We are justified in the sight of God, and we must be sanctified.
- B. Partaking of that deliverance is made possible by Christ through the bond of faith.
 - 1. Christ joins us to Himself by the bond of faith.
 - 2. That union into Christ makes us actual and active partakers of the benefits and fruits of His suffering and death.
 - 3. That is the truth because Jesus said from the cross, "It is finished!"

III. The Daily Benefit

- A. Daily we must yet strive against that old man of sin.
 - 1. In Romans 6 and other passages, the Lord calls us to mortify that old man of sin.
 - a. Neg, we are not to yield our members as servants of sin anymore.
 - b. Pos, mortify that old man of sin by the chief weapon of repentance.
 - 2. The enjoyment of our victory over our old nature is enjoyed by "offering ourselves unto God and Christ a sacrifice of thanksgiving." How is that done?
- B. In faithfulness, there is the hope that we shall have the complete victory over our old man.
 - 1. The sufferings and death of Christ assures us that the victory is sealed.
 - 2. The burial of Christ assures us that the victory over that old man will come to pass when our body is planted in the earth and our souls are taken to glory after death. Unto that goal, we may be assured that the Lord shall preserve us and keep us.

Introduction

- A. The HC says that the words "He descended into hell" were added to the Apostles' Creed.
 - 1. The writers of the HC were historically honest about the origin of the words "He descended into hell."
 - 2. Nevertheless, if we are to keep this addition in the Apostles' Creed, then we must maintain it with the correct interpretation which stands in harmony with all Scripture and the rule of faith.
- B. Though the phrase was a later addition and the understanding of that addition was corrected in the Reformation, we must not conclude that this added phrase has ruined the Apostles' Creed and so must be removed. It may be retained in the Reformed understanding without any reservation.
 - 1. In fact, the correct understanding of the words enhances our understanding of the steps of Christ's humiliation.
 - 2. With that, the HC then applies to our hearts the Reformed understanding of Christ's descent into hell.

"Christ's Descent into the Hell of the Cross"

I. The Torment

- A. Christ's descent into hell means that He descended into inexpressible torments in body and soul.
 - 1. These words do not mean that Jesus went personally into various places after his death other than heaven.
 - a. There are 2 ideas that claim that Christ personally went somewhere, other than heaven, after His burial.
 - b. Both of these views are based upon a false interpretation of I Peter 3:18-19, which speaks of no literal descent of Jesus into the place of hell, but only speaks of His announcement by His Spirit in hell of His glorious victory.
 - 2. That Jesus descended into hell means He endured the inexpressible anguish and torments of hell on the cross.
 - a. There is the place which God has created for the inexpressible torments of body and soul.
 - b. Rather, than sending Jesus to hell itself, God brought the sufferings of hell to Jesus on the cross.
 - c. In that hell of the cross, Jesus endured inexpressible spiritual torments.
- B. Jesus did endure hell on the cross because He cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me."
 - 1. There Jesus was forsaken by God completely.
 - 2. To be forsaken by God was the ultimate fulfilment of the curse due to our sin.
 - 3. Who can fully understand that Jesus suffered for us inexpressible anguish, sorrow, pains, and terrors?

II. The Necessity

- A. Was it possible for Jesus to go another way than this horrible death of the cross?
 - 1. This was that well-known question that Jesus Himself asked in Gethsemane. "If it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." The Father's answer was "no."
 - 2. The reason for that answer was "satisfaction for our sins could be made no otherwise, than by the death of the Son of God."
 - a. What other possibilities would there be concerning the removal of the cup of God's wrath?
 - b. Jesus Christ, our Mediator, needed to drink that cup of wrath and suffer hell for us. That was the only way.
- B. Still, there is more that can be said about this necessity of Christ's descent into hell.
 - 1. This death was necessary "unto the praise and glory of His grace, wherein God hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Eph 1:6) This descent of Jesus into the hell of the cross declared that Jehovah's grace is sovereign, undeserved, unmerited, always saving, particular, and wonderful.
 - 2. The hellish death of the cross was necessary for the revelation of Jehovah in Christ unto His people. What is the Name of our God Who saves us? We cannot know His Name apart from the hellish death of Christ. Though the reality of the hellish death of Jesus is incomprehensible, yet here we see our holy and gracious God face to face.

III. The Benefit

- A. From this hellish death of Christ we derive a personal benefit in "my greatest temptations."
 - 1. What are "my greatest temptations"?
 - 2. In regards to our great temptations, even those into which we have fallen, the descent of Jesus into the hell of the cross gives the repentant believer great comfort.
- B. The descent of Jesus into hell gives us a blessed hope.
 - 1. His descent into those inexpressible hellish sufferings has changed our sufferings for our eternal profit. His descent has made our pathway in life aim **upward and heavenward**.
 - 2. Our exaltation into heaven is inversely proportionate to Christ's descent into hell.
 - a. How far down did Jesus go when He suffered on the cross? How intense were the inexpressible sufferings of Christ on the cross for you? How heavy was the weight of God's wrath upon Christ your Lord?
 - b. As far as He went down, as greatly as He suffered, and how heavy the weight pressed upon Him as He descended into the hellish agonies of the cross, so high, so intense, and so heavy shall be the everlasting glory that God has reserved for you in heaven, and even now begins in you.
 - 3. Thus, in life & death, we expect not to perish under the wrath of God and then in hell forever, but to be preserved in God's grace & goodness through life and then afterwards to be received upwards into place of the eternal weight of the glory and goodness of our God with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Introduction

- A. We consider another step of Christ's humiliation called His burial. This is the step that happened historically last. After Christ died the second death of hell on the cross for His Church, Christ died with His soul arising up into heaven, and His body left for some time yet hanging lifelessly on the cross. It was necessary that the body of Jesus be buried.
- B. Although the treatment of the H.C. is brief in regards to the burial of Christ, yet we must not overlook the necessary place of the burial of Christ in our knowledge and assurance of our own salvation.

"The Kingly Burial of Christ in a New Tomb on the 6th Day of the Week"

I. The Historical Event

- A. The Bible gives us a clear picture of the events of Christ's burial.
 - 1. Immediately after Jesus died, Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Christ, asked Pontius Pilate for the body of Jesus because he knew the OT law and desired to show his love to God and to Jesus. (Deut 21:22-23; Matt 27:57)
 - 2. Believing Joseph, along with believing Nicodemus wrapped the body of Jesus in very expensive burial ointments and linen strips of cloth, which things were normally used for wealthy nobility and kings.
 - 3. In keeping with the fact that they were giving Christ a royal burial, they laid him in a new tomb.
 - 4. This burial was for Christ the final part of His humiliation.
 - a. Christ, the only begotten Son of God, needed to humble Himself to even that step of humiliation in becoming subject to the grave for a little while.
 - b. While Jesus lay in the grave on the 7th day of the week, it appeared outwardly for a little while that the kingdom of darkness and Satan had triumphed and the covenant of God had been put to defeat forever. Nevertheless, His burial served the revelation that Christ had the victory and very soon would receive His glory.
- B. This burial was necessary according to prophecy and for the fulfilment of the Covenant promises.
 - 1. The Old Testament spoke of His burial. (Psalm 16:10a; Isaiah 53:9)
 - 2. Christ Himself prophesied of His own burial. (Matt 16:21, Matt 17:22-23; Matt 20:18-19; sign of Jonah)
 - 3. The burial of Christ teaches us that He came to fulfill all OT prophecies, types, shadows, and the law as its end, its perfect fulfilment. Even in His burial, God saw to it that His only begotten Son was in full compliance with the OT laws in order to fulfil them for us, especially with the 4th commandment.

II. The Reasons for His Burial in a New Tomb on the 6th Day

- A. Why was it necessary that Christ be buried and buried in a tomb?
 - 1. That it may be clearly shown that Christ was completely dead for 3 important reasons.
 - a. This confirmed that He took upon Himself the entire death that we deserved to die.
 - b. This assures us that our merciful High Priest entered into all the aspects of our suffering and death in this life so that He does know what mercy and grace is needed for us to be preserved unto glory through this life.
 - c. This helps to confirm that His coming resurrection was not a trick of the disciples, but a miracle of God alone.
 - 2. By His burial, Jesus fulfilled the O.T. law of Deut 21:23.
 - 3. His burial showed a picture of our salvation according to Paul's instruction in I Corinthians 15:42-44 which refers to our bodies being planted in the ground in preparation for our final resurrection. (John 12:23-24)
 - 4. His burial prepared the disciples and believing women to be eyewitnesses of the wonderful work of God in the resurrection of Christ on the Resurrection Lord's Day.
- B. Why was it necessary that Christ be buried in a new tomb? Christ had to be buried in a new tomb in order to set forth the sign that He died as the perfect and spotless Lamb of God for our complete and finished redemption.
- C. What was the reason for Christ's burial in a rich man's tomb? (Isaiah 53:9) Having fulfilled all obedience and righteousness to God and the law Christ was no longer a criminal, but the King of Righteousness. His burial in a tomb reflected the truth that Christ had obtained our full justification.
- D. Why was Christ buried on the 6th day? He was buried on the 6th day in order that He might rest on the 7th day of the week on that last O.T. Sabbath. He rested in the O.T. Sabbath, not to begin another week of labouring to another O.T. Sabbath, but to rise into the finished and completed rest of the Resurrection.

III. Its Significance for Jesus and for Us

- A. His burial is significant because it was a foreglimpse of His exaltation in His resurrection from the grave.
 - 1. The creation itself reflects this truth where in parts of the world the seasons shift from fall to winter.
 - 2. When viewed by faith, the burial of Christ was not the end, but only a very temporary thing. We must not remember the death and burial of Christ as though Christ remains dead and buried, but only as a temporary event in the past that served what Christ enjoys now in glory at God's Right Hand.
- B. As a result, His burial is also significant for us.
 - 1. It gives us the example to follow that we also bury our dead, like a seed, in hope of the final resurrection.
 - 2. His burial also gives us hope before the reality of our own burial. When we our bodies must be sown in the grave and return to the dust, we have the hope that our time in the grave is only temporary. We enter the grave as the royal citizens of the King who must rise again in the final resurrection when the King calls us forth in the last day.

Introduction

- A. On the first day of the week, Christ, Who was crucified and died, overcame the last enemy, death.
- B. Of that triumphant resurrection, there were many infallible proofs.
 - 1. There were the proofs of that very day at the tomb and in His personal appearances that day.
 - 2. In addition to that, there were other proofs given by His many appearances after the day of the Resurrection.
 - 3. All of those appearances and the very existence of the Bible itself, are all unmistakable proofs that every day since then Christ is not dead, but He is the Resurrection and the Life, our Living Lord of glory.
- C. Now, the H.C. asks a question about the significance of that truth of the resurrection for us personally. How does knowing the truth of the Resurrection of Christ serve my comfort and outlook in life? The Resurrection of Christ applies to our regeneration, calling, faith, justification, sanctification, preservation, and glorification; it applies to our life in salvation each and every day.

“The Profit of Resurrection of Our Lord”

I. Its Profit for Our Justification

- A. We are comforted by the resurrection in the knowledge that we in Christ are partakers of His righteousness.
 - 1. The resurrection of Christ instructs us that Christ's righteousness was perfect. The resurrection of Christ was a seal of the authenticity of the righteousness of Christ for us.
 - 2. Further, the resurrection of Christ makes legal partakers of that perfect righteousness and obedience.
 - a. The resurrection shows us the blessing of the righteousness that belongs to the repentant believer now.
 - b. How does the resurrection make our connection to the righteousness and obedience of Christ a reality? In Romans 4:25 we read that Christ “was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”
 - c. Not only do we partake of that righteousness legally, but also actually by that living union to Christ, which is the bond and the activity of saving faith.
- B. This is a comfort to know with respect to our sins and our need for forgiveness and full justification.
 - 1. The Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15:17 applies the resurrection to the truth of the forgiveness of our sins.
 - a. The text teaches that “if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”
 - b. Since Christ has been raised, we are no longer in our sins in the sight of God.
 - 2. This applies in our struggles against our sin and in the knowledge of our sinfulness in our daily repentance. The resurrection is God's proof to you of your justification, your forgiveness, your right to eternal life because of Christ.

II. Its Profit for Our New Life

- A. In addition to providing us a benefit with respect to our justification and forgiveness, the resurrection of Christ teaches us about the new life to which we have been raised now.
 - 1. The life implanted in us by the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration is the new life of the risen Christ.
 - 2. In addition to that, the resurrection also is connected to the work of Christ in sanctification because the Spirit of Christ by irresistible grace renews us and conforms us into the image and life of Christ.
- B. The resurrection assures us that the life of Christ in us shall be preserved. The resurrection of Christ assures us that the life of Christ cannot be destroyed or stolen from us, even by our own sin.
- C. Implications.
 - 1. It is a truth which admonishes us to walk in that new life of Christ.
 - 2. It is a truth which encourages the child of God throughout life, especially at the end.

III. Its Profit for Our Future Hope

- A. The resurrection of Christ emphasizes the truth that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.
 - 1. The kingdom of Christ and its life is not earthly.
 - 2. In His resurrection, Christ entered into the full and glorious life of His Kingdom as our King. Such is the new life of Christ in His body of which we must also partake as His Covenant people. In that new body, we must dwell with Jehovah forever in heavenly glory.
- B. The resurrection of Christ serves as a sure pledge of our own blessed resurrection.
 - 1. Our hope is eventually to be in glory with Christ.
 - 2. Christ's resurrection assures us that He will bring us there to glory in body and soul.
 - a. That is true because in I Corinthians 15:23 we learn that Christ is the “firstfruits” of the resurrection.
 - b. If the firstfruits has been harvested and gathered into everlasting glory, shall not then the rest of the harvest be gathered up unto the same glory? Yes, the glory that Christ enjoys in body and soul as the firstfruits, He must also give unto us when He gathers us up unto glory with Him in the great day of His visible and final appearing.

Introduction

- A. 40 days after His resurrection, Jesus called His disciples to Mt. Olivet in order to witness his ascension into heaven.
- B. This was and remains a very significant event in the work of Jesus for His church and the glory of God.
 - 1. It is mentioned numerous times throughout Scripture. In fact, it is mentioned far more often than His birth.
 - 2. It is significant because this event marks the triumph and victory of the Kingdom of God.
 - 3. Being so significant, this even event makes the Church of Jesus Christ very joyful. (Luke 24:52-53) We rejoice greatly in the ascension of Christ because His ascension has gained for us an advocate before our Father, a worthy calling for each day, and another sure pledge of our future hope.

“What Christ’s Ascension Gains For Us”

I. A Heavenly Advocate

- A. The book of Hebrews teaches us that Christ’s ascension fulfilled the Old Testament type of the High Priest.
 - 1. The High Priest was commanded once a year to enter the Holy of Holies, inside the temple (or tabernacle).
 - a. That was done at a special moment on the day of atonement (yom kippur).
 - b. This spiritual exercise was a type and shadow of what was necessary for Israel’s atonement. (Ps 24:3-5)
 - 2. In His ascension Christ declared that He was the High Priest of His people.
 - a. This establishes that Christ’s ascension is directly connected to His work on the cross.
 - b. When Christ entered into heaven, He crossed through the veil between heaven and earth.
 - c. There our Forerunner has gone to remain. (Hebrews 6:20)
- B. What is the gain of that? He continues there to intercede for you as your advocate.
 - 1. The fact is we need that intercession of our Advocate because we are sinners. (I John 2:1)
 - 2. Fear not, fellow pilgrim and repentant citizen of the kingdom of heaven, bearing our loads of sin and guilt. Our high priest at the mercy seat of the Judge of heaven and earth prays for and intercedes for us.
 - a. He intercedes for us concerning our standing before God so that God always sees us in the blood of Christ.
 - b. He intercedes for us concerning our spiritual life with the Father.
 - c. By His Holy Spirit in us, He removes load of our sin and guilt away and replaces it with peace, hope, and joy.

II. A Worthy Calling

- A. Because Christ ascended into heaven, He gives us a worthy vocation (calling). The H.C. quotes from Colossians 3:1ff to set before us what our calling is as those who have risen with our ascended Lord: “seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and not things on earth.”
 - 1. Our calling is not to seek the things of this earth. That is an unworthy and vain (empty) calling.
 - 2. Our calling is to seek the things of the kingdom of heaven where Christ sits at the right hand of God which makes our calling worthy!
- B. Because Christ is ascended to heaven, it is possible that we may walk in that worthy vocation.
 - 1. Because Christ has ascended into heaven, He has received the promise of the Father: the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. By that Spirit of Christ now in us, we may, must, and will seek the kingdom of our ascended Lord!

III. A Double Assurance

- A. Though the cause of Christ’s kingdom is glorious and victorious, the Lord knows that we are not always so confident about the glory of the kingdom of Jesus Christ as it comes through the history of the last days.
 - 1. Our faith does not always stand high on the plateaus of confidence and clear conviction of the promises of God.
 - 2. Nevertheless, we have our merciful High Priest Who knows our frailty and the weakness of our faith.
- B. The ascended Lord gives to us another pledge in His ascension, in addition to the pledge of the resurrection, that our salvation must be accomplished and the church of Jesus Christ must be glorified.
 - 1. Christ’s ascension is a another pledge that we must follow our Forerunner into the glory wherein He now sits.
 - 2. But, how shall I know and be assured that I will partake of that glory?
 - a. The Lord has given you an earnest of that final glory already.
 - b. Now, what is that down-payment?
 - (1) The earnest is the Spirit of Christ who dwells in our new regenerated hearts and by whose presence we begin to produce His fruits of faith and believing.
 - (2) The Spirit within you is the beginning of the final sum of the riches of salvation.
 - (3) He is the power to make the rest of the riches of salvation in us a reality. Having Him as a down-payment then, we have now the double assurance that He will sanctify and preserve all of His saints through this life so that they shall ascend up Mt. Zion and dwell in the house of the Father with Christ forever.

AMEN

Introduction

- A. We confess, first of all, in this LD that Christ now sits at the right hand of God.
 - 1. This is the position to which Christ was prophesied to go. (Psalm 89:27ff; Psalm 110:1; Psalm 2:6ff)
 - 2. Thus, when Christ ascended up into heaven, He received His promised glory at the right hand of God in the presence of the angels and saints before God's throne.
- B. This truth is another part of our only comfort in life and death. This truth is a source of much assurance because it teaches us that our heavenly Father governs everything by our Lord Jesus Christ for our daily and eternal salvation.

"Christ: Our Governor of All Things"

I. The Fact

- A. Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, is Lord and Governor of all things.
 - 1. With respect to the world and the church, Christ's governorship is different.
 - a. Christ governs all things with respect to the wicked world in His anger and curse.
 - b. But, Christ governs all things with respect to His church in grace.
 - 2. With those attitudes at God's right hand, our Governor, the Lord Jesus Christ, rules over "all things."
 - a. Our Governor exercises a universal sceptre over all creatures, great and small.
 - b. Because Christ is Wise, He knows His creatures according to the wisdom & knowledge of God.
 - 3. Our Governor at God's right hand rules over all things by His Spirit.
 - a. The Son of Man, Jesus Christ, at God's right hand makes His universal sceptre effective in every part of His creation by His Spirit.
 - b. Therefore, the proper definition of history is that the Father rules over all things by Christ through His Spirit.
- B. Christ governs all things for the purpose of His church and covenant.
 - 1. That His church and covenant are at the centre of His government is taught in Scripture.
 - a. In Revelation 5-6, we are given a visionary description of the truth of Christ's Ascension and the work He does in sitting at God's right hand.
 - b. This is repeated in Eph 1:22-23, "And hath put all things under his (Christ's) feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."
 - 2. Can we by faith in the light of Scripture see that government for the sake of His church in history? Yes. (Examples: reformation, 2 world wars of the 20th century; technology advancements for communication and travel)
 - 3. Therefore, Christ so governs all things that way, and He governs it that way for your sakes!

II. The Reason

- A. He possesses at God's Right Hand "all authority and power."
 - 1. This is what Jesus confessed to His disciples, immediately prior to His ascension: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2. With that omnipotence and sovereignty, Christ governs everything.
 - a. From the viewpoint of God's providence, Christ governs everything. (Hebrews 1:3)
 - b. This absolute government of Christ He exercises for the welfare of the Church.
- B. This is the fulfilment of God's determinate counsel and foreknowledge.
 - 1. In Colossians 1:13ff, we read of this very truth.
 - 2. Why would God will and do this? For the glory of Himself. (Ephesians 1:17)
 - 3. Because Christ governs that way and for that reason, then you may be assured that He your Lord and Saviour governs all things, even in your daily life, for your profit in fulfilment of God's will and good pleasure.

III. The Profit

- A. The personal profit of Christ being our Governor of all things is that He can and does pour out upon us heavenly gifts. ("Graces" in the original German and Latin has the idea of "gifts.")
 - 1. There are many heavenly gifts that our Governor pours out upon His Church.
 - 2. He also pours out upon us individually His heavenly gifts.
- B. Unto that goal, having Christ as Governor of all Things gives us the precious profit of heavenly protection.
 - 1. Strong enemies surround the church and the saints, which are chiefly three. Who of us can stand against them?
 - 2. But, "fear not, little flock, it is my Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom," saith our Lord.
 - 3. As Christ so governs, we have nothing of which to be afraid.
 - 4. What a blessed comfort it is to believe and confess that the Lord Jesus Christ, is our sovereign and omnipotent governor at the Father's right hand.

AMEN

Introduction

- A. We confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is enthroned in great glory and majesty.
- B. Since Christ labours in that glory towards that goal of the fulfilment of His everlasting covenant, Christ labours towards His second coming, also called His *pa-rou-si-a* (His bodily appearing again).
 - 1. His appearing again marks the fulfilment of the will of God concerning His covenant of grace.
 - 2. For that final return of Jesus Christ, we as members of that covenant, look and hope. Upon that return of Christ, the truly Reformed believer sets his heart because that coming is our final and full redemption.

“Looking for Christ to Come Again”

I. Looking for His Glorious Return

- A. The glorious return of Christ is one of the objects to which faith always looks.
 - 1. In many places in Scripture and in different language, the glorious return of Christ is taught.
 - a. Malachi 4:1 we are told that “the day” comes, which shall burn as an oven.
 - b. In Acts 2:20, a reference to Joel 2, this day is called the “great and notable day of the Lord.”
 - c. That day is called elsewhere in Scripture “the end.” (I Peter 4:7)
 - d. Because the coming of Christ again is that grand climax of all history, this implies that this will be a great wonder or miracle.
 - 2. That coming of Christ is not afar off, but it is “at hand.” (I Peter 4:7)
 - a. That the end is near at hand does not mean that the end is chronologically tomorrow.
 - b. The end is at hand in 2 senses: always coming and the next great event in history according to God’s will.
- B. For that end and the return of Christ, the Reformed believer must look.
 - 1. In Luke 12:35ff, Jesus admonishes us to be “ready also, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”
 - 2. That readiness and watchfulness is an activity of true faith.
 - 3. In that watchfulness of faith, we then go one step further and long for that coming.
 - a. The church cries out at the end of Revelation, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”
 - b. Our longing is based not merely upon our own personal desire for deliverance, but above all our desire is that God might be glorified in Jesus Christ.

II. Looking for Signs of His Return

- A. We look and long for that to come at the appointed time.
 - 1. We may not speculate as to when the Lord might return again.
 - 2. We expect that return to take place soon. Jesus said, “Behold, I come quickly. Surely, I come quickly.”
 - a. This means that Christ will not stay in heaven one moment longer than what is necessary.
 - b. Further, that Christ comes quickly means that in comparison to the everlasting ages beyond the end of history, the time left that it will take for the Lord to return is virtually nothing. In comparison to eternity, our life and the history left in time is like an evaporating vapour cloud.
 - c. Christ comes quickly from the viewpoint that for the wicked His coming is always too soon.
 - d. Christ comes quickly from the viewpoint of His love for His Church.
- B. How can we see and know by faith that Christ is coming quickly? Observe the signs!
 - 1. Christ has given you and me in the Bible a list of various signs of His coming.
 - 2. What are these signs according to the book of Daniel, Matthew 24, II Thess 2, Rev. 6, and many other passages?
 - 3. As the end approaches, these signs will increase in frequency and intensity. Do you observe that, beloved?

III. Looking for His Return with Much Profit

- A. The profit of daily watching for the return of Christ is first that it keeps us heavenly-minded.
 - 1. In I John 3:2-3, we read, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”
 - 2. In that way, we live in constant readiness for the Lord to appear for us personally and for His church at the end.
 - 3. That heavenly-mindedness is an important guard against the covetousness and material-mindedness. It keeps us focussed upon the one kingdom that really matters: Christ’s heavenly kingdom and its riches.
- B. In addition, the H.C. applies this watchfulness for the Lord’s coming to the difficult signs of Christ’s coming through which the church must pass.
 - 1. Yes, the church militant of Jesus Christ must also pass through the signs of His final coming.
 - 2. What profit is the knowledge that Christ is coming again while we are being oppressed, starved, or killed under persecution and great affliction for the cause of Christ?
 - a. The H.C. teaches us to expect Christ’s sure return again, with an “uplifted head” of joy and eagerness.
 - b. The end comes in which Christ shall cast all His enemies into hell, and exalt His chosen ones to Himself, into heavenly joys and glory.
- C. Jesus declares, “Behold, I come quickly!” Let us now say, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Yea, come quickly!”

Introduction

- A. Of great interest to the believer is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we think of the return of Christ, we pray with the church of all ages, "Even so, Lord Jesus come! Come quickly!"
- B. However, of great concern to the believer about the return of Christ is the great tribulation that will come before.
 - 1. The way in which the Bible describes the great tribulation is from a human viewpoint frightening.
 - 2. Before the sobering reality of the coming great tribulation, the Lord speaks to us the sure Gospel of salvation: "Fear not little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!" (Luke 12:32)

"Christ Coming Again through the Great Tribulation"

I. What That Tribulation For the Church Will Be

- A. The Bible has much to say about the kind of tribulation that is coming for the church.
 - 1. It is mentioned throughout the Bible. (Acts 4:12; II Timothy 3:12)
 - 2. The ultimate author of the persecution of tribulation is Satan. (I Peter 5:8-9; Genesis 4)
 - 3. Now, when you suffer that persecution, the reason is that Christ lives in you. (Matt 5:11; John 15:21)
- B. Unlike all of the other tribulations for the saints in history, there is one more, great tribulation coming.
 - 1. This tribulation will be unprecedented in intensity and coverage. In Matt 24:21, the great tribulation is described as something that "was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, ever shall be."
 - a. It will cover the whole world so that the saints everywhere shall be affected.
 - b. It will target the church very directly with a very specific purpose..
 - 2. At that time, the antithesis will be very clear, either one is a Christian, willing to suffer for Christ, or one will be a worshipper of the anti-Christ and enjoying the glory of the evil kingdom of man. (Revelation 13)
 - 3. However, this tribulation will also be brief. We read of that in Matthew 24:22, "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."
- C. This will be Satan and his antichrist's last attempt to destroy the church.
 - 1. Jesus reminded us in Matthew 16 that the gates hell are working mightily to prevail against the church.
 - 2. The great tribulation is his final attempt to overthrow the kingdom of Christ.
 - a. According to Rev. 13:7, the antichrist shall be given power to make war against the saints.
 - b. The goal of that war is to "overcome them." (Rev 13:7)

II. Why Christ Must Come Again Through This Sign

- A. This has been prophesied to be fulfilled.
 - 1. This is chiefly prophesied in the NT.
 - 2. Since this is the word of the Lord it shall surely come to pass.
- B. This has been pictured in the O.T. types and shadows. (Flood; Egypt; Daniel chapter 3; Matthew 24)
- C. This event in history is divinely prudent because it serves the glorious Gospel of grace in its fullest and finest revelation at the end of history.
 - 1. God did not will that history will end on a very positive note for the world.
 - 2. God willed that the coming of Christ would come to pass through the sign of the man of sin coming to his final fulfilment in the anti-Christ and his atrocities against the church.
 - 3. God has willed history to go this way to serve the glory of His grace as He has done many times in the past. Against that dark background of hopelessness, God will shine forth with the glory of His sovereign, irresistible, unconditional, and almighty grace to save us by a wonder.

III. What Comfort The Church Has Through It

- A. The sovereign Lord will cause the great tribulation to serve the good and salvation of the church.
 - 1. Though Satan is the author of the evil of persecution, yet the Lord Jesus Christ remains sovereignly in control over that persecution.
 - 2. Because He is in sovereign control, we have nothing to fear. (Psalm 23:4; Psalm 46:1; Matt 16:18; Matt 28:20)
- B. In the great tribulation, the church shall have a good and realistic expectation for her heavenly salvation.
- C. The church has the rich assurance and spiritual relief of her heavenly victory and inheritance. (Romans 8:39; John 10:28-29; John 6:39)
- D. She has the complete confidence that the final judgment show before all that the cause of the faithful saints has always been the cause of Christ, His truth, and His kingdom.
 - 1. The Lord is coming, even through that sign of His coming as Christ has done many times before in history.
 - 2. This is the Lord who shall appear in His righteous glory to destroy His enemies and cast them into hell.
 - 3. This is the Lord who shall in the final judgment show our justification and show that the cause for which we have died is God's cause. He shall bring us into the glory of the new heavens and earth. Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly. AMEN

Introduction

- A. The Lord's Day teaches our need as pilgrims for the Holy Spirit. We cannot be saved without Him.
 - 1. Salvation would be impossible for us to obtain apart from the Holy Spirit and His work of grace.
 - 2. We need the Lord to work His salvation in and through us.
- B. To fill that need, the Lord has given to us His Spirit, Who in His person is the Third Person of the Trinity. The Lord has given Him to us in order to work in us a complete and perfect salvation. The Lord has given that Spirit to us permanently so that as we sojourn through life, we have the complete assurance that the Lord will abide with us and in us all the days of our life.

"The Gift of Christ's Spirit unto the Pilgrim"

I. His Identity

- A. He is in His Person the Third Person of the Trinity.
 - 1. He is the Third Person who proceeds from the Father and from the Son.
 - a. He is the Spirit Whom the Father breathes forth to the Son and the Son breathes forth unto the Father as the Breath or Wind of God.
 - b. He is the He is the Spirit Who is Holy as the Bond, uncreated, with the Father and the Son.
 - 2. Being The Third Person in the Godhead, the Holy Spirit is God.
 - 3. Scripture also teaches us that the Holy Spirit was given to our Lord Jesus Christ at His exaltation.
 - a. The Father gave the Holy Spirit to our Mediator as part of the redemption of the church.
 - b. What then did it mean for Christ to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?
- B. The H.C. highlights in its exposition the fact that the Spirit of Christ is the blessed gift to the church.
 - 1. Who are the objects of the gift of the Spirit of Christ, Who works our salvation?
 - a. The objects of that Spirit of Christ Who works salvation by grace alone is not everyone.
 - b. Christ gives the gift of His Spirit only to His elect, for whom and for whom alone He died on the cross.
 - 2. There was added to the command to repent, this promise: "... and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - a. What kind of gift is the Spirit? (Acts 2:38)
 - b. The Holy Spirit is a sovereignly given, Christ secured, and irresistibly placed gift on and in His church.

II. His Work

- A. We must confess that the work of the Spirit of Christ is first to make me a partaker of Christ and all His benefits.
 - 1. How shall the pilgrim by himself obtain the blessings of salvation and the hope of the heavenly inheritance?
 - 2. The truth that Christ poured out His Spirit upon the church shows exactly **how** the child of God is saved in the establishment, maintenance, and preservation of his salvation. It is the work of the Spirit of Christ!
 - 3. This work of the Holy Spirit is miraculous.
- B. When the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ works His wonder of salvation in us, His work is a work of comforting us.
 - 1. This is true because He is the Comforter.
 - a. Christ promised to send us the Comforter.
 - b. He comes with a unique and exclusive comfort.
 - 2. How does the Comforter work in us the personal comfort of the Lord Jesus Christ?
 - a. He first convicts us of our great sin.
 - b. Then, He points us to Christ for our complete deliverance.
 - c. Having taken us this far, the Spirit then also works in us a humble thankfulness in which we may know and enjoy the benefits and fruits of our only comfort in life and death.
 - 3. That work of the Spirit in the sojourner is absolutely necessary.

III. His Permanence

- A. For the assurance of that everlasting hope, we are taught that the Spirit of Christ "shall abide with me forever."
 - 1. The Spirit of Christ does not having come into us, suddenly vanish, nor is He removed from us entirely.
 - 2. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit forever. When Christ anoints us with His Spirit and makes His people Christians, that seal or mark cannot be erased. This gives us confidence in Christ and inspires us unto thankfulness and a faithful practice of the fruits of repentance.
- B. This promise of the permanence of the Spirit upon us and in us is based upon the promise of Christ Himself.
 - 1. Christ promises that He will dwell with us forever.
 - 2. That must be true because of the finished work of Christ. He has died. He has risen. He is exalted. He has received the promise of the Father.
 - 3. We have the comfort that as lonely, sinful, but preserved by grace alone pilgrims in the earth today, we are miraculously the dear children of our heavenly Father, and Christ is working quickly to gather us unto Himself in the Father's house by His grace and His own sovereign Spirit.

Introduction

- A. In one word, the H.C refers to a doctrine of great significance: "chosen." The Reformer and minister of the Gospel, John Calvin, taught that the doctrine of election is the heart of the church, and the Canons of Dort describe election as a fountain out of which flow all the blessings of salvation. It is a very important doctrine for the believer.
- B. The doctrine of election is not only historically important, but it is also personally important for us. The doctrine of election and also reprobation affects many aspects of our life in the church invisible and in our membership in our local church institutes or congregations.

THE CHURCH: "CHOSEN"

I. The Meaning

- A. God has chosen His Church in Christ and every member in particular
 - 1. God chose His church: "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." (Eph 1:4)
 - 2. The church only has that high place in the counsel and works of God because she has been chosen in Christ.
 - 3. In His election, God chose a particular number of elect.
 - 4. Even so, God has foreknown all of His elect in His love. (Psalm 139:1)
 - 5. Election determines the way for the Church unto Her place in God's covenant. (Revelation 13:8)
- B. This doctrine of election is fundamental to our knowledge of other aspects of the Church.
 - 1. Election is fundamental to our understanding of the unity of the Church which is only in our Head, Jesus Christ.
 - 2. It is fundamental to our knowledge of the holiness of the Church and the truth of the antithesis.
 - 3. It is fundamental to our knowledge of the gathering of the Church.
 - 4. It is fundamental to our knowledge of final realization of the Church in the end of the world.

II. The Basis

- A. It is not what has been rejected as heresy by the church in the past.
- B. The basis for the election of the Church is found only in the Triune God, the Father.
 - 1. God as chosen us in Christ and "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." (Eph 1:5)
 - 2. Some object to this Reformed doctrine as hard, cruel, and heretical.
 - a. The objection of unbelief to the election of the Church has at its root a resistance to the absolute sovereignty of God and an unjust judgment against the righteousness of God to do whatsoever He pleases to do.
 - b. The Scriptures answer that objection of unbelief. (Romans 9:20-21)

III. The Blessedness

- A. It is blessed chiefly because it exalts and magnifies the Name of God.
 - 1. That is really what is at stake in the doctrine of double predestination: elect and reprobation. This doctrine declares that God is God. Period. Satan abhors it, the world ridicules it, the ignorant and hypocrite abuse it, and heretics oppose it.
 - 2. But, it is a truth which the "Church of Christ hath always most tenderly loved and constantly defended it, as an inestimable treasure." Do you cherish it as such for the glory of our sovereign God?
- B. God be thanked that this doctrine is also blessed because it is a source of true comfort in the midst of all the troubles and changes in life and with respect to our own sinfulness and unfaithfulness to God in our daily lives.
 - 1. Daily we are taught by the Spirit of Christ that we are sinners.
 - 2. Yet, the doctrine of election assures us of the certain and unchangeable salvation of our God in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.
 - 3. That doctrine of election assures us that then we shall be partakers of all of the blessings of salvation in Christ.
 - 4. Out of that fountain of election and on the foundation of the Cornerstone, Jesus Christ, we have the hope of God's blessing and the certainty that we shall be preserved unto the end. The church must be brought unto the assembly of the elect in life eternal; that numberless throng before the sea of crystal in full triumph and glory before the throne of the Lamb.
- C. Can and may we have the confidence that we shall be numbered among such? Am I elect of God, a chosen member of the body of Christ in whom the Father delights to dwell and reveal His glory?
 - 1. God gives to us the assurance and knowledge of our eternal and unchangeable election, not by prying into the secret things of God; nor guessing. Rather, by observing in ourselves, with a spiritual joy and holy pleasure, the infallible fruits of election... such as true faith in Christ, filial fear, a godly sorrow for sin, a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and many other fruits. Do you have those spiritual gifts and blessings?
 - 2. Rejoice, beloved children of God, to know then that you belong to that church of Christ, chosen from eternity unto everlasting life with Him.

AMEN

Introduction

- A. We confess in LD 21 that God has chosen the Church from eternity in Christ.
- B. Having chosen His church, God has also ordained that He will gather His church unto Himself.
 - 1. This gathering of the Church stands in harmony with the character of election.
 - 2. The goal of the gathering of the Church is the same as double predestination.
 - 3. The gathering of the church shares in the certainty of the church's unchangeable election.
 - 4. The gathering of the church is fulfilled as God has foreordained in the best possible way. What is that way?

"THE CHURCH: GATHERED"

I. This Work of God

- A. The H.C. describes the gathering of the Church as the work of the Son of God.
 - 1. That this is the case is evident from many passages in the book of Acts. (Acts 8:26ff; 9:15-16 (22:21); 10:1ff; 13:2; 16:6-7; 18:9-10; 18:21; and 23:11.)
 - 2. The H. C. emphasizes this truth when it speaks of this work as **the work of the Son of God**.
 - a. This gathering of the church is **not the work of man**. (John 6:44)
 - b. But, what is impossible for man to do is possible with the Son of God for the fulfilment of His covenant..
- B. The work of gathering is the work of gathering the elect from a condition of spiritual peril and hopelessness into a condition and place of safety, communion, and peace.
 - 1. The objects of gathering are those, who although they are elect, are also in this life lost and dead sinners.
 - 2. But, by His sovereign, electing, and irresistible grace, Christ gathers His elect into life and blessings of salvation.
- C. Christ gathers His elect from all the nations of the earth, a church truly catholic.
- D. What right does the church have to be gathered unto Christ?
 - 1. The ultimate ground of Christ's work of gathering is anchored in God's eternal counsel.
 - 2. But, the judicial ground lies in the atoning and redeeming work of Christ.

II. The Time of This Work

- A. The H.C. teaches that the work of gathering is accomplished by Christ "from the beginning unto the end of the world."
 - 1. Was there a church in the O.T.? Did it not begin on the day of Pentecost? (Acts 7:38)
 - 2. There could be a church in the O.T. because Christ was in the O.T.
- B. In fact, Christ gathers His eternally chosen church unto everlasting life throughout all history.
 - 1. Throughout all history, He gathers His Church in the same way.
 - 2. He gathers His Church against the same spiritual opposition.
 - 3. Hence, He gathers His Church in the same victory and on the same basis of His death and resurrection.
 - 4. He gathers his people through history for the same ultimate purpose of the moment when He shall appear again on the clouds of heaven in His glory.

III. The Means for This Work

- A. The Lord gathers His Church by the powerful means of His Word and Spirit.
 - 1. The Word is the living revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, inspired in the Holy Scriptures.
 - 2. This Word is powerful and effective in its purpose by the Spirit of Christ.
 - a. The Bible itself is not powerful.
 - b. But, it is the Spirit who makes the Word effective.
- B. Christ by His Spirit and Word gathers His church through the church.
 - 1. The Church is both the object of Christ's gathering as well as an instrument in that work.
 - 2. That the Lord has determined that the Church is used as a means to gather His people, enhances the wonder of the gathering of the Church. Why does Christ use in His Hand his weak church for the work of ingathering?

IV. The Goal of This Work

- A. The goal of this gathering is everlasting life for His eternally chosen church.
- B. Unto that goal of the fulfilment of God's covenant, the Lord assures us in His Word that He will gather all His elect:
 - 1. We need not fear that some of His sheep will go missing.
 - 2. Rather, the Scriptures assure us that as Christ gathers His Church by His Word and Spirit through the church, the Lord is meticulously and precisely doing His work.
 - a. That does not mean that we will always comprehend the ways of the Lord for the Church here below.
 - b. But, the fact of the matter is Christ is wise, good, and faithful in all of His work according to His promises. II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Introduction

- A. We believe the truth of an holy catholic church of Christ.
- B. We also believe that this Church is both invisible and also visible in the earth as the church institute.
 - 1. The church of Jesus Christ became manifest in the earth in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.
 - 2. We may not merely confess that we belong by faith to the invisible church of Christ, but we are also bound to join and remain attached to the visible, church institute as faithful and godly members.

“The Church: Bound To Belong”

I. The Duty of Belonging in the Church

- A. The spiritual, invisible body of Christ comes to manifestation visibly in this earth in the visible church institute, which we call congregations or churches.
 - 1. We find references in the Bible to these churches. (Acts 2:47b; Acts 20:28; I Corinthians 1:1; Revelation 2,3)
 - 2. These churches were not identical to the invisible body of Christ. (Acts 20; I Corinthians 5:13; I John 2:19; II Tim 2)
 - 3. Remember that the Lord has high regard for the visible church institute according to I Timothy 3.
 - a. The faithful congregation is called to be “the pillar and ground of the truth.”
 - b. According to Revelation 2 and 3, the faithful congregation is that place where the Spirit dwells and where the light of the Gospel shines.
- B. Because the Lord has a high regard for the church institute, so also must we by belonging to His church.
 - 1. We must belong to the church by joining her; that is, by joining a faithful, local congregation and its denomination.
 - 2. Then, we must belong to the church by staying in the church.
 - a. We may not leave that church, except for one reason only.
 - b. As long as the church is faithful, we with our children must belong in that church.

II. The Manner of Belonging in the Church

- A. We must belong to a church that is faithful to her utmost. We must join the church institute with the faithful marks.
 - 1. There are many denominations in the world today. But, to which church must I belong?
 - 2. We must belong to the church or churches that maintain the marks of the true church.
 - a. What are those marks?
 - b. A believer is required to examine the marks of the church to see if they meet the standard of the Word of God.
 - c. In the church that faithfully maintains the marks of a true church, the believer must become a full member.
- B. Then, with that faithful congregation and its denomination, we must belong with a “living membership.”
 - 1. The *H.C.* in Q/A 55 explains in more detail what that involves when it speaks of the communion of the saints. Because we belong to Christ and belong to His Church, we belong to the communion of the saints wherein we must exercise our gifts and abilities for the welfare of the church.
 - 2. Belonging to the church faithfully, also requires that the believer maintain the marks of a true Christian in himself.
 - a. What are these marks? (*Belgic Confession*, art. 29)
 - b. Belonging to the church means that I have those spiritual virtues and marks. For then, I will be assured that I belong to the communion of others who also possess the same marks
 - c. Normally, where there are believers faithfully maintaining their individual marks, there will also be a congregation faithfully maintaining the marks of a true church.
 - 3. Belonging to the church, I love the truth, confess it faithfully in my life and conduct, fight against the evil and sin, submit to the government of the Church, faithfully worship each Lord's Day, contribute my money and goods for the support of the poor and for the support of the ministry of the Word in the church according to Christ's command.
 - 4. Belonging to the church will mean that I find my true friends in the church who also believe the same Faith.
- C. Belonging to the church also requires that we behave in the church correctly.
 - 1. This was the great concern of the Apostle Paul for the churches as expressed in I Timothy 3.
 - 2. Belonging to the church involves a commitment to behave ourselves in the church of God decently and in good order according to the rules of our Biblically-based Church Order for peace and unity in the church.
- D. Belonging to the church requires faithfulness that is rooted in the faithfulness of God to His Church.

III. The Benefits of Belonging in the Church

- A. One of the benefits of our belonging to the visible church is that we are fed.
- B. Belonging to the church results in growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- C. Belonging to the church provides us the benefits of comfort. Through belonging to the church, I am assured that I belong to Christ by His redeeming love.
- D. Finally, belonging to the church faithfully results in a weekly oasis for us. Each Lord's Day I am given a foretaste of the day when I shall belong to Christ and to His Church in everlasting glory before the throne of God. Each Lord's Day I may rejoice that I belong to the church of Christ and may be very thankful for God's grace that has made belonging possible and a reality. Do you belong to the church in the proper manner for the blessed benefits? You must.

Introduction

- A. The importance of that communion of the saints for our comfort in this life is illustrated by the congregation at Joppa.
- B. The communion of the saints is another description of where we enjoy in our only comfort in this life.
- C. The communion of the saints is a gift of God to us which serves as the means for our enjoyment of our only comfort.

“Our Fellow Saints”

I. Our Communion Together

- A. We believe that the communion of the saints is this: “All and every one who believes, being members of Christ, are in common partakers of Him.”
 - 1. This communion is only found in a particular group of people: the believing saints of Christ. (Ephesians 1:1)
 - 2. The commonness, which all and every one who are saints have, is our covenant life with the Father.
 - a. The life we have together is the life with God Triune in His Covenant of grace.
 - b. That covenant life with the Father is realized when He adopts and makes us His sons and daughters.
 - 3. Remember, that our communion with the Father and with one another has its focus in Christ. He is the basis, the source, the possibility, the sustaining power, and our only hope for the final realization of this communion in heaven.
 - 4. This truth about the communion of the saints implies:
 - a. Our communion is exclusive.
 - b. Our communion is spiritual.
 - c. Our communion for the church is holy. (II Corinthians 6:4)
 - d. Our communion is the object of the world and Satan’s hatred and attacks.
 - e. We learn that our communion is blessed. (e.g. the church and communion of the saints at Joppa)
- B. At the same time that Christ creates this beautiful communion in Him, He continues to maintain a rich diversity.
 - 1. The members of the body of Christ are not the same.
 - 2. This diversity is emphasized in Q/A #55 in the words “every one” and a “member of Christ.”
 - 3. This diversity is a marvelous creation of God in the body of Christ, and even in the local churches of Jesus Christ.
 - 4. Because of this truth, we see it is possible for God by His grace to take sinners and join them together into the communion and fellowship of Christ.

II. Our Duty Towards Them

- A. Knowing that, we are obligated to delight and seek the welfare of our fellow saints.
 - 1. The H.C. reminds us that we must employ our gifts for the other members in the fellowship of Christ.
 - a. We may not be selfish and self-serving.
 - b. Rather, we are to employ them for the other members in the body of Christ in that station and calling in life in which God places us. (Galatians 6:1, Acts 9)
 - 2. We must know it to be our duty to serve our fellow saints readily and cheerfully.
 - a. By this, the Word of God points out the wickedness of our sinful nature.
 - b. The Lord commands us to exercise ourselves in the communion of the saints: readily, cheerfully like the angels.
- B. What ought to be the goal of that service?
 - 1. There are wrong goals: vain-glory, getting something in return, make ourselves look better than others, competition, or teach a social Gospel.
 - 2. The correct goal is that we use our gifts “for the advantage and salvation of the other members.” (e.g. Tabitha)
 - 3. When by the grace of God that is our motive, then we may be assured that we shall also serve the ultimate goal of the glory of the Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

AMEN

Introduction

- A. The HC continues its explanation of the blessings of belonging to the body of Christ. Another important benefit is the forgiveness of sins.
- B. This blessing is indeed precious to the child of God and to the church.
 - 1. In fact, it is an indispensable blessing
 - 2. It is also a foundational blessing.

“The Forgiveness of Sins”

I. The Meaning

- A. The H.C. speaks of that which daily plagues the conscience of the child of God: sin.
 - 1. Our sin is rebellion and hatred against God.
 - a. Sin is a missing of the mark of God's glory.
 - b. Scripture describes sin in many different ways.
 - c. Since the H.C. uses the word “sins,” it brings to mind the reality of the diversity and the extent of sin.
 - d. The O.T. gives us pictures of what we generally look like in this life.
 - 2. That sin arises out of our corrupt nature.
 - 3. Do you know what sin is and the corrupt nature?
 - 4. It is not enough to confess our sin and corrupt nature objectively. Do you know it subjectively?
- B. While we weep for our sin, we believe in the Gospel by faith and confess: “I believe the forgiveness of my sins!”
 - 1. God has forgiven my sins.
 - a. God has done this because it is only He who has the right and the power to do it.
 - b. In His sovereignty and omnipotence, in complete harmony with His holiness, righteousness, wisdom, truth, and goodness, God forgives our sin.
 - 2. The goodness of this forgiveness is further explained when we learn that there are 2 main parts to forgiveness.
 - a. The Lord teaches us that when He forgives our sins, He remembers them no more.
 - b. This means that God does not remember you as poor in his sight, but rather as rich. And, He remembers you as rich because the 2nd part of forgiveness is that God imputes to you a complete righteousness.
 - 3. The extent of that forgiveness is truly amazing.
 - a. God forgives my corrupt nature.
 - b. God forgives “all” my sins.
 - c. Instead of remembering all of what we daily remember, God in His justice only remembers the infinite wealth of our perfect righteousness, which He has counted as ours at His judgment throne.

II. The Ground

- A. The judicial ground of our forgiveness is not:
 - 1. Us.
 - 2. Our union to Christ.
 - 3. Our prayers for forgiveness or even our confession of this truth in article 10 of the Apostles' Creed.
- B. The only judicial ground of our forgiveness is the satisfaction of Christ.
 - 1. That satisfaction of Christ
 - a. Christ paid the debt of our sin by His perfect death on the cross.
 - b. At the same time, Christ fulfilled the requirement of God's eternal punishment.
 - c. He had to endure being sacrificed as an accursed thing.
 - d. And, Christ covered our sin and corrupt natures.
 - e. He atoned for our sin and corrupt natures.
 - f. He redeemed us from our sin and corrupt natures.
 - 2. We believe that this satisfaction of Christ did several important things.
 - a. He merited our complete righteousness before God.
 - b. He established for us the right to the new nature in Christ Jesus.
 - c. Further, He has also brought us into God's favor and under God's blessing.

III. The Result

- A. We have blessed peace with respect to our past.
- B. We have unshakeable assurance in our present life.
- C. We have quiet confidence in God for our future pathway and the time we must appear before the judgment throne.

Introduction

- A. The truth of the resurrection of the dead is a truth which distinguishes Christianity from various world religions.
 - 1. This truth is denied by many religions. (II Timothy 2:17)
 - 2. When we confess with the church of all ages, the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust, we confess a unique truth of God and Jesus Christ.
- B. The truth of the resurrection also is an important piece of the knowledge of our only comfort in life and death.
 - 1. This truth gives us present-day encouragement.
 - 2. This truth gives us good hope for the future.
 - 3. That truth reassures us that we are joined to Christ not just in our souls, but also with respect to our bodies.

“Expecting Our Final Resurrection”

I. Expecting What?

- A. We expect that there will be a final resurrection of our bodies.
 - 1. This one event will take place at the end of history. (John 6:39,40)
 - 2. That resurrection must take place according to the O.T. prophecies.
 - a. Job prophesied and confessed the final resurrection. (Job 19:25-27)
 - b. The hope of a new body in heavenly glory was known by the O.T. saints.
 - 3. That final resurrection will be a great wonder.
 - a. Unbelief despises or laughs at wonder of the final resurrection.
 - b. In the wonder of the resurrection God shows forth His great glory.
 - c. That final resurrection must be only God's work.
 - 4. This wonder that will be general.
 - a. Everyone who died before final appearing of Christ will be raised.
 - b. For the child of God, what a comfort to know this.
 - c. The wonder of the final resurrection itself will not be grace to everyone raised.
- B. When the resurrection takes place, we expect that we will be raised with a new body.
 - 1. This new body will be different.
 - 2. The Bible describes clearly our new resurrection body.
 - a. It will be like Christ's. (I John 3:2)
 - b. With 4 main characteristics (I Corinthians 15:42-44): incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual.
 - 3. This radical change from our old body to our heavenly one is illustrated for us in God's creation.

II. Expecting Why?

- A. We expect this final resurrection of our bodies only because of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 1. We expect it because of His love and righteousness.
 - 2. We expect it because of His complete redemption for us by His death and resurrection.
 - 3. We expect it because of His almighty and sovereign power.
- B. We expect our final resurrection because of how God created us: body and soul.
 - 1. We believe that upon death our souls will go to be with the Lord. (Psalm 73:24; Luke 23:43)
 - 2. But, because we have been created a unity of body and soul, our salvation is not complete until body and soul are reunited in heavenly glory. (Hebrews 11:40)

III. Expecting How?

- A. We must look for that to come by the activity of faith (believing).
 - 1. It is only by faith that we will see this coming glorious wonder.
 - a. Unbelief cannot see those wonders which are coming.
 - b. Faith does embrace and expect the coming final resurrection when Christ returns because faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
 - 2. Believing, we must look for the final resurrection in the attitude of the brevity of this life and the fact that this old tabernacle must be removed to be replaced by the new.
- B. Believing that truth, we are given a wonderful assurance according to John 5:25, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”
 - 1. That we have faith is evidence of the reality that we have the beginning of our full resurrection even now.
 - 2. Having that faith and that spiritual resurrection in soul and spirit, beloved, you may expect with uplifted head the day when Christ shall come again. Do you see the signs?
 - 3. When He returns, He shall complete His wonder work of salvation in you when He shall call you forth from the dead, and unite you forever in body and soul in a glory everlasting.
 - 4. Beloved, as you patiently wait for the day for Christ to finish His work of raising you out of death into life, rejoice greatly, and pray earnestly as you labour diligently each day: “Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly!”

Introduction

- A. With respect to our eternal state, we are taught to avoid 2 extreme errors.
 - 1. We are taught not to ignore our eternal state.
 - 2. We must also avoid the error of a neglect for our daily duties and earthly callings. (II Thessalonians 3:11)
- B. We are taught to Scripture maintain a healthy relationship between our faithful, daily labors and the knowledge of our eternal destination.
 - 1. The Lord teaches us that our expectation of our eternal life will affect our daily life. Jesus said in Matthew 6:21, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
 - 2. Further, the expectation of our everlasting life affects positively our labors for God's kingdom and covenant in the congregation and in the home. (I Corinthians 15:58)

"The Life Everlasting"

I. A Glorious Life

- A. We can think of our everlasting life from a three-fold viewpoint.
 - 1. That everlasting life is a life of complete knowledge. (I John 1:5; Revelation 21:22, Revelation 21:27)
 - 2. It is the life of complete holiness and blessedness.
 - 3. Further, everlasting life will be a life of a complete, restful service of the Lord. (Revelation 22:3)
- B. Where will that everlasting life be revealed?
 - 1. It will be revealed in the New Paradise.
 - 2. What will that New Paradise exactly look like? *"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."*
- C. This life will be permanent. ("everlasting")
 - 1. It is permanent because of Jehovah.
 - 2. The Lord illustrates the permanence of that life by directing our attention in the New Paradise to the Tree of Life and the River of the Water of Life.
 - 3. The result is that our life in and of God shall be permanent.
- D. It is the life which fully reveals the glory of the Triune God in Jesus Christ.
 - 1. That glory of God is the purpose of that life. (Revelation 4:11)
 - 2. In that everlasting life and creation, God will be all in all.

II. A Sure Inheritance

- A. The H.C. teaches us to view our everlasting life as something which we **"inherit."**
 - 1. An inheritance from a parent or grandparent is something that is given to us on the basis of his will and testament.
 - 2. The H.C. teaches us that our everlasting life is an inheritance.
 - 3. Since the Triune God in Christ has made and willed that inheritance, it is sure and certain.
 - 4. The result is that we may today be sure that we shall inherit the wealth and the joy of everlasting life.
- B. But, has the will and testament of God concerning our inheritance become binding?
 - 1. Yes, because He who wrote the testament has already died.
 - 2. Not only that, our Lord Jesus Christ has made us partakers of that inheritance by His Spirit.
 - 3. Because of Christ, we expect to inherit this perfect salvation when He comes again.
 - 4. We expect that because the New Jerusalem shall be built on the foundation of Christ.
 - 5. Of course, the child of God might wonder sometimes in this life whether that inheritance is certain for *him*.

III. Its Present Beginning

- A. To assure the believer of his partaking of the inheritance of everlasting life, God gives us the beginning of that life now.
 - 1. The faith which He works in us is evidence that there is begun in us everlasting life. (I John 5:10-11)
 - 2. The effect of that everlasting life on us now is that it works in us now a desire to be like Christ. (I John 3:1-3)
 - 3. That in turn works in us a longing not only to be like Christ, but to be with Him. (Psalm 42:2)
- B. That beginning Christ is pleased to work in us by His Word and Spirit.
 - 1. He calls us to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called (Eph 4:1).
 - 2. Further, where your treasure is there will be your heart also. Where is your treasure? Is it not in that heavenly inheritance? It must be. Your treasure is in heaven. Then there will be your heart also.
 - 3. With our heart and hope in heaven and life everlasting, let us be faithful day by day in our labors as we seek God's Kingdom first.

AMEN

- A. LD 23 and 24 give a conclusion to the treatment of the Biblical doctrines, summarized in the Apostles' Creed, which treatment began in LD 7, when it asked "What is then necessary for a Christian to believe?"
- B. The H.C. concludes its treatment of the Apostles' Creed with this question, "What doth it profit thee **now** that thou believest all this?"
 - 1. What profit is there in the knowledge and assurance of what is necessary to believe? This question applies not only to the Biblical doctrines which we have learned in the HC from LD 8 to LD 22, but this question applies to our knowledge of the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, the Creed of Chalcedon, the Belgic Confession, the entire Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordt.
 - 2. The answer is both concise and precise.
 - a. The HC answers with a resounding "yes" that there is everlasting profit.
 - b. And, the profit is this: "That I am righteous in Christ, before God, and am heir of eternal life."

"The Profit of Believing What is Necessary to Believe"

I. Believing All What?

- A. There is blessed profit in believing all that the Holy Spirit has led the church to know (John 16:13, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...")
 - 1. Negatively, this does not apply to false teachings and heresies against the Truth.
 - 2. Over against the lie and false teachings, "all this" of the LD is that truth which the Spirit has taught the Church through NT history through much struggle and trial.
 - 3. This helps us understand that what is meant by "all this" of the truth is not of human origin.
 - a. If it were of human origin, then what necessity would there to believe it?
 - b. Because "all this" is not of man, but of the Spirit of Christ and God Himself, it comes with the authority of the Word of God and the demand of God to believe it.
- B. Principally, the "**all this**" is all the truth of the the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 1. That is the revelation of the Triune God.
 - 2. The revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ includes all the doctrines of the whole counsel of God concerning our salvation.
 - 3. The H.C. also has in mind all of the distinctives of the Reformed faith which distinguish it not only from the unbelieving heathen religions, but also all of the fine distinctives which set it apart from all of the the false Gospels religions within the sphere of the church world.
 - 4. Thus, when the H.C. says "all this," it is what we call today the **Reformed Faith**, which remains true to its heritage and true to the Scriptures without compromise and in complete submission to Christ.
 - 5. What profit is there in believing all that of the Gospel as taught and defended in the Reformed Faith?

II. Believing unto What Profit?

- A. When believing and living the Reformed faith costs so much, can it actually be profitable? From an outward and carnal viewpoint, many object to the cost of believing all this as too great. Sadly, because of the weakness of our faith and because of our sin, we often sinfully agree.
- B. The H.C. declares what this profit is with remarkable simplicity, which the wise and prudent of this world cannot understand, and which only the little children of our heavenly Father are given the grace to know.
 - 1. The profit of believing all this is that **I am righteous in Christ before God.**
 - 2. Being righteous before God in Christ means that now and forever, **I am an heir of eternal life.**

III. Believing with What Obligation?

- A. That places upon us the obligation **to cherish the Faith.** (Prov 23:23)
- B. That places on us the obligation **to defend the Faith.** (Jude 3)
- C. That places on us the obligation **to promote the Faith.** (I Peter 3:15)
- D. That we pray daily for the grace of God to maintain in us a zeal and a humble conviction for His truth for our own personal profit and true comfort, but above all for the profit of the glory of God's Holy Name. AMEN

Introduction

- A. The Philippian jailor asked the Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30)
 - 1. This question and the answer reminded the jailor of his unbelief and his complete inability to save himself.
 - 2. Nevertheless, for salvation it was necessary that the jailor do only one activity: believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 3. Through believing, we learn never to trust in our own good works to save, but rather we trust solely in the good and holy works of Jesus Christ alone to save us from our sin.

- B. There is a common objection which states that if man cannot save himself and his salvation is merely of grace for the sake of Christ alone, that this will cause many people of God to become very wicked and spiritually careless.
 - 1. Some say that since we are saved by grace alone and not works, then we will think that we can enjoy the ways of sin and God will still save us in the end. That teaching is wicked.
 - 2. The doctrine of salvation and justification by grace alone and not good works promotes in God's people a growing carelessness and seriousness to maintain and practice good works out of the motive of thankfulness to God.

"The Place of Good Works in Our Salvation"

- I. What is that proper place of our good works?
 - A. We learn clearly what the place of good works is not.
 - 1. Good works do not earn the whole of our justification and salvation.
 - a. Briefly, good works are those works which the child of God does in thanksgiving to God.
 - b. It is a common and popular idea today that our good works do merit something with God.
 - c. Scripture teaches that man does not by his good works of the law earn his salvation.
 - d. Why cannot our good works earn our righteousness before God and salvation?
 - (1) Our good works cannot merit righteousness before God.
 - (2) Even if we do perform a perfectly sinless good work, the believer is never in a position to merit the blessings of forgiveness and salvation with God.
 - 2. Nor, do good works even earn or merit part of our righteousness before God.
 - a. The worst threat for the church today is not the false teaching that our good works establish only earn a little part of our salvation and forgiveness.
 - b. The Bible shows that because salvation is a miracle, then it is impossible for us to help God to save us. Salvation is the work of God alone.
 - 3. We are warned from falling into the sin of thinking that our works merit something with God.

 - B. Since believing, repentance, and good works do not earn our salvation, what place do they have in the our daily life?
 - 1. Good works are described in the LD as "fruits": the end result of God's work of salvation.
 - 2. Good works are the "fruits of thankfulness." What are some of the good works that we perform?

- II. Why are our good works even possible?
 - A. They are not humanly possible, but rather humanly impossible.
 - 1. This means that apart from Christ, we can do no good works. (John 15:5)
 - 2. Apart from Christ, we can only produce evil works because of our great sin.

 - B. Now, the reason that our good works are possible is the grace of God in Christ Jesus.
 - 1. What we cannot do, Christ miraculously does in us by His Spirit and grace alone.
 - 2. Because our good works are possible by grace alone, our good works can never be the cause or condition upon which our salvation is in some way based or established.
 - a. Since salvation from beginning to end is grace and that salvation includes our good works according to Ephesians 2:8-10, then good works have their place in salvation as only the fruits of thankfulness.
 - b. Our good works are the free gift of God and the sovereignly worked gift of God in us.

- III. What does this doctrine promote in us?
 - A. This grace which makes good works the fruits of thankfulness in salvation does not work in us a desire to pursue a life of evil works. It does not make us careless.

 - B. Christ by His Gospel of sovereign and irresistible grace promotes in us and through us a carefulness to live a godly life, full of thankfulness.

Introduction

- A. Having taught us what that faith is which we must believe, the H.C. now teaches us how that faith in the Gospel of Christ is worked.
 - 1. Faith in its fundamental principle is worked directly by the Spirit of Christ.
 - 2. But, that gift of faith, which in principle we possess at the moment we are risen with Christ by His Spirit in regeneration and become the children of God in principle, must also be worked so that it brings forth fruit.
 - 3. How is that faith worked so that we believe and are assured of the promises of the Gospel in Christ? By the God-ordained means of the preaching of the Word and by the sacraments the Holy Spirit works and confirms our faith so that we grow in the life of believing all of the doctrines contained in the Scriptures and set forth in our Reformed Confessions.
- B. The 2 sacraments which God has given us are important for the spiritual life of the believer.
 - 1. They are not important because they are some kind of superstitious event.
 - 2. The sacraments are important life because they are a powerful means to strengthen our faith in Christ crucified.

“THE SACRAMENTS”

I. What They Are

- A. Christ has given the church two special institutions called sacraments.
 - 1. The word “sacrament” helps us to know what these special institutions are.
 - a. “Sacrament” originally referred to the oath that Roman soldiers took when entering the army.
 - b. The church has applied the same word to those institutions which Jesus gave to the Church.
 - 2. Jesus gave us these loyal institutions as signs.
 - 3. Not only that, the sacraments are designed by God to seal to us what they signify.
- B. Of course, to be effective, the sacraments are visible and holy.
 - 1. The sacraments were designed and created by Christ to be visible to us and our children.
 - 2. These visible sacraments are holy.
- C. The Lord requires that the sacraments must be administered by the Church.
 - 1. They cannot be administered by individuals.
 - 2. The sacraments were given to the church to be administered by the church in obedience to Christ.

II. What Their Purpose Is

- A. The purpose of the sacrament is not:
 - 1. To become the power to save us or wash away our sin.
 - 2. To become more important than the preaching of the Word, but to be a merely to point us the faithful preaching of the Gospel.
 - 3. To enslave us in a superstitious life.
 - 4. To offer unto us a salvation that we must accept in order for us to be saved.
- B. According to the Lord's Day, the purpose of the sacraments is:
 - 1. To “direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation.”
 - a. The sacraments point us away from ourselves for any reason, cause, or ground for our salvation.
 - b. They point us to Christ as the only ground of our salvation.
 - 2. To teach us that “the whole of our salvation depends upon that one sacrifice of Christ which He offered for us on the cross.”

III. What Their Effect in Us Is

- A. They confirm our assurance of our salvation.
- B. They encourage our spiritual growth.
- C. They promote in us the life of thanksgiving.
 - 1. Standing then before the invisible grace of God, signified & sealed to you through your sight, smell, touch, and taste, what does that make you and me?
 - 2. By the grace of God and the inner working of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, they motivate us to be thankful for the blessed knowledge of the marvelous grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ to us, poor sinners. **AMEN**

Introduction

- A. "Baptism," or words similar to it, is used many times in the Bible, which helps us understand its meaning.
- B. Jesus commanded the Church to administer baptism.
 - 1. By this commandment, the OT equivalent of baptism was replaced.
 - 2. Having shed His blood, risen again, and ready to sit at God's Right Hand, the Lord commanded the church on the Mt. of Olives to baptize. (Matthew 28:19)
 - 3. By this sign and seal, we are assured and admonished about the truth of our entrance into the covenant of God by and only because of God's sovereign grace.

"The Sign and Seal of Our Membership in the Covenant of Grace"

I. Reminding us of a humbling reality

- A. Because baptism teaches us that we must be washed, it teaches us that we must be washed from the filth of the guilt and depravity of our sin.
 - 1. Baptism reminds us of the reality that we are by nature filthy.
 - 2. Baptism reminds us that our filth and sin separate us from fellowship and life with God.
 - 3. Baptism reminds us that as a consequence of our filth we deserve under God's curse to rot in hell.
- B. Baptism reminds us that we cannot remove ourselves from the bondage of our sin and filth, from our separation from God, and from being to be destroyed.
 - 1. Can we create the soap and water necessary to wash away our guilt?
 - a. The guilt of my sin means that before God, the Judge, I should be sentenced to eternal hell.
 - b. In order to remove my guilt and remove any reason for the judge to declare me a criminal, I must wash away from God's sight the sin which I have committed.
 - c. Shall my good works wash away the guilt so that God does not see it any more?
 - 2. Can we create the soap and water to wash away the pollution of our sin?
 - a. Sin makes me dirty, and this why Ezekiel 36 speaks of sin as filthiness.
 - b. Now, can I create a soap that will so wash me that I no longer perform filthy works, no longer walk in the filth of unbelief, and never behave towards God with the dirtiness of pride?
 - 3. Therefore, I am reminded by baptism about my spiritual filth: (Are you?)
 - a. I must humble myself before God and confess that I am, apart from fellowship in Christ and His grace, a filthy, totally dead sinner.
 - b. And, I must look for my purification and deliverance from my filth and my union again with God in His covenant in a holy life outside of myself in Christ alone.

II. Directing us to the Good News

- A. Baptism is the sign and seal to direct us to Christ as our Red Sea and hope of heavenly life.
 - 1. By Christ alone, I am thoroughly washed from the dreadful stains of my sin unto sparkling pure and complete righteousness before God.
 - 2. By Christ alone, I am powerfully washed from the black pollution and horrible ugliness of my sin unto the white and beautiful, holy life with God.
- B. By the baptism of the blood of Christ and His Spirit, we are joined unto the Father in His Covenant.
 - 1. My spiritual baptism into Christ's death and resurrection, which is signified by my earthly baptism, produces the result that I am no longer an alien separated from God.
 - 2. My spiritual baptism into Christ teaches me that on the basis of the death of Christ and by the power of His Spirit I am worthy of and I also begin to occupy my place in the covenant of God.
 - 3. Beloved, remember, that is the complete truth of baptism. Baptism shows that I am washed away from the guilt and pollution of my sin, and I am joined unto my heavenly Father in His covenant of grace in newness of the life of Christ! (Ezekiel 36:28)

III. Obliging us unto a thankful and holy life

- A. Are you baptized? Do you desire to be baptized? Through baptism, Christ puts upon you an obligation, not which is bondage and misery, but which burden is easy and light.
- B. What specifically is the baptismal obligation for those who, as God's covenant people, have been baptized and believe that they have been washed by the blood and Spirit of Christ?
 - 1. They must lead a holy and unblameable life.
 - 2. Considering that greatness of God's love, grace, and mercy, they are obliged now and the rest of their life on earth to thank God for their baptism, and what it means, in a godly life of daily repentance and godly fear in our Red Sea, Jesus Christ.

Introduction

- A. The NT church practised infant baptism.
 - 1. This practice is mentioned in several places in the NT. (Acts 16:15; Acts 16:33; I Corinthians 1:16)
 - 2. Who belonged to those households?
- B. The baptism of the infants of believers must continue to be the practice for the N.T. Church today. This is opposed by the ana-baptist movement in the protestant church world since the time of the Reformation to the present day. (*Belgic Confession*, article 34) Even so, the H.C. shows that the baptism of our infants is a Scriptural and necessary practice.

“Baptizing Our Infants”

I. Baptizing with a Sign of the Covenant

- A. The reality to which baptism points is the covenant of grace which God has with His people.
 - 1. This is the covenant which God establishes with His people.
 - 2. This is the covenant that God maintains.
 - 3. It is the covenant into which God brings only His elect.
 - 4. Where do we find the covenant of grace?
- B. Baptism signifies our place in His covenant.
 - 1. That sign of the covenant has been accomplished in 2 ways in history.
 - a. In the Old Testament, the sign of the covenant was administered in the bloody sign of circumcision.
 - b. Now, in the New Testament, the sign of the covenant has been administered differently: water baptism.
 - 2. Baptism, like its predecessor, is a sign of our place in God's covenant.
 - a. It is sign that we are joined unto the Triune God forever.
 - b. It is a sign of the wonder of that salvation by the Father by Christ Jesus through His Spirit.
 - c. As that kind of sign, it is also a means of grace.
 - 3. This is the sign God has given to the church as a blessing to her and which she must administer to believing households, including infants. What is the basis for that?

II. Baptizing on the Basis of the Promise

- A. There have been several ideas maintained in church history for the basis of baptism. (4 main, false ideas)
- B. None of those are the basis for baptism, but the true and proper basis for the baptism of infants will always remain the promise of God.
 - 1. What is this promise?
 - a. The promise is mentioned in especially 2 places in the Bible. (Genesis 17:7; Acts 2:39)
 - b. These verses describe the promise of salvation.
 - 2. Baptism must be administered on the basis of the promise of the covenant because baptism is a sign of the promise of the covenant.
 - a. Baptism is not a sign of what man can do to save himself or of supposedly some conditions that man must fulfil to enter the covenant of God, or of man's free-will to accept Christ in order to be saved.
 - b. Baptism is a sign of the wonderful and invisible grace of God to make us poor, dead sinners, his rich and living children in His covenant, who love Him with their whole being.
 - c. Because baptism is a sign of the invisible, particular, unconditional, and sovereign grace of God to His people, that is why baptism should be administered to the infants of believers.
 - d. We apply the sign of baptism to reflect accurately the reality of the saving work of God's grace among His people.

III. Baptizing into the Christian Church

- A. The result of baptism and, thus, its relationship between baptism and the local congregation has been often forgotten in church history.
 - 1. Those who demand adult and believer's baptism only end up with a problem: a church without children.
 - 2. That position is not Scriptural.
 - a. This position disobeys the command of Christ to the church through Peter, “Feed my lambs!” We may not call or regard as worldly unbelievers, outsiders, heathen, the objects of mission work, not yet saved, or not yet born again people, those children of believers in the church whom Christ calls His lambs.
 - b. Did not, in Acts 2:39, the Apostle declare that the promise was to believers and their children that very day?
- B. The children of believers are baptized in order for them to come into contact with and under the means of grace.
 - 1. Believing parents bring their children for baptism so that they might be given membership in the sphere of God's covenant, in the local congregation of Jesus Christ.
 - 2. Believing parents know that the fruit of baptism and all the instruction and guidance that must go along with it will bear the fruit and results that God has intended.
 - 3. That promise. That faithfulness of God. That grace of God. That covenant of God in Christ Jesus. That's the reason, the goal, the basis, and the spiritual and humbling beauty for any baptism, especially the baptism of the infants of believers.

Introduction

- A. The Lord has given us 2 sacraments.
 - 1. For a sacrament to be a sacrament it must meet some criteria.
 - 2. On that basis, we believe that Christ gave us only 2 sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- B. These two sacraments compliment each other.
 - 1. In baptism, God signifies our entrance into salvation.
 - 2. In the Lord's Supper, God signifies not only how He has brought us into His kingdom, but also how He continues to feed us within His kingdom and covenant.

"A Special Table for the Pilgrim in This Wilderness"

- I. The Provision for the Pilgrim
 - A. God provides us in this wilderness with a table of spiritual food.
 - 1. Every week God does that.
 - a. Every week God is mindful of the fact that we must sojourn through a spiritual wilderness.
 - b. But, God is not cruel in this wilderness way and He provides for us a spiritual oasis at the beginning of each week on the Lord's Day in His house of worship.
 - 2. In addition to that invisible, weekly table in the preaching of the Word, the Lord also gives us another special table in which the spiritual and heavenly Table, made known in the preaching, is visibly signified and sealed to us.
 - a. Because the believer is brought before this table occasionally, it becomes a special and unique table.
 - b. Because of its special place, the Form for the Lord's Supper calls the Lord's Supper a celebration.
 - c. In contrast to the wilderness of this life, the special table God provides is an occasion for great joy!
 - B. This special table was instituted by Christ in the night before His crucifixion.
 - 1. Christ was gathered with His disciples in the upper room, celebrating the Passover.
 - a. The Passover was the O.T. institution, begun in the days of Moses.
 - b. Since Christ was the Passover Lamb, ready to be slain for His people the next day, Christ in obedience to His heavenly Father knew that it was time to institute the N.T. sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
 - 2. This Christ commanded us to celebrate in remembrance of Him until He comes again.
 - a. Until He comes again, this sacrament is necessary for us in the wilderness of this life.
 - b. Once we are in heaven, we will no longer need this special wilderness table of the Lord's Supper.
- II. Its Effect on the Pilgrim
 - A. The effect of our presence and participation at this special table is positive.
 - 1. It is not positive for all those who use the sacrament of the L.S. in the church world.
 - 2. Unto the believing pilgrim and stranger, the effect of the Lord's Supper is good and uplifting.
 - a. Our hunger & thirst is satisfied.
 - b. Being satisfied, our spiritual joy is increased. Do you experience these good effects?
 - B. Upon what does the good effect of the Lord's Supper in the believer depend?
 - 1. It does not depend upon our faith.
 - 2. That we receive the blessings of the table of the Lord depends upon the Christ who draws us there in His mercy.
 - a. He must open our hearts by His Spirit and work His life in us.
 - b. He must awaken us spiritually so that we come to the table of the Lord in November, or later after we make confession of faith, in the true faith which is the gift of the grace of God.
- III. An Opportunity for Instructing His Children
 - A. Although our children and young people do not come to the special table to partake, yet it is an opportunity for them to be instructed and so in that way to be blessed.
 - 1. In the O.T., the Passover was such a instructing memorial according to Exodus 12:26-27: "And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, 'What mean ye by this service?' That ye shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses.' And the people bowed the head and worshipped."
 - 2. Have not your children asked or commented similarly about the memorial of the Lord's Supper? God gives us a golden opportunity when we leave the special table to instruct our children in the Gospel.
 - B. That is what we desire for ourselves and our children, when come to the years of discretion, because the Lord's Supper compliments baptism.
 - 1. Having baptized our children, our desire is that they may also receive the other sacrament.
 - 2. Whether that comes to pass, also depends not upon our faith, but upon the grace of God in Christ, our Shepherd.
 - 3. May our partaking of the food of the special table in this wilderness strengthen our faith.

Introduction

- A. This Lord's Day addresses some errors about the Lord's Supper.

- B. Why is this important? Because this is foundational to the main question of the LD: what does it mean that we partake of the body and blood of Christ? How does this happen?

"PARTAKERS OF CHRIST'S TRUE BODY AND BLOOD"

I. The Meaning

- A. As we eat the spiritual feast on the special table, we are reminded and assured that we are partakers of Christ Himself.
 - 1. We partake of His atonement.
 - 2. We partake of His satisfaction.
 - 3. We partake of His resurrection.
 - 4. We partake of His life.
 - 5. We partake of His blessings.

- B. To impress upon our souls that we partake of Christ, Christ brings us to His table in order to eat and drink Him.
 - 1. God uses our everyday eating and drinking as an example of what it means to be a partaker of Christ.

 - 2. Similarly, we eat the necessary Bread and Wine of life.

- C. As far as our standing before God is concerned, our partaking of Christ assures us that in the sight of God in our legal position before Him, God sees no substantial difference between us and Christ. That gives us hope for the future.

II. The Manner

- A. How do we eat, digest, and assimilate Christ crucified? By faith.
 - 1. We do eat the elements of the table physically.

 - 2. Nevertheless, we the true heavenly meat and drink by the activity of saving faith (i.e. true believing).

- B. But, our partaking of Christ is accomplished by more than just through our believing. We must remember and believe that our partaking of Christ is accomplished by the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit by His grace alone. (cf. Answer #79)

III. The Benefit

- A. The benefit of partaking of Christ is peace. (Luke 7:50)

- B. The benefit of partaking of Christ is joy. (Luke 18:14; Psalm 51:12)

- C. Finally, the benefit of partaking of Christ is true comfort and assurance for "our poor comfortless souls." (*Belgic Confession*, article 35)

Introduction

- A. Q/A #80 of L.D. 30 is considered to be a very controversial part of the Heidelberg Catechism.
 - 1. These were not originally in the first edition of the catechism, but was added later, and was an addition that the Synod of Dordt approved in 1618-1619.
 - 2. What has become particularly offensive are the last words of the Answer #80: "an accursed idolatry."
 - 3. Despite its past and present opposition, #80 remains a distinctive mark of a faithful Reformed church.
- B. More than just pointing out a particular heresy in a false church, Answer #80 illustrates the real danger which always exists in one's use of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. From all errors, we must defend our proper remembrance of the death of Christ.

"Defending the Proper Remembrance of the Death of Christ"

I. The Need

- A. A defense of the proper use of the Lord's Supper is needed over against the persistent heresy of the mass.
 - 1. The Lord's Supper became the mass in Romish church during the Middle Ages. (1551, Transubstantiation)
 - 2. What does transubstantiation and the mass/eucharist mean? In its practice, the Romish church claims to maintain the proper remembrance of the death of Christ for the comfort of God's saints.
- B. That claim by the false church is essentially not new in history.
 - 1. Cain attempted to worship God in the same fundamental error.
 - 2. The Pharisees of Jesus day embraced that same religion of Cain.
 - 3. This error is a threat, especially amongst those who hold to salvation, to any degree, even the slightest, as based upon man or his works of obedience to the law or works of believing.
 - 4. Against all of that, the H.C. obliges us to defend ourselves so that we never confess a man-based or man-centered salvation.

II. The Defence

- A. These errors do not properly remember the one and only sacrifice of our Lord.
 - 1. According to the H.C., they are idolatry.
 - a. The H.C. defines idolatry in LD 34: "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."
 - b. According to that definition of Scripture, the popish mass is idolatry for at least 2 reasons.
 - (1) Because Christ is the bread and wine literally and physically, the popish mass makes the bread and wine to be the Holy Son of God.
 - (2) The popish mass is also idolatry because it teaches the people to put their trust in something else other than God, and put their trust in the pope and his bread and wine.
 - c. All the religions of the Cains and the Pharisees of the church world, are essentially the same: idolatry.
 - 2. They teach that pardon for sin, even in part, is established by man's effort and will in some way.
 - 3. In that false remembrance of Christ's death, there can be no assurance of anything regarding salvation.
- B. Believing God's sovereign and particular grace, we must embrace the true remembrance of the death of Christ.
 - 1. We must come to table in complete trust which is in harmony with the 1st commandment.
 - 2. We must come to the table to use it as God has commanded in harmony with the 2nd commandment.
 - 3. We come to the table for the testimony of full, complete, and finished pardon of our sin.
 - 4. Thus, we properly remember the death of the Lord in order to receive true assurance of our salvation.

III. The Result

- A. By not coming as Christ commanded, the church will turn the Lord's Supper into a worship of man or the creature.
 - 1. That is exactly where the mass teaches and promotes.
 - 2. Scripture condemns the use of the Lord's Supper as a testimony to our good works as a factor in the product of salvation. (Romans 3:27; I Corinthians 1:29-31)
 - 3. What is the judgment upon those who pervert the Lord's Supper? (Matthew 7:22-23)
- B. However, those who place their trust in the Lord as they partake, them shall the Lord in no wise cast out.
 - 1. They come on bended knee before the King in true and humble faith.
 - 2. These worship the Lord in the beauty of His holiness and His righteousness by His Holy Spirit.
 - 3. In so doing by a true faith in Christ, we properly remembered is the death of our Lord until He returns soon.

AMEN

Introduction

- A. Christ gave His Church two keys to use: preaching and Christian discipline.
- B. The primary key of the Kingdom is the preaching of the Gospel.
 - 1. That is also one of the marks of a true church.
 - 2. Now, the H.C. emphasizes that the maintenance of the mark of the preaching of the Word is an active duty.
 - 3. The Lord through the instruction of the H.C. calls us to consider this powerful Kingdom key of the preaching of the Holy Gospel. What is it? How does it Function? Is it necessary for us?

“The Kingdom Key of the Preaching of the Holy Gospel”

I. Its Identity

- A. The preaching of the Holy Gospel is summarized as a work fulfilled “according to the command of Christ.”
 - 1. Christ gave that command throughout Scripture, but especially in Matthew 28:19, “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations....”
 - 2. This is the command of Christ.
 - 3. This implies a few things.
 - a. Those who preach His Word must be sent by Christ. (Romans 10:15)
 - b. The Church is accountable to Christ for her work of exercising the key of the preaching of the Gospel.
- B. The H.C. describes the activity of the preaching as the work of “declaring and publicly testifying.”
 - 1. By this statement, we learn from Scripture that the preaching of the Gospel is not a few things.
 - 2. The preaching of the Gospel is a public declaration or proclamation of the testimony of the Gospel.
 - a. The Gospel must be promiscuously preached. (Matthew 28:19)
 - b. That declaration is authoritative.
- C. What ought to be the content of the preaching? “The Holy Gospel”
 - 1. The content of the preaching is shown in Isaiah 6. His Word must be preached. (II Timothy 4:2)
 - 2. That Holy Gospel is declared to us in the form of promise.

II. Its Function

- A. The exercise of the Kingdom key of preaching of the Holy Gospel has a two-fold effect.
 - 1. Scripture illustrates how this key works by thinking of the Kingdom of God as a large, walled and gated city.
 - a. At the front of the city is set into the walls a large gate which are kept by gate-keepers who have keys.
 - b. This is what Christ, the King of Zion, has given to the church: keys to guard the front gate.
 - 2. This is tremendous power which Christ has given to the church.
 - a. Jesus told the disciples, and in them the church, that whatsoever is bound on earth is bound in heaven.
 - b. The function of the keys of the kingdom by the church in faithfulness to Christ has serious consequences which makes us to hold the keys of the kingdom in high regard.
- B. How then does this key of the preaching function with respect to the unbelievers and the believers?
 - 1. For the unbelievers, the preaching is the means to shut the door of the kingdom unto unbelievers. (Galatians 5:21, Isaiah 6:9-11)
 - 2. For the believers, the preaching keeps and guards us inside the kingdom of Christ.

III. Its Necessity

- A. We need the key of the preaching exercised “to all and every believer.”
 - 1. It must be exercised to all in the church.
 - a. Whether it should be done and whether the preaching is effective in the church has been questioned.
 - b. But, this key of the preaching is effective to all within church.
 - 2. “Every believer” must confess this morning, “I need this kingdom key.”
 - a. I need it because of my unbelief and sin.
 - b. I need to have Christ declare to me a few things.
 - c. And, under that preaching, I need Christ to work faith and peace in my heart through His Holy Spirit.
 - d. And, by His work, I need to find my true safety and peace inside the safe walls of the Reformed Faith.
- B. That is what we need for our generations after us.
 - 1. Do you pray that the kingdom key of the preaching may be faithfully exercised in our congregation and sister congregations, and throughout the world in the true churches of Christ?
 - 2. Do you pray as Christ commanded? The harvest is great. But, the laborers are few. Work and pray for laborers and faithful wives for those officebearers in the church.

AMEN

Introduction

- A. Why must we still do good works?
 - 1. The HC gives an answer when it its answer it reminds us that our good works do not and cannot merit.
 - 2. In addition to that, this question also rejects the errors of the antinomianists and the careless Christians.

- B. With this question, the HC is directing us into the only blessed life for the child of God in our daily life.
 - 1. That blessed life is not the life of evil works. (Galatians 6:7-8)
 - 2. That blessed life is the life of good works: the life of the fruits of thankfulness; the life of the works that are in harmony with repentance and flow out of Jesus Christ; and, the life of the works which are pleasing to God.

“Our Blessed Life of Thanksgiving”

- I. What that life is.
 - A. The blessed life for the child of God is a life of thankfulness directed to our heavenly Father.
 - 1. That is a life in which we testify to God our thanksgiving. (Psalm 116:17a)
 - 2. A life in which we thank our heavenly Father for His blessings.
 - 3. That blessed life of thankfulness involves the whole of our conduct.
 - 4. That blessed life is a life full of good works.
 - 5. That blessed life is a life of daily conversion.

 - B. True thanksgiving also understands that this of thankfulness is possible by the work of God alone.
 - 1. That is a truth that is easy to forget.
 - a. The believer is prone to forget God and His wonderful works.
 - b. The HC begins in its first question and in the answer with the redeeming work of Christ.
 - 2. Then, Christ by His Spirit also raises us out of the death of an unthankful life and self-centered pride into His life of gratitude and Christ-centred and grounded life.

- II. Why that life is necessary.
 - A. This is the goal of the redemptive and sanctifying salvation of God through Jesus Christ by His Spirit.
 - 1. We were not saved by Christ to live a life of sin.
 - 2. We were saved by God to the life expressed by the Psalmist in Psalm 116..
 - 3. For those reason, we must do good works.
 - a. It is God’s eternal counsel that we must do them, it is the purpose of our redemption, it is the fruit of the Spirit of sanctification, it is according to God’s commandments, and it is the sure goal of His grace that we must do good works of thankfulness to Him.
 - b. The child of God who believes that will do good works. He who sincerely in true faith prays, “Thy will be done,” will desire to live the life of thankfulness unto our heavenly Father.

 - B. The Father is thanked and glorified thereby.
 - 1. The Father is not honoured by a life of sin.
 - 2. Instead, the Psalmist declares: “Praise ye Jehovah!” (Psalm 116:19).

- III. What benefits this life involves.
 - A. In this way we receive personal assurance of our salvation in Jesus Christ.
 - 1. In the way of doing the works of the flesh, there is no assurance of salvation.
 - 2. Rather, “make your calling and election sure” (II Peter 1:10) in the way of gratitude to our heavenly Father.

 - B. A life of thankfulness gives a good example and encouragement to others.
 - 1. That is not true of everyone.
 - 2. Nevertheless, unto God’s people and to His sheep, your life of thankfulness will be a good example and encouragement.
 - a. God may use your godly life to bring other of His sheep out of the ways of sin and wickedness into the path of faith, gratitude, and righteousness for His name’s sake.
 - b. Your life of thankfulness in Christ will serve your covenant children as a good example to follow in life.
 - c. Your life of thankfulness will also serve as encouragement to others of like precious faith.
 - (1) What a blessing it is to not only enjoy the life of thankfulness yourself, but then to enjoy that life together with another saint as a friend, parent, child, husband, wife, grandparent, grandchild!
 - (2) And, such are the real friends we need and must seek in life: who can, may, must, and who willingly and joyfully sing Psalm 116 with us; and, not only sing it, but also live it from a new heart with the whole of their conduct.

Introduction

- A. This Lord's Day shows us that the life of a Christian is not easy.
 - 1. Our life does have a positive side to it.
 - a. There is the blessedness of knowing our only comfort in life and death.
 - b. There is also the blessed assurance that our salvation is eternally secure in our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - c. In all of that knowledge and assurance, there is great spiritual joy and thanksgiving.
 - 2. However, there is also a difficult part to the Christian's daily life described by the Lord's Day as warfare.
- B. This inner, spiritual warfare is very fundamental part of our life of gratitude.
 - 1. We need to know the reality of our enemy of our sinful nature inside us.
 - 2. We need to grow in our knowledge of our complete dependency upon our Lord Jesus Christ for deliverance.
 - 3. Being persuaded of that, we will grow in our understanding of how thankful we should be and should live to the glory of God.

"Our Daily Conversion"

I. A Daily Activity

- A. Our daily conversion consists to 2 corresponding, inseparable parts.
 - 1. Our conversion consists of the putting to death the old man of sin.
 - a. That old man of sin is a description of the principle and power of sin yet within us.
 - b. Christ commands us in the Bible to mortify that old man of sin. (3 parts to it)
 - 2. While putting to death the old man of sin, we also quicken the new man of Christ.
 - a. There is in the regenerated child of God that principle of the "new man of Christ."
 - b. With respect to that new man, we are called to "put on the new man of Christ." (3 parts to it)
- B. This conversion is a daily activity.
 - 1. There are and continue to be those special, adult conversions in the lives of some saints.
 - 2. Nevertheless, even the adult convert, must continue to live a life of daily conversion. Why?
 - 3. How is this daily conversion possible?

II. The Divine Possibility

- A. The possibility of the daily, spiritual turning is not to be found in the believer himself.
 - 1. Often the contrary is taught today in the church world.
 - 2. The Bible teaches that neither the possibility, nor the basis of our daily conversion is to be found in ourselves, nor in both ourselves and some supposed "cooperating" grace of God. (Jeremiah 31:18; Psalm 143:8,11)
- B. Our hope of turning is possible because Jhvh is our God, the God of all grace in Christ.
 - 1. The blessing of our daily conversion was merited by Christ through His atoning death.
 - 2. That which Christ has obtained by His redeeming death, He now applies and works in us by His Holy Spirit.
 - a. He implants in us His own life.
 - b. That life of regeneration Christ works in us by His Spirit.
 - c. That in no way makes us a stock & block in His work of salvation, but active, living children of God.
 - 3. The Holy Spirit uses means to bring about our blessed daily conversion.
 - a. He uses the preaching of the Gospel and the sacraments.
 - b. He uses other means in connection with the means of grace (Bible Study, prayer, daily devotions)

III. The Good Results

- A. The good results of our daily conversion and repentance is good works.
 - 1. What are those good works? What are some examples?
 - 2. With all of these good works, they maintain 4 characteristics.
 - a. They have their source in a true faith.
 - b. They are performed according to the standard of God's commandments.
 - c. They are performed unto the goal of the glory of God.
 - d. They are performed out of the motive of the love of God.
- B. The good result of our life of daily conversion is a growing trust in Christ alone.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit teaches us in our daily life in this work of daily conversion that we must not put our trust in ourselves.
 - 2. Our trust is solely in Jehovah for He is our salvation, our glory, and our hope that we shall be preserved until after death we are received unto Him in glory.

Introduction

- A. God has given us His commandments.
 - 1. God originally had His commandments written upon stone to illustrate that the commandments of God cannot be changed. They apply completely and perfectly to the Church today just as perfectly as they did to the Israelites in the wilderness when those commandments were first announced.
 - 2. God gave us 10 commandments, not more, nor any less.
 - 3. God gave us these commandments after He said, "I am Jehovah thy God..."
- B. God has given us His commandments for our life of thanksgiving. God did not give us His commandments in order that we might earn our salvation. The purpose of God's commandments for the believer is three-fold: (sin and misery, Christ, the life of thanks) Although we have transgressed God's law completely and by nature have no ability to keep any of them, yet in Jesus Christ we have the perfection of God's law and now also the life to live in obedience to God's commandments for His praise and glory.
- C. In the first commandment, we learn that our blessed life of thanks is a life of trusting in the one true God alone.

"Trusting in the One True God Alone"

I. The Object of Our Trust

- A. The object of our trust may not be many things which we are prone to trust.
 - 1. The Scriptures teach us not to put our trust in men or creatures.
 - a. There are OT examples of what we may not trust. (Judges 2:13; Jer 46:25; I Sam 28; II Chron 16:11-12)
 - b. There are also NT examples of what we may not trust. (Luke 12; Acts 12:20-23; Matt 26:14ff; John 12:6; Acts 5:1-11; I Timothy 6; Acts 17:22ff)
 - c. Besides that, the Heid. Cat. forbids that we trust other things: other saints, angels, superstitions.
 - d. Finally, we may not trust in our selves: our wisdom, strength, works, and abilities. (Isa 47:8-10)
 - 2. To trust in those things is a serious offense and sin against God.
 - a. Because this life is full of storms and troubles, it is important to have a firm foundation in life.
 - b. However, man by nature, is prone not to trust in God, but to trust in everything else but God.
 - c. Nevertheless, what man finds is only misery when he trust in himself, idols, or other creatures because they are all vanity, a breath of air.
- B. Trust in Jehovah, with all thine heart. (Proverbs 3:5-6)
 - 1. Obedience to the 1st commandments means that we trust in the Solid Rock. (Deut 32; II Sam 22:2ff)
 - 2. Who is our Rock?
 - a. He is the Triune God, Jehovah, the unchangeable, Righteous and Holy, Covenant God.
 - b. He created the heavens and the earth and all that therein is by His Word and Spirit.
 - c. He is the God of providence Who rules and governs all creatures according to His will.
 - d. He is our Redeemer, Who has redeemed us to be His children by the blood of His only begotten Son.
 - e. He has come to us in our Lord Jesus Christ by His Holy Spirit and has made us His children.
 - f. He is revealed Himself to us in the infallibly inspired Holy Scriptures as the sovereign, almighty, gracious, merciful, gloriously good and wise God, Whose thoughts towards us are thoughts of peace and good. (Jer 29:11)
 - g. He is Jehovah, our God, beside Whom there is no other god. (Isaiah 44:6; Isa 45:5)

II. The Activity of Our Trust

- A. That activity of trusting in God is explained first as loving God.
- B. To trust in God is to fear God.
- C. To trust in God is to glorify God.
- D. Trusting in God is involves the activity of esteeming God highly.
- E. To trust in God includes submission to God in patience.
- F. Those who trust in God expect only good from Him.
- G. Therefore, those who trust in God rely upon God for everything.

III. The Motivation of Our Trust

- A. The personal motivation for this trust in God alone is our own salvation by grace alone. ("That I, as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my own soul...")
 - 1. Do you desire the salvation of your own soul? Trust in God alone! He is the Rock Who has anchored you to Him by the death of Christ and the power of His Holy Spirit.
 - 2. They that trust in God enjoy the fulfilment of that desire in peace, true happiness, assurance, and joy in the sorrows of this life.
- B. Ultimately, the believer is motivated to trust in God alone for the honor of His Name. ("...rather than commit even the least thing contrary to His will.")
 - 1. Our motivation to trust in God alone is that we do not wish to commit even the least thing contrary to His will.
 - 2. Let us trust in God that He might be honored and glorified!

Introduction

- A. The first commandment teaches us Whom we must worship.
 - 1. We must worship and serve no other gods.
 - 2. Being redeemed from idolatry, the Lord by His grace and Spirit powerfully calls us out of the iniquity of idolatry unto serving God alone.
- B. Now, how shall we worship this one true God alone? The second commandment teaches us how we must worship and serve God alone.
 - 1. Today, the church of Christ faces a great challenge to proper worship with the threats of contemporary worship and with self-will worship. The question the church faces is who determines how God will be worshipped by the church during her official worship services: me or God?
 - 2. How shall the true believer in communion with the saints worship God?
 - a. He must worship in harmony with what Christ taught us to pray: "Thy will be done."
 - b. We must worship God as He will and has commanded because we are His redeemed servants.

"Worshipping Our God As He Commands"

- I. What this worship requires of us
 - A. God forbids 2 things in the second commandment.
 - 1. He forbids that we make images by which to worship God.
 - a. God does not forbid that we take photographs and have statues of things in His creation as art.
 - b. What God does forbid is that we make pictures or statues by which to worship God. Instead of worshipping God as He is, apostate and wicked Israel worshipped God as they wanted Him to be.
 - c. Although image worship is something which the Roman Catholic Church approves, God forbids it.
 - 2. God forbids that we worship Him in another way **in addition to** or **instead of** what He has commanded.
 - a. There were examples of violations of this in Israel's history.
 - b. In the N.T. Scriptures, there are examples of breaking the 2nd commandment.
 - c. There are examples of violations today in the church world.
 - B. How shall we worship God and behave ourselves towards Him during the worship services? God requires us to worship Him as He has commanded us in His Word.
 - 1. As Jesus told us in John 4:24, we must worship God in spirit and in truth.
 - a. We must worship God from the heart in that true living faith of a regenerated heart.
 - b. Worship which is offered to God in and on the basis of the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - c. May we then make pictures of Christ, Who is the Truth, whereby to worship God? Has God given us one?
 - 2. That is the picture which must be proclaimed by the lively preaching of the Word.
 - a. We must not go the way of using images and man-made paintings, or "dumb images."
 - b. God commands that the real, picture of Christ be displayed by the preaching of the Word. That speaks.
 - 3. God commands that in our worship services, the preaching of the Word be surrounded by only a few elements: singing and confession of faith; offerings for the poor and the support of the church; prayer; and the receiving of the beginning and ending blessings of Christ.
 - 4. Why must we worship Him as He has commanded us? Who God is, determines how He will be worshipped.
- II. Why this worship is necessary
 - A. God is Spirit.
 - B. God is sovereign.
 - C. God is holy.
 - D. God is wise.
 - E. Let us worship God as He commands us because God is merciful and gracious.
- III. How this worship is fulfilled by us
 - A. We fulfil this right worship of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 10:19-22)
 - 1. Our worship must be offered on the basis of the finished work of Jesus Christ.
 - 2. Our worship must be offered in the name of our Advocate, Jesus Christ, at God's Right Hand.
 - 3. Our worship is only possible through our Lord Jesus Christ by the power of His sanctifying Holy Spirit.
 - B. The believer worships God in Jesus Christ through faith. (Hebrews 11:3)
 - 1. This is the faith of which Christ is the author and finisher.
 - 2. They that sacrifice the worship of thanksgiving to God in the name of Christ and by a true and living faith have the testimony that they shall be accepted and they shall please God.
 - a. In that faith Abel offered the more excellent sacrifice as God commanded and taught.
 - b. In that faith we must offer also the more excellent sacrifice to God as God has commanded and taught us in His Holy Word and thereby we will receive God's testimony that we are righteous, justified, forgiven, at peace with God.

Introduction

- A. The horrible depravity of human nature is most notably known in how man uses the Name of His creator.
- B. As horrible man's depravity is in the light of the 3rd commandment, so gloriously shines the obedience of the new man of Christ to the 3rd commandment. The right use of the Name of God is highly valued by Christ and the angels in heaven. That is what according to the new man of Christ, we must seek to do: honor the Name of our God.

"Using the Holy Name of Our God"

I. The Inescapable Obligation

- A. We are obliged to use the Name of God because that Name is revealed to us very clearly and completely.
 - 1. God so reveals His Name to us in 2 places: creation (Psalm 8:1) and Scripture.
 - 2. Being surrounded by that Name, it is an inescapable duty that we must respond to that Name.
- B. The obligation is even more necessary when we consider that this Name of Jehovah is our salvation.
 - 1. We are saved by the Name of Jehovah.
 - 2. Thus, as a necessary part of our salvation, Jehovah has imprinted or stamped His Name upon us and deep within us in our new hearts.
 - 3. We are not only surrounded by the Name of God in the creation, but that is the Name which in God's sovereign mercy fills us up spiritually with the riches of eternal salvation.

II. The Right Use

- A. The Word of God as summarized here in the H.C. calls us to fight against the works of our flesh and the sins of taking God's Name in vain.
 - 1. To take God's Name in vain means to regard God's Name as nothing.
 - 2. This we may not do. To be sure, we may not blatantly take God's Name in vain. But, we may not even in the slightest way treat God's Name casually, carelessly, or thoughtlessly.
- B. Rather, we must use the Holy Name of God rightly.
 - 1. We must use it **with fear & reverence**.
 - a. The use of God's Name with fear & reverence requires that we know the Name of God, honor His name, and be consecrated to the Holy Name in all of our life.
 - b. This implies that we must nurture such motives by using God's Holy Name consciously, meditatively, from our hearts, in prayer, by daily study of the Scriptures, and by faithful attendance of the faithful preaching.
 - 2. Then, we must promote and defend the honor of God's Holy Name.
 - a. We should promote respect for the Holy Name of God in lives and our homes by our words & deeds.
 - b. We should defend God's Holy Name from abuse and mistreatment.
 - c. Having the Name of God upon our hearts and having been given the office of representing the Name of God in the earth as believers, we can do no otherwise than use that Holy Name of our God in holiness, righteousness, and in the truth.
- C. Do we use the Holy Name of God aright?

III. The Great Purpose

- A. Our goal in keeping the 3rd commandment must be God's glory.
 - 1. That was and remains the goal of Christ.
 - 2. Since that was the goal of Christ, that is the goal of the new life of Christ which He works in us in the keeping of the 3rd commandment: God's glory.
 - a. The goal of our life as children must be to honor the Name of Jehovah.
 - b. Young people are called to glorify the Name of Jehovah.
 - c. Our homes must aim at the goal of the glory of God's Name.
 - d. Always self and our will and wants must be sacrificed for sake of God's glory. Never may God's glory be sacrificed for our wants & ways.
- B. Unto that goal, let us look to Christ, who is our holiness and our obedience b4 God.
 - 1. Put your trust in the Name of Jehovah.
 - a. The Name of Jehovah has been the refuge of the saints since the beginning of history. (Prov 18:10)
 - b. So, must we glorify God by putting our trust in that Name of Jehovah. Do you do that?
 - c. Such a life aims at the great purpose of glorifying the Name of Jehovah.
 - 2. But, do we obtain the life of perfection to the 3rd commandment in this life? No, we never will. But, our hope remains steadfast in Jesus Christ.
 - a. That causes us to rejoice in the blessedness and certainty of the salvation of the Name of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Name of Jehovah. He dwells within us.
 - b. Therefore, give thanks unto Jehovah for His great Name! Confess that Name! And confess that Name in all your life in the way of daily repentance and a growing desire for the living perfection of the 3rd commandment unto the glory of the Name of our heavenly Father.

Introduction

- A. Lord's Day 37 of the *Heidelberg Catechism* treats the legitimacy of a lawful oath.
 - 1. What is an oath? The Scriptures forbid that we use the oath improperly.
 - 2. Though there are those abuses of the oath that must be avoided, yet the oath itself is legitimate.
 - a. There are occasions when the magistrates require us to swear oaths.
 - b. The purpose of the oath in those situations is entirely proper.
- B. The Lord's Day 37 gives proof that the Christian may use the oath so that we can answer an objection.
 - 1. There is one objection that is sometimes made against the use of the oath and that can be answered.
 - 2. There is one more proof that the oath may be used lawfully: "for such an oath is founded upon God's Word."
 - a. One of the things that this means is that God revealed His Word and truth by means of an oath.
 - b. Now, we will focus our attention on Jehovah's oath, which is one reason why we may use the lawful oath.
 - 3. Regarding that oath of Jehovah, we will examine what it is, why God reveals Himself this way, and the blessed hope that this oath establishes for us, His people.

"Jehovah's Covenant Oath"

I. What His Oath Is

- A. God revealed His oath originally to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - 1. We read of this in several places in the Old Testament: Gen 22:15-18; Gen 26:3; and Ps 105:9-10.
 - 2. To what was God confirming fidelity and truthfulness for Abraham's sake?
 - a. He was confirming fidelity to His one central, Covenant promise.
 - b. The significant difference with what God spoke to Abraham was that the promise was more developed in content.
 - c. Hence, God declared to Abraham the covenant promise in type and shadow.
 - d. Seeing this Covenant promise was neither revealed nor fulfilled over night, God confirmed unto Abraham by an oath His truthfulness and fidelity to the promise of fulfilling His Covenant in the coming Messiah.
- B. Indeed God kept His oath revealed to Abraham. That was fully evident in the fullness of time in Jesus Christ.
 - 1. The promised seed did come and fully did reveal what God promised.
 - 2. Is God bound by His Covenant oath to fulfill His promise to all those who hear the proclamation of this promise, especially in our generations; to all the physical children of the righteous?
 - a. That is a relevant question within the church world to which there are many answers. Is the extent of God's oath only to the making the covenant possible, but dependent on man's will?
 - b. However, it is not God's intent to make salvation possible and dependent upon man's will or believing. God made, keeps, and fulfills His covenant oath in harmony with His decree of double predestination.
- C. Though the promise of the Covenant was fulfilled in principle in Christ, that oath of God remains in effect today.
 - 1. Hebrews 6:17-18 reminds us of that fact.
 - 2. This means that God swore His oath for the entire Church, and even for us in particular.

II. Why He Swore This Oath

- A. Negatively, this was not necessary as though God were a man, who often need to confirm what they say as true with an oath. God did not swear His oath for some benefit for Himself.
- B. Positively, God revealed His truthfulness by means of an oath for us.
 - 1. The oath was given in recognition of the amazing way in which Jehovah's covenant would be fulfilled.
 - 2. The oath was given in order that a full witness be given unto the certainty of His Covenant through the ages.
 - 3. Jehovah went to these lengths in His sovereign mercy because of the littleness of our faith.

III. What Hope This Oath Establishes for Us

- A. That is important to know in light of the hope which we have in this life.
 - 1. Our hope is mentioned at the end of Hebrews 6 in connection with God's covenant oath: our place in glory.
 - 2. But, looking at ourselves today we might well conclude that our hope of glory is now all in vain.
- B. Jehovah in His mercy has given us His oath which acts as the Rock and sure foundation of our hope.
 - 1. His oath is the means by which God reveals His unchangeable mercy, His preserving grace, and His unconditional love unto His people.
 - 2. That gives us strong consolation and comfort.
 - a. In fact, Hebrews 6:19-20 teaches us that we have this hope as an anchor of our souls.
 - b. What is the consequence of that?
 - (1) No matter how the Lord leads us thru life, we always have this hope that Jehovah will be our God and Jehovah will bless us for Christ's sake.
 - (2) As we walk in the way of faithfulness to the Lord, fleeing from our sin, seeking our refuge and forgiveness in Christ, desiring to love God fully according to all of His commandments, and trusting in God and His grace alone for that faithfulness, we may be sure that God will fulfill His Covenant oath concerning His Church His own glory and for our salvation. Jehovah will be true to His Name!

Introduction

- A. The instruction of LD 38 of HC guards us against 2 extreme & grievous errors regarding sabbath observance (legalism and antinomianism), and guides us in the way of wisdom, peace, and thankfulness to God.
- B. Further, by making the connection between the sabbath day our daily, spiritual life, the HC shows that sabbath observance is like a thermometer of our spiritual life.
 - 1. Is the sabbath the highlight of your week? How do you view the sabbath and how do you use it? Does your week begin and flow out of the week-beginning: the sabbath? Is it the goal, the plateau, the mountain-top, the oasis, and the foundation for your week?
 - 2. Yes, obedience to the 4th commandment is not just for one day, but for 7 days. But, that obedience becomes the most evident on the first day of the week, in which we must consecrate ourselves and our families unto the worship of God with the hope that we will soon do so gloriously in the everlasting sabbath of our Lord in eternal glory.

“Keeping the Lord’s Day Hallowed”

I. The Requirement

- A. The Lord calls us to consecrate one day out of 7 for spiritual rest.
 - 1. That rest of the sabbath is the activity of entering that cov’t rest with Jehovah.
 - a. The church enters covenant rest and fellowship with God on the sabbath in her church worship.
 - b. This is an activity of faith, and involves our hearts.
 - c. The true rest of the sabbath is not physical rest. God commands us to be focused and to spend all our spiritual energy in the enjoyment of covenant rest with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ. All that takes place on the sabbath must serve that spiritual activity of worship unto God in our church worship.
 - d. This is an activity of spiritual gladness.
 - e. That public, spiritual fellowship with God on the Lord’s Day will sanctify us for the rest of the week.
 - 2. The Lord commands us to keep one day of the week holy. In the NT, this day is the first day of the week.
 - a. What are some of the reasons?
 - (1) This is done according to the example of the apostles.
 - (2) Christ arose on the first day of the week
 - (3) Christ met with His disciples on first day of the week, 1 week after His resurrection.
 - (4) Christ poured out His Spirit on the first day of the week.
 - (5) Christ fulfilled the OT sabbath by His death and resurrection, and ordained the first day of the week as the day in which we must frequent the house of God to His Word.
 - (6) Christ revealed Himself to the Apostle John, and through him to the Church, on the first day of the week in the book of Revelation.
 - b. This does not forbid worship services on other days of the week, but does require the church to consecrate the entire Lord’s Day for her worship and for attendance of the means of grace (preaching, sacraments).
 - 3. That is the day of the week to be kept **holy**. What does that holiness mean? It must be dedicated to the service of His Name & praise publicly in the worship services.
- B. What are the specific duties of keeping the Lord’s Day hallowed.
 - 1. Support support of the ministry of the Word and the schools (our church seminaries)
 - 2. Frequent the church of God.
 - 3. Hear the Word of God, use the sacraments, and publicly to call upon the Name of the Lord.
 - 4. So that all of God’s people might keep the day holy, contribute to the relief of the poor (benevolence).

II. The Reason

- A. God has ordained that one day out of 7 must be consecrated for that sabbath. (Genesis 2:1-3)
 - 1. God did that Himself in Genesis 2 after He had created the heavens and the earth in 6 days.
 - 2. God established that day as an important type & shadow of His covenant rest with His people in Christ. When the NT arrived and Christ finished His work, we no longer worship in the type of that rest, but in the fulfilment of that rest. Our worship on the first day confesses that the promised rest has been fulfilled, which was sealed on the day of Pentecost, the first day of the week.
- B. God has redeemed us from the toil of our sin unto that rest of the Lord’s Day by Christ Jesus.

III. The Result

- A. In the way of proper sabbath keeping, we experience the sabbath as a spiritual oasis.
- B. Here God gives to you and me a foretaste of our eternal sabbath and His heavenly house.

Introduction

- A. Our only comfort in life and death is enjoyed in the pathway of godliness and thanksgiving unto God.
 - 1. That knowledge is not enjoyed in the way of wickedness and willful disobedience to God.
 - 2. Our only comfort is known only in this blessed way of showing forth thanks unto God for the blessings that He has given us. That way of showing thanks is the duty to love God, and also in our neighbor as set forth in the second part of the 10 commandments.
- B. In the 5th commandment, the Lord calls us to submit to all those in authority over us.
 - 1. The natural man and the world will not do this. (II Timothy 3:1)
 - 2. Over against the perils of the present age, God calls us out of the evils of rebellion and revolution unto the obedience and blessedness of obeying the 5th commandment.

“Honoring All Those in Authority”

I. The Daily Duty

- A. Our heavenly Father calls us in the 5th commandment to honor all those in authority over us.
 - 1. First, this honor consists of the inner, hidden virtue of submission.
 - 2. Secondly, this honor consists of outward, visible virtue of obedience.
- B. L.D. 39 describes that basic duty of submission and obedience in practical terms.
 - 1. We are reminded that those in authority over us in this life are sinners and weak.
 - a. In all the positions of authority over us, God places sinners there.
 - b. Often, those in authority over us are weak.
 - c. In light of the differences in the abilities, infirmities, and even sins of those in authority, we sometimes think that in those situations we may have a reason not to obey.
 - d. The Lord calls us not to be a respecter of persons when we fulfil our duty of honoring those in authority.
 - 2. The description of our necessary submission and obedience is the opposite of what our sinful flesh wants.
 - a. True honor has its source and fountain in love.
 - b. True submission and obedience endures: “fidelity.”
 - c. Proper obedience to authority must have the right reason: because the Lord has placed them over me.
 - 3. What is our duty when those in authority over us require us to break God’s commandments?
 - a. This situation arose in the life of God’s saints’ in Scripture (Daniel’s 3 friends and the Apostles).
 - b. What must be done?
 - (1) If there is opportunity, there is room for us to appeal such commands on the basis of Scripture and demonstrate that they are against the Bible and for us something we may not do.
 - (2) However, if those in authority persist that we must do their wicked commands, we must disobey and suffer the consequences of disobeying a wicked ruler’s command and of faithful obedience to God.
 - c. When we must disobey for the Lord’s sake, still we must show a wicked ruler honor for the Lord’s sake.

II. The Divine Reason

- A. According to I Corinthians 11:3, all authority comes from God.
 - 1. “But, I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.” (“head” refers to authority and right to rule.)
 - 2. The implication of that truth concerning our submission and obed is that we must see God’s authority behind the authority that we meet in the home, the church, government, business, and society.
- B. The 5th commandment is built upon the 1st commandment and see the unity of the commandments.
 - 1. To honor all those in authority means we must first honor God as God alone, the Sovereign One over us.
 - 2. This was shown perfectly in the life of Christ. “Not my will, but Thy will be done.”
 - 3. Loving our Sovereign God alone and knowing His authority to place over us whomsoever He will, there will then flow forth the obedience to honor all those who are in authority over us.

III. The Encouraging Promise

- A. When we examine ourselves against the standard of Christ’s obedience, we see that we have fallen far short. Do we submit and obey as we ought all those in authority? Do we submit for the Lord’s sake? Do we honor them with love, fidelity, and respect? Are we longsuffering with the weaknesses of those in authority as we ought? No.
- B. In light of our sin, how is it possible then that the promise of the 5th commandment can be ours?
 - 1. God promises long life, which is eternal life. How shall we attain that, when we are such rebellious sinners?
 - 2. But, the promise is unto you and to your children, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.
 - a. We have been redeemed by Christ, who was crucified as a revolutionary for us, rebellious sinners.
 - b. The Lord by His Spirit renews and sanctifies us unto that new obedience of honoring authority.
 - c. In that way of His Spirit and grace, we may expect the promise of this commandment to be fulfilled.
 - d. We look forward to the everlasting day when we shall have this submission and obedience perfectly.

Introduction

- A. The truth of the 6th commandment is taught in part in I Timothy 4:4– “For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.”
- B. I Timothy 4:4 implies that we must have due regard and care for our earthly life and of others.
 - 1. We are not islands to ourselves, but live among many people.
 - 2. How must we conduct ourselves in those relationships with other people?
 - a. The 6th commandment teaches, “Thou shalt not kill!”
 - b. And, the Lord positively summarized that same commandment by saying, “Thou shalt love Thy neighbor as thyself!” “Show patience, peace, meekness, mercy, and all kindness, towards him, and prevent his hurt as much as in us lies; and that we do good even to our enemies.”

“Showing All Kindness to Our Neighbors”

I. What Must Be Done

- A. The Lord in Luke 10:25ff identifies to whom we are obliged to keep the 6th commandment.
 - 1. The Lord illustrates the objects of our kindness in the familiar parable of the Good Samaritan.
 - 2. By this parable, the Lord gives the correct description and understanding of our neighbor.
 - a. Who is our neighbour, who requires your all?
 - b. Jesus also has us ask the correct question. The question Jesus asked was not “whose neighbor was the dead man in the ditch?”; but rather, “which of the three was neighbor to the dying man in the ditch?”
 - c. To whom am I required to be neighbor? All whom God places on my pathway. To those in the home, the church, neighborhood, workplace. Our neighbor is found everywhere we go in life.
- B. To all neighbors and even the most difficult one upon the pathway and the one whom we would easily neglect, Jesus calls us to be neighbor and seek their health in an earthly and spiritual sense.
 - 1. Negatively, we may not kill that neighbor.
 - a. The HC gives a list of what they means.
 - (1) I may not kill, “neither in thoughts, nor words, nor gestures, much less in deeds.” (Prov 12:18a)
 - (2) “May not hate, wound, or kill our neighbor”
 - (3) And, I may not kill by means of “another.” (e.g. King David towards Uriah the Hittite)
 - 2. Instead, we must be faithful neighbor to others by doing good and showing kindness to them: both outward acts of kindness, but most importantly spiritual kindness. (Prov 12:18b)
 - 3. This duty is the exercise of the virtues of patience, longsuffering, and peace.

II. How It Must Be Done

- A. Unto faithfulness in showing kindness toward our neighbor, let us do this in the right way.
 - 1. Fight against all the root causes of murder and violations of the 6th commandment.
 - a. Jesus taught in Luke 10 and elsewhere that obedience to the law is not merely outward, but a commandment that requires inner and outer obedience.
 - b. Obedience to this commandment begins with an inner battle against all desire of revenge and pride.
 - 2. Instead, we ought to be humble towards the neighbor.
 - a. This applies to our neighbor within the sphere of the church and home. (Philippians 2:3)
 - b. Be humble to the worldly neighbor. (Canons of Dordt, III/IV, art. 15) We will show them kindness in humility; not rendering evil for evil; but opposing their evil with good.
- B. The Lord calls us to fulfil this commandment to our utmost.
 - 1. This applies to ourselves.
 - 2. This applies to our fellow saints: “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”
 - 3. This applies to our spiritual enemies, by virtue of their unbelief and wickedness. (Rom 12:20)

III. What the Goal Must Be

- A. The goal of our kindness must be good. We may not have the wrong purpose.
 - 1. Our goal must not be earthly and carnal.
 - 2. Nor, must our goal in doing good to the neighbor ignore the antithesis. (Rom 12:21)
 - 3. Finally, we may not keep the 6th commandment with the goal of self-righteousness.
- B. Thus, the goal of obedience to the 6th commandment must be heavenly and spiritual.
 - 1. We must seek the true Kingdom of God in our helping the neighbor.
 - 2. We must seek the repentance and spiritual health of our neighbor, even the ungodly neighbor.
 - 3. Therefore, ask this question: “To whom must I be neighbor?” Then go and fulfill the answer by faith alone in our Lord Jesus Christ, your Righteousness and Life in thankfulness to Him and our Father.

Introduction

- A. We live in an age and a world that hates obedience to the 7th commandment.
 - 1. The world tempts the believer unto sexual uncleanness.
 - 2. The world attacks marriage.
- B. The Lord calls us to maintain a holy respect for and a strict obedience to the demands of the 7th commandment and its application to marriage.
 - 1. The Lord calls the church to respect marriage as God's institution and His gift and blessing to His Church.
 - 2. Married persons must maintain in obedience to the 7th commandment their marriages in holiness to the Lord.

“Honouring the Gift of Holy Wedlock”

I. The Duty

- A. Marriage is a divine institution of the Father, the Triune God.
 - 1. The Scriptures teach that in the 6th day of history God joined together Adam and Eve.
 - 2. By His work in Genesis 2, God established the pattern for all marriages in history.
 - a. God teaches that marriage is good & not to be despised as though being single is more holy. (Hebr 13:4)
 - b. God established that marriage is a union between one man and one woman.
 - c. In that marriage bond and state, God made the man head of the woman.
 - d. Finally, God established the truth that the woman is necessary for the man to be man.
 - 3. To embrace that institution of marriage with a believing heart is to submit and obey the authority of the God of marriage, our heavenly Father.
- B. God made marriage symbolic of something heavenly and far greater in glory and blessedness.
 - 1. Paul teaches us in Ephesians 5 that marriage is a symbolic reflection of Christ and His Church.
 - a. That marriage is a covenant relationship between the Son of God in the flesh and His bride, the church.
 - b. That marriage of Christ and His church is signified and sealed at the Lord's Table.
 - 2. What is true of the marriage of Christ and His church is reflected in a faithful marriage between a husband and wife.
 - 3. Unto the goal of reflecting the reality of Christ and His Church, the people of God are admonished to avoid **the sin of mixed marriages**.
- C. God made marriage a life-long institution for the man and woman in marriage.
 - 1. Many deny that principle by appealing to Romans 7:2-3.
 - 2. We confess that marriage is a life-long bond and state when we define marriage as **“holy wedlock.”** God holds the “key” to marriage. How does God unlock the marriage? **Death**.
 - 3. Thus, for life, husbands and wives are married. “As long as you both shall live... till death us do part...”

II. The Reasons

- A. We must honour marriage because marriage is a holy institution of God.
 - 1. God regards it as holy.
 - 2. The reason God regards marriage is holy is that He the Covenant God is Holy.
- B. We must honour marriage and the gifts to be used in marriage because Christ has redeemed us to be holy, chaste, and pure in marriage.
 - 1. Christ redeemed us by His obedience and faithfulness to God and to His Bride, the Church.
 - 2. By His death, Christ redeemed us unto His heavenly marriage.
 - 3. In thanksgiving for what Christ has done for you, be faithful in your marriages.
- C. We must honour marriage because we are temples of the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 6:19)

III. The Blessedness

- A. Where there is impenitent rejection of the demands of God there will be God's judgment.
 - 1. Those who refuse to obey the Word of
 - 2. We are admonished by God to honour the divine institution of marriage.
- B. Nevertheless, where there is faithfulness to marriage, married persons may expect to enjoy the Lord's blessings upon them.
 - 1. After all, that is His promise to married persons.
 - a. “Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in His ways.” (Ps 128:1)
 - b. That is the promise to a married couple which is based solely upon Christ.
 - 2. That promise which gives Christian couples great hope in this life.
 - a. The reality is that marriage is not all roses. “Whereas married persons are generally, by reason of sin, subject to many troubles and afflictions...”
 - b. Though that be the pathway, yet there is sure hope to go forward into and through marriage by faith unto the service of our Lord.

Introduction

- A. The 8th commandment also exposes the widespread corruption of our human depravity.
 - 1. The stealing which the 8th commandment forbids is a universal evil.
 - 2. The goal of that stealing is to get the gain of this earth and world.
 - 3. What does all of that wickedness and earthly gain do for a man's soul? Can man redeem his soul by the things that he gets through all of his stealing? Man can only earn greater condemnation for his robberies.
- B. Our Lord Jesus Christ calls us by His Spirit and the 8th commandment to live a thankful life that hates stealing.
 - 1. We are called to recognize and to fight our old corrupt nature who is a robber.
 - 2. The Lord calls us in the way of contentment and thanksgiving to be faithful and content servants in this life, looking to Christ for the deliverance and strength to be His thankful and content servants.

"Be Not Robbers, But Faithful Servants"

I. The Command

- A. We may not be robbers.
 - 1. To be a robber is to follow the bad example of thieves in the Bible.
 - 2. The sin of robbery includes a denial of God's providence to distribute earthly gifts among men unevenly, unequally, and fairly and righteously.
 - 3. And, a robber hates that God is sovereign and seeks to steal from God His majesty and the glory is His alone.
 - 4. It is possible to commit the sin of stealing in many ways.
 - 5. One way of stealing, which we are warned by Prov 6:1-11 not to do, is being slothful.
 - 6. Be not robbers who in principle deny God's glory and selfishly set their hearts on the things of this earth.
- B. We must delight in the fact that are only servants and so live as servants.
 - 1. We were created servants in the beginning, and by the redemption of Christ we are again servants of God.
 - 2. What has the Lord entrusted to our use as His servants which we must rightly use?
 - a. God has given us us exactly what we need individually as His stewards.
 - b. Did God entrust to us all the same things? No. Some are given more, some less.
 - 3. Now with those differing gifts and abilities, and our differing levels of wealth and health, devote all these things in the service of the cause of the Church and Kingdom of God in your congregation and homes.

II. The Reason

- A. We must keep the 8th commandment because of a fundamental principle.
 - 1. The 8th commandment is based upon the principle that God is the Owner of all the hosts of His creation.
 - a. The Triune God created the heavens and the earth and all that therein is. He owns it all.
 - b. Further, our God is the Ruler over all His creatures without exception. He is Jehovah of hosts.
 - 2. The 8th commandment emphasizes Jehovah's absolute ownership of all things in His creation.
 - a. That is true of everything. They are "His gifts." (Answer 110)
 - b. What do the Scriptures tell us?
 - (1) "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (Ps 24:1)
 - (2) "For every beast of the field is mine, and the cattle upon a 1,000 hills is mine." (Ps 50:10).
 - 3. Because God is the owner of all things and distributes to every creature exactly what his gifts should be, we must be his content and thankful servants.
- B. That is the life to which Christ has redeemed us and called us.
 - 1. It is certainly not the redemption and life which we deserve. (John 18:40)
 - 2. Because Christ redeemed us from the curse, we have God's blessings.

III. The Purpose

- A. Interestingly, one of the purposes of this duty is "that we may be able to relieve the needy."
 - 1. We must labor faithfully in the employment that the Lord provides and which is in harmony with His law.
 - 2. We must through our labors provide daily bread and live within our means.
 - 3. The purpose of all of our faithful labor should be to support the church and to relieve the needy.
- B. What is our goal by our merciful relief to the needy?
 - 1. Is our goal merely that they might have a better life?
 - 2. Our goal is that the poor in the household of faith and outside may be have also the necessities of life in order to themselves be faithful servants of God in His Kingdom.
 - 3. Therefore, our ultimate goal is that our God be worshipped and glorified by us and those whom we help.

Introduction

- A. Proverbs 12 sets forth repeatedly the antithesis between the way of wisdom and the way of foolishness. This contrast is also set forth concerning what we consider this morning, the truth of the 9th commandment. On the one hand, Proverbs 12 sets forth the sins of the 9th comm, and then on the other hand sets forth the life of obedience to the 9th commandment. (Vss 6, 13, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, and 25)
- B. Christ calls us to live at enmity against the use of our lips and tongues to speak lies and to bear false witness, and to love the way of new obedience, in which we use the lip and tongue of truth for the honor and good character of our neighbors and for the glory of our God in Jesus Christ, Who is the Truth, is True, and is Faithful.

“Using the Lip and Tongue of Truth”

I. The Requirement

- A. We are required not to use the lip, tongue, and mouth for evil speaking or lying.
 - 1. What may we not do with our tongue and lips? We may not bear false witness, falsify another man’s words, be a backbiter, be a slanderer, nor judge anyone rashly or unheard.
 - 2. Does the Bible warn us against other evil uses of our lips and tongues? Yes.
 - a. Do not boast before others, nor use vain flattery.
 - b. Do not use our tongues as knives to hurt others.
 - c. Do not use your tongues to lie in order to avoid consequences.
 - d. Do not impersonate or act out other people for that is not honest and truthful before God.
- B. Instead, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ use the lip and tongue of truth.
 - 1. According to the HC, this means 3 things.
 - a. We must love and speak the truth in that love uprightly.
 - b. Our motive must be that we defend and promote the honor and good character of our neighbor.
 - c. This we must apply in “judgment and all other dealings.”
 - 2. Proverbs 12 speaks of the good uses of our lips and tongues. (Vss 6, 13, 18, 22)
 - 3. Christ calls us to nurture a healthy and wholesome lip and tongue of truth.
 - a. That is a tongue which does not destroy and tear down the covenant home or the healthy congregation.
 - b. The lip and tongue of truth edifies our fellow saints.

II. The Reason

- A. The reason why we may not use our tongues for evil is 2-fold.
 - 1. The lip and tongue of lying is the proper work of the devil.
 - a. The devil is the father of the lie. (John 8:44).
 - b. All lying of whatever form must be detested by the child of God, whom Christ has delivered from the power of the Devil and has regenerated.
 - 2. We must detest it because God hates the lip and tongue of lying.
 - a. This is the testimony of Scripture in Proverbs 6:16a,17b and Proverbs 12:22
 - b. An abomination before the LORD is that which the LORD hates, which He shows by the pouring out of His wrath and mighty judgments upon lying and evil speaking.
- B. Positively, God demands us to employ a lip and tongue of the truth because we have been redeemed.
 - 1. Christ went to Calvary to redeem us from the power of the lie and the devil.
 - a. He went in full obedience and unswerving love for His people.
 - b. Thus, Christ has redeemed you unto God as a people of the truth of His covenant of peace and unity.
 - 2. Christ pours into us His Spirit to work in us truth and being truthful.
 - a. His Spirit comes into us to regenerate us and work in us to be true, full of the truth, and faithful to Him.
 - b. Day by day the Spirit of Christ, sanctifies us to be vessels of truth.
 - c. Because of that work of Christ for, in, through us, we must use a lip and tongue of truth.
 - 3. Further, the right use of the tongue is required because we are joined unto the God of truth, our Father.

III. The Result

- A. The result of obedience and disobedience to the command of our Lord.
 - 1. The lip and tongue of the lie merits the heavy wrath of God. (Proverbs 12:13, 19, 28)
 - 2. He that loves and speaks the truth with his lips and tongue shall prosper. (Prov 12:28, 25, 20, 19)
- B. Let us then heed the command of our Lord in the 9th commandment.
 - 1. Let us do that looking to our Lord Jesus Christ for the life of love to God and obedience.
 - 2. Let us use the gift of speech and communication for God’s glory so that we are daily faithful witness of His wondrous grace in our Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Introduction

- A. Has the Heidelberg Catechism missed the point in its explanation of the 10th commandment?
 - 1. When Scripture brings up the matter of the 10th commandment, Scripture explains the commandment. (Hebr 13:5; Phil 4:11; I Tim 6:6ff)
 - 2. Yet, when the Heid. Cat. treats the 10th commandment, it does not even use the words “covet” or “content.”
- B. Nevertheless, the Heidelberg Catechism’s is right on the mark in its answer when it gives us an important perspective about the 10th commandment.
 - 1. The 10th commandment is not just another commandment in a long list, but a special commandment.
 - 2. How then must I keep the 10 commandments and love God faithfully? Be content in your hearts with your lot in life and what God demands of you in the way. Be content in your hearts at all times. Be content in your hearts because in that daily struggle to do so, you learn more and more to be content that all of your salvation and redemption is in Christ alone, longing for the final perfection.

“The Struggle to Be Content, Not Covetous”

I. The Battle

- A. Contentment involves understanding and believing several things about God and ourselves.
 - 1. The one who is content believes that God is God alone.
 - 2. The content one believes God is his God for Jesus’ sake.
 - 3. The content believe that God rules according to His will and good pleasure.
 - 4. The content submit to God’s way in life.
 - 5. The content trust in God and God’s wisdom.
 - 6. The one who is always satisfied with God loves God.
 - 7. The one who is content confesses God is good always.
- B. To be content means that we must be content with 3 things in our life.
 - 1. We must be content with what we have, which God has given us. Hebrews 13:5a, “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have.”
 - 2. We must be content with the circumstances and lot of our life.
 - 3. We must be content with God’s demands upon us in His commandments.

II. The Timing

- A. When should we be content? The answer and actually doing the answer is a big problem.
 - 1. Our old nature never wants to be content, but only covetous.
 - 2. Daily it shows that we will only be content some of the time.
 - a. When life goes the way we want, it is easy to be content, so we think.
 - b. Daily we must fight our nature to not covet what God did not give us.
 - 3. Are we content at all times with what we have? No.
- B. Nevertheless, God demands that we be content, and not covetous constantly.
 - 1. “Never” must we be covetous.
 - 2. “At all times” must we be content, including with the negative responses of the Lord to our prayers.
- C. Never covetous, always content? Who is capable of this contentment which faithfully opposes covetousness?

III. The Possibility

- A. To seen before God as only content and never covetous is only possible through Christ our Righteousness.
 - 1. It is impossible for us to keep the 10th commandment to build up before God a reputation and a standing before God of being content.
 - 2. But, Christ in His mercy delivered us from the guilt of our covetousness.
 - a. Christ took upon Himself the curse due to our sin and was crucified as the covetous one.
 - b. Christ redeemed us from our covetousness in the righteousness of perfect contentment.
 - c. That holy work of Christ’s contentment earned our perfection to the 10th commandment.
 - d. That righteousness of Christ God imputes to you by faith.
 - 3. Upon that basis and out of that truth of Christ crucified, rests true contentment.
- B. Now, to learn the life of always content and never covetous is only possible through the Holy Spirit of Christ.
 - 1. The Spirit of Christ must regenerate, convert, work faith, and sanctify us in this new life of contentment.
 - 2. The Spirit is pleased to teach us the life of contentment over against covetousness through a life-long battle with covetousness. Are you content with that truth that your salvation is by grace alone? Are you content that this requires of you a life of daily thanksgiving and daily trusting in Christ alone for all of your salvation?
- C. Our hope is that because God is God, as the content believe, then it will be possible for us to one day possess in full measure the life of being always content, and never covetous. We shall then say in absolute perfection, “I have enough because I have Christ in all His fulness and glory! I am satisfied with my Lord and my God!”

Introduction

- A. The Heid. Cat. reminds us how important prayer is in the life of the believer.
- B. The Old Testament Daniel gives us a real-life illustration of the importance of prayer in our lives.
 - 1. He was a faithful child of God to whom prayer was very important in his daily life.
 - 2. Daniel 9 shows the content of one of Daniel's prayers.

The Importance of Prayer for the Believer

I. Its Necessary Place

- A. Prayer is necessary, but not for the wrong reasons.
 - 1. Prayer is not our activity by which we earn our salvation in part or merit with God.
 - 2. Prayer is not an activity only done on demand or when needed.
 - 3. Prayer is not an activity which we do in order to change God's mind and change His will for our life.
- B. Prayer is important for the reasons which are illustrated in Daniel's and other prayers in Scripture.
 - 1. It is an important activity of our thanksgiving to God.
 - 2. It is the means by which we seek God's grace and Holy Spirit.
 - 3. It is spiritual activity and expression of our covenant fellowship and friendship with our heavenly Father.
 - a. That means that prayer is not merely the activity of bringing requests and petitions to God.
 - b. Prayer is the spiritual activity of fellowship with Jehovah.
 - (1) Daniel in ch 9:4 expresses at the forefront of his prayer the truth of the Covenant.
 - (2) The primary essence of prayer is that we are speaking face to face with Jehovah, which is why it is the chief part of thankfulness.
 - (3) Even though we may bring our requests unto God, yet we do that still in the understanding that fellowship with our heavenly Father is the chief and fundamental purpose of prayer.

II. Its Necessary Parts

- A. It is important then that "first, that we from the heart pray to the one true God only, Who hath manifested Himself in His word, for all things that He hath commanded us to ask of Him."
- B. "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." Do you know your real and true need?
- C. "Thirdly, that we be fully persuaded that He, notwithstanding we are unworthy of it, will, for the sake of Christ our Lord, certainly hear our prayer, as He has promised us in His word."
 - 1. Our prayer must also contain the necessary part of a confident persuasion concerning our heavenly Father that He will answer us and provide us with what we truly need as we ask for it.
 - 2. That confident persuasion is based solely upon Christ our Lord.
 - a. That is evident from Daniel's prayer also. (Dan 9:17,18, 19 (twice))
 - b. Yes, we may be confident that our heavenly Father will hear and answer our prayers when we offer them up on the basis of our crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ. That is the Lord's sure and immutable promise to you.
 - (1) Jesus said, "Verily, Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, He will give it you." (John 16:23).
 - (2) Ask (what is Biblically correct and in harmony with God's will) and ye shall receive! (vs 24).
 - (3) Come into His presence, seek His grace and Spirit, and, beloved, be confidently persuaded that for Jesus' sake, the Father shall give you His indispensable grace and Holy Spirit.

AMEN

Introduction

- A. We must not approach our God in prayer as the heathen approach their gods in worship.
 - 1. We may not come to God in superstition and fear.
 - 2. When we approach our God, beside whom there is no god, we come in much different way: the boldness of a true and living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. Those words show exactly how we ought to appear before the throne of our heavenly Father.
 - 1. This approach guards us against 2 extreme errors.
 - 2. Rather, we must appear before God in prayer in 2 ways by which we may be assured that we shall be received by the Father when we pray to Him.

“Bowing Before the Throne of Our Heavenly Father”

I. As His Children

- A. When we call upon the Name of our Father, we stand before Him as His children.
 - 1. That fact immediately reminds us of the wonder which the Father has done unto us.
 - a. We were not always the children of the Father.
 - b. But, the Father in His mercy, made us His children, both legally and spiritually.
 - c. As a result of this new spiritual adoption, we belong to the Family of Jehovah.
 - 2. When we come before our heavenly Father in prayer, we come not as strangers, but as His adopted children.
- B. As His children, where exactly do we stand when we call upon the Name of our Father?
 - 1. Where we stand in prayer was pictured throughout the OT by the incense offerings in the temple.
 - 2. The offering up of incense in the OT very vividly illustrated the principles of prayer by the people of God.
 - 3. The opening words of the Lord’s Prayer focus our attention upon that special place where the incense went.
 - a. What was of joy and delight to the Israelites was not the sight of the incense coming out of the front doors of the tabernacle, nor the fact that it filled the Holy Place, but that the incense offered in their behalf went into the Most Holy Place where the ark of the Covenant rested.
 - b. Now in the NT, the reality of where we stand in prayer before our Father is fully revealed: through our high priest, Jesus Christ at God’s throne of all power, sovereignty, mercy, and goodness.

II. In Sincere Reverence

- A. When we prayer “our Father, Who art in heaven,” we are reminded that although we come before our Father, He is, nevertheless, our King.
 - 1. When the Lord taught us to pray this, He guarded us from bringing the Triune God down in our thoughts to the level of a man, and encourages us to remember that God is the Lofty One.
 - 2. Christ commands us to keep in mind during our prayers this heavenly perspective on our relationship between Jehovah and us. The consciousness of this will guide our prayers unto the glory of God.
- B. Because He is situated in His heavenly throne, we must stand approach God in prayer in sincere reverence.
 - 1. Yes, we must stand before His throne in the right spiritual posture.
 - 2. Sincere reverence means that we address God with the right language.
 - 3. Sincere reverence means that we behave before God in the right attitude.
 - 4. We should stand before His throne in the conscious knowledge of His works and majesty.

III. With A Proper Confidence

- A. Hebrews 10 exhorts us to approach our Father’s throne with true confidence and assurance.
 - 1. Hebrews 10 exhorts us to come boldly before that throne, which is not a carnal boldness.
 - 2. We are called to come before His throne in the confidence of faith, which is based solely upon Christ.
 - a. Hebrews 10:19ff teach us that by faith we are to come boldly in true confidence.
 - b. The way to that throne is the way of faith and “having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”
- B. On that basis, we must approach our Father’s throne in true confidence in regards to 2 things about the Father.
 - 1. For Christ’s sake, the Father is willing to hear and provide us all that we need and ask of Him in true faith.
 - 2. For Christ’s sake, the Father is also able to, He can, provide for us all that we need.
 - 3. The goal of this power and willingness of the Father to bless us and work all things for our good is glorious. He is working towards the goal when one day we will actually stand before the throne of His glory in life everlasting.
 - 4. Is that not our longing? Our longing in prayer is to be with our Father. Our ultimate longing is that what we enjoy now in prayer may come to full reality when we shall stand as His servant-children before Him and speak the praises of His Name face to face.

Introduction

- A. In Luke 1, we read about an important event in the life of Mary.
 - 1. The angel Gabriel was sent by God to the virgin Mary to announce what God would do with her. The angel assured Mary that what was impossible for man would be possible for God in the incarnation and birth of God's only begotten Son in our flesh. "For with God nothing shall be impossible," the angel said.
 - 2. A little later, Mary went and visited her cousin Elisabeth. There she praised the Lord, and said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."
- B. L.D. 47 uses this praise of Mary as a proof and illustration of the 1st petition of the Lord's Prayer because central to Mary's praise is the hallowing of God's Name. That this is important is evident from vs 49: "And holy is His Name." What is the most important need that you have? Jesus teaches us in that most important thing in your life, as it was true for Mary, is that the Name of our Father be honored.

"The Petition that Our Father's Name Be Hallowed"

I. Seeking to Know His Holy Name

- A. The first petition expresses our heartfelt desire to know the Name of God both **objectively** and **subjectively**.
 - 1. We desire to know the Name of God in the revelation of that Name in His works and Word.
 - a. The creation declares the Name of God.
 - b. Moreover, the Scriptures declare the Name of God.
 - c. In Luke 1, Mary confesses that she knew the Name of God through the OT Bible.
 - d. Finally, we must know the Name of God as revealed at the cross of Calvary.
 - 2. In addition to that, the first petition implies a heartfelt desire to know the Name of God in His works and Word to us personally. We desire to know this Name of God subjectively.
 - a. Mary: "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.... for He... hath done to me great things."
 - b. Is that not the knowledge that we desire, too?
 - c. Therefore, we desire to know the Name of God as it is revealed in and through our own life.
- B. We want to know our Father's Name in order that we might confess, as did Mary, "My soul doth magnify the Lord... and Holy is His Name!" That is the hallowing of God's Name.
 - 1. What does the word "hallowed" mean? It means that God's Name is Holy, as Mary confessed.
 - 2. That we desire that the Name which we know be hallowed, means that we desire 2 things.
 - a. First, that God reveal constantly that His Name is Holy. "Show me Thy glory!"
 - b. Secondly, we desire that we continually see and know that God's Name is Holy and matchless.
 - 3. Significantly, that is our greatest need: not our Name, but the Father's Name be hallowed.

II. Seeking to Honor His Holy Name

- A. Knowing the Father's Name, we then must give the Father's Name an exclusive place in our life.
 - 1. We often do that to important heirlooms or special gifts that we receive.
 - 2. That is what we desire in this petition to do to the Name of our Father.
 - a. We do not want to blaspheme that Name, that is, bestow on the Name of the Father contempt.
 - b. Rather, hallowing and honoring the Father's Name means that we consciously give it a place of exclusive honor in our life.
- B. The Heidelberg Catechism shows us that honoring of God must include our whole being.
 - 1. In Luke 1 Mary's honoring of God's Name involved her whole being: soul, spirit, mouth, "handmaiden."
 - 2. That what we desire in this first petition: that we may honor the Father with our whole being.
 - 3. Who is sufficient of himself for this task?

III. Seeking to Receive His Grace to do This

- A. We need God's grace to cause us both to know His Name and then also to honor that Name.
 - 1. By nature we are haters of the Name of the Father. When faced with the reality that the hallowing of God's Name means that we must submit to Him and obey Him through the difficult way of trials and tribulations, we are prone easily to become bitter and rebellious against the Father and not honor His Name.
 - 2. Only by the grace of God are we delivered from a bondage of enmity against the Father's Name.
 - a. Through Jesus Christ, our Father sacrificed His Name for us on the cross. Because of that work of Christ, the Father has also written His Name in our new hearts by His Spirit.
 - b. That is one of the great things God has done to us according to His great mercy.
- B. Our prayer is that since the Father by His grace has revealed His Name unto us and written that Name upon our hearts, that He will preserve that Name there and preserve us in a life of knowing and honoring His Name.
 - 1. That is a comfort to know that. Many temptations there are to do the contrary. We need God's grace to remain faithful.
 - 2. We may be assured that the Father will be gracious unto us because He is Faithful. That is His Name. In the way of a desire to hallow His Name, we have that hope for Jesus' sake.

Introduction

- A. That Judah was in captivity, did this mean the end and defeat of the kingdom of God? The book of Daniel shows us the kingdom of God had not come to an end
- B. Daniel 1 illustrates and supports one part of the explanation of the 2nd petition in LD 48 which we wish to focus upon this morning.
 1. LD 48 gives a full explanation of the petition, “Thy Kingdom Come.”
 2. Daniel 1 touches on all those 4 elements in the LD, but its instruction gives particular emphasis to the first desire that God rule in us by His Spirit and Word so that more and more we walk as faithful citizens in opposition to the kingdom of man and Satan. That is our desire: That our Father cause His kingdom to come in our hearts and the hearts of our children in order to be faithful citizens in the midst of a spiritually hostile world and kingdom of darkness.

“Seeking the Coming of Our Father’s Kingdom in Us”

- I. Seeking What Kingdom to Come in Us?
 - A. “Kingdom” is defined as “the Father ruling us.”
 1. When we speak of the kingdom in the understanding of the 2nd petition, kingdom does not refer to the providence of that Triune God.
 2. Rather, we are praying about the Father’s spiritual government over and within us spiritually.
 - a. The kingdom of the Father here is His spiritual government within us in our hearts.
 - b. This is the spiritual government of His grace.
 - c. This spiritual government is particular.
 - d. Further, that spiritual government over His people is heavenly.
 - e. Finally, the foundation of the Kingdom of the Father is the Father Himself.
 - B. The praying of the 2nd petition implies our confession that the Father has made us part of His Kingdom.
 1. We were not by nature citizens of His Kingdom.
 2. The Father by His grace has made us citizens of His Kingdom by His grace in Christ Jesus.
 - a. He has purchased for us the right of citizenship in His Kingdom through the atonement of Jesus Christ.
 - b. The Father has then also taken us into His Kingdom through regeneration.
 3. In the 2nd petition, we are desiring first of all that the Kingdom which God has established in our hearts and by which we have become citizens, that this Kingdom may come in all of its glory and beauty within us.
- II. Seeking What Manner for Its Coming in Us?
 - A. Our desire is that this Kingdom might come in the manner or way of sanctification.
 1. There yet remain remnants of our life in the kingdom of darkness with us.
 2. Our prayer is that God will cause that principle of the life of His Kingdom become more & more manifest in our lives each day.
 - a. Our desire should be that we grow daily in submission to the Father.
 - b. Our desire should be that our Father will keep us faithful, as He did with Daniel & his 3 friends. The faithfulness we desire is really the life of daily conversion.
 - B. We desire that our Father will make us that subservient and submissive to Him by His Word and Spirit.
 1. The Kingdom of the Father is not advanced in us in any other way.
 2. The Father advances His rule of grace, His Kingdom, within us by His Word and Spirit.
 - a. The Word of Christ crucified is that powerful two-edged sword which cuts to our hearts.
 - b. That Word of Christ is brought to us through the preaching of the Word.
 - c. That Word preached is made effective and fruitful in our hearts by the Spirit of Christ.
 3. The example of the power and good fruit of the Word and Spirit of God, to cause His Kingdom to come in us, is found in the faithfulness of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.
- III. Seeking What Goal for Its Coming in Us?
 - A. The goal of our desire and the Father’s work to cause His kingdom to advance in us is perfection.
 1. That does not mean the fulness of holy perfection in this life.
 - a. We cannot become perfectly holy in this life.
 - b. That is the sobering reality, but which the Lord uses by His Spirit to make us long more and more for the work of God’s grace to finish in us what He has begun.
 2. Nevertheless, in this life, we must desire that full hope of our final perfection in glory.
 - a. That perfection is nothing less than sinlessness.
 - b. That is the hope which the Father gives us in Christ Jesus. Soon, we shall be like Him, our King.
 - B. Is that goal, in which Christ’s rule in us comes to its fulness of everlasting holiness and perfection, possible? Yes, it is because Christ is the King of His Kingdom of grace over us, for us, in us, and through us.

Introduction

- A. Luke 22 illustrates that what Jesus taught, He Himself also did.
 - 1. In Gethsemane, Jesus wrestled with drinking that what He called, that cup of suffering.
 - 2. In that agony of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to the Father in heaven, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done." (Luke 22:42)
- B. Likewise, we must also pray. We must not pray: "My will be done." We must pray, "Not my will, but Thy will be done!" Let the Father's will be done always in earth as it is in heaven.

Seeking Submission to Our Father's Will

I. To What?

- A. We are seeking submission to what the Father in heaven wills.
 - 1. Our Father is the willing God.
 - a. He is not like the idol gods of wicked men.
 - b. But, Our God does whatsoever He wills (Ps 115:3), and His will is sovereign and unchangeable.
 - 2. The Bible makes a distinction between the will of God's counsel and the will of God's command.
 - a. The will of God's decree is the will which governs everything. (Ephesians 1:9, "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.")
 - b. The Scripture also speaks of the will of God in the sense of His commandments. (Ps 40:8, "I delight to do Thy will, O God; yea, Thy law is within my heart.")
 - 3. Now, which will of God do we mean when we pray, "Thy will be done"?
 - a. We might conclude that we are praying about the second, but not the first.
 - b. But, is true that we only pray about doing God's commandments and are not praying about God's sovereign will & decrees?
 - (1) We must be careful not to separate God's counsel from His commandments.
 - (2) The two "wills" of God are inseparable can be illustrated in the life of Israel in the wilderness.
 - c. Thus, when we pray Thy will be done, we are praying that we might keep love God and keep His commandments while He fulfills His counsel in our life.
- B. To the will of our heavenly Father we seek submission.
 - 1. First, we confess that the Father's will is good.
 - a. This means His will is morally good.
 - b. In this petition, we also confess that the Father's will has the right purpose.
 - c. We confess in this petition, that the Father's will is good always.
 - d. Therefore, this will of the Father always comes first in my life.
 - 2. Not only do we confess that, but we also then submit to that good will of the Father.
 - a. Seek to obey His commandments as Christ did.
 - b. In that obedience to God, we seek to submit to His sovereign ways as Christ showed.
 - c. Desire that His will be done in our life to the extent that we ourselves want or desire His counsel to be done in our life. (e.g. Job)

II. In What Way?

- A. We seek God's grace to submit to His will which determines our station and calling.
 - 1. Yes, God's will determines our station and calling in life, not us. They come directly from the Father.
 - 2. Along with that station and calling, God determines all the circumstances in which we must fulfill our calling.
- B. Our prayer is that in our station and calling, we might submit to the Father always.
 - 1. Negatively, we must renounce our own will.
 - 2. Positively, we must be content with God's will and pathway for us in this life.

III. Seeking Submission by Whose Strength?

- A. The Heid. Cat. teaches us that we must follow the example of the angels in heaven.
 - 1. Our confessions do not say much about the angels, and here is one of the few references to the angels.
 - 2. We are exhorted to imitate these holy angels in their faithful submission.
- B. That leads us to conclude that submitting to the Father's will is only possible by the strength and grace of Christ.
 - 1. We cannot pray this petition and do what it means in our own strength.
 - 2. Our only hope and strength is in Christ's prayer: "Not my will, but Thine, be done!"
 - a. Christ denied Himself all the way to the cross of Calvary for you.
 - b. That prayer and the will which He did do is our redemption and the power by which we may submit.
 - c. The result is that through faith we can begin to pray this petition, learn to submit to the Father's will, and enjoy the beginning of the blessedness which the angels enjoy in doing God's will in heaven.
 - 3. We have the hope that soon we shall be in the new creation with the holy angels and saints forever seeking and submitting to the will of God in a heartfelt and self-denying love unto His glory and honor.

Introduction

- A. Whence comes your food each day?
 - 1. Elijah learned very clearly at the brook Cherith that it came from the of God.
 - 2. When the brook Cherith dried up because of the drought in the land of Israel, God did not forsake Elijah, but sent him to a widow of Zarephath to support him in another miraculous way.
- B. Since our daily bread comes from our heavenly Father, to whom then shall ye go spiritually to obtain it? Let us, beloved, go unto our heavenly Father, who alone provides us with our food and drink and seek from Him our daily bread and His blessing upon it for our spiritual benefit.

Seeking Our Father for Daily Bread

I. The Necessary Activity

- A. The Lord instructs us to pray to our heavenly Father for “daily bread.”
 - 1. We are taught to pray for the basic necessities of life.
 - a. We are surrounded in our homes by much more than bread.
 - b. Should we be praying for those things?
 - c. Does the fact that we are taught to pray for “bread” exclude any other necessities of life? No. “Grant us, O Father, all the necessities we need for this life to seek Thy Kingdom.”
 - 2. Then, the Lord teaches us to add this important word: “daily” (next to the word bread).
 - a. Although the original Greek word “daily” is only used here in the Lord’s Prayer, yet Scripture makes clear what this word means. (Proverbs 30:8b and illustrated by God’s support of Elijah)
 - b. With the addition of the words “this day” the Lord not only focusses our attention on the necessities of life, but He also focusses our attention in this petition on the proper quantity of those necessities.
 - 3. 2 other important points to remember about the wording of this petition:
 - a. This prayer we must offer everyday.
 - b. Pray for “our” daily bread. Our prayer must also be offered for our fellow saints and others.
- B. When we pray for our daily bread, we pray that the Lord will grant us the means to have daily bread.
 - 1. It is clear from the Bible that our daily bread does not come into our cupboards and fridges automatically.
 - a. Even when God miraculously gave Israel in the wilderness manna from heaven, God still used means to provide them their divinely allotted portion of bread each day.
 - b. The Lord uses means to bring us our daily bread; many which we use and in which we must be active.
 - 2. Our prayer for daily bread implies that we must be working to provide our daily bread.
 - a. We do not ask for the Father’s approval of all unlawful means of getting our daily bread.
 - b. We seek God’s approval of the lawful and proper means of getting our daily bread.
 - c. Our prayer seeks that the Father gives us the health and strength to go about our daily labors by which to obtain our bread for each day.

II. The Important Reasons

- A. This prayer must be offered to the Father because He alone is the source of our Daily bread.
 - 1. That brings us before that question again, “from whence comes your food?” It comes from God’s Hand!
 - 2. The Father is the fountain of all the good gifts of daily bread and all good gifts that we need for Jesus’ sake.
- B. That leads us to see that we must seek the Father for daily bread because we need His blessing for daily bread.
 - 1. We do not want just daily bread from the Father.
 - a. The wicked, whom God hates, also receive daily bread. (Psalm 73)
 - b. Thus, we cannot pray for merely daily bread because the Father does not merely dispense daily bread, but always dispenses earthly bread with a spiritual purpose.
 - 2. We pray for daily bread **and** that the Father give it to us in His blessing and grace.
 - a. We know that we are sinners.
 - b. We pray that God will be merciful and send us our daily bread each day as a blessing for Christ’s sake.
 - c. We desire that our daily bread be given to us from His Hand of particular grace in Christ Jesus.

III. The Blessed Effect

- A. The prayer is means to keep us faithful.
 - 1. This prayer guards us against 2 sins of covetousness and a false holiness in regards to earthly things.
 - 2. That prayer is possible by God’s grace through nothing less than faith.
- B. The prayer of faith to our heavenly Father for daily bread, has a two-fold effect.
 - 1. It works in us more and more to place our trust in the Father alone.
 - 2. That spiritual attitude will also result in true thankfulness & humble thankfulness that the Father for the sake of Christ grants us that daily bread with His blessing. That makes our daily bread sweet and tasty!

AMEN

Introduction

- A. This petition is of primary importance for us personally and as a church.
 - 1. Our petition for daily bread is important. (III John 2)
 - 2. Nevertheless, our greatest need is here in the 5th petition: the forgiveness of our sins. Without that forgiveness our life is empty and hopeless. Having the forgiveness of sins, we have everything: basis and motivation for contentment, joy, thanksgiving, the signing of that new song of salvation in our hearts, and the happy expectation that because of this blessing all things in this life will serve our eternal good.
- B. One can see that this blessing was enjoyed by Joseph in Egypt.
 - 1. He showed in his own personal life that he had the blessing of the forgiveness of sins by his godly living and by his special request concerning the burial of his bones in Canaan.
 - 2. In his conduct towards others, Joseph showed he possessed the blessing of forgiveness. As God had forgiven him, so he forgave his brethren who had sinned against him. That teaches us that the blessing of the forgiveness of our sin is a blessing which we receive from our Father and which we enjoy among the communion of the saints with our fellow saints.

“Seeking Our Father for Forgiveness”

I. The Precious Blessing Sought

- A. We make the painful confession that we are spiritual debtors.
 - 1. We owe God the obligation of perfection and love, but have failed to fulfil that obligation.
 - 2. Not only can we not count them, we cannot pay them.
 - 3. This knowledge makes us miserable because of the knowledge of our guilt. (“transgressions”) (Gen 50:15)
- B. But, out of that misery, we ask the Father, “Father, forgive our debts!”
 - 1. Please, cancel our debts!
 - a. “Forgive” means to “blot out, to wipe out, to cancel.”
 - b. We ask the Father to cancel our debts by taking care of them in a special way: not imputing them to us.
 - 2. Instead, impute to us something in place of that debt of sin.
 - a. Our desire is **not** that there be nothing present in our spiritual account. We desire to be rich towards God.
 - b. Thus, we desire to have God impute to us full obedience and righteousness because with it we will not be cursed by God, but blessed.
 - 3. Not only is this petition very humbling, but it is also a very bold petition.

II. The Only Basis

- A. We offer this petition on the sure basis of the Father’s mercy and righteousness.
 - 1. We plead upon the Father’s mercy for forgiveness.
 - a. We ask Him to look upon us in His sovereign pity and compassion.
 - b. Then, in His mercy to do something about our debts that torment our hearts and consciences.
 - c. For the sake of His great, never-ending, never-failing, unconditional mercy, to see us not as wicked debtors, but rather as the free, obedient children and heirs of His Covenant.
 - 2. We also offered this petition in harmony with our Father’s righteousness.
- B. That means we offer our petition upon the basis of where the Father’s mercy and righteousness have perfectly met together. That is at the cross of Calvary and specifically: “for the sake of Christ’s blood.”
 - 1. Here in the Heid. Cat. we behold the glorious, pure Light of the Gospel: the shed blood of Christ is and forever shall remain the only meritorious ground of our forgiveness.
 - 2. That complete payment for us was established perfectly in the shed blood of atonement by our Substitute.
 - 3. For Jesus’ sake alone, our Father forgives our sins. Do you have that peace of the forgiveness of your sins? Will our Father hear and answer as we have asked?

III. The Resulting Resolution

- A. As the Father has so mercifully forgiven our insurmountable debts in Christ, we are then obliged to forgive the spiritual debts of our brethren.
 - 1. We must recognize the difference between our debts to the Father and the debts of another to us.
 - 2. Further, our forgiveness of the brother may have no limitations.
 - 3. That forgiveness includes forgetting. “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses”
- B. The fruit of that activity is the enjoyment of peace.
 - 1. When there is confession made and forgiveness expressed for one another, there will also be the enjoyment of our peace in the shed blood of Calvary.
 - 2. Then there is the fruit of assurance in our own hearts personally concerning the forgiveness of our own debts.
 - 3. That is so important that the Lord teaches us to pray very specifically. Not: Father forgive us our debts. Rather, “Father forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” In like manner, shall we enjoy the peace that passes all understanding, and we shall live righteously as Thy dear children. AMEN

Introduction

- A. In the 5th petition we prayed for that precious blessing of the forgiveness of our sin, but now in the 6th petition, we pray for more necessary spiritual blessings.
- B. Further, we seek God to work in us the blessings of His salvation that flow forth out of the forgiveness of sins.
 - 1. There is the popular, but false conception that salvation is the work of God and man. That is false. Salvation is from beginning to end the work of God.
 - 2. Therefore, by the 6th petition, we seek from our Father complete salvation. We seek from the Father that we may be kept by His power through faith unto our full salvation. (I Peter 1:5)
- C. Of the blessings that we are asking God to fulfil in us by the 6th petition, we focus our attention upon the blessing of being preserved unto the end.

“Seeking Our Father for Preservation unto the End”

I. Seeking For What?

- A. We pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, or the Evil One.”
 - 1. This is a request that the Father not to lead us into the trap of temptation.
 - a. By this request, we confess that the Father is sovereign over temptation. (II Sam 24:1)
 - b. Our request is that the Father not sovereignly lead us into and through temptation. Although we do not seek a life without temptation, yet we do ask that the Father not lead us into the traps of temptation.
 - 2. God does lead His saints into temptation.
 - a. The Bible gives examples of saints who fell in their pride into temptation.
 - b. God’s purpose with those falls into temptation was the humbling of His people.
 - 3. However, our request is that the Father not lead us into temptation in order to be delivered from our pride. We ask God to use another way of keeping us in humility and godly fear. But, do not use the extreme remedy of leading us into temptation in order to humble us and so to purify us.
- B. Hence, our request is that God sanctify us.
 - 1. We ask the Father by His grace to work in and through us the blessing of repentance.
 - 2. We ask the Father by His grace and Spirit to work in and through us the life of faith and good works. When we pray, “Father, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” we mean, Father, sanctify us daily!
- C. Our request is also that the Father preserve us in the a life of good works, repentance, and faith.
 - 1. We wish to continue in the grace & knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 13:20a-21)
 - 2. However, because we know how prone we are to yield to temptation, our desire is that God preserve us.
 - 3. Since the Father does preserve us, He by the Spirit of Christ does not let that seed of regeneration to perish.
 - 4. When we pray for deliverance from evil, our desire is that we be purified each and every day, and also preserved in our salvation in Christ unto the day of our death and entrance into glory everlasting.

II. Seeking Why?

- A. We must ask this petition because of our spiritual enemies who constantly threaten our salvation.
 - 1. There are 3 main spiritual enemies.
 - 2. These spiritual enemies fight us constantly and repeatedly.
 - 3. Do you have the power to fight and overcome these spiritual enemies?
 - a. Before the power of sin and temptation, we cannot stand a moment.
 - b. Have you learned that and do you believe that to be true of yourselves? We have no power, no strength to stand a moment before the spiritual enemies. By prayer, the Lord will strengthen us to persevere.
- B. We ask for these blessings of preservation and sanctification because we must have them for Christ’s sake.
 - 1. Our preservation and sanctification are the necessary fruit of our justification and forgiveness.
 - 2. The work of salvation must be completed. (Phil 1:6)
 - 3. Christ prayed that we might be preserved. (Luke 22:31-32)
 - 4. The Father promises to preserve us. (John 10:28-29)

III. Seeking With What Hope?

- A. We pray this petition with the hope that we shall remain faithful against evil and the Evil One now.
 - 1. “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.”
 - 2. Our desire is that God give us the weapons that will crush our enemies.
- B. However, the ultimate answer to this petition is complete victory.
 - 1. That goal may seem very impossible. Yet, the goal of final victory and total perfection is possible and real.
 - 2. Do you desire your final glorification? Do we realize what we are praying in this petition? We wish to fight the enemy, not in our strength, but in the strength of the Lord. We may fight the good fight of faith in the hope of our final victory, when we shall wear the victor’s crown before the throne of the Lamb.

Introduction

- A. The conclusion to the Lord's Prayer is a conclusion of praise, which is one of the main reasons for prayer and that is the purpose of our salvation.

- B. Even so, the conclusion to our prayers may be one of the most difficult parts of prayer because we are commanded to pray in complete trust and confidence in our heavenly Father. Although it is very difficult for us to pray in complete trust because of our unbelief, yet the Lord calls us to pray with the assurance that our prayers will be heard by our heavenly Father for Jesus' sake alone.

"Assured that Our Prayers are Heard"

I. The Content of This Assurance

- A. The Lord's Prayer concludes with a confession of our praise to our heavenly Father.
 - 1. We confess first that the Kingdom belongs solely unto the Father.
 - 2. We confess that the Power belongs solely unto the Father: Thine is the Power.
 - 3. Because to Him is the Kingdom and the Power, we conclude that all glory also belongs unto the Father.
 - 4. This is not a passing confession, but we believe that this truth and praise applies unto the Father forever.
- B. How does this confession of the Father's glory assure us that our prayers will be heard and answered?
 - 1. Because God is King, we believe that He is willing to bless us.
 - 2. Because God is almighty, we believe He has, does, and will continue to bless us.
 - 3. Because the glory is God's, He must bless us.
 - 4. Therefore, we rest assured that whatever we ask in faith, we may be assured of the certain answer to our prayers, and we may be certainly assured that God will certainly bless us through the means of our own prayers. The Father will hear and answer because His our Almighty, Sovereign, and All-Glorious Father.

II. The Basis of This Assurance

- A. The basis for that assurance is neither presumption, liturgical sincerity, merit, nor the fact that we pray.
- B. Rather, our full and true assurance is based solely upon Christ.
 - 1. Christ is our Advocate at the Father's Right Hand.
 - 2. That is the assurance and confidence we must have as Christ has taught in John 16:23: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, He will give it you."
 - a. What does that mean? Does that mean we may ask for anything? All that we ask according to God's will in the Name of Christ the Father will hear & answer and He will do that for Christ's sake alone.
 - b. There is the immovable Foundation of the assurance that our weak prayers shall certainly be heard by our Sovereign, Almighty, and All-Glorious Father.

III. The Certainty of This Assurance

- A. That assurance is emphasized when we are taught to conclude our prayer by saying, "Amen."
 - 1. With "amen," we confess before our Father that we have been true in our prayer.
 - a. "Amen" is a Greek word which means "firm." In Rev. 3:14, we read that Christ is called "the Amen." He is the Faithful Witness of the unchangeable, everlasting, and immovable Truth!
 - b. When we say the last word of our prayer, "amen," we are testifying before God that we were true to the Father in our prayers.
 - 2. Besides that, we also affirm the truth concerning our heavenly Father as revealed to us in His Word.
 - 3. Do you see now the difficulty with this last word? Are we true to what we say in our prayers? Do we really trust the Lord as we ought? Do we really want only the Father's will to be done & not ours? Will you say to the Father, "I meant what I said," when you cannot even remember what you said, or said it so out of custom, you don't even know what you meant?
- B. Yet, standing upon the foundation of Christ, we must be ready in our hearts to say that last word, "amen."
 - 1. We must be ready to say that in any situation in which the Father has led us.
 - 2. No matter what situation, we must pray to God in the assurance that He will hear and grant us His blessing!
 - a. "Ask and it shall be given you! and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened!"... "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"
 - b. Seek the Father daily for His blessing and Spirit. Be assured, that the Father will grant them to you for Christ's sake alone. Such prayers of faith will not go unanswered. For the sake of the throne of His glory at which Christ now sits, our Father will hear and bless you with His wise answers.