



DAILY MEDITATIONS ON THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

by Pastors of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America

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FEB
Lord's Days 6 - 9

The Second Part - Of Man's Deliverance

Lord's Day 6

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

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

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

Answer. That he might, by the power of his Godhead [c] sustain in his human nature, the burden of God's wrath; and might [d] obtain for, and restore to us, righteousness and life.

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

Answer. Our Lord Jesus Christ: [e] "who of God is made unto [f] us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Question 19. Whence knowest thou this?

Answer. From the holy gospel, which God himself first revealed in Paradise; [g] and afterwards published by the patriarchs [h] and prophets, and represented by the sacrifices [i] and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly, has fulfilled it [j] by his only begotten Son.

[a]: Rom. 5:12,15

[b]: 1Pet 3:18; Isa. 53:11

[c]: 1 Pet. 3:18; Acts 2:24; Isa. 53:8

[d]: 1John 1:2; Jer. 23:6; 2Tim. 1:10; John 6:51

[e]: Mat. 1:23; 1Tim. 3:16; Luke 2:11

[f]: 1Cor 1:30

[g]: Gen. 3:15

[h]: Gen. 22:17,18; Gen. 28:14; Rom. 1:2; Heb. 1:1; John 5:46

[i]: Heb. 10:7,8

[j]: Rom. 10:4; Heb. 13:8

February 5 – LD 6, Day 1: The Mediator must be a Righteous Man
by Rev J. Korterling

Isa. 53:11, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”

The catechism re-iterates here that if someone is going to take the place of sinful man, he has to be not only a man, but even more than a man; he has to be a sinless or righteous man.

The catechism says, “the justice of God requires that the same human nature which hath sinned should likewise make satisfaction for sin.”

What does it mean that the same human nature must bear the consequences of sin?

Adam’s sin was a willful act on his part. God did not force Adam to sin or trick him into sin. When Eve came to Adam with the fruit of the forbidden tree, it was desirable and something they both wanted. Hence when they disobeyed God, they did it freely, they chose to do this, knowing full well it was against God’s clear instruction. “The day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die.”

If sinful man is going to make payment for this act of disobedience, the sinner in his own human nature must do so as an act of obedience. He must freely desire to do this and take the consequence of his sin willingly. The price for sin is everlasting separation from God’s favor and instead of that, doomed to the torments of His hellish wrath. To make atonement, man has to say to God, you are right. I deserve this punishment. Now as an act of love I will bear this punishment because I want to return to your fellowship and favor.

Nowhere in the human race is there a man qualified to do this for himself or for other sinners. No one WANTS to bear God’s hellish wrath, much less be able. The reason for this is that fallen man is not righteous before God. His will is captured by the power of sin. He is content to revel in his sin, make excuses for them, and even blame God for everything that goes wrong in his life.

The good news of the gospel is that there is a RIGHTEOUS man. Isaiah calls Him, “my righteous servant”. That is Jesus, “He shall justify many and bear their iniquities.”

Blessed be God Who provides a Righteous Man for us.

February 6 – LD 6, Day 2: Only God can Atone for Sin
by Rev J. Kortering

I Peter 3:18, *“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”*

The catechism here asserts that the Mediator must in one Person be very God. The reason for this is that by His Godhead, he sustains His human nature to enable it to bear the wrath of God and also by that same Godhead, be able to save the sinner and restore him to righteousness and life.

The mediator must be personally God for two reasons. Here we consider the first.

He must bear the suffering of the pain of hell and make an end to that by satisfying God. The Bible teaches that the guilty sinner is cast into hell to remain there forever. The penalty for sin is everlasting hell because it is against “the most-high majesty of God.” To deliver the sinner from this suffering, the mediator must be able to take the place of the sinner and take that EVERLASTING wrath of God upon himself and bring it to a close because God accepts his suffering as payment.

How can anyone bear such terrible suffering? No mere human being can do that. Such a man would succumb to such suffering, he would die of shock. The qualification of our mediator is that he must be both God and man in order that his divinity might strengthen his humanity to bear God’s just wrath against sin and satisfy God.

How can such suffering have “everlasting” value? We know that Jesus suffered the pains of hell while he was on the cross during the three hours of darkness. That suffering had everlasting value because Jesus was truly God.

The text quoted above expresses it well, “Christ suffered for sins, the **just** for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being **PUT TO DEATH IN THE FLESH BUT QUICKENED BY THE SPIRIT.**” To be “just”, he could not be the product of Adam’s human race. He had to come down from the Father, very God, and take on human flesh.

In that flesh, he was able to suffer hellish wrath, bear it, and bring it to an end.

Our Mediator meets the qualifications; He is a righteous man and Personally God.

He made atonement for our sins.

Put your trust in Him alone.

February 7 – LD 6, Day 3: Only God can Deliver Man from Sin
by Rev J. Korterling

II Timothy 1:9,10 Who hath saved us...according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

We mentioned that there are two reasons why the mediator must be more than a righteous man, he must be very God. The first we considered already, he must be God in order to bear the punishment God placed on our sins, everlasting wrath and hell. Now we focus on the second reason, he must be very God, as the catechism says, "that he might obtain for and RESTORE to us righteousness and LIFE." He must make the dead sinner spiritually good and alive.

Those of us who care about the salvation of those who are not Christians can testify to this important qualification of our mediator. Man cannot save himself; neither can fellow man save his neighbor. We may carry in our hearts the DESIRE to save, we may put forth the EFFORT to save, by this we refer to our effort to share the gospel with them, yet we know in our hearts that only God by the Holy Spirit can convert and change them. That Holy Spirit is given to our Mediator who is more than a righteous man, He is very God, and only God can bring forth life out of death.

The words of Timothy quoted above explain this.

He refers to God who has brought salvation and He has done this through Jesus Christ. He describes that work of salvation as two fold, first He abolished death. That He did on the cross. The Mediator was very God and bore the punishment of death. But more, He also brought forth life and immortality to light through the gospel. Bringing forth that life and immortality is the work of our Mediator as His victory over spiritual death right now.

This is most encouraging for us.

We have a Mediator who not only paid for the sins of His own, but also has the power to deliver every one of them from the dominion of sin and the devil. That is His qualification and that is His ministry all through history.

He uses the gospel as His means.

Let's celebrate our great God and Mediator who is abundantly qualified to save.

**February 8 – LD 6, Day 4: Our Lord Jesus Christ is That Mediator
by Rev J. Kortering**

I Peter 3:8, For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit.”

You may have noticed that as we examined the qualifications for our Mediator given by the Bible and summarized by the catechism, it is impossible to be abstract and theoretical. Each time we examined one of the details, we had to relate it to Jesus. The reason is obvious; our Mediator is not a thought or an idea to be set forth like the chapter of a book. He is our life and hope. Hence we could not keep silent as to Who He is, we had to make reference to Him as the One who alone is qualified to reconcile us to God.

The catechism now sets Him forth in all His glory. Who then is that Mediator, who is in one person both very God and a real righteous man? OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!

He meets all the qualifications.

He is a righteous man as we read in the Matthew account (1:23) which quotes Isaiah 7:14 “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name, Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” The virgin Mary could not understand how she could become pregnant without a male. The answer was re-assuring, Luke1:35, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

No wonder His name is Immanuel, God with us. He is a real human being who received his human nature from the virgin Mary. He is also a Divine Person, as the Holy Spirit fathered Him and brought forth the Son OF GOD.

Thus the text quoted above indicates that Christ was the just one who suffered for the unjust. Christ was sinless and thus He was able to offer Himself as a substitute for sinners. He was put to death in the flesh, this tells us that He accomplished atonement on our behalf. He was quickened in the Spirit to make us alive.

Children of God say together, “Our Lord Jesus Christ”. I trust He is yours as well.

**February 9 – LD 6, Day 5: The Knowledge of the Mediator is communicated to us through the Holy Gospel
by Rev J. Kortering**

Romans 1:16, For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jews first and also to the Greek.”

The gospel is good news, but good news kept secret is not good. The good news of the gospel is that we have a Mediator, Our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the One Who paid the debt of sin and restores us to favor with God. There is nothing more good than such news.

The question the catechism now poses is this, “How do you know about the Mediator?” The answer is from the holy gospel. The word gospel means good news.

God in His mercy always announces that good news to fallen sinners. The salvation which He provides in our Lord Jesus Christ is in His heart, and from the moment man fell into sin until the present, even unto the end of the world, God is busy heralding forth this good news by which He saves fallen mankind.

The heart of the gospel and its message is salvation through Jesus Christ.

This, Paul acknowledges in the quotation above. Paul says, the gospel of Christ is the POWER of God unto salvation. The reason for this is because it is the gospel OF CHRIST. God through Jesus Christ our Mediator, has reconciled the sinner unto Himself. Being both God and Man, Jesus was qualified to make this reconciliation. As the angel announced to Joseph at His birth, “She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins.” It is good news for “his people”. The Apostle Paul defines these people as “everyone that believeth, to the Jews first and also to the Greek.”

God is very honest with us as He communicates to us the Holy Gospel. He strips us of all pride and self-worth. Only undeserving and unworthy sinners will turn to Jesus by faith and embrace Him as their Savior. The first work of grace in your heart and mine that prepares us for the good news of Jesus is that we NEED Him.

Do you see yourself as a lost sinner, separated from God, worthy of everlasting hell?

God sets forth Jesus in the gospel. He calls you to receive Him and believe in Him as your Mediator.

**February 10 – LD 6, Day 6: Christ was the Mediator of the Old Covenant
by Rev J. Korterling**

Romans 1:1-3 *“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scripture concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

The Old Covenant is the name given to the church prior to the birth of Jesus.

During that time, God communicated the knowledge of the Mediator in different ways. Already in the Garden of Eden, God spoke directly to Adam and Eve, this is called *a theophony*. Once when He spoke to Satan, He told Satan that there would be a war between the people whom He would save by the Mediator, and those who would follow Satan’s evil ways. That war would end in the coming of Jesus who would destroy Satan and all his followers, Genesis 3:15.

During the days of the Old Covenant, God reminded His people that the Mediator would come to cover their sins by instructing them to sacrifice animals. By the shedding of the blood of the substitute (a lamb), God declared to them the gospel of the coming Mediator. He held before their eyes a very effective picture of the cross of Jesus who would come as the Mediator in the future. He added to this many ceremonies of the law. They had special festivals in which they commemorated the shedding of blood as the covering for sin. One such example is the Feast of the Passover in which they placed blood on the door posts of their tents to remind them of the night in Egypt when the angel of death passed over them and did not kill their first-born sons. That blood was a picture of their Mediator.

In the quote above, Paul mentions prophets. God also sent prophets to the Old Covenant people, who told them that their sins would be covered by God’s Lamb, upon Whom God would lay the iniquity of us all. One such prophet was Isaiah. Read Isaiah 53 for an example of such a prophetic message.

It is good for us to reflect upon this gospel given in the Old Covenant. There is only ONE Mediator and ONE gospel because there is only ONE people of God whom God saves in Jesus Christ. Because of this, we benefit from our reading and study of the Old Testament (Old Covenant).

**February 11 – LD 6, Day 7: Christ is the Mediator of the new Covenant
by Rev J. Kortering**

Romans 10:4, *“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”*

Now we can reflect with great thankfulness that Jesus is indeed God’s Mediator. He is qualified from every point of view; He is personally God, the Second Person of the Trinity. He is a real man, having been born of Mary. He is a righteous man that is without personal sin, because He was born of the Virgin Mary.

With such qualification, He completed our redemption, He paid for our sins, and God received His suffering and death as a substitute for ours. God raised Him from the dead to certify our righteousness in Him. One conclusion follows from this, there is only one Mediator between God and man, and that is Christ Jesus.

We must make one final point before we leave this Lord’s Day of the catechism. The only way we can be sure that this Jesus is OUR Mediator is through faith in Him. This is the point of the verse quoted above. Christ is the END of the law for righteousness. The law refers to the law given by God from Mt. Sinai. That law states, “Do this and live”. Fallen, sinful man cannot keep the law in order to be righteous before God. According to the law, there is no hope for man to be received into favor with God. Now we read, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. In Jesus Christ there is righteousness because He paid the debt of the law which is death, and kept the letter of the law which is righteousness.

This righteousness which is in Christ Jesus is ours by means of faith in Him. And this is true for all mankind. There is no righteousness before God for anyone in the world, except through faith in the righteousness which Jesus merited for us.

Two things follow from this.

First, how important it is that you and I be sure that we believe in Jesus for our righteousness and commit our life to serve Him.

Second, we recognize how important it is to get the gospel out so that others may learn about Jesus and commit their lives to serve Him.

The New Covenant is God’s gracious covenant, may He be pleased to use preaching and witnessing to gain others for Christ.

The Second Part - Of Man's Deliverance

Lord's Day 7

Question 20. Are all men then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ?

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

Question 21. What is true faith?

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

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

Answer. All things [j] promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our catholic undoubted Christian faith briefly teach us.

Question 23. What are these articles?

Answer.

1. I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
2. And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:
3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary:
4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell:
5. The third day he rose again from the dead:
6. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty:
7. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:
8. I believe in the Holy Ghost:
9. I believe an holy catholic church: the communion of saints:
10. The forgiveness of sins:
11. The resurrection of the body:
12. And the life everlasting. AMEN.

[a]: Mat. 1:21; Isa. 53:11

[b]: John 1:12,13; Rom. 11:20; Heb. 10:39

[c]: John 6:69; John 17:3; Heb. 11:3,6

[d]: Eph. 3:12

[e]: Rom. 4:16,20,21; Heb. 11:1; Eph. 3:12; Rom. 1:16; 1Cor 1:21; Acts 16:14; Mat. 16:17; John 3:5

[f]: Rom. 10:14,17; Mat. 9:2

[g]: Rom. 5:1

[h]: Gal. 2:20

[i]: Rom. 3:24,25,26

[j]: John 20:31; Mat. 28:19,20

February 12 – LD 7, Day 1: Who Then is Saved By the Mediator, Jesus Christ?
by Rev J. Korterling

Matthew 1:21, “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins.”

Having set forth the credentials necessary for Jesus to be the Mediator, and having set forth the glorious fact that He is not hidden but set forth boldly in the gospel through all ages, the catechism now addresses the important question, whom does this Mediator, Jesus, really save?

Many different answers are given to this question. They usually fall into two groups

First, those who emphasize that man determines for himself whether he will be saved. You are familiar with them because they are the most vocal and probably the most prolific. They suggest that God has done everything He could to save, He gave His Son, He wrote out a check to atone for every human being to make their salvation possible, now man has to endorse the check, he has to accept Jesus as His Savior in order to make it effective. The catechism asks, “Are all men then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ?” These people answer; all men COULD be saved IF they desired it. The will of man makes the determination.

Second, there are those who follow the catechism here and are known as Reformed believers, they are called this because they hold to the truths set forth in the sixteenth century Reformation. Men like Martin Luther and John Calvin were leaders in this work. They believe that the Bible teaches that God wills to save a certain people whom He chose in eternity and gave Jesus to die for them and sends the gospel to them so that they might believe. An example of such a Bible text is quoted above, Jesus is called Jesus “for He shall save HIS PEOPLE from their sins.” Jesus was aware of the fact that God, His Father, willed to save only some of the human race when he said in John 17:9, “I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”

These passages guide the authors of the catechism to answer the question “who is “ by stating, “ONLY those who are ingrafted into Christ and receive all His benefits, by a true faith.”

Not man but God determines who is saved.

**February 13 – LD 7, Day 2: Faith both Ingrafting and Receiving
by Rev J. Korterling**

John 1:12,13, *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

When the catechism states that the saved ones are ingrafted into Christ they emphasize that salvation begins and ends with God. They use the biblical figure of speech as Jesus did in John 15 where He teaches that He is the vine and God the husbandman who joins each branch to him in order to make them alive. “Without me, ye can do nothing,” John 15:5. This helps us understand the importance of our union with Christ, for He adds, “Abide in me and I in you, As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”

There is an important relationship between ingrafting and receiving.

The sinful and spiritually dead sinner cannot join Himself to Jesus, cannot accept Him as his personal Savior, unless he is first made alive. This sinner is made alive through the ingrafting. Just like the farmer who takes a branch which is considered dead apart from the vine, and unites it to the vine, God takes the dead sinner and unites him to Christ through the act of ingrafting. The union between vine and branch is completed. The living sap of the vine passes through the graft and causes the branch to live. Life does not go from the branch to the vine but from the vine to the branch. Jesus is the living vine and God joins each one, for whom He shed His blood, to Him at His appointed time in history.

Once that graft takes place, the dead sinner becomes alive.

Proof of the power of spiritual life is that the sinner comes to behold by faith WHO God is, the sovereign and holy One. Before Him the sinner is convicted of His sin. He weeps on account of his sins and looks to God with sorrow of heart. Jesus is Mediator for ALL who are burdened by their sins. Matt. 11:28-30.

Now such a convicted sinner is ready to receive Jesus as HIS Mediator with thankful heart.

By receiving Jesus, he receives power to become a son of God. He admits he is such not by his own will but the will of God.

February 14 – LD 7, Day 3: Faith has Conviction of Truth
by Rev J. Korterling

John 17:3, *“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”*

Once we are engrafted into Christ Jesus by faith, our hearts are filled with His love. His love for us and our responding love for Him affects our minds. Under the influence of that love, “we hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word.”

Knowledge of the universe is exploding around us every day. In our high-tech generation, we pride ourselves in being able to gain access to information. We cannot possibly retain in our human brain all the things which we learn through reading, television, computer research via the internet, on and on. It is not so much what we know but where we can find it. Most of this information we view as “formal knowledge’, objective truth. As Christians we learn this and process this as any other human being.

But the knowledge of faith is different. From a heart that loves God, we view this information in the light of God’s divine revelation, the Bible. The center of this knowledge is God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Apart from Jesus, the knowledge of God works terror and judgment. But, the knowledge of God through Jesus His Son, brings purpose and direction to this fallen world. We know that Jesus is Savior of His people and is now exalted and reigns over all things to bring them to their conclusion in His kingdom in the new heaven and earth. We learn the truth of history, science, medicine, etc. in the light of the Word of God.

More than that, we love God and are thankful that Jesus is OUR Savior and Lord. The truth of the Bible is personally embraced and precious to us. As quoted above, “this is life eternal”. We personally know God and His Son, Jesus.

This knowledge which we hold for truth as Christians sets us at odds with the unbelieving world about us. Those who do not have Christian faith, limit their focus upon “things seen” and do not have the ability to “see with the eyes of faith which are illuminated by the Word of God.” The difference is the knowledge of faith and knowledge limited by unbelief.

As a Christian, do you have conviction of truth, both objective and personal?

February 15 – LD 7, Day 4: Faith has Assurance of Personal Salvation
by Rev J. Korterling

Ephesians 3:12, “In whom (Jesus Christ) we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.”

Once we are engrafted into Christ Jesus by faith, our hearts are filled with His love. His love for us and our responding love for Him affects not only our minds but also our wills. As the catechism expresses it, “also an assured confidence, which the Holy Ghost works by the gospel in my heart, that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ’s merits.” We are convicted of our personal salvation.

All Christians have conviction of the truth (knowledge), they also possess conviction or assurance of personal salvation. We must not say that it is possible to possess true faith without this conviction. It is inherent in the work of salvation, from a heart filled with God’s love we are able to receive our own salvation as a wonder of grace and possess with certainty that we are saved.

Notice with me why we are sure of our own personal salvation.

Not because I am good enough for God and He ought to accept me into His covenant because of who I am or how I have lived. If we truly have the work of grace in our hearts, our sins always cause burden and shame. Even our good works are not reason for acceptance by God because these works are still stained with sin and never grounds for our acceptance.

Neither are we sure because we have accepted Jesus as our Savior, as if an act of our will makes all the difference with God. If you are in touch with your own spiritual condition, even now as a child of God, you know that your will still vacillates between wanting God and wanting the pleasure of sin. If we look at our own inner desires, we lose all assurance.

Rather, our assurance is via looking to Jesus by the Holy Spirit. We focus on who we are IN and THROUGH Jesus Christ our Savior. He has made us righteous, the grounds for our forgiveness of sin. He has made us holy, the proof of our union with Christ.

I encourage you not to look to yourself, but to Jesus for your full assurance of salvation. In Him we have boldness and can approach God with confidence.

**February 16 – LD 7, Day 5: Faith Worked by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel
by Rev J. Kortering**

Romans 10:17, *“So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”*

Now we must focus on one more aspect of faith and salvation. True faith focuses on Jesus as Savior, it does that because the Word of God explains that Jesus is the only Savior. When we are engrafted into Him, we are filled with His love so that we gladly embrace all that He says is true, and rejoice when He assures us of our personal salvation. The conclusion is that faith is the most important experience.

Of more than passing interest is, how do we obtain this faith?

Here too, the catechism emphasizes that it does not have its roots in man himself. This is no small point when we consider how many in the church-world emphasize that faith is the work of man. Oh, yes, they say that it is all of God, even all of grace, but God will not give His grace to anyone who does not of his own will seek it. The tragedy of this emphasis is that man’s will is unable to seek after God or to “accept Jesus” as they say. God must work upon the human will and change it in order for man to will and seek after God.

The beautiful point of the catechism here is that God does this by means of the gospel. Faith is worked by the Holy Spirit through the gospel.

To embrace this truth, we must admit our own human depravity and be thankful to God that He enables us to do what we cannot do apart from Him.

The Apostle Paul expresses it beautifully in Romans 10:17, “So then, faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God”. In the context there, Paul explained that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, vs. 13. That is the external evidence of faith which the Holy Spirit works. Remember the jailor, “Men and brethren, what must I do to be saved?” Acts 16:30. How does one come to call on the Lord? He answers this in Romans 10:14,15, “So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” The Spirit works through the preached word.

Have you heard the word? Do you respond by believing? If you do, it is the proof of the Holy Spirit working true faith in you.

February 17 – LD 7, Day 6: What is necessary for a Christian to Believe
by Rev J. Korterling

John 20:31, *“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”*

The catechism raises a rather rare question here. “What is then necessary for a Christian to believe?” I suggest it is rare in that it seems that in the ecclesiastical world today, WHAT you believe is of little import. We are encountering an ecumenical spirit, that is, one which wants all Christian churches to join together, and if that can’t happen, at least to have a common expression of Christianity among all Christians. To get this, they belittle objective faith, they say that statements of belief are of little consequence. “It is not important what you believe, simply that you do believe,” is their conclusion. The Bible can be interpreted in many ways, doctrine which consists of the teachings of any given church are declared to be important for THAT church but not necessary for every Christian. In the most extreme case, one concludes that some churches would say that it is not necessary that you believe ANYTHING, simply confess that you need Jesus or some such statement.

Here we have it that there are some things NECESSARY for a Christian to believe. These are so important that unless a person believes these things, he/she is not a true Christian. That sounds both strange but also refreshing to hear.

What might it be that is necessary for a Christian to believe?

The answer is, “All things promised in the gospel”.

The quotation above indicates the heart of the gospel is that Jesus is the Christ (the anointed Mediator of the covenant) who himself is the Son of God,(truly God), and that in Him there is salvation (life through his name).

This is necessary because without this faith there is no salvation. Belief in man himself, belief in any human that might seem outstanding, belief in any other god, whether heathen religion or western philosophy, ends in death. There is salvation in no other name than Jesus. God has provided His Son as our Savior and in Him there IS salvation. All who confess their sins and acknowledge that the blood of Jesus covers them have the evidence of eternal life.

Once more, do you believe all that the gospel conveys? This is necessary and opens the door to everlasting life.

**February 18 – LD 7, Day 7: Truth of the Gospel Summarized in the Articles of Faith
by Rev J. Korterling**

Matthew 28:19,20, Go ye therefore and teach all nations....teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

The great commission which our Lord Jesus gave His disciples, was to teach and baptize with the assurance that He would be with them always, even to the end of the world.

The catechism instructs us to believe all things promised us in the gospel.

Now it adds, “which the articles of our catholic undoubted Christian faith briefly teach us.”

A summary of faith is useful. It sounds very pious to say that we believe the Bible and refuse to accept any creed or statement of faith which summarizes what the Bible teaches. In fact it is impossible to refuse to summarize one’s faith; proof is that every church and every group that professes to be Christian has a statement of faith.

The early Christian church also saw the need for such a summary statement. Today we call this summary the Apostles Creed, not because the apostles wrote it, but rather it was written in the early centuries of the church to summarize the teachings of the apostles. In our catechism, it is called, “our catholic undoubted Christian faith”. It contains twelve articles and has been recited and quoted by the church of all ages, hence it is called “catholic”, which is not a reference to the Roman Catholic, but “catholic” is used in the proper sense of universal, a statement of faith expressed from the days of the apostles until the present. It is also described as “Christian” faith because it expresses the truth which every Christian has professed. Christians take the Bible very seriously and realize that it is not up to every individual to determine the content of his or her faith, but to do it in common together and to involve the church in officially adopting such a statement. It also is “undoubted”, that is, it is an expression of faith which every Christian holds to be true without any reservation.

It is sad that many churches today pay lip service to these twelve articles but put different meaning into them. The church that apostatizes uses the same terminology but changes the meaning. We are thankful that the catechism professes that these articles summarize the truth of the gospel, which is essential for faith.

We trust your heart is open to meditate upon these articles and embrace them by faith.

The Second Part - Of Man's Deliverance

Lord's Day 8

Question 24. How are these articles divided?

Answer. Into three parts; the first is of God the Father, and our creation; [a] the second of God the Son, and our redemption; [b] the third of God the Holy Ghost, and our sanctification. [c]

Question 25. Since there is but one only [d] divine essence, why speakest thou of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

Answer. Because God hath so [e] revealed himself in his word, that these three distinct persons are the one only true and eternal God.

[a]: Gen 1

[b]: 1Pet. 1:18,19

[c]: 1Pet. 1:21,22

[d]: Deut. 6:4

[e]: Gen. 1:26; Isa. 61:1; John 14:16,17; 1John 5:7; John 1:13; Mat. 28:19; 2Cor. 13:14

February 19 – LD 8, Day 1: God is the Object of Our Faith
by Rev J. Korterling

I Peter 1:21, *“Who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.”*

You notice that this quotation makes it plain that our faith is focused upon God.

This means two things.

First, it indicates that when we confess our faith to others, we speak about our God. God is the subject of this conversation. The crisis of all world religions is “who is God”? The distinguishing thing about the Christian religion is that we openly and without reservation make known the name of our God. He is the one and only true God of heaven and earth. When we teach our children concerning faith, we speak to them about our God. We tell them the history of His revelation given in the Bible, we help them focus upon the salvation which God alone has provided for us. When we encourage one another with the comfort so necessary in this life, we share with them the comfort which comes from our God.

Second, when we make this confession about God to others, we do this in the presence of, and before the face of this God. We are aware of God’s divine involvement in all the affairs of men, most of all in our own affairs. We want God to hear our confession. We want God to pay attention to activities as we relate to other human beings because in this way we praise Him and bring glory to Him. By faith we give recognition that He is our God.

In one word, God is the object of our faith.

There is a reason for this. That reason is that when God bestows upon us true and living faith, we enter into a covenant relationship with Him. By faith we realize that we are what we are and we become what we become because of God’s wonderful work of salvation in us. It is amazing to us that Almighty God, Creator God, Sovereign God loves us and takes us into His friendship. As quoted above, He raised Jesus from the dead and now He also raises us from spiritual death.

Faith reaches up to Him and confesses to Him and speaks about Him concerning the joy of that fellowship.

Our faith and hope is in God alone.

February 20 – LD 8, Day 2: God is One Divine Essence
by Rev J. Kortering

Deut. 6:4, *“Hear O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.”*

The first article of the Apostle’s Creed is “I believe in God”.

We noticed already that this God is the object of our faith. We make confession to Him and about Him in the love of His friendship established with us.

Two things have to be said about this God as the object of our faith.

First, we confess that He is the ONLY God. This was demonstrated over and over in the Old Covenant. The passage quoted above consists of the words of Moses as he summarized for Israel the instruction given to them in Mount Sinai. One thing is for sure, Jehovah is ONE Jehovah which means that there is only one Jehovah and He is not a god among many gods, rather He is the one and ONLY God there is. The history which followed demonstrated that Jehovah put down all the supposed gods of Egypt. He killed with a mighty hand the dwellers in the land of Canaan who worshipped other gods. How could He do this? Think about Mt. Carmel in the days of the Prophet Elijah. Let the living and true God answer by fire. Baal and Ashtoreth remained silent while Jehovah consumed the altar and the land with fire. The people shouted, “Jehovah He is THE God”. So through the ages, Jehovah is the same, the one only true God.

Second, He is three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We will see later that even though God revealed Himself as three Persons, He nevertheless is ONE God, not three. The catechism expresses it this way, “Why speakest thou of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? A. Because God hath so revealed himself in His Word, that these three distinct persons are the one only true and eternal God.”

We speak of this one and only true and eternal God as a description of the ESSENCE of God.

God’s nature or composition (so to speak) is that He possesses one mind, one will, one heart as He relates to others. We can say this because God made man in His image and we know the image of God is what distinguishes man from animals or other creatures. Man thinks, man has feeling, man desires, man loves and these things reflect His creator.

The Lord our God is ONE.

February 21 – LD 8, Day 3: God is Three Persons
by Rev J. Kortering

I John 5:7, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one."

One of the great mysteries concerning our God is that He is triune. This word is made up of two words, the first can be translated one and the other word can be translated three. Hence we conclude the confession of the historic Christian faith is that we have one God who has three Persons. Three Persons subsist in one being. That states briefly what we mean by triune or trinity.

We considered before what is included in the one being or nature of God.

Now we have to say a brief word about the three Persons. A person is an individual who has the ability to think, to will, to talk, to enjoy friendship. Among all the creatures God has made, only human beings who are created human persons have this ability.

God is three divine Persons who function in the one divine nature. To express this somewhat simply, the three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all function as Persons within the one divine nature. They think in the one mind of God but think individually as Persons. They desire as Persons, they express joy, sorrow, anger as Persons. They do all these things in the one heart and will of God.

Each Person possesses His own personality and distinct qualities. Thus each Person thinks individually, yet is united in the one mind of God. They are divine, co-equal and co-eternal God, yet distinct from each other. They complement each other and contribute to the personal relationship they enjoy within the godhead.

The catechism acknowledges this is impossible to comprehend and sets God apart from man in His own being and nature. We can at least understand that this allows for God's majesty and power. It is important for us to be humble and accept these truths concerning God. We do this by the simple statement of faith, "God hath so revealed himself in His Word." Think of the passage quoted above. Look at John 14:16,17, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." The Son prays to the Father that He will give the Holy Spirit to His children to comfort them.

The truth of the trinity is not man-made, it is divinely revealed.

February 22 – LD 8, Day 4: All that We Believe Involves the Trinity
by Rev J. Kortering

Matt. 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The catechism expressed that it is necessary for us to believe everything that is included in the gospel. The Apostle's Creed summarizes for us this faith and reduces it to twelve short statements of faith. We call these the Twelve Articles of Faith. Now we learn that everyone of these articles is an expression of the trinity. The question is raised, How are these articles divided? The Answer is, into three parts: the first is of God the Father and our creation, the second, of God the Son and our redemption, and the third, of God the Holy Ghost and our sanctification." The expression of our faith in God the Father is Article 1. This is followed by our faith in God the Son which includes articles 2-7. Finally faith in God the Holy Spirit includes articles 8-12.

No wonder then that Jesus instructed his church to baptize new converts in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. These three Persons are the Ones Who bring about our salvation.

Because our faith is in a Personal God, it is expressed as having all three Persons as the object of faith.

The first is of God the Father and our creation. The Son is involved in creation as John expressed it, "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made," John 1:4. The Holy Spirit was involved in creation, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," Gen. 1:2. The Father obviously spoke, "Let there be light", Gen. 1:3. His role is the leading role in creation.

The second is of God the Son and our redemption. Again, the Father is involved, "God (as Father) so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," John 3:16. The Son came into this world, Matt. 1:21, and the Holy Spirit came upon the Virgin Mary, Luke 1:35. The Son assumes the key role in redemption.

The third is of God the Holy Ghost and our sanctification. This Spirit is sent from the Father, by Jesus into this world, John 14:16,17. The Spirit is the key person in making us holy.

Thus we believe in the trinity, God, Three Persons in One Divine Being.

February 23 – LD 8, Day 5: Faith in God the Father
by Rev J. Korterling

Luke 3:22, *“Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased”*

It is not so easy to quote texts from the Bible that specifically demonstrate the First Person of the Trinity. The above quote is an example. God could not say the statement, “Thou art my beloved Son” unless He was the First Person speaking to the Second Person. Nevertheless, on the foreground is not the first and second Person but God triune as Father speaking to Jesus as the Mediator of the covenant. Behind this statement nevertheless, is the wonderful truth that God is the first Person of the holy trinity. As we pointed out before, as Father, he assumes the leading role in the creation, not only, but also in the sending of His Son and the sending forth of the Holy Spirit. God as Father has an important role in all aspects of creation, redemption, and sanctification.

The point is that if He were not the first Person as Father, He could not be involved as He is in all aspects of salvation.

There is something important about God the Father.

He has made a human analogy within the human family. A father is the one who initiates the formation of a new family by taking the initiative in marriage, by taking a wife. Living with such a wife in love, children are conceived and brought forth. This father nurtures and cares for these children and meets their needs. This is a reflection of God our Father.

Because God is Father, He initiates within the God-head a covenant of friendship. Love emanates from the Father to the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Already apart from creation, and long before time began, the Father functions in originating (humanly speaking) the divine friendship which is the pattern for covenant friendship with His creatures when time begins.

In the creation, He functions as Father, giving origin and persistence to His creation.

Even after the fall, the Father takes on His great role of “fathering” children out of sin and death and who by nature are children of the devil, and makes them His dear children.

God as Father ultimately takes to Himself the perfect family in the perfect creation through Jesus Christ His Only Begotten Son.

When the Father said to Jesus, “Thou art my BELOVED Son”, we embrace our Father with joy.

February 24 – LD 8, Day 6: Faith in God the Son
by Rev J. Korterling

John 1:1, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*

In connection with the Person of the Son, it is easiest to demonstrate that He is a Person within the Godhead (a term we use to refer to the One Divine Being we call God, who lives in covenant friendship as three Persons).

This is important because there are many within Christianity who claim to teach the trinity but deny it. How do they deny the trinity? They deny the trinity by insisting that God is NOT three Persons, but three modalities, three ways of revelation. God is ONE Person who manifests Himself in three ways, as a Father, as a Son, and as a Spirit. Heretics throughout the ages have opposed the doctrine of the trinity by using such reasoning. They do this because they insist that the idea of three Persons subsisting in One Divine Being is too philosophical and abstract. It is important that our catechism answered their false reasoning by simply stating, “God has so revealed Himself to us in His Word.” That is the key issue, do we let God tell us who He is or do we make God to be what we want Him to be. If we do, this is idolatry.

I say, God the Son as a divine Person can be demonstrated.

Psalm 2:7 is a declaration to the Son in eternity, “Thou art MY Son, this day have I begotten thee.” This is not a reference to Bethlehem, but a reference to His resurrection and ascension. He is a Person because the Father could talk to him, personally, and say to Him in eternity that He has begotten Him in victory.

He is a divine Person because He could do divine things on earth, He performed miracles which aroused debate as to His true identity. How can He do this if He is only a manifestation of the divine? He could do this because He was personally God the Son. The same was true in the debate that followed Jesus’ reference to forgiveness of sins. “Who can forgive sins but God only?” Jesus claimed that power because He was personally God.

What a comfort this affords.

All that Jesus did for us while He was on earth, He did for us not as a manifestation of the divine, but as a Person who consciously performed redemption. Hence it is genuine for us.

**February 25 – LD 8, Day 7: Faith in God the Holy Spirit
by Rev J. Korterling**

John 14:16,17, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

The third Person of the holy trinity is designated, God the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost.

We must exercise some caution and precision when we speak of spirits or ghosts within our culture. These are common terms used within the heathen context. They refer to either humans as spirits or ghosts (the spirits of the deceased ancestors for example) or spirits and ghosts from the realm of the evil spirit world.

It is quite different to speak of our God as being Personally, the Holy Spirit.

The Bible does speak of our God as a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth, John 4:24. Here we reflect upon the Person of the Spirit within the Godhead. He is called Spirit which means literally, "breath". The idea is that the Holy Spirit is the breath of God, the One who enables God to be the living God. He is the One Who realizes a relationship of friendship between the Father, Son, and Himself as Holy Spirit. When the Father speaks to the Son, He does so through the Person of the Holy Spirit. He is called the third Person of the trinity not because He is lower in rank to the Father and Son, but rather because He completes the work of the three Persons within the Godhead.

The same thing applies to the work which the triune God does outside of Himself. He is the creator God, the Savior God, the God Who brings all His plans to its consummation and He does this through the third Person of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit breathes the creation into existence. The Spirit comes upon the virgin Mary to conceive the promised Son. The Spirit gathers the church from all nations. The Spirit ultimately will destroy this present world and create a new one in which righteousness will dwell.

He is a Divine Person. This explains His efficacy and power. He always gets done what must be done.

Our faith is in Him as we think about our salvation. It is sure and steadfast in the Holy Spirit.

The Second Part - Of Man's Deliverance

Of God The Father

Lord's Day 9

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

Answer. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (who [a] of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that is in them; who likewise upholds and [b] governs the same by his eternal counsel and providence) is for the sake of Christ his Son, my God and my Father; on whom I rely so entirely, that I have no doubt, but he will provide me with all things necessary [c] for soul and body: and further, that he will make whatever evils he sends upon me, in this valley of tears [d] turn out to my advantage; for he is able to do it, being Almighty [e] God, and willing, being a [f] faithful Father.

[a]: Gen. 1; Gen 2; Psa. 33:6

[b]: Psa. 115:3; Mat. 10:29; Heb. 1:3; John 5:17

[c]: John 1:12,16; Rom. 8:15,16; Gal. 4:5,6; Eph. 1:5; 1John 3:1

[d]: Psa. 55:22; Mat. 6:26

[e]: Rom. 8:28; Rom. 4:21

[f]: Rom. 10:12; Mat. 6:26; Mat. 7:9,10,11

February 26 – LD 9, Day 1: God the Father: the Almighty Creator
by Rev. G. Van Baren

Read: Genesis 1; John 1; Hebrews 11:3

The Heidelberg Catechism begins in this Lord's Day a treatment of the first of the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed. These articles represent the necessary truths which a Christian *must believe*. True faith holds to these without exception. The 12 articles of the Apostles' Creed are based on the truth of the Trinity. It expounds the truths concerning each of the Persons of the Trinity—who exist in Oneness of Being.

Article 1 of the Apostles' Creed speaks specifically of the First Person of the Trinity and specifies His work: creation and providence. The work of the First Person of the Trinity is not limited only to Him. The Father creates by the Word (John 1:1-3; 14) and through the Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:1).

One who confesses this, acknowledges the infinite power, the infinite wisdom of Father. He created all things on earth and in the heavens *of nothing!* There are no other gods, no other religion, which dare make such a claim.

Yet the Catechism does not treat this great doctrine merely as doctrine. Rather, proceeding from the truth concerning our only comfort in life and death, it reminds the Christian that this Father, the Almighty Maker of the heaven and the earth, is *my* Father for Jesus' sake. He not only wishes to take care of us, but He is both willing and able to do so. And He has *promised* to do so. His promise can not fail nor be broken. That's the great wonder of the grace of God for me.

With such a Father, we need never to fear. He is infinite, almighty, the unchangeable Father. He both creates all things without exception, and upholds and governs all things that His purpose may be realized.

Oh, we face often times troubles and trials of various sorts. At times one may feel absolutely, hopelessly, overwhelmed by this all. Those who have not faith can frequently rely on alcohol or drugs of various sorts to deliver them. But such are driven to ever deeper despair. Some have gone so far as to take their own lives in order to escape the trials of this life.

But thanks be to God, our Father can and does provide us all that we need for Jesus' sake.

**February 27 – LD 9, Day 2: Creation: The Great Work of Our Father
by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read again: Genesis 1; Psalm 33

God, the Father, the First Person of the Trinity, is the Almighty Maker of the heavens and the earth. He creates all things by the Word (Son) and through the Spirit. He spoke and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast (Ps. 33:9). Indeed, the testimony of Scripture is that “thy heavens (are) the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained” (Ps. 8:3). He created all things instantly as Gen. 1 clearly teaches. In verse 3 we read, “And God said, Let there be light, and there was light”.

Before this Divine action of our Father, there was no time, no space, no matter, no universe. There was nothing of the universe which we now see. There were no people; there were no angels. These first came into being by His Word. The Catechism speaks of this not first of all to show the beauty of the creation about us, but rather to show how “Almighty” our Father is. Young lads would often boast, “My dad is stronger and bigger than your dad!” Perhaps the boast was even true. Yet our confession is far more. Our Father is “Almighty”! Father is *all might*! There is no might apart from His. What might exists in creation was fashioned by Father. He sustains every moment any being that reveals some measure of might. Could an ant confront the might of an elephant? It is infinitely more impossible for any finite creature to oppose our Father successfully.

Consider today what God the Father has done! He has fashioned *as with his fingers* the whole of this universe. The “fingers” seem to be such little digits on the hand. With our fingers we can make small things. We can not make a tree. We can not make an animal. Far less can we make stars or planets. Yet it took only the “fingers” of God to fashion and sustain a universe so vast that man has not succeeded to measure its extent.

It took only the fingers of God to make all of the stars in the universe. We are told that there are as many of stars in the universe as there are grains of sand on all of the seashores in the world. In comparison to the sands of the seashore, the earth would be no larger than a fraction of a grain of sand! How Almighty indeed is our Father!

February 28 – LD 9, Day 3: My Father—How Great He Is!
by Rev. G. Van Baren

Read: I Kings 8:22-53; Psalm 8

The Almighty Father, Creator and sustainer of the universe, is *our* Father. But our Father has revealed uniquely His might in the planet earth on which we live. He who beholds that earth through the “spectacles of Scripture” can not but be awed at what is seen there.

There is the beauty of the flowers and the entire plant world. One can be struck speechless at lovely fields of flowers. One feels insignificant when he stands by some of the giant Redwood trees in California. Our Father has formed, colors, and sustains each one as “with His fingers.” One of the poets has emphasized, “Only God can make a tree.”

Then there is also the beauty of the mountains and canyons. It is an awesome experience to stand on the rim of the Grand Canyon in Arizona (USA) and see its great depth and extent. One sees there the rich colors of rock—various shades of red—which seems to alter its colors as the sun shines upon it through the day. One is humbled by its vastness and begins to realize how insignificant he is when compared to all of that. One might mention the vast deserts which are found on the earth. One can gaze at the great oceans which cover so much of the earth. God speaks—and these came into being.

But our Almighty Creator, our Father, shows His greatness and power in smallness as well. There are little creatures, almost too small for the human eye to see; that also He created and directs. Man, for all of his ability to make very small things, is not able to make anything like the many small insects God has made. I marvel when I see one of these almost invisible insects. Legs which are hardly visible, wings which one can not see—carry this insect from point to point. And when one tries to crush that insect under one’s thumb, somehow it can sense impending destruction and escape. All of this too is made by our Almighty Creator, and Father.

He is *my Father*. Can the devil have power equal to Father’s power? Can the wisest and most clever human being successfully fight against Him? If Father withdraws His sustaining power under them, they would cease to exist!

And the child of God *believes* in Him. He trusts Him—for He is able and willing to protect and provide for His own for Jesus’ sake.

March 1 – LD 9, Day 4: Our Father Created All Things in Six Days!
by Rev. G. Van Baren

Read: Hebrews 11

Genesis 1 and 2 present the simple, clear, testimony of the great work of creation by our Almighty Father. In six literal days (each identified as beginning and ending with evening and morning) He fashioned all things within His great universe. It did not take our Father millions or billions of years to finish the work. It was finished in six days. The word “day” almost always refers to a literal day in Scripture. The few exceptions are clearly identified (as in Gen. 2:4). God speaks also of the days of creation in His great law: the Ten Commandments. God said that we are to rest on the seventh day, for “in six days God created the heavens and the earth and rested the seventh day.”

This is an essential truth which can be contradicted only with severe consequences for the interpretation of all of Holy Scripture. Scripture is completely infallible or it is fallible in some or many of its passages. Presbyterian and Reformed Churches which began with a denial of the literal creation days, soon were led into a pattern of denying or “reinterpreting” many other passages of Scripture. Many heresies have been introduced in this way.

The creation account has in it a simple beauty in describing the great work of creation. The beautiful statement is included with the days of creation: “And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was (very) good.” There was no sin, no evidence of the curse or of death in all of that which God had made.

There is clearly presented also an order in that creation: God creates a “stage” for his work—especially on the earth. He forms the plants needed to sustain life. Then He created animal life from lower to higher forms. Within each “kind” there could be and would be changes seen over a period of time. But one “kind” did not evolve into other “kinds”.

The climax of this creation was the formation of Adam (means “dust”) from the dust of the earth—and Eve (the first woman) from Adam’s rib. Adam was made the head of creation and all mankind. Gen. 2 points out also that the creation was at the same time the establishment of the marriage relationship. From the beginning, God made one man for one woman as long as they both would live. When questioned about divorce, Jesus insisted, “From the beginning it was not so.”

It is humbling to realize that the Almighty God who did all this, is *my* Father for Jesus’ sake.

**March 2 – LD 9, Day 5: One Believes Father’s Work of Creation Only By Faith
by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: Psalm 115

The creation of all things is a wonder which is properly attributed to God the Father. At the same time, it is the wonder denied by the unbeliever and, in fact, by the devil himself. But the unbeliever, in denying creation by God, must find a substitute to the testimony of Gen. 1 & 2. And a substitute he claims to have found. At first it was presented as a *theory* of origins. Today it is presented as *scientific fact* generally presented as unquestionably proven. It is the “science” of evolution. In fact, in our day, many churches and denominations have succumbed to the teaching of evolution—except with the disclaimer that God has directed its course.

Some have sought to disprove the purported “facts” of evolution. The commonly accepted “big bang” theory of the origin of the universe would seem to be preposterous. Was in fact all the matter of the universe at a point of time billions of years ago all compressed in a very small point? Was that “point” eternal? If not, what was its origin? What caused its “explosion”? And how did the sexes evolve with their reproductive organs over millions of years—each at the same time so that conception could take place?

The “scientist” claims today that he has found the proof for evolution in the study of genetics. Darwin’s theory of evolution is commonly adopted by most scientists. The scientist today claims that genetics presents proof positive that Darwin was correct.

But what fool the Christian would be to accept the reasoning of unbelieving scientists instead of the testimony of Scripture itself. In fact, God in His Word clearly states that one believes the teaching of Scripture concerning origins “by faith” (Heb. 11:3). “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God....” Heb. 11:1 states further, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

“Faith” which believes all this is the fruit of regeneration—being “born again.” Faith holds to the testimony of God in Scripture. Faith believes that through union with the Savior Jesus Christ, the Father who creates is *my* Father. This is the source of all my comfort in life and death.

March 3 – LD 9, Day 6: The Great Question: What do YOU Believe?
by Rev. G. Van Baren

Read: Ephesians 1

The Catechism makes our confession very personal. As in the Apostles' Creed, *I* confess that *I* believe in God the Father Almighty. *I* believe that He upholds and governs all His creation by His eternal counsel and providence. *I* believe and confess that this God is *my* God and *my* Father.

The question arises: on what do I make such a great claim? Is it not preposterous? Is it not presumptive to claim all this? The Catechism earlier stated that I learn from the Law of God (the Ten Commandments) that I am so wicked and corrupt that I am wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness (L.D. 3). That means that I of myself have nothing to offer to God to earn sonship. I am wholly incapable of doing any good thing in myself. How dare I, then, to claim that He is *my* Father?

The claim that God is my Father rests on the completed work of His Son in our flesh, Jesus Christ. I needed One who could represent me before God, who could remove from me all guilt before God. If my guilt for all of my sins were removed, if One could bear the just sentence of death because of those sins, then I can call God my Father. I needed such a Mediator between God and myself who is able to represent me as very man, and as God He is able to bear infinite wrath of God for my sins. Jesus is the One. He suffered the agonies of hell for me. He died under God's wrath. He made the payment God required—and the proof is in the fact that He arose again the third day. He ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of God. Because of Christ's work, I can call God my Father.

From that, it follows that my Father “provides me with all things necessary for soul and body.” I can rely on that truth without doubt or question. He provides all that I need for the body—food, clothing, and shelter. He provides care over me and defends me from my enemies. Above all, He provides for my soul—for that spiritual aspect of my being. He will take me to glory when my soul is separated from my body at death. And He will reunite my soul with my resurrected body at Christ's return. What a wonderful confession and assurance!

March 4 – LD 9, Day 7: My Father Sends to Me All Things in His Great Love!
by Rev. G. Van Baren

Read: Matthew 7:7-13

The Catechism presents all of the essential doctrines of Holy Scripture for our instruction. But again, the Catechism now makes the glorious truth of Trinity and the Fatherhood of the First Person, so very personal. This Father of Jesus Christ, the Almighty Creator is, difficult as it is to believe, *my Father* for Jesus' sake. Father surely will provide all things necessary for soul and body. Jesus reminds of that fact in Matthew 7:11. Jesus does not promise great wealth or healing of every sickness. He does promise us "all things necessary for soul and body. In the "Lord's Prayer" Jesus taught us to ask: "Give us this day our daily bread." We ask for bread for the day—and with that we must be content. If Father is pleased to give much more, we have the added responsibility of using all to the glory of our God.

It is more difficult to understand the care of our heavenly Father when we become sick and soon might die. Why must the Christian endure the terribleness of warfare? Why does the Christian sometimes lose all that he possesses through fire or wind? What about Christian parents who lose a child?

Some have claimed that God sends only health and prosperity to His children. It is the devil who sends the adverse things. Only if one asks Father in faith, will he be healed. If he lacks sufficient faith, he likely will not be healed.

Notice the Scriptural truth the Catechism emphasizes: "...He will make whatever evils *He* sends upon me..." Yes, He also sends to His people poverty, sickness, and death as well. Is. 45:7 makes this plain: God makes peace and creates evil. Psalm 119 repeatedly emphasizes that great truth that "affliction has been for my profit..." And Rom. 8:28 teaches that all things work together for good to them that love God. Therefore the same chapter points out that there is nothing which can separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

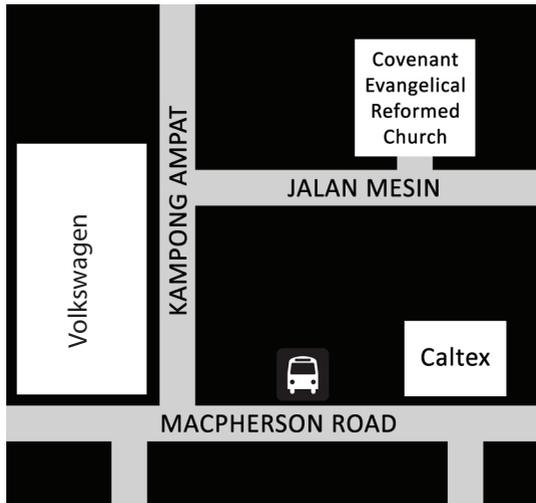
Is this not a most glorious assurance? The Almighty God is able to work all for our good and willing to do so being "a faithful Father."

When adversity comes, we do not understand always the "why." We are tempted to be critical of our Father. Yet we must be content in the knowledge that our understanding of the "why" is so limited. We are content to leave it to our Almighty Father. He knows best what we need—and provides that.



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