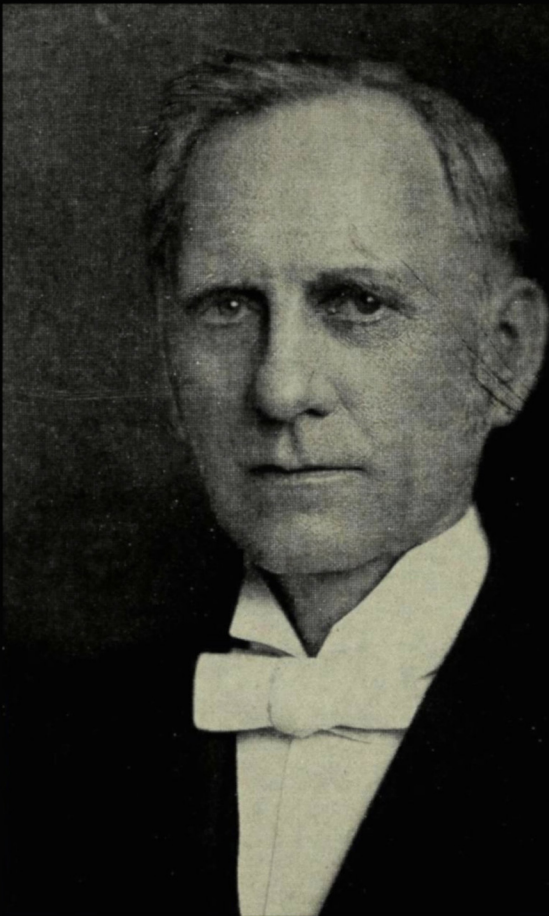


**J. N. Kildahl, D.D.**

**Christian Dogmatics**



## CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS

John Nathan Kildahl

(1857-1920)

Edited by

Jonathan D. Anderson

(1979- )

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## Editor's Preface

Although there are many systematic theologies already available to the student of the Bible, this volume is being published under the conviction that it possesses several valuable features which make it somewhat unique in its field. First of all, it stands out for its comprehensive arrangement and presentation of Bible doctrines in a manner so user-friendly and lucid as to be beneficial not only to the theologian but also to the layman. In this regard, some of the items which might be pointed out are its organization of all doctrines into just ten chapters, its outline format which readily displays relationships of the doctrines to each other, its simple and practical literary style, and its overarching emphasis on Scripture.

Secondly, this book possesses distinction as one of very few systematic theologies written from the viewpoint of Scandinavian-American Lutheran pietism, a movement which combined the Norwegian/Haugean and the Swedish/Rosenian traditions. It has been observed that, in general, the four major earmarks of pietism are experiential Christianity, Biblical focus, holy living, and opposition to formalism.<sup>1</sup> Pietism held an important place among Scandinavian-Americans during portions of the 19th and 20th centuries, as evidenced, for example, by the various Lutheran synods it produced and the wide participation it fostered in such parachurch organizations as the Hauge Inner Mission Federation, the Lutheran Bible Institute, and the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement. As such, it should not be lightly overlooked.

Perhaps due to its emphasis on practical daily Christianity, Scandinavian-American pietism produced few scholarly theologians, but the author of this book, Dr. J. N. Kildahl, was a brilliant example of one of those few. The course of Kildahl's life is here outlined by four points: his experience of salvation, his evangelistic zeal, his election controversy position, and his emphases as a leader in higher education.

John Nathan Kildahl was born in 1857, in Trondheim, Norway, and together with his family, immigrated to America in 1866, settling

in rural Goodhue County, Minnesota.<sup>2</sup> Regarding his personal experience of salvation as a young man, we have his own account.

In my youth, I am sorry to say, I fell away from my baptismal covenant. But on account of the Word of God which especially Father and Mother had sowed in my heart, and on account of the uninterrupted working of the Holy Spirit upon me, I never found sweet peace in the worldly life but came, in the course of time, into deep anxiety for the salvation of my soul. I began then earnestly to want to reform and to attain to such an inward spiritual condition that I, as I thought, could be found worthy to accept faith and receive pardon. I had learn[ed] that a man is justified by faith alone without works; but by works, I understood outward works, especially such as I had heard that the Catholics were engaged in to attain justification; and I did not understand that the contagion of self-righteousness had seized upon my soul and that all my striving was slavery under the Law. If there is anything that I in my life have been serious about, it is that I might create in myself remorse, repentance, and preparedness, or in other words, such a condition which I in my blindness thought was, in accordance with the Word of God, demanded of me as [the] condition in order that He could do something further with or for me unto my salvation. And if there is anything that has been a total failure for me, then it is this: to become such that I myself thought there was some hope or some probability that God could give me faith by means of which I could secure forgiveness of sins. When I had worn myself out under the Law and [had] made no headway but [had gone] from bad to worse, [and when] it seemed to me more and more impossible for me to attain to conversion and my mouth was closed, then the Lord through His Gospel showed me that *what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh* [Rom. 8:3]. Although I had heard as far back as I could remember that we are saved by grace on account of the merit of Jesus Christ by faith in Him alone, yet this came as a completely new revelation to me. I received grace to understand a little of that which, up to this time, had been hidden from me: namely, what grace is, and what it means to be saved by grace, and what it means to be justified by faith. It dawned upon me

what is meant by the words *all things are now ready* [Luke 14:17]. And since that time, it has been a need and a joy for me to exalt the free, unmerited grace of God.<sup>3</sup>

After attending Luther College from 1873 to 1879 and Luther Seminary from 1879 to 1882, Kildahl was ordained into the Norwegian Synod and called to serve the Vang and Umland congregations of Goodhue County.<sup>4</sup> There, from 1882 to 1889, he first “attracted attention through his earnest evangelical preaching and warm personality.”<sup>5</sup> He also served as principal and professor at Red Wing Seminary during the 1885-1886 school year,<sup>6</sup> and during that one year, his evangelistic zeal shone forth in another way. “When [he] examined the young men who wanted to be trained for the ministry, it was not about the high-school diploma [that he] asked; but the main thing [he asked] was [if] they really had gone through a genuine conversion from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.”<sup>7</sup> In 1889, Kildahl accepted the pastorate of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Chicago, Illinois, where, over the next decade, “he developed his charge from a small congregation almost too poor to support a pastor to the foremost congregation in the synod, with a Sunday school of a thousand children.”<sup>8</sup> While in Chicago, he also eagerly took part in the work of the Hauge Inner Mission, a Norwegian Lutheran free movement known for its evangelistic fervor and emphasis on personal experience with God. One of the Inner Mission’s friends later testified that Kildahl “took a real interest in the Inner Mission and was with the brethren whether he was asked to speak or not; but he also spoke often and encouraged the work.”<sup>9</sup> Another of the Haugean friends stated that Kildahl “helped along in the Inner Mission in Chicago, much more than the pastors of the Hauge Synod, and had revivals and prayer-and-testimony meetings in his churches. When he was [later] president of St. Olaf [College], I am told, he always took time to attend the prayer meetings and listen to the prayers of God’s humble people.”<sup>10</sup>

During the time Kildahl pastored in Goodhue County, he became involved in a doctrinal disagreement over election which split his Norwegian Synod. In 1872, the Norwegian Synod, together with the Lutheran Synods of Missouri, Ohio, and three other states, had formed the Synodical Conference.<sup>11</sup> Within less than a decade, an intense controversy over predestination and conversion rocked the

Conference.<sup>12</sup> A succinct summary of this controversy was given several years later by Lutheran theologian and historian Henry Eyster Jacobs.

The Predestination Controversy within the Synodical Conference ... was the direct result of Missouri's denial of the existence of "open questions" within the Lutheran Church, and its attempt to enforce as confessional the position which Luther originally held, but which in the latter part of his life, without renouncing, he preferred not to press....

The issue could be foreseen long before the controversy began. In 1880 Dr. F. A. Schmidt, of the Norwegian Synod, a colleague of Dr. Walther in the [Missourian] seminary at St. Louis, criticized the statement presented in various theses to the district synods for discussion and printed in their minutes, that God's election is the cause of man's salvation, and that even man's faith is the result of election.... With Dr. Schmidt sided the professors of the Ohio Synod ... From outside the Synodical Conference, the theologians of the Iowa Synod also came to the support of Dr. Schmidt....<sup>13</sup>

... A great amount of learning was displayed, on both sides, in the frequent long attacks and counter-attacks, which were published....<sup>14</sup>

The charge, on the one side, was that the Missourians were Calvinists; and, on the other, that their opponents were synergists. But Missouri differed from Calvinists in teaching the universality of the atonement, the universality and seriousness of the call, and the constant presence of the Holy Spirit with the Word. Missouri always protested that it never taught that any one is lost because God willed that he be not saved. The distinction between the three doctrines may be thus illustrated:

Ohio and Iowa [and Dr. Schmidt and his Norwegian followers]: In view of faith in the merits of Christ, men are elected unto salvation.

Missouri: In view of the merits of Christ, men are elected to faith for salvation.

Calvinists: Men are elected to the merits of Christ and to faith for salvation.<sup>15</sup>

... An attempt was made to reach an understanding by a colloquium at Milwaukee, in January, 1881, where, after five days'

discussion, the professors of the Ohio Synod withdrew. At the next meeting of the Ohio Synod it dissolved its connection with the Synodical Conference. The Norwegian Synod followed, hoping to preserve its unity by getting beyond the range of the controversy in the Synodical Conference in respect to which its pastors were divided. The effort was useless, for the Norwegian Synod was itself separated by the conflict, the “anti-Missourians” founding a seminary at Northfield, Minn., with Dr. Schmidt as the chief professor....<sup>16</sup>

It was in 1886 that Schmidt and other Norwegians founded the anti-Missourian seminary spoken of above,<sup>17</sup> and “in 1887 Schmidt withdrew [entirely from the Norwegian Synod] with a large section of the Synod and formed the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood ....”<sup>18</sup> J. N. Kildahl, being himself a leading advocate of the anti-Missourian position,<sup>19</sup> was one of those who withdrew along with Schmidt to form the Brotherhood.<sup>20</sup>

Certainly the question of election also closely involved the matter of conversion. When individuals were converted to Christ, was it because God had elected them to faith unto that end, or was it because they had responded in faith to the Gospel call in God’s Word? And if man’s response of faith to the Gospel call was part of his conversion, how could it still be true that salvation was entirely of God? The following excerpts from pp. 194, 196, and 219-220 of this book delineate Kildahl’s understanding of the Biblical answers to those questions. (See also his “Theses on Election,” pp. 352-357.)

The call is the gracious act of God by which He reveals to men His will and grace in Christ Jesus, offers them seriously the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, invites them to come to Him, and powerfully moves their hearts, thus making it possible for them to accept the invitation.

....

... [The call] strongly impresses the truth on man’s heart, powerfully works on him, moves his heart, draws him, and thus makes it possible for him to do what he otherwise, on account of his natural inability and spiritual death, could not do: namely, accept the call, repent, and by faith accept Christ as his Savior. ... Because of this sufficiency and efficacy of the call, God therefore expects that he who has been called should repent, turn



to God, and be saved. And if he is not saved by this powerful work of God, the only reason is that he willfully and recalcitrantly resists the gracious work of God. If he is saved, he is saved solely by the grace of God; if he is lost, he is lost solely by his own fault.

....

... The Bible clearly teaches that by nature man is dead and that he can do nothing to his subjective salvation by his own natural powers.... If man, therefore, is to be converted, God must convert him; God must grant him repentance; God must grant him to believe; God must make him meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints of light; God must translate him into the kingdom of His Son.... But on the other hand, it is evident that it is man who feels sorry for his sins, that it is man who turns to God, that it is man who believes in Christ, and that conversion or repentance is an act of the heart and will of man. The explanation is this: *it is God who worketh in [man] both to will and to work* (Phil. 2:13). It is God who, by His gracious operations, produces sorrow for sin and faith in the heart. Therefore, Paul says to the Colossians that they were *raised with [Christ] through faith in the working of God* (Col. 2:12). This work of God is not done in such a way, however, that a man is converted against his will but so that his heart and will are influenced and moved to repent and turn to God and believe in Christ....

In 1890, partially through the efforts of J. N. Kildahl,<sup>21</sup> the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood joined with the Norwegian Augustana Synod and the Norwegian-Danish Conference to form the United Norwegian Lutheran Church.<sup>22</sup>

Just one year before the turn of the century, Kildahl returned from Chicago to southeastern Minnesota where he was promptly, and unexpectedly, elected president of St. Olaf College in Northfield, a position in which he served until 1914. During these years, “students experienced him as a religious mentor, and he presided over a lively spiritual community. Bringing the curriculum up to date, Kildahl also recruited a distinguished faculty ... [and] began the construction of a more extensive campus.”<sup>23</sup> From 1899 until 1903, he also pastored St. John’s Lutheran Church in Northfield.

More and more, during these years, Kildahl also became known “as a leader in the church. He was looked up to and trusted by all,

the clergy and the laity alike. Everybody listened when [he] spoke in the church conventions, and usually his advice was followed.”<sup>24</sup>

In 1914, Dr. J. N. Kildahl accepted the position of Professor of Dogmatics at the United Norwegian Lutheran Church Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.<sup>25</sup> From excerpts of the installation address which he delivered on January 10, 1915, we learn the particular truths that he, an “orthodox pietist” as he called himself,<sup>26</sup> most highly valued and, therefore, emphasized in his teaching.

It is a pleasure to me to be able to declare that I fully and unreservedly accept the great formal confessional principle of the Reformation, namely, that the Holy Scriptures are the only source and rule of faith, doctrine, and life; for I believe that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God because the holy men of God who wrote the Holy Scriptures spake *being moved by the Holy Spirit* [II Pet. 1:21] and *comparing spiritual things with spiritual* [1 Cor. 2:13, KJV].

....

The United Church has called me to the chair of Dogmatics. It is the sphere of Dogmatics to give a rational, systematic expression of the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures. The dogmatician shall not present his own philosophy or his own pious thoughts; he shall, in a systematic manner, present each doctrine that God has revealed in His Word and show the relation of the doctrines to one another. It goes without saying that the only source from which the dogmatician shall draw, and the only rule and guide that he in his instruction can go by, is the Holy Bible....

....

... [The dogmatician must] live and breathe in the Scriptures; he must make the Scriptural method of thinking and speaking a part of his very life. It is self-evident that a teacher of dogmatics can deliver to his students only what he himself subjectively in his own consciousness has accepted as the teaching of the Word of God. It is, therefore, so necessary that the subjective Christian understanding of the dogmatician be born, and more and more be formed, in the atmosphere of the Holy Scriptures; for only in this manner can his subjective faith be a product of the Spirit of God working through the Word and thus [be] a pure faith in accordance with God’s revealed Word.

....

... [The Reformers] did not first make dogmas and afterwards find proofs in Scriptures of the correctness of these dogmas. Nor did they in the first place study their own Christian heart to discover its nature and thereupon formulate doctrines accordingly. No, they immersed themselves in the study of the Word of God. What they there found, they assimilated and made their own personal possession; and from this, their own subjective understanding of the teaching of the Word of God and their acceptance of this teaching, arose spontaneously and involuntarily their systems of Dogmatics. The doctrines were thus taken exclusively from the Bible but first took their course through a Christian heart, by which, as far as the method of presentation is concerned, each doctrine received the particular form and color peculiar to each individual dogmatician. The heart of a Christian is different from a system. The system stands there unchangeable, but there are not two hearts that are identical. The system is cold and unsympathetic, but the heart of the Christian beats warm and sympathetic.

....

... I have nothing new to present. There are, indeed, many in our age who are of the opinion that the old theology does not apply to our times and that, consequently, it is the duty of the theological teachers to bring forth a new theology which shall in greater measure equip the theological students to meet the needs of the age and to solve the problems of the Church ... It is proclaimed in loud language that the seminaries must fall in with the times and the progress of events and that it does not pay any longer to keep on with the old dogmas.... Dogmatics is not a popular subject in our day, and it is held to be a sign that a man is broadminded, enlightened, and up with the times if he really can speak scornfully about dogmas.

As far as the method of preaching the Word of God is concerned, we certainly do well to strive with all our might to make it fit our times, that is, that it can in the best manner reach the people of the 20th century and that it can be adapted to the many difficult and complex circumstances under which the people, especially in the large cities, live and under which the Church now must work.... But as to the truth itself, the truth regarding

salvation and godliness which has been revealed in the Word of God, that is and must remain the same for all time.

There are truly some things that never change and never can change under all the shiftings and changes of time. Salvation rests on a number of historical facts, and facts are stubborn things. Facts do not change.... Two and two were four at the time of Adam, and two and two equal four still. There is no other method of producing life now than existed many thousands of years ago.... The farmer of the 20th century cannot make wheat and oats grow by any other method than that used by Cain. We have better farming implements, but the process is the same....

So it is also in the spiritual world. We do not have any new methods by which spiritual life can be called forth and developed. Salvation, godliness, holiness depend on the same means and on the same process of the Spirit now as in the days of the first Christian Church. God has once in time performed a deed by which all men from the creation of the world to the end of the world may become saved and sanctified, if they at all shall be saved and sanctified. The teachings about this act of God and our salvation by means thereof cannot be changed because, as stated, historical facts cannot be changed....

....

When I say that the truth is and must be the same for all times and that, consequently, no new truths can be presented, I do not mean that any one theologian of any one age has reached the bottom of the unfathomable depths of God's wisdom and that we cannot make progress in understanding. There are many deep things in the Word of God which no one yet has been given grace to understand ... but this does not prove that no one shall ever be permitted to penetrate a little deeper into any of these mysteries.... But there are matters that are presented in the Scripture so wonderfully bright and clear that no one who will let himself be instructed by the Holy Spirit can be in doubt or uncertainty [about them]; and these [matters] are: what God has done unto our salvation through His Son Jesus Christ, in what manner we sinners become partakers of this salvation, and what this salvation works and produces in us when we accept it.

....

It gives me great pleasure also to subscribe to the second great confessional principle of the Reformation, the material principle, *that a man is justified by faith (alone) apart from the works of the law* [Rom. 3:28]. I am convinced that this doctrine, which is set forth in Scripture in such a wonderfully clear manner, is the only doctrine by which a poor, lost, and condemned sinner can arrive at life in God and peace with Him....

If I as a theological professor shall succeed in some measure in making this central dogma of the Lutheran Church rightly understood and making it loom up large, precious, and important for them who shall go out from this seminary to preach the Gospel of Christ, then I will consider it as a great gift of God to me.

There is much discussion in our day as to what the age demands and as to what qualifications a modern pastor should have. Much of what is said on these subjects it will profit us to consider seriously. But I am firmly convinced that there is one thing that is needed more than anything else. But this one thing is not something new; it is that the pastor, farthest in and deepest down in his soul, is possessor of the grace in Christ in the manner in which he alone is possessor who, in the distress of his soul, in the school of experience, by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, has learn[ed] to understand what it is to become justified by faith in Jesus Christ without the works of the Law.<sup>27</sup>

In 1917, the United Norwegian Lutheran Church merged with the Norwegian Synod and the Hauge Synod to form the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America. J. N. Kildahl accepted the vice presidency of the new synod, and the United Church Seminary at which he taught in St. Paul took on the name of Luther Theological Seminary. Just three years later, Kildahl passed on from this earthly life.<sup>28</sup>

The present volume was originally an extensive course syllabus entitled *Notes on Christian Dogmatics* which Kildahl prepared for the 1917-1918 academic year at Luther Theological Seminary.<sup>29</sup> Its title page indicates that it was mimeographed for distribution, presumably among his students. Many decades later, a pastor who possessed a handed-down copy of this document made another copy of it for my father, Rev. Emerson J. Anderson. Recognizing the value of the document, my father requested and received permission from Luther Seminary in March of 2000 to reproduce and edit it. Two

months later, his health declined to the point that he set the project aside and never picked it back up. He died in 2005. Several years after my father died, I began searching for a systematic theology written from the Scandinavian-American pietistic Lutheran viewpoint. I was unsuccessful in my search until I discovered the Kildahl document in a three-ring binder among my father's books. Recognizing, as my father had, the value of this document, I determined to take up the project of editing and publishing it in book format.

The editing process has been relatively straightforward. J. N. Kildahl was obviously as fluent in English as he surely was in Norwegian. The changes I have made to his original document have consisted mainly of cleaning up the hierarchical outline format, correcting grammar, spelling, and punctuation, rearranging words and phrases here and there for clarity, verifying that Scripture quotations conform with the text of the American Standard Version, and formatting the entire work for better readability. Kildahl's language has not been modernized but has been left to stand as it appeared in 1917. I owe a debt of gratitude to my mother, Martha Anderson, and my sister-in-law, Victoria Fugleberg, for their assistance in typing up large portions of the original manuscript in preparation for formatting and editing.

I would like to send this book forth with the wish for that same blessing of God upon it which its author desired upon his teaching 100 years ago: namely, that the doctrine of justification by faith alone without the works of the Law might be magnified to become larger, more precious, and more important than ever to those who read or hear the words contained in this book.

Jonathan D. Anderson

Moorhead, Minnesota

500th Anniversary of the Reformation, Oct. 2017

### Notes to Editor's Preface

1. Mark A. Noll, "Pietism," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), Walter A. Elwell, ed., 855-856.
2. *Norsk lutherske prester i Amerika* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1915), 190; St. Olaf College, "John N. Kildahl," [wp.stolaf.edu/president/past-presidents/kildahl](http://wp.stolaf.edu/president/past-presidents/kildahl), accessed 3 Aug. 2017.
3. J. N. Kildahl, "Installation Address of Professor J. N. Kildahl, D.D., as Professor of Systematic Theology at the United Church Seminary, St. Paul [Minnesota], Jan. 10, 1915," part of the Papers of John Nathan Kildahl housed at the Norwegian-American Historical Association on the campus of St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.
4. *Norsk lutherske prester i Amerika*, 190.
5. St. Olaf College, "John N. Kildahl."
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## **Section One**

### **Introduction to Christian Dogmatics**

#### **I. God**

#### **II. The Trinity**

#### **III. Cosmology**

#### **IV. Anthropology**

# Introduction to Christian Dogmatics

## A. Religion

### 1. Man Is Religious

Man is a religious being. He differs essentially from all other animals in this respect: that he possesses the capacity for religion. It is human to be religious. There has never been found a people that did not have some kind of religion.

### 2. Definition of Religion

The term “religion” is used in a twofold sense.

a. When we say that man is a religious being, we understand by religion a subjective state of mind consisting in an intuitive knowledge of a higher being, a feeling of dependence on that being, and a consciousness of personal relation to it.

b. The term “religion” is also used objectively to denote the system or principles underlying such a subjective state of man. In this sense, we say that a man adheres to, accepts, or believes in a certain religion, e.g., the Christian religion or the Mohammedan religion.

### 3. Natural and Revealed Religions

The different religions of the world may be classified as natural religions and revealed religions.

#### **a. Natural Religions**

All heathen religions are natural religions. They are called natural because they have their origin from and are founded on man’s natural knowledge of God, and they are a product of man’s own natural reasoning about God.

#### **(1) God Revealed Externally through Nature**

God has indeed revealed himself to all men externally through nature.

Rom. 1:19-20 – *Because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived*

*through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity ...*

## **(2) God Revealed Internally through Conscience**

God has indeed revealed himself to all men internally through the conscience.

Rom. 2:14-15 – *For when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them.*

But this so-called natural revelation is not adequate for true fellowship with God because:

In the first place, it is imperfect. Through natural religion, God reveals Himself only as Creator, Lawgiver, and Judge but not as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has provided a salvation for fallen men.

In the second place, through sin, man's powers are corrupted so that man neither can correctly understand God nor has the ability to seek God or live in His fellowship.

I Cor. 2:14 – *Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ...*

Rom. 3:10-12 – *There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; they have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one.*

Eph. 2:1 – ... *Ye were dead through your trespasses and sins.*

### **b. Revealed Religions**

By revealed religions, we understand religions that have their origin from and are founded on supernatural divine revelation. These religions are, therefore, true religions. There are two such religions, the Jewish religion and the Christian religion.

These two religions are not opposed to each other; they are not distinct and diametrically different systems teaching different views of fellowship with God. They are practically the same, the Jewish religion being its development and the Christian religion being the completion and perfection of the former.

### **(1) The Jewish Religion**

The Jewish religion was the religion of God's people in the Old Testament. It had its origin from and was founded upon divine revelation before Christ. This revelation came in the form of word, type,

action, and history. It was incomplete and preparatory, promising a Savior to come and thus paving the way for the Christian religion.

## **(2) The Christian Religion**

The Christian religion has its origin from and is founded on the full divine revelation of God's complete plan for the redemption of the fallen human race through the work and suffering of His Son Jesus Christ. Since Christ above is the Door, and since no one can come to the Father except through the Son, there can be no real fellowship with God – in other words, no true religion – except through Christ. The Christian religion, therefore, is not one of many religions, the best and most perfect of them all; but it is, strictly and properly speaking, the only religion in the world. The Christian religion alone accomplishes what all other religions attempt to do but cannot do. There can be no fellowship with God without faith, and only by means of the Christian religion is it possible for man to attain to faith and thus to live in fellowship with God, in other words, to live a truly religious life.

## **B. Christian Theology**

We have stated that the Christian religion has its origin from and is founded on divine revelation. This revelation began immediately after the Fall, continued and gradually increased throughout the Old Testament, and was completed by Christ and His apostles. We have a complete record of this supernatural revelation in the inspired writings of the Old and New Testaments which, therefore, are the source of knowledge and the supreme rule of faith and practice for all Christians. The science of the Christian religion as revealed in the writings of the Old Testament and the New Testament is called theology, or more specifically, Christian theology. Christian theology comprises four main branches: exegesis, systematic theology, Church history, and practical theology.

## **C. Dogmatical Theology**

The most important division of systematic theology is dogmatic or dogmatical theology. By dogmatics, we understand the science or systemized knowledge of the doctrinal teachings of the Christian religion as found in the Bible and formulated by the Church as an expression of its subjective conception of these teachings.

The Bible, being a record of God's supernatural revelation to man, contains, scattered through the different books from Genesis to Revelation, all the doctrinal truths which it has pleased God to reveal to us and which are necessary and profitable for our temporal and eternal welfare and salvation. Dogmatics collects and systematizes all these doctrinal truths and deals with them as they, in process of time, occasioned especially by certain historical events, have been defined and formulated by the Church. A doctrine thus found in the Scriptures, either stated directly in so many words or drawn from the teachings of the Bible by correct logical inference, and thus developed and defined by the Church is called a dogma. Dogmatics, then, deals with the dogmas, or doctrinal teachings, of the Church. Like every other science, dogmatics makes use of technical terms employed in philosophical discourse.

## I. God

### A. The Source and Nature of Our Knowledge of God

The Bible does not try to prove the existence of God. The very first verse in the Bible takes the existence of God for granted and speaks of Him as a freely willing and acting person. There are so-called proofs of the existence of God deduced from reason. Arguments drawn from reason to prove the existence of God indeed strongly point towards the existence of a Higher Being and make it very plausible to the thinking mind that there must be a God. As stated, all men seem to have an intuitive idea that there is a God. But no argument deduced from the light of nature proves conclusively that there is a God. As stated, the Bible simply takes the existence of God for granted; and according to the Bible, the existence of God is so self-evident that it is only *the fool* [who] *hath said in his heart, There is no God* (Ps. 14:1).

It follows, therefore, that a correct and saving knowledge of God we can get only from the revealed Word of God. As already stated, God has indeed revealed Himself through nature, and we can learn a great deal about God by studying nature (see Ps. 8). But unaided by the Scriptures, the knowledge of God that we get from nature is inadequate. God's revelation of Himself through nature gets its right interpretation and understanding only when seen in the light of supernatural revelation as it is completed through Jesus Christ and recorded in Holy Writ.

A true knowledge of God, however, cannot be obtained merely by an intellectual apprehension of God's revelation through nature and the Bible. Only through faith wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit can we rightly know God; hence the saying, *Credo ut intelligam* ("I believe so that I may understand" – Anselm of Canterbury). The true knowledge of God is hidden from the natural man and is revealed only by the Spirit of God.

Matt. 11:25-26 – ... *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understand-*

*ing, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight.*

*I Cor. 2:9-10 – ... Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit ...*

The knowledge that we thus get of God from the Bible is indeed both a correct and sufficient knowledge, i.e., a saving knowledge, but it is not a complete and perfect knowledge of God. We can know God as far as He has revealed Himself to us and as far as it is possible for a finite and imperfect mind, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, to grasp God; but no man can comprehend the infinite God in His innermost nature and essence.

*Job 11:7-9 – Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.*

*I Tim. 6:16 – ... dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see ...*

## B. The Nature of God

By the nature of God, we understand His innermost being or essence constituting His very existence which always is absolutely the same and which, therefore, enters into the definition of God. This essential nature of God is in itself hid but is manifest in all His actions.

When we try to define God, we of course do not mean that we can put Him into a class or genus and point out the difference between Him and the rest of the genus (which is the ordinary way of forming a definition) because God does not belong to any genus. He is absolutely *sine genere* (without genus) and cannot be defined in the ordinary sense of the word. When we nevertheless speak of defining God, we simply describe Him as having certain marks and properties as we find Him described or spoken of in the Holy Writ.

From the Scriptures, we know that there is one God and that this one God is a Spirit, that He is a person, and that He is an absolute personality.

## 1. God Is a Spirit

In other words, God has no body or material form; and being a Spirit, He is invisible and inconceivable.

John 4:24 – *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*

II Cor. 3:17 – *Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

John 1:18 *No man hath seen God at any time ...*

I Tim. 6:15-16 – *... the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power eternal. Amen.*

Ex. 33:18-20 – *And he [Moses] said, Show me, I pray thee, thy glory. And he [God] said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live.*

## 2. God Is a Person

The old scholastic definition of a person reads as follows: “A person is an indivisible, intelligent, incommunicable substance, which neither is a part of another, nor is sustained in another, nor has dependence upon another object ...” (Martin Chemnitz in *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Heinrich Schmid, ed., 1899, p. 297). When we say that God is a person, we do not mean that He is merely a subjective conception or idea, or that He is merely a force, or that He is one with the universe; but we mean that He subsists of Himself and that He is a substance possessing self-consciousness and self-determination.

## 3. God Is an Absolute Personality

Man is also a person because he subsists of himself, is not a part of another, and possesses self-consciousness and self-determination; but man is a created and dependent personality, having received his existence from God and being dependent on God. God, on the other hand, is absolute, being uncreated, having life in Himself, being dependent on nothing outside of Himself, and being subject to no limitation or restriction.

Ex. 3:13-14 – *And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his*



*name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM [I AM BECAUSE I AM, or, I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE]: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.*

#### 4. God Is One

From what has been said about the personality of God, it follows that God is one. By the unity of God, we understand two things: first, that He is not a compound but a simple existence, and second, that there is only one God. When God gave the Decalogue, He introduced its promulgation by saying, *I am Jehovah thy God ... Thou shalt have no other gods before me* [or, besides me] (Ex. 20:2-3).

Deut. 6:4 – *Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.*

John 17:3 – *And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God ...*

I Tim. 2:5 – *For there is one God ...*

Jas. 2:19 – *Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well ...*

I Cor. 8:4 – *Concerning therefore the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no God but one.*

The most common false conceptions of God are the following: pantheism which claims that God is all and all is God, i.e., that God is identical with the universe; polytheism which asserts that there are many gods (polytheism is the opposite of monotheism); dualism which teaches that two positive principles, one good and one evil, have existed from eternity; deism which believes in a personal God but denies that He has revealed Himself and that He, after having created the world, has had anything to do with it; atheism which denies the existence of God; and agnosticism which contends that it is not possible to have any knowledge of God.

### C. The Attributes of God

We have said that, by the nature of God, we understand His innermost being or essence constituting His very existence. By the attributes of God, we simply understand the manifestations of His nature or the modes of expression of His innermost being. We know the nature of God only through His attributes. Our knowledge of the nature of God, in its relation to the world or as far as it has been revealed to us, is the sum total of what we know about all the attributes of God. Since the attributes of God are simply the various

manifestations of His nature, it follows that the attributes of God are not accidents in God but that they are qualities that are rooted in the very ego and inmost essence of God. And since the attributes of God are simply different expressions of the same nature, it follows that they cannot be separated except in thought.

The attributes of God are eternity, immutability, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, wisdom, goodness, holiness, justice or righteousness, truth, and glory and majesty.

### 1. The Eternity of God

By the eternity of God, we understand that He has had no beginning and that He will have no end and that it is His nature always to exist. Whatever eternity may be, it is impossible for us to conceive of it except as an endless succession of time – time way back of us without beginning and time in the future without end. God is the eternal “I AM”; i.e., there was no time when He was not and there shall be no time when He shall not be. He has within Himself from eternity to eternity the fountain of life and renovation and always lives His life as something new.

Ps. 90:2 – *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*

Ps. 102:25-27 – *Of old didst thou lay the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.*

Gen. 21:33 – *And Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of Jehovah, the Everlasting God.*

Rom. 16:26 – In this verse, God is called *the eternal God*.

I Tim. 1:17 – *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

### 2. The Immutability of God

By the immutability of God, we understand that God does not change in His nature, knowledge, will, moral character, or principles of government. Since God is eternal and absolute and possesses perfection in every way and respect, there is in Him no place for growth or decline, development or evolution. His nature or essence must forever remain the same. Since He knows all things past, present, and future, knows them as they are, and knows them as necessary or

contingent, there can be no change in His knowledge. The moral law, the eternal principles of right and wrong, are simply an expression of His nature; therefore, His attitude toward right and wrong is always the same. He always hates evil and approves of that which is good. And the righteous principles of His government are unchangeable. It is not possible that any circumstances may occur that change the will and purpose of God.

I Sam. 15:29 – *And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent.*

Mal. 3:6 – *For I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.*

Heb. 6:17 – *Wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed with an oath.*

Heb. 13:8 – *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and forever.*

Jas. 1:17 – *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.*

Num. 23:19 – *God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent: Hath he said, and will he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and will he not make it good?*

Rom. 11:34-35 – *... Who hath been his counselor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?*

### 3. The Omnipresence of God

By the omnipresence of God, we understand that God is actively present everywhere. He is continually in every part of the universe. There is no place in which He is not included, and there is no place from which He is excluded. He is in every individual, and in Him, every individual lives and moves and has his being. No one can get away from God, and God gets away from no one. This, however, is not to be understood according to the pantheistic theory that the presence of God is by necessity and that God and the universe are identical; but His presence is a free, self-determined presence. “God is everywhere, but God is not everything” (source unknown). “Everything is filled by God; but that which is filled is different from that by which it is filled” (H. Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, 1898, p. 93). God is both in everything and highly exalted above everything.

Ps. 139:7-10 – *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if*

*I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

*Jer. 23:23-24 – Am I a God at hand, saith Jehovah, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places so that I shall not see him? saith Jehovah. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith Jehovah.*

*I Kgs. 8:27 – ... Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee ...*

*Isa. 66:1 – Thus saith Jehovah, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool ...*

*Amos 9:2-3 – Though they dig into Sheol, thence shall my hand take them; and though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down. And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and it shall bite them.*

*Acts 17:28 – For in him we live, and move, and have our being ...*

Although all of God, i.e., God according to His whole nature and all His attributes, is always present everywhere, He does not make His presence manifest in the same way at all times and in all places. His presence in creation is different from His presence in history; His presence in His believers is different from His presence in the ungodly; His presence in bestowing grace is different from His presence in executing judgment. In this sense, the Lord, by way of anthropomorphism, is said to come, to appear, to go, to visit, to dwell, etc.

*Gen. 17:1 – ... Jehovah appeared to Abram ...*

*Gen. 18:21 – I will go down now, and see ...*

*Gen. 21:1 – And Jehovah visited Sarah as he had said ...*

*I Kgs. 19:11-12 – ... And, behold, Jehovah passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Jehovah; but Jehovah was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but Jehovah was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but Jehovah was not in the fire ...*

*Ex. 20:24 – ... In every place where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee.*

*John 14:23 – ... We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

*Matt. 18:20 – For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

I John 4:12 – ... *If we love one another, God abideth in us ...*

Ps. 34:18 – *Jehovah is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart ...*

Isa. 66:15 – *For, behold, Jehovah will come with fire, and his chariots shall be like the whirlwind; to render his anger with fierceness, and his rebuke with flames of fire.*

#### 4. The Omnipotence of God

By the omnipotence of God, we understand that *whatever Jehovah pleased, that hath he done, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps* (Ps. 135:6) and that *with God all things are possible* (Matt. 19:26). In other words, by the pure exercise of His will, He speaks, and it is done; He commands, and it stands fast (Ps. 33:9). Nothing is too hard for Him (Gen. 18:14), and *no word from God shall be void of power* (Luke 1:37). The whole universe is absolutely subject to His will. *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light* (Gen. 1:3). *By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth* (Ps. 33:6); and *He uphold[s] all things by the word of His power* (Heb. 1:3). The omnipotence of God is revealed in nature and attested on well-nigh every page of the Bible.

#### 5. The Omniscience of God

By the omniscience of God, we understand that God immediately or intuitively and perfectly knows all things. He has a perfect knowledge of Himself and of all things outside of Himself. Because of His omniscience, He knows the past, present, and future; and He knows absolute and necessary future events as absolute and necessary; and He knows contingent future events as contingent. Because of His omniscience, He knows the multiplicity of things great and small, the thoughts and intents of the heart, the secret sins as well as the longings after God, and the desires and wants of His believers. The omniscience of God, therefore, should be both a cause of fear and a source of comfort.

I John 3:20 – *Because if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.*

Job 37:16 – *Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge?*

Ps. 147:5 – *Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; his understanding is infinite.*

I Cor. 2:10 – ... *For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*

Prov. 15:3 – *The eyes of Jehovah are in every place, keeping watch upon the evil and the good.*

Matt. 10:29-30 – *Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

Ps. 139:2-4 – *Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether.*

Ps. 139:11-12, 16 – *If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me, and the light about me shall be night; even the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.... Thine eyes did see mine unformed substance; and in thy book they were all written, even the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was none of them.*

I Chr. 28:9 – *... For Jehovah searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts ...*

Heb. 4:13 – *And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

John 21:17 – *... Lord, thou knowest all things ...*

Acts 1:24 – *And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men ...*

Matt. 6:6, 8 – *But thou, when thou prayest ... for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*

Eccl. 12:14 – *For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

I Sam. 23:12 – *Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver up me and my men into the hand of Saul? And Jehovah said, They will deliver thee up.*

Isa. 1:19-20 – *If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword ...*

Matt. 11:23 – *... If the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day.*

## 6. The Wisdom of God

By the wisdom of God, we understand His perfect ability always to employ the best means to the accomplishment of the best ends. The wisdom of God is manifested in creation, preservation, history,

providence, and the redemption of the world. In short, everything that God does reflects His wisdom.

Rom. 11:33 – *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! ...*

Rom. 16:27 – *To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen.*

Job 12:13 – *With God is wisdom and might ...*

Ps. 104:24 – *O Jehovah, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all ...*

Jer. 10:12 – *... He hath established the world by his wisdom ...*

I Cor. 2:7 – *But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory.*

Eph. 3:8-11 – *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

## 7. The Goodness of God

By the goodness of God, we understand that principle or disposition in Him by which He is benevolent (*bene volens*, good will) to all His creatures, desires their well-being in the highest degree, and promotes their greatest possible happiness.

Goodness is a general and generic term, and its species are love, mercy or lovingkindness, and grace.

Love has been defined as “a pleasant state of mind accompanied with a desire for good toward its object” (Miner Raymond, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, 1877, p. 335). It has also been defined as “an impulse or inclination toward other persons, disposing us to give out from our own resources what may benefit ... them” (Noah K. Davis, *Elements of Psychology*, 1893, pp. 300-301). As stated, love is a species of the general category of goodness; but love is distinguished from goodness in this respect: that it has for its object only rational beings. True, we speak about love to flowers, country, etc.; but properly speaking, love must have for its object rational beings, and love is awakened by the appreciation of the worth of its object.

Mercy, or its synonym lovingkindness, is a feeling of goodness and kindness toward those who are miserable. Related terms are pity, compassion, forbearance, longsuffering, and patience.

Grace is mercy and love exercised toward the undeserving or ill-deserving, i.e., the sinner.

All the work of God reflects His goodness. All living creatures are the objects of His goodness, and *he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust* (Matt. 5:45), but He especially loves those who are His children.

The goodness, love, mercy, and grace of God are most clearly manifested in the objective and subjective salvation through Jesus Christ. The most beautiful, as well as the most significant, expression of God's love to us is that used by Christ when He calls God our Father.

Ps. 34:8 – *Oh taste and see that Jehovah is good ...*

Ps. 106:1 – ... *Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good; for his lovingkindness endureth forever.*

Luke 18:19 – ... *None is good, save one, even God.*

Ps. 145:9 – *Jehovah is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

Rom. 2:4 – *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

I John 4:16 – ... *God is love ...*

I John 4:10 – *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

John 3:16 – *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

Titus 3:4-7 – *But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Ex. 34:6-7 – ... *Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth, keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty ...*



Mic. 7:18 – *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in lovingkindness.*

John 14:21 – *He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.*

## 8. The Holiness of God

The term “holy” means set apart, clean, immaculate, without blemish, morally clean, i.e., free from sin; it means to be in conformity to law. It may have respect both to character and conduct but is especially used with reference to character. By the holiness of God, we therefore understand that God in His nature is morally clean, that He is absolutely free from all sin, that He is in perfect conformity to law, that He delights in that which is good and right, that He hates that which is wicked and bad, and that He therefore neither will nor can have any fellowship with evil.

Lev. 19:2 – *Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy; for I Jehovah your God am holy.*

I Pet. 1:16 – ... *Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.*

Isa. 6:3 – ... *Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts ...*

Rev. 4:8 – *And the four living creatures ... have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty ...*

Ps. 111:9 – ... *Holy and reverend is his name.*

Hab. 1:13 – *Thou that art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that canst not look on perverseness ...*

Ps. 5:4 – *For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: evil shall not sojourn with thee.*

I John 1:5-6 – *And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.*

Prov. 15:9, 26 – *The way of the wicked is an abomination to Jehovah; but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness ... Evil devices are an abomination to Jehovah ...*

## 9. The Justice or Righteousness of God

By the justice or righteousness of God, we understand that rectitude of principle in God which prompts Him to vindicate His eternal laws by demanding that which is right or by exacting and rendering

what is due, in other words, by punishing the wicked and rewarding the good.

The holiness of God seems to have reference more to the rectitude of principle as God is in Himself. Justice or righteousness seems to have reference more to the rectitude of principle in His dealings with rational beings. The righteousness of God can, therefore, be said to be His holiness as far as it manifests itself outwardly in God's dealings with others.

Ps. 11:7 – *For Jehovah is righteous; he loveth righteousness ...*

Ps. 116:5 – *Gracious is Jehovah, and righteous ...*

Ps. 145:17 – *Jehovah is righteous in all his ways ...*

Ezra 9:15 – *O Jehovah, the God of Israel, thou art righteous ...*

John 17:25 – *O righteous Father, the world knew thee not ...*

It is common to speak of the justice of God as legislative, judicial, remunerative or rewarding, and retributive or punitive. This must not be understood as though there were different kinds of justice. The justice of God is always one and the same, but this division has reference to the different ways in which the justice of God is manifested or exercised in the different subjects to which it is applied.

a. God has manifested His righteousness or justice by giving righteous laws. Hence, we speak of His legislative justice.

Ps. 19:9 – *... The ordinances of Jehovah are true, and righteous altogether.*

Deut. 4:8 – *And what great nation is there, that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?*

b. God manifests His justice by passing and rendering righteous and just judgments. Hence, we speak of His judicial righteousness.

Ps. 7:11 – *God is a righteous judge ...*

Ps. 9:8 – *And he will judge the world in righteousness, he will minister judgment to the peoples in uprightness.*

Ps. 89:14 – *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne ...*

c. In executing His righteous judgments, God manifests his righteousness by bestowing reward upon the faithful and by punishing the wicked. Hence, we speak of His remunerative and retributive justice.

II Tim. 4:8 – *Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at*

*that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.*

Heb. 6:10 – *For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister:*

Dan. 9:12, 14 – *And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil ... Therefore hath Jehovah watched over the evil, and brought it upon us; for Jehovah our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth.*

## 10. The Truth of God

By the truth of God, we understand in the first place that He is an actually existing and living God in contradistinction to all other so-called gods that are not real but only the products of men's imaginations.

Jer. 10:10 – *But Jehovah is the true God; he is the living God, and an everlasting King ...*

John 17:3 – *And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God ...*

I John 5:20 – *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

I Thess. 1:9 – *... Ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God.*

By the truth of God, we understand in the second place that His word is according to fact, infallible, and, therefore, perfectly to be depended on.

John 17:17 – *Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth.*

Eph. 1:13 – *In whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation ...*

By the truth of God, we understand in the third place His reliability in keeping His words, i.e., His faithfulness in fulfilling His promises and the certainty of the coming of His threatenings.

Titus 1:2 – *In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal; but in his own seasons manifested his word ...*

I Cor. 1:9 – *God is faithful, through whom ye were called ...*

I John 1:9 – *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

I Cor. 10:13 – ... *But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.*

II Cor. 1:20 – *For how many soever be the promises of God, in him is the yea: wherefore also through him is the Amen ...*

### **11. The Glory and Majesty of God**

The Scriptures in many places speak of the glory and majesty of God. These terms do not stand for any special or particular attributes but express the fullness and sum total of all the attributes of God. It goes without saying that God possessing all the attributes spoken of in the preceding pages must be glorious and majestic.

Ps. 93:1 – *Jehovah reigneth; he is clothed with majesty ...*

Eph. 1:17 – ... *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory ...*

II Pet. 1:16-17 – ... *But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Jer. 2:11 – *Hath a nation changed its gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.*

## II. The Trinity

### A. The Unity and Plurality in the Trinity

The Scriptures teach, on the one hand, that there is only one God and, on the other hand, that there is one called the Father, another called the Son, and a third called the Holy Spirit, and that divinity is predicated of each of these three. From this, we learn that, in a certain sense, God is one and that, in another sense, He is three. In other words, there is a unity in God; but in this unity, there is a certain plurality or threefoldness. In the one God, there are three distinct modes of subsistence. God is, therefore, called the triune God. This doctrine is called the doctrine of the Trinity. The word “trinity” is not found in the Bible; it is a purely theological term expressing aptly in one word a doctrine, the statement of which requires a great number of words. The first theologian known to have used the term was Tertullian.

#### 1. The Unity in the Trinity

When we speak about the unity in the Trinity, we have reference to the divine essence. We mean that there is only one God and, consequently, only one divine essence; and that, therefore, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in essence, i.e., are the one and same God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three Gods, each having His separate and individual or special divine essence. Nor is the one divine essence divided into three so that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have each a part of the one divine essence. Nor do the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each contribute their part to the divine essence. But the one undivided essence is in its entirety possessed by each of the three. In other words, the one undivided essence is in its entirety found in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit both collectively and individually. “It is one essence modified in three subsistences, each modified subsistence having the whole essence” (Conrad Emil Lindberg, *Apologetics*, 1917, p. 168).

## 2. The Plurality in the Trinity

There is in the Scriptures no common term by which the three distinctions or modes of subsistence in the Trinity are designated. We only find that there are three to whom divinity is ascribed: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But in the Church, the name “person” has been used to designate these distinctions in the Trinity. We therefore speak about the three persons in the Godhead, and we say that God is one as to essence and three as to persons. The Father has always been called the first person in the Godhead, the Son the second, and the Holy Spirit the third.

By the term “person,” the Church does not mean simply a subjective conception or idea, or a form of manifestation, or a power. Nor does the term “person” mean a part of God, as though God were divided, nor a quality or attribute of God. But by using the term “person,” the Church wants to express the idea that there are in the Godhead three distinct substances possessing self-determination and self-consciousness. The term “person,” says the Augsburg Confession, Art. I, is used “to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself.” (For the scholastic definition of person, see p. 40.) Although Christ says, *I and the Father are one* (John 10:30), He also speaks about the Father as another: *It is another that beareth witness of me ... And the Father that sent me, he hath borne witness of me* (John 5:32, 37). In the same way, Christ speaks about the Holy Spirit: *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth* (John 14:16-17). According to what we have stated, each of the three distinctions in the Trinity is a person, can say “I,” and can speak to or about each of the others as to another; but each exists in the essence of the one God and, therefore, in the essence of the other two. In other words, they are in each other. This idea the Greek theologians expressed by the term *perichoresis*, i.e., pervasion (not to be confounded with the *perichoresis* of the two natures of Christ). *I am in the Father, and the Father in me* (John 14:10).

### B. The History of the Doctrine of the Trinity

The apostolic fathers felt no need of dogmatically fixed formulas of the doctrine of the Trinity. They were satisfied with the formulas of the New Testament as we have them in the words of institution of Holy Baptism, in the apostolic benediction, etc. But heresies soon

began to creep into the Church. They were of two kinds: modalism, which held fast to the unity of the essence but denied the plurality, and Arianism, which in a way held fast to the plurality but denied the unity of the essence. According to modalism, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were simply names of different modes of manifestation of God. In the West, modalism was represented by the Patripassians who taught that the Son was the same as the Father, only revealing Himself by another aspect. It was, therefore, the Father that was born and that suffered (hence, Patripassians); but as Savior, the Father bore the same Son. The Patripassians flourished in the second century. In the East, Modalism was represented by the Sabellians (named after their leader Sabellius) who also taught that the Son and the Holy Spirit were not self-subsisting distinctions but only names of powers or modes of manifestation. Sabellianism flourished from about the middle of the third century. Arianism (named after the leader Arius), which flourished from the beginning of the fourth century, denied the unity of the essence of God and taught that the Son was an intermediate being, a creation of God, the first and greatest of God's creatures, next to God, and endowed by God with power to create, govern, save, and judge the world. Semi-Arianism was a modified form of Arianism, a sort of compromise between Arianism and orthodox Christianity. It held that Christ was of a like or similar essence as the Father.

The Church had to defend the truth over against these different heresies, and a great and bitter controversy that lasted for more than 300 years raged in the Church. It was necessary for the Church minutely, exactly, and precisely to define its conception of the teachings of Scripture on this point. Two great ecumenical Church councils were held, one at Nice in the year 325 and one in Constantinople in the year 381.

At these meetings, the doctrine of the Trinity was thoroughly discussed; the heresies that denied either the unity of the essence or the plurality of persons were rejected; dogmas declaring the unity as to essence and the plurality as to persons were carefully formulated, laid down, and formally accepted by the Church. The creed accepted at the Church council at Nice is called the Nicene Creed. An amendment was added at the Council of Constantinople. (The Church council at Toledo in the year 589 resulted in the addition of the *filioque* phrase stating that the Holy Spirit had proceeded from the Father and the Son.) About the year 500, another creed, the

Athanasian Creed, came into existence. The faith of the Church thus formulated and accepted became a symbol, mark, or banner by which those who held the orthodox faith were known and by which they were distinguished from those who taught differently. In these creeds, the unity of essence is emphasized and explained so as not to exclude or weaken the idea of plurality, and the triad or trifoldness is emphasized and explained so as not to exclude or weaken the idea of the unity of essence. The whole Christian Church accepts the ecumenical creeds, and it has not been able to contrive any words or expressions by which the doctrine of the Trinity can be more adequately expressed. In Article I of the Augsburg Confession, the Lutheran Church states that it concurs with the doctrine laid down in the Nicene Creed. So-called churches that do not accept the doctrine laid down in the three ecumenical creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed) cannot be recognized as Christian churches.

The Nicene Creed  
(*filioque* phrase underlined)

“I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible.

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God.

“Begotten of his Father, before all Worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one Substance with the Father; By whom all things were made,

“Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man,

“And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father.

“And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: Whose kingdom shall have no end.

“And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets.

“And I believe in one holy Catholic [Christian] and Apostolic Church.

“I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.



“And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.”

## C. Bible Proofs of the Doctrine of the Trinity

### 1. Old Testament Suggestions of the Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity is not expressly and directly taught in the Old Testament; i.e., there are no direct expressions or statements to the effect that there are three distinct self-subsistences in God. But there are indications and suggestions which seem, in the light of the New Testament, to plainly imply the doctrine but which hardly could be expected to be understood by those who had not the clearer revelation of the New Testament.

#### a. *The Angel of Jehovah*

An angel called the angel of Jehovah is often spoken of. He is sometimes spoken of as being Jehovah Himself (see Gen. 22:11-18, Gen. 31:11-13, and Ex. 3:2-6). This angel is, in Malachi 3:1, called the angel or *messenger of the covenant* and is said to be the Messiah. The early church fathers understood this angel of Jehovah to be the *Logos*, the second person in the Godhead who, in the Old Testament, revealed Himself in the form of an angel.

#### b. *Wisdom Personified*

The wisdom of God is, in several places in the Old Testament, personified and represented as a person that speaks and who is said to be with God before the creation of the world (e.g., see Prov. 8).

#### c. *The Names of the Three Persons*

The names of the three persons in the Godhead are mentioned in the Old Testament.

(1) The Father is mentioned in the Old Testament.

Mal. 2:10 – *Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? ...*

(2) The Son is mentioned in the Old Testament.

Ps. 2:7 – *... Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee.*

(3) The Spirit is mentioned in the Old Testament.

Gen. 1:2 – *... And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*

I Sam. 10:6 – *And the Spirit of Jehovah will come mightily upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy ...*

Ps. 51:11 – *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy Spirit from me.*

(4) All three persons are mentioned in the Old Testament.

Isa. 48:12-16 (note especially the last phrase) – *Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called: I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. Yea, my hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spread out the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together. Assemble yourselves, all ye, and hear; who among them hath declared these things? He whom Jehovah loveth shall perform his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans. I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him; I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; from the beginning I have not spoken in secret; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord Jehovah hath sent me, and his Spirit.*

Isa. 61:1-3 – *The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified. (Compare Luke 4:18-21.)*

#### **d. God Speaking about Himself in the Plural**

God sometimes speaks about Himself in the plural.

Gen. 1:26 – *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ...*

Gen. 3:22 – *And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil ...*

#### **e. Elohim**

One of the most common names of God in the Old Testament is *Elohim* which is the plural of *El*, God. The very first time God is mentioned in the Scriptures, in the very first sentence of the Bible, the name applied to Him is *Elohim*. *Elohim*, which is plural, is the subject of the sentence, but the verb is in the singular. Thus, in the very opening sentence of the Bible, both the unity and the plurality of God are suggested.

### **f. Jehovah Speaking about God as Another**

Sometimes Jehovah speaks about or even to God as to another.

Ex. 34:5 – *And Jehovah descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of Jehovah. (Compare Acts 7:53 – Ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels ...)*

Hos. 1:7 – *But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by Jehovah their God ...*

Ps. 110:1 – *Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand ... (Compare Matt. 22:41-45 – Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet? If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son?)*

### **g. Aaronic Benediction and Trisagion**

In the Aaronic benediction, the name of Jehovah is repeated three times. *Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee: Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace (Num. 6:24-26).*

In the Trisagion in Isa. 6:3, the adjective is three times predicated of God: *Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts. (Compare John 12:37-42 – But though he [Jesus] had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him: that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? For this cause they could not believe, for that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and he hardened their heart; lest they should see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, and should turn, and I should heal them. These things said Isaiah, because he saw his glory; and he spake of him. Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.)*

### **h. The Messiah and the Spirit of God**

Even the Old Testament speaks about the Messiah and the Spirit of God in such a way that what is said about them can only be predicated of God. This is especially clear when we read these passages in the light of the New Testament. Thus, both the Son and the Spirit are called God.

Ps. 110:1 – *Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand ...*

II Sam. 23:2-3 – *The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and his word was upon my tongue. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me ...*

In Isa. 6:8, Isaiah tells us that he *heard the voice of the Lord, saying ...* In Acts 28:25, Paul quotes the words which Isaiah heard the Lord say, and Paul says that it was the Holy Spirit that spake. Hence, He whom Isaiah calls the Lord, Paul calls the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is, in Isa. 6:8, called the Lord.

Divine attributes and works are ascribed to the Messiah and the Spirit of God.

Ps. 102:25-28 (Heb. 1:8, 10-12 says that this is said of the Son) – *Of old didst thou lay the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.*

Isa. 9:6 – *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Mic. 5:2 – ... *Out of thee [Bethlehem] shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.*

Ps. 139:7 – *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? ...*

Ps. 104:30 – *Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created ...*

## 2. New Testament Proofs of the Trinity

There is nowhere in the New Testament a scientific exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity, nor is there any passage which, in so many words, expressly states that there are three distinctions in the one divine essence; but the doctrine of the Trinity is very clearly taught. As the Bible nowhere states that there is a God but takes the existence of God for granted, so the New Testament does not state that God is triune but takes the Trinity for granted. As the Bible simply speaks of God as a freely willing and acting personality, so the New Testament speaks of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as freely willing and acting persons. The New Testament proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity may be divided into two classes: first, the passages that mention the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together and coordinate them; second, the passages that speak of the three persons

separately but in such a way that divinity, directly or indirectly, is ascribed to each one.

### **a. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Coordinated**

When Christ instituted Holy Baptism, He commanded His disciples to baptize *into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit* (Matt. 28:19). Here, three distinct person are mentioned into whose fellowship people are baptized.

### **b. The Baptism of Christ**

At the Baptism of Christ, we find in the same manner that the three were present as three separate, self-subsisting distinctions, the Father speaking from heaven, the Son as the One who was being baptized, and the Holy Spirit descending upon the Son.

Matt. 3:16-17 – *And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straight-way from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

### **c. Jesus' Promise of the Spirit from the Father**

Before Jesus left this world with His visible presence, He promised His disciples that He would send them the Holy Spirit from the Father.

John 14:16-17 – *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth ...*

John 14:26 – *But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.*

John 15:26 – *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me.*

### **d. The Apostolic Benediction**

II Cor. 13:14 – *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.*

### **e. Other Passages Proving the Trinity**

I Cor. 12:3-6 – *... No man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all.*

Eph. 2:18 – *For through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.*

Eph. 4:4-5 – *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.*

I Pet. 1:1-2 – *... to the elect ... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ ...*

### **f. Divinity Ascribed to the Three Persons**

There is a class of Bible passages that speak of three persons separately, but directly or indirectly ascribe divinity to each one. Before we proceed to examine this class of Bible passages, let us again remind ourselves of the patent fact that the Bible very plainly and positively teaches that there is but one God (see I, B, 4. God Is One, p. 41). But at the same time that this fact is so strongly set forth in the Bible, we find that to each of the three – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – such attributes, works, names, and worship are ascribed as only can be attributed to God. In other words, we find in the New Testament that divine attributes, works, names, and worship are ascribed to each of the three persons.

#### **(1) Divinity Is Ascribed to the Father**

That in the New Testament divine attributes, works, names, and worship are ascribed to the Father is not denied by anyone, and that fact is so patent that we shall not stop to discuss it. I only wish to refer to two passages.

I Cor. 8:6 – *Yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him ...*

Matt. 11:25 – *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth ...*

#### **(2) Divinity Is Ascribed to the Son**

The New Testament in many places speaks of Christ in such a way that what is said about Him can be predicated only of God.

##### **(a) Divine Attributes Are Ascribed to the Son**

i. Eternity is ascribed to the Son.

John 1:2 – *The same was in the beginning with God.*

Col. 1:17 – *And he is before all things, and in him all things consist.*

Rev. 1:8 – *I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.*

Heb. 1:8 – *But of the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ...*

ii. Immutability is ascribed to the Son.

Heb. 1:8, 10-12 – *But of the Son he saith ... the heavens are the works of thy hands: they shall perish; but thou continuest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a mantle shalt thou roll them up, as a garment, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.*

Heb. 13:8 – *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever:*

iii. Omnipresence is ascribed to the Son.

Matt. 18:20 – *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

Matt. 28:20 – *... And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

iv. Omnipotence is ascribed to the Son.

Matt. 28:18 – *... All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.*

Phil. 3:21 – *... He is able even to subject all things unto himself.*

Rev. 1:18 – *... I have the keys of death and of Hades.*

v. Omniscience is ascribed to the Son.

John 1:48 – *... Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.*

John 2:25 – *... He needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man.*

John 21:17 – *... Lord, thou knowest all things ...*

Rev. 2:18-19, 23 – *... These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like unto burnished brass: I know thy works, and thy love and faith and ministry and patience ... And all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts ...*

### **(b) Divine Works Are Ascribed to the Son**

i. Creation is ascribed to the Son.

John 1:3 – *And all things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made.*

Col. 1:16 – *For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him.*

Heb. 1:8, 10 – *But of the Son he saith ... Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands.*

John 5:21 – *... The Son also giveth life to whom he will.*

ii. Preservation is ascribed to the Son.

Col. 1:17 – *And he is before all things, and in him all things consist.*

Heb. 1:3 – ... *upholding all things by the word of his power ...*

iii. The forgiveness of sins is ascribed to the Son.

Mark 2:5-9 – *And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, even God? And straightway Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, saith unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?*

iv. The raising of the dead is ascribed to the Son.

John 6:39 – *And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.*

John 5:25 – ... *The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.*

v. The judgment is ascribed to the Son.

John 5:22-23 – *For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him.*

Matt. 25:31-46 – *But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left ... Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ... Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels ... And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.*

**(c) The Son Is Directly and Expressly Called God**

John 1:1 – ... *The Word was God.*

John 20:28 – *Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.*



Rom. 9:5 – ... *Of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

Heb. 1:8-10 – *But of the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ... Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee ... Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth.*

I John 5:20 – ... *And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

Matt. 22:42-44 – ... *What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet?*

#### **(d) Divine Worship Is Ascribed to the Son**

Since divine attributes and divine works are ascribed to Christ, and since He is expressly called God, it follows that divine worship is also ascribed to Him.

John 5:23 – *That all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father: He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him.*

John 14:1 – ... *Believe in God, believe also in me.*

Phil. 2:10 – *That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth.*

Heb. 1:6 – *And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.*

Rev. 5:12-14 – ... *Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped.*

#### **(3) Divinity Is Ascribed to the Holy Spirit**

The Bible in many places speaks also about the Holy Spirit in such a way that what is said about Him can only be applied to God.

##### **(a) Divine Attributes Are Ascribed to the Holy Spirit**

i. Eternity is ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

Heb. 9:14 – ... *Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself ...*

ii. Omniscience is ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

I Cor. 2:10-11 – ... *For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God ... even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God.*

John 16:13 – *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth ... and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.*

**(b) Works of Divine Power Are Ascribed to the Holy Spirit**

Luke 1:34-35 – *And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God.*

Matt. 12:28 – *But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you.*

John 3:5 – ... *Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Rom. 8:11 – *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

**(c) The Holy Spirit Is Called God**

Acts 5:3-4 – ... *Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit ... Thou has not lied unto men, but unto God.*

I Cor. 3:16 – *Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

**(d) We Therefore Find That the Holy Spirit Is Given Equal Rank with the Father and the Son**

Matt. 28:19 – *Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

II Cor. 13:14 – *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.*

## D. Personal Acts of the Trinity

From what we thus far have learned, it is evident that the three persons are of the same essence, that they are con-substantial, and that “the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the Glory Equal, the Majesty Coeternal” (The Athanasian

Creed). Only in thought can the three persons be separated. In reality, they are inseparable. The Father is not God without the Son, or the Son without the Father and the Holy Spirit. There is a *perichoresis* or pervasion of the one person by the other. There are, however, in the relation of the three persons to each other and in their relation to the world, certain distinctions which characterize them. In other words, the Scriptures ascribe to each of the three persons certain personal acts. These personal acts may be divided into two classes: first, the acts that have reference to the eternal relation of each of the three persons to one another, which acts are called immanent or internal acts (*opera ad intra*); second, the acts that have reference to the relation of each of the three persons to the world, which acts are called economic or external acts (*opera ad extra*). We therefore speak about the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity.

### 1. The Internal Acts of the Trinity

The immanent or internal acts that have nothing to do with the world but are wrought within the Trinity are two: generation and spiration. These acts are not common to all three persons but are peculiar, the first to only one person and the last to two persons.

#### a. The Act of Generation

By generation is meant that act by which God the Father is Father and by which the Son is Son. Because of this generation, God is called the *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Rom. 15:6, II Cor. 1:3, etc.); and by Christ Himself, He is called *his own Father* (John 5:18). And because of this generation, the Son is called God's *own Son* (Rom. 8:3, 32) and *his only begotten Son* (John 3:16).

Ps. 2:7 – ... *Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee.* (This passage is cited in Acts 13:33 – ... *As also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* It is also cited in Heb. 1:5 – *For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?* And it is cited again in Heb. 5:5 – *So Christ also glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that spake unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*)

Rom. 15:6 – *That with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

John 5:18 – *For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*

Rom. 8:32 – *He that spared not his own Son ...*

John 1:14 – *And we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father ...*

John 1:18 – *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

John 3:16 – *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son ...*

### **b. The Act of Spiration**

By spiration is meant that act of the Father and the Son by which the Holy Spirit from eternity proceeds from both.

John 15:26 – *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me.*

## **2. The External Acts of the Trinity**

The economic or external acts are the acts that have reference to the world. They are divided into three classes, and each class is ascribed especially to one of the persons. Creation and providence are ascribed to the Father, redemption to the Son, and sanctification to the Holy Spirit. Each of these three classes of works is ascribed especially to one of the three persons because one of the persons is especially prominent in the performance of these acts. But all three persons have part in all the external acts. All the external acts can, therefore, in a certain sense be said to be common to all three persons. Thus, both the Son and the Spirit had part in the creation: *All things were made through him* (John 1:3); *Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created* (Ps. 104:30). The Son is said to be *upholding all things by the word of his power* (Heb. 1:3). The Father *so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son* (John 3:16); wherefore, the Father is called *God our Saviour* (I Tim. 2:3). And sanctification is ascribed to the Father: *Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth* (John 17:17).

### III. Cosmology

The external acts that are ascribed especially to the Father may be treated under the headings of cosmology, i.e., the doctrine of the origin and preservation of the world, and anthropology, i.e., the doctrine concerning man. Under cosmology is treated everything that pertains to the world except man. In our dealing with cosmology, we shall consider the following topics: creation, providence, and angels.

#### A. Creation

Creation is an act of God by which He, in the beginning, by means of His omnipotent word, in six days, from nothing, brought forth the world for His own glory and the good of man.

##### 1. The Creator

It is an undisputed fact that we are living in a wonderful world. The question of how this world has come into existence has at all times puzzled the brains of men. The Bible tells us in its opening sentence very simply and very plainly that *in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* (Gen. 1:1). Isaiah says that *the everlasting God, Jehovah, [is] the Creator of the ends of the earth* (Isa. 40:28). And Paul said in his address at Athens that *God ... made the world and all things therein ... [and] giveth to all life, and breath, and all things* (Acts 17:24-25).

By way of prominence, the creation is ascribed to the Father. I Cor. 8:6 – *Yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things ...*

The other two persons, however, have also part in the creation, and this act is, therefore, also ascribed to them.

John 1:3 – *All things were made through him [the Word]; and without him was not anything made that hath been made.*

I Cor. 8:6 – *... and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things ...*

Col. 1:16 – *For in him [the Son] were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether*

*thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him.*

Heb. 1:2, 8, 10 – ... *Through whom [his Son] also he [God] made the worlds ... But of the Son he saith ... Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands.*

Gen. 1:2-3 – ... *The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*

Job 33:4 – *The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty giveth me life.*

Ps. 33:6 – *By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

Ps. 104:30 – *Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created ...*

We notice that the preposition “through” is often used, especially in passages where the creation is ascribed to the Son. The most scriptural way of expressing the idea would, therefore, probably be that the world was created by the Father through the Son and the Spirit.

## 2. The Product of Creation

The product of creation, in other words, that which God has created, is comprehended in one word: the “world.”

Ps. 89:11 – *The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.*

By the world, we understand all that exists, visible and invisible, that is not God. In Gen. 1:1, as well as in the passage just cited, the world is called heavens and earth. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* (Gen. 1:1).

By the heavens is meant, in the first place, the visible expanse above us together with the sun, moon, and stars.

Ps. 33:6 – *By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

By the heavens is meant, in the second place, the invisible celestial world where God and His angels dwell.

Matt. 6:9 – ... *Our Father who art in heaven ...*

Matt. 22:30 – ... *they ... are as angels in heaven.*

By the earth is meant the planet on which we live and all that it contains.

### 3. The Time of Creation

The opening verse in the Bible tells us that *in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* (Gen. 1:1). This settles the question as to when the world was created. Origen, Schleiermacher, and others are of the opinion that God created the world from eternity. But that which is eternal cannot have been created. That would be a contradiction in terms because to create means to bring into existence that which was not before. Nor can we speak about anything being before that which is eternal, but Paul says in Eph. 1:4 that believers are chosen by God *before the foundation of the world*. See also the following passages.

Ps. 90:2 – *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*

John 17:24 – *Father, ... thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

I Pet. 1:20 – [Christ] *was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world ...*

Nor can we say that that which is eternal has a beginning, but in John 9:32 we read, *Since the world began ...*. That the world has a beginning the Scripture clearly teaches, but it does not tell us when that beginning was. We do not know how old the world is. The beginning of the world was the beginning of time. Time is not a part of eternity but something different from eternity. Time and the world began at the same time and will end at the same time; but eternity has no beginning nor will it have any end.

### 4. The Means of Creation

The world was created by the omnipotent word of God. That is, by an act of His free and sovereign will, which will was given expression in a command, God brought forth the world.

Gen. 1:3 – *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.* (These words, *God said*, we find over and over again in the first chapter of Genesis.)

Ps. 33:6, 9 – *By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made ... For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.*

Heb. 11:3 – *By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear.*

Rev. 4:11 – ... *For thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created.*

### 5. The Process of Creation

The creation of the world was of an instantaneous act but took place gradually. In the beginning, heaven and earth were created (Gen. 1:1). The Bible does not tell us when that beginning was, nor can science give us any information. After having told us that God in the beginning created heaven and earth, the Bible says that *the earth was waste and void* (תהו ובהו) and that there was *darkness ... upon the face of the deep* (Gen. 1:2). How long this chaotic condition of waste, voidness, and darkness lasted we are not told. *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light* (Gen. 1:3), and the six days of creation followed. First, God created matter; then He gave it the proper forms, making a cosmos out of chaos. First, He created inorganic matter, then organic. First, He created the vegetable kingdom, then the animal kingdom. First, He made the lower animals, then the higher. And when the world had been made ready, He created man, the crown of creation, and gave him dominion over everything on the earth. Some things God created from nothing, and some things from matter already created. The first process is called immediate creation and the second, mediate. (See Gen. 1 and 2 for the whole account of the creation.)

### 6. The Purpose of Creation

The purpose or aim which God had in view in creating the world was His own glory and the good of man. Everything that God has created declares His power, wisdom, and goodness.

Ps. 8:1, 3 – *O Jehovah, our Lord, How excellent is thy name in all the earth, Who hast set thy glory upon the heavens! ... When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained ...*

Ps. 19:1-2 – *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.*

Rev. 4:11 – *Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created.*

Who can behold God's wonderful creation and not praise and glorify the great name of the Creator?



A secondary object was the good of man. Man was made lord and ruler over the earth; all things were put under his feet; all things were created for him; and all things were to serve him and enhance his felicity.

Gen. 1:28 – *And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

Ps. 8:4-8 – *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honor. Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.*

Ps. 115:16 – *The heavens are the heavens of Jehovah; but the earth hath he given to the children of men.*

I Tim. 6:17 – ... *God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*

Heb. 1:14 – *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?*

## B. Providence

### 1. What Providence Is

With the same omnipotent power wherewith God created the world, He sustains it and everything in it; supplies it with the necessary power to exist and to perform its functions; cares for all created things; concurs in the affairs of the world at large, as well as in the actions of nations and individuals; and governs the world, lending and directing all things toward the aim set by Himself. This work of God we call providence.

Acts 17:28 – *For in him we live, and move, and have our being ...*

Heb. 1:3 – ... *upholding all things by the word of his power ...*

Ps. 46:5-10 – *God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God will help her; and that right early. The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. Jehovah of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. Come, behold the works of Jehovah, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariots in the fire.*

*Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.*

*Acts 14:15-17 – ... God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet He left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness.*

## 2. The Objects of Providence

In a general way, everything that God has created is the object of His providence; in a special sense, man is the object; and in a most special sense, the children of God are the objects.

### **a. All Created Things Are the Objects of Providence**

Nothing is so great that it is not dependent on God and subject to the will and power of God, and nothing is so insignificant that God does not care for it.

*Acts 17:26 – And he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation.*

*Ps. 147:9 – He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.*

*Matt. 6:26, 30 – Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value then they? ... But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*

*Matt. 10:29 – Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father.*

### **b. Man Is the Object of Providence**

*Ps. 36:7-9 – ... And the children of men take refuge under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou wilt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.*

*Matt. 5:45 – ... For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.*

*Ps. 107:8-9 – Oh that men would praise Jehovah for his lovingkindness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he satisfieth the longing soul, and the hungry soul he filleth with good.*

From the conception until the death of each individual, his every step and move and everything that happens to him are under the providence of God.

Job 10:8 – *Thy hands have framed me and fashioned me ...*

Ps. 139:13-16 – *For thou didst form my inward parts: thou didst cover me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made ... My frame was not hidden from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see mine unformed substance; and in thy book they were all written, even the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was none of them.*

Ps. 71:6 – ... *Thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels ...*

Job 34:21 – *For his eyes are upon the ways of a man, and he seeth all his goings.*

Prov. 20:24 – *A man's goings are of Jehovah ...*

Prov. 16:9 – *A man's heart deviseth his way; but Jehovah directeth his steps.*

Prov. 19:14 – ... *But a prudent wife is from Jehovah.*

Ps. 127:1 – *Except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except Jehovah keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*

Job 14:5 – *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months is with thee, and thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.*

### **c. The Children of God Are the Objects of Providence**

Ps. 91:1-7 – *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of Jehovah, he is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust. For he will deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover thee with his pinions, and under his wings shalt thou take refuge: his truth is a shield and a buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.*

Ps. 33:18 – *Behold, the eye of Jehovah is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his lovingkindness.*

Rom. 8:28 – *And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose.*

Heb. 1:14 – *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?*

### 3. How Providence Manifests Itself

We may say that the providence of God manifests itself in three different ways, or under three different forms, as preservation, concurrence, and government.

#### a. Providence Manifested by Preservation

By the preservation of God is meant both His protecting care by which He keeps away from created things harmful forces and influences that would otherwise destroy them, and His sustaining care by which He continually keeps things in existence, sustains life in organic matter both as individuals and as species, provides the necessary means for that purpose, and gives power and ability to be and to do that for which He has created them.

Ps. 91:3-6 – *For he will deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover thee with his pinions, and under his wings shalt thou take refuge: his truth is a shield and a buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.*

Acts 17:28 – *For in him we live, and move, and have our being ...*

Col. 1:17 – *... And in him all things consist.*

Heb. 1:3 – *... upholding all things by the word of his power ...*

Matt. 6:25-33 – *Therefore I say unto you, be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value then they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these*

*things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

Ex. 15:2 – *Jehovah is my strength ...*

Ps. 29:11 – *Jehovah will give strength unto his people ...*

Ps. 144:1 – *Blessed be Jehovah my rock, who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.*

### **b. Providence Manifested by Concurrence**

As already stated, God sustains the world and gives both to animate and inanimate creatures strength and ability to act within certain limits. Nothing can exist and nothing can be done in the universe except by the preserving care and power of God. He has created the natural laws according to which matter behaves, and He sustains it in its existence according to these laws, and He sustains every living creature in all its actions and modes of existence. This, however, does not mean that all creatures are simply passive and that God alone is responsible for all that happens. There is a concurrence so that the effect in every case is produced, not by God alone, nor by the creature alone, but by the cooperation of both, God being the first cause and the creature the second cause. There are in nature certain laws, forces, and energies given by the Creator; and there is a will, an ability to choose, in other words, a certain degree of liberty, given to man by God. God does not work outside or independently of these laws and conditions but in and through them. Therefore, the effect is a joint result of all these causes.

Phil. 2:13 – *For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.*

I Cor. 12:6 – *And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all.*

Acts 17:28 – *For in him we live, and move, and have our being ...*

### **c. Providence Manifested by Government**

Although there is a concurrence of God and man in providence, we must remember that the supreme and omnipotent power is God who rules, leads, and directs all the affairs and actions of men according to His wise plans, to His own glory, and to the benefit of those who love Him. There are three ways in which the government of God in providence manifests itself: permission, hindrance, and direction.

#### **(1) The Permission of God**

It is a fact that there is not only a cooperation between man and God but also, on the part of many men, a positive and decided activ-

ity diametrically opposed to the will and law and purpose of God. And it is also a fact that, as a rule, God does not by force stop men from doing evil. He never favors or sanctions sin, nor is there ever on His part an indulgence or a mitigation of the law; but merely because men misuse the power given them by Him, he does not deprive them of their free will, but He suffers them to go on in their evil way. God did not make it physically impossible for the children of Israel to make a golden calf. He did not prevent Judas from betraying Him (although He warned him). He does not cause the wind to blow down saloons or the fire to burn up houses of prostitution. This form of the government of God in providence is called permission.

Ps. 81:10-12 – *I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. But my people hearkened not to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I let them go after the stubbornness of their heart, that they might walk in their own counsels.*

Acts 14:16 – *Who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways.*

Rom. 1:28 – *And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting.*

## **(2) The Hindrance of God**

Although God as a rule does not hinder men in the exercise of their free will, He sometimes interferes and prevents them from carrying out their purposes and frustrates their plans, thus averting the results that otherwise would follow. There are many instances of this kind of providence in the Bible. For example, God suffered not Abimelech to touch Sarah (Gen. 20:6); He prevented Balaam from cursing Israel (Num. 22:13); He frustrated the plans of the Jews to murder Paul (Acts 23). Eternity alone will reveal our loving Father's care and tell us what danger He has prevented from befalling us.

## **(3) The Direction of God**

Ungodly people do not care for the will of God and often work and rage against God and His plans. Even the children of God are shortsighted and ignorant and do not always understand what is best for themselves and for others and what furthers the glory of God and the extension and establishment of His kingdom, and they therefore unwittingly oppose the will of God. Now, as already stated, God does not always hinder men in the exercise of their free will even

when they do things that are displeasing to Him and work against His purposes; but He overrules their plans and guides, leads, directs, and governs all things so that His plans are realized; and He makes the acts of men, even those that are sinful, serve His purposes. He is able to bring good out of evil and make all things work together for good to those who love Him (Rom. 8:28). The lives of Joseph (Gen. 50:20 – ... *Ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good ...*), Moses, and Paul furnish beautiful examples of God's direction in His governing providence. But *the manifold wisdom of God* (Eph. 3:10) is especially manifested in the procuring of our salvation through Jesus Christ. Foes and friends tried in every way to hinder the realization of the plans of God; but by putting Christ to death, *the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled* (Acts 3:18).

#### 4. Ordinary and Extraordinary Providence

As a rule, God sustains, protects, and governs the creatures in the regular way and by ordinary means. Sometimes He does it in an unusual way, either acting independently of the ordinary means or using ordinary means in an extraordinary way.

##### **a. Ordinary Providence**

God provides food by letting it grow out of the ground (in the last analysis, all food grows out of the ground). We get clothing from plants and animals, fuel from wood and coal, etc. He has created the laws of nature, by the following of which we can subdue the earth and make nature serve us, etc. On the whole, we can say that God provides, protects, and governs His creatures according to the laws of nature.

##### **b. Extraordinary Providence, or Miracles**

In all our activity, we are bound to the laws of nature, but God is not. It goes without saying that He who has made the laws of nature is above them and is, therefore, in His activity not dependent on them. It is true that God, in dealing with His creatures, usually works according to and by means of the laws of nature; but He is not bound to them, and sometimes He does deal with the world in an extraordinary way. When He does, we say that a miracle is performed. By a miracle, we understand a phenomenon, act, or occurrence brought about by divine intervention and wrought according to laws and processes unknown to us. A miracle is, therefore, something which we cannot understand or explain because it does not coincide with our knowledge and experience.

## C. Angels

Not only is there an innumerable multitude of different kinds of creatures created by God that have bodies and, therefore, can be seen; but also there is a great host of spiritual beings, i.e., beings that have no body and, therefore, are invisible to us. These beings are called angels.

Heb. 1:14 – *Are they not all ministering spirits ... ?*

### 1. The Origin of Angels

The angels are created by God.

Neh. 9:6 – *Thou art Jehovah, even thou alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host ...*

Col. 1:16 – *For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him.*

But the fact of when God created the angels, the Bible does not tell. According to Job 38:7, *all the sons of God shouted for joy* when the Lord laid the foundation and the cornerstone of the earth.

### 2. Different Kinds of Angels

Originally, all angels were good.

Gen. 1:31 – *And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good ...*

But as free, self-determining, moral personalities, they could choose between good and evil, between obeying God and disobeying Him. Some sinned and became evil; some remained faithful and entered into a more perfect state. Therefore, angels are divided into two classes: good angels and bad angels.

#### a. Good Angels

##### (1) The Attributes of Good Angels

(a) Good angels cannot die.

Luke 20:36 – *For neither can they die any more [the blessed after the resurrection]: for they are equal unto the angels ...*

(b) Good angels cannot sin.

The fact that they cannot die is, of course, founded on the fact that they cannot sin. If they could sin, then they could die, for the wages of sin is death.



(c) The knowledge of good angels is great.

That the knowledge of the angels is great we learn from the fact that Jesus, in Mark 13:32, says that not even the angels know the day of the coming of the Lord.

II Sam. 14:20 – *And my lord [David] is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God ...*

(d) Good angels have great power.

II Pet. 2:11 – *Whereas angels, though greater in might and power [greater than man], bring not a railing judgment against them before the Lord.*

In II Thess. 1:7, we are told that the Lord is coming *with the angels of His power*. We have in the Bible several instances of angels exhibiting great power.

II Kgs. 19:35 – *And it came to pass that night, that the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand ...*

Acts 12:7 – *And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.*

(e) Good angels are numerous.

Matt. 26:53 – *Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? (4,500 x 12 = 54,000)*

Heb. 12:22 – *But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels [μυριάσιν ἀγγέλων].*

Rev. 5:11 – *And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.*

Dan. 7:10 – *... Thousands of thousands ministered unto him [the Ancient of Days], and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him ...*

(f) Good angels are of different ranks and orders.

In Eph. 3:10 and Col. 1:16, Paul speaks of principalities and powers in heavenly places. In Jude 9, mention is made of an archangel whose name is Michael. In Dan. 12:1, he is said to be a *great prince*, and in Dan. 10:13, he is called *one of the chief princes*, indicating that there are other chief princes. The Bible, in different places, mentions cherubim.

Gen. 3:24 – ... *And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim ...*

And in one place, seraphim are mentioned.

Isa. 6:2, 6 – *Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly ... Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar.*

But nothing is told us about the nature and rank or station of the cherubim and seraphim.

Two angels are called by name in the Bible: Gabriel and the archangel Michael. Both of them are mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments.

(g) Good angels do not live in marriage and, consequently, do not multiply.

Matt. 22:30 – *For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven.*

## **(2) The Occupation of Good Angels**

The occupation of the good angels is of various kinds.

(a) Good angels glorify and worship God.

Isa. 6:2-3 – *Above him stood the seraphim ... And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*

Dan. 7:10 – ... *Thousands of thousands ministered unto him [the Ancient of Days], and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him ...*

Rev. 5:11-12 – *And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne ... saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing.*

(b) Good angels are messengers of God sent by Him to do His will.

i. Good angels serve and protect the believers.

Ps. 91:11 – *For he will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*

Heb. 1:14 – *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?*

Luke 16:22 – *And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom ...*

Examples of such service and protection that might be mentioned are the rescuing of Lot and his family out of Sodom (Gen. 19), the preservation of Daniel in the den of lions (Dan. 6), the release of Peter from prison (Acts 12), and the bringing of bread and water to Elijah (I Kgs. 19).

ii. Good angels execute the judgments of God.

II Sam. 24:16 – *And when the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it ...*

II Kgs. 19:35 – *... The angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand ...*

iii. Good angels are especially employed by the Lord at great and important events in history.

For example, angels were employed at the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai.

Acts 7:53 – *Ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not.*

Gal. 3:19 – *What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator.*

Angels were also employed at important events in the life of Christ: the incarnation (Luke 1), the birth (Luke 2:8-14), the temptation (Matt. 4:11), the suffering in the garden (Luke 22:43), the resurrection (Matt. 28:2-7, John 20:12-13), and the ascension (Acts 1:10-11).

iv. Good angels will accompany the Lord and assist at the day of judgment.

Matt. 13:41, 49-50 – *The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity ... So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.*

Matt. 25:31 – *But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory.*

## **b. Bad Angels**

### **(1) The Fall of Bad Angels**

When in time the fall of the angels took place, how many fell, and what the nature of their first sin was we do not know. We know that their fall occurred before the fall of man, and we know that the number of those who fell was great.

Luke 8:30 – *And Jesus asked him, What is thy name? And he said, Legion; for many demons were entered into him.*

Eph. 6:12 – *For our wrestling is ... against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

It is generally accepted theory that their sin consisted in pride. Pride was the sin to which the serpent tempted Eve. In I Tim. 3:6, Paul says that a bishop should *not* [be] *a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil.* This theory is also strengthened by a passage in the Apocryphal books, Ecclesiasticus 10:13, which reads, “For pride is the beginning of sin ....” But pride, like all other sins, has its root in unbelief. Whatever the sin was, one thing is clearly told us in the Scriptures, and that is that they sinned.

II Pet. 2:4 – ... *God spared not angels when they sinned ...*

John 8:44 – ... *He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.*

## **(2) The Result of the Fall of Bad Angels**

(a) Bad angels lost their high state and dignity.

Jude 6 – *And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation ...*

(b) Bad angels lost their liberty.

Jude 6 – *And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*

II Pet. 2:4 – ... *God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.*

## **(3) The Character of Bad Angels**

Bad angels are exceedingly evil, full of malice and hatred against God and man. They are always against God and everything that is good, always trying to do harm. That this is the case is evident from all that is told us about them in the Bible. They are called evil spirits.

Luke 7:21 – *In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits ...*

They are called unclean spirits.

Matt. 10:1 – *And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits ...*

They are called the *spiritual hosts of wickedness* (Eph. 6:12).

They are instigators of false doctrines.

I Tim. 4:1 – *But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons.*

They torment people physically.

Mark 9:20, 22 – ... *Straightway the spirit tare him grievously; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming... [His father said] and oft-times it hath cast him both into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him ...*

Satan is called *the evil one* (Eph. 6:16).

He is called a murderer and a liar.

John 8:44 – ... *He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.*

He beguiled our first parents; he tried to make our Savior fall; and, *as a roaring lion, [he] walketh about, seeking whom he may devour* (I Pet. 5:8).

People who are full of guile and all villainy and who are enemies of all righteousness are called *son[s] of the devil* (Acts 13:10).

#### **(4) The Destiny of Bad Angels**

There is no salvation for the lost angels. The eternal fire to which wicked men in their last judgment will be assigned was prepared for bad angels.

Matt. 25:41 – ... *Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Rev. 20:10 – *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

Matt. 8:29 – ... *What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?*

#### **(5) The Chief of the Bad Angels**

At the head of these spiritual hosts of wickedness is a great, powerful, highly gifted and intelligent, cunning, and exceedingly malignant spirit who is their chief or prince.

##### **(a) The Names of the Chief of the Bad Angels**

This prince of darkness has many names. He is called the devil, which means slanderer and accuser, because he slanders and accuses God to man and man to God.

Gen. 3:4-5 – *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then*

*your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.*

Rev. 12:10 – ... *For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night.*

He is called Satan, i.e., the adversary, because he opposes God and man.

Zech. 3:1 – *And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right hand to be his adversary.*

He is called the serpent because he assumed that form in Paradise.

Rev. 12:9 – *And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world ...*

II Cor. 11:3 – *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ.*

He is called *Beelzebub the prince of the demons* (Matt. 12:24).

(b) The Personality of the Chief of the Bad Angels

That the devil is a self-subsisting person, and not merely a conception of the idea of wickedness as rationalists contend, is evident from the way he is spoken of throughout the Bible. He is consistently spoken of as a person. Personal names are given to him, as we have seen; personal acts are ascribed to him; and the masculine gender of the personal pronoun is always used to designate him.

(c) The Power of the Chief of the Bad Angels

He has a kingdom in which he is the prince of the demons, for which reason they are called his angels.

Matt. 12:24, 26 – ... *This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons ... And if Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?*

Matt. 25:41 – ... *Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.*

But in his kingdom, he not only rules over his angels but also has all wicked people in his power, for they belong to his kingdom. For that reason, he is called the God of this world and the prince of this world.

II Cor. 4:4 – ... *The god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving ...*

John 12:31 – *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

He is called *the prince of the powers of the air ... the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience* (Eph. 2:2). It is said that *the whole world lieth in the evil one* (I John 5:19).

(d) The Temptations of the Chief of the Bad Angels

The great aim and ambition of the devil is to make men sin and thus to plunge them into eternal ruin. To this end, he tempts them. He is therefore called *the tempter* (Matt. 4:3). In this art, he is adept. To Eve and to Christ he came visibly and spoke to them. But his ordinary way of tempting is to instill evil thoughts in the hearts of men.

John 13:2 – *... the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.*

His chief means of beguiling people is lying.

John 8:44 – *... He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.*

He, however, knows how to mix a sufficient quantity of truth with his lies to make them acceptable.

(e) The Future Destiny of the Chief of the Bad Angels

At the coming of the Lord, the devil will be bound and cast into the abyss for a thousand years. At the end of the thousand years, he will be loosed for a little while; and then he will be *cast into the lake of fire and brimstone ... [to] be tormented day and night forever and ever* (Rev. 20:10). See Rev. 20:1-10.

## IV. Anthropology

Under cosmology, we treat everything pertaining to the world except man. Under anthropology, we treat the rest of the world, namely, man. When the world had been made ready, God created man, the crown and climax of all His creatures. Man is the goal of all the creative work. Man was created by a special decree of the Lord. *And God said, Let us make man ...* (Gen. 1:26). Man is a world all by himself and reflects the whole creation. Man has, therefore, been called the microcosmos in contradistinction to the macrocosmos, i.e., the big world or the whole world. Under anthropology, we shall consider the following topics: the original condition of man, the Fall of man, sin, and the result and punishment of sin.

### A. The Original Condition of Man

The fact that we speak of the original condition of man suggests that man's condition is not now what it was from the beginning. On account of the changes which man has undergone and to which he is subject, we speak of five states of man: the state of integrity or innocence, the state of corruption or sin, the state of grace, the state of glory, and the state of misery. The original condition in which man was when God created him was the state of integrity.

#### 1. Man Was Created with Both Body and Soul

The creatures that we have so far considered are either spirits without bodies or bodies without spirits. Man is endowed with both body and spirit.

Gen. 2:7 – *And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

The soul can indeed exist without the body, but not the body without the soul. The soul is the center of personality. But the body is the organ of the activity of the soul. And although the soul, on account of the disturbance of sin, can exist in an abnormal way with-



out the body, the soul alone is not man. Man consists of soul and body, and both belong to his nature. Man is a dichotomous being.

## 2. Man Was Created in the Image of God

Gen. 1:26 – *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ...*

Gen. 5:1 – *... In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him.*

Gen. 9:6 – *... For in the image of God made he man.*

There is no Bible passage which directly states wherein the image of God consisted. But since God has no body, the image of God could not consist in likeness between our bodies and God's. The image of God plainly had reference to the spiritual and moral part of man. In His Law, God has revealed to us His will and nature. To be like God, therefore, must necessarily mean to be in conformity with the Law of God in regard to nature, will, and outward conduct. The image of God therefore consisted in a perfect conformity with the moral law. He who is in every respect what the Law of God demands him to be is he who has the image of God. In other words, the image of God was essentially the same as the new man in us after we are born again. To be born again is, therefore, a renewing of the image of God. The difference between a believer, on the one hand, and Adam and Eve in the state of integrity, on the other hand, is that a believer, besides having the new man, has also the old man which hinders the new man from fully developing according to its essential nature. For this reason, a believer is not perfect; but Adam and Eve in their original state had nothing but the image of God and were, therefore, perfect; i.e., they did not sin. That the image of God was essentially the same as the new man in a believer, and that man is renewed to the image of God when he is born again, are clearly seen from the following passages.

Rom. 8:29 – *For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son ...*

Eph. 4:23-24 – *And that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.*

Col. 3:10 – *And have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him.*

Since Adam and Eve fell in Paradise, there has been only one man on earth who has been in perfect conformity with the Law of God, and that is Jesus Christ. He is the very image of God's sub-

stance (Heb. 1:3). The new man in believers is essentially Christ in them, and the more they *attain ... unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ* (Eph. 4:13), the more clearly they reflect the image of God. According to the passages quoted above, man, when he had the image of God, possessed knowledge, holiness, and righteousness.

#### **a. Man Possessed Knowledge**

How great man's knowledge was in the state of integrity we do not know. He, of course, was not perfect in knowledge; i.e., his knowledge could grow. From Col. 3:10 just quoted, it is evident that he had a correct knowledge of God as far as it went, a knowledge which enabled him to worship God rightly and to serve Him according to God's will. From the fact that Adam, when he saw Eve, knew that she was bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh and that she was taken out of man (Gen. 2:23), and from the fact that Adam gave names to every living creature (Gen. 2:19-20), we may safely infer that his insight, particularly into natural things, must have been great.

#### **b. Man Possessed Holiness and Righteousness**

By the holiness and righteousness which man possessed in the state of integrity, we understand that man had a perfectly free will which was constantly inclined toward that which was good, and that he had a natural inborn power to do that which was right. In consequence thereof, man, in his very essence and nature – and, therefore, also in his thoughts, desires, and motives as well as in his outward conduct, words, and actions – was in perfect harmony with the moral law, in other words, with the will of God. Holiness has reference more especially to the inner purity of character, and righteousness to the conduct.

Eph. 4:24 – *And put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.*

### **3. Man Lived in the Garden of Eden**

Gen. 2:8-10, 15 – *And Jehovah God planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made Jehovah God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became four heads ... And Jehovah God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.*

## B. The Fall of Man

### 1. The Rationale of the Fall

The prerogatives, excellencies, and blessings of the state of integrity were given to man at his creation, God being the sovereign, active giver and man the passive recipient. But in order that man might be established and perfected in the state of integrity; in order that he might enjoy the fullest extent of the blessings of this state; and in order that his fellowship with God might be deepened and intensified; it seems that it was necessary that man should possess and enjoy these prerogatives, not merely as a gift of God given him without his pleasure being consulted, but by appropriating and making them his own personal possession by a free choice on his part. In full liberty, man had to choose personal fellowship with God, choose between God and that which is not God, choose between obeying and disobeying God, choose between good and evil. Full enjoyment of personal fellowship between two persons is unthinkable unless the fellowship exists by virtue of free choice of both parties.

Man was created with a perfectly free will, but a perfectly free will which has the power and privilege to choose according to its own decision implies the possibility of a fall.

It seems, therefore, that it was necessary that man should be put on trial, in other words, that the free will of man should come within the range of temptation. Such a trial could take place only in the presence of a definite and positive commandment of God.

Confronted with such a commandment, man misused his free will, chose to disobey God, and thus fell out of the state of integrity and into the state of corruption and sin. This was the Fall of man.

### 2. The Fact of the Fall

#### a. The Story of the Fall

The story of the Fall is, succinctly, as follows. The devil, in the guise of a serpent, came to our first mother while she lived in the Garden of Eden and beguiled her to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, concerning which tree the Lord had said, *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die* (Gen. 2:17). And *Eve gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat* (Gen. 3:6). The story of the Fall is recorded in Gen. 3:1-6.

**b. The Tempter behind the Fall**

Man did not of himself conceive of the idea of disobeying God. The idea did not originate in man's heart; it originated in the heart of him who *sinneth from the beginning* (I John 3:8), the originator of sin. Man was tempted and envied by the devil. That it was the devil that came to Eve in the guise of a serpent does not appear from the story of the Fall in Gen. 3. There is told only what appeared to the senses of Eve; she only saw and heard a serpent and, undoubtedly, had no idea that there was any evil power behind the serpent. But that it was through the craftiness of the devil that man fell into sin is evident from other passages of the Bible.

John 8:44 – *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.*

In Rev. 12:9, the devil is called *the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world ....* Wisdom 2:24 in the Apocrypha reads, “Through envy of the devil death came into the world.”

**c. The Temptation That Led to the Fall**

Our first parents were tempted to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The only commandment which God gave Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden was that they should not eat of the fruit of this tree. There probably was nothing in the nature of this prohibition which appealed to their reason. They were to obey, not because they understood why they should not eat of it, but simply because God had said that they should not. God wanted them to implicitly believe and blindly obey.

**d. The Process of the Fall**

In studying the story of the Fall, we notice that there was a process going on in man, a process that ended in the eating of the fruit. An inward fall preceded the outward sinful act. The heart was separated from God and had rebelled against God before the hand perpetrated the act.

The first step was that man began to mistrust God and to misbelieve His word. Unbelief is the first sin and the root and source of all other forms of sin.

The second step was the awakening of a desire for the fruit which God had forbidden and a sinful pride and ambition which wanted to be like God.

The third step was the outward actual eating of the forbidden fruit.

### 3. The Immediate Results of the Fall

The immediate results of the Fall were that man lost the image of God in the strict sense of the word and became sinful and wicked, that he lost his peace of conscience and became afraid of God and fled from Him, that he died, and that he was driven out of Paradise and became subject to toil, suffering, and sorrow. See Gen. 3:7-19.

## C. Sin

### 1. What Sin Is

The Law of God, i.e., the eternal principles of right and wrong, is an expression of the will of God. He who in respect to his inward nature, heart, or soul is different from what God in the Law says that He wants man to be; or who desires or wills otherwise than the Law prescribes; or who fails to desire or will what the Law requires; or who thinks, speaks, or acts contrary to the dictates of the Law; or who fails to think, speak, or do what the Law demands that he should think, speak, or do; he sins. Sin, then, is transgression of the Law or failing to be in conformity with the Law. Sin is lawlessness.

I John 3:4 – *Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.*

According to this definition, sin may be either an act or a condition; and by act in this connection is meant either bodily act or mental act.

Therefore, we say both that man sins and that he is sinful. When we say that he sins, we make reference to the fact that he performs physical and mental or spiritual acts that are contrary to the Law of God. When we say that he is sinful, we make reference to the fact that he is defective in his character, in other words, that he is continually in a condition which does not come up to the requirement of the Law of God. (We shall speak more of this later.)

Sin in general is usually divided into two classes: original sin and actual sin. This division is not made in the Scriptures, and nei-

ther of these terms is Biblical. They are both purely theological terms. But they stand for Biblical concepts.

## 2. Original Sin

We have seen that the immediate result of the Fall of Adam was that he lost the image of God in the strict sense of the word and that he became sinful; that not only did the Fall consist in an unlawful act, but also, by this unlawful act, man's whole and constant attitude to God was changed so that he now was without love to God and fear of God. In other words, the immediate result of the Fall was a sinful condition. In Gen. 5:3, we read that Adam *begat a son in his own likeness, after his image*. But not only were the immediate sons and daughters of Adam begotten in his likeness and image, but also all the descendants of Adam begotten according to nature are born in the sinful state into which the Fall of Adam had brought him; i.e., they are born sinners, born with sin.

### a. The Fact of Original Sin

The fact of original sin is taught in the Scriptures both indirectly and directly. It is taught indirectly by passages that teach the universality of sin. It is taught directly by passages that teach that man is born a sinner.

#### (1) Sin is Universal

Gen. 8:21 – ... *The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth ...*

I Kgs. 8:46 – ... *For there is no man that sinneth not ...*

Ps. 143:2 – *And enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight no man living is righteous.*

Rom. 3:9-12 – *What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; they have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not, so much as one.*

Rom. 5:12 – *Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.*

Rom. 3:22-23 – ... *For there is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.*

#### (2) Man Is Born a Sinner

Job 25:4 – *How then can man be just with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?*

Ps. 51:5 – *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

Job 14:4 – *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.*

John 3:5-6 – *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God! That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

Eph. 2:3 – *Among whom we also all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

### **b. The Nature of Original Sin**

The Augsburg Confession, Art. II, very aptly defines original sin when it says, “Also they teach, that since the fall of Adam, all men begotten according to nature, are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin ....” According to this definition, there is in original sin both a negative and a positive element.

#### **(1) The Negative Element of Original Sin**

The natural man, i.e., man as he is born into the world and without being born of God, lacks the requirements of the first commandment which is the sum and substance of all the commandments; he is without fear of God, trust in God, and love to God. And not only is he without these requirements of the Law, but also he lacks the ability and power to fear, trust in, and love God. Consequently, he does not merely commit sins occasionally, but he is in a habitual, constant, and continual state of sin. Every moment of his life, he is in a sinful condition, in a condition which is obverse to the Law. The condition in which he finds himself is, therefore, one continual sin. As Luther says about original sin, “It is the essential sin which does not sin for an hour or for a certain time, but wherever and as long as the person is, that long is this sin also” (*Church Postil* on Luke 2:21). And it is not in his power to be otherwise than he is. No effort on his part can make him anything but a sinner because no one can do or be what he is not born with the potential capacity to do or be. Original sin is not an act but a condition. “Original Sin is the absence of original righteousness ....” (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Ch. I, Art. II, 15).

Rom. 3:10-12 – *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after*

*God; they have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one.*

Rom. 8:3, 7-8 – *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh ... Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

John 3:3, 5-6 – *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God ... Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

## **(2) The Positive Element of Original Sin**

Not only is original sin a defect, the absence of righteousness; but also original sin contains a positive element, viz., what the Augsburg Confession calls concupiscence, or coveting. By concupiscence in this connection, we do not mean outbreaks in the forms of thoughts, but that depraved habitual condition or disposition which is constantly inclined towards and prone to do that which is evil and which is the source of all evil deeds, words, and thoughts; it is a positive attitude which is constantly antagonistic to that which the Law of God requires of us. It is, as Dr. Krauth says, “that in which all other sins in some sense take their origin. It throws its life into them; without it they might not be; it is not only original, it is also the originating sin, or that sin which gives the original to all others” (Charles P. Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, 1899, pp. 389-390).

Matt. 15:19 – *For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings.*

Rom. 7:23 – *But I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members.*

Gal. 5:17 – *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would.*

Jas. 1:14 – *But each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.*



Eph. 2:3 – *Among whom we also all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

### **c. The Pervasiveness and Power of Original Sin**

Original sin has pervaded, penetrated, and saturated man's whole nature and corrupted all the powers of his soul so that all parts of man's spiritual makeup are affected by it. Original sin has wrought total depravity in the soul and nature of man.

Gen. 6:5 – *And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

Gen. 8:21 – *... The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth ...*

Jer. 17:9 – *The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?*

Rom. 7:18 – *For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not.*

Rom. 8:7 – *Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.*

#### **(1) Original Sin Darkened Man's Intellect**

Original sin has darkened man's intellect so that he cannot understand or comprehend spiritual things.

I Cor. 2:14 – *Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged.*

Eph. 4:17-18 – *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart.*

Rom. 3:11 – *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

I Cor. 3:20 – *... The Lord knoweth the reasonings of the wise, that they are vain.*

Man is, therefore, said to be blind and to walk in darkness. Therefore, Christ came to effect *recovering of sight to the blind* (Luke 4:18). He came to be *the light of the world* (John 8:12), and He came to *shine upon them that sit in darkness* (Luke 1:79).

## (2) Original Sin Perverted Man's Will

Original sin has perverted man's will so that his will has become evil and can no longer choose according to the will of God; he has no longer a free will in spiritual matters. He has become a slave of sin. And he has lost the ability and power to be good and to do good. He is dead through trespasses and sins. This follows by necessity from what we have said about the nature of original sin. If what we have said about both the positive and the negative elements of original sin is true, then this statement must be true also; and for proof, we refer to the passages quoted under b. The Nature of Original Sin, pp. 95-97. Note especially Rom. 8:7 – ... *neither indeed can it be*. Besides these, we refer to the following.

Eph. 2:1 – *And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins.*

Col. 2:13 – *And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive ...*

John 8:34 – *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin.*

Rom. 6:17 – ... *Ye were servants of sin ...*

Rom. 7:14 – *For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

## 3. Actual Sin

By actual sin, we understand all acts, words, and thoughts that are contrary to the Law of God or the omission of that which is enjoined in the Law. It is called actual, not in the meaning of real, but because it always consists of acts in contradistinction to original sin which is a condition. Act, here, has reference to both physical and mental acts, i.e., not only to deeds and words but also to thoughts. Because the sinful state, condition, or disposition is inherited by everyone from his parents, we call that original sin. Because every sinful deed, word, and thought is an act originating in the individual, we call that actual sin.

There is a very close connection and a most intimate relation between original sin and actual sin. The sinful state of man's heart, the depraved and evil disposition and inclination of human nature, is the soil out of which sinful deeds, words, and thoughts naturally grow; original sin is the evil root, and actual sins are the evil sprouts. Matt. 7:17-18 – *Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot*

*bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*

Matt. 15:18-19 – *But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings.*

Luke 6:43-45 – *For there is no good tree that bringeth forth corrupt fruit; nor again a corrupt tree that bringeth forth good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.*

Jas. 1:14-15 – *But each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death.*

Ps. 51:2-5 – *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight; that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

### **a. Causes of Actual Sin**

There is no effect without a cause. When a person commits sin, there is always a stimulus, temptation, or cause. The causes of actual sin may be said to be of three kinds.

#### **(1) The Flesh Tempts to Sin**

All sin has its origin and root in the natural depravity and evil inclination of the heart, i.e., the flesh. See the passages just quoted under 3. Actual Sin, as well as the following.

Eph. 2:3 – *Among whom we also all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind ...*

Eph. 4:22 – *That ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit.*

For that reason, actual sins are called the works of the flesh.

Gal. 5:19-21 – *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like ...*

And to live in sin is called to live after the flesh.

Rom. 8:12-13 – ... *We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die ...*

### **(2) The Devil Tempts to Sin**

He is called a *tempter* (Matt. 4:3) and *the deceiver of the whole world* (Rev. 12:9). See III, C, 2, b, (5) The Chief of the Bad Angels, pp. 85-87.

### **(3) The World Tempts to Sin**

By the world, in this connection, we mean worldly or unregenerate men. The children of the world tempt to sin by word (oral and written), deed, example, institutions, and by general atmosphere created by them.

Jas. 4:4 – *Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God.*

I John 2:15-16 – *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father; but is of the world.*

To live in sin is, in the Bible, called walking according to the course of this world.

Eph. 2:1-2 – *And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world ...*

## **b. Classification of Actual Sins**

### **(1) Sins of Commission and Omission**

Sin of commission is the doing of an act which is forbidden. Sin of omission is neglecting to do that which is enjoined.

Jas. 4:17 – *To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

Luke 12:47 – *And that servant, who knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*

Matt. 25:24-30 – *And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter; and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own. But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; thou oughtest therefore to*

*have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest. Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away. And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.*

### **(2) Sins in Thoughts, Words, and Deeds**

In His Sermon on the Mount, Christ has thoroughly explained the spiritual significance of the Law and clearly shown that not only deeds and words but also thoughts and desires of the heart are sins. Matt. 5:21-28 – *Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire. If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the last farthing. Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

### **(3) Sins against God and Man**

Sins against the First Table of the Decalogue and sins against the Second Table are sins directly against God on the one hand and sins against man and against oneself on the other hand.

Matt. 22:37 – *... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*

I Cor. 6:18 – *... But he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.*

### **(4) Conscious and Unconscious Sins**

By conscious sins, we understand acts that we know to be sin; by unconscious sins, we understand acts of which we are not aware.

Ps. 19:12 – *Who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults.*

I Tim. 1:13 – *... Howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*

### **c. Sin against the Holy Spirit**

There is one great and terrible sin of which the Bible makes special mention. In theology, it is usually called “sin against the Holy Spirit.” In the Scriptures, it is called “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit” or “speaking against the Holy Spirit.” There are six Bible passages that deal with this sin. They are the following.

Matt. 12:31-32 – *... Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.*

Mark 3:28-29 – *Verily I say unto you, All their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.*

Luke 12:10 – *And every one who shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven.*

Heb. 6:4-6 – *For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*

Heb. 10:26-29 – *For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries. A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*

I John 5:16 – *If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto*

death. *There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request.*

None of these passages alone contain the whole doctrine of sin against the Holy Spirit. But by comparing each with all the others, and by supplementing what we find in each with what we find in the others, we get the whole doctrine. These Bible passages are the only ones in Scripture that treat of this sin. But that all these treat of the same sin is evident from the fact that they all deal with a sin for which there is no forgiveness; and Christ expressly says that every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.

### **(1) Wherein Sin against the Holy Spirit Consists**

Wherein does sin against the Holy Spirit consist? Sin against the Holy Spirit is an overt act committed by a person who, being fully conscious of what he is doing, purposely, maliciously, and wickedly recalcitrates, attacks, and blasphemes the divine truth and work of the Holy Spirit.

According to the passages quoted from Matthew, Mark, and Luke, sin against the Holy Spirit is the act of speaking blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Not only is it blasphemy in the heart, but also it is blasphemy uttered. Matthew calls it blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and he calls it to speak against the Holy Spirit. Hence, it is blasphemy spoken against the Holy Spirit. Mark and Luke call it to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. To blaspheme means “to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate” and is used “specifically of those who by contemptuous speech intentionally come short of the reverence due to God or to sacred things”; blasphemy means “railing, reviling ... slander, detraction, speech injurious to another’s good name,” “specifically, impious and reproachful speech injurious to the divine majesty” (Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1889, p. 102).

We note from the three passages cited (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) that not all blasphemy comes under this category. Especially is mentioned blasphemy against the Son of Man as not being unpardonable. Only blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the one unpardonable sin. A person may be guilty of blasphemy without having committed sin against the Holy Spirit. As a matter of fact, many people have blasphemed and have received forgiveness for their blasphemy. Sin against the Holy Spirit is a special kind of blasphemy. The blasphemy which is not forgiven is in Heb. 10:29 desig-



nated as *do[ing] despite unto the Spirit of grace*. (The word *ἐνοβρίασας* is from *ἐνοβρίζω* and means to do despite, to treat with contumely.) To do despite denotes an act of conscious, willful, deliberate defiance with a feeling of contumely and hatred. In the same passage, this sin is further described as treading the Son of God under foot and as counting the blood of the covenant wherewith the perpetrator was sanctified an unholy thing. And in Heb. 6:6, it is described as *crucify[ing] ... the Son of God afresh, and put[ting] him to an open shame*. These passages speak of Hebrews who had embraced the Christian religion, who had been enlightened, who had tasted and experienced the good Word of God and the heavenly powers, but who were in danger of falling away and renouncing the Christian religion to avoid persecution, and who, therefore, were admonished to *not forsak[e] [their] own assembling together, as the custom of some [was]* (Heb. 10:25). Sin against the Holy Spirit in a case like this would consist, not in yielding under pressure in a weak moment, but in deliberately renouncing Christianity, cursing and blaspheming what they themselves have experienced as the truth from God, denying that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God, declaring that Jesus was crucified for His own sins, thus making common cause with those who had crucified Him (in other words, crucifying the Son of God afresh and thus putting him to an open shame), joining with those who heap contumely and blasphemies on Him, treading Him under foot, ridiculing the doctrine that His blood can save and sanctify, deriding it, calling it an unholy thing, and thus doing despite to the Spirit of grace.

This sin is called sin against the Holy Spirit or blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, not because the one who commits this sin necessarily is conscious of directing the blasphemy that he speaks against the third person in the Trinity, but because he blasphemes the work of the Spirit. It is evident from the two passages quoted from the epistle to the Hebrews and from the context of the passages quoted from Matthew, Mark, and Luke that the blasphemy may be spoken directly against Christ, against the Son of God. The context in Matthew and Mark shows that what Christ spoke about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was occasioned by the fact that the Pharisees said that Christ cast out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. In Luke, the connection is Christ's speaking about denying Him in the presence of men. And the author of the epistle to the Hebrews says that this sin consists in crucifying the Son of God



afresh, putting Him to an open shame, treading the Son of God under foot, and counting the blood of the covenant wherewith the perpetrator of this sin has been sanctified an unholy thing. This sin the author of the epistle to the Hebrews calls doing despite to the Spirit of grace. Hence, in all these passages, this sin is spoken of as being committed directly against the second person, the Son of God. But since it is the work of the Holy Spirit that men learn to know Christ, believe in Christ, and confess Christ before men; that men are sanctified with the blood of Christ; and that men taste of the heavenly gift, the good Word of God, and the power of the age to come; therefore, it is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit for one who has thus been enlightened and made a partaker of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 6:4) to deny Christ, tread Him under foot, put Him to an open shame, count His blood an unholy thing, and ridicule and blaspheme Him. It is doing despite to the Spirit of grace.

## **(2) By Whom Sin against the Holy Spirit Can Be Committed**

By whom can sin against the Holy Spirit be committed? Sin against the Holy Spirit can be committed only by a person who has been so enlightened by the Holy Spirit that he is convinced in his own mind of the divine truth and, therefore, is conscious of the fact that, by resisting and blaspheming, he is resisting and blaspheming the truth and work of God.

Sin against the Holy Spirit may be committed by very highly enlightened and sanctified Christians. This is evident from the two passages quoted from the epistle to the Hebrews. The author speaks about persons who have been enlightened, who have tasted of the heavenly gift, who have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come (Heb. 6:4-5), who have received the knowledge of the truth, and who have been sanctified with the blood of the covenant (Heb. 10:26, 29).

When Christians – who have been so highly exalted and have tasted the heavenly gift and the powers of the age to come – willfully, wickedly, and despitefully trample on the blood with which they have been sanctified; when they ridicule the work of the Holy Spirit in their own hearts and lives; when they put the Son of God to an open shame; and when they wittingly and malignantly blaspheme Christ and the gracious work and operation of God which they themselves have experienced; it stands to reason that such an awful and satanic turpitude cannot be perpetrated without everything that is

from God in their lives forever dying and that they, by such a diabolical act, plunge themselves into an irreparable condition.

Sin against the Holy Spirit may be committed also by people who are not Christians but who have been under the influence of the Holy Spirit to such an extent that they are convinced in their own minds of the divine truth and are conscious of the fact that it is the truth and work of God which they are rejecting, opposing, and blaspheming. That this is the case is evident from the context of the passages quoted from Matthew and Mark. Jesus had healed a blind and dumb man possessed by a demon. The effect that this manifestation of the power of God had on the multitudes was that they were led to believe that Jesus probably was the Messiah; they said, *Can this be the son of David?* (Matt. 12:23). But the scribes and the Pharisees said, *This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons* (Matt. 12:24). Then Jesus, after having shown them how untenable and absurd such a theory was, spoke these words about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. It is evident that Christ was referring to what the scribes and the Pharisees had said, viz., that He had cast out demons by Beelzebub; and Mark expressly says that Christ spoke these words about blaspheming against the Holy Spirit *because they said, He hath an unclean spirit* (Mark 3:30). Jesus did not directly say that the scribes and Pharisees, by saying that He cast out demons by Beelzebub, had committed sin against the Holy Spirit; but it is very evident that His words imply one of two things: either that, by saying what they said, they had spoken blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, or that such speech was bordering on it and was very close to it and that they were in danger of committing this sin. A mind that can invent anything so illogical, unreasonable, and preposterous in the presence of such gracious and clear manifestations of the power of God must certainly have gone far in its willful obstinacy, hatred, and enmity against God and His work. But if the scribes and Pharisees either had committed sin against the Holy Spirit or were in danger of doing it, this sin can be committed by persons others than Christians because the scribes and Pharisees were certainly not believers.

### **(3) What Is the Result of Sin against the Holy Spirit**

What is the result of sin against the Holy Spirit? There is no forgiveness for sin against the Holy Spirit. According to Matt. 12:31-32, Christ says that *every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men* (provided, of course, that they repent and, by faith, seek forgive-

ness) but that *blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven*. And in order to make it still stronger, He repeats the statement and declares that *whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come*; i.e., forgiveness is absolutely excluded. According to Mark 3:29, Christ says that *whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin*. Also according to Luke 12:10, Christ declares that *unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven*. And John tells us that it is of no avail to pray for one who has committed this sin (I John 5:16).

The reason why this sin is not forgiven is not that Christ did not die for those who commit this sin, for He *gave Himself a ransom for all* (I Tim. 2:6) and He has bought even those who bring destruction upon themselves (II Pet. 2:1). Nor is the reason that there is any sin which in itself is unpardonable. But the reason is that, although this sin consists in an act, it results in a condition, the nature of which is such that it makes repentance impossible. In Heb. 6:6, we are told that *it is impossible to renew ... unto repentance* those who have committed this sin. This awful crime, this horrible turpitude and deliberate blasphemy against the majesty of God, is of such a malign and diabolical nature that it destroys the possibility in the human soul for repentance and plunges the perpetrator of it into a state or condition like that of the fallen angels. He gets beyond redemption. His day of grace is ended. Having trodden under foot the Son of God, having counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, having put the Son of God to an open shame, and having thus done despite unto the Spirit of grace, *there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries* (Heb. 10:26-27).

## D. The Result and Punishment of Sin

Sin is not merely a disease and weakness which makes man an object of pity; but sin is demerit, and sin is guilt, subjecting man to punishment. Sin always brings and inflicts punishment. In a general way, we may say that all evils that befall man's body and soul in time and eternity, including the manifold ills of life, are the result of sin

(Gen. 3:16-19). The chief results of sin, however, are that sin brings man under the wrath of God and that sin causes death.

### 1. The Wrath of God

By the wrath of God, we understand an effective or energetic expression of the holiness and righteousness of God. Because God is holy, i.e., hates that which is evil, and because He is righteous, i.e., punishes evil and rewards good according to the eternal principles of right and wrong, therefore sin awakens His displeasure and prompts Him to inflict condign punishment. Because God is righteous, therefore He is angry.

Ps. 7:11 – *God is a righteous judge, yea, a God that hath indignation [the King James reads, is angry] every day.*

Nah. 1:2, 6 – *Jehovah is a jealous God and avengeth; Jehovah avengeth and is full of wrath; Jehovah taketh vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies ... Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his wrath is poured out like fire ...*

Ps. 90:7-9 – *For we are consumed in thine anger, and in thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath ...*

In many places, the Scriptures very plainly teach that sin brings man under the wrath of God.

Ezra 8:22 – ... *But his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.*

Rom. 1:18 – *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men ...*

Eph. 5:6 – ... *For because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience.*

Because man is born a sinner, therefore he is by nature a child of wrath.

Eph. 2:3 – *Among whom we also all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

Man is under the wrath of God from his birth; and unless he comes into fellowship with Christ who endured the wrath of God in our stead, the wrath of God will abide on him forever.

John 3:36 *He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

## 2. Death

From the passages just quoted under 1. The Wrath of God, we learn that, because of sin, the wrath of God comes upon man, and that, when the wrath of God abides on man, he shall not see life; but if he does not see life, he only sees death; i.e., he is dead. In Ps. 5:4, we read, *For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: evil shall not sojourn with thee.* To not sojourn with God is death. Only in God is there life; only by living in fellowship with God can man live, in the strict sense of the word. By sinning, man severs his connection with God and dies. The result and punishment of sin is death. Man dies through trespasses and sins.

Gen. 2:17 – ... *For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

Ezek. 18:4 – ... *The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*

Rom. 5:12 – *Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.*

Rom. 6:23 – *For the wages of sin is death ...*

Eph. 2:1 – *And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins.*

Col. 2:13 – *And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh ...*

### **a. What Death Is**

The Bible does not give us any definition of death. Nor can science tell us what death is. We know that death is the obverse of life, the negation of life; but no one knows what life is, and consequently, no one knows what death is. But the Bible speaks a great deal about death, and by examining the different passages in which the term “death” appears, we find out something about what the Scriptures mean by death. The first place in the Bible where death is mentioned is Gen. 2:17. In that passage, we read that Jehovah forbade man to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and that He added, *For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* According to this word of God – and the Word of God never fails – that phenomenon which is called death would occur if man should disobey the Lord and eat of the forbidden fruit. And according to this word of God, it would occur immediately; it would occur on the same day. *For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* Man did disobey the Lord and did eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When the Lord came to man after he had sinned, He found

that he had undergone a great and terrible change. He did not find the same Adam and Eve that He had created. We have spoken of this change before. This changed condition in which the Lord found man after he had sinned is death.

### **(1) Death Is Not Annihilation**

Death is not annihilation or cessation of being. By examining Adam and Eve after they had sinned and by understanding, according to the word that God had spoken, that they were dead, we find that death is not annihilation or cessation of being. As stated, they had undergone a great and awful change, but they had not been put out of existence; they had not ceased to be. Death works a terrible change in man, but it does not do away with him. Adam and Eve still existed. They could still hear, walk, speak, and, to all appearances, act as they had done before. Death, then, is not non-existence; but through death, man enters into a changed and different mode of existence. Man may exist either in a state of life or in a state of death. Before the Fall, man existed in a state of life; after the Fall and before he had received pardon, he existed in a state of death. That death is not tantamount to cessation of being or non-existence is clearly seen also from Eph. 2:1-3 which reads, *And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind ....* According to this passage, the Ephesians, while dead, had been very active. They had lived; they had walked; they had been doing. As long as a person is in this world, he may be alive and dead at the same time. He may be alive in one sense and dead in another sense. Therefore, Paul says that *she that giveth herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth* (I Tim. 5:6); and he says about the Ephesians that, while they were dead through trespasses and sins, they lived in the lusts of the flesh.

### **(2) Death Is Separation from God**

Death, in the strict sense of the word, is separation from God.

Ps. 5:4 – *For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: evil [or, the evil] shall not sojourn with thee.*

Isa. 59:2 – *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God ...*

From these passages, we learn that sin separates a person from God. And from other passages, we have learned that the condition caused by sin is called death. Hence, according to the Bible, separation from God is death. God is the only principle, fountain, and source of life. He is the only One who has life in Himself. As long as a person, in a spiritual sense, lives and moves and has his being in God and is united with God, he is a partaker of the life of God. The moment he sins, he is no longer in harmony with God, but he severs his connection with God, is separated from the principle fountain and source of life, is *alienated from the life of God* (Eph. 4:18), and is dead. As a branch cannot possibly live after it has been separated from the tree, so man cannot live separated from God.

### **b. Different Forms of Death**

As already intimated, the term “death” is used in more than one sense in the Bible. That accounts for the fact that a person may be spoken of as alive and dead at the same time. There are different forms of death. Strictly speaking, however, all forms of death either are only stages of the one and same death or are inevitable results of the one and same death. Death enters man when he transgresses the Law of God, and death is continually working in him, destroying both soul and body, until it culminates in eternal separation of both body and soul from God. There are three forms or stages of death: spiritual death, temporal death, and eternal death. This distinction, however, is not made in the Scripture, and these terms are not biblical terms. The Bible only speaks about death without any qualifying adjective. But studying the different passages in which the term “death” is used, it becomes apparent that the idea is not always exactly the same. The different ideas expressed by the terms spiritual, temporal, and eternal death are found in the Bible. The classification, therefore, is justifiable.

#### **(1) Spiritual Death**

Spiritual death is the effect or consequence of sin which consists in the separation of the soul from God who is the source, giver, and sustainer of all life. By this separation from God, all activity in godly and spiritual things ceases. All power, ability, and potentiality for being godly and for willing and doing that which is good is gone.

Col. 2:13 – *And you, being dead through your trespasses ...*

John 15:4-5 – *... As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the*

*vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing.*

The state and condition in which the natural man is because of original sin is the state and condition of spiritual death. The description which we have given of original sin is, therefore, a description of spiritual death. This is the form of death which our first parents experienced on the day they transgressed the commandment of God. Not only is spiritual death one of the stages of death, but also it is death properly so called, all other forms of death simply being a natural development or an inevitable consequence of spiritual death.

## **(2) Temporal Death**

Man is an organism consisting of body and soul. These two parts combined constitute man. It is, therefore, self-evident that what affects the soul also by necessity must effect the body, and vice versa. The soul of man, therefore, could not be separated from God, or die, without this awful cataclysm seriously affecting also the body. It could not be that one part of man be separated from God and the other part not. By the Fall of man, therefore, the corruption of the soul was also extended to the body. Immortality and the germ of life were stifled, and the power of death began its destructive work. But as a branch may be green and even blossom after it is cut off from the tree, so the body has a short but very imperfect existence in this world even after death has begun its work and until the corruption is completed by the separation of body and soul. Death in all its forms is separation of that which belongs together in order that life may exist. The union of body and soul is a necessary condition for the existence of physical life. When this union ceases, physical life ceases. The separation of body and soul is called temporal death. What that takes place, all physical activity ceases. The body *returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it* (Eccl. 12:7). The spirit goes into the realm of the dead where the souls of the believers are comforted in Paradise and the souls of the wicked are in torment until the day of resurrection.

Gen. 35:18 – *And it came to pass, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-oni ...*

Luke 16:22-26 – *And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on*



*me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water; and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted and thou art in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.*

Luke 23:43 – ... *Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*

The teaching of the Scriptures concerning the condition of the soul between death and the resurrection will be more fully treated in X. The Last Things.

### **(3) Eternal Death**

Eternal death is the condition of both body and soul after the resurrection for those who die in the condition of spiritual death, and it is an eternal continuation of that condition, i.e., an everlasting separation of both body and soul from God.

II Thess. 1:7-9 – ... *at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might.*

That is death in the fullest sense of the word, death in its most completely developed form. The doctrine of eternal death belongs to eschatology and will be treated more fully in X. The Last Things (see X, G, 2, a. “Death” or “Second Death,” p. 344).



## **Section Two**

**V. Christology**

**VI. Soteriology**

**VII. Pneumatology**

## V. Christology

### A. The Preparation of the Redemption

As soon as man had fallen into sin, God promised a Savior. This first promise of redemption is called the Protogospel or the Protevan-gelium and is found in Gen. 3:15. The promise was that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. The Savior came in the fullness of the time four thousand years later.

Gal. 4:4-5 – *But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

During these four thousand years, the Lord prepared the world for the coming of the Savior.

#### 1. Preparation among God's Chosen People

##### a. The Training of God's Chosen People

God prepared His chosen people for the coming of the Savior by training and exercising them in faith and obedience. The redemption of the Lord can be appropriated only by faith, and only by implicitly believing the word of the Lord and trusting Him and obeying Him is it possible to live in His fellowship and be His people. The Lord, therefore, as soon as He had called Abraham, began to train him in faith and obedience, and this training continued among the chosen people throughout the Old Testament.

Isa. 30:15 – ... *In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength ...*

Heb. 11:13 – *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar ...*

##### b. The Separation of God's Chosen People

God prepared His chosen people for the coming of the Savior by separating them and keeping them from being contaminated by heathen influences. For that reason, God commanded Abraham, *Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee* (Gen. 12:1). For that rea-

son, the children of Israel were commanded to destroy the inhabitants of the country which the Lord gave them (Deut. 7:1-2, 23-24). And for that reason, they were not to intermarry with the heathen nations.

Deut. 7:3-4 – *Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For he will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods ...*

### **c. The Revelation of the Plan of Redemption**

God prepared His chosen people for the coming of the Savior by gradually revealing more and more clearly the plan of redemption. This was done by two different ways.

#### **(1) Revelation by Direct Prophecy**

To children, we impart only the most elementary knowledge, and as they grow, we give them harder things to learn. Thus the Lord deals also with the whole human race. When the human race was in its infancy, God indeed revealed to it His purpose of redeeming man, but this revelation was very general and incomplete. Gradually, a fuller and more complete revelation was given. We note the following details.

(a) The Savior was to be of the seed of Abraham.

Gen. 22:18 – *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ...*

(b) The Savior was to be of the tribe of Judah.

Gen. 49:10 – *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.*

(c) The Savior was to be of the house of David.

II Sam. 7:16 – *And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.*

Jer. 23:5-6 – *Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness.*

(d) The Savior was to be born of a virgin.

Isa. 7:14 – *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

(e) The Savior was to be born at Bethlehem.

Mic. 5:2 – *But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.*

(f) The Savior was to be prophet, priest, and king.

Deut. 18:18-19 – *I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.*

Ps. 110:4 – *Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*

Zech. 9:9 – *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass.*

(g) The Savior was to be of divine origin, nature, and majesty.

See Mic. 5:2 and Ps. 110:4 above.

Isa. 9:6 – *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

(h) The Savior was to suffer, die, and rise again.

See the entire chapters of Ps. 22 and Isa. 53.

Ps. 22:6-8 *But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, Commit thyself unto Jehovah; let him deliver him: let him rescue him, seeing he delighteth in him.*

Isa. 53:9 – *And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*

Ps. 16:10-11 – *For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life ...*

## **(2) Revelation by Ceremonial Rites and Types**

The whole divine service of the old covenant – the sacrifices, the rites, the tabernacle, the priests, etc. – were *a shadow of the good things to come* (Heb. 10:1). The distinguished men of the Old Testa-

ment were antitypes of the Messiah; and the chosen people of God, with all their institutions and their whole history, were typical.

## 2. Preparation among the Heathen Nations

The preparation going on among the heathen nations was partly of a negative and partly of a positive nature.

### **a. Preparation of a Negative Nature**

The religious condition in heathendom at the time of Christ can best be characterized as complete bankruptcy. Men had lost faith in the old gods, and the different philosophical systems could not satisfy the heart or give the soul rest. Men asked, *What is truth?* (John 18:38) and built altars to unknown gods (Acts 17:23). Through centuries of sad experience, the heathen had learned to realize their own blindness and helplessness, and there was among the people a feeling of emptiness, a seeking for the truth, and a longing for something that could satisfy. Plinius, the Roman author, wrote, "Give me a new comfort, a great and powerful comfort, such as I have never heard of or read about. All that I have read and heard in my life comes to my mind, but my pain is too great." What their hearts craved, but in vain sought in their own cults or philosophy, the Gospel brought them. That explains the success of the Gospel preaching. *What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you* (Acts 17:23).

### **b. Preparation of a Positive Nature**

Through the providence of God, there were in the heathen world at the time of the apostles many conditions that helped the spread of the Gospel.

- (1) The Roman Empire comprised the whole civilized world.
- (2) The Greek language was spoken everywhere.
- (3) Greek philosophy furnished adequate terms for Christian psychic states and conditions.
- (4) Good roads had been built throughout all countries for the transportation of the Roman legions.
- (5) The Jews were scattered throughout all parts of the Roman Empire. This fact was of a twofold significance. In the first place, knowledge of the one true God was disseminated among the heathen peoples. In the second place, the synagogues of the Jews afforded in the different cities a convenient place for the preaching of the Gospel.

Acts 13:14-16 – *But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the*

*rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. And Paul stood up, and beckoning with the hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken.*

## B. The Person of the Redeemer

### 1. Introductory Remarks

The Bible is a large volume. It contains 66 books written by a great number of authors during a period of about 1,600 years. It deals with a vast number of subjects. It contains history, poetry, philosophy, and theology. But from Genesis to Revelation, there runs as a carmine thread one great idea which deals with one great subject and treats of one great person on whom everything centers: Jesus Christ. He was the expectation and hope of the people of God under the old dispensation; of Him spoke the prophets; of Him sang the poets; to Him pointed as symbols and prototypes the rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the Old Testament. For His coming, elaborate preparations were made for 4,000 years both among Jews and Gentiles. When He was about to appear, the greatest of all prophets was sent to prepare the way for Him. When He came, He spoke as no one had ever spoken before. Although He had no education in the ordinary sense of the word, all agree that He spoke wiser and deeper words than any other man that has ever lived and that He revealed God to man in a clearer manner than all the wise men of the world combined. And He performed works that are absolutely unique in the history of the world. Jesus Christ towers way above the rest of the sons of men.

And He made claims and pretensions that are unheard of by any man. He not only said that He spoke the truth but also said that He was the Truth; He not only showed the way, as others pretended to do, but also claimed that He was the way; He not only taught how life might be obtained but also asseverated that He was the life. He declared that no one could come to the Father except through Him. And He promised that He would give eternal life to those who believed on Him and that He would raise them up at the last day.

In spite of all this, He was hated by the leaders of His own people as no Jew has ever been hated. And He was crucified as a malefactor.



And still, after He was dead, His followers went out into the world and preached to Jew and Gentile, to Greek and barbarian, to the ignorant and the scholar alike that there is not salvation in any other than in that one who, over in Palestine, was hanged on a tree by the rulers of His own people. This preaching was, of course, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. And still, this “preaching of foolishness” appealed to the human heart; it simply captivated the souls of men in both high and low positions, got a power over their lives, and transformed them in a most miraculous way; it conquered nation after nation. And wherever this preaching has gained foothold, the world has been changed most marvelously.

Who is this man who stands without a peer in the history of the world? Who is this man whose birth forms that epoch in history from which time is reckoned?

There has never been a man concerning whom the opinions have been so divided and concerning whom there have been such heated discussions.

Christ Himself says, *For except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins* (John 8:24); and on the other hand, He says, *This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ* (John 17:3). Surely, according to Christ Himself, it is of the greatest importance that we should have the right conception of His person. Life and death depend on our conception of Christ. And if there is anything which ought to be interesting, it must be the study of this man. *What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?* This question Christ Himself put to the Jews (Matt. 22:42). And this important question we will now proceed to answer. But we could never answer it correctly simply by the light of our own reason. But God Himself has given the answer plainly and clearly in Holy Writ. And he who will permit the Holy Spirit to be his teacher in this matter shall not err; *he ... shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life* (John 8:12).

## 2. The Incarnation of the Redeemer

The mission of Jesus Christ on earth was to redeem the fallen human race. In order to do this, it was necessary that he should become man. As God, He existed from eternity. As man, He had to have a beginning. The historical act of the Son of God becoming man had to take place in time. This historical act is called the incarnation, from the Latin word *caro*, meaning flesh. The incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that God simply appeared in a human

form; nor does it mean that He changed Himself into a man; nor does it mean that the *Logos* united Himself with a previously existing human being; nor does it mean that He, out of His divine person, created and united with Himself a human nature. But by the incarnation, we understand that the *Logos*, the Son of God who existed from all eternity, united in His divine person with His divine nature a human nature, i.e., a human natural organism, a human body and a human soul, formed in the womb of the virgin Mary out of physical matter existing in her. He thus became a real man at the same time that He continued to be real God. He became the God-man, a theanthropic person.

John 1:1, 14 – *In the beginning was the Word [λόγος], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us ... full of grace and truth.*

Heb. 2:14 – *Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same ...*

### 3. The Two Natures of the Redeemer

#### a. The Divine Nature of the Redeemer

We have stated that He who was made flesh in the womb of the virgin Mary was a theanthropic person, i.e., that He who was *made in the likeness of men* (Phil. 2:7) was at the same time true God, consubstantial, coequal, and coeternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

The Bible proofs for the deity of the second person in the Godhead we have given in II, C. Bible Proofs of the Doctrine of the Trinity, pp. 57-66, especially under 2, f, (2) Divinity Is Ascribed to the Son, pp. 61-64. In addition to these, we shall here only consider some of Christ's own testimonies concerning Himself and how those to whom He spoke understood Him.

John 5:17-19, 21, 23 – *But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh even until now, and I work. For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God. Jesus therefore answered ... For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom he will ... that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him.*

John 10:30-33 *I and the Father are one. The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of those works do ye stone*

*me? The Jews answered him, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.*

*Matt. 26:63-66 – And the high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power; and coming on the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his garments, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? They answered and said, He is worthy of death.*

According to these passages, Jesus called God His Father and Himself the Son of God, and the connection shows how those to whom He spoke understood Him. They understood Him, by these terms, to make Himself equal with God, yea, to make Himself God; and therefore, they wanted to stone Him for blasphemy; and for such “blasphemy,” He was sentenced to death by the high counsel of the Jews. (Lev. 24:10-16 contains a story about blaspheming and the consequence God appointed for blaspheming; v. 16 reads in part, *And he that blasphemeth the name of Jehovah, he shall surely be put to death.*)

### **b. The Human Nature of the Redeemer**

We have said that the Redeemer was a theanthropic person. That means that He was not only true God but also true man. He was a man with the same kind of a human body and the same kind of a human soul as other men have. It was necessary that the Redeemer should be a true man that he might redeem the human race by suffering and death.

*Heb. 2:14-15 – Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

#### **(1) Bible Proofs of Christ’s Humanity**

(a) Christ is said to have descended from David, Abraham, and Adam according to the flesh. See the genealogies in Matt. 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38.

Gen. 3:15 – *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

Rom. 1:3 – *Concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh.*

Rom. 9:5 – *Whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh ...*

Luke 1:32 – *... And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.*

(b) Christ shared the ordinary human experiences, performed ordinary human acts, and lived an ordinary human life. He was born and died; He hungered and thirsted; He ate and drank; He rejoiced and wept; He walked and sat, slept and awoke, taught and spoke, etc.

(c) Both Christ's body and his soul are mentioned.

John 2:21 – *But he spake of the temple of his body.*

Luke 24:39 – *See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having.*

Matt. 27:50 – *And Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit.*

(d) Christ is expressly called a man, and he very commonly called Himself “the Son of man.”

John 8:40 – *But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth ...*

I Tim. 2:5 – *For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus.*

Matt. 20:18 – *... And the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes ...*

## **(2) Peculiarities of Christ's Humanity**

### **(a) Christ's Infirmities**

When Christ was here on earth, He shared with the rest of men the infirmities common to all men such as hunger, fatigue, sorrow, pain, etc. (*infirmitates naturales*).

Isa. 53:4 – *Surely he hath borne our griefs [or, sicknesses], and carried our sorrows.*

Heb. 4:15 – *For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

But the Scriptures do not tell us that He had any personal or individual infirmities such as deformity of body, lack of any of the five

senses, or any similar disease from which one may suffer but not another (*infirmities personales*).

**(b) Christ's Excellencies**

He was, in the highest degree, endowed with excellent mental powers and faculties.

Luke 2:47 – *And all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.*

John 7:15 – *The Jews therefore marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?*

Luke 2:52 – *And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*

**(c) Christ's Sinlessness**

The human nature of Christ was different from the nature of all other men since the Fall in the respect that it was not sinful. All, even the greatest and most pious men of God, have confessed that they are sinners and have complained of their depravity and have prayed for forgiveness (see, for example, David in Ps. 51, Daniel in Dan. 9, and Paul in Rom. 7). But from the lips of Jesus, there never came an intimation of anything like an acknowledgment or confession of sin. He taught us to pray, *Forgive us our sins* (Luke 11:4), but for Himself, He never prayed for forgiveness. On the contrary, He on several occasions protested His sinlessness and perfect conformity to the will of God. And the apostles bear the same testimony concerning Him.

John 8:46 – *Which of you convicteth me of sin? ...*

II Cor. 5:21 – *Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf ...*

Heb. 4:15 – *For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

Heb. 7:26 – *For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners ...*

I Pet. 1:18-19 – *Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot, even the blood of Christ.*

I Peter 2:22 – *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.*

**(d) Christ's Immortality**

Death is the wages of sin. Since Christ was sinless, it follows that his body was different from other human bodies after the Fall in

the fact that it was not subject to death. Christ died, but His death did not occur by necessity, as in the case of other men, but by an act of His own free will.

John 10:17-18 – ... *I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again ...*

#### 4. The Unity of the Person of the Redeemer

Although Christ is both God and man and, consequently, has both a divine and a human nature, He is not two persons but one. In other words, there is in Christ only one intelligent, indivisible, incommunicable substance possessing self-consciousness and self-determination and which is not a part of another but subsists of itself. The Son of God and the Son of man are the same, united in one theanthropic person. There is but one ego.

Luke 1:31-32, 35 – *And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David ... The holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God.*

Rom. 1:3-4 – *Concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord.*

The same person is here spoken of as the son of Mary and the Son of God; the same man is said to be born of the seed of David and is declared to be the Son of God with power.

#### 5. The Personal Union

By the personal union, we understand that, from the moment of the conception of Christ, both natures, the divine and the human, have been and forever will be inseparably and indissolubly united in one theanthropic person so that one of His natures can no longer be conceived of as existing without the other. Consequently, the whole life of Christ had a theanthropic character. See the passages just quoted under 4. The Unity of the Person of the Redeemer.

Formula of Concord, Part II (Solid Decl.), Ch. VIII, 46, 47 –

“Secondly, as to the execution of the office of Christ, the person does not act and work in, with, through, or according to only one nature, but in, according to, with and through both natures, or, as the Council of Chalcedon declares, one nature operates, with the com-

munion of the other, in that which is a property of either. Therefore Christ is our Mediator, Redeemer, King, High Priest, Head, Shepherd, etc., not only according to one nature, whether it be the divine or the human, but according to both natures, as this doctrine is in other places more fully treated.”

The term personal union is sometimes used to designate the act of union which took place at the conception of Christ; but most commonly, it is used to designate the state of union which always continues to exist.

## 6. The Communion of Natures

By the communion of natures, we mean that the two natures permeate and penetrate each other. This permeation or penetration the theologians have expressed by the use of the term *perichoresis*, and they have said that the communion of natures is *perichorectic*.

Col. 2:9 – *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

a. The theologians call this union unmixed or unconfused, thereby designating that, although there is a pervasion of each nature by the other, they are not mingled together or changed into something new, like hydrogen and oxygen which together make water; but they remain distinct, like body and soul which remain unconfused although the soul very intimately permeates the body, or like fire and iron which never mix although fire may penetrate the iron.

b. The theologians also call this union an inner and personal union to distinguish it from an outward union, such as that between two pieces of wood that are glued together or that between a person and the clothes that he wears.

c. The union is also said to be inseparable or lasting; i.e., the union effected between the divine and human natures of Christ at His incarnation is never dissolved. It did not last only during Christ's visible sojourn on earth. The human nature is united with the divine nature also in glory.

## 7. Personal Propositions

A direct result of the personal union and the communion of natures is what the theologians call personal propositions. By personal propositions, we understand that the concrete of one nature is used as the predicate in a sentence in which the concrete of the other nature is used as the subject, e.g., “the Son of God is man,” or “the Son of man is God.”

Isa. 9:6 – *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given ... and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Matt. 16:13, 16 – ... *Who do men say that the Son of man is? ... Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

## 8. The Communication of Properties

*(communicatio idiomatum)*

Another direct result and consequence of the personal union and the communion of natures is the communication of properties, or the *communicatio idiomatum*. By *idiomatum* in this connection, we understand not only properties or attributes properly so called – i.e., properties, characteristics, or marks that are peculiar to each of the two natures and which distinguish one from the other – but also operations, actions, conditions, and results that follow from the properties. By the communication of properties, we understand two things: first, that all the properties that belong to either of the two natures are communicated, or ascribed, to the person of the Redeemer; and second, that all the properties that belong to one of the natures are communicated, or ascribed, to the other nature so that the human nature participates in the properties of the divine nature and vice versa.

The communication of properties may be divided into different kinds or genera.

### a. Genus Idiomaticum

By this genus, we understand that the attributes of either nature, or both natures, are ascribed to the person of the Redeemer, the person being designated either by a concrete of human nature, e.g., the Son of man, or a concrete of divine nature, e.g., the Son of God, or by a name which implies both natures, e.g., Christ.

This genus may be divided into three species.

(1) Human attributes are ascribed to the concrete of the divine nature.

Acts 3:15 – *And killed the Prince of life ...*

I Cor. 2:8 – ... *For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

Gal. 2:20 – ... *And that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.*

(2) Divine attributes are ascribed to the concrete of human nature.



Matt. 9:6 – ... *The Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins*

...

John 3:13 – *And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven.*

(3) Both divine and human attributes are ascribed to the person, the person being designated from either nature or from both natures.

Rom. 9:5 – *And of whom [the fathers] is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all. God blessed for ever.*

Rom. 1:3-4 – *Concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power ...*

### **b. Genus Apotelesmaticum**

(from the Greek – to effect, perform, finish, complete)

*Genus apotelesmaticum* has reference to the acts of the mediatorial office of Christ. The object of the incarnation, or the union of the human nature with the divine nature, was that the *Logos* might become our mediator or Redeemer. By the *genus apotelesmaticum*, we understand that our Savior and Redeemer performs all that pertains to His work as Mediator, i.e., all the acts of his threefold office, not through one nature but through both, each performing in communion with the other that which is peculiar to it. As stated before, Christ's whole life on earth had a theanthropic character. His acts were not of two kinds, one kind the product of His human nature and one kind wrought by His divine nature. In other words, He did not do some things, for example, the raising of the dead or the conquering of the devil, as God, and some things, for example, growing, weeping, and dying, as man. His whole work, and every individual act, were a product of the cooperation of both natures. All that He did, all that He said, and all that He thought He did, said, and thought through both natures, each nature, of course, performing that which was peculiar to it but in such a way that also the other nature had part in it. The mediatorial work of Christ is, therefore, sometimes ascribed to the concrete of the divine nature, sometimes to the concrete of the human nature, and sometimes to the concrete of both natures.

I John 3:8 – ... *To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

Luke 19:10 – *For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.*

I Cor. 15:3 – ... *That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.*

Formula of Concord, Part I (Epitome), Ch. III, 2-3 –

“For the one side has held that Christ alone, according to his divinity, is our righteousness, if he dwell in us by faith; contrasted with which divinity, dwelling in men by faith, all the sins of men should be regarded as a drop of water to the great ocean. On the contrary, others have held that Christ is our righteousness before God, alone according to the human nature.

“Against both the errors just recounted, we unanimously believe, teach and confess that Christ is our righteousness, neither according to the divine nature alone, nor according to the human nature alone, but the entire Christ according to both natures, alone in his obedience, which as God and man he rendered the Father even to death, and thereby merited for us the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, as it is written: ‘As by one man’s disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous’ (Rom. 5:19).

### **c. Genus Majesticum**

Besides the *genus idiomaticum* and the *genus apotelesmaticum*, both of which can be proved directly from the Bible, most Lutheran theologians also have a third genus, namely, the *genus majesticum* which only indirectly, i.e., by a logical inference, can be proven from the Bible. By this genus, the theologians understand that all those attributes of Christ that express the perfection, power, glory, and majesty of His divine nature – such as omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience and worship – are communicated to His human nature.

Matt. 18:20 – *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

Matt. 28:18 – ... *All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.*

Col. 2:3 – *In whom [Christ] are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden.*

Col. 2:9 – *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

Phil. 2:10-11 – *That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Matt. 28:17 – *And when they saw him, they worshipped him ...*

Matt. 9:6 – ... *The Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins*  
...

Formula of Concord, Part II (Solid Decl.), Ch. VIII, 64 –

“Therefore, we hold and teach, with the ancient orthodox Church, as it explained this doctrine from the Scriptures, that the human nature in Christ has received this majesty according to the manner of the personal union, viz. because the entire fulness of the divinity dwells in Christ, not as in other holy men or angels, but bodily, as *in its own body*, so that with all its majesty, power, glory and efficacy in the assumed human nature, voluntarily when and as he [Christ] wills, it shines forth, and in, with, and through the same manifests, exercises, and executes its divine power, glory and efficacy, as the soul does in the body and fire in glowing iron. For by this illustration, as is also mentioned above, the entire ancient Church explained this doctrine.”

#### **d. Genus Tapeinoticon**

(from the Greek – to humble)

Besides the three genera mentioned above, some Lutheran theologians maintain that there is a fourth genus, namely, the *genus tapeinoticon*. By this genus, they understand that human attributes are ascribed to the divine nature.

Gal. 4:4 – *But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law.*

Mark 13:32 – *But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*

I Cor. 2:8 – ... *For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

### **C. The States of the Redeemer**

When we study the life of Christ as it is portrayed to us in the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments, from the time of His conception in the womb of His mother Mary until He sits at the right hand of the Father, we find that it presents to us two different pictures, two distinct periods, two sharply contrasted conditions and modes of existence. The one presents to us His earthly life, His life in the flesh under the limitations of time and space, in self-renunciation and abnegation, in the form of a servant. The other presents to us His resurrection life in the fulness of His divine glory and majesty.

The one is called the state of humiliation (*status exinanitionis*), and the other is called the state of exaltation (*status exaltationis*).

Phil. 2:5-11 – *Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

## 1. The State of Humiliation

### a. The Nature of the State of Humiliation

The state of humiliation is the state in which Christ lived during His life on earth from the conception in His mother's womb until He was laid in the grave, during which time He, to a great extent, emptied Himself of His divine perfections, glory, and majesty and lived the life of a servant in obedience, under limitations and self-renunciation, in poverty, privation, and suffering.

Matt. 8:20 – ... *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*

Matt. 20:28 – *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister ...*

Luke 2:51 – *He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them ...*

Luke 22:27 – ... *But I am in the midst of you as he that serveth.*

John 17:5 – *And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

II Cor. 8:9 – *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.*

Phil. 2:5-8 – quoted at the top of this page

Heb. 2:9 – ... *who hath been made a little lower than the angels ...*

Heb. 5:7-8 – *Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered.*

Heb. 12:2 – *Looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame ...*

### **b. Christ's Relation to His Father During His Humiliation**

The relation of Christ the Redeemer to His Father in the state of humiliation was not the same as before and after.

#### **(1) Christ's Dependence upon His Father**

In the state of humiliation, Christ lived a life of dependence on His Father. He prayed continually to His Father; and only he prays who needs to get something.

Heb. 5:7 – *Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death ...*

He speaks about gifts being given Him by the Father.

John 17:7-8 – *Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee: for the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them ...*

John 17:9 – *I pray ... for those whom thou hast given me ...*

Also the miracles were given Him by the Father.

John 5:36 – *... the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish ...*

John 10:25 – *... the works that I do in my Father's name ...*

At the grave of Lazarus, Christ thanked the Father that He heard Him. (John 11:41 – *... And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me.*) Hence, He must have prayed the Father for the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

#### **(2) Christ's Obedience to His Father**

In the state of humiliation, Christ lived a life of obedience to the Father. Therefore, He was in the Old Testament called the servant of Jehovah.

Isa. 42:1 – *Behold, my servant, whom I [Jehovah] uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him ...*

Christ was born under the Law.

Gal. 4:4 – *But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law.*

Heb. 5:8 – *Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered.*

Phil. 2:8 – *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself; becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.*

Therefore, Christ always spoke about doing His Father's will.

John 6:38 – *For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

Luke 22:42 – *... Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*

### **(3) Christ's Inferiority to His Father**

In the state of humiliation, Christ was, in short, inferior to the Father. In John 14:28, Christ expressly states, *The Father is greater than I.* And in Matt. 24:36, He tells us that the Son does not know the time of the end of the world, but only the Father knows.

### **c. Stages in the State of Humiliation**

It is customary to speak about various stages or grades in Christ's state of humiliation. By stages or grades, we mean different events, periods, conditions, or aspects of the earthly life of our Redeemer. We might mention the following: conception, birth, circumcision, childhood, life among men, suffering, death, and burial.

#### **(1) Christ's Conception**

By the conception of Christ, we understand that the Holy Spirit came upon the Virgin Mary and that the power of the Most High overshadowed her, working in her the miracle that she, in a way which was not according to the ordinary course of nature, i.e., without male seed, was fructified and conceived a child who was the *Logos*, the eternal Son of God, who, in the womb of the Virgin, in His divine person united with His divine nature the human organism formed from the seed of the Virgin.

Luke 1:31-35 – *And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God.*

Isa. 7:14 – *... Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

Gen. 3:15 – *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ...*

Rom. 1:3 – *Concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh.*

Heb. 2:14 – *Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same ...*

The humiliation of Christ began simultaneously with His conception, but the incarnation itself was not a part of His humiliation. The Son of God could have assumed human flesh and blood without humbling Himself; and He has still, at the right hand of the Father, the human nature which He assumed at His conception, but He is no longer on that account in a state of humiliation. When, therefore, we mention His conception as the first step in His humiliation, we have reference, not to the fact that He became a man, but to the fact of the manner of the incarnation, namely, that He was conceived by a sinful woman and that He began His earthly sojourn by assuming the form of an unconscious babe in the womb of a woman. The humiliation of Christ did not consist in His *being made in the likeness of men* but in *taking the form of a servant* (Phil. 2:7).

## **(2) Christ's Birth**

The humiliation connected with the birth of the Redeemer consists in this: that He was born a weak, helpless infant; that He was born by a humble and poor mother; that He was born in a stable, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger (Luke 2:7). His foster father was a carpenter (Matt. 13:55), and His mother was a poor woman (as evidenced by Luke 2:24 compared with Lev. 12:6-8).

## **(3) Christ's Circumcision**

The circumcision of Christ was to Him a humiliation because, by this fact, He who was the Lord of the Law (Mark 2:28) subjected Himself to the Law and assumed the obligation to keep and fulfill the Law that He might redeem us from the curse of the Law.

Gal. 5:3 – *Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.*

Rom. 2:25 – *For circumcision indeed profiteth, if thou be a doer of the law ...*

## **(4) Christ's Childhood**

The childhood of Christ was a humiliation to Him because, in the first place, He was a helpless child, growing and developing both physically and mentally according to the ordinary course of nature like any other child. In the second place, He was subject and obedient to His mother and foster father although He by divine right was their Lord. In the third place, He grew up in a humble home and was known as a carpenter's son, working with His own hands and Him-

self learning the carpenter's trade. In the fourth place, He spent the years of His childhood and youth in a despised village among common people of the working class.

Luke 2:40 – *And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.*

Luke 2:51-52 – *And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them ... And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*

Matt. 13:55 – *Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas?*

Mark 6:3 – *Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended in him.*

John 1:46 – *And Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? ...*

### **(5) Christ's Life among Men**

Christ's life among men was a life of humiliation because, in the first place, He was poor and had not where to lay His head. In the second place, He was subject to the common ailments of sinful men such as hunger, fatigue, sorrow, and pain. In the third place, He came to His own, but His own received Him not; He was misunderstood, slandered, belied, hated, and persecuted. In the fourth place, even His own disciples misunderstood, tempted, forsook, denied, and betrayed Him. All these things combined to make His earthly life a hard and sad one.

Matt. 8:20 – *... The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*

Matt. 4:2 – *And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered.*

John 4:6 – *... Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus by the well ...*

Isa. 53:3 – *He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ...*

Matt. 12:24 – *But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons.*

John 1:11 – *He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not.*

John 9:16 – *Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath ...*

John 15:25 – *... They hated me without a cause.*



John 19:15 – *They therefore cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.*

Matt. 16:22-23 – *And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.*

Matt. 26:56 – ... *Then all the disciples left him, and fled.*

Matt. 26:69-74 – *Now Peter was sitting without in the court: and a maid came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilaean. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and saith unto them that were there, This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I know not the man. And after a little while they that stood by came and said to Peter, Of a truth thou also art one of them; for thy speech maketh thee known. Then began he to curse and to swear, I know not the man. And straightway the cock crew.*

Matt. 26:14-16 – *Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said, What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to deliver him unto them.*

Matt. 26:47-49 – *And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priest and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he: take him. And straightway he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Rabbi; and kissed him.*

## **(6) Christ's Suffering**

We may speak of the suffering of Christ in a wider sense, including all the privations, discomforts, temptations, sorrows, and adversities from the earliest infancy of Christ, as treated above under (1) Christ's Conception - (5) Christ's Life among Men. This suffering the theologians have called *passio inchoata*. And we may speak of His suffering in a narrower sense, thereby denoting His extreme suffering which He suffered the last couple days of His life in the flesh, the suffering which Jesus refers to in Matt. 20:18-19 when He says, *Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be*

*delivered unto the chief priests and scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify ....”* This suffering the theologians have designated as *passio magna* or *passio extrema*.

In regard to the suffering of Christ, we make the following observations.

(a) The suffering of Christ was not something which merely happened to Him, but it was necessary for our salvation and was, therefore, inflicted on Him according to the foreknowledge, counsel, and plan of God.

Luke 24:25-26 – *And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things ...?*

John 18:11 – *Jesus therefore said unto Peter, Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*

Matt. 26:39 – *And he ... fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me ...*

Acts 2:23 – *Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ...*

Acts 4:27-28 – *... Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together; to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council foreordained to come to pass.*

(b) But although the suffering of Christ was necessary, and although the cup was given by the Father according to His determinate counsel, it was, nevertheless, not forced upon Christ; but He chose to take it upon Himself, and He bore it voluntarily. He humiliated himself, becoming obedient even unto death (Phil. 2:8).

John 10:18 – *No one taketh it [my life] away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again ...*

Heb. 10:7 – *... Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.*

(c) Christ bore His suffering patiently.

Isa. 53:7 – *He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. (Compare Matt. 27:12-14 – *And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he**

*gave him no answer, not even to one word: insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.)*

(d) The suffering of Christ was a suffering of both body and soul. His bodily suffering was great. He was struck in the face and spat upon; He was scourged and crowned with thorns; the cross was laid upon His bloody shoulder and back; He was nailed to a cross where He hung for hours in the most excruciating pain, thirsting so that His tongue cleaved to His jaws.

Ps. 22:15-17 – *My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: a company of evil-doers have inclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I may count all my bones. They look and stare upon me.*

Matt. 26:67-68 – *Then did they spit in his face and buffet him: and some smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ: who is he that struck thee?*

John 19:1-2 – *Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head ...*

John 19:17-18 – *They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified him ...*

But Christ's greatest suffering was the agony of soul which He experienced both in anticipation of what was coming and in enduring it in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross when He was forsaken by God. This agony of soul was undoubtedly caused by being subjected to the wrath of God on account of the sin of the world which Christ had taken upon Himself and for which He had to suffer as though He had committed it all.

John 12:27 – *Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour.*

Matt. 26:38 – *... My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ...*

Luke 22:44 – *And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.*

Matt. 27:45-46 – *Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

### **(7) Christ's Death**

The death of Christ terminated His life in the flesh. Body and soul were separated, but His death did not affect the union between the divine and human natures which had taken place at His incarnation. Death, the wages of sin, is – in the fullest, deepest, and most awful sense of the word – separation from God. This penalty of sin Christ suffered on the cross when He was forsaken by God. Not only did He feel as though He were forsaken by God – not only was it a “seeming separation” – but He was actually forsaken, thus dying in the fullest sense of the word. But even in the deepest agony and humiliation, He did not despair but said, *My God*.

Matt. 27:50 – *And Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit.*

Matt. 27:46 – *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

### **(8) Christ's Burial**

The burial of Christ was the last stage in His humiliation and the culmination of it. It attested and confirmed His death. He was buried in the sepulcher of Joseph of Arimathaea – a good, righteous, and rich man, a member of the high council, and a disciple of Jesus – the tomb being a new one *where never man had yet lain* (Luke 23:53). See Matt. 27:57-60 and Luke 23:50-53 for the full account.

The significance of Christ's humiliation, especially His obedience, suffering, and death, will be treated later.

## **2. The State of Exaltation**

### **a. The Nature of the State of Exaltation**

The state of exaltation is the state in which Christ again assumed the condition of being on an equality with God. It is, in other words, the state in which He resumed the divine perfections, glory, and majesty of which He had emptied Himself during His state of humiliation. As Christ in entering into the state of humiliation did not cease being God, so He in re-entering into His divine glory did not cease being a man. As both natures had been united in His person during His state of humiliation and, therefore, had part in the humiliation, so both natures continue to be united in His person in the state of exaltation and, therefore, have part in the exaltation. The state of exaltation began when Christ was made alive in the tomb, i.e., when His soul and body were again united.

John 17:5 – *And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

Eph. 1:20-22 – *... He raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church.*

Phil. 2:9-11 – *Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

### **b. Stages in the State of Exaltation**

As there were stages or grades in Christ's state of humiliation, so there are stages or grades in His state of exaltation. By stages in the exaltation, we understand the different conditions or aspects of the existence of Christ in His state of exaltation. We may mention the following: His descent into Hades, His resurrection, His ascension, His session at the right hand of God, and His return to judge the quick and the dead.

#### **(1) Christ's Descent into Hades**

*(descensus ad inferos)*

The doctrine concerning the descent of Christ into Hades was the last to be embodied in the Apostles' Creed, this link being added in the fourth century. Christ's descent into Hades is of a somewhat mysterious nature, and there have been many different opinions as to both the nature and the object of this act of Christ. We shall probably never get a fully satisfactory answer to all our questions concerning this event as long as we are in this world. But since our Creed makes mention of the descent into Hades, and since this fact is spoken of in the Bible, it is our duty to study it and to try, as far as possible, to find out what God has revealed to us concerning this matter.

#### **(a) What Is Meant by Christ's Descent into Hades**

The meaning which an unsophisticated person most naturally would get by reading the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed would be that Christ died, that His body was buried, and that His soul went where the souls of all who die go, viz., to Hades, i.e., the abode of the dead. His soul left *the land of the living* (a phrase in the Old Testament, e.g., Ps. 52:5) and went to the realm of the dead. In

other words, He died exactly as other people die and had the same experience that all who die have – body and soul were separated, the body was laid in a tomb, and the soul descended to the dead (*ad inferos*).

Luke 23:43 – *And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*

Acts 2:31 – *He [David] foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.*

But the Bible also speaks of another descent of Christ into Hades, and it is this descent into Hades which dogmaticians speak of under that heading. He descended into Hades after He had been made alive. Whether this descent took place before or after His resurrection we do not know because the Bible does not tell us. This descent into Hades was the first stage in His state of exaltation; i.e., it was, as far as we know, the first act of Christ after He had fully resumed life from His death on the cross.

I Pet. 3:18-19 – *Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.*

**(b) What Was the Object of Christ's Descent into Hades**

The object of Christ's descent into Hades was *preach[ing] unto the spirits in prison, that aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah* (I Pet. 3:19-20). The Bible does not say that He did not preach to more departed spirits, but this passage mentions only the spirits of those who had been disobedient in the days of Noah. This passage does not tell us what Christ preached to those spirits. The word *ἐκήρυξεν* (from *κηρύσσω*) is used which simply means to proclaim or publish something. The word *εὐαγγελίζω* is used about preaching the gospel. *Κηρύσσω* may or may not be used about preaching the gospel. How the word is to be understood has to be determined by the context. But there is nothing in the context of 1 Pet. 3:19-20 that warrants the theory that Christ preached salvation to the spirits in the prison. On the contrary, the context is decidedly against it. The most reasonable theory seems to be that His preaching to the spirits who had been disobedient and recalcitrant when salvation was offered them was a corroboration of the preaching of Noah which was what they had spurned. In other words, it was not a preaching of salvation but simply a tri-

umphant proclamation of the glorious victory He had won over death, Satan, and all His enemies.

## (2) Christ's Resurrection

### (a) *The Fact of the Resurrection of Christ*

On the third day after His crucifixion, Christ arose from the dead.

Luke 24:5-6 – ... *Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen ...*

I Cor. 15:4 – *And that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day ...*

There are said to be over one hundred places in the Bible where the resurrection of Christ is directly mentioned.

The resurrection of Christ is the most stupendous fact in history, and it is the great miracle of Christianity. With the resurrection of Christ, the Christian religion stands and falls. If Christ is risen from the dead, then Christianity is true; if, on the other hand, Christ has not been raised, then there is nothing to Christianity. Therefore, Paul says in I Cor. 15:14, *And if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain.* But he adds in v. 20, *But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep.*

The raising of Christ from the dead is ascribed to God the Father. Acts 2:24 – *Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death ...*

Rom. 6:4 – ... *Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father ...*

Sometimes Christ Himself is given as the efficient cause of the resurrection.

John 2:19, 21 – *Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up ... But he spake of the temple of his body.*

Luke 24:6 – *He is not here, but is risen ...*

After His resurrection, during a period of forty days, Christ at different times appeared at different places to different persons. The Bible tells about ten such appearances. At one time, He appeared to more than five hundred brethren (I Cor. 15:6). He walked with them, sat down with them, conversed with them, and ate and drank with them. The object of all this was, evidently, to convince them most thoroughly of the fact that He was risen from the dead. See



Matt. 28:8-10, 16-20; Mark 16:9-18; Luke 24:13-53; John 20:11-31 and 21:1-25; Acts 1:1-11, 3:15, and 10:39-41; and I Cor. 15:4-8.

**(b) The Resurrection Body of Christ**

The body with which Christ rose again from the dead was a true and real body.

Luke 24:37-43 – *But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish. And he took it, and ate before them.*

The body with which Christ rose again from the dead was the same body that He had before He was laid in the grave.

John 20:25-27 – ... *But he [Thomas] said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.*

But although the body with which Christ rose again from the dead was a true and real body, and although it was the same body that He had before He died, the resurrection body of Christ was very much different from the body which He had during His earthly life. Hence, we are told in Mark 16:12 that He was manifested *in another form* unto the two disciples that walked to Emmaus. The body which Christ had after His resurrection was a glorified, spiritual body. In Phil. 3:20-21, Paul says that when Christ returns from heaven, He *shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory*; and in I Cor. 15:44, we are told that we are to be raised with spiritual bodies, and the apostle adds, *If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit* (I Cor. 15:44-45). From this, it appears that the body of His glory, after which our bodies are to be fashioned, is a spiritual body. This is evidently also what Peter means when he



says that Christ was *put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit* (I Pet. 3:18).

**(c) The Significance of the Resurrection of Christ**

i. The resurrection proves that Christ was the One He claimed to be.

It was prophesied in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah that He should be raised from the dead (Ps. 16:8-11; compare Acts 2:25-31). Christ claimed that He was the Messiah (John 4:25-26); He claimed, and even testified under oath, that He was the Son of God (Matt. 26:63-64); He claimed for Himself the same honor that is due the Father (John 5:23). He claimed that He was sent by the Father for the salvation of the world (John 5:36-37, John 3:16, Luke 4:18-19); that He had authority to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6); that He had authority to execute judgment (John 5:27); that He was going to resurrect all the dead (John 5:28-29); and that He had power to lay down His life and to take it again (John 10:18). He presaged that He, after having been killed, should be raised up the third day (Matt. 16:21), and He told the Jews that they might destroy the temple of His body and in three days He would raise it up (John 2:19-22). Christ made such claims that, if they had not been true, He would have been the greatest blasphemer who has ever lived; wherefore, the Jews who did not believe in Him wanted to stone Him for blasphemy (John 10:33) and actually sentenced Him to death for blasphemy (Matt. 26:63-66). These claims are all made good by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. God would never have and could never have put His stamp on the work and words of an imposter and a blasphemer by raising Him from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is, therefore, the strongest proof that He was all that He claimed to be and, therefore, the strongest proof of the truth of the Christian religion. The object of saving faith can therefore, in one word, be said to be the resurrection of Christ as Paul has stated it in Rom. 10:9 when he says, *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

Rom. 1:4 – *Who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord.*

I Cor. 15:14, 17-18, 20 – *And if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain ... And if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they*

*also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished ... But now hath Christ been raised from the dead ...*

ii. The resurrection of Christ proves that the work of redemption has been completed.

Christ came to redeem us from sin and all the consequences of sin. In order to do that, He took upon Himself all our sins, which necessitated His suffering the punishment for sin, namely, death. Therefore, Christ died, His death being an atonement for our sins. But in order to save us, He must, at the same time that He dies and thus makes atonement for our sins, be stronger than death. If death holds Him as it has held everybody else, then He has lost and we are lost. Therefore, He must die but at the same time overcome death, wrench Himself out of the power and fetters of the grave, and thus bring him to naught who had the power of death, that is, the devil. The fact that Christ came out of the grave proves that He has won a glorious victory over all our enemies. And by raising His Son from the dead, God has put His stamp on His Son's work and has publicly declared that His work has been accepted, that all the demands of the Law have been satisfied, that Christ is justified from sin, and that righteousness has been procured for the whole world.

Rom. 4:25 – *Who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.*

iii. By the resurrection, Jesus entered into that form of existence in which He could always be present with His disciples everywhere unto the end of the world, send the Holy Spirit, and thus work for the subjective salvation of all men.

Matt. 28:18, 20 – ... *All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth ... And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

John 16:7 – *Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you.*

John 12:32 – *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.*

The expression *lifted up from the earth* has reference to Christ's death on the cross; but if His death had not been followed by His resurrection, He could not after His death have drawn all men unto Himself.

iv. From the resurrection of Christ flows the power unto spiritual resurrection and a holy life.

Rom. 6:3-5 – ... *All we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death[.] We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.*

Eph. 2:5 – *Even when we were dead through our trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved).*

Col. 2:12 – *Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.*

Col. 3:1 – *If then ye were raised together with Christ ...*

v. The resurrection of Christ assures believers of their resurrection.

In the first place, Christ has promised that He will raise up those who believe on Him, and His own resurrection is a guarantee that He will keep His promise.

John 6:40 – *For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

In the second place, believers are united with Christ, thus constituting together with Him one body, He being the Head and they the members.

Rom. 12:4-5 – *For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another.*

I Cor. 12:12 – *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.*

Eph. 1:22-23 – *And he [God] put all things in subjection under his [Christ's] feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

Now that the Head is risen, the members shall certainly not be left to remain in death.

I Cor 15:23 – *But each in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming.*

II Cor. 4:14 – *Knowing that he that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you.*

### (3) Christ's Ascension

The ascension of Christ was that act by which He left this world with His visible presence and returned to heaven to the supercosmic mode of existence which He had before He came to this world.

Acts 1:9-11 – *And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.*

Mark 16:19 – *So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven ...*

Luke 24:51 – *And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.*

John 17:5 – *And now, Father; glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

#### (a) *The Nature of the Ascension*

Although Jesus, after He was *made alive in the spirit* (I Pet. 3:18), could appear and disappear at pleasure, His ascension was not merely such a vanishing out of sight; but it was a real, bodily, local motion by which His visible sojourn on earth came to an end and by which He permanently went back to heaven. The passages just quoted plainly state that He was taken up; that He went into heaven; and that, as they were looking, they beheld Him going until a cloud hid Him from their eyes.

#### (b) *The Place to Which Christ Ascended*

When Christ ascended, He indeed moved upward toward that firmament or expanse which is also called heaven (Gen. 1:8); but the heaven to which Christ betook Himself was the heaven in which the throne of God is (Ps. 11:4) (*coelum majestaticum*). Christ told His disciples that, as He had come out from the Father and had come into the world, so, when He was going to leave the world, He was going to the Father (John 16:28). And He has taught us that the Father is in heaven (Matt. 23:9). He went into the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5). He *was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God* (Mark 16:19). *He ... ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things* (Eph. 4:10).

**(c) Christians' Benefits from the Ascension**

There are certain benefits which Christians derive from the ascension of Christ.

i. The ascension of Christ is a source of comfort and joy to believers.

In the first place, Christ went to prepare a place for His believers in His Father's house into which He has promised to receive them.

John 14:1-3 – *Let not your heart be troubled: 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; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

John 17:24 – *Father, I desire that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me ...*

In the second place, Christ went to the Father that He might send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Christ said to His disciples in John 14:28, *If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father,* and in John 16:7, *Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you.*

In the third place, He ascended into heaven that He might be *head over all things to the church* (Eph. 1:20-22) and might be with His believers *always, even unto the end of the world* (Matt. 28:20). For that reason, we find that the disciples, having understood the significance of Christ's ascension, no longer had sorrow in their hearts on account of His departure as the case had been before they understood these things (John 16:6); but after His ascension, *they ... returned to Jerusalem with great joy* (Luke 24:52).

ii. There is in the ascension of Christ an admonition to believers to be heavenly minded.

Christ is indispensable to a believer. The believer lives and moves and has his being in Christ; Christ is his food and drink; his heart's desire and longing is toward Christ. Now if Christ has ascended into heaven and has promised to take also those who are His unto Himself that they may be where He is, a Christian desires to *be with Christ; for it is very far better* (Phil. 1:23).

Col. 3:1-2 – *If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of*

*God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth.*

#### **(4) Christ's Session at the Right Hand of God**

*(sessio ad dextram Dei)*

At His ascension into heaven, Christ sat down at the right hand of God.

Mark 16:19 – *So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.*

Heb. 12:2 – *... Jesus ... hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Ps. 110:1 – *Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand ...*

This session at the right hand of God is not to be understood literally as though Christ locally sat down on a chair or throne at the right hand of the Father's throne. But the session at the right hand of God must be taken in the same sense as the hand of God. Now God, being a Spirit, has not a physical hand; but the hand of God denotes His power.

Ps. 8:6 – *Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands ...*

Ps. 89:13 – *Thou hast a mighty arm; strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.*

Luke 1:51 – *He hath showed strength with his arm ...*

The session of Christ at the right hand of God, therefore, is an anthropomorphic expression denoting that the God-man, Jesus Christ, at His return to the Father, was fully and permanently made a partaker of the divine reign, power, glory, and majesty. The right hand of God is in the Bible called *the right hand of Power* (Matt. 26:64), *the right hand of the Majesty on high* (Heb. 1:3), and *the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens* (Heb. 1:8). Therefore, Paul says in Eph. 1:20-22 that God *raised him [Christ] from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church.* And in Eph. 4:10, he says that Christ *ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.* And therefore, Peter says in I Pet. 3:22, *Who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.*

It is the same throne on which Christ shall sit when He returns to judge the world.

Matt. 25:31 – *But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory. (Compare this passage with Matt. 26:64 – ... Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.)*

### **(5) Christ's Return to Judge the Quick and the Dead**

When Christ's mediatorial work, continued on earth through the Church, is finished, then as the last stage in His state of exaltation, Christ shall come on the clouds of heaven, sit at the right hand of power, and judge all men. This, however, belongs to eschatology and will be treated under X. The Last Things (see X, C. The Coming of the Lord, pp. 331-335, and X, E. The Day of Judgment, pp. 338-342).

## VI. Soteriology

### The Offices of the Redeemer

*(munus triplex Christi)*

The object of Christ's coming to the world was to redeem the fallen human race and, thus, to reestablish the relation of fellowship between God and man which had been destroyed by sin. As the one who is accomplishing this work, Christ is called the Mediator (I Tim. 2:5 – *For there is one God, one mediator [μεσίτης] also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus*). And the work which He does to further this end is called His mediatorial work or mediatorial office. He performed His mediatorial work while He lived in the flesh, and He continues to perform it in a spiritual way until the end of time.

Under the Old Testament theocracy, God dealt with His people through three distinct offices, those of a prophet, a priest, and a king. The prophets announced to the people the will of God; the priests offered sacrifices for the sins of the people and prayed for them; and the kings ruled and protected the people of God. In Christ, these three offices are combined in their highest perfection. These three offices of Christ, however, must not be separated except in thought. They are only three sides from which Christ's mediatorial work may be viewed. Christ has revealed the will of God to us; as such, He is called prophet. He has given Himself as a ransom for us; as such, He is called priest. He preserves, increases, rules, and governs His Church; as such, He is called king. And we use these terms about Him because the Bible uses them in this connection.

### A. The Prophetic Office of Christ

*(munus propheticum)*

*God, ... of old time [spoke] unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners* (Heb. 1:1). Through the prophets of the Old Testament, God revealed and proclaimed to the people His will. The prophets were preachers of righteousness who



spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21). They rebuked the people for their sins, announced the punishment of God over those who would not repent, and spoke words of comfort and consolation to the sorrowing and repentant. And they predicted the glorious salvation that was to come through the Messiah. They spoke from the viewpoint of God. For that reason, sacred history is so much different from secular history (compare the account of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity in Dan. 4). "A prophet is more than a teacher of God's Word. A teacher of God's Word does no more than unfold, explain, and witness to, what a given revelation contains. The Prophet, on the contrary, brings us something new" (H. Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, 1898, p. 295). A prophet does not simply mean a man who prophesies, i.e., predicts future events, but one who speaks from God. He may reveal secret things (Daniel 2:27-28, 5:16); he may foretell future events; or he may simply preach righteousness. Moses was the greatest of all the Old Testament prophets. Samuel founded prophet schools, and it is especially from his time on that we find the prophets as a class of men playing a very prominent role in the history of God's people in the Old Testament.

Christ is the great prophet whom the Old Testament prophets foreshadowed and of whom they spoke. The work of Christ must be viewed in connection with and in the light of the work of the Old Testament prophets. Only in that connection can it be understood. They prepared the way for Him.

It was foretold in the Old Testament that the Messiah should be a prophet.

Deut. 18:15, 18-19 – *Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken ... I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.*

Christ called Himself a prophet.

Matt. 13:57 – *And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house.*

Christ was regarded as a prophet by the people.

Matt. 21:11 – *And the multitudes said, This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.*

Christ's appearance and ways were, in many respects, like those of the prophets of the Old Testament.

But Christ was more than an ordinary prophet. He towers way above every other man that has ever appeared as a messenger of God. *Never man so spake* (John 7:46). He not only proclaimed the truth but even said, *I am ... the truth* (John 14:6). The prophets said, *Thus saith the Lord*; He said, *Verily I say unto you*. The prophets said, *Hear the word of Jehovah*; He said, *I speak the things which I have seen with my Father* (John 8:38). The prophets *spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit* (II Pet. 1:21); but *he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for he giveth not the Spirit by measure* (John 3:34). He was the *great prophet* (Luke 7:16) whom *the Father, even God, hath sealed* (John 6:27), *a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people* (Luke 24:19) *in whom [were] all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden* (Col. 2:3). *God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son* (Heb. 1:1-2). Moses said regarding this Prophet, *Unto him ye shall hearken* (Deut. 18:15); and when He came, God spoke from heaven concerning Him, *This is my beloved Son: hear ye him*" (Mark 9:7).

## 1. What Is Included in the Prophetic Office of Christ

### a. Christ's Teaching and Preaching

As a prophet, Christ has revealed God and proclaimed His will as no one else.

John 1:18 – *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

John 18:37 – *... To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*

It goes without saying that, since Christ Himself is the author and source of our salvation, His teaching and preaching must, by necessity, be preeminently a teaching and a preaching about Himself, His person, His work, and His kingdom. Therefore, He spoke as He did in the following passages.

Matt. 11:28 – *Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

John 7:37 – *... If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.*

John 6:35 – *... I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

John 6:40 – ... *Every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

John 11:25-26 – ... *I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die ...*

As all the Word of God may be divided into the Law and the Gospel, so Christ also taught both Law and Gospel.

### **(1) Christ's Teaching of the Law**

The Law may be preached either for the purpose of bringing men to the realization of their sins that they may feel the need of a Savior, or for the purpose of enlightening the disciples of Christ as to how they should live in order to please God. Christ preached the Law with both these ends in view.

Christ's preaching was preeminently a preaching of the Gospel. He was anointed and sent *to preach good tidings to the poor ... to proclaim release to the captives ... to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord* (Luke 4:18-19). But *they that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick* (Matt. 9:12). Therefore, Christ also preached the Law that people might realize their need of the salvation which He came to bring. Therefore, Christ preached the Law in all its exacting severity. He laid great stress on the spiritual character and application of the Law. He showed us that the Law is not fulfilled by an outward observance of the letter but that our whole being must be in conformity with the spirit of the Law; in other words, not only our hand, foot, and tongue must keep the Law but also our heart. Our whole heart, soul, mind, and nature must be in conformity with the Law and must be like God. Not only he who has sexual intercourse with a woman that is not his wife commits adultery, but also he who has a desire to do it (Matt. 5:27-28). Not only he who kills a person commits murder, but also he who hates his brother (Matt. 5:21-22). It was especially in His Sermon on the Mount that Christ explained the Law, making clear its spiritual character and nature.

Matt. 5:17-19 – *Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven:*

*but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

*Matt. 22:37-40 – ... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets.*

*Matt. 5:48 – Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

## **(2) Christ's Preaching of the Gospel**

But as stated, Christ especially preached the Gospel: the good tidings about Himself, about the salvation which He came to procure, and about the kingdom which He came to establish. He preached Himself as the one on whom people should believe and to whom they should come to get eternal life, and He promised everyone that would come to Him that He would in no wise cast him out.

*Mark 1:14-15 – Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.*

*Luke 4:18-19 – The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*

*John 3:16 – For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

*Matt. 11:28 – Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

*John 6:35, 37 – ... I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst ... And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

*John 6:40 – For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

*John 7:37 – ... If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.*

*John 11:25-26 – ... I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.*

## **b. Christ's Prophecies**

As prophet, Christ not only preached the Law and the Gospel but also foretold future events. He foretold His suffering, death, and resurrection (Matt. 20:17-19), the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-15, Acts 1:8), the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 19:43-44), the persecution of the disciples (Luke 21:12-17), the condition among men toward the end of the world (Matt. 24), His coming again to judge the quick and the dead (Matt. 25:31-46), etc.

## **c. Christ's Miracles**

Christ performed a great number of miracles. We have an account of many of them in the four Gospels, but of many of them, we have no account.

John 20:30 – *Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book.*

John 21:25 – *And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.*

### **(1) Christ's Miracles Were Signs**

The miracles of Christ were signs; i.e., they signified certain things. They not only were the performances of acts but also contained deep spiritual significance in those acts. They were object lessons; they were preaching and teaching by pictures.

The opening of the eyes of the blind was a powerful sermon on the fact that Jesus had come to give men light, or understanding, in spiritual matters (see John 9, noting esp. vv. 5 and 39).

John 9:5 – *When I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

John 9:39 – *And Jesus said, For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind.*

The raising of the dead signified that Jesus had come to give life (see John 11, noting esp. vv. 25-26).

John 11:25-26 – *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?*

### **(2) Christ's Miracles Were Seals of Divinity**

The miracles of Christ were seals of His divine mission and authority, and their object was to prepare hearts for believing the Word and to confirm the faith in believers.

John 10:25, 37-38 – ... *The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me ... If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.*

John 3:2 – ... *Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him.*

John 20:30-31 – *Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.*

#### **d. Christ's Instituting of the Sacraments and Church**

The instituting of the sacraments and the ministry of the Church were also included in the prophetic office of Christ; and through these instrumentalities, His prophetic office is continued unto the end of the world.

Matt. 28:19-20 – *Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

John 20:21 – ... *As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

### **2. Stages in the Prophetic Office of Christ**

There are two stages in the prophetic office of Christ, the immediate and the mediate. By the immediate prophetic office of Christ, we understand that by which Christ in His own person performed that work of a prophet which we have just described. The mediate prophetic office of Christ is that which is being exercised by those whom He has sent and still is sending as His ambassadors.

John 20:21 – ... *As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

II Cor. 5:20 – *We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God.*

John 14:12 – *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father.*

## B. The Priestly Office of Christ

(*munus sacerdotale*)

Under the dispensation of the Old Testament, there was a priesthood. All the male descendents of Aaron were priests, and the whole tribe of Levi provided helpers for the priests. The priests were mediators between God and the people. No one but the priests could enter the tabernacle or the temple of the Lord. They attended to the service, offered the sacrifices, and prayed for the people. At the head of the priesthood was the high priest who was the only one who could enter the Holy of Holies. Into this place, he entered once every year on the Day of Atonement with the blood of a bullock and of a goat which he sprinkled upon the mercy seat, thus bringing a sin offering for his own sins and for the sins of the people.

Num. 18:6-7 – *And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are a gift, given unto Jehovah, to do the service of the tent of meeting. And thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priesthood for everything of the altar; and for that within the veil; and ye shall serve: I give you the priesthood as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.*

Ex. 28:29-30 – *And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before Jehovah continually. And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before Jehovah: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before Jehovah continually.*

See also Ex. 28 and 29 (the priesthood), Num. 3:3-13 (the Levites), and Lev. 16 (the Day of Atonement).

Christ is the great High Priest of whom all the priests in the Old Testament, and especially the high priests, were types. He is the mediator ... between God and men (I Tim. 2:5), *the mediator of a better covenant* (Heb. 8:6), and *the mediator of a new covenant* (Heb. 9:15). He has gone into the holy place, into the presence of God with His own blood; He has brought the sin offering for our atonement; and He intercedes for us.

Heb. 9:11-12 – *But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through*



*the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.*  
 Heb. 7:25 – *Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

It is especially the epistle to the Hebrews that speaks of Christ as a priest.

As indicated, the priestly office of Christ consists of two functions, viz., that He gave Himself as a sacrifice whereby He effected our redemption and that He intercedes for us. We therefore treat of the priestly office of Christ under two headings: first, the redemption, and second, the intercession.

### 1. The Redemption of Christ

The object of Christ's coming to this world was to redeem the human race from sin and all the consequences of sin, remedy the evil caused by the Fall, and thus make possible a restoration to fellowship with God. We therefore call Him the Redeemer, and His work we call the redemption.

Gal. 4:4-5 – *But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Isa. 59:20 – *And a Redeemer will come to Zion ...*

Heb. 9:12 – *... But through his own blood, [He] entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.*

#### **a. Terms for the Act of the Redemption**

##### **(1) “Redemption”**

As already stated, we have the word “redemption.”

Eph. 1:7 – *In whom we have our redemption [ἀπολύτρωσιν] through his blood ...*

I Pet. 1:18 – *Knowing that ye were redeemed [ἐλυτρώθητε], not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers.*

Gal. 3:13 – *Christ redeemed [ἐξηγόρασεν] us from the curse of the law ...*

The verb *λυτρόω* means to release or liberate by paying a ransom (*λύτρον*). Hence, redemption (*ἀπολύτρωσις*) means a release or liberation effected by the payment of a ransom. The verb *ἐξαγοράζω* means to redeem or buy by paying a price (from *ἀγορά*, market-place). The term “redemption,” therefore, and the verb “redeem,”



when used to express what Christ has done for us, denote that He has released or liberated us by paying a ransom.

## (2) “Ransom”

I Tim. 2:6 – *Who [Christ] gave himself a ransom [ἀντίλυτρον] for all ...*

Mark 10:45 – *For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom [λύτρον] for many.*

Both ἀντίλυτρον and λύτρον mean that which is given in exchange for someone as the price for his release or liberation.

## (3) “Purchase,” “Buy”

Related to the terms “redeem” and “ransom” are the term “purchase” and its synonym “buy.”

Acts 20:28 – *... Feed the church of the Lord which he purchased [περιεποιήσατο] with his own blood.*

I Cor. 6:20 – *For ye were bought [ἠγοράσθητε] with a price ...*

The first of these two verbs means to get for one’s self; hence, to buy. The second verb means to frequent the marketplace; hence, to buy.

## (4) “Propitiation”

Rom. 3:25 – *Whom [Christ Jesus] God set forth to be a propitiation [ἱλαστήριον], through faith, in his blood ...*

I John 2:2 – *And he is the propitiation [ἱλασμός] for our sins...*

I John 4:10 – *... God ... sent his Son to be the propitiation [ἱλασμόν] for our sins.*

Both ἱλαστήριον and ἱλασμός are derived from the verb ἱλάσκομαι which means “to render propitious to one’s self, to appease, conciliate to one’s self” (Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1889, p. 301). The nouns, therefore, mean an appeasement, propitiation, or expiation; or the meaning may be the means of appeasement or propitiation, i.e., that by which appeasement or expiation is effected. Christ, according to these passages, is the appeasement between God and man; He is the expiation for sin. In the Septuagint, the word ἱλαστήριον is used about the mercy seat (תְּרָפֶזֶת) covering the Ark on which the blood of atonement was sprinkled. Atonement was made on the mercy seat. We have here a transfer of the meaning of a term by the association of ideas.

## (5) “Reconciliation,” “Reconcile”

We have both the noun and the verb in Rom. 5:10-11 – *For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled [κατηλλάγημεν] to God*

through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled [καταλλαγέντες], shall we be saved by his life; and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation [καταλλαγὴν]. The verb καταλλάσσω means to change or exchange coins for others of equal value (as we have to do when we go to other countries); hence, to reconcile. The meaning of the noun is restoration to favor by yielding an equivalent in value to the offense. The idea is that one gets the favor and good will of the offended party by paying him a certain sum of money which is supposed to outweigh the offense.

### (6) “Make Peace”

The same idea that is contained in the term “reconciliation” is also found in the expression “Christ is our peace,” i.e., that He has abolished the enmity, slain the enmity, and made peace.

Eph. 2:14-15 – *For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace.*

Col. 1:20 – ... *having made peace through the blood of his cross ...*

### (7) “Deliver”

Heb. 2:14-15 – *Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver [ἀπαλλάξῃ] all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

### (8) “Savior,” “Save”

I John 4:14 – ... *The Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour [σωτῆρα] of the world.*

Matt. 1:21 – ... *And thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save [σώσει] his people from their sins.*

Hence, we find that Scripture teaches us that, in Christ, we have our redemption; that He gave Himself a ransom for us; that He is the propitiation or atonement for our sins; that through Him, we have received the reconciliation; that He is our peace and our Savior. We find that He has redeemed, purchased, and bought us, reconciled us to God, made peace, and saved us.

### **b. The Means and Manner of the Redemption**

What has Christ done to bring about our redemption? That which has caused man’s ruin and lost condition is sin. Sin is disobedience to the Law, the breaking of the Law. Therefore, it goes with-

out saying that restoration to fellowship with God could be brought about only by perfect obedience to the Law, by satisfying in every way and respect the requirements of the Law. But in accordance with God's legislative holiness, the Law requires, in the first place, that man must continue *in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them* (Gal. 3:10); i.e., it requires that the Law must be kept. And in accordance with God's punitive righteousness, the Law requires, in the second place, that everyone shall be *cursed ... who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them* (Gal. 3:10); i.e., the Law requires that offenses against the Law must be punished. That which Christ has done by which we are redeemed is that He has perfectly satisfied all the demands of the Law. In other words, He has redeemed us by His obedience in leading a life in perfect harmony with the Law and by His obedience in willingly suffering the condign punishment for sin. The first is called His active obedience and the second His passive obedience.

Rom. 5:19 – *For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous.*

Phil. 2:8 – *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.*

Heb. 5:8-9 – *Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation.*

### **(1) Christ's Active Obedience**

By the active obedience of Christ, we understand that Christ – in His life; in His actions, words, and thoughts as well as in His soul, heart, and nature; in His disposition and inclination – was continually in perfect harmony with the Law of God. In every point, He not only did and said the will of God but also did and said it with a willing and obedient heart; it was His meat to do the will of God. The relation of Christ to His Father during Christ's earthly life as our Mediator and Redeemer was not that of equality but that of an obedient servant born under the Law.

Phil. 2:6-8 – *Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.*

Gal. 4:4-5 – *But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Heb. 10:7 – *Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.*

John 6:38 – *For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

John 4:34 – ... *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work.*

## (2) Christ's Passive Obedience

By the passive obedience of Christ, we understand His suffering and death. We call it obedience because Christ suffered and died in perfect obedience to the will of God. The Law requires punishment for offenses against the Law; but in order that the suffering which Christ endured as a punishment for our violation of the Law might be a satisfactory atonement, the punishment must be suffered willingly and obediently, the heart and soul perfectly agreeing and consenting to the justice or the punishment inflicted. The suffering of punishment per se is not an atonement for sin; the suffering must be a willing, loving, and obedient yielding to the just requirement of the Law. One who suffers unwillingly is not in harmony with the Law. Not only did Christ suffer, but also He endured His suffering willingly in harmony with the spirit of the Law and the will of God. He was *obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross* (Phil. 2:8).

Luke 22:42 – ... *Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*

## (3) Terms for the Means and Manner of the Redemption

We have quoted passages to show which terms are used to express the act of redemption. Now, let us see which terms and phrases are used to express the means and manner of our redemption.

### (a) *We Are Redeemed by the Blood of Christ*

Matt. 26:28 – *For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.*

Heb. 9:22 – ... *And apart from shedding of blood there is no remission.*

Rom. 3:25 – *Whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood ...* (notice the punctuation)

Eph. 1:7 – *In whom we have our redemption through his blood ...*

I Pet. 1:18-19 – *Knowing that ye were redeemed ... with precious blood ... even the blood of Christ.*

Acts 20:28 – ... *Feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.*

Hence, we find that the Bible teaches that the blood of Christ was poured out for the remission of sins, that Christ is a propitiation for our sins in His blood, that we have our redemption through His blood, that we were redeemed with the blood of Christ, and that the Church of God was purchased with His own blood. The Bible does not seem to be afraid of “blood theology.”

**(b) We Are Redeemed by the Death of Christ**

The blood of Christ was shed when He died. To say that we are redeemed by the blood of Christ, therefore, is tantamount to saying that we are redeemed by His death.

Mark 10:45 – *For the Son of man also came ... to give his life a ransom for many.*

Rom. 5:10 – ... *We were reconciled to God through the death of his Son ...*

Heb. 2:14-15 – *Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

According to these passages, the ransom which Christ paid for our release or redemption was His life. We were reconciled to God through the death of His Son; i.e., that which was yielded by Christ whereby our restoration to the favor of God was effected was His life. It was through death that Christ brought the devil to nought and delivered them that were subject to bondage.

**(c) We Are Redeemed by the Cross**

Because Christ died on the cross, the Bible, by a figure, says that we are reconciled through the cross: [He] *reconcile[d] them both [Jew and Gentile] in one body unto God through the cross* (Eph. 2:16). Therefore, Paul says, *But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Gal. 6:14). And therefore, we sing, “In the cross of Christ I glory” (John Bowring, 1825).

**(d) We Are Redeemed by the Wounds of Christ**

Because wounds were inflicted on Jesus when He gave His life as a ransom for us, therefore our redemption is ascribed also to His wounds.

Isa. 53:5 – *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

### **c. The Vicarious Atonement**

According to the Scriptures, the sin of the world was reckoned unto Christ.

Isa. 53:6 – ... *And Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

II Cor. 5:21 – *Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf ...*

I Pet. 2:24 – *Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree*

...

And Christ suffered and died for this sin that had been laid on Him.

I Peter 3:18 – ... *Christ also suffered for sins once ...*

I Cor. 15:3 – ... *Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.*

Christ, therefore, suffered and died in our stead. In our stead, He endured the penalties due us for our sins. As our Substitute, He was obedient even unto death and suffered the punishment which we should have suffered for our sins. The doctrine that Christ suffered and died in our stead as our Substitute and that His suffering and death, therefore, were the enduring of the penalty and just punishment due us for our sins is called the doctrine of the vicarious atonement, or vicarious satisfaction.

Isa. 53:5 – *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

Gal. 3:13 – *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us ...*

I Pet. 3:18 – *Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous ...*

II Cor. 5:14-15 – ... *We thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all ...*

Heb. 2:9 – *But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every man.*

### **d. Why an Atonement Was Needed: God's Wrath**

The holiness and righteousness of God demanded that satisfaction and atonement for sin be made.

As already intimated, the word “propitiation” means either the act of appeasing one who is offended, or that which is offered as a ground for appeasement of wrath. The very term “propitiation,” as well as the term “reconciliation,” connote that someone is angry. There is no need of propitiation or reconciliation where there is not displeasure, wrath, or anger. The very word “atonement” connotes that a wrong has been perpetrated for which amends or reparation is made. That is the meaning of the term. Now, why was propitiation, reconciliation, or atonement needed? It was needed because God was angry. His wrath had been kindled.

Ezra 8:22 – ... *But his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.*

Nah. 1:2, 6 – *Jehovah is a jealous God and avengeth; Jehovah avengeth and is full of wrath; Jehovah taketh vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies ... Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his wrath is poured out like fire ...*

Rom. 1:18 – *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men ...*

Eph. 5:6 – *Let no man deceive you with empty words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience.*

Eph. 2:3 – ... *We ... were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

What causes the wrath of God? Sin. Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience (Eph. 5:6). Because of what things? The demonstrative pronoun refers back to the things mentioned in the preceding three verses: fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, idolatry, filthiness, foolish talking, jesting (Eph. 5:3-5). Because of these things – these sins, these vices – the wrath of God comes.

Rom. 1:18 – *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men ...*

Ezra 8:22 – ... *But his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.*

The wrath of God, then, is caused by sin. The wrath of God comes over those who sin.

John 3:36 – ... *But he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

It appears from these passages that sin awakens the wrath of God, in other words, that the wrath of God comes upon men because

of their sins. His wrath is against all them that forsake Him, and His wrath abides on them as long as they continue to disobey the Son.

Why does the wrath of God come over those who sin? Because He is a righteous God. The wrath of God is simply an expression of His righteousness. The wrath of God is the holy attitude which God by necessity must hold towards sinners. In Ps. 7:11, we read, *God is a righteous judge, yea, a God that hath indignation every day* (the word which in the American Standard is rendered *hath indignation* is in the King James translated *is angry*). One of the peculiarities of Hebrew poetry is that the same idea is expressed twice but in different ways. This is the case also with this passage. The last part of the verse contains the same idea as the first: God is a righteous Judge, or, to express it a little differently, He has indignation (or is angry) every day. His indignation, or anger, is an expression of His righteousness.

By the righteousness of God, we understand that attribute of God by which He renders to everyone what is due him according to the eternal principles of right and wrong, whether it be reward or punishment. Because God is righteous, therefore He is angry with sinners; i.e., He punishes them.

When the wrath of God abides on a sinner, the sinner cannot see life; he cannot live. *For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: evil [or, the evil] shall not sojourn with thee* (Ps. 5:4). To not sojourn with God is tantamount to death. He who by sin falls out of fellowship with God, therefore, dies.

Rom 6:23 – *For the wages of sin is death ...*

Gen. 2:17 – *... For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

Sin is in itself a demerit; it is evil per se. It deserves punishment; it is an outrage upon the righteousness of God, and it is, therefore, just that the sinner should be punished. Because of the righteous wrath of God, sin must be punished. And as has been stated, the punishment for sin is death. Sin severs the connection with God, and apart from God there is no life.

Ezek. 18:4 – *... The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*

Rom. 5:12 – *... And so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.*

Because sin separates the sinner from God, the only source and fountain of life, therefore death must, by necessity, be the consequence and punishment of sin. And this condign punishment for sin the sinner can never suffer so that he is through suffering, so that he



has made atonement for his sins; for as long as he is separated from God, he always continues to sin and rebel against God, and consequently, he is always subject to death. In the next place, death is always qualitatively eternal. Left to himself, man must always remain dead – once dead, forever dead. There is no power in man to free himself from death. If he gets into the power of death, death will hold him forever. Thus, all men find themselves under the judgment of eternal death.

But God loved the fallen human race. *God so loved the world* – so Christ tells us in John 3:16. On account of God's justice, the sinner is under the wrath of God and must be punished for his sins. But because God is perfect, He can at the same time, as has already been stated, love the sinner; and because He loves him, He desires to save him. Is that possible? Is there any way by which the justice of God can be satisfied and the penalty due the sinner for his sins be paid so that God, without violating the principles of justice, can save man and thus satisfy the craving of His love to save him? The wisdom of God has found a way. As stated, justice demands expiation, propitiation, atonement for sin. But as we have also seen, it was not necessary in order to satisfy the justice of God that each individual sinner should personally atone for his sin. It was possible that one could take the place of all and do it for all. And as we have seen, Christ died for all.

### ***e. The Evils from Which We Have Been Redeemed***

The redemption of Christ is a most complete redemption from all temporal, spiritual, and eternal evils that have come into the world by the Fall of man. It is, therefore, a redemption from sin, from all its guilt, power, and bondage, and from all its effects, consequences, and punishments in time and in eternity. It is, therefore, a redemption from the wrath of God; from the Law and its bondage, curse, and condemnation; from death – spiritual, temporal, and eternal; and from the power of the devil.

#### **(1) Redeemed from Sin**

Matt. 1:21 – ... *And thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.*

I John 1:7 – ... *And the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

When we say that Christ has redeemed us from sin, we do not mean that He has taken sin out of the world or out of man so that we no longer have sin. But in this statement, three things are implied:

first of all, that owing to the redemption of Christ, sins are forgiven so that we are freed from their guilt and punishment; secondly, that owing to the redemption of Christ, sin loses its dominating power over us; and thirdly, that as a consequence of the atonement of Christ, we shall in the next world be completely free from sin.

(a) We are freed from the guilt and condemnation of sin.

Col. 1:14 – *In whom [the Son] we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.*

Rom. 8:1 – *There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.*

(b) We are freed from the power of sin.

Rom. 6:14 – *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace.*

(c) We shall be freed from sin itself when we leave this world.

II Tim. 4:18 – *The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom ...*

Rev. 21:27 – *And there shall in no wise enter into it [New Jerusalem] anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie ...*

## **(2) Redeemed from the Wrath of God**

As we have seen, the wrath of God is the holy attitude which God holds toward the sinner on account of his sin; it is an expression of God's righteousness. Therefore the sinner, by his sin, comes under the wrath of God. Since the redemption of Christ is a redemption from sin, it goes without saying that it also is a redemption from the wrath of God. Because of the redemption of Christ, God no longer holds the attitude toward us that He by necessity must punish us; for Christ was punished in our stead, and the wrath of God turned toward Him.

Rom. 5:9 – *... Being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him.*

I Thess. 1:10 – *... Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come.*

## **(3) Redeemed from the Law**

Christ has freed us from the Law in a twofold sense. He has freed us from the Law as a way to life, and He has freed us from the curse of the Law by freeing us from the Law as a bond written against us.

(a) We are free from the Law as a way to life.

The old original way to obtain eternal life was by the Law.

Luke 10:28 – *... This do, and thou shalt live.*

Lev. 18:5 – *Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and mine ordinances; which if a man do, he shall live in them ...*

But this way to life is closed to man because his mind *is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be* (Rom. 8:7). But *what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son* has done (Rom. 8:3). Through Jesus Christ, the righteousness demanded by God in the Law and witnessed by the Law and the prophets has been manifested apart from the Law (Rom. 3:21-22). The Law has been abolished as a way to life, and Christ has become the way in its stead. Therefore, Christ says, *I am the way* (John 14:6). Christ *dedicated for us a new and living way* (Heb. 10:20). We are free from the Law and have nothing to do with the Law as a way or means by which we are to obtain eternal life.

Rom. 6:14 – *... For ye are not under law, but under grace.*

Rom. 7:6 – *But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held ...*

Gal. 3:24-25 – *So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

Gal. 4:4-5 – *But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Gal. 5:1 – *For freedom did Christ set us free ...*

Eph. 2:15 – *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances ...*

According to Rom. 7:1-6, we are as free from the Law as a woman whose husband is dead is free from the law of matrimony that bound her to him as long as he lived.

(b) We are free from the Law as a bond, in other words, from the curse of the Law.

When a person does not keep the Law perfectly, he becomes a debtor to the Law. The Law stands against him as a bond or note that has not been paid, and he comes under the curse and condemnation of the Law, for *cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them* (Gal. 3:10). Christ, having abolished the Law and having thus discharged us from the Law, has freed us from the indebtedness to the Law.

Gal. 3:13 – *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us ...*

Col. 2:14 – *Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances [δόγμασιν] that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.*

#### **(4) Redeemed from Death**

*The wages of sin is death* (Rom 6:23). As soon as sin entered into the world, death also came. Since Christ has redeemed us from sin, from the wrath of God, and from the Law, it goes without saying that He has also redeemed us from death. Death is caused by sin, and where the cause is removed, there the effect also disappears. Death is the penalty of the Law, and where the Law is abolished, there the penalty is also abolished. Death is essentially separation from God. Through Christ, we are reunited with God; and united with Him, we live. Through Christ, we are redeemed from death in all its forms: spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

II Tim. 1:10 – ... *Our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

Hos. 13:14 – *I will ransom them from the power of Sheol; I will redeem them from death: O death, where are thy plagues? O Sheol, where is thy destruction? ...*

Heb. 2:14-15 – *Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

John 11:25-26 – *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die ...*

John 5:24 – *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life.*

Eph. 2:1 – *And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins.*

John 5:28-29 – *Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.*

Rom. 8:1 – *There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.*

Rev. 20:14 – *And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire ...*

**(5) Redeemed from the Devil**

Through sin, the devil gets power over man. Immediately after the Fall, God promised that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). This was done when Christ died on the cross. Thus, He has redeemed us from the devil.

Heb. 2:14-15 – *Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

Rev. 20:10 – *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

**(6) Redeemed from All Evils of All Kinds**

Christ has redeemed us from all evils of all kinds, as evidenced by the following verses.

Isa. 35:10 – *And the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

Isa. 60:20 – *Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for Jehovah will be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.*

II Tim. 4:18 – *The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom ...*

Rev. 21:4 – *And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.*

**f. The Blessings That Have Been Procured for Us through the Redemptive Work of Christ****(1) Perfect Righteousness**

The Law of God demands of man a perfect righteousness, i.e., a perfect conformity to the Law of God as to both outward living and inward condition of heart and soul. This righteousness, which man cannot obtain by the Law in that it is weak through the flesh, Christ has procured for us.

Jer. 23:6 – *... And this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness.*

Rom. 3:21-22 – *But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the*

*prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction.*

Rom. 8:3 – *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.*

I Cor. 1:30 – *... Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.*

## **(2) Forgiveness of Sins**

The only way to get rid of our sins is to have the sins forgiven. As we have heard, God cannot forgive sins unless atonement and satisfaction for sin is made. Christ, having atoned for our sins, has thereby procured forgiveness for our sins.

Matt. 26:28 – *For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.*

Acts 13:38 – *Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins.*

Eph. 1:7 – *In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.*

## **(3) Sonship**

Through the Fall, men lost the privilege and blessing of being the children of God. This privilege and blessing Christ has procured for us again by His redemptive work.

Eph. 1:5 – *Having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself ...*

Gal. 4:4-5 – *... God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

John 1:12 – *But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

## **(4) Access to God**

When Christ died, the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple *was rent in two from the top to the bottom* (Matt. 27:51). This rending of the veil symbolized the fact that, by the death of Christ, the way to God was opened to all men. There is nothing now that separates man from God.

Eph. 2:18 – *For through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.*

Rom 5:1-2 – *Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had*

*our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Heb. 10:19-20 – *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.*

Because of the fact that the veil has been removed and all believers now live in the presence of God, i.e., in His fellowship, therefore all New Testament believers are called priests – spiritual priests.

I Pet. 2:9 – *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession ...*

### **(5) Peace with God**

The Patriarch Jacob already called the coming Messiah *Shiloh*, i.e., the one who brings peace (Gen. 49:10); Isaiah called Him the *Prince of Peace* (Is. 9:6); and when Christ was born, the angels sang, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace* (Luke 2:14). By the redemption of Christ, peace has been established between God and men; and a fruit of His redemption is peace in the hearts of men.

Eph. 2:14-15, 17 – *For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace ... and he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh.*

Rom. 5:1 – *Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Luke 2:29-32 – *Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord, according to thy word, in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*

John 14:27 – *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful.*

### **(6) Eternal Life**

Through His redemptive work, Christ has procured for us eternal life.

Rom. 6:23 – *... The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

1 John 5:11-12 – *And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life ...*

John 3:16 – *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

John 6:47 – *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life.*

### **(7) All That Is Needed for Salvation**

To sum up, we may say that there is absolutely nothing that we need for our spiritual life and salvation in this world or the world to come but that Christ has procured it for us. We have it all in Christ, and he who finds Christ finds all.

Rom. 8:32 – *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?*

Eph. 1:3 – *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*

### **g. The Extent of the Redemption: All Men**

The whole world is the object of the love of God. He is *not wishing that any should perish* (II Pet. 3:9) but *would have all men to be saved* (I Tim. 2:4). Christ, therefore, *gave himself a ransom for all* (I Tim. 2:6); He was the Substitute for all. By the redemptive work of Christ, every human being has been redeemed. The Bible is very clear on this point, giving expression to this precious truth in many different ways. This most important and fundamental doctrine is proved and established by the following passages.

(1) That the redemptive work of Christ extends to all is proved by passages that directly and expressly state that Christ's redemptive work was for the whole world, or, what amounts to the same, for all men.

John 1:29 – ... *Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!*

John 3:16 – *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

Rom. 8:32 – *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all ...*

II Cor. 5:14-15 – *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again.*



II Cor. 5:19 – ... *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

I Tim. 2:4-5 – *Who [God] would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus.*

Heb. 2:9 – ... *That by the grace of God he [Jesus] should taste of death for every man.*

I John 2:2 – *And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.*

(2) That the redemptive work of Christ extends to all is proved by passages that make special mention even of those who are ultimately lost as being included in the redemption of Christ.

Rom. 14:15 – ... *Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died.*

I Cor. 8:11 – *For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died.*

II Pet. 2:1 – *But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.*

(3) That the redemptive work of Christ extends to all is proved by the fifth chapter of Romans where Paul teaches that the redemption of Christ is co-extensive with the effects of the sin of Adam.

Romans 5:15, 18 – ... *For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many [πολλοὺς] ... So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life.*

(4) That the redemptive work of Christ extends to all is proved by the command of Christ to preach the Gospel to all men and His teaching that salvation or condemnation will be the result according as a person believes or disbelieves.

Mark 16:15-16 – ... *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.*

John 3:36 – *He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

## 2. The Intercession of Christ

(*intercessio Christi sacerdotalis*)

The second function of the priestly office of Christ is His intercession. As the high priest of the Old Testament, when entering into the holy place, wore a breastplate in which the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel were inscribed *for a memorial before Jehovah continually* (Ex. 28:29), so our High Priest, Jesus Christ, after having entered into the holy place, i.e., after His exaltation, continues to pray for us. When Christ was here on earth, He not only taught, healed the sick, and completed the redemption but also spent a great deal of time in prayer. He prayed for His enemies (Luke 23:34) and He prayed for His disciples both present and future (John 17, the sacerdotal prayer of Christ). Christ did not cease to be our High Priest when He ascended into heaven. The redemptive work is indeed completed, but He still continues to pray for us.

Rom. 8:34 – ... *It is Christ Jesus ... who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession* [ἐντυγχάνει] *for us.*

Heb. 4:14-16 – *Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need.*

Heb. 7:24-25 – *But he, because he abideth for ever, hath his priesthood unchangeable. Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

1 John 2:1-2 – *My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.*

### a. For Whom Christ Prays

From the above passages, it is very evident that Christ prays for the believers. It is the children of God, *God's elect*, that Paul speaks about in Rom. 8:33-34, and there he says that *it is Christ Jesus ... who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* The other passages quoted also speak of the believers. But from some of these passages, it appears that Christ prays also for others. In Heb. 7:25, we are told that *he is able to save to the uttermost them*

*that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* Here, the subjective salvation of those who draw near to God is ascribed to the intercession of Christ as a cause. From this, we infer that Christ at the right hand of God prays for the conversion of sinners. The same idea seems to be contained in I John 2:1-2 because, in connection with Christ's intercession for us if we sin, the fact is mentioned that *he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.*

### **b. For What Christ Prays**

In Heb. 4:14-16, we are reminded of the fact that we have a *great high priest* who can *be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, having been *in all points tempted like as we are*, and that, therefore, we should *draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need.* In I John 2:1-2, believers are reminded of the fact that, in case they sin, they *have an Advocate with the Father.* And as stated, we are told in Heb. 7:25 that our High Priest *is able to save ... them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* From these passages, it appears that Christ prays for help for the believers in all their infirmities and temptations and in all times of need, that He intercedes for them when they sin, and that he prays for the salvation of those who draw near to God through Him. He prays for the gathering, establishment, protection, and maintenance of His Church on earth.

## **C. The Kingly Office of Christ**

*(munus regium)*

We have stated that, under the Old Testament theocracy, God dealt with His people through three distinct offices – those of the prophet, priest, and king – and that these three offices were united in Christ in their highest perfection. Therefore, Christ is not only Prophet and High Priest; He is also King. As the Old Testament prophets spoke of Him as Prophet and Priest, they also spoke of Him as King. The Old Testament kings, especially David, were types of the coming Redeemer. Christ is, therefore, often called “David.” Jer. 30:9 – *But they shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.*

Great and glorious things were presaged of this King and His kingdom.

Isa. 9:6-7 – *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever ...*

Dan. 2:34-35, 44 (the vision of Nebuchadnezzar) – *... A stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image ... and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth ... And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people ...*

At the annunciation of Christ's birth, the angel Gabriel said to Mary, *And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end* (Luke 1:31-33).

Immediately after Christ's birth, *Wise-men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews?* (Matt. 2:1-2).

The messenger of God, John the Baptist, who was sent by the Lord to prepare the way for Christ, preached to the people, *Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand* (Matt. 3:2).

When Christ Himself appeared, He said the same: *From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand* (Matt. 4:17). And Christ spoke a great deal about the kingdom.

In consequence of the Old Testament prophecies, the people expected that the Messiah should be a King. We therefore find that, when it began to dawn on them that Jesus was the Messiah, they wanted to make Him king.

John 6:14-15 – *When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world. Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew ...*

Therefore, the people also called him the Son of David. Matt. 20:30 – *And behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, Lord, have mercy on us, thou son of David.*

And, therefore, the people also at His kingly entrance into Jerusalem (whereby the prophecy in Zech. 9:9, *Behold, thy king cometh unto thee*, was fulfilled) cried, *Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord* (Luke 19:38), and, *Hosanna to the son of David* (Matt. 21:9).

Christ Himself declared that He was a king. Before Pontius Pilate, He witnessed what Paul calls *the good confession* (I Tim. 6:13), saying that He was a king. But on that occasion, He also explained what kind of a king He was: *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world ... Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice* (John 18:36-37).

When Jesus was crucified, this superscription was written over His head in three languages: *JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS* (John 19:19). Christ was heralded into the world as King, and he was heralded out of the world as King.

*Christ is Lord of lords, and King of kings* (Rev. 17:14).

### 1. The Nature of the Kingdom of Christ

The Scriptures call God, as Ruler of heaven and earth, King: *the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God* (I Tim. 1:17). But when we speak about the kingship of Christ, we do not have reference to the general, eternal reign of God over all things in which Christ, as one of the persons in the Godhead, shares. But we have reference to a special reign as a part of His mediatorial work, which reign has a beginning in time. The end of the atoning work of Christ was *that he might ... purify unto himself a people for his own possession* (Titus 2:14). And Christ's work as King consists in establishing His Church on earth, extending, governing, and protecting it here on earth, and perfecting it in the state of glory. Viewed from this angle, the Church is called the kingdom in which Christ is the King. The kingdom of Christ, therefore, *is not of this world* (John 18:36). It is of a spiritual nature; it is *the kingdom of heaven* (Matt. 5:3). Entrance into this kingdom is gained only by new birth (John 3:3), and only by faith can citizenship in the kingdom of Christ be held.

Christ was King also during His state of humiliation. He said to Pilate that He was a King, yea, that He had been born to that end (John 18:37). But it was not until He rose from the dead that He really assumed His kingly power and glory. Then He said, *All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations* (Matt. 28:18-19). When Christ ascended into heaven, He sat down at the right hand of God, *at the right hand of Power* (Matt. 26:64). His ascension may, therefore, be regarded as His crowning. From the right hand of the Father, He now exercises His kingly power and authority.

Eph. 1:20-23 – ... *He [God] raised him [Christ] from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

## 2. The Spheres of the Kingdom of Christ

It is customary to speak of the kingdom of Christ as threefold: the kingdom of grace, the kingdom of glory, and the kingdom of power. There are, however, not three kingdoms of Christ. The kingdom of Christ is only one. But when we make this distinction, the reason is that the kingdom of Christ may be viewed from three different angles; it is found in three different spheres.

### a. *The Kingdom of Grace*

The kingdom of grace is, practically, the Church of Christ on earth regarded from the viewpoint of the state in which Christ is the Ruler and, as such, gathers men into the Church, applies to them His grace, sanctifies them, bestows upon them spiritual blessings, and rules and sustains them unto the end. Christ's kingship in the kingdom of grace, therefore, is the same as His being *the head of the church* (Eph. 5:23). The citizens of this kingdom are all believers on earth. The power with which Christ rules in this kingdom is the power of grace working by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the means of grace. For that reason, it is called the kingdom of grace.

Jer. 31:33-34 – ... *I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people ... For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.*

Luke 17:20-21 – ... *The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you.*

John 18:36-37 – ... *My kingdom is not of this world ... To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*

Rom. 14:17 – *For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

### **b. The Kingdom of Glory**

As already stated, the kingdom of glory is not another or different kingdom; it is only another department of the same kingdom. By the kingdom of glory, we understand that sphere of the kingdom of Christ in which He triumphantly reigns over saints and angels in glory.

Matt. 25:34 – *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

Luke 22:29-30 – *And I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom ...*

Rev. 11:15 – ... *The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

### **c. The Kingdom of Power**

In order to further the interests of His kingdom on earth, and in order that the object may be attained, viz., that His people may be transferred to the kingdom of glory, Christ also uses His divine power to lead and direct the affairs of this world so that His plans may not be frustrated but that men and institutions of this world may serve His purpose. Christ's kingdom of power is not identical with God's sovereign rule of the universe, but it is the application of this absolute sovereignty in its relation to the Church. This sphere of Christ's kingdom, therefore, also belongs to His mediatorial work. As samples of this kind of rule may be mentioned the miracles of Christ, the release of Peter from prison (Acts 12:1-19), and, on the whole, the providence of God in behalf of the Church.

Matthew 28:18-19 – *And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptiz-*



*ing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

### 3. The Duration of the Kingdom of Christ

On the one hand, Scripture plainly teaches that the kingdom of Christ is an everlasting kingdom.

Is. 9:7 – *Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end ...*

Luke 1:33 – *And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

Rev. 11:15 – *... The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

On the other hand, the Bible also teaches that Christ shall sit at the right hand of God until He has made His enemies His footstool (Ps. 110:1) and that, when the end of the world comes, Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God.

I Cor. 15:24-28 – *Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For, He put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all.*

The foregoing passage I understand to mean that, when the end comes and Christ has ultimately saved all who can be saved and has put all His enemies, including the last enemy which is death, under His feet (Rev. 20:14), then He will subject Himself and all that the Father had subjected unto Him unto the Father. There is no longer any need of a Mediator. All the authority and power that Christ had as Mediator was given to Him by the Father (*All things have been delivered unto me of my Father* [Matt. 11:27], and, *All authority hath been given unto me* [Matt. 28:18]). Now that Christ's work is completed, all is given back to the One who gave it to Him. But His delivering up the kingdom and His subjecting of all things unto the Father does not mean the abdication of Christ; it simply means the conclusion of His mediatorial work and, therefore, of His mediatorial kingship. The reign of Christ is now merged into the reign of God *that God may be all in all* (I Cor. 15:28). Christ, not only according



to His divine nature but also as the Son of David, reigns together with the Father and the Holy Spirit in divine sovereignty; *and of his kingdom there shall be no end* (Luke 1:33).

## VII. Pneumatology

### A. The Office of the Holy Spirit

Our salvation has emanated from the Father; it has been procured by the Son; and it is applied, or imparted, to the individual by the Holy Spirit.

We have seen that Christ has redeemed us from sin, from the wrath of God, from the Law, from death, from the devil – in short, from all evils of all kinds; and that He has procured for us righteousness, forgiveness of sins, sonship, access to God, peace, eternal life – in sum, all spiritual blessings.

This salvation which is procured by Christ is a ready salvation, objectively provided for all men. But in order that the redemption of Christ may become efficacious for the subjective, practical, and personal salvation of the individual, it is necessary that the redemption of Christ be imparted to and appropriated by the individual. But just as little as we were able to atone for our sins, deliver ourselves from death, and procure for ourselves eternal life, so little have we any power to apprehend or appropriate unto ourselves the redemption of Christ. To impart to the individual the redemption of Christ, so that he actually and subjectively experiences in his heart and life the saving and reconciliatory work of Christ, is the work of the Holy Spirit, as we have learned in the explanation of the third article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the gospel, enlightened me by his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith ..." (Martin Luther, *The Small Catechism*, Part II, 6). This work of the Holy Spirit is, in dogmatics, called pneumatology.

As in all other external acts of the Trinity, all three persons work together toward the subjective salvation of man; but this work is especially ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

As there is only one Savior for all men from Adam until the end of the world, so there is only one way by which men can be personally benefited by the redemption of Christ, namely, by faith. And

since no man can by his own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ but must have this faith created in his heart by the Holy Spirit, it is, therefore, self-evident that the Holy Spirit has always been active for the subjective salvation of man. But He has not always worked in the same manner and in the same degree.

### **1. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament**

The doctrine of the Trinity is not very clearly set forth in the Old Testament. Consequently, we do not find the special work of the Holy Spirit as a distinct person in the Godhead spoken of as it is in the New Testament. But as stated above, people before Christ had no more ability of their own to get into a right relation with God than people after Christ had, but they could be personally saved only by the work of the Spirit of God. Therefore, we find that David prays, *Take not thy holy Spirit from me* (Ps. 51:11).

### **2. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament**

Now that Christ has finished His redemptive work and has returned to His Father, the Holy Spirit is present in the world in a new and different way and in a greater degree. As Christ, by the incarnation, came to man in a way in which He had not been with him before, so the Holy Spirit, in consequence of the coming of Christ, comes to man in a way in which He did not come before, it being His special work to enlighten men regarding the redemption of Christ, glorify Christ in the hearts of men, and make men partakers of Christ's salvation. The work of the Holy Spirit, therefore, has the work of Christ as its postulate. Easter must come before Pentecost. The third article of the Apostles' Creed rests on the second article.

John 7:39 – ... *For the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

John 16:7-14 – ... *It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father; and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.*

*He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you.*

*Acts 2:33 – Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear.*

**a. Extraordinary Manifestations of the Presence and Work of the Holy Spirit**

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out in a miraculous way, His coming being immediate and both visible and audible.

*Acts 2:1-4 – And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Not only on the day of Pentecost but also on other occasions was there an extraordinary manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

*Acts 10:44-47 – While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter; because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter; Can any man forbid the water; that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?*

*Acts 19:1-6 – And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples: and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given. And he said, Into what then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*

And not only was the presence of the Holy Spirit manifested in an extraordinary way, but also special and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit were given, as Joel had prophesied.

Joel 2:28-29 – *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.*

Acts 2:4 – *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Acts 10:46 – *For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.*

Acts 19:6 – *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*

I Cor. 12:4-11 – *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit; and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits: to another divers kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will.*

### **b. Ordinary Presence and Work of the Holy Spirit**

The ordinary way in which the Holy Spirit comes and works is through the means of grace. This coming, presence, and working of the Holy Spirit is neither visible nor audible; but aside from the bestowing of extraordinary gifts, His working in the hearts and lives of men is the same now as it was at the time of the apostles. His work, in sum, consists of imparting to us the manifold grace of God procured for us by Christ, which work will be treated at length in the following pages.

John 14:16 – *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter; that he may be with you for ever.*

Luke 11:13 – *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?*

Rom. 5:5 – ... *The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us.*

I Cor. 12:3 – ... *And no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit.*

I Cor. 3:16 – *Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

### 3. The Grace of the Holy Spirit

The activity of the Holy Spirit to apply to the individual that which Christ has procured for us is called the grace of the Holy Spirit. This term is not found in the Bible. The Scripture speaks only of grace or the grace of God or the grace of Christ. But the term very aptly expresses the idea because this work is a work of grace and, as we have seen, it is especially ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

(Editor’s note: Although the term “the grace of the Holy Spirit” does not directly appear in the Bible, the following two verses lend further credence to the concept. Notice in both cases the manner in which the Spirit’s work is connected to Christ’s redemptive work. Heb. 10:29 – *Of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?* Zech. 12:10 – *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him ....)*

By grace (*χάρις*) in general, we understand the love and favor of God to the undeserving or ill-deserving. Since this loving favor of God manifests itself in many different ways, the term “grace” has many different shades of meaning. It was the loving favor of God to the undeserving and ill-deserving that prompted Him to send His Son and, through Him, to procure our redemption and salvation; therefore, we read, *For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men* (Titus 2:11). Since the redemption of Christ is a work of the loving favor of God to the undeserving and ill-deserving, we therefore call the redemption itself grace, and the Bible therefore says that *we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus* (Acts 15:11). But it is also the loving favor of God to the undeserving and ill-deserving that prompts Him to impart to the individual what Christ has procured for us. This last manifestation of the grace of God is what, in theology, is called the grace of the Holy Spirit. This

work of the Holy Spirit is called grace because it is done without the cooperation of any natural power or strength of ours and in spite of our guilt and unworthiness of such favor. Thayer says that “*χάρις* is used of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting His holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues” (Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1889, p. 666).

Rom. 3:24 – *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

Rom. 11:6 – *But if it is by grace, it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.*

I Cor. 15:10 – *But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain ...*

Eph. 2:8 – *For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

II Tim. 1:9 – *Who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal.*

### **a. Distinction in Grace**

Because of the fact that all men do not hold the same relation to God and His grace, and because of the fact that the grace of God, therefore, does not always produce the same effect in all persons, therefore, a distinction in grace may be made. Many different distinctions have been made by theologians. But we prefer the following distinction: prevenient grace, operating grace, and indwelling grace. This distinction, of course, is not found in the Bible, but we make it for convenience sake.

#### **(1) Prevenient or Preparatory Grace**

By prevenient or preparatory grace, we understand the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of unregenerate men by which He gives them a knowledge of the contents of the Gospel; calls them to repentance; works upon their hearts to awaken them from their spiritual sleep so that they may see their lost condition, feel sorry for their sins, and realize their need of salvation; offers them the grace of God; and invites them to come to Christ; thus preparing their hearts for the acceptance of faith. Samples of the operation of prevenient grace may be found in the case of Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) and the men that were converted on the day of Pentecost – *they were pricked in their heart* (Acts 2:37).

## (2) Operating Grace

By operating grace, we understand the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit by which He regenerates man, creates spiritual life in him, gives him saving faith, justifies him, forgives him his sins, and imputes to him Christ's righteousness. Operating grace is, in short, that grace of God by which a sinner is subjectively saved and by which he is transferred from the state of sin into the state of grace.

Rom. 3:24 – *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

Eph. 2:8 – *For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

## (3) Indwelling Grace

By indwelling grace is understood the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit in believers by which He works in them everything that pertains to their Christian life, enlightening, chastising, comforting, renewing, strengthening, and preserving them.

Rom. 8:14 – *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

I Cor. 3:16 – *Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

I Cor. 12:6-7 – *And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal.*

I Cor. 15:10 – *But by the grace of God I am what I am ...*

Phil. 2:13 – *For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.*

I Pet. 1:5 – *Who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

The common term used by theologians to designate this kind of gracious operation is “cooperating grace” or “cooperative grace” because regenerate man is active in his own sanctification but must continually be aided by the grace of God. But “indwelling grace” expresses the idea better because it is also one of the effects of grace that the believer can work together with God. As the above verses state, it is God who works in the believer both to will and to work, and it is only by the grace of God that the believer is what he is.

### **b. Attributes of Grace**

The following attributes may be ascribed to the grace of God.



**(1) Grace Is Sufficient**

Rom. 5:20 – ... *But where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly.*

**(2) Grace Is Universal**

In other words, grace is for all.

Titus 2:11 – *For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men.*

**(3) Grace Is Free**

Rom. 3:24 – *Being justified freely by his grace ...*

Grace which is not free would be a contradiction in terms.

**(4) Grace Is Resistible**

Matt. 23:37 – ... *How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!*

Acts 7:51 – *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye.*

II Cor. 6:1 – ... *We entreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.*

The attributes of grace will be considered more fully under B. The Call.

**c. The Order of Salvation**

*(ordo salutis)*

Some of the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit in applying the redemptive work of Christ to an individual follow in a chronological order; thus the call comes chronologically before regeneration, and justification before sanctification. Some operations are simultaneous, for example, justification and regeneration. In considering the different operations of the Holy Spirit, we therefore take them up one by one, as far as possible, in their chronological order. In regard to those operations that do not follow chronologically one after the other, the order is somewhat different with different dogmaticians. In speaking of the order of salvation, therefore, it is necessary to remember that the order followed does not necessarily imply chronological order. When we study the work of the Holy Spirit, we cannot study the whole work at once, but we must view it from the different angles and look at one part at a time. The order in which we treat of the different operations of the Holy Spirit is called the order of salvation. In considering the different operations of the Holy Spirit, we will follow this order: the call, illumination, conversion, justification, regeneration, and sanctification.

## B. The Call

(*vocatio*)

The Holy Spirit begins the gracious work of applying the redemptive work of Christ to the individual by calling him. Man is by nature in a spiritual condition of sleep; i.e., in spiritual matters he is not conscious of his true condition. He does not know his sins, and he does not realize the danger in which he is. In his natural condition, he is also ignorant of the will and grace of God, and he does not know what to do to be saved. Man is also by nature spiritually dead; i.e., he is separated from God and is utterly incapable of bringing himself into fellowship with God. The first thing needed, therefore, is that man be awakened out of his spiritual sleep, that he learn to realize his condition, that *he c[on]me to himself* as Christ calls it (Luke 15:17), that he get knowledge of the will and grace of God, and that he be thus influenced and worked upon so that it becomes possible for him to come into fellowship with God. This is done through the call of God.

### 1. What the Call Is

The call is the gracious act of God by which He reveals to men His will and grace in Christ Jesus, offers them seriously the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, invites them to come to Him, and powerfully moves their hearts, thus making it possible for them to accept the invitation. (See also “Theses on Election,” pp. 352-357.)

Isa. 55:1-3, 6-7 – *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David ... Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

Matt. 11:28 – *Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

Matt. 22:4 – *... All things are ready: come to the marriage feast.*

Eph. 5:14 – ... *Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.*

Rev. 3:20 – *Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

Rev. 22:17 – *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely.*

### **a. General and Special Call**

The dogmaticians distinguish between the general or indirect call and the special or direct call. By the former, they understand the call which comes to those who have not heard the Word of God, which comes through conscience and God's revelation of Himself in nature, and by which a longing for the unknown God may be awakened and men may be led to seek after Him.

Acts 17:23 – *For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD ...*

Acts 17:27 – *That they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him ...*

Rom. 1:19-20 – *Because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse.*

Rom. 2:14-15 – *For when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them.*

By the special or direct call, the dogmaticians understand the call which comes to man through the teaching and preaching of the revealed Word of God. Here we treat only of the special or direct call.

### **b. Ordinary and Extraordinary Call**

The dogmaticians also distinguish between the ordinary or mediate call and the extraordinary or immediate call. By the former, they understand the call that comes to men in the ordinary way through the divinely appointed means. By the latter, they understand the call

that comes in a miraculous way. An example that may be mentioned of the latter is the call of Saul on the way to Damascus (Acts 9:1-18).

## 2. Attributes of the Call

### a. *The Call Is Earnest and Serious*

By the earnestness and seriousness of the call, we understand that all men to whom the call is addressed are called with the serious and earnest wish, will, and purpose of God that they should accept the call, repent, come to Him, and be saved both in this world and the next.

Matt. 23:37 – ... *How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!*

Luke 19:41-42 – *And when he drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*

I Tim. 2:3-4 – ... *God our Saviour; who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.*

### b. *The Call Is Efficacious*

By the efficacy of the call, we understand that the call not only presents the grace of God and invites man to come to Him but also strongly impresses the truth on man's heart, powerfully works on him, moves his heart, draws him, and thus makes it possible for him to do what he otherwise, on account of his natural inability and spiritual death, could not do: namely, accept the call, repent, and by faith accept Christ as his Savior. The call is not irresistible as the Calvinists teach, but it has certain inevitable effects; i.e., God so strongly impresses the truth and so powerfully works on man's heart that he cannot avoid perceiving the work of God on him. He cannot avoid perceiving certain emotions, feelings, and thoughts which the call awakens in his heart; he is affected or stirred. Because of this sufficiency and efficacy of the call, God therefore expects that he who has been called should repent, turn to God, and be saved. And if he is not saved by this powerful work of God, the only reason is that he willfully and recalcitrantly resists the gracious work of God. If he is saved, he is saved solely by the grace of God; if he is lost, he is lost solely by his own fault. (See also "Theses on Election," pp. 352-357.)

Jer. 23:29 – *Is not my word like fire? saith Jehovah; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*

Rom. 1:16 – *For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power*

*of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ...*

Heb. 4:12 – *For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Acts 2:37 – *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart ...*

Acts 24:25 – *And as he [Paul] reasoned of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified ...*

Rev. 3:20 – *Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

John 6:44 – *No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him ...*

Jer. 26:2-3 – *Thus saith Jehovah: Stand in the court of Jehovah's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in Jehovah's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word. It may be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way ...*

Matt. 21:32 – *For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him.*

Hos. 13:9 – *It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against me, against thy help.*

Formula of Concord, Part II (Solid Decl.), Ch. II, 55 –

“Although now both, viz. the planting and watering of the preacher, and the running and willing of the hearer, would be to no purpose, and no conversion would follow, if the power and efficacy of the Holy Ghost were not added thereto, who through the Word preached and heard, enlightens and converts the hearts, so that men believe this Word, and assent thereto; nevertheless neither preacher nor hearer should doubt this grace and efficacy of the Holy Ghost, but should be certain, if the Word of God is preached purely and clearly, according to the command and will of God, and men listen attentively and earnestly, and meditate upon it, that God is certainly present with His grace, and grants, as has been said, what man can otherwise from his own powers neither accept nor give.”

Also compare what is said under A, 3, a, (1) Prevenient or Preparatory Grace, p. 191.

### c. The Call Is Universal

By the universality of the call, we understand not that the call actually has been extended to all individuals in the world or even to all nations, but that, as God *would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth* (I Tim. 2:4) and as Jesus Christ *gave himself a ransom for all* (I Tim. 2:6), so it is God's will and command that the Gospel should be preached to the whole creation in all the world.

Mark 16:15 – *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.*

### 3. The Means of the Call

Strictly speaking, the only means of the call is the Gospel as it comes to man through preaching, teaching, singing, reading, or recalling to memory that which a person has formerly learned, and as it comes to man connected with the earthly elements in the sacraments. Since it is through the Gospel alone that God reveals and presents His grace in Christ, since it is through the Gospel alone that God invites men to come to Him and His grace, and since it is through the Gospel alone that God works on the hearts of men and gives them both the will and the ability to accept the call, therefore, it goes without saying that the Gospel is the only ordinary means of the call.

Rom. 1:16 – *For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ...*

II Thess. 2:14 – *Whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

But since no man will accept the Gospel call as long as he sleeps in sin and lives in security, unconcerned about his spiritual condition, therefore, God also uses the Law for the purpose of arousing him and bringing him to the knowledge of sin that he may realize his need of the salvation which the Gospel offers. The Law, therefore, is indirectly and for a preparatory purpose used by God in calling man.

Rom. 3:20 – *... For through the law cometh the knowledge of sin.*

Gal. 3:24 – *So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

Eph. 5:14 – *... Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.*

God may also employ other means by which He brings men into such a mental attitude that it becomes easier for Him to get a hearing with them when through the Word He calls them. For example, He

may use sickness, a death in the family, and innumerable other experiences of life. Peter was reminded of the word of Christ by hearing the cock crowing (Matt. 26:74-75). The Philippian jailer was terrified by the earthquake (Acts 16:26-33).

Ps. 119:71 – *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I may learn thy statutes.*

#### 4. The Object of the Call

The object of the call is that man should become a partaker of the salvation which Christ has procured for him, both in this life and in the life which is to come.

Acts 26:17-18 – ... *Unto whom [the Gentiles] I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me.*

I Pet. 2:9 – ... *Who [God] called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

I Thess. 2:12 – ... *God, who calleth you into his own kingdom and glory.*

Eph. 1:18 – ... *that ye may know what is the hope of his [God's] calling ...*

### C. Illumination

In psychology, we speak about intuitive knowledge, i.e., knowledge which every normal person has by nature and which it is not necessary to teach him. The idea of a god seems to be just such intuitive knowledge. There has never been found a people that had not the idea of some higher being.

Rom. 1:19-20 – *Because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse.*

All people also seem to have the idea of sin. But there is no sin where there is no law. The idea of law, therefore, is also universal.

Rom. 2:14-15 – *For when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them.*

But the intuitive knowledge of God and law which the natural man has is so imperfect, vague, and perverted that the Bible characterizes his condition as darkness. *For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord* (Eph. 5:8). And Scripture teaches that there is none that understandeth (Rom. 3:11); that *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged* (I Cor. 2:14); and that the things that are revealed ... *through the Spirit* are things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man (I Cor. 2:10, 9).

A saving knowledge of the truth man can get only by being enlightened and illuminated by God Himself.

John 3:3 – ... *Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

I Cor. 2:10-12 – *But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God.*

II Cor. 4:6 – *Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

Eph. 3:8-9 – *Unto me ... was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God ...*

The act of illuminating is not the same as the act of calling. However, illumination must not be separated from the call. If the call is the act of God by which He reveals the will and grace of God in Christ, it goes without saying that the call is in itself illuminating, in other words, that God illuminates through the call.

See Eph. 3:8-9 just quoted.

### 1. Different Kinds of Illumination

Illumination may be classified as imperfect (also called literal or pedagogic) and perfect (also called spiritual or completely saving). Another classification is legal and evangelical. We may also speak about the illumination which takes place in conversion and that which takes place after conversion.



## **a. Imperfect and Perfect Illumination**

### **(1) Imperfect Illumination**

By imperfect, literal, or pedagogic illumination, we understand the impartation of all knowledge which it is possible for the natural man, by his own natural reason and understanding, to gather from the Word of God before he is born again. The natural man can get a historical knowledge of the things of which the Bible speaks in the same way that he can understand the contents of any other book. This literal illumination is not sufficient because a person may have it without being a Christian. It is, however, of the greatest importance, for without it, a person cannot come to the saving knowledge of the truth. It is a necessary postulate for spiritual illumination.

Acts 26:26-27 – *For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.*

II Pet. 1:19 – *And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.*

### **(2) Perfect Illumination**

By perfect, spiritual, or completely saving illumination, we understand the impartation of a knowledge of the saving truth which cannot be obtained by human intellectual powers, study, research, or painstaking application but which is a supernatural gift of God by which man gets a saving insight into and understanding of spiritual matters. By this spiritual illumination alone, man gets a correct and adequate conception of sin and grace and everything which pertains to the life in Christ Jesus.

Matt. 11:25-26 – *... I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight.*

Matt. 16:16-17 – *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.*

Mark 4:11 – *... Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God ...*

Luke 24:45 – *Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures.*

I Cor. 2:9-10 – ... *Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit ...*

II Cor. 4:6 – *Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

Eph. 1:16-20 – [I] *cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places.*

## **b. Legal and Evangelical Illumination**

### **(1) Legal Illumination**

By legal illumination, we understand the impartation of the knowledge that God through the Law gives to man regarding the holiness, righteousness, and wrath of God on the one hand and the sin, depravity, helplessness, and lost condition of man on the other hand. As stated, man has by nature some knowledge of sin, but this knowledge is very imperfect, vague, and perverted. A correct and adequate knowledge of sin man gets only through the revealed Law of God. Especially without the illumination of the Holy Spirit is man ignorant of the depravity and sinfulness of his heart.

Rom. 3:20 – ... *Through the law cometh the knowledge of sin.*

Rom. 7:7 – ... *I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

### **(2) Evangelical Illumination**

By evangelical illumination, we understand the impartation of the knowledge which God through the Gospel gives to man regarding the salvation which has been procured for him. As already stated, man has by nature an imperfect and vague knowledge of sin, but of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, he has absolutely no knowledge. This is that *which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man but which God [alone] reveal[s] ... through the Spirit (I Cor. 2:9-10).*

II Cor. 4:4 – ... *The god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them.*

Eph. 3:8-9 – *Unto me ... was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God ...*

### **c. Illumination in and after Conversion**

#### **(1) Illumination in Conversion**

Before conversion, man is complete darkness and he does not see the things that pertain to the kingdom of God. By conversion, he becomes a light in the Lord and his eyes are opened. By conversion, he is transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

Acts 26:17-18 – ... *Unto whom [the Gentiles] I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light ...*

Eph. 5:8 – *For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord ...*

Col. 1:13 – *Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.*

I Pet. 2:9 – ... *Who [God] called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

Acts 9:18 – *And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized.*

#### **(2) Illumination after Conversion**

As great and marvelous as is the illumination of man at the time of his conversion, it is not complete; i.e., man does not at the time of his regeneration receive all the enlightenment which it pleases God to give to His children. Man is still only a babe in Christ in regard also to divine illumination. The Holy Spirit continues to enlighten him day by day, and he grows in knowledge and understanding of spiritual things.

Eph. 1:16-20 – quoted on p. 202

Eph. 3:18-19 – [That ye] *may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.*

Col. 1:9-10 – ... *That ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to walk worthily of the*

*Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.*

II Pet. 3:18 – *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ...*

## 2. The Means of Illumination

The means of illumination is the Word of God. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples of Christ received in a miraculous manner divine enlightenment to a higher degree than formerly (tongues of fire, Acts 2:1-4); but we are not to look for miracles. The revealed Word of God, the Law and the Gospel, are the ordinary means of illumination.

Ps. 19:7-8 – *... The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple ... The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes.*

Ps. 119:105 – *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path.*

II Tim. 3:16-17 – *Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.*

II Pet. 1:19 – *And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation.*

The theologians usually mention three auxiliaries to be made use of in obtaining divine enlightenment through the Word of God: prayer, meditation, and trials (*oratio, meditatio, tentatio*).

Luke 11:13 – *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?*

Acts 1:14 – *These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer ...*

Eph. 1:16-20 – quoted on p. 202

II Pet. 1:19 – *And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.*

Ps. 119:71 – *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I may learn thy statutes.*

## D. Conversion or Repentance

The whole tenor and trend of the life of the natural man is directed away from God. His mind, his thoughts, his affections, his desires are turned toward worldliness and sin. He is carnally minded. He is in the way to hell. If he is to be saved, a radical change must take place in him. The process by which this change is brought about is called conversion or repentance.

### 1. The Nature of Conversion

Conversion or repentance is that process by which a sinner turns completely about so that he begins to walk in the opposite direction. He turns from sin to righteousness, from the ways of the devil to God, from death to life. Conversion, however, not only is a change in a person's outward life but also and especially is a change in his inward condition, affecting the intellect, emotion, and will.

Isa. 55:6-7 – *Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah ...*

Jon. 3:10 – *And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way ...*

Luke 5:31-32 – *... They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.*

Acts 3:19 – *Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out ...*

Acts 26:17-18 – *... Unto whom [the Gentiles] I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me.*

#### a. Terms Used in the Bible for Conversion

Two verbs and two corresponding nouns are used in the Bible to express the process of conversion. The verbs are “turn” or “convert” (ἐπιστρέφω) and “repent” (μετανοέω).

Acts 26:17-18 – *... Unto whom [the Gentiles] I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God ...*

Jas. 5:19-20 – *My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.*

Acts 2:38 – *And Peter said unto them, Repent ye ...*

The corresponding nouns are “conversion” (ἐπιστροφή) and “repentance” (μετάνοια).

Acts 15:3 – ... *declaring the conversion of the Gentiles ...*

Luke 15:7 – ... *There shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance.*

Sometimes both verbs are used together.

Acts 3:19 – *Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out ...*

The words ἐπιστρέφω and ἐπιστροφή denote that a person turns right about *from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God* (Acts 26:18). The verb “turn” or “convert” and the noun “conversion” express this idea exactly. The words μετανοέω and μετάνοια are derived from μετά, change, and νοέω, the mind, and denote a change of mind. The word “repentance,” therefore, does not fully express this idea. The two words together, ἐπιστροφή and μετάνοια, denote an outward and an inward change, a change of heart accompanied by a change of course.

### **b. Different Meanings of the Terms Used for Conversion**

The terms “conversion” and “repentance” are not always used in the same sense either in the Bible or in theology.

#### **(1) Different Meanings of the Terms**

##### **Used for Conversion in the Bible**

As stated, there is a difference in the original meaning of the terms ἐπιστροφή, denoting a turning about, and μετάνοια, denoting a change of mind. But the two terms are used synonymously to denote the same thing, only viewing it from different angles. Most commonly, both terms denote the whole process of the change which a sinner, who has been living outside of fellowship with God, experiences when he is transferred from the state of sin into the state of grace, including both sorrow for sin and faith in Christ.

Acts 26:18 – ... *that they [the Gentiles] may turn (ἐπιστρέψαι) from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God ...*

Matt. 12:41 – ... *For they repented (μετενόησαν) at the preaching of Jonah ... (Compare Jon. 3:10 – ... They turned from their evil way ...)*

Luke 15:7 – ... *There shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance.*

Luke 5:31-32 – ... *They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.*

As stated, the term “repentance” does not fully express the idea contained in the Greek term *μετάνοια* because the term “repentance” originally meant only sorrow for something done or left undone with the desire to make it right again. But the term is now used to express all that is contained in *μετάνοια*. It denotes a change of attitude not only toward sin but also toward God.

Sometimes the word “repentance” is used only about the first part of conversion, namely sorrow for sin.

Mark 1:15 – ... *Repent ye, and believe in the gospel.*

Acts 20:21 – *Testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Formula of Concord, Part II (Solid Decl.), Ch. V, 7-9 –

“But also the term ‘repentance’ is not employed in the Holy Scriptures in one and the same sense. For in some passages of Holy Scripture it is employed and understood with reference to the entire conversion of man, as Luke 13:5: ‘Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.’ And in chap. 15:7: ‘Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.’ But in Mark 1:15, as also elsewhere, where a distinction is made between repentance and faith in Christ (Acts 20:21) or between repentance and remission of sins (Luke 24:46, 47), repentance means to do nothing else than to truly acknowledge sins, from the heart to regret them, and to abstain therefrom. This knowledge proceeds from the Law, but does not suffice for saving conversion to God, if faith in Christ be not added, whose merits the consolatory preaching of the holy Gospel offers to all penitent sinners who are terrified by the preaching of the Law. For the Gospel proclaims the forgiveness of sins, not to coarse and secure hearts, but to the bruised or penitent (Luke 4:18). And that from repentance or the terrors of the Law despair may not result, the preaching of the Gospel must be added, that it may be repentance to salvation (2 Cor. 7:10).”

In Matt. 18:3, Jesus says to His disciples, *Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Here, the word “turn” is used to denote not the translation from death into life but a change of mind in believers.

## (2) Different Meanings of the Terms Used for Conversion in Ecclesiastical Language

Most commonly, the terms “repentance” and “conversion” are used in ecclesiastical language, as in the Bible, to denote exactly the same thing. The two terms are used synonymously and interchangeably. The most common meaning of the terms in ecclesiastical usage is exactly the same as that meaning which the terms most generally have in the Bible: namely, the whole experience and process of that change which takes place in a person, who has turned away from God, when he is transferred from the state of sin into the state of grace, including sorrow for sin and faith in Jesus Christ. If we hear a person say about another person that he has been converted, we will understand him to mean that that person has gone through the different experiences connected with coming into fellowship with God. Used in this sense, conversion must be completed when a person by faith has accepted Christ. Hence, it is common to say about a person that he has been converted, or that he is converted.

Some theologians use the term “conversion” in a narrower sense, denoting thereby only the momentary act of being transferred from the state of sin into the state of grace and leaving out the process which goes before.

Sometimes the words “conversion” or “repentance” are used to denote that work in a believer whereby he daily repents of and turns away from sin and by faith seeks and appropriates unto himself the grace of God. This is what Pontoppidan calls “the repentance of the faithful” (*conversio stantium*) (*Epitome of Rev. Dr. Erick Pontoppidan's Explanation of Martin Luther's Small Catechism*, 1891, Edmund Belfour, trans., pp. 105-106). Conversion in this sense of the term practically coincides with daily renewal. This conversion can, of course, never be said to be complete but must continue as long as we live here below.

### 2. The Parts of Conversion

Conversion consists of two parts: sorrow for sin and faith in Christ.

Augsburg Confession, Art. XII, 3-5 –

“Now repentance consists properly of these two parts: One is contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin; the other is faith, which, born of the Gospel, or of absolution, believes that, for Christ's sake, sins are forgiven, comforts the conscience, and delivers it from terrors.”



### **a. Sorrow for Sin**

As has been stated, repentance means a change of mind. The natural man lives in sin and loves sin; he lives in carnal security and self-satisfaction. Repentance or conversion begins with a change of mind in man's attitude toward sin. He begins to learn to know sin; he gets a different view and opinion of sin; he feels uneasy and worried on account of sin and experiences sorrow, remorse, pain, anguish, and compunction of conscience; he begins to hate sin and desires to get away from it.

The essential elements of true sorrow for sin are the following: knowledge of sin; uneasiness and worry over one's condition; sorrow, regret, contrition, and compunction of conscience over sin and the life one has led; hatred of sin; desire to be saved from sin; and confession of sin.

#### **(1) Knowledge of Sin**

By knowledge of sin as an essential element of conversion, we not only understand that a person theoretically knows that he has done certain things that the Bible calls sin or that he is in a condition which is termed a sinful condition. Such theoretical knowledge of sin a person may have without having come to the knowledge of sin. But by knowledge of sin, in this connection, we also understand that a person, by the enlightenment of God through the Law, gets a different conception and understanding of sin in that he sees sin as a guilt and crime against God, the committing of which is a very serious matter that awakens the wrath of God and subjects the sinner to eternal punishment. And since sin consists not only in deeds, words, and thoughts but especially in a sinful and depraved condition of the heart from which, as its source, all actual sin flows, therefore true knowledge of sin goes deeper than the realization of the wickedness of these outward manifestations of man's sinfulness. Knowledge of sin is, first and above all things, a conviction of the total depravity, hardness, ugliness, and inability of the heart.

Ps. 51:3 – *For I know my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me.*

Rom. 7:7 – *... I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

Rom. 7:18 – *For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing ...*

## (2) Uneasiness and Worry over One's Condition

As has been stated, the natural man lives in carnal security and self-satisfaction. One of the marks of true repentance is that a change in this respect takes place in him. If the call of God begins to take effect in the heart of a sinner, a sure sign is that his peace is gone and he gets thoroughly dissatisfied with himself and concerned and worried over his condition.

Ps. 6:2-3 – ... *O Jehovah, heal me; for my bones are troubled. My soul also is sore troubled ...*

Ps. 32:3-4 – *When I kept silence, my bones wasted away through my groaning all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture was changed as with the drought of summer. Selah.*

Ps. 38:3-4 – *There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine indignation; neither is there any health in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over my head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.*

See also the story of Nicodemus in John 3:1-21, esp. vv. 1-12.

## (3) Sorrow, Regret, Contrition, and Compunction of Conscience

One of the sure marks of the change which conversion works in a person in his attitude toward sin is that he feels genuinely sorry not only over the effects of sin – the calamity and misery which sin always brings over those who commit it – but especially for sin itself. He feels sorry over the fact that he has sinned against God and that he is sinful; he regrets that he has sinned; his conscience accuses and rebukes him for having sinned; it causes him pain that he is a sinner.

Ps. 38:3-4 – *There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine indignation; neither is there any health in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over my head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.*

Jer. 31:19 – *Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.*

Luke 5:31 – ... *They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick.*

II Cor. 7:10 – *For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret ...*

Luke 18:13 – *But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner.*

Luke 5:8 – *But Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*

Matt. 26:75 – *And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.*

Note the difference between the repentance of Peter in the preceding verses and that of Judas in the following passage.

Matt. 27:3-5 – *Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? see thou to it. And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.*

#### **(4) Hatred of Sin**

One of the marks of the change wrought in conversion in man's relation to sin is that, instead of loving sin, he now hates sin, hates his sinning, hates his inclination and proclivity toward sin, and hates his love for sin.

Rom. 7:15 – *... For not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do.*

#### **(5) Desire to be Saved from Sin**

It is self-evident that, if a person feels sorry for sin and hates sin, he also wants to get away from it and wants to get saved from it. He desires to have his sin forgiven and, thus, to be saved from its guilt and punishment, and he desires to get saved from the power of sin and from sin itself.

Ps. 51:1-2 – *... According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

Matt. 6:12-13 – *And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*

#### **(6) Confession of Sin**

As long as a person is impenitent, he keeps silent about his sins, hides them, and tries to excuse and defend himself (like Adam and Eve in Gen. 3:9-13). A sure mark of the change which sincere penitence works in him is that he honestly acknowledges and confesses

his sin and guilt before God. And if he has committed sins against men, he will confess such sins also to them and try, as far as it lies in his power, to remedy the evil done.

Ps. 32:3-5 – *When I kept silence, my bones wasted away through my groaning all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture was changed as with the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity did I not hide: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto Jehovah; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*

Jer. 3:13 – *Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against Jehovah thy God ...*

Jer. 14:20 – *We acknowledge, O Jehovah, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers; for we have sinned against thee.*

Hos. 5:15 – *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly.*

Luke 19:8 – *And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold.*

### **b. Faith in Christ**

Sorrow for sin is absolutely necessary for conversion because *they that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick* (Matt. 9:12). But sorrow for sin does not save. It indeed produces a change in the heart, but a person is not turned to God by it. A person is not converted because he is sorry for his sins. That by which a person actually turns to God is faith. Having gone away from God and fallen into the state of sin, man can do nothing to regain the favor of God. This Christ alone has done. And only by believing on Christ and appropriating unto himself the merits of Christ is it possible for man to return to God, come into His fellowship, and thus be subjectively saved.

Acts 26:17-18 – *... Unto whom [the Gentiles] I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me.*

Gal. 3:26 – *For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus.*

Eph. 2:8 – *For by grace have ye been saved through faith ...*

Eph. 3:12 – *In whom [Christ] we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him.*

Not only is faith the organ through which man is converted to God, is united with Him, is made a partaker of the salvation of Christ, and comes into fellowship with God. But faith is also a living power in the heart of man whereby he is transformed; it enlightens his intellect, deepens his feelings, strengthens his will, and gives peace to his conscience. It makes man a new creature, builds up his character, and sanctifies his whole personality.

II Cor. 5:17 – *Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.*

Phil. 4:13 – *I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.*

I John 5:4 – *... And this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith.*

Heb. 11:1 – *Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.*

### **(1) The Elements of Faith**

It is common among dogmaticians to say that the parts or elements of faith are three: viz., knowledge (*notitia*), assent (*assensus*), and confidence (*fiducia*). But strictly speaking, knowledge is not an element of faith but a postulate of or necessary prerequisite for faith. It is evident that, to believe something, a person must have knowledge of it. Therefore, Paul says, *How shall they believe in him whom they have not heard?* (Rom. 10:14). Taking it for granted, therefore, that knowledge of God and of the Gospel is a *conditio sine qua non* (an indispensable condition), we will say that the elements of faith are two: viz., assent and confidence.

#### **(a) Assent**

By assent, we understand that a person in his heart is convinced of the truth of the Gospel and the salvation which God through the Gospel reveals and offers to men. Theologians distinguish between general assent and special assent. By general assent is meant that a person in a general way accepts as divine truth the universal preaching and promises of the Gospel. By special assent is meant that a person is persuaded that the general truths of the Gospel apply also to him personally; that since Christ died for all, He also died for him; that since all men are redeemed, he also is redeemed. The second is a logical inference from the first.

Heb. 11:1 – *Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.*

The following verse contains both general and special assent.

I Tim. 1:15 – *Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

**(b) Confidence**

By confidence, we understand that a person in his heart trusts in, relies on, and builds upon the redemption of Christ for salvation; believes that God for the sake of Christ's work receives him into His fellowship, makes him His child, and forgives him his sins; and believes that, for Christ's sake, he is an heir of everlasting life. Faith not only believes that the Gospel is a truthful revelation of what God, through His Son, has done for our salvation but also rests, confides, and trusts in the teaching and promises of the Gospel. He who has faith not only believes that Christ has procured forgiveness of sins and sonship for all men, and therefore also for him, but also believes that God actually forgives him his sins and actually makes him His child. A believer not only believes God, i.e., believes what God says, but also believes in God, i.e., trusts and confides in Him (*Credo Deo; credo in Deum*). By faith, a person resigns and commits himself to God.

John 3:16 – ... *Whosoever believeth on [εἰς] him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

Rom. 4:21 – *And being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

II Cor. 3:4 – *And such confidence have we through Christ to Godward.*

Heb. 10:22 – *Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith [πληροφορία πίστεως] ...*

II Cor. 1:9 – ... *that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God ...*

Ps. 52:8 – ... *I trust in the lovingkindness of God for ever and ever.*

Ps. 18:2 – *Jehovah is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my rock, in whom I will take refuge; my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower.*

Ps. 9:10 – *And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee ...*

Ps. 91, e.g., vv. 1-6 – *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of Jehovah, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust. For he will deliver thee from the snare of the fowler; and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover thee with his pinions, and under his wings shalt thou take refuge: his truth is a shield and a buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow*

*that flieth by day; for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.*

## **(2) The Object of Faith**

When we speak about faith in general, we may say that the object of faith is everything which God has revealed to us. A believer believes everything which God has spoken in His Word. But we are here speaking about faith in a special sense; we are speaking about faith as a part of conversion; we are speaking about that particular faith by which a person gets into and lives in fellowship with God; we are speaking about saving or justifying faith. A person may be ignorant of many things which God has revealed and, therefore, have no belief in regard to them but still have the saving faith. On the other hand, a person may believe many things which God has revealed and still not have the saving faith. What is the object of that special faith by which a person is saved?

### **(a) Christ Is the Object of Faith**

A general answer to the question above is this: The object of saving or justifying faith is Christ. To be justified and saved, a person must believe in or on (εἰς) Christ.

John 3:16 – *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

Acts 16:31 – ... *Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved ...*

The Bible also speaks about believing in the name of Jesus because His name stands for what He is and what He has done.

John 1:12 – *But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

What does it mean to believe in Jesus?

i. We must have a correct belief concerning the person of Christ.

John 8:24 – ... *For except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*

I John 5:5 – *And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

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

Rom. 10:9 – *Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

Matt. 16:15-16, 18 – ... *But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God ... Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

ii. We must have a correct belief concerning the work of Christ. We must believe in and trust for salvation in that which Christ as our Mediator has done in our stead by which He has fulfilled the requirements of the Law, atoned for our sins, and procured for us forgiveness, sonship, righteousness, and eternal life – in other words, His vicarious atonement. Saving faith believes and trusts in the fact that everything which is demanded of me by the Law is found perfectly and completely in Christ as my Substitute and that everything by which I have displeased God and called down upon me His displeasure, wrath, and condemnation, and for which the Law condemns me and my own conscience accuses me, has been fully atoned for by Christ when He, as my vicar, was obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Saving faith, therefore, believes that God now forgives me my sins, justifies me, and makes me His child and an heir of everlasting life solely and exclusively on account of what Christ has done and suffered. To believe on Christ means to trust in Him for salvation because of what the Bible tells us that He has done to bring about our redemption and salvation. His vicarious satisfaction, therefore, by necessity must be the object of saving faith. (Here apply all the passages that are cited under VI, B, 1. The Redemption of Christ, especially under a. Terms for the Act of the Redemption, b. The Means and Manner of the Redemption, and c. The Vicarious Atonement, pp. 160-166.)

***(b) The Gospel Is the Object of Faith***

We have stated that Christ is the object of saving faith. The person of Christ and the vicarious redemptive work of Christ is that whereupon our faith builds. But Christ comes to us through the Gospel. It is the Gospel that presents the person of Christ to us. It is through the Gospel that the atonement of Christ is revealed and offered to us. The Gospel, therefore, becomes the object of saving faith. We believe in Christ by believing and trusting in what the Gospel tells us about Christ.

Mark 1:15 – ... *The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.*



Mark 16:15-16 – ... *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ...*

I Cor. 15:1-4 – *Now I make known unto you brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures.*

### **(3) Degrees, or Strength, of Faith**

Faith is not equally strong in all persons, nor is it equally strong in the same person at all times. Faith may increase and decrease.

Matt. 14:31 – *And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*

Mark 9:24 – *Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*

Matt. 15:28 – *Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt ...*

Matt. 8:10 – *And when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*

Luke 17:5 – *And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.*

II Thess. 1:3 – *We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith groweth exceedingly ...*

In regard to the strength and weakness of faith, we note the following.

(a) The strength or weakness of a believer's faith must not be measured by his feelings but by his tenacity to hold fast to the Lord and to His Word. Peter felt strong when he said to Jesus, *If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended ... Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee* (Matt. 26:33, 35). But what happened the same evening showed that he was weak because he trusted in himself and not in the Lord. On the other hand, the Canaanite woman was not filled with sweet and pleasant feelings when she stood and cried, *Lord, help me*, but the Lord said, *O woman, great is thy faith* (Matt. 15:25, 28). It was great because she clung to the

Lord and trusted in Him in spite of His seeming unwillingness to help her.

(b) The increase or decrease of a believer's faith does not increase or decrease that which he possesses. The weak faith as well as the strong faith justifies a person before God and makes him the possessor of the whole Christ with all that He is and has done for the salvation of sinners. Every believer, no matter how weak and trembling his faith, possesses nothing less than the full salvation procured by Christ; and a strong faith cannot possess any more.

(c) In other respects, weak faith is, of course, inferior to strong faith. Not only does the strong faith have a firmer hold on Christ and less danger of losing Him; but also the strong faith is a greater power in overcoming evil and in following in the steps of Christ, in leading a holy life and in performing good works. We should, therefore, pray, *Lord, Increase our faith* (Luke 17:5).

### 3. Transitive and Intransitive Conversion

In the Bible, conversion is sometimes ascribed to God and sometimes to man.

Sometimes God is the subject and man the object. God is said to convert man. The verb is transitive, and conversion viewed from this angle is said to be transitive.

Jer. 31:18 – ... *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned ...*

Col. 1:12-13 – *Giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.*

Considered from this viewpoint, repentance is said to be a gift of God.

Acts 5:31 – *Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour; to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.*

Acts 11:18 – ... *Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.*

Eph. 2:8 – *For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

Heb. 12:2 – *Looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith ...*

Phil. 1:29 – *Because to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf.*

Sometimes, and most frequently, man is the subject; man is said to turn or repent. The verb is intransitive, and conversion viewed

from this angle is said to be intransitive. Not only is man said to repent, but also God bids man to repent, expects that he should repent, and rebukes him for not repenting.

Matt. 12:41 – *The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah ...*

Jon. 3:10 – *And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way ...*

Isa. 55:6-7 – *Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah ...*

Mark 1:15 – *... Repent ye, and believe in the gospel.*

Jer. 26:2-3 – *Thus saith Jehovah: Stand in the court of Jehovah's house, and speak ... all the words that I command thee to speak ... It may be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way ...*

Luke 13:5 – *... Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* (See also the parable of the barren fig tree in vv. 6-9 which is expounded on pp. 284-287.)

How are these seemingly contradictory statements to be reconciled? The Bible clearly teaches that by nature man is dead and that he can do nothing to his subjective salvation by his own natural powers.

Eph. 2:1 – *And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins.*

John 15:4-5 – *... As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me ... For apart from me ye can do nothing.*

If man, therefore, is to be converted, God must convert him; God must grant him repentance; God must grant him to believe; God must make him meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints of light; God must translate him into the kingdom of His Son. Therefore, Luther and the Formula of Concord say that man is purely passive in his conversion. But on the other hand, it is evident that it is man who feels sorry for his sins, that it is man who turns to God, that it is man who believes in Christ, and that conversion or repentance is an act of the heart and will of man. The explanation is this: *it is God who worketh in [man] both to will and to work* (Phil. 2:13). It is God who, by His gracious operations, produces sorrow for sin and faith in the heart. Therefore, Paul says to the Colossians that they were *raised with [Christ] through faith in the working of God* (Col. 2:12).

This work of God is not done in such a way, however, that a man is converted against his will but so that his heart and will are influenced and moved to repent and turn to God and believe in Christ. (See also “Theses on Election,” pp. 352-357.) It is because of the working of God upon the heart that God expects conversion and rebukes man for not repenting. *Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit thenceforth, well; but if not, thou shalt cut it down* (Luke 13:8-9). Therefore, the Formula of Concord says that “conversion is such a change through the operation of the Holy Ghost, in the understanding, will and heart of man, that, by this operation of the Holy Ghost, man can receive the offered grace”; and further on, it explains that “when Luther says that with respect to his conversion man is purely passive,... his meaning ... is not that in conversion no new emotion is awakened in us by the Holy Ghost, and no spiritual operation begun; but he means that man of himself, or from his natural powers, cannot contribute anything or help in his conversion” (Part II [Solid Decl.], Ch. II, 83, 89).

Heinrich Schmid says, “Conversion, then, is to be called a work of God, so far as this change cannot at all be produced without the agency of divine grace. So far, however, as this change cannot occur without an internal movement in man, which is conditioned by his will, conversion in another point of view can be regarded as proceeding from man” (*The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Heinrich Schmid, ed., 1899, p. 460).

## E. Justification

Owing to the fact that justification is an act outside of men, many theologians do not consider faith and justification as parts of the order of salvation but treat of these subjects before they take up the order of salvation. It seems to me, however, that since faith is a part of conversion and since man is justified by faith, the most logical order is to treat of faith under conversion and to treat of justification immediately after conversion.

We have learned that the two parts of conversion are sorrow for sin and faith in Christ. We have also learned that sorrow for sin does not save but only prepares the heart to realize the necessity of personal salvation. And we have learned that it is faith that saves, that it is by faith that a person actually turns to God. Faith saves because

faith justifies; by faith, a person stands acquitted and justified before God.

The Law of God demands that man must be perfectly holy and righteous, that he must be perfect even as God is perfect.

Lev. 19:2 – ... *Ye shall be holy; for I Jehovah your God am holy.*

Matt. 5:48 – *Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Gal. 3:10 – ... *Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them.*

But man cannot make himself righteous. *There is none righteous, no, not one* (Rom. 3:10). Man can be justified only by an act of God Himself. Therefore, Paul says that *it is God that justifieth* (Rom. 8:33). This act of God by which He justifies man is called justification (*justificatio*).

The doctrine of justification by faith holds the central and dominant position in Lutheran theology. Concerning this doctrine, Luther says, “Of this article nothing can be yielded or surrendered, even though heaven and earth and all things should sink to ruin” (Smalcald Articles, Part II, Art. I, 5). This is the doctrine by which the Church stands or falls, the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*.

## 1. What Justification Is

Justification is an act of God whereby He, out of pure grace for Christ’s sake, declares a believing sinner righteous in that He reckons unto him the righteousness of Christ and forgives him all his sins.

### **a. The Nature of the Act of Justification**

Justification is not something that takes place in man like conversion and regeneration; it is not an act whereby man is made righteous; it is not an infusion of righteousness; it is not a change in man’s heart or nature. There is, to be sure, something that takes place in a person’s heart at the same time that he is justified, but that must not be confounded with justification. Justification is an act outside of man. When God justifies a sinner, He acts as Judge. The act of justification is, therefore, said to be a forensic or judicial act. It is an act by which the sinner is declared to be righteous; God passes the judgment on him that he is just.

The term “justify” has various meanings in the Bible, but it never means to make righteous by the imparting of a moral quality. Very often, the term is used to denote the act of declaring righteous, the opposite of declaring guilty or condemning. See, for example, the following verses.

Prov. 17:15 – *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah.*

Isa. 5:22-23 – *Woe unto them that ... justify the wicked for a bribe ...*

It is evident that the term has this meaning when it is used about God's justification of a sinner.

Rom. 4:5 – *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.*

Rom. 5:16 – *... For the judgment came of one unto condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification.*

Rom. 8:33-34 – *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? ...*

### **b. The Two Elements of Justification**

This forensic act of God whereby He justifies a sinner has two elements in it. One element is the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. This is the positive element. The other is the non-imputation, or forgiveness, of sin. This is the negative element. This distinction, however, can only be made in thought because the two elements are only two sides of the same act. When God reckons to a sinner the righteousness, i.e., sinlessness, of Christ, it goes without saying that the sin of the sinner is not reckoned to him. It follows from the act of imputation of sinlessness that the sin of the sinner is forgiven. Where there is perfect righteousness, there can be no guilt.

Man is under double obligation to the Law. He is in duty bound to keep the Law. This he has not done and cannot do. He has broken the Law. Consequently, he is subject to punishment. What man needs, therefore, is to be delivered from the obligation to obtain eternal life by keeping the Law and from suffering the penalty due him for having transgressed the Law. This double deliverance from the Law is found in the redemption of Christ. By His active and passive obedience, Christ has redeemed us from the Law. He has fulfilled the requirements of the Law in our stead, and He has procured forgiveness of sins for us. Now, the moment a person by faith accepts Christ, the whole redemptive work of Christ is reckoned or imputed to him. He has, therefore, both a perfect fulfillment of the Law, i.e., a perfect righteousness, and he has forgiveness of sin. The one goes with the other because together they are the two sides of the redemptive work of Christ. The two elements of justification, therefore, correspond to the double need of the sinner and to the two sides of the redemption of Christ. It is, therefore, Christ's vicarious righteousness, not His essential righteousness, that is imputed to the believing

sinner. And it is, therefore, the forgiveness procured by Christ which the believing sinner receives.

### **(1) Imputation of Christ's Righteousness as Seen in the Scriptures**

Some of the passages relating to the positive element of justification, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, are as follows.

Rom. 3:21-22 – *But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe ...*

Rom. 4:6 – *... David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works.*

Rom. 5:19 – *For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous.*

Rom. 10:4 – *For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth.*

II Cor. 5:21 – *Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.*

Phil. 3:8-9 – *... That I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.*

### **(2) Non-Imputation, or Forgiveness, of Sin as Seen in the Scriptures**

Some of the passages relating to the negative element of justification, the non-imputation, or forgiveness, of sin, are as follows.

II Cor. 5:19, 21 – *... God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses ... Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.*

Ps. 32:1-2 – *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity ...*

Eph. 4:32 – *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.*

## **2. The Cause of Justification: God's Grace**

In our definition of justification, we have said that justification is an act of God whereby He, out of pure grace for the sake of Christ, declares a believing sinner righteous. When God justifies a sinner,

the reason for this act is not that God finds anything in the sinner for the sake of which He justifies him. There is no merit or worthiness on the sinner's part that causes his justification. God justifies believing sinners out of pure grace for the sake of, or on account of, the meritorious work of Christ.

Rom. 3:24 – *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

Rom. 4:16 – *For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace ...*

Rom. 5:19 – *For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous.*

II Cor. 5:21 – *Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.*

### 3. The Means of Justification: Faith

From the fact that God justifies the sinner out of pure grace without any merit or worthiness on his part, it follows that man is not justified by the works of the Law, for grace excludes works.

Rom. 4:4 – *Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt.*

Rom. 11:6 – *But if it is by grace, it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.*

But if works are excluded as a means of justification, then man can be justified only by faith. To be justified by grace is the same as to be justified by faith.

Rom. 4:16 – *For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace ...*

The only means of justification, therefore, is faith. If there is anything that is plainly taught in the Bible, it is that man is justified by faith alone apart from the Law or the works of the Law.

Rom. 3:20 – *... By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight ...*

Rom. 3:28 – *We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.*

Rom. 4:5 – *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.*

Gal. 2:16 – *Yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the*



*works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

### **a. Why Works Must Be Excluded**

Why must the works of the Law be excluded in man's justification? By the works of the Law is understood anything and everything that a man can do and that is commanded in the Law, and anything and everything that a man can be and that the Law demands of him that he should be. In other words, by the works of the Law, or the righteousness of the Law, we understand a perfectly holy and righteous life according to the Law and a perfect inward condition in conformity with the Law. To be justified by the Law or by the works of the Law would mean that a man was declared just or righteous before God because he had perfectly performed the outward and inward works demanded of him by the Law, in other words, that his inward condition and his outward acts had been in harmony with the requirements of the Law. But *man is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can ... be* (Rom. 8:7). Therefore, the Law cannot present man just before God; that is *what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh* (Rom. 8:3). Therefore, *by the works of the law [can] no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law cometh [only] the knowledge of sin* (Rom. 3:20).

But do not the works of the Law count at all in man's justification? No, the work of man has no part whatever in his justification. *Man is justified by faith apart from [χωρίς] the works of the law* (Rom. 3:28). He is not justified partly by the works of the Law and partly by the work of Christ. And the reason is that *all our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment* (Isa. 64:6). The condition of man was so deplorable, his depravity so complete, and his relation to the Law so despairing that God took the procuring of righteousness entirely out of the hand of man and put it into the hand of His Son. Christ did not come to supplement the defective work of man but *to fulfil all righteousness* (Matt. 3:15). Therefore, Paul says that *all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus* (Rom. 3:23-24).

### **b. Why Faith Justifies**

The foundation of man's justification is laid in Christ. We are *justified ... through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus* (Rom. 3:24). But the redemption in Christ must be apprehended by man; and as stated, the only means on the part of man by which he can lay

hold on Christ and appropriate unto himself the righteousness of Christ is faith. Faith is the receiving means (*medium receptivum*). But faith is a gift of God. Faith, therefore, has nothing meritorious in it. We are not justified on account of faith but by faith (*non propter fidem, sed per fidem*). The reason man is justified by faith, therefore, is not that faith is meritorious in itself or that faith is a virtue with which God is so much more pleased than anything else man has that He justifies man on account of it. The value of faith as the means of justification lies exclusively in its object. In other words, the reason faith justifies, or is reckoned for righteousness, is the fact that faith apprehends and possesses the righteousness of Christ. Man is, therefore, justified on account of Christ apprehended by faith (*propter Christum, per fidem*). Wherefore, as stated before, to be justified by faith is tantamount to being justified by grace, faith simply being the empty hand which receives the gift gratuitously given.

### **c. No Other Doctrine of Justification in the Bible**

Does the Bible teach any other doctrine of justification than the doctrine of justification by faith? To this question we answer most emphatically, No. If the natural condition of all men has been the same at all times, if all men since the fall of Adam have been absolutely incapable of keeping the Law of God and, thus, of obtaining righteousness by works, and if Christ is the Savior of all men and there is not salvation in any other, then it follows that the only way for all men to be justified and saved must be the way of faith.

Rom. 3:22-24 – ... For there is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

#### **(1) Justification by Faith in the Old Testament**

Justification by faith is the doctrine of the Old Testament. The doctrine of justification by faith apart from the works of the Law is not so thoroughly developed and so clearly set forth in the Old Testament as in the New Testament. The people of the Old Testament were not spiritually and religiously mature enough for the full comprehension of this doctrine; they were more like children. But they believed in the Word and promises of God, and this faith was reckoned unto them for righteousness.

Gen. 15:6 – *And he [Abraham] believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness.*

Ps. 32:1-2 – *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin*

is covered. *Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity ...*

Hab. 2:4 – ... *But the righteous shall live by his faith.*

In his dealing with this doctrine in the epistle to the Romans, Paul cites Psalm 32:1-2 and says, *Even as David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works* (Rom. 4:6). In Rom. 1:17, he also cites Hab. 2:4 (quoted above). And Peter says, *To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins* (Acts 10:43).

### **(2) Justification by Faith Taught by Christ**

Justification by faith is the doctrine of Christ that He Himself taught. New theology has claimed that Paul is the inventor of the doctrine of justification by faith and that Jesus did not teach it. This is not true. Jesus taught justification by faith as the only way to salvation. He has taught us this doctrine both by direct instruction and by His way of dealing with sinners. Christ began His ministry by preaching the Gospel, saying, *The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel* (Mark 1:15); and He closed His ministry on earth by charging His disciples, saying, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned* (Mark 16:15-16). Throughout His ministry, Jesus taught all who came to Him that they should believe on Him; and He has very plainly told us that life and death are dependent on our believing or disbelieving. It is hardly necessary to quote Bible passages because the Gospels are full of such sayings of Christ. We shall only cite a few.

John 3:18 – *He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

John 3:36 – *He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Matt. 9:2 – ... *Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven.*

### **(3) Justification by Faith Taught by the Apostles**

Justification by faith was the doctrine of all the apostles. But especially was it given unto Paul to set forth in a very clear and systematic way the doctrine of justification by faith. This he has done

especially in his epistles to the Romans and the Galatians. It is not necessary to cite Bible passages because most of the passages quoted throughout the discussion of this topic are from Paul.

## F. Regeneration

At the same time that man is justified by faith, he is also through faith regenerated or made a child of God. Justification is an act of God outside of man. Regeneration is an act of God in man.

John 1:12-13 – *But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Gal. 3:26 – *For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus.*

### 1. What Regeneration Is

Regeneration is that creative act of God by which man, conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity, dead through trespasses and sins and thus separated from God, is, by the grace and power of God, raised from spiritual death, born into a new spiritual life, made a child of God, received into fellowship with God, made a temple of the holy Trinity, given a new heart, made a new creature in whom the image of God is again implanted, and endowed with new spiritual understanding, will, and power.

Regeneration is not simply “getting a new vision”; it is not simply getting a higher and broader view of life; it is not “reforming”; it is not “turning over a new leaf”; it is not “making a new start.” All these things go with regeneration, but regeneration is something vastly more than all this. Regeneration is a radical change in man’s whole personality, affecting intellect, feeling, and will.

#### **a. Impartation of Spiritual Life**

Through regeneration, spiritual life is imparted to man. The condition of natural man is spiritual death. Through regeneration, he is raised from this condition of death and is made alive in Christ Jesus.

Eph. 2:4-6 – *But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love where-with he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.*

Col. 2:13 – *And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.*

Just as our real life on earth begins when we are born, so we call that act of God by which we get spiritual life a birth. We call this impartation of new life regeneration or new birth, the first birth being that by which we enter this world.

John 3:3 – ... *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

We call the new life which is given through regeneration spiritual life in order to distinguish it from physical life and because it belongs to the spiritual world and is created and sustained by the Spirit of God. Wherefore, those who are born again are said to be spiritual.

John 3:6 – ... *That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

Rom. 8:14 – *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

Gal. 5:25 – *If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.*

Gal. 6:1 – *Brethren ... ye who are spiritual ...*

We have heard that we are regenerated when we by faith receive Christ (John 1:12). Spiritual life has been procured for us by Christ and is found only in Christ. *Christ ... is our life* (Col. 3:4). Therefore, we are *ma[d]e alive together with him* (Col. 2:13). The moment that a person by faith accepts Christ, he also accepts life; i.e., simultaneously with his acceptance of Christ, the life of God is imparted to him.

I John 5:11-12 – ... *God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life ...*

In Col. 2:13 we are told that God *ma[d]e [us] alive together with him [Christ], having forgiven us all our trespasses*. By faith, we are justified; i.e., our sins are forgiven. But where the sins are forgiven, there the guilt and punishment of sin, which is death, is also taken away; there is life. Therefore, Luther says, “Where there is remission of sins, there are also life and salvation” (Martin Luther, *The Small Catechism*, Part V, 6). The two cannot be separated.

The life which is imparted through regeneration is only *the life of God* (Eph. 4:18); and as stated, we are made alive together with Christ – Christ is our life. Spiritual life, therefore, is essentially eternal life which begins here at the moment of our regeneration and continues throughout eternity.

I John 5:11-12 – ... *God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life ...*

I John 5:13 – *These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.*

### **b. Becoming a Child of God**

Through regeneration, a person becomes a child of God. Every man is the child of the one who has begotten him. Those who are regenerated are begotten of God; consequently, they are the children of God.

I Pet. 1:3 – *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

John 1:12-13 – *But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

But if we are the children of God, then are we also *heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ* (Rom. 8:17). Therefore, Peter says that *God begat us again unto a living hope ... unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away* (I Pet. 1:3-4).

### **c. Being Received into Fellowship with God**

Through regeneration, a person is received into fellowship with God and becomes a temple of the holy Trinity. Man dies by virtue of the fact that he, through sin, is separated from God, the source and fountain of life. Death is separation from God. Man can, therefore, be made alive only by being united with God, by being taken into fellowship with God. By regeneration, each one of the three persons takes up His abode in man. Not only does God give the regenerate new and spiritual gifts, but also He gives Himself to man in that He unites man with Himself in the most intimate manner, making man His temple. We therefore speak of fellowship with God, fellowship with Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This fellowship the theologians call mystical union (*unio mystica*).

John 14:17 – ... *For he [the Spirit of truth] abideth with you, and shall be in you ...*

John 14:23 – ... *And my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

John 15:5 – *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing.*

I Cor. 3:16 – *Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

Gal. 2:20 – *I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me ...*

I John 1:3 – *... And our fellowship is with the Father; and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

#### **d. Being Made a New Creature**

Through regeneration, man is made a new creature. We therefore call regeneration a creative act. As stated, regeneration is not an act by which the sinner is reformed. Regeneration is not the stimulation into activity of powers and potential capacities that have been lying dormant or undeveloped; it is not powerfully influencing man so that he pulls himself together to do what it was impossible for him to do without such gracious influence of God. But it is the creation of something absolutely new in man; it is giving him something which he had not before; it is making him something which he was not before and which he had no powers or potential capacities to be or become. Regeneration does not change man into a new being; spiritual life is not substituted for his mental life. Nor is his sinful nature taken out of him and a sinless nature given him instead. Man continues to have the old mental faculties that he had before, and he continues to be a sinner having the same sinful nature that he had before. But through regeneration, he receives the life of God; he is made a partaker of the nature of God; a new heart is created within him; he gets new powers and potential capacities that develop more and more by the grace of God and that rule and dominate his whole personality and that keep the evil lusts and desires in subjection.

Ezek. 36:26 – *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ...*

II Cor. 5:17 – *Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.*

Eph. 4:24 – *And put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.*

#### **e. Renewal of the Image of God**

Through regeneration, the image of God is again implanted in man. The image of God, in which man was created and which was lost by the Fall, is again given to man when he is born again; i.e.,

there gets to be harmony between the will of God and the will of man; the Law of God is written in man's heart because his sins are forgiven, and *he delight[s] in the law of God after the inward man* (Rom. 7:22).

Jer. 31:33-34 – *But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.*

Eph. 4:23-24 – *And that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.*

Col. 3:10 – *And have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him.*

#### **f. Receiving Spiritual Understanding, Will, and Power**

Through regeneration, man receives a new spiritual understanding, will, and power.

Col. 3:10 – *... being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him.*

II Cor. 4:6 – *Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (See also what is said under C, 1, a, (2) Perfect Illumination, pp. 201-202).*

Rom. 7:18 – *... For to will is present with me ...*

Rom. 7:22 – *For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.*

Rom. 8:2 – *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.*

Eph. 2:10 – *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.*

Titus 2:14 – *... That he [Jesus] might ... purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works.*

## **2. The Cause and Means of Regeneration**

### **a. The Cause of Regeneration: God**

From all that has been said about regeneration, it is evident that the only cause of man's regeneration is God. We have heard that regeneration is a creative act, that it is the act of giving life. God alone can create; God alone can give life. Man cannot cooperate



with God in an act of creation, in an act of giving life. In regeneration, therefore, man is purely passive and God alone is active. And that which prompts Him to regenerate is no worthiness or merit in man but solely His grace in Christ Jesus.

John 1:12-13 – *But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Eph. 2:8-10 – *For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus ...*

Titus 3:4-5 – *But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.*

This, however, is not to be understood as though the regenerating grace of God were irresistible as the Calvinists teach. But as stated before, through prevenient grace, God works upon the heart of the unregenerate and draws him by His Spirit. And the one who, by this gracious work and operation of God, willingly yields to the grace of God through the call, him God regenerates.

Jer. 20:7 – *O Jehovah, thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded ...*

Rev. 3:20 – *Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

See also what is said under B, 2, b. The Call Is Efficacious, pp. 196-197.

### **b. The Means of Regeneration**

The means by which God works regeneration in man are two: the Word of God and Holy Baptism.

#### **(1) Regeneration by the Word of God**

Jas. 1:18 – *Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.*

I Pet. 1:23 – *Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth.*

The Law indeed has no life-giving power. The work of the Law is only preparatory, making man realize his need. The Gospel alone has the power to create new life.

II Cor. 3:6 – ... *For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*

Rom. 1:16 – *For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation ...*

I Cor. 4:15 – ... *For in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel.*

## **(2) Regeneration by Baptism**

John 3:4-5 – *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? ... Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Titus 3:5 – ... *But according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration ...*

Gal. 3:26-27 – *For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.*

That which makes baptism a washing of regeneration is, of course, the Word of God which is in and with the water. “For the water, without the Word of God, is simply water and no baptism” (Martin Luther, *The Small Catechism*, Part IV, 10). But in Baptism, it is not the Word alone, however, that regenerates; it is the Word of God connected with the water. In other words, a person is regenerated through the act of baptism.

## **G. Sanctification**

The object of Christ’s redemption was not only that forgiveness of sins might be procured for us but also that we might be morally restored. The object was not only to deliver us from the bondage of sin but also to make us the servants of God; it was not only to save us from a life in sin but also to transfer us into a life of holiness. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God [did], sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemn[ing] sin in the flesh [of Christ] (Rom 8:3); but the object of this vicarious work of Christ was that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom 8:4). The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men (Titus 2:11) but at the same time also instructing [παιδεύουσα] us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly*

lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world ... [For Christ] gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zeal of good works (Titus 2:12, 14). When Jesus goes into the house of Zacchaeus, a man that is a sinner (Luke 19:7), then that sinner is changed so that he gives liberally of his goods to the poor, and if he has wrongfully exacted anything of any man, he restores with interest (Luke 19:8). God *justifieth the ungodly* (Rom 4:5), but the ungodly does not remain ungodly. We are justified by faith alone; but justifying faith is not alone, for it produces and is accompanied by good works. Through regeneration, the ungodly person is changed into a godly person. He is given a new heart, a new will, and new powers and possibilities. Regeneration, therefore, marks the great change and turning point in his life. From now on, he leads a different life; he *walk[s] not after the flesh, but after the Spirit* (Rom 8:4); he *serve[s] in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter* (Rom 7:6); he *walk[s] in newness of life* (Rom. 6:4). The unfolding and development of this Christian character, personality, and new life is called sanctification, or renovation, or daily renewal.

### 1. What Sanctification Is

The term “sanctification” is used in both a wider sense and a narrower sense. Sanctification used in its wider sense denotes that work of the Holy Spirit by which He sanctifies man, i.e., makes man holy, and it includes justification, regeneration, and daily renewal. In this sense, the word is used in I Pet. 1:2 – [Elect] *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ ...* In this sense also, Luther says that the third article of the Apostles’ Creed “treats of Sanctification” (Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism*, Part II, 35). Used in the narrower sense (which is the most common), the term “sanctification,” as already stated, means the unfolding, growth, and development of the new life principle, powers, and possibilities given by regeneration. In this sense, we use the word “sanctification” here.

It is not God’s ordinary way to create fully developed creatures and personalities. He creates organisms and endows them with certain powers and possibilities and then lets them develop. The life created by regeneration is not an exception from this rule. The “new creature” is a child in Christ, not a grown-up man. But this child is

to develop into a man; it is to *grow in ... grace* (II Pet. 3:18); it is to *attain ... unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer children* (Eph. 4:13-14). But since in regeneration the new life principle is not substituted for the old life principle; since by regeneration the sinful nature with its evil propensities and enmity toward God is not rooted out; and since the new life character, powers, and possibilities are given to a sinful man, to a man with a depraved nature and a perverted will; it is self-evident that this unfolding, development, and growth does not go on smoothly and undisturbed but takes place under difficulties and in the face of opposition on the part of the old depraved nature. Sanctification, therefore, by necessity must assume the character of a fight against sin in its various forms. Sanctification or renovation, therefore, has two sides, one that may be called the negative and one that may be called the positive. Accordingly, sanctification consists in the putting away of the old man and the putting on of the new man.

Eph. 4:22-24 – *That ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.*

Rom. 13:12-14 – *The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

#### **a. The Positive Side of Sanctification:**

##### **Putting On the New Man**

The positive side of sanctification consists in the putting on of the new man. By the new man is meant the new life principle, the new mind, will, desire, power and capacity – in short, the image of God implanted by regeneration. That the new man should be put on means that the believer's whole personality should be more and more permeated by the sanctifying grace of God and, thus, that the image of God should become clearer and more perfect; that the believer should grow in all Christian graces; that he should become inwardly more and more holy in his thoughts, feelings, and will; and that in his outward life and conduct, he should daily more and more reflect the life of God in his heart, following in the steps of his Savior.

Rom. 12:2 – ... *But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Eph. 4:13-15 – *Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we ... speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ.*

Eph. 4:23-24 – *And that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.*

Phil. 4:8 – *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

Col. 3:10 – *And have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him.*

II Pet. 3:18 – *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ...*

According to Eph. 4:13-15 quoted above, a Christian should grow up in all things till he reaches *the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*. Sanctification, therefore, affects the whole personality of a Christian. It affects his understanding, his feelings, his desires, his will, and his whole conduct of life.

### **(1) Sanctification Affects the Understanding**

We have heard that, in regeneration, a new light is kindled in man's intellect. He who was blind now sees. But his knowledge of the things of the Spirit of God is not perfect or complete. From now on, he must grow in the ... *knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (II Pet. 3:18). He must be *renewed unto knowledge* (Col. 3:10). *His delight is in the law of Jehovah; and on his law doth he meditate day and night* (Ps. 1:2). He now sees with new eyes and hears with new ears, and to him now *it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God* (Luke 8:10); therefore, his understanding of spiritual things will day by day be greater and more perfect.

Eph. 3:18-19 – [That ye] *may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.*

Eph. 1:17-20 – *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places.*

Col. 1:9-10 – ... *That ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing ...*

### **(2) Sanctification Affects the Feelings**

The more a believer experiences the grace of God and the privilege of living in fellowship with Him, the more he will also experience the peace, joy, and satisfaction which God gives to His children – even in the midst of sorrows, troubles, and tribulations.

Ps. 4:7-8 – *Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than they have when their grain and their new wine are increased. In peace will I both lay me down and sleep; for thou, Jehovah, alone makest me dwell in safety.*

Rom. 14:17 – *For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

II Cor. 6:10 – *As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ...*

Phil. 4:7 – *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.*

### **(3) Sanctification Affects the Desires and Affections**

Because a believer has *see[n]* the kingdom of God (John 3:3), has *taste[d]* and *seen* that Jehovah is good (Ps. 34:8), and has his *citizenship ... in heaven* (Phil. 3:20), therefore his desires are toward the Lord and toward everything that belongs to the kingdom of God here on earth and in the world to come.

Ps. 18:1 – *I love thee, O Jehovah, my strength.*

Ps. 73:25 – *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.*

Ps. 84:10 – *For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*

Phil. 1:9 – *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more ...*

Col. 3:1-2 – *If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth.*

But if the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us (Rom. 5:5), then we also love our neighbors and even our enemies and especially the brethren, which love should more and more manifest itself in kindness and self-sacrificing service in the steps of Him who loved the church, and gave himself up for it (Eph. 5:25) and who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

Matt. 22:39 – ... *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*

Matt. 5:44, 46 – ... *Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you ... For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?*

I Thess. 4:9-10 – *But concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another ... But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound more and more.*

Rom. 12:15 – *Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep.*

Eph. 4:32 – *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.*

Gal. 5:13 – ... *Only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another.*

#### **(4) Sanctification Affects the Will**

Through regeneration, man's will has been liberated; i.e., the will, which by nature cannot will that which is good, is freed from this bondage so that it can will that which is good and can will that which is in harmony with the will of God. By daily renewal, the will must be more and more liberated and strengthened; and we strengthen our will by exercising our will power. This can only be done by battling against the powers that tend to draw our will in the wrong direction. A Christian has a chance to exercise his will power especially in the faithful performance of his daily duty.

Rom. 7:18 – ... *For to will is present with me ...*

#### **(5) Sanctification Affects the Whole Conduct**

Sanctification affects the whole man, body and soul, in all his conduct of life. The sanctifying grace of God must permeate man's



whole personality so that he dedicates and consecrates not only the powers of his soul but also his body and all that he has to the service of God, thus making his whole life an uninterrupted service of the Lord.

Rom. 6:13 – ... *But present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

Rom. 12:11 – *In diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.*

I Cor. 6:20 – *For ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body.*

I Cor. 10:31 – *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

Col. 3:17 – *And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

I Thess. 5:23 – *And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Otto Funke says, “I am constantly trying to make my Christianity more natural and my nature more Christian” (specific source unknown). That is sanctification.

### **b. The Negative Side of Sanctification:**

#### **Putting Away the Old Man**

The negative side of sanctification consists in the putting away of the old man. By the old man, or old Adam, is meant the depraved and sinful nature still inherent in regenerate man. “It is that which is born in us, from Adam, malicious, hateful, envious, lascivious, avaricious, indolent, haughty, yea, unbelieving, infected with all vices, and having by nature nothing good in it” (Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism*, Part IV, 66). That the old man should be put away means that a believer should, by the grace of God, more and more withstand evil in all its forms and not permit it to gain ascendancy, die daily to sin, mortify the flesh, subdue evil lusts and desires, and, by the power of God, conquer the power of sin.

Rom. 6:6-8, 11-14 – *Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him ... Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your*



*mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof: neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness ... For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace.*

*I Cor. 5:7-8 – Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

*Gal. 5:24 – And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.*

*Eph. 4:22 – That ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit.*

*Col. 3:5-9 – Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience: wherein ye also once walked, when ye lived in these things; but now do ye also put them all away: anger; wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth: lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings.*

## 2. The Conditions of Sanctification

### a. Sanctification Is Gradual

Justification and regeneration are instantaneous acts. Sanctification, on the other hand, is gradual, continuing from the time a person is justified and regenerated until he leaves this world. Because the evil in man is never in this life perfectly rooted out, and because it is not possible on this side of the grave to attain to perfection, therefore the struggle against sin and the striving for growth in all Christian graces must, by necessity, continue all the days of our lives. For that reason, it is also called daily renewal.

*II Cor. 4:16 – ... But though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.*

*Phil. 1:6 – Being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

*Phil. 3:12-14 – Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I*

*press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

Ps. 19:12 – *Who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults.*

I John 1:8 – *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

### **b. Sanctification Is by Self-Denial and Struggle**

Sanctification is exercised and accomplished under self-denial and struggle. It is self-evident from what has been said about the nature of sanctification as a putting away of the old man with its sinful lusts and desires that it cannot be practiced without self-immolation. The desire of our own depraved nature is opposed to the desire of *the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth* (Eph. 4:24). But the new man must dominate, and the old man must be subdued, yea, drowned and crucified; but he yields unwillingly and dies slowly and under protest; hence, there is war between the flesh and the Spirit. Therefore, Jesus spoke so much about the necessity of denying oneself when following Him. A Christian not only will do that which he likes to do but also will do his duty even though it may be hard and disagreeable; and here is where denying oneself and taking up the cross come in. Then, we must bear in mind that the flesh has two powerful allies: the world and the devil. *The whole world lieth in wickedness* (I John 5:19, KJV), and the devil is constantly trying to lead believers into sin. The interests of the world and the devil are diametrically opposite to the interests of God. If a person, therefore, wants to live according to the will of God, he by necessity will have to take up arms against the world and the devil. *Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God* (Jas. 4:4). Therefore, the life of the people of God on earth is a constant warfare, and, therefore, Christians are admonished to arm themselves and to fight the good fight.

Gal. 5:17 – *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would.*

Matt. 16:24-25 – *... If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.*

Matt. 10:34-39 – *Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law: and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*

Eph. 6:10-17 – *Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

II Tim. 4:7 – *I have fought the good fight ...*

### **3. The Cause of Sanctification: God through His Spirit**

The cause of sanctification is God who, through His Spirit, works in believers. He alone through regeneration has liberated the will of man and created in him new spiritual powers, and He constantly through the means of grace works in him. Man is indeed active in this work, cooperating with God; and the degree of sanctification will depend on man's faithfulness and diligence. But it is God who continually works all good within man, and it is only by the grace of God that man can cleanse himself and walk in the steps of Christ.

I Thess. 5:23 – *And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly ...*

Titus 2:14 – *... That he [Christ] might ... purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works.*

Rom. 15:16 – *... being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*

Gal. 5:22-23 – *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control ...*

Titus 3:5 – ... *But according to his mercy he [God] saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.*

II Cor. 7:1 – *Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

Phil. 2:12-13 – ... *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.*

(Editor's note: To explain in more detail the relationship between the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work in the believer's life and the believer's cooperation with Him in it, the following paragraphs regarding being filled with the Spirit have been inserted here from J. N. Kildahl, *Concerning Sin and Grace* [Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1954], Bernhard H. J. Habel, trans., pp. 249-251. Underlining has been added to highlight salient points.)

I wonder if there are not altogether too many believers who are standing on too low a rung in their Christian life so far as spiritual light, understanding, warmth, and power are concerned.... They are believers, and so far as that goes, they have received God's Spirit; for all believers have received the Holy Ghost. But there is a difference between *having* the Spirit of God and *being filled* with the Spirit; there is a difference between being a Christian and being a good Christian; there is a difference between being a believer and being an enlightened, experienced, warm, Spirit-filled believer. There seem to be many believers who have never experienced a Pentecost. They have not allowed the Spirit of God to lead them to that measure of light and understanding of the Gospel and to that power in life and Christian witness which He desires for them. The worst of it is that many are entirely satisfied with this low level of Christian living and seem to think it must be so, that to ask for greater power would be a sign of spiritual pride.

....

Is there anything we can do about the matter? Is it possible for one who stands on a lower level to receive the gifts of the Spirit in richer measure? Jesus says [in John 14:15-16, 21, KJV], *If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter. And, He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him....* The world cannot receive the Spirit of truth; the

world cannot see Him or know Him [John 14:17]. It is only to those who love Jesus that our Lord reveals himself; and only to them is the Spirit given.

... The Holy Ghost can do His work in us when we meditate on Jesus as He has been revealed in the Gospel; and it is through such meditations that the Spirit teaches us and reminds us of all that Jesus has said. Those who love Jesus love His [W]ord; for Jesus comes to them through His Holy Word. In the Word of God, the Christian sees Jesus and hears Jesus; and through the Word the Spirit reveals Jesus to the believer so that He becomes great and splendid in one's heart....

... And it is only the one who loves Jesus and proves the genuineness of his love by obedience that the Spirit has power to lead from light to light and from strength to strength. You may hear and read the [W]ord of God as much as you please, and you may take part in the work of the church as diligently as you please; you may pray and cry to the Lord for the Holy Spirit; but the Spirit will not be given to you if you are not obedient to the Lord.

....

... Be first of all obedient, and grieve not the Spirit of God. Do not try to excuse your sin or to bargain with the Lord or with your own conscience in any matter concerning obedience to God's commands. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. He cannot tolerate dishonesty and hypocrisy; He cannot carry on God's work in one who is not true in his innermost heart. Strive to keep the commandments of Jesus; seek to be obedient in all things, both when it pleases you and when it goes against the old Adam; try to be truthful, honest, and fair, not only in your relationships to men but also in your relationship to God. Then you will, if you make diligent use of the means of grace, receive more of the fulness of the Spirit and grow in spiritual stature. You will go forward in your understanding of the [G]ospel and in the grace which is in Christ; and Jesus will become great to your heart. Christ will become the theme of your song, and His atonement will become the great power in your life. You will receive more power to overcome sin, more desire to deny yourself and to sacrifice all for the sake of Jesus. You will become more holy, more pious. And your life will bear testimony that Jesus dwells in your heart. In short, you will become filled with the Holy Spirit.

### **a. The Means by Which God Works Sanctification**

The means by which God works sanctification in believers are the means of grace.

#### **(1) The Law Is a Means of Sanctification**

The Law is a means of sanctification in a twofold way. In the first place, it reveals to a believer his sins, rebukes him for his sins, and thus indirectly drives him to amend his ways.

Rom. 7:7 – ... *For I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

In the second place, the Law being a revelation of God's will, it becomes the rule according to which the life of a believer must develop.

Ps. 119:105 – *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path.*

Prov. 6:23 – *For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light ...*

#### **(2) The Gospel Is a Means of Sanctification**

The Law is indeed the rule for sanctification, but it gives no power to be or to do what it points out as right and pleasing in the sight of God. The Gospel is the means by which power, strength, willingness, and desire to battle against sin and to walk in newness of life according to the Word of God is given. In the Gospel, we learn to see the love of God which kindles love to God and man in our hearts; and love is the acting principle of all sanctification. David says, *I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart* (Ps. 119:32), and the heart is enlarged by the grace and love of God which come to us through the Gospel.

II Cor. 7:1 – *Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

II Cor. 5:14 – *For the love of Christ constraineth us ...*

I Pet. 4:1 – *Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind ...*

Titus 2:11-12 – *For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world.*

#### **(3) The Sacraments Are Means of Sanctification**

Baptism not only regenerates us but also is, throughout our whole lives, a source of strength and an incentive to holy living.

Rom. 6:4 – *We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father; so we also might walk in newness of life.*

The Lord's Supper strengthens the faith of believers, thus fitting them better for the work of sanctification; and it is a bond of union between believers, binding them together in Christian love.

I Cor. 10:17 – *Seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread.*

### **b. The Pattern of Sanctification: Christ**

The pattern of sanctification which God has placed before our eyes which we as Christians are to imitate is Christ.

Mark 10:43-45 – *... But whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister ...*

John 13:14-15 – *If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.*

I Pet. 2:21 – *Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps.*

### **c. The Means of Sanctification on Our Part**

The means on our part by which we may seek the grace and help of God to battle against the powers of sin in us and about us and to lead holy lives is prayer. A praying Christian is a strong Christian.

Phil. 4:6 – *In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

Jas. 1:5 – *But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

## **4. The Manifestation of Sanctification in Good Works**

In regeneration, a person gets the life of God, the nature of God, the image of God, and the Spirit of God. Now, everything behaves and works according to its own nature. That which is of God must produce that which is in harmony with God. The activity and work of the new man must, therefore, be in conformity with the will of God. In other words, a believer must do good works.

“Good works are free acts of justified persons, performed through the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit, according to the prescription of the divine Law, true faith in Christ preceding, to the honor of God and the edification of men” (David Hollaz in *The Doc-*



*trinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Heinrich Schmid, ed., 1899, p. 493).

Matt. 5:16 – *Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

Eph. 2:10 – *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.*

II Cor. 9:8 – ... *That ye ... may abound unto every good work.*

I Tim. 6:17-18 – *Charge them that are rich in this present world ... that they do good, that they be rich in good works ...*

Titus 2:7 – *In all things showing thyself an ensample of good works ...*

### **a. Good Works Are Free Acts**

A believer does good works not simply because the Law demands them of him, or because he acknowledges the right of God to rule over him, or because he may be placed in such a position that certain circumstances compel or constrain him to do what he is doing; but he does good works because he delights in the Law of God, because his heart is in the works, and because he therefore freely chooses to do them. When we call good works “free acts,” we do not mean that a believer is free to either do good works or not do them but that he does them free from external constraint. In doing good works, he simply follows the nature of the new man that has been created within him. A work done unwillingly and under compulsion cannot be termed a good work because it lacks the right motive.

Ex. 35:5 – *Take ye from among you an offering unto Jehovah; whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it ...*

Ps. 110:3 – *Thy people offer themselves willingly ...*

Jer. 31:33 – ... *I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it ...*

Rom. 7:22 – *For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.*

II Cor. 8:12 – *For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath ...*

II Cor. 9:7 – *Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*

Phile. 14 – *But without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will.*



**b. Good Works Are Performed by Believers Only**

Good works are the fruit of the Spirit. Therefore, they are found only in persons in whom the Spirit is permitted to dwell and to produce fruit.

John 15:4-5 – ... *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing.*

Gal. 5:22-23 – *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control ...*

Eph. 2:10 – *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works ...*

Titus 2:14 – *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works.*

Augsburg Confession, Art. XVIII –

“Of the Freedom of the Will, they teach, that man’s will has some liberty for the attainment of civil righteousness, and for the choice of things subject to reason. Nevertheless, it has no power, without the Holy Ghost, to work the righteousness of God, that is, spiritual righteousness; since the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God [1 Cor. 2:14]; but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Ghost is received through the Word. These things are said in as many words by Augustine in his *Hypognosticon*, book iii.: ‘We grant that all men have a certain freedom of will in judging according to [natural] reason; not such freedom, however, whereby it is capable, without God, either to begin, or much less to complete aught in things pertaining to God, but only in works of this life, whether good or evil. “Good,” I call those works which spring from the good in Nature, that is, to have a will to labor in the field, to eat and drink, to have a friend, to clothe oneself, to build a house, to marry, to keep cattle, to learn divers useful arts, or whatsoever good pertains to this life, none of which things are without dependence on the providence of God; yea, of Him and through Him they are and have their beginning. “Evil,” I call such works as to have a will to worship an idol, to commit murder,’ etc.

“They condemn the Pelagians and others who teach that, without the Holy Ghost, by the power of nature alone, we are able to love God above all things; also to do the commandments of God as touching ‘the substance of the act.’ For, although nature is able in some

sort to do the outward work (for it is able to keep the hands from theft and murder), yet it cannot work the inward motions, such as the fear of God, trust in God, chastity, patience, etc.”

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Ch. III, Art. VI, 9-10 –

Although, therefore, civil works, *i.e.* the outward works of the Law, can be done in a measure, without Christ and without the Holy Ghost, nevertheless it appears from those things which we have said, that those things which belong peculiarly to the divine Law, *i.e.* the affections of the heart towards God which are commanded in the first table, cannot be rendered without the Holy Ghost. But our adversaries are fine theologians; they regard the second table, and political works; for the first table they care nothing, as though it were of no matter; or certainly they require only outward observances. They in no way consider the Law that is eternal, and placed far above the sense and intellect of all creatures (Deut. 6:5): “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart.”

### **c. Good Works Are Done According to the Standard of the Law**

Since the Law is the revelation of the principles of right and wrong – in other words, of the eternal, unchangeable will of God – we know from the Law what is pleasing to God; and when a person seeks to do that which God has commanded in the Law, then we know that he is doing works that are good in the sight of God. On the other hand, no matter how highly a work may be praised and extolled by men, if it is not directly or indirectly comprehended in what God has commanded, it cannot properly be termed a good work. And since the Law includes everything that is good in itself and that has value in the sight of God, we shall find plenty to do by trying to live according to that. Therefore, we reject as good works the human inventions of the Catholics termed “good works” such as fasting, vows of poverty, celibacy, and the like.

Mark 7:7-13 – *But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men. Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition. For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death: but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given to God; ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his*

mother; making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do.

**d. Good Works Flow From and Are the Natural Fruit of Faith**

We are justified by faith alone apart from the works of the Law; but wherever faith is, there good works are also because faith produces good works. *What the law could not do, that God has done that the ordinance [or works] of the law might be fulfilled in us* (Rom. 8:3-4).

Gal. 5:6 – *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love.*

Jas. 2:17 – *Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.*

**e. Good Works Are Wrought to the Glory of God and the Edification of Men**

To be good and acceptable in the eyes of God, our works not only must be performed according to the outward standard of the Law but also must have that quality which is the fulfillment of the Law; they must be prompted by the right motive, which is the seeking of the glory of God and the welfare of our fellow men. No matter how beautiful a work may seem to be, if the underlying motive is selfishness in some form or other, it is so far from being a good work that it is an abomination in the sight of God. Therefore, Christ rebukes those who do *all their works ... to be seen of men* (Matt. 23:5), and Ananias and Sapphira were punished most severely in spite of the fact that they brought money for the poor (Acts 5:1-11).

Matt. 5:16 – *Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

I Cor. 10:31 – *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

I Cor. 10:23-24 – *All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all things edify. Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good.*

**f. Good Works Are Imperfect**

We have mentioned the marks of good works; but since no Christian can keep the Law of God perfectly, since no Christian loves God and man with a perfect love, and since no Christian is free from selfishness, therefore, the good works of Christians are not perfect, and, therefore, as Luther has said, a Christian will have to ask God's forgiveness for his best works. The reason is that even our best works are tainted with sin. That goes to show how impossible it

is for us to obtain righteousness before God by our good works and how false the Catholic idea is that many saints have performed “works of supererogation,” i.e., more works than they themselves need over against God.

Isa. 64:6 – ... *And all our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment ...*

Luke 17:10 – *Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do.*

### **g. Good Works Have a Reward**

Righteousness, life, and salvation are not given as a reward for good works; these blessings are given freely by grace for the sake of Christ to those who believe. But nevertheless, it pleases our Heavenly Father to reward, not of merit but of free grace, every work of His children done in faith, prompted by love to Him.

Matt. 10:42 – *And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward.*

Luke 14:14 – ... *For thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.*

Gal. 6:9 – *And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

## **Section Three**

**VIII. The Means of Grace**

**IX. The Church**

**X. The Last Things**

## VIII. The Means of Grace

### A. Introduction

Christ has procured for all men full and free salvation, forgiveness, righteousness, sonship, fellowship with God, and life everlasting.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to make the individual a partaker of that which Christ has procured for the whole world. To that end, He calls, enlightens, justifies, regenerates, converts, renews, and preserves man. But all this the Holy Spirit does through means.

All that God has done and daily continues to do in behalf of man's salvation we call grace because God does not owe man anything. Man has deserved only punishment. His salvation is, therefore, from every point of view, a free gift of God. The procuring of our salvation through Jesus Christ is an act of grace; that which is procured for us by Christ is grace; and the work of the Holy Spirit to impart the merit of Christ to the individual sinner is an act of grace. Paul, therefore, says that *the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men* (Titus 2:11); he says to the Ephesians, *For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God* (Eph. 2:8); to the Romans, he says, *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus* (Rom. 3:24); and in I Cor. 15:10, he states that *by the grace of God I am what I am*. For these reasons, the means by which the Holy Spirit performs His gracious work in the hearts and lives of men are called means of grace. They impart to us the grace of God, which operation is in itself an act of grace.

Every person who wants the grace of God must seek and find it through the means of grace.

Smalcald Articles, Part III, Art. VIII, 3, 10 –

“And in those things which concern the spoken, outward Word, we must firmly hold that God grants his Spirit or grace to no one, except through or with the preceding outward Word. Thereby we are protected against enthusiasts, i.e. spirits who boast that they have the Spirit without and before the Word, and accordingly judge Scripture

or the spoken Word, and explain and stretch it at their pleasure ... they wish to be acute judges between the Spirit and the letter, and yet know not what they say or propose.”

“Therefore in regard to this we ought and must constantly maintain that God does not wish to deal with us otherwise than through the spoken Word and the sacraments, and that whatever without the Word and sacraments is extolled as spirit is the devil himself.”

Augsburg Confession, Art. V –

“That we may obtain this faith, the Office of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who worketh faith where and when it pleaseth God in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ’s sake, justified those who believe that they are received into favor for Christ’s sake.

“They condemn the Anabaptists and others, who think that the Holy Ghost cometh to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works.”

### 1. The Number of the Means of Grace

There are two means of grace, the Word and the sacraments. Through the Word, God speaks to us; through the sacraments, He deals with us by actions. That which gives efficacy to the sacraments, however, is the Word which is connected with the outward elements. Because of the above named fact, the means of grace are sometimes designated as the audible Word and the visible Word.

### 2. The Efficacy of the Means of Grace

Through the means of grace, God does not merely reveal, present, and offer His grace; nor are the means of grace mere signs and symbols of His grace; nor are they pledges and seals of the same. But the means of grace are powerful and efficacious instrumentalities through which God actually bestows His grace, performs His work in the hearts and lives of men, creates faith, produces a holy life, sustains believers unto the end, and finally brings them to eternal salvation.

John 3:5 – ... *Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

I Pet. 1:23 – *Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth.*

The means of grace are always efficacious regardless of the belief or unbelief of either the one administering them or of the one to whom they are being administered. They have the same efficacy in themselves.

But the condition under which the means of grace can produce that for which they are intended is that man does not resist but believes.

Heb. 3:8 – *Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, like as in the day of the trial in the wilderness.*

Heb. 4:2 – *For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard.*

Mark 16:15-16 – ... *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.*

Isa. 48:18 – *Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.*

### 3. The Sufficiency of the Means of Grace

The means of grace are sufficient for the purpose for which they are given. When Christ commanded His disciples to go and make all nations disciples, He gave them no other means. They were to make disciples by baptism and by teaching.

Matt. 28:19-20 – *Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you ...*

They are sufficient for every person and for every exigency.

Luke 16:29 – ... *They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.*

Rom. 1:16 – *For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

Jas. 1:21 – ... *receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

## B. The Word of God

The oral and written word is also among men a powerful means by which we communicate with one another. By means of words,



we reveal to one another our thoughts, influence one another, enlighten one another's intellect, and move one another's feelings and will.

Thus, the Lord also makes use of words as a means of communicating with us, revealing to us His thoughts, influencing us, enlightening our intellect, and moving our feelings and our will. The Word of God is a means of grace.

Under this heading, we shall consider four things: the outward form of the Word, the inspiration of the Word, the perspicuity of the Word, and the efficacy of the Word.

### **1. The Outward Form of the Word**

Under the Old Testament dispensation, God spoke to His people through the prophets. In the fulness of time, He spoke to them through His Son. Christ has revealed the thoughts of God as no one else; hence, He is called the Word (*λόγος*). After Christ, God continued to speak to men through the apostles and evangelists.

The oral word is limited to those who hear the person who speaks. The immediate hearers can repeat it to others who did not hear the speaker, and they in turn can repeat it to others again. Thus, the word can be transmitted from generation to generation. This method of transmitting the Word of God is called tradition.

### **2. The Inspiration of the Word**

One of the functions of the Word of God in bringing man to eternal salvation is to reveal the will of God and show man the way. To be a sure and safe guide and rule of faith and life, the Word must be infallible and inerrant. The Scripture is just such an infallible and inerrant word by virtue of its being inspired.

We shall consider first, the nature of the inspiration, and second, the Biblical proofs of the inspiration.

#### **a. The Nature of the Inspiration**

By the inspiration of the Bible, we understand that the men who wrote the Bible were thus filled, moved, and guided by the Holy Spirit that they, under the influence of the Spirit, wrote what God wanted them to write and used adequate words to express what God wanted them to say. The Bible is written by men but inspired by God (*θεόπνευστος*, God-breathed).

II Tim. 3:16 – *Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.*

II Pet. 1:21 – *For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.*

The things which the Biblical writers wrote were revealed to them through the Holy Spirit, and the words which they used were *spiritual words*, i.e., words taught them by the Spirit, thus *combining spiritual things with spiritual words* (see the passage below).

I Cor. 2:9-13 – *But as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words.*

As there was in Christ – the *Logos*, the Revealer of God – something distinctly divine and something distinctly human combined in the same person, so there is in the Bible – the written Word, the revelation of God – something distinctly divine and something distinctly human combined in the same book. The Bible is written by man in ordinary human language according to ordinary grammar and rhetoric, but all has been done under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The men who wrote the Bible were not unconscious instruments in the hand of God; they were not simply God's pen or God's secretary taking down dictation. They studied the subject matter and used their mental powers as we do when we sit down to write. Therefore, their individuality and personal peculiarities were retained. Jeremiah did not write like Isaiah, nor Paul like Peter. Luke used more classical Greek than John, and Mark's style is different from that of Matthew. But God made use of all these men just as they were and guided each one in his writing without depriving him of his own peculiar way. When we read Daniel, we hear God speak to us in the peculiar style of Daniel; and when we read Paul's epistles, it is God who speaks to us in Paul's way of writing. In giving us His Word in writing, God has not changed the men who wrote the different books

into a uniform type, but He has accommodated Himself to the individuality of each writer.

### **b. Bible Proofs of the Inspiration**

In dealing with the Bible proofs of the inspiration, we must consider the Old Testament and the New Testament separately because the passages that prove the inspiration of the Old Testament do not necessarily prove the inspiration of the New Testament and vice versa.

#### **(1) Old Testament Proofs of the Inspiration**

(a) In the first place, we find in many of the books of the Old Testament a great number of statements to the effect that the men who wrote these books spoke the “Word of God.” We are told that the “Word of Jehovah came” to them; wherefore, these men said, “Thus saith Jehovah.” I refer you to the following passages. *The word of Jehovah that came to Joel ...* (Joel 1:1). *The word of Jehovah that came to Micah ...* (Mic. 1:1). Time and again, Ezekiel says, *Thus saith the Lord Jehovah* (e.g., Ezek. 2:4). Isaiah begins his book in this way: *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken* (Isa. 1:2); and in Isa. 1:10, he says, *Hear the word of Jehovah*. In Ex. 34:27, we are told that Jehovah said to Moses, *Write thou these words*. In II Sam. 23:2, David says, *The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and his word was upon my tongue*.

These are only a few of the numerous statements of this kind that we find scattered over the Old Testament. We cannot read the Old Testament without getting a strong impression of the fact that it is the Lord that speaks to us.

(b) In the second place, we find that Christ always spoke about the Old Testament (“the Scriptures,” or, “the law and the prophets”) as the Word of God.

Matt. 22:31 – *But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God ...?*

Mark 7:8-9, 13 – *Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition ... making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered ...*

(c) In the third place, there are in the New Testament several passages that directly and expressly state that the writers of the Old Testament books were inspired. In Matt. 22:43, Christ says that what David said in Ps. 110:1 he said *in the Spirit*. Paul says, *Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet* (Acts 28:25). The epistle

to the Hebrews, quoting a passage from Jeremiah, introduces the quotation by saying, *The Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us* (Heb. 10:15).

II Pet. 1:21 – *For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.*

II Tim. 3:16 – *Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.*

## **(2) New Testament Proofs of the Inspiration**

(a) In the first place, we find that Christ promised His disciples that, after He had gone to His Father, He would send them the Holy Spirit who should teach them all things and guide them into all the truth.

John 14:26 – *But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.*

John 16:12-13 – *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.*

(b) In consequence of this fact, we find, in the second place, that the apostles themselves claimed that they were inspired.

I Cor. 2:9-14 – *But as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words. Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged.*

Gal. 1:11-12 – *For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For nei-*

*ther did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ.*

### 3. The Perspicuity of the Word

By the perspicuity of the Word, we understand that the Scripture has the quality of being plain, simple, and intelligible. In other words, the Bible in such a clear way reveals to us the way of salvation that every person with ordinary intelligence can understand it and find the way. The Scripture is written in ordinary human language so that ordinary human beings without any aid from any outside source may, by the light of the Word alone, find God and the salvation provided by Him.

Ps. 119:105 – *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path.*

Ps. 19:8 – *The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes.*

II Tim. 3:15-17 – *And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.*

### 4. The Efficacy of the Word

The office of the Word of God is not merely to reveal the will of God and instruct man as to what he must believe and do. On account of the spiritual condition in which man is by nature, that would not be sufficient. Though the way be clearly pointed out, man, being dead through trespasses and sins, has neither the ability nor the will to accept the grace of God and walk in the way. The Word of God is, therefore, also efficacious; i.e., it has an inherent power to awaken, regenerate, justify, sanctify, and preserve man. It communicates, bestows, and imparts grace; it gives and sustains spiritual life; it actually and practically saves man. The Holy Spirit Himself is present working through the Word.

Jer. 23:29 – *Is not my word like fire? saith Jehovah; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*

Matt. 4:4 – *... It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

John 6:63 – *It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life.*

Rom. 1:16 – *For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

II Cor. 10:4-5 – *For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*

I Thess. 2:13 – *And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.*

Heb. 4:12 – *For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

I Pet. 1:23 – *Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth.*

## C. The Law and the Gospel

With reference to both its contents and the results it produces in man, the Word of God, when treated as a means of grace, is divided into the Law and the Gospel.

### 1. The Difference between the Law and the Gospel

The Law is that part of the Word of God which demands of man that he should be good, holy, righteous, and perfect, both as to his inward nature and character and as to his outward life and conduct. It threatens transgressions with punishment and promises good things to those who keep it. The Gospel is that part of the Word of God which reveals, presents, offers, and imparts the grace of God through Christ Jesus and gives eternal life to all who by faith accept Christ.

The characteristic of the Law is that it commands and forbids (*thou shalt* and *thou shalt not*, e.g., in Ex. 20); the characteristic of the Gospel is that it offers and gives. The Law teaches us how we should be and what we should do; the Gospel teaches us what we should believe. The Law demands obedience and works from us; the Gospel offers and gives us the obedience and work of Christ. The Law promises eternal life on condition that we keep it; the Gospel

promises eternal life as a free gift. The Law reveals sin; the Gospel reveals the remedy for sin. The Law condemns and kills; the Gospel gives life. The Law demands a holy life; the Gospel gives power to lead a holy life.

Gal. 3:12 – *And the law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them.* (Compare Lev. 18:5 – *Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and mine ordinances; which if a man do, he shall live in them ...*)

Gal. 3:10 – *For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them.*

II Cor. 3:6 – *Who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*

Rom. 4:4 – *Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt.*

Rom. 1:16 – *For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

See Formula of Concord, Part I (Epitome), Ch. V, e.g., 3-5 –

“We believe, teach and confess that the Law is properly a divine doctrine, which teaches what is right and pleasing to God, and reproveth everything that is sin and contrary to God’s will.

“Therefore everything that reproveth sin is and belongs to the preaching of the Law.

“But the Gospel is properly such a doctrine as teaches what man who has not observed the Law, and therefore is condemned by it, should believe, viz. that Christ has expiated and made satisfaction for all sins, and, without any merit of theirs [no merit of the sinner inter-vening], has obtained and acquired forgiveness of sins, righteousness that avails before God, and eternal life.”

See also Formula of Concord, Part II (Solid Decl.), Ch. V.

## 2. The Law

### **a. The Law Found in Both the Old and New Testaments**

The Law is found in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, but it predominates in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the deeper meaning and spiritual character of the Law have been more fully set forth. Christ has done this especially in His Sermon on the Mount.

### **b. The Term “Law” Not Always Used in the Same Sense**

The term “law” is not always used in the same sense in the Scriptures. In the Old Testament, it is often used in a very wide sense to mean the same as the whole written Word of God.

Ps. 1:2 – *But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; and on his law doth he meditate day and night.*

Ps. 19:7 – *The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul: the testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple.*

Sometimes the word “law” is used to denote the writings of Moses, the Pentateuch.

Luke 24:44 – *... All things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me.*

In its strictest sense, and as distinguished from the Gospel, the word “Law” means God’s revealed will regarding man’s character and conduct. In this sense, the word “Law” is most commonly used; and in this sense, we use it here.

### **c. The Division of the Law**

The Law may be divided into the ceremonial law, the forensic law, and the moral law. This division is not found in the Scriptures in either the Old Testament or the New Testament. God simply gave all His commandments to His people, but He did not classify them; He gave no list of moral laws or civic laws or ceremonial laws. But the classification is based on the nature or character of the different commandments. When we examine them, we find that some of them are of a moral character, some pertain to the outward order and arrangement of worship, and some have reference to the duties and the citizens of the Jewish state. Hence the division.

#### **(1) The Ceremonial Law**

The Ceremonial Law was the law concerning times, places, and manner of worship in the Jewish church.

As there is in every man’s life a period of childhood before he reaches manhood, so there is also in the history of a people. The child is not given as much liberty as a grown-up man. The child is under laws and guardians. Before the coming of Christ, the children of Israel were treated as children, and they were under tutors as children are. The ceremonial law was just such a tutor to the children of Israel.

Gal. 3:23 – *But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*



The children of Israel were taught not only to worship God but also when, where, and how to do it.

But the chief object of the ceremonial law was to foreshadow Christ and the blessings that were to come to man through Him.

Col. 2:16-17 – *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's.*

It is self-evident that, since the ordinances of the ceremonial law were types and shadows of Christ, they ceased to be in force when the antitype, the body itself, came.

### **(2) The Forensic Law**

By the forensic law, or civic law, we understand the statutes or the code of laws by which the Israelites were governed as citizens of the Jewish theocratic state. It ceased to be in force when the form of government changed and the Jews came under other powers.

### **(3) The Moral Law**

The moral law is a declaration of the eternal, unchangeable, universal principles of right and wrong that always are the same in all ages, among all peoples, and under all circumstances. The moral law is, therefore, an expression of how man should be outwardly and inwardly, how he should be in his nature, and how he should think, speak, and act.

In regard to the mode of revelation, the moral law has been distinguished into the natural law and the revealed law. By the natural law, we understand the intuitive knowledge of right and wrong with which man as a perfect rational being was created and which constituted one of the features of the image of God. God wrote the Law in man's heart; i.e., He created man so that he knew the Law without being taught it and so that he naturally acted according to this knowledge.

Rom. 2:14-15 – *For when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them.*

By the revealed law, we understand the declaration of this same will of God given especially through Moses and most perfectly formulated in the Ten Commandments.

#### **d. What the Law Demands**

The Law demands the whole man, body and soul. It demands that man's heart and soul – his whole inward state, condition, affections, and nature – should be holy and that every emotion, thought, word, and deed should be good, flowing naturally from a pure fountain and being prompted by love to God and man. The Law demands nothing short of perfection. It tolerates no exception or discrepancy. If man's condition for a single moment is not perfectly holy, or if man by a single emotion, thought, word, or deed falls short of perfection, the Law condemns him.

Matt. 5:48 – *Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Gal. 3:10 – *For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them.*

Jas. 2:10 – *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all.*

Matt. 22:37-40 – *And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets.*

Lev. 19:2 – *... Ye shall be holy; for I Jehovah your God am holy.*

Rom. 13:10 – *Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.*

Gal. 5:14 – *For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*

Ezek. 18:24 – *But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? None of his righteous deeds that he hath done shall be remembered: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.*

#### **e. The Relation between Believers' Redemption from the Law and Their Obligation to Keep It**

As we have heard, the moral law is an expression of the eternal, universal, unchangeable principles of right and wrong that have perpetual duration and that all people, therefore, are in duty bound to observe. But in the chapter treating of Christ's redemptive work, we were also told that Christ has redeemed us from the Law so that we

no longer are under the Law. How can we harmonize these two doctrines? How can a believer be redeemed from the Law, so that he is free from the Law and is no longer under the Law, and at the same time be under obligation to keep the Law?

In the first place, the Scriptures clearly teach that believers are, through Christ, free from the Law and are no longer under the Law.

Gal. 3:13 – *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*

Gal. 3:25 – *But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

Gal. 4:5 – *That he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Gal. 5:1 – *For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage.*

Rom. 6:14 – *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace.*

Rom. 7:6 – *But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.*

Eph. 2:15 – *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace.*

Col. 2:14 – *Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.*

In the second place, the Scriptures also clearly teach that the Law has not been abated, abolished, abrogated, and done away with so that it is no longer in force and so that Christians are no longer in duty bound to keep it.

Matt. 5:17-19 – *Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

Rom. 3:31 – *Do we then make the law of none effect through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law.*

Hence, in one sense, the Law has been abolished and taken out of the way; in another sense, it has not been abolished and taken out of the way. In one sense, believers are free from the Law and no longer under the Law; in another sense, they are under obligation to keep the Law.

In what sense are believers free from the Law by virtue of the redemption of Christ?

The old original way to obtain eternal life was through the Law.

Luke 10:28 – ... *This do, and thou shalt live.*

Lev. 18:5 – *Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and mine ordinances; which if a man do, he shall live in them ...*

Because of the Fall, this way to eternal life has been made impossible on account of man's inability to keep the Law. Christ has redeemed us from the Law in this respect: He has opened to us another way by which we may obtain eternal life. The righteousness (righteous inward condition and righteous outward life) which the Law demanded of us as a condition for obtaining eternal life, Christ, by His own keeping of the Law in our stead, procured for us. The Law, therefore, through the redemption of Christ, has been put out of commission as the means by which eternal life is obtained.

Rom. 3:21 – *But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.*

Rom. 1:17 – *For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.*

In the next place, the Law curses and condemns everyone who does not keep it. By suffering in our stead the punishment due us on account of our transgression of the Law, Christ has redeemed us from the punishment with which the Law threatens us.

Gal. 3:13 – *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*

Col. 2:14 – *Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.*

Hence, we have been redeemed from the Law in a double sense. We have been redeemed from obtaining eternal life by the law, a better way having been opened unto us; and the Law has been taken out of the way as a bond that was against us, Christ as our Substitute having satisfied all the demands of the Law.

In what sense are believers under obligation to keep the Law? We have stated that the moral law is simply an expression of the eternal, universal, unchangeable principles of right and wrong. In other words, the Law is an expression of God's eternal, unchangeable will as to how He wants man to be and act. But if that be true, it is inconceivable that He should ever will that man should be or act contrary to these principles. Hence, it is always a sin to be or act contrary to the will of God, and it is never permissible to sin. If the Law were abolished, we would no longer be sinners, because where there is no law, there is no sin.

#### **f. The Attitude of New Testament**

##### **Believers to the Ceremonial Law**

From what we have said about the relation between believers' redemption from the Law and their obligation to keep the Law, it follows that the ceremonial law no longer is binding on New Testament believers. Christ has redeemed us from the Law; we are dead to the Law; the Law is taken out of the way and has been blotted out. This refers to everything which, in the Old Testament, is included in the term "law." No distinction is made between moral and ceremonial law. We are redeemed and discharged from all law. But as we have heard, there are certain things in the Law which simply are an expression of God's eternal, unchangeable will.

These eternal principles of right and wrong I cannot throw aside if I want to live in accordance with the will of God. But being free from the Law, I am not in duty bound to observe other rules and regulations concerning places, times, and ways of worship. Such rules and regulations have no eternal validity. Being free from the Law, I therefore have perfect liberty to observe or not observe them.

Col. 2:16 – *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day.*

See Acts 15, e.g., vv. 28-29 – *For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you ...*

#### **g. The Threefold Use of the Law**

Although the Law, on account of man's inability to keep it, does not justify or save man, it is nevertheless, if rightly used, of great value. The Law has a threefold use.

**(1) The Political Use of the Law**

The law contained in the Ten Commandments forms the foundation of all civilized legislation, both national and international, and to a great extent preserves external order and discipline, keeping wicked and ungodly men within certain bounds of decency and thus protecting society against violence and crime.

I Tim. 1:9 – ... *Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers.*

**(2) The Elenchical Use of the Law**

By this use of the Law, we understand that it reveals and convinces man of sin and threatens the offender with punishment, thus indirectly becoming a means of driving him to Christ.

Rom. 3:19-20 – *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin.*

Gal. 3:24 – *So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

**(3) The Didactic Use of the Law**

By this, we understand that the Law is the rule and guide of life and conduct for believers. The object of the redemption of Christ was that *the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit* (Rom. 8:4). As believers, we delight in the Law of God after the inward man; we desire to do the will of God. But now the Law is an expression of the will of God. In the Law, we find what the will of God is; therefore, the Law becomes our standard.

Prov. 6:23 – *For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.*

Eph. 2:10 – *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.*

See Formula of Concord, Part I (Epitome), Ch. VI, e.g., 2 –

“We believe, teach and confess that although men rightly believing [in Christ] and truly converted to God have been freed from the curse and coercion of the Law, they nevertheless are not on this account without Law, but have been redeemed by the Son of God, in order that they should exercise themselves in it day and night [that

they should meditate upon God’s Law day and night, and constantly exercise themselves in its observance (Ps. 1:2)], (Ps. 119). For even our first parents before the fall did not live without Law, which Law of God was also written upon their hearts, because they were created in the image of God (Ge. 1:26 sq.; 2:16 sqq.; 3:3).”

See also Formula of Concord, Part II (Solid Decl.), Ch. VI.

#### ***h. The Preaching of the Law***

Although Christian ministers are sent especially to *preach the gospel* (Mark 16:15) and should never forget that they are *ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit* (II Cor. 3:6), they must follow the example of Christ and the apostles in also preaching the Law. The Law must be preached to prepare hearts for the Gospel because *they that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick* (Matt. 9:12). And the Law must be preached as the rule for Christian conduct.

### **3. The Gospel**

#### ***a. The Origin of the Term “Gospel”***

The word “gospel” is a translation of the Greek word *εὐαγγέλιον* which means good news or good tidings. The original form of the Old English word, which was later put into its current form “gospel” in Wycliffe’s Middle English translation, was *godspel*. This came from the Old English words *god*, good, and *spel*, story or news; hence, good news. (The first vowel of the Old English word *godspel* was originally pronounced with a long “ō” but was later changed to a short “ö” and mistakenly associated with the word “God” as if the word meant news about God.) The corresponding verb in Greek is *εὐαγγελίζω*, to proclaim good news or good tidings (e.g., Luke 4:18). In the New Testament, *εὐαγγέλιον* occurs 76 times and *εὐαγγελίζω* occurs 54 times.

#### ***b. The Term “Gospel” Not Always Used in the Same Sense***

Sometimes the word “gospel” is used in a wider sense to denote the whole doctrine of the New Testament as taught by Christ and His disciples.

Mark 1:1 – *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ ...*

Most commonly, the word “Gospel” is used in a narrower sense, as contradistinguished from the Law, to denote simply the story of what God has done through Jesus Christ for the salvation of man and what God, in consequence thereof, promises as a free gift.

Luke 4:18-19 – *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*

### **c. What the Gospel Is**

The Gospel is not a new law which offers salvation on easier terms than the Law of Moses. Nor is it a system of instruction by which we are taught how we may supplement what we are lacking in the fulfillment of the Law. The Gospel is something which is entirely different in nature from the Law and has absolutely nothing to do with the Law. The Gospel is a record of an historical fact. It tells about an event which took place over 1,900 years ago. The Gospel is, properly speaking, an announcement of what Christ, as Mediator between God and man, has done in our stead for our salvation. And it offers to all men, without distinction and without condition, that which through the vicarious work of Christ has been procured for the world, viz., the free grace of God, forgiveness of sins, righteousness, sonship, and life everlasting. And it assures us that every one who believes the message of the Gospel, in other words, every one who believes on Jesus Christ, gets what the message announces and offers.

Rom. 3:21-25 – *But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God.*

I Cor. 15:1-4 – *Now I make known unto you brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures.*

I John 5:9-12 – *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness*



*concerning his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son. And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.*

See Formula of Concord, Part I (Epitome), Ch. V, e.g., 5 –

“But the Gospel is properly such a doctrine as teaches what man who has not observed the Law, and therefore is condemned by it, should believe, viz. that Christ has expiated and made satisfaction for all sins, and, without any merit of theirs [no merit of the sinner inter-vening], has obtained and acquired forgiveness of sins, righteousness that avails before God, and eternal life.”

See also Formula of Concord, Part II (Solid Decl.), Ch. V.

#### **d. The Gospel Found in Both the Old and New Testaments**

The Gospel is found in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, but it predominates in the New Testament so much that the first four books of the New Testament are called Gospels. The Gospel is also presented much more clearly in the New Testament than in the Old Testament.

## **D. The Sacraments**

Not only has God given us His Word as a means by which He bestows His grace and performs His work in the hearts and lives of men, but also He has appointed certain actions that work together with the Word and that individualize the general promises of the Word. These actions are called Sacraments.

### **1. Different Meanings of “Sacrament”**

There is in Holy Scripture no common name for the divinely appointed ordinances or actions which we now call Sacraments. Tertullian was the first to apply the term “sacrament” to Holy Baptism.

*Sacramentum* is a Latin word derived from the verb *sacrare*, to sanctify, and it means any consecrated thing. Hence, it was used to designate the money deposited with the priest by each party to a lawsuit. It was also used about the oath taken by a soldier because, by it, he consecrated himself to death in case he should prove unfaithful.

The ancient fathers called every mystery and every doctrine that was hard to understand a sacrament, e.g., the sacrament of the Trinity

and the sacrament of the Incarnation. Hence, in the Vulgate, the Greek word *μυστήριον* is rendered *sacramentum*.

Dan. 2:18 – *That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret* [sacramento, i.e., the dream of Nebuchadnezzar] ...

Eph. 5:32 – *This mystery* [sacramentum] *is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church.*

I Tim. 3:16 – *And without controversy great is the mystery* [sacramentum] *of godliness ...*

In the Middle Ages, there was considerable uncertainty as to the number of ecclesiastical acts to which the term “sacrament” was to be applied. By the Scholastics, it was applied to as many as twelve churchly acts. This number was afterward reduced to seven.

Among the Reformers, there was also some uncertainty as to the number of ecclesiastical actions that should be called sacraments.

After some time, the use of the term “sacrament” was, in the Lutheran and Reformed churches, limited to the two ordinances that so widely differ from all other acts of the Church, viz., Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. According to our definition of a Sacrament, there are only these two, one by which spiritual life is created and one by which spiritual life is sustained and strengthened.

## 2. The Nature of a Sacrament

A Sacrament is an action appointed by God in which He, by external and visible elements, offers, bestows, and seals to an individual His invisible grace.

According to this definition, there are four things that are peculiar to a Sacrament and that together constitute a Sacrament.

### **a. A Sacrament Is an Action**

In a Sacrament, there is indeed the Word of God, but the Word is here accompanied by an action performed by the person administering the Sacrament.

### **b. A Sacrament Is Appointed by God**

God Himself has instituted the Sacrament and commanded that this act should be performed.

### **c. A Sacrament Involves External Elements**

A Sacrament involves external and visible elements prescribed by God Himself. These earthly elements are the means through which God, together with the Word, bestows and seals His grace. Neither the external elements apart from the Word nor the Word

apart from the elements is a Sacrament, but the two united form a Sacrament.

**d. Through a Sacrament, Grace Is Offered, Bestowed, and Sealed**

The grace given through the Sacraments is the same as that given through the Word. It is only the method of giving that is different. Baptism gives new life, and the Lord's Supper strengthens the new life. The same work of God is done through the Word alone. But in the Sacraments, we have in connection with the Word the action and the visible elements that aid us as they appeal more to our senses.

**3. What Constitutes a Sacrament**

There are three things that constitute a Sacrament.

a. The repeating of the words used by Christ when He instituted the Sacrament (the words of institution).

b. The sacramental act, or dispensation (in Baptism, the act of baptizing; in the Lord's Supper, the act of distributing the elements).

c. The reception of the Sacrament (in Baptism, there must be a person who actually receives Baptism; in the Lord's Supper, there must be someone who actually eats and drinks the elements).

A Sacrament exists only while these things are being said and done. There is no Sacrament before or after. All that according to church ritual precedes and follows is simply for the purpose of preparing and aiding the heart to receive the true benefit from the Sacrament.

**4. The Efficacy of the Sacraments**

The Sacraments are always efficacious. Their efficacy does not depend on the character, call, or intention of the person administering the Sacrament nor on the spiritual condition of the recipient. They have the efficacy inherent in them by reason of their being instituted by God and on account of the Word and promise of God. In order, however, that men may be benefited by the use of the Sacraments – in other words, that the Sacraments may have a salutary effect – it is an indispensable condition that man must receive the Sacraments in faith. Hence, we distinguish between the inherent, ever-present efficacy itself and the saving effect on those using the Sacraments.

*Matt. 23:2-3 – ... The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not.*

Mark 16:15 – *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.*

I Cor. 3:7 – *So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.*

## 5. The Design of the Sacraments

### a. Sacraments Offer, Bestow, and Seal God's Grace

As already stated, the chief and primary purpose of the Sacraments is to offer, bestow, and seal the grace of God to the individual. "... The Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them..." (Augsburg Confession, Art. XIII).

Other signs or purposes are as follows.

### b. Sacraments Are Marks of Profession

By using the Sacraments, a person professes the Christian faith.

I Cor. 11:26 – *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come.*

A formal confession of faith has always been connected with Baptism also.

### c. Sacraments Are a Means of Remembrance of the Redemption of Christ

Rom. 6:4 – *We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.*

Luke 22:19 – *And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

### d. Sacraments Are Bonds of Union between Believers

Eph. 4:3-6 – *Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.*

I Cor. 10:17 – *Seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread.*

## E. Holy Baptism

### 1. The Origin of Baptism

When Christ instituted Holy Baptism, He availed Himself of a custom that was well-known among the people. Washing and cleansing with water was very common among the Jews as a religious rite. Ex. 19:10 – *And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their garments.*

Num. 19:7 – *Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even.*

John the Baptist made use of this rite in connection with his preaching, thereby symbolizing that hearers needed cleansing from their sins.

Christ instituted the sacrament of Baptism after He had finished His work on earth, just before He ascended into heaven. The record of the institution of Holy Baptism is found in two passages.

Matt. 28:18-20 – *And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

Mark 16:15-16 – *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.*

### 2. The Nature of Baptism

Baptism is a sacred and divinely appointed action by which sinful men, with the application of water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, are brought into fellowship with the Triune God and by which the grace of God is thus bestowed upon and sealed to them.

The earthly element is simple: ordinary water; and for this, no other element can be substituted.

That Word of God connected with the earthly element which makes Baptism a Sacrament are these words: *into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit* (Matt. 28:19). The Greek preposition *εἰς* does not here mean that the person who is

being baptized is baptized by authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit but that he is baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The name of God stands for what God is. Hence, through the act of Baptism, a person is brought into God, into fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, into participation of everything that all three persons in the Godhead stand for in their relation to men. To be baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit also means, in the next place, to be given over to the Triune God to serve and obey Him, to surrender oneself, body and soul, to Him.

### 3. The Effects and Benefits of Baptism

#### a. Baptism Brings One into Fellowship with God

As already stated, Baptism brings a person into fellowship with the Triune God. We have considered the meaning of the words of institution. Other passages containing the same doctrine are the following.

Rom. 6:3-4 – *Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.*

Gal. 3:27 – *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.*

#### b. Baptism Works Regeneration

If, according to the Scriptures, Baptism brings us into fellowship with God, then it follows that Baptism must work regeneration for, *Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God* (John 3:3), cannot enter into fellowship with God. But the Scriptures not only indirectly, but also directly and in plain words, teach that Baptism regenerates.

John 3:5 – *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Titus 3:5 – *Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.*

#### c. Through Baptism, the Holy Spirit Is Given

It is water and the Holy Spirit that regenerate a person when he is baptized (John 3:5 – ... *Except one be born of water and the Spirit* ...). However, not only is the Holy Spirit active in working new

birth in Baptism, but also the gift of the Holy Spirit is given through Baptism to the person who is baptized. In other words, through Baptism, the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in the heart.

Acts 2:38 – *And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

#### **d. Baptism Brings Forgiveness of Sins**

We cannot live in fellowship with God without having our sins forgiven. That Baptism is a means of imparting to us the forgiveness of sins is seen from the following passages.

Acts 2:38 – *And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 22:16 – *And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name.*

I Pet. 3:21 – *Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

Baptism is, therefore, also called a cleansing.

Eph. 5:26 – *That he might sanctify it [the Church], having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word.*

#### **e. Baptism Saves**

To sum up, Baptism saves. If Baptism brings us into fellowship with the Triune God, if it regenerates, if it gives the Holy Spirit, and if it cleanses from sin, then Baptism, in short, saves man. That Baptism saves is also expressly stated in the Scriptures.

Titus 3:5 – *Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.*

I Pet. 3:21 – *Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

Mark 16:16 – *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.*

### **4. What Baptism Signifies**

According to our catechism, “[Baptizing with water] signifies that the old Adam in us is to be drowned and destroyed by daily sorrow and repentance, together with all sins and evil lusts; and that

again the new man should daily come forth and rise, that shall live in the presence of God in righteousness and purity for ever” (Martin Luther, *The Small Catechism*, Part IV, 12). According to this statement, two things are symbolized by Baptism with water: 1. drowning and destruction of sin; 2. rising into a new life.

Rom. 6:4 – *We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.*

### 5. The Mode of Baptism

The verb “baptize” (*βαπτίζω*) means to apply water in some way. It may mean to dip into or immerse, either the whole or a part, to sprinkle, to pour, or to apply water with the hand. The mode of Baptism is not prescribed and is, therefore, immaterial. Baptism may be performed by immersion, either of the whole body or the head only, by sprinkling, or by pouring water on the head.

### 6. The Subjects of Baptism – Infant Baptism

All men who wish to be saved must be baptized. The command is clear: *make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them* (Matt. 28:19). All nations are to be baptized. But a nation consists of all the individuals of a people: men, women, and children. Mark 16:15-16 says, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.* That means, of course, the whole national creation, i.e., all men. All men are sinful and are by nature outside of the kingdom of God; all men must, therefore, be born again and thus be brought into the kingdom of God. And Baptism is a means of regeneration.

The most important question in this connection, however, is this: Should also infants be baptized? There is general consensus as to the necessity of adult Baptism, but Baptists and others deny that infants should be baptized. Our answer is most emphatically that also infants should be baptized. Infants should be baptized for the following reasons.

#### a. Infants Need Baptism

Infants are born in the state of sin and cannot see the kingdom of God without being born again.

John 3:5-6 – *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*



Eph. 2:3 – *Among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

Ps. 51:5 – *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

### **b. It Is God's Will That Children Be Saved**

It is the will of God that also children should be saved and have part in the kingdom of God.

Matt. 18:14 – *Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.*

Matt. 19:14 – *But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven.*

### **c. Baptism Has Replaced Circumcision**

Even under the old dispensation, the Lord instituted a sacrament by which all male children were received into covenant with God as early as the eighth day after their birth. It would indeed seem strange if, in this respect, the New Testament should be inferior to the Old Testament which had only shadows of the good things to come.

Baptism has been substituted for circumcision, as Paul says: *In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with him in baptism* (Col. 2:11-12). The Lord expressly commanded that infants should be circumcised. Now, is it reasonable to suppose that the sacrament which has taken the place of that Old Testament sacrament by which infants were received into fellowship with God should not be applied to infants? Can we conceive of a sacrament taking the place of another and not being intended for that class to which the old one was especially applied?

### **d. Christ Has Commanded to Baptize All Nations**

Christ has commanded to baptize all nations, and He has made no exception in the case of children. Consequently, they are not to be excluded.

### **e. The Apostles Baptized Whole Households and Families**

Acts 16:15 – *... she [Lydia] was baptized, and her household ...*

Acts 16:33 – *[The jailor] ... was baptized, he and all his ...*

I Cor. 1:16 – *And I baptized also the household of Stephanas ...*

### **f. Peter Said Children Should Be Baptized**

In His Pentecostal sermon, Peter expressly said that children are to be baptized. On the day of Pentecost, the Christian Church was founded, and on that day, Christian Baptism was administered for the first time. On that day, an inspired apostle, speaking from God, stated in plain words that Baptism was also for children.

*Acts 2:38-39 – And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.*

### **g. Infant Baptism Practiced since the Apostles' Time**

Infant Baptism has been practiced in the Church since the time of the Apostles. In accordance with the universal command of Christ, and in accordance with apostolic teaching and practice, infant Baptism has always been used in the Church ever since the time of the Apostles.

### **h. Objections against Infant Baptism Answered**

None of the objections raised against infant Baptism by those opposed to it is valid.

(1) It is alleged that infants cannot receive any blessing from being baptized because they cannot believe. Against this argument, we quote the following.

*Matt. 18:3-6 – ... Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me: but whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.*

*Luke 1:15 – ... And he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.*

*Ps. 22:9-10 – But thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me trust when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God since my mother bare me.*

Regarding the ability of children to believe, we learn from these passages, in the first place, not that children must become adults in order to be able to believe, but that adults must become as little children. In the second place, we have here a clear and unqualified state-

ment by Christ Himself that little ones do believe on Him. And in the third place, we are told that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit even before he was born. If it is possible for one infant to receive the Holy Spirit without means before it is born, it must be possible for other infants to receive the Holy Spirit through means after they are born; and Baptism is the ordinary means through which the Holy Spirit is given.

(2) Baptists adduce Mark 16:16 against infant Baptism: *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ....* This passage, they say, proves that faith must precede Baptism because believing is put before baptizing. But the fact that “believe” is mentioned before “Baptism” does not prove that faith must be present before Baptism. All that this passage proves is that these two conditions must be present if a person is to be saved. Compare Matt. 28:19-20 where baptizing is put before teaching: *Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you ....*

(3) The Baptists say that Rom. 10:17 proves that only adults can believe because, according to that passage, *So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.* The fact that it comes by hearing does not exclude that it comes also by Baptism. Compare the following two passages.

I Pet. 1:23 – *Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth.*

Titus 3:5 – *Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.*

(4) But, they say, infants have no knowledge or consciousness of what is being done to them when they are baptized. How, then, can they be benefited by Baptism? To this we simply answer: Neither have infants any knowledge or consciousness of the fact of their physical birth, but still they are born.

(5) But how can spiritual life be sustained as long as a person cannot be nourished by the Word of God? To this we answer: He who creates life can also sustain it. How is physical life sustained in the mother’s womb before the child can take nourishment through the mouth?

Eccl. 11:5 – *As thou knowest not what is the way of the wind, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the work of God who doeth all.*

## 7. Confirmation

Confirmation holds a close relation to infant Baptism. The spiritual life which through Baptism has been created in the heart of an infant, and which exists only as an incipient germ or sprout, is to be developed by the Word of God in which every baptized child must be instructed.

Matt. 28:19-20 – *Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you ...*

By confirmation, we understand that a person, having reached the age of discretion and having been instructed in the elements of the Christian religion, voluntarily, before being admitted to the Lord's Supper, by making a public confession of his Christian faith, and by declaring that he renounces the devil and all his works and all his ways, assumes the full obligation entered into by Baptism.

## 8. Proceeding in or Falling from the Baptismal Covenant

(Editor's note: Because of the significance of this topic to infant Baptism and because of its lifelong importance in the author's theology, this section has been appended here from J. N. Kildahl, *Concerning Sin and Grace* [Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1954], Bernhard H. J. Habel, trans., pp. 52-58. Underlining has been added to highlight salient points.)

*He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. Luke 13:6-9 [KJV]*

A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. That man is the Lord. The vineyard is His church on earth. You and I are fig trees, planted in the vineyard. We were planted in the vineyard by holy baptism.

“And he came and sought fruit thereon.” Fig trees are planted in the vineyard because they are expected to bear fruit. And we are placed in the church of God in order to bear fruit. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life [Rom. 6:4, KJV]....

What kind of fruit does the Lord expect us to bear? That can be seen plainly from the verse preceding our text. Jesus happened to tell this parable because people were talking about some persons who had died suddenly. In connection with the incident, Jesus said, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish* [Luke 13:5, KJV]. Then He told this parable. The fruit, therefore, which the Lord expects us to bear is our repentance. The thing that brings forth fruit in the lives of men is the Word of God. But God’s Word is of two sorts – the law and the gospel. Where the law is permitted to do its work, it brings forth consciousness of sin and repentance. Where the gospel is permitted to do its work, it brings forth faith and trust. But where there is faith there are also the fruits of faith; namely love for God and for one’s neighbors, and zealous work for the cause of the Lord.

“But he found no fruit.” Year after year He came and looked for fruit, but found none. The Lord, in this passage, is not speaking about any heathen. He is speaking of a person who has been baptized into the church of God, who has been the object of God’s grace, and from whom God could therefore expect repentance and the fruits of faith; but He does not find them.

Could it, by any chance, be you? ... Have you borne fruit? Have you repented and turned to the Lord? ...

What has been your experience with respect to what we ordinarily call *revival*? You have often heard about revival. Have you ever experienced it? Can you look back to some point in your life when you experienced a radical change? A time when the question of getting into the right relationship with God became so important that it took first place in your thoughts, night and day? Do you know that you experienced a time when you were given grace to believe that you had received the forgiveness of your sins and the assurance that you were a child of God, so that you also gained peace in your soul? Perhaps you answer, No, I have not experienced what is called a revival, for I believe that I have been a Christian since the day of my baptism. Have you, indeed? In that case you are a happy person! There are some who can say it. But they seem to be very few. Most

people, however, fall away from their baptismal covenant. And there are many, many such in our churches – people who have never experienced a revival, who have never been really troubled about their spiritual condition, who have never been anxious about their relation to God, and who have never experienced the power of the new life and the peace which faith brings to the soul. They have lived in the church all their days; they have gone into the church and to the table of the Lord; they have great respect for the House of God and the Word of the Lord; and they have taken some part in the work of the congregation. But the Word of God has never borne any fruit in their lives, making old things pass away and all things become new.

If we use the Word of God rightly, it will produce spiritual experiences in us, and these experiences we must have in order to be right with God. Yes, even those who have remained faithful to their baptismal covenant must experience some kind of revival. They must proceed from the standpoint of the child to that of the adult. They must reach a deeper consciousness of sin and a clearer view of grace.

But it is not enough to have had such an experience once in a lifetime. If the Word of God is to bring forth fruit in us, we must have spiritual experiences, continually, or, in other words, God's [W]ord must constantly bring forth fruit in us.

How about this with you? Do you have any trouble with sin? With waging your fight against sin? ... Are you troubled by the old Adam – your own sinful heart? Or are you living on good terms with your own nature? ...

... Is the good news that Jesus died for our sins on the cross ... only a doctrine which you acknowledge to be a true and comforting teaching; or have you actually experienced a heart moved by this gospel so that your soul is comforted and guided and refreshed by it? ...

And what is your relationship with God? Is God only a power you have heard about, far away in the heavens? Or is the secret of the Lord with you when you read and meditate upon the Word, and pray to Him? ...

... Do you find that you feel uncomfortable among the children of the world and their social ties? ... Do you have a special love for all believers, and do you feel most at home among God's people?

... Is it a pleasure to you to be among those who give of their earthly goods for the upbuilding and extension of the kingdom of God ...?

I have mentioned briefly here some of the fruits which the Lord expects to find among us who belong to the church. Too many people treat this matter too lightly. And it is sad to think that they will be eternally lost. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous [Ps. 1:5, KJV]. The Lord may perhaps let us stay year after year like barren fig trees in His vineyard, but He will not allow it forever. Some day His command shall go forth: “Cut it down! Why does it cumber the ground?”

What if it refers to you! What if the Lord has been waiting these many years for you to repent and to begin leading a holy life.... You have had your day of grace, and have not made use of it.

Or perhaps you are one for whom Jesus prays today, pleading that you may be permitted to live one more year, with the understanding that if you do not repent now, this shall be your last chance. ... Therefore, seek ye the LORD while he may be found, and call ye upon him while he is near [Isa. 55:6, KJV].

## F. The Lord's Supper

### 1. The Origin of the Lord's Supper

On the evening before His suffering and death, Jesus met with His twelve disciples in a large upper room in Jerusalem to eat the Passover. After the Passover was eaten, while they were still sitting at the table, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. This was the last real Passover and the first celebration of the Sacrament of the Altar. Here the Old Testament ends and the New Testament begins. The shadows disappear; the body itself is here. Therefore, the old Sacrament passes away and the new takes its place. The words of institution are found in the following passages.

Matt. 26:26-28 – *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.*

Mark 14:22-25 – *And as they were eating, he took bread, and when he had blessed, he brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take ye: this is my body. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Verily I say*

*unto you, I shall no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.*

*Luke 22:19-20 – And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you.*

*I Cor. 11:23-26 – For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come.*

## 2. The Nature of the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is the true body and blood of Jesus Christ in connection with bread and wine, instituted for Christians, through which Sacrament Christ communicates all the benefits of His death to His believers.

### **a. The Earthly Elements in the Lord's Supper**

The earthly elements in the Lord's Supper are bread and wine.

### **b. The Heavenly Gift Accompanying the Lord's Supper**

The heavenly gift accompanying the bread and the wine is the true body and blood of Christ as is plainly stated in the words of institution.

The words of institution are to be taken literally. The reasons for taking them literally are the following.

(1) There is nothing in the context of any of the accounts of the Lord's Supper which in any way indicates that the words of institution are to be understood figuratively. Nor is there anything in the subject matter itself which compels us to deviate from the established hermeneutical rule to interpret Holy Scripture literally when there is nothing that compels us to accept a figurative interest.

(2) In the different Biblical records of the institution of the Lord's Supper, there are, as may be expected, several variations in minor matters; but in stating what the Lord's Supper is, there is a most remarkable harmony. In every case, it is declared that the bread is the body of Christ and that the wine is the blood of Christ.

*Matt. 26:26 – ... Take, eat; this is my body.*



Mark 14:22 – ... *Take ye: this is my body.*

Luke 22:19 – ... *This is my body which is given for you ...*

Mark 14:24 – ... *This is my blood of the covenant ...*

Luke 22:20 – ... *This cup is the new covenant in my blood ...*

I Cor. 11:25 – ... *This cup is the new covenant in my blood ...*

(3) Paul teaches in I Cor. 11:27 and 29, *Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord ... For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body.*

(4) In I Cor. 10:16, Paul clearly states that, in the Lord's Supper, there is a communion between the wine and the blood of Christ and between the bread and the body of Christ. He says, *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?*

(5) It is to be expected that everything which the Lord wants us to believe, i.e., every article of faith, should somewhere in the Scriptures be set forth in clear, distinct, and explicit terms. Now, if all the passages of Scripture that state what the Lord's Supper is are to be taken figuratively, then the doctrine of this Sacrament is without a single plain, clear, and literal passage in Holy Writ. And it does not seem reasonable that the Lord should have set forth an article of faith only in that way, especially when we remember that the Lord's Supper was something entirely new and hitherto completely unknown.

(6) It must also be remembered that the Lord's Supper was the last will and testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and it has always been customary in a will to avoid all figurative language and to draw up the will in the most clear, precise, and plain language possible.

(7) Those who reject the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, and for that reason claim that the words of institution must be taken figuratively, use certain arguments to which we give answer as follows.

(a) A body cannot be present at more than one place at the same time; the body of Christ is at the right hand of the Father and, therefore, cannot be present on earth. To this we answer that the body of Christ is glorified, that it is a spiritual body, that Christ with His body is omnipresent, and that, therefore, the qualities of a natural and earthly body cannot be ascribed to the glorified body of Christ.

Matt. 28:20 – ... *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

(b) In John 6:53-56, Christ speaks about *eat[ing] the flesh of the Son of man and drink[ing] his blood*, and it is evident that here Christ speaks figuratively, speaks about spiritual eating and drinking, and speaks about accepting Him by faith. It must be admitted that Christ here speaks figuratively, but it cannot be admitted that Christ here speaks about that eating and drinking of His body and blood which takes place in the Lord's Supper. In this passage, Christ does not make reference to the Sacrament of the Altar.

(c) Attention is called to the fact that Christ often made use of figures; that is, when speaking about spiritual matters, He often presented them under the figure of earthly things. He used similes, metaphors, etc.; He said, *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed* (Matt. 13:31); He said about Himself, *I am the true vine* (John 15:1); He called Herod *that fox* (Luke 13:32); etc. Yes, He did, but He never said about earthly things that they were spiritual things, thereby meaning that these earthly things were emblems of heavenly or spiritual things. There is in the whole Bible no expression like that used by the Lord in the words of institution of the Lord's Supper.

### **c. The Relation between the Earthly Elements and Christ's Body and Blood**

The Lutheran Church teaches that the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper is real, substantial, and sacramental. By real is meant the reverse of symbolical; by substantial is meant that the body and blood of Christ are present according to their substance; by sacramental is meant that the body and blood of Christ are present in a way which is peculiar to the Sacrament and which is different from any other presence of which we might conceive. In other words, by these terms, we want to express that the body and blood of Christ are truly and really present in the Lord's Supper according to their substance, nature, and essence, but in a way which we do not understand and, therefore, cannot explain. The Lutheran Church has never attempted to explain how the body and blood of Christ are present or what the relation is between the body and blood on the one hand and the bread and the wine on the other hand. From I Cor. 10:16, we know that there is a union between the cup and the blood and between the bread and the body, but we do not understand the nature of the union. We use the term "sacramental

union,” not to attempt to explain the nature of the union, but simply to express the existence of a relation whose nature we are not able to explain. We say that the body and blood of Christ are “in, with, and under” the bread and wine, not because we believe that that is an adequate expression of the relation, but simply because we have to use some term by which to express our imperfect comprehension of a mystery which cannot be understood and explained. We have to be satisfied with knowing and believing that, in connection with the bread and wine, we, in some mysterious way, receive the true body and blood of Christ. The Lutheran Church has no theory or doctrine regarding the nature of the relation between the earthly elements and the body and blood. All we can say is that we know that, when we partake of the bread and wine, we also partake of the body and blood of Christ; but we are not able to explain this union peculiar to the Sacrament, and therefore we call it a sacramental union.

It is, however, easier to say what we do not teach.

(1) We do not teach transubstantiation, i.e., that the substance of the bread and wine are changed into the substance of the body and blood of the Lord so that nothing more than the appearance of bread and wine remains (the color, the taste, and whatever appears to the senses).

(2) We do not teach consubstantiation. It has often been stated by writers outside of our church that the Lutheran Church teaches consubstantiation. But that is not the case. Consubstantiation is a theological term which has been much used in the Trinitarian controversies and has in theology a fixed and well-defined meaning, viz., “of one substance.” Used in connection with the union of the earthly elements and the body and blood of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, it would, therefore, naturally convey the idea that a change takes place whereby the earthly elements and the body and blood form one substance, which theory the Lutheran Church has never held.

(3) We do not teach impanation, i.e., that a small corpuscle of the body of Christ is closed up inside of a piece of bread. Nor do we teach subpanation, i.e., that the body of Christ is lying hidden under the bread.

(4) We do not teach a lasting or permanent union of the earthly elements and the body and blood of Christ apart from the use of the Sacrament. We know that we receive the body and blood of Christ through the medium of the participation of the bread and wine, but

there is nothing in Scripture which indicates that the union exists after the use of the Sacrament.

#### **d. The Manner of Receiving Christ's Body and Blood**

When instituting the Lord's Supper, Christ took the bread and said, *Take, eat; this is my body*; and taking the cup, He said, *Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood* (Matt. 26:26-28). From these words of Christ, we know that, together with the bread and wine, we receive into our mouths and eat the body of Christ and drink His blood. But we do not pretend to be able to explain the nature of this eating and drinking. Therefore, we call it a sacramental eating and drinking, thereby denoting that it is an eating and drinking which is unique and peculiar to the Sacrament and thus distinguishing it from both natural eating and drinking and spiritual eating and drinking. We say that the body and blood of Christ are received and eaten and drunk in a supernatural and inexplicable manner.

### **3. The Design of the Lord's Supper**

#### **a. The Lord's Supper Is a Memorial Feast**

The Lord's Supper is a memorial feast commemorating the giving of Christ's body into death and the shedding of His blood, in other words, His suffering and death.

I Cor. 11:24 – ... *This do in remembrance of me* ... (v. 25 reads similarly)

#### **b. The Lord's Supper Is a Pledge of Redemption**

The Lord's Supper is a pledge and seal of the redemption of Christ, brought about by His suffering and death, and of all the benefits procured thereby. Its design is, therefore, to strengthen, nourish, and enrich our spiritual life by uniting us most intimately with our Savior.

Luke 22:19 – ... *This is my body which is given for you* ... *This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you.*

#### **c. The Lord's Supper Is a Communion**

The Lord's Supper is a communion, i.e., a bond of union, not only between Christ and the believers but also mutually between the believers, uniting them in love and Christian fellowship.

I Cor. 10:17 – *Seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread.*

#### **d. The Lord's Supper Is a Mark of Profession**

I Cor. 11:26 – *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come.*

#### **4. The Subjects of the Lord's Supper**

From what has already been said about the design of the Lord's Supper, it is evident that only "true Christians, who have attained such age and understanding that they can examine themselves" should go to the Lord's table and that, as our catechism further says, "the most important qualification needed by those who go to the Lord's Table" is "faith" (*Epitome of Rev. Dr. Erick Pontoppidan's Explanation of Martin Luther's Small Catechism*, 1891, Edmund Belfour, trans., pp. 113, 116).

I Cor. 11:28 – *But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.*

## IX. The Church

As already stated, God deals with men, imparts to them His grace, and saves them through the instrumentality of the means of grace. The institution or organism through which the means of grace are administered is the Holy Christian Church.

### A. Different Uses and Meanings of the Term “Church”

The term “church” is not always used in the same sense. Sometimes it is used about the entire body of all believers throughout the whole world. This is the Church Universal. Sometimes it means the sum total of all, good and bad, who are in an outward and visible manner banded together in smaller or larger organizations for the purpose of administering the means of grace. In this sense of the word, the Church comprises all church bodies that are recognized as Christian denominations. Sometimes the word “church” is used about those who subscribe to certain special confessions, e.g., the Lutheran Church, the Presbyterian Church, etc. Sometimes it is used about those adhering to the same creeds inside certain geographical boundaries, e.g., the Church of Norway, the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, etc. Sometimes the term “church” is used about the congregation of those living in the same neighborhood and worshipping in the same house, e.g., Our Saviour’s Church in Chicago. And sometimes it is used about the building in which the church members of a certain locality worship.

The English word “church” (Old Saxon *kirika*, Scottish *kirk*, German *kirche*, Norwegian *kirke*) is derived from the Greek adjective *κυριακός* (fem. *κυριακή*, neut. *κυριακόν*) which means “of the Lord.”

The Greek word in the New Testament translated as “church” is *ἐκκλησία* which is from *ἐκκαλέω*, to call out. It means “an assembly of the people convened at the public place of council for the purpose of deliberating” (Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1889, p. 196); for example, see Acts 19:39 – *But*

if ye seek anything about other matters, it shall be settled in the regular assembly (ἐκκλησία). The word ἐκκλησία is used 114 times in the New Testament.

In the New Testament, the Church is also called:

- The Church of God (I Cor. 10:32 – *Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God.*)
- The Church of the Lord (Acts 20:28 – *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord ...*)
- The Church of Christ (Rom. 16:16 – *... All the churches of Christ salute you.*)
- The Church in God (I Thess. 1:1 – *... unto the church of the Thesalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ ...*)
- The Church of the saints (I Cor. 14:33 – *... As in all the churches of the saints.* Compare Ps. 149:1 – *... Sing unto Jehovah a new song, and his praise in the assembly of the saints.*)
- The Church of the firstborn (Heb. 12:23 – *To the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven ...*)
- The body of Christ, Christ being the head and the believers the members (Eph. 1:22-23 – *And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him [Christ] to be head over all things to the church, which is his body ...*)
- The house of God (I Tim. 3:15 – *... That thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God ...*)
- The city of God and the general assembly of the firstborn (Heb. 12:22-23 – *But ye are come unto ... the city of the living God ... to the general assembly [πανηγύρει] and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven ...*)
- The bride and wife of Christ (Rev. 21:9 – *... Come hither; I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb.* This designation of “bride” or “wife” is very common in the Old Testament.)
- The kingdom of God (Mark 1:15 – *... The kingdom of God is at hand ...*)
- The kingdom of heaven (Matt. 3:2 – *... For the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*)

## B. The Origin of the Church

### 1. The Time of the Church's Founding

The Holy Christian Church was founded on the day of Pentecost. The story of the founding of the Church is found in the second chapter of Acts.

### 2. The Founder of the Church

Christ is the founder of the Christian Church.

Matt. 16:18 – ... *Upon this rock I will build my church ...*

### 3. The Instrumentality through Which the Church Was Founded

Christ founded the Church by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit who enlightened and regenerated men, thus uniting them by faith with Christ and, through Christ, with God. The Holy Spirit was shed immediately upon the disciples, and upon the others who became believers, through the preaching of the Word by the apostles.

### 4. The Foundation of the Church

The foundation upon which the Church is built is Christ and His Word. The Church is built upon Christ; but since Christ deals with men through His Word, the foundation of the Church is also said to be the Word.

I Cor. 3:11 – *For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

Matt. 16:16-18 – *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

Eph. 2:19-20 – *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone.*

### 5. The Material of Which the Church Is Built

As has already been stated, the Church is built of living stones, i.e., men who have been made spiritually alive by the operation of the Holy Spirit.



I Pet. 2:5 – *Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

Acts 2:41 – *They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.*

## C. The Nature of the Church

### 1. The Church Is Composed of All True Believers

Properly speaking, the Church is the congregation or sum total of all regenerated and truly believing men throughout the whole world regardless of race, education, and outward church connection. The Church is the “Communion of Saints” as we confess in the third article of the Apostles’ Creed.

Eph. 4:11-12 – *And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ.*

I Pet. 2:5 – *Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

Eph. 2:19-20 – *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone.*

Eph. 5:26-27 – *That he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

In Eph. 4:15-16, the Church is spoken of as a body whose head is Christ and whose members are dependent on the Head who *maketh the increase of the body*.

Eph. 4:15-16 – *But speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.*

In the above named sense of the word, which is also called the narrower sense, the Church is said to be invisible and, therefore, an object of faith (third article of the Apostles’ Creed). The Church is

invisible, first of all, because Christ its Head is invisible; secondly, because the life of the individual believers, which is the life of the Church, is invisible (Col. 3:3 – ... *Your life is hid with Christ in God*); and thirdly, because as a consequence, who are the members of the Church cannot positively be determined by men.

As already stated, the word “church” is sometimes used about a small part of the Church, viz., those who in a certain community worship in the same house, in other words, a local congregation. A local church, properly speaking, is the congregation of true believers who are bound together in a certain community for the purpose of administering the means of grace.

I Cor. 1:2 – *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours.*

See also the opening verses of epistles to other churches.

## 2. The Organized Church Contains Also Unbelievers

As has been said, the Church is the institution or organism through which the means of grace are administered. As such, the Church must have an outward tangible form and organization. In this sense of the word, the Church is composed not just of true believers; but by the figure of speech called a “synecdoche,” the term “church” is applied to all those who profess the Christian faith and are associated with the believers in an outward organization for the purpose of administering the means of grace. Speaking about the Church in this sense of the word, it is a mixed church composed of both believers and unbelievers.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Ch. IV, Art. VII and VIII, 3 –

“... For we grant that in this life hypocrites and wicked men have been mingled with the Church, and that they are members of the Church according to the outward fellowship of the signs of the Church, *i.e.* of Word, profession and sacraments ....”

That the Church as it actually appears in this world as an institution or organism through which the means of grace is administered is a mixed church is clear from the following passages.

II Tim. 2:20 – *Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some unto honor, and some unto dishonor.*

Matt.13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50 –

*Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. But when the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. And the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it tares? And he said unto them, An enemy hath done this. And the servants say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he saith, Nay; lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn....*

*Then he left the multitudes, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Explain unto us the parable of the tares of the field. And he answered and said, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy that sowed them is the devil: and the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are angels. As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears, let him hear:...*

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away. So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.*

In the above named sense of the word, which is also called the wider sense, the Church is said to be visible. It is called visible because its administration of the means of grace is visible, because it is visible by its confession, and because it is visible by the fact that it

can be accurately determined who are the members of the outward organization called the Church.

There are not, however, two churches, one visible and one invisible. There is only one Church which in one sense is visible and in another sense invisible. The invisible Church is found within the visible Church; and strictly speaking, the unbelieving members of the visible Church are not members of the Church but are only mingled with the Church and outwardly attached to it.

## D. The Organization of the Church

### 1. The Head of the Church

The Head of the Church is Christ. By the power of the Word and the Sacraments, and by the operation of the Holy Spirit through these means, Christ rules, governs, directs, and leads the Church. He is the Bishop of souls.

Matt. 28:18-20 – *And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

Eph. 1:22-23 – *And he [God] put all things in subjection under his [Christ's] feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

I Pet. 2:25 – *For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*

### 2. The Constitution of the Church

The constitution, laws, rules, and regulations according to which the Church is governed and its work done is the Word of God.

### 3. The Bond of Union of the Church

The bond of union which unites all true believers of the Church is faith in Christ with whom they are each united and through whom they are all united with one another.

Eph. 2:11-22 – *Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and*

*without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh: for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father. So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.*

*Col. 2:19 – ... holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God.*

## **E. The Marks of the Church**

We have stated that the Church is the institution or organism through which the means of grace are administered. This being the case, it is self-evident that the Church must be known and distinguished from all other institutions or societies by the fact that it administers the means of grace. The true marks of the Church are, therefore, the Sacraments; and therefore the Augsburg Confession, Art. VII, teaches that “the Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered.”

*Matt. 28:19-20 – Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

*Luke 22:19 – And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

From what has been said about the Church and its marks, it is evident that there is no salvation outside of the Church; i.e., no one can be saved except by the means of grace administered by the Church, and no one can be saved unless he is a believer and, therefore, a member of the true Church of God. *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus est* (Outside of the Church there is no salvation).

(Editor's note: To shed further light upon Kildahl's meaning in the preceding sentences, the following paragraphs have been inserted here from one of the theological works which Kildahl noted that he consulted during the preparation of his dogmatics text, namely, Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith* [Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1905], pp. 387-388.)

"Is the declaration, *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus est*, 'Outside of the Church there is no salvation,' correct?"

"Yes, but not in the sense in which it is ordinarily used. It is correct because all who believe are members of the Church through their faith in Christ. The expression is, therefore, equivalent to: 'There is no salvation without faith.' But if it be interpreted as meaning that none are saved unless they be recognized as externally connected with some visible and particular church, it can be accepted only with some qualifications.... There may be extraordinary cases where persons are brought to faith in Christ through the reading of Holy Scripture and devout books, or the memory of religious instruction received in childhood, without any direct connection with a particular church.

"But would this justify one in saying that any are saved without the instrumentality of the Church?"

"No. The Communion of Saints or congregation of believers directly or indirectly is instrumental in the salvation of all who attain faith in Christ. Even in such extraordinary cases, as those above mentioned, there is no real independence of the Church and its agencies. What is extraordinary, is that the influence of the Church reaches the individual in a different mode from that which is usual. When some of the mutineers of the ship 'Bounty' on Pitcairn's Island, in their isolation for many years from the civilized world, came to repentance and faith, ... it must not be thought, that the Church or 'communion of saints' had nothing to do with it. For it was under these circumstances, that the preaching of the Word through the Church heard many years before, asserted its power."

## F. The Attributes of the Church

The attributes of the Church are unity, holiness, catholicity, apostolicity, and perpetuity.

### 1. The Church Is One

The Church is one because Christ its Head is one and because all believers are united with Christ the Head and, through Him, with one another into one body having one faith and one baptism.

Eph. 1:22 – *And he [God] put all things in subjection under his [Christ's] feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church.*

Eph. 4:4-6 – *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.*

I Cor. 12:13 – *For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit.*

### 2. The Church Is Holy

The Church is holy because all its members have been and are made holy by the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the members of the Church are called saints and the Church is called the Communion of Saints.

I Cor. 3:17 – *If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye.*

Eph. 1:1 – *... the saints that are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus.*

Eph. 5:25-27 – *... Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

I Pet. 2:9 – *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession ...*

### 3. The Church Is Catholic or Universal

The Church is catholic or universal because it is not limited to any time or place but is gathered from among all nations and intended for all peoples.

Matt. 28:19 – *Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

Mark 16:15 – ... *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.*

Acts 1:8 – ... *And ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

We also speak about the Church Universal as distinguished from local or particular churches.

#### 4. The Church Is Apostolic

The Church is apostolic because it was planted by the Apostles but especially because it is built on the teachings of the Apostles. The Apostles having been inspired by God, their teaching admits of no change, modification, or addition. Hence, when we say that the Church is apostolic, we have reference especially to the fact that it teaches nothing but what is contained in the apostolic writings.

Eph. 2:20 – *Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone.*

Gal. 1:8 – *As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema.*

#### 5. The Church Is Perpetual or Enduring

The Church is perpetual or enduring because, in spite of all enemies, attacks, persecutions, false doctrines, and dangers of all kinds, the Church has always existed and will continue to exist until the end of time.

Matt. 16:18 – ... *And upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

Matt. 28:20 – ... *And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

### G. The Church Militant and the Church Triumphant

1. Here on earth, the Church is constantly in a state of warfare against the devil, the world, and the flesh. The Church has to wage war against false doctrines, vices, worldliness, unbelief, self-righteousness, false piety, unchurchliness, ritualism, and all other kinds of



sins and injurious tendencies. As long as the Church is in this state of warfare, it is called the Church Militant.

John 15:18 – *If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you.*

Eph. 6:11-17 – *Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

II Cor. 10:4-5 – *For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*

2. After the regeneration of all things, the Church shall be in a state of perfect peace, glory, and triumph. After the Church has entered into this state, it is called the Church Triumphant.

The Church will be glorious because: a. it will have won over all its enemies; b. it will have been separated from everything evil; and c. all its members will have been perfected.

Matt. 13:43 – *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father ...*

Rev. 11:15 – *... The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

## H. The Office of the Church: The Christian Ministry

As stated, the Church is the institution or organism through which the means of grace are administered. The office through which the Church administers the means of grace is the Christian ministry.

## 1. The Origin of the Ministry

### **a. The Ministry Differs from Spiritual Priesthood**

In the Old Testament, there was a priesthood headed by the high priest and appointed by God to bring sacrifices to God and to provide mediation between God and man.

But when Christ, the true High Priest and Mediator whom all high priests and mediators of the Old Testament prefigured, had offered up Himself, the veil to the Holy of Holies was rent and the way to God was opened. All sinners may now come to God; there is no more need of priests to act as mediators between God and man. All Christians are, therefore, priests; i.e., they have direct access to God by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ. Thus, the spiritual priesthood of all Christians has taken the place of the Old Testament order of priests.

*I Pet. 2:5, 9 – Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ ... But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*

*Heb. 10:19-20 – Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.*

The Christian ministry, however, is something entirely different from the spiritual priesthood of the New Testament. The spiritual priesthood of believers is a prerogative of every Christian man, woman, and child; but the Christian ministry is an office given indeed to the whole Church but belonging only to those who have been appointed to it.

### **b. The Ministry Is Appointed by God**

The Christian ministry is appointed or instituted by God.

*Matt. 16:19 – I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

*I Cor. 12:28 – And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues.*

*Eph. 4:11 – And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.*

Acts 20:28 – *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.*

Matt. 28:18-20 – *And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

### **(1) The Apostles Appointed to the Ministry First**

The first to be appointed to the ministry were the apostles. This office was of a double nature. There was something about the apostolic office which was peculiar to the times when it existed and to the men that held it and which was not to continue in the Church after the death of the apostles. This thing was that the apostles were inspired men with authority from God, had seen the Lord, were personally instructed by Him, and were directly called by Him.

Acts 1:21-22 – *Of the men therefore that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection.*

I Cor. 2:9-13 – *But as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words.*

I Cor. 9:1 – *Am I not free? am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?*

Gal. 1:1, 11-12 – *Paul, an apostle (not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead) ... For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For nei-*

*ther did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ.*

There was something connected with the apostolic office which was to continue in the Church, viz., that the apostles were to administer the means of grace, this also being the function of the permanent ministry of the Church.

*Matt. 28:18-20 – And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

The bishops of the Church are not the successors of the apostles. The apostles have no successors. The apostolic office ceased with the deaths of the apostles.

## **(2) Elders Appointed to the Ministry Next in Order**

The next in order to be appointed to the ministry were the presbyters or elders who were the regular incumbents of the office of the Church and who correspond to what is now commonly called clergymen or pastors. The first mention of elders made in the New Testament we find in Acts 11:30 – ... *sending it to the elders* ... (i.e., the church at Antioch sent relief to the brethren in Judea). But we know nothing about how and when the first elders were appointed. We have, however, passages telling of the appointment of elders later on. Acts 14:23 – *And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.*

Titus 1:5 – *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge.*

(Regarding the place of evangelists in the Church, see pp. 358-365.)

## **2. The Nature of the Ministry**

As already stated, the ministry is an office appointed by God for the administration of the means of grace. The Christian ministry is not an order like the Old Testament priesthood, but it is an office of the Church. The Lord has not entrusted the administration of the means of grace to the clergy but to the Church.

That it is the Church which has power is evident from the following passage.

*Matt. 18:17-20 – And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the*

*church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican. Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

Since the whole Church cannot administer the means of grace through all its members, and since an individual cannot claim as his personal right and privilege that which belongs to a body, the Lord appoints through the Church certain men to the office of the Church. Acts 14:23 – *And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.*

### 3. The Qualifications of Those in the Ministry

The Apostle Paul said, *Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work* (I Tim. 3:1); but at the same time, he warned Timothy against laying hands hastily on anyone (I Tim. 5:22). The ministry is the most responsible and important office that any man can hold on this earth. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that only those who are qualified assume the functions of a pastor.

#### a. A Minister Must Be a True Christian

He who is to enter the ministry must be a true and living Christian. He is to be a witness (Acts 1:8 – ... *And ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*). How can anyone be a witness of that of which he has no experience? He who enters the ministry is to speak and testify of the life of God. How can he speak of a life which he has not lived? He is to show the way. How can he show the way if he does not know it? He is to preach Christ. How can he preach Christ if he does not know Him?

Ps. 50:16-17 – *But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, and that thou hast taken my covenant in thy mouth, seeing that thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?*

#### b. A Minister Must Be of Spotless Character

He who is to enter the ministry must be a man of spotless character, blameless life, and good reputation.

I Tim. 3:1-7 – *Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach; no brawler, no striker; but gentle, not contentious, no lover of money; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

Titus 1:5-9 – *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge; if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly. For the bishop must be blameless, as God's steward; not self-willed, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but given to hospitality, a lover of good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled; holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers.*

### **c. A Minister Must Be Educated for the Ministry**

He who is to enter the ministry must be educated for the ministry. In the Old Testament, there were prophet schools for the education of prophets. The twelve apostles went to school for three years with the Master Himself. Paul was a well-educated man before he entered upon the ministry.

### **d. A Minister Must Be Regularly Called**

He who is to enter the ministry must be regularly called. “Of Ecclesiastical Order, they teach, that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments, unless he be regularly called” (Augsburg Confession, Art. XIV).

Rom. 10:15 – *And how shall they preach, except they be sent? even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!*

Heb. 5:4 – *And no man taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is called of God, even as was Aaron.*

The call must be, in the first place, an inner call, and in the second place, an outward call through the Church. He who has the inner call and the outward formal call through the Church is called by God

and is a servant of God to the Church, an ambassador of Christ, and a steward of the mysteries of God.

Acts 20:28 – *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.*

II Cor. 5:20 – *We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God.*

I Cor. 4:1 – *Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.*

### **e. A Minister Must Be Ordained**

He who is to enter the ministry must be ordained to the ministry. Ordination is an act by which a candidate for the ministry, through the laying on of hands and through prayer, is set apart and consecrated for the ministry to which he has been called and by which the holy office is formally entrusted to him. It is practically the call which makes a person a minister.

Ordination is not directly commanded by God, but being of apostolic origin and for the sake of order, it should not be omitted.

Acts 13:3 – *Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them [on Paul and Barnabas], they sent them away.*

II Tim. 1:6 – *For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands.*

## **4. The Power and Authority of the Ministry**

### **a. The Power of the Ministry Is Spiritual**

The power and authority of the ministry are purely spiritual; i.e., ministers have no other power and authority than that which proceeds from the means of grace administered by them.

### **b. The Power of the Ministry May Be Divided Into Two Classes**

#### **(1) Preaching and Administering the Sacraments**

The first class of the power of the ministry is the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments (*potestas ordinis*). Matt. 28:18-20 – *And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you ...*



Mark 16:15-16 – *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.*  
 Augsburg Confession, Art. XXVIII, e.g., 8-9 –

[Regarding the power of the bishops] “This power is exercised only by teaching or preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments, according to the calling, either to many or to individuals. For thereby are granted, not bodily, but eternal things, as eternal righteousness, the Holy Ghost, eternal life. These things cannot come but by the ministry of the Word and the sacraments....”

## **(2) The Power of the Keys**

The second class of the power of the ministry is the remitting and retaining of sins. This is usually called the power of the keys (*potestas clavium*).

Matt 16:19 – *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

John 20:23 – *Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

To have the keys to a house means to be in such a position of trust that one has the power and authority to open or lock the house. To have the keys of the kingdom of heaven means to be in such a position of trust that one has the power and authority to open or close the door to the kingdom of heaven, i.e., admit people to or close people out from the kingdom of heaven. A minister opens the door to the kingdom of heaven when he, through the Gospel, announces to a penitent sinner the forgiveness of sins procured by Christ (the key of loosing), and he closes the door to the kingdom of heaven when he tells an impenitent sinner that his sin, impenitence, and unbelief exclude him from fellowship with God (the key of binding).

In a special sense, the key of loosing is used in absolution and the key of binding in excommunication.

### **(a) Absolution**

Absolution is the announcement of the forgiveness of sins to an individual. That which through the Gospel is proclaimed to all penitent and believing sinners is in absolution directed to an individual for his special and personal assurance and comfort. As is the case with all the spiritual gifts of God, so here, in order to benefit, it must be accepted by faith.



**(b) Excommunication**

Excommunication means that a person is excluded from the Church. The process of which excommunication is the last step is called church discipline. The mode of procedure in a case of church discipline is very plainly set forth in the following passage.

*Matt. 18:15-20 – And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican. Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

## X. The Last Things

Paul says, *If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable* (I Cor. 15:19). Man does not reach his goal in this life. We are looking forward to a world to come. *For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come* (Heb. 13:14). In this life, we see fully neither the consequences of sin nor the salvation from sin. Nor does the kingdom of God unfold itself in its glory here below. All these things will appear more clearly on the other side. *For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known* (I Cor. 13:12). Nor is justice always meted out in this world, but the day is coming when the Lord *will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth* (Ps. 96:13).

Christ has not promised his followers a paradisaical condition as long as the present state of affairs continues. But He has taught them to look forward to His return as the event which is to usher in a state of felicity when their fondest hopes and their greatest expectations are to be realized.

John 14:1-3 – *Let not your heart be troubled: 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; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

Therefore, Paul also exhorts the Christians to be *looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ* (Titus 2:13).

The doctrine concerning all the events that must come to pass and all the conditions that must prevail in bringing the whole world and each individual person from this earthly state into the final state beyond is called “the last things,” or eschatology (from *ἔσχατος*, last furthest, extreme, most remote; Latin, *de novissimis*). Under this heading, we shall consider the following subjects: the intermediate state, great events before the end, the coming of the Lord, the resurrection of the body, the day of judgment, the end of the world and the

restoration of all things, the place and condition of the condemned, and the place and condition of the righteous.

## A. The Intermediate State

When death separates the body and the soul, the body returns to the earth and is resolved into its constituent elements, and the soul returns to God.

Eccl. 12:7 – *And the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it.*

Because the soul is the center of man's personality, it is not annihilated; it does not cease to exist. Death is not a cessation of being. Through death, the soul simply passes into a different mode of existence.

Matt. 10:28 – *And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul ...*

Luke 16:22-26 – *And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.*

Rev. 6:9 – *... I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.*

The state or condition in which the soul exists between death and the resurrection is called the intermediate state. The realm into which the departed soul goes through death was in the Old Testament called Sheol and in the New Testament, Hades. These names are used to designate a common abode of the disembodied spirits of both the good and the wicked. The names simply designate the realm of the dead in contradistinction to *the land of the living* (a phrase in the

Old Testament, e.g., Ps. 52:5), and they do not connote anything relative to the condition of the dead.

Gen. 37:35 – ... *And he said, For I will go down to Sheol to my son mourning ...*

Job 14:13 – *Oh that thou wouldst hide me in Sheol ...*

Ps. 9:17 – *The wicked shall be turned back unto Sheol ...*

Acts 2:27, 31 – *Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption ... He [David] foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.*

Luke 16:23 – *And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments ...*

Rev. 20:13 – *And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them ...*

### **1. The Intermediate State Is Not the Same State as after the Resurrection**

The state in which the soul is between death and the resurrection is not the same as the state in which it will be after the resurrection. The intermediate state is not a permanent state; hence, it is called intermediate. Rev. 20:13-14 – ... *And death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them ... And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire....* In other words, death and Hades were forever done away with. There was no room or need any more for the intermediate state, Hades.

In the intermediate state, the soul is in a state of incorporeity; after the resurrection, soul and body will be united. Man consists of both body and soul; his condition is, therefore, not perfect until the two are again united. It is, therefore, not this state of incorporeity which is the object of the longing of the children of God but the state which is coming after the resurrection.

II Cor. 5:1-8 – *For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life. Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing*

*that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.*

It is not death for which Jesus has told us to look and long and watch, but His return.

Phil. 3:20-21 – *For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself.*

## **2. The Condition in the Intermediate State Is Not the Same for All Departed Souls**

Although, as stated, it has not pleased the good Lord to reveal to us very much concerning the condition of the souls in the intermediate state, He has, nevertheless, told us that the souls of departed believers are in a state of bliss and rest, that they are comforted, that they are in Paradise, that they are at home with the Lord, and that they are with Christ; and He has told us that the souls of the departed wicked are in torment and anguish under the wrath of God.

Rev. 14:13 – *... Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors ...*

Luke 16:22-23, 25 – *And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom ... But now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish.*

Luke 23:43 – *... To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*

II Cor. 5:8 – *We ... are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.*

Phil. 1:23 – *But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ: for it is very far better.*

John 3:36 – *He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

## B. Great Events before the End

The Scriptures very plainly predict that the world is going to come to an end; but according to the same Scriptures, we are to first expect certain great events and catastrophes. We classify these events into five groups: the preaching of the Gospel unto all nations, the restoration of Israel, the Antichrist, the Millennium, and the last struggle.

### 1. The Preaching of the Gospel unto All Nations

We are now living in what Christ calls *the times of the Gentiles* (Luke 21:24), i.e., the times when the Gospel is being preached to the Gentiles and the kingdom of God is being established among them, the times in which God visits the Gentiles *to take out of them a people for His name* (Acts 15:14). *The kingdom of God [was] taken away from [Israel], and ... given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof* (Matt. 21:43). *By [Israel's] fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles ... Their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles* (Rom. 11:11-12).

But the Lord has still greater things in store for the heathen world. The Lord has promised that, before the end of the world, His kingdom shall extend unto the ends of the earth and the Gospel shall be preached to all nations.

Gen. 22:18 – *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ...*

Zech. 9:10 – *And he shall speak peace unto the nations: and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.*

Matt. 24:14 – *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come.*

The Scriptures do not say that all peoples shall be Christianized but that the Gospel shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all nations. The accomplishing of this, Paul in Rom. 11:25 calls *the fulness of the Gentiles* (*πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν*). Due to this preaching of the Gospel among all nations, John tells us that he saw *a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne* (Rev. 7:9). This ingathering of the nations is now going on rapidly. We are living in the greatest missionary age the world has ever seen.

## 2. The Restoration of Israel

Christ came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not (John 1:11). A hardening in part [befell] Israel (Rom. 11:25). The kingdom of God [was] taken away from [them] (Matt. 21:43); and during the times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24), Israel as a people has been rejected by God. They were broken off and cast ... away (Rom. 11:17, 15). Now is being fulfilled what Hosea predicted: *For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim* (Hos. 3:4); and what Moses prophesied: *And Jehovah will scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth ... And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot* (Deut. 28:64-65).

But God did not cast off his people which he foreknew (Rom. 11:2). *As touching the gospel, they are enemies ... but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake. For the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of* (Rom. 11:28-29). All the chapters of the history of Israel have not yet been written. There is still a great and glorious future for the chosen people of God. Christ has said that *this generation shall not pass away, till all things [that are to happen before the end of the world] be accomplished* (Luke 21:32). And in spite of all persecutions, misfortunes, wanderings, and vicissitudes, during a period of nearly 2,000 years without a country, without a common language or any other outward bond of union, they still remain with us a distinct people with very distinct characteristics, a living proof of the truth of the Word of God. And *this generation shall not pass away, till all things be accomplished* because they are still to serve God's purpose in the history of His kingdom. When *the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled* (Luke 21:24), then Israel will be restored both politically and religiously.

Isa. 54:7-10 – *For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In overflowing wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting lovingkindness will I have mercy on thee, saith Jehovah thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed; but my lovingkindness shall not depart*

*from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, saith Jehovah that hath mercy on thee.*

### **a. The Political Restoration of Israel**

When *the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled* (Luke 21:24), the children of Israel shall be gathered from among the nations from all parts of the world; they shall again come to their own country where Israel and Judah, as one united nation, shall dwell safely under one king. There they shall be greatly multiplied; their land shall be like the Garden of Eden, and their ruined cities shall be rebuilt. The Bible is so full of promises of the glorious future of the people of Israel that the collection of them would make a little book. We shall only quote a few.

Luke 21:24 – *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

Acts 15:14, 16 – ... *First God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name ... After these things I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up.*

Deut. 30:3-5 – ... *Jehovah thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the peoples, whither Jehovah thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine outcasts be in the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will Jehovah thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: and Jehovah thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.*

Isa. 11:11-12 – *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, that shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.*

Ezek. 36:24, 33-38 – *For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land ... I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be builded. And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, whereas it was a desolation in the sight of all that passed by. And*



*they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited. Then the nations that are left round about you shall know that I, Jehovah, have builded the ruined places, and planted that which was desolate: I, Jehovah, have spoken it, and I will do it ... I will increase them with men like a flock. As the flock for sacrifice, as the flock of Jerusalem in her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men ...*

A few of the many other passages regarding the political restoration and glorious future of the people of Israel are the following.

*Ezek. 37:19-24 – ... Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his companions; and I will put them with it, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in my hand ... Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all ... And my servant David shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd ...*

*Jer. 23:5-6 – Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness.*

*Zech. 8:3-8 – Thus saith Jehovah: I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called The city of truth; and the mountain of Jehovah of hosts, The holy mountain. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in those days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith Jehovah of hosts. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.*

Amos 9:14-15 – *And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God.*

Ezek. 37:1-14 (the prophecy to the dry bones), esp. vv. 12, 14 –

*... Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel ... And I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land ...*

Jer. 31:35-37 – *Thus saith Jehovah, who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who stirreth up the sea, so that the waves thereof roar; Jehovah of hosts is his name: If these ordinances depart from before me, saith Jehovah, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith Jehovah: If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then will I also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith Jehovah.*

### **b. The Religious Restoration of Israel**

The greatest thing about the future of the chosen people of God, however, is not that they shall return to the land of their fathers and be restored as a nation but that they shall accept Christ and again become the people of God. Israel is to be restored also religiously. The prediction of this fact goes hand in hand throughout the Old Testament with the prophecy of their political regeneration. The same thing is likewise plainly foretold in the New Testament.

Deut. 4:30-31 – *When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, in the latter days thou shalt return to Jehovah thy God, and hearken unto his voice: for Jehovah thy God is a merciful God; he will not fail thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.*

Deut. 30:6 – *And Jehovah thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.*

Isa. 12:1-3, 6 – *And in that day thou shalt say, I will give thanks unto thee, O Jehovah; for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid: for Jehovah, even Jehovah, is my*

*strength and song; and he is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation ... Cry aloud and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great in the midst of thee is the Holy One of Israel.*

*Jer. 23:5-6 – Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness.*

*Jer. 31:31, 33-34 – Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah ... I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people ... for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.*

*Jer. 33:8-9 – And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me ... And this city shall be to me for a name of joy, for a praise and for a glory ...*

*Hos. 3:4-5 – For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and shall come with fear unto Jehovah and to his goodness in the latter days.*

Several more passages regarding the religious restoration of Israel are the following.

*Ezek. 36:24-31 – For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land. And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep mine ordinances, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. And I will save you from all your uncleannesses ... Then shall ye remember your evil ways, and your doings that were not good; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.*

Ezek. 37:24-28 – *And my servant David shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in mine ordinances, and observe my statutes, and do them ... And David my servant shall be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the nations shall know that I am Jehovah that sanctifieth Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.*

Zech. 12:10-13:1 – *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem ... And the land shall mourn, every family apart ... all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.*

In the 23rd chapter of Matthew, we have the last public discourse of Jesus to the Jewish people, His farewell sermon to them. The closing words are these: *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate* (Matt. 23:37-38). The future of Jerusalem was indeed dark and dreary, and Jesus does not hide from Jerusalem the punishment which was going to be inflicted upon it. And still, there is yet one word to be added. His last words to Jerusalem were these: *For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord* (Matt. 23:39). *Let him be crucified* (Matt. 27:23) is not the last word spoken by Israel concerning their Messiah. *They shall look unto me whom they have pierced* (Zech. 12:10). The day is coming when Israel shall say, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

In Rom. 11:25-32, Paul writes, *For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved: even as it is*

written, *There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: and this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As touching the gospel, they are enemies for your sake: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake. For the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of. For as ye in time past were disobedient to God, but now have obtained mercy by their disobedience, even so have these also now been disobedient, that by the mercy shown to you they also may now obtain mercy. For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all.*

### **c. The Result of the Restoration of Israel**

The result of the restoration of Israel shall be great missionary activity on the part of this people for the conversion and salvation of men. As Paul, having been convinced of his error and having given up his bitter enmity toward Christians, became the greatest worker for Christ, so we may expect that the children of Israel, after having seen their great mistake and after having accepted Jesus as their Messiah, will become the most zealous workers for the extension and upbuilding of the kingdom of Christ.

Isa. 12:4 – *And in that day shall ye say, Give thanks unto Jehovah, call upon his name, declare his doings among the peoples, make mention that his name is exalted.*

Isa. 66:1 – *And I will set a sign among them, and I will send such as escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations.*

Jer. 33:9 – *And this city shall be to me for a name of joy, for a praise and for a glory, before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them, and shall fear and tremble for all the good and for all the peace that I procure unto it.*

The result of the restoration of Israel is most beautifully presented by Paul in the following passage.

Rom. 11:12, 15-16 – *Now if their [the Jews'] fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? ... For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? And if the first-fruit is holy, so is the lump: and if the root is holy, so are the branches.*

### 3. The Antichrist

Ever since Christ came to this world, there have been anti-Christian tendencies and an anti-Christian spirit in the world; i.e., forces and influences that antagonize Christ and Christianity have been at work.

I John 2:18 – *Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists ...*

I John 4:3 – *And every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already.*

But according to Scripture, there is yet to come before the end a person, a powerful world ruler, to whom the appellation of antichrist is especially given. We shall here refer to the chief passages of Scripture that treat of the antichrist.

Dan. 7:15-27, e.g., vv. 23-25 – *Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And as for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise: and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the former; and he shall put down three kings. And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and he shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time.*

II Thess. 2:1-10, e.g., vv. 3-8 – *... For it [the day of the Lord] will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming.*

I John 2:22 – *Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son.*

Rev. 13:1-19, e.g., vv. 2-7 – *And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death; and his death-stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast; and they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him? and there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to him authority to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, even them that dwell in the heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.*

Rev. 19:19-20 – *And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, where-with he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone.*

That the antichrist is to be a person is evident from the fact that he is spoken of as a person. He is called *the man of sin, the son of perdition, and the lawless one*; he speaks and he thinks. It is true that in Revelation he is called a beast (*θηρίον*), but this beast is through-out spoken of as a man; he is spoken of in the masculine gender although *θηρίον* is neuter, and he is said to speak, rule, and wage war. In Dan. 7, his kingdom is called a beast and he is spoken of as a horn, but it is expressly explained that the beast is a kingdom and the horn a king. That he is to be a world ruler is clearly seen both from Dan. 7 and from Rev. 13:7. In the last named place, we read, *And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.*

### **a. The Time of the Rule of the Antichrist**

According to II Thess. 2:3-8, the reign of the antichrist will take place immediately before *the manifestation of [Christ's] coming*. There will be a *falling away* (v. 3) and a condition of *lawlessness*



(v. 7). There will be one that keeps him back, and when that one is taken away (v. 7), *then shall be revealed the lawless one* (v. 8). According to Rev. 13:5, there will be *given to him authority to continue forty and two months*; and then, according to II Thess. 2:8, *the Lord Jesus shall slay [him] with the breath of his mouth, and bring [him] to nought by the manifestation of his coming*.

Dan. 7:21-22, 25-26 – *I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom ... And he shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time [3 1/2 years, 42 months]. But the judgment shall be set, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.*

### **b. The Character of the Antichrist**

The very name given to the antichrist indicates his character. Not only is he, like all unregenerate men, at enmity with God; but also he is, in a special sense, the embodiment and personification of the hatred and antagonism to God and to everything godly and holy. He is the very antithesis of Christ. John tells us that he saw him *coming up out of the sea* (Rev. 13:1). It seems that “sea” here must be taken in a figurative sense. By the sea is most likely meant the swarming multitude of men. If this is correct, then his coming up out of the sea seems to express the idea that the antichrist is going to be a man of the people. I do not think that we miss the mark very much when we suppose that he will be the finished product of the spirit of the times, a man in whom the masses see their ideals most perfectly represented and personified, the most representative exponent of the godless and anti-Christian spirit of the times. He will be a special servant of the devil, a most willing, obedient, and cunning tool of the evil one, a man in whom Satan most clearly sees his own image.

According to the Scriptures, the antichrist’s *coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders* (II Thess. 2:9); the devil gives him his power and authority (Rev. 13:2, 4); he is *the man of sin, the son of perdition, and the lawless one* (II Thess. 2:3, 8); he is deceitful, lying, and unrighteous (II Thess. 2:9-10). In Revelation, the antichrist is called a beast, and in Dan. 7, the same term is used to designate his kingdom. His kingdom is *diverse from all the kingdoms* (Dan. 7:23), *exceeding terrible, whose teeth [i.e., the beast’s] were of iron, and its nails of brass;*



*which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet* (Dan. 7:19). *He shall think to change the times and the law* (Dan. 7:25).

In regard to his attitude to God, the antichrist is pictured in Scripture as follows. He *denieth* [both] *the Father and the Son* (I John 2:22); he speaks *blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, even them that dwell in the heaven* (Rev. 13:6); he *opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God* (II Thess. 2:4); yea, he is even worshiped (Rev. 13:8, 12).

As may be expected, the antichrist will introduce a reign of terror and persecution against all Christians.

Rev. 13:7 – *And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them ...*

Rev. 13:15-17 – *And it was given unto him [the other beast, the great helper of the antichrist] to ... cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead; and that no man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, even the name of the beast or the number of his name.*

### **c. The Destiny of the Antichrist**

The reign of the antichrist, however, is not going to be long (42 months according to Rev. 13:5). The Lord will shorten the days (Matt. 24:22). At the appearing of Christ, *the Lord Jesus shall slay [the antichrist] with the breath of his mouth, and bring [him] to nought* (II Thess. 2:8). His armies will be destroyed, and he and his right-hand helper, the false prophet, will be *cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone* (Rev. 19:19-20).

Dan. 7:11, 13, 22, 26 – *... I beheld even till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed, and it was given to be burned with fire ... Behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him ... The ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom ... But the judgment shall be set, and they shall take away his [the antichrist's] dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.*

#### 4. The Millennium

At the appearing of the Lord, as already stated, the reign of the antichrist will be destroyed. Then Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss for a period of a thousand years. The martyrs and those who had not worshiped the antichrist and his image nor had received his marks upon their foreheads shall be raised from the dead and shall reign with Christ a thousand years. This period of a thousand years between the appearing of the Lord and the end of the world is called the Millennium, which is from two Latin words: *mille*, thousand, and *annus*, year. The corresponding Greek word is *χίλια*, thousand.

Rev. 20:1-6 – *And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

#### 5. The Last Struggle

When the Millennium is over, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison for a short time and shall deceive the nations again, gather the enemies of Christ and the Church from the four corners of the earth, and attack the saints. But fire shall come down from heaven to devour them, and the devil shall be cast into the lake of fire, the place *which is prepared for the devil and his angels* (Matt. 25:41) where the antichrist and the false prophet already are; and there they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Rev. 20:7-10 – *And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall come forth to deceive the*

*nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

## C. The Coming of the Lord

There are many things connected with the doctrine of the last things that are hard to understand and difficult to explain. It is also impossible to precisely determine in what chronological order some of the phenomena and events will occur. But one thing is as clear as day, and that is that Christ Himself will return, that He will raise all the dead, that He will judge all flesh, and that this world will come to an end. As the salvation of man was brought about by an historical act, viz., the coming of the Son of God to earth, so the full and ultimate realization of the salvation of man will be brought about by an historical act, the second coming of the Son of God to earth. As the first coming was a real, literal, bodily, and therefore, visible coming, so the second coming will be a real, literal, bodily, and visible coming. This second coming of Christ is spoken of in both the Old and New Testaments. Christ Himself foretold His coming in plain terms, and when sorrow filled the hearts of the disciples because Christ was going to leave them, He comforted them by telling them that He would come again (John 16:5-6, 16-22). The second coming of Christ is the great event looked forward to by all Christians as the realization of their fondest hope, as the day of the regeneration and restitution of all things, and as the day when they shall enjoy perfect salvation. Even nature, according to Rom. 8:19-22, awaits with earnest expectation for that day. In Titus 2:13, Paul calls the day of the appearing of the Lord *the blessed hope*.

### 1. Different Names to Designate the Lord's Coming

In the Scriptures, the second coming is called:

- The coming of Christ, the Son of man, the Lord, etc. (*παρουσία*, a being present, a coming; I Cor. 15:23, Matt. 24:27, 37, 39, I Thess. 2:19, 4:15, and many other places)

- The coming of the day of God (II Pet. 3:12)
- The revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ (*ἀποκάλυψις*, an unveiling, uncovering, or revealing; I Cor. 1:7)
- The appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (*ἐπιφάνεια*, manifestation, appearance; I Tim. 6:14)
- The appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13)

The day of the Lord's coming is called:

- The day (I Cor. 3:13)
- That day (II Tim 1:12, 18)
- The day of God (II Pet. 3:12)
- The day of the Lord (II Pet. 3:10)
- The day of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor. 1:8)
- The last day (John 11:24)
- The great day (Jude 6)
- The day of judgment (II Pet. 2:9)
- The day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (Rom. 2:5)
- The great and terrible day of Jehovah (Joel 2:31)

## 2. Different Stages in the Lord's Coming

The day of the Lord is spoken of also in the Old Testament, but there the day of the Lord means the time from the birth of Christ until the day of judgment, and the coming of Christ in the flesh and His final coming are spoken of as one coming. The prophets saw the Lord coming to save and to judge, but the fact that hundreds of years should lie between the saving and the judging they did not see (e.g., see Joel 2). In the same way, the New Testament writers have spoken of the time of the second coming of the Lord as a day, thereby denoting a longer period; and all but John have spoken of the coming of the Lord as one single event. From the book of Revelation, however, it appears clearly that there are stages in the second coming of Christ. As has already been stated, there is a premillennial coming of the Lord, at which coming the antichrist and his army will be destroyed and the Millennium will be established (II Thess. 2:8, Rev. 19:19-20:6, Dan. 7:13, 22, 26). Then, after a thousand years, there is the final coming, at which coming all men will be judged and the world will come to an end (Rev. 20:7-15). It must be this stage of His coming that is spoken of as *the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints* (I Thess. 3:13). See also the following verses.

Zech. 14:5 – ... *And Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with thee.*

Jude 14 – ... *Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones.*

### 3. Signs Preceding and Accompanying the Lord's Coming

The day of the Lord shall be preceded and accompanied by great and terrible signs whereby the Christians may infer that His coming is near. These signs shall consist of wars, eclipses, the falling of stars from heaven, the shaking of the powers of heaven, and the roaring of the sea and the billows.

Matt. 24:6-8 – *And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for these things must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places. But all these things are the beginning of travail.*

Matt. 24:29 – *But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.* (Mark 13:24-25 reads just about the same.)

Luke 21:25 – *And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows.*

Besides these signs of a more general character, Matthew mentions a special sign which he calls *the sign of the Son of man* [which shall appear] *in heaven* (Matt. 24:30). What that sign is going to be no one knows.

### 4. The Manner of the Lord's Coming

#### a. The Lord's Coming Will Be Unexpected

Although those who are enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit will, by the signs preceding the coming of the Lord, be able to know that it is drawing near, still they will not by these signs or any other means be able to find out the exact time of His coming. Even to Christians, His coming will be a surprise, for Christ has told us that He will come in the day and the hour which we think not.

Matt. 24:36, 42-44 – *But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only ... Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch*

*the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

Mark 13:35 – *Watch therefore: for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrowing, or in the morning.*

I Thess. 5:2-3 – *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child ...*

II Pet. 3:10 – *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief ...*

### **b. The Lord's Coming Will Be Sudden**

Mark 13:35-36 – *Watch therefore ... lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.*

I Thess. 5:3 – *When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them ...*

Luke 17:31 – *In that day, he that shall be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away: and let him that is in the field likewise not return back.*

### **c. The Lord's Coming Will Be Visible and Audible**

Thus, His coming will be noticeable to all.

Matt. 24:30 – *... And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

Matt. 24:26-27 – *If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the wilderness; go not forth: Behold, he is in the inner chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man.*

I Thess. 4:16 – *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God ...*

I Cor. 15:52 – *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

### **d. The Lord's Coming Will Be in the Clouds of Heaven**

As He disappeared in a cloud when He ascended into heaven, so He shall return in a cloud.

Matt. 24:30 – *... And they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven ... (Compare Matt. 26:64 – Jesus saith unto him ... Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of*

*Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.* Mark 13:26 is nearly identical to Matt. 24:30, and Mark 14:62 is nearly identical to the comparison text of Matt. 26:64.)

**e. The Lord's Coming Will Be in Great Power and Glory**

Matt. 24:30 – ... *And they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* (Mark 13:26 is nearly identical.)

Matt. 16:27 – *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father ...*

**f. The Lord Will Be Surrounded by His Angels**

Matt. 16:27 – *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels ...*

II Thess. 1:7 – ... *at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire.*

## D. The Resurrection of the Body

### 1. The Fact of the Resurrection

At the coming of the Lord, all the dead shall, by the powerful word of God, be resurrected; i.e., the soul shall again be united with the body which shall be restored and called out of the grave.

John 5:28-29 – ... *For the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ...*

Acts 24:15 – *Having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust.*

Rev. 20:12 – *And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne ...*

### 2. The Order of the Resurrection

As there are different stages in the coming of the Lord, so there is a certain order according to which the resurrection of the dead shall take place. All the dead shall be resurrected, but not at the same time. The martyrs and those who have not worshiped the beast or his image and who have not received his mark are to be raised from the dead at the premillennial coming of Christ. This resurrection is called the first resurrection. The rest of the dead will be called out of their graves at the final coming of the Lord.

Rev. 20:4-5 – ... *I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark*

*upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection.*

The resurrection of the rest of the dead is called *the resurrection of judgment* in contradistinction to the resurrection of believers which is called *the resurrection of life* (John 5:29).

### **3. The Nature of the Resurrected Bodies**

#### **a. Resurrected Bodies Like Christ's Resurrected Body**

The bodies with which believers shall be raised will be fashioned after the resurrection body of Christ.

Phil. 3:21 – *Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory ...*

I Cor. 15:49 – *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

#### **b. Resurrected Bodies the Same Bodies Possessed in This Life**

The resurrected bodies of believers will be the same bodies that they had in this life. Christ rose with the same body that He had before He died; His disciples recognized Him; He even showed them His wounds.

John 20:27 – *Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side ...*

The Bible never speaks about the resurrection body as a new body but always as the same body.

I Cor. 15:42-44 – *... It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption ... it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body ...*

At the final coming of Christ, the believers who then shall be living on earth shall, without going through the process of death, be changed and caught up in the clouds. The order will be that first, the dead in Christ will be raised; then, the living believers will be changed; and together, they will be caught up in the clouds.

I Cor. 15:51-52 – *... We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

I Thess. 4:15-18 – *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall*



*rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

The change which the living believers shall undergo and their being caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air is sometimes called the rapture.

### **c. Resurrected Bodies Different from Present Bodies**

Although the resurrected bodies of believers will be the same as the bodies they had here in this life, they will in many respects be very much different from their present earthly bodies.

Phil. 3:21 – *Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory ...*

I Cor. 15:35-53, esp. vv. 50-53 – *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

#### **(1) Immortal Bodies**

The resurrected bodies of believers will be immortal and incorruptible.

Luke 20:36 – *For neither can they die any more ... being sons of the resurrection.*

John 6:54 – *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

I Cor. 15:42 – *So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.*

#### **(2) Bodies Not Subject to Suffering**

The resurrected bodies of believers will not be subject to infirmities, suffering, or disease.

Rev. 21:4 – *And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.*

Rev. 7:16 – *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat.*

I Cor. 15:43 – *... It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.*

**(3) Spiritual Bodies**

The resurrected bodies of believers will be spiritual bodies.

I Cor. 15:44 – *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*

**(4) Glorified Bodies**

The resurrected bodies of believers will be glorified bodies.

Phil. 3:21 – *Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory ...*

I Cor. 15:43 – *It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory ...*

**4. The Resurrected Bodies of the Wicked**

Concerning the resurrected bodies of the wicked, we find no direct information in the Bible. We can only infer from what we know about the condition of the condemned that they will receive bodies that have necessary properties for existing in such a condition.

**E. The Day of Judgment**

The day of the final coming of the Lord is called the day of judgment because, on that day, all men, after having been raised from the dead, shall appear before the judgment seat of God to receive their final judgment.

Rom. 14:10 – *... For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God.*

Acts 17:31 – *... He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness ...*

II Pet. 2:9 – *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment.*

Rev. 20:12 – *And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne ... and the dead were judged ...*

Matt. 25:31-46 – *But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a*

*stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.*

### 1. The Judge

The judgment is sometimes ascribed simply to God.

Ps. 98:9 – ... *For he [Jehovah] cometh to judge the earth: he will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.*

Heb 12:23 – ... *God the Judge of all ...*

But most commonly, the judgment is ascribed to the second person in the Godhead.

Matt. 25:31-32 – *But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another ...*

John 5:22-23 – *For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father ...*

### 2. Those to Be Judged

On the day of judgment, all men shall be judged – the quick and the dead, the just and the unjust.

II Cor. 5:10 – *For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

Acts 10:42 – *And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead.*

I Cor. 4:4-5 – *For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God.*

Jude 14-15 – *... Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*

### 3. That for Which Men Shall Be Judged

On the last day, men shall be judged according to the relation they have held to Christ – whether they have believed or disbelieved; and they shall be judged according to their thoughts, words, and deeds which are testimonies of their faith or unbelief.

John 3:18 – *He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

John 5:24 – *... He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life.*

Matt. 12:36 – *And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.*

Matt. 16:27 – *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds.*

I Cor. 4:4-5 – *For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God.*

Jude 14-15 – *... Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*

II Cor. 5:10 – *For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

I Pet. 1:17 – *... who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work ...*

Matt. 25:31-46 – quoted under E. The Day of Judgment, pp. 338-339

Ecc. 12:14 – *For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

#### **4. The Rule by Which Men Will Be Judged**

The rule or law according to which men will be judged is the Word of God. The sentence or judgment rendered at the day of judgment will be the same sentence or judgment which the Word of God has pronounced here. That which the Word of God has condemned will be condemned at the last day, and that which the Word of God has approved of will be approved of at the day of judgment.

Rom. 2:16 – *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ.*

Those who have accepted the Gospel and believed on Christ shall be judged by the rule or law of the Gospel.

Rom. 8:1-2 – *There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.*

John 5:24 – *... He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life.*

Those who have rejected Christ and His Gospel will be judged by the Law.

John 12:48 – *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day.*

Rom. 2:2 – *And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practise such things.*

From Rom. 2:12, it appears that those who have not heard the Word of God will be judged by some other form: *For as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law ..... That norm is undoubtedly the law of nature of which Paul speaks in the subsequent verses: For when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their*

*thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them (Rom. 2:14-15).*

## 5. The Sentence to Be Pronounced

The Judge will now pronounce the final sentence on every man, a sentence from which there is no appeal. This is the last and final supreme court decision. The godly will be awarded eternal life, and the wicked will be assigned to eternal death.

*Matt. 25:34, 41, 46 – Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ... Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels ... And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.*

## F. The End of the World and the Restoration of All Things

At the final coming of the Lord, time will end and the world, i.e., the entire physical creation, will be destroyed and dissolved by fire.

*Matt. 24:35 – Heaven and earth shall pass away ...*

*II Pet. 3:7, 10 – But the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men ... But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

Instead of the old world which thus shall perish, a new heaven and a new earth shall appear.

*Isa. 65:17 – For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.*

*II Pet. 3:13 – But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

*Rev. 21:1 – And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more.*

This act of God is in the Bible called *the regeneration and restoration of all things*.

*Matt. 19:28 – And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man*

*shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

Acts 3:21 – *Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things ...*

Rev. 21:5 – *And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new ...*

## G. The Place and Condition of the Condemned

As already stated, the unbelieving and wicked will, on the day of judgment, be assigned to eternal death and damnation.

### 1. The Place of the Condemned

a. The most common name of the place to which the wicked will be condemned is hell (γέεννα, Gehenna).

Mark 9:47 – *And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell.*

Matt. 10:28 – *And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

In the Authorized Version [the King James Version], no distinction was made between γέεννα, Gehenna, and ᾗδης, Hades; both words were rendered “hell” except in some instances where ᾗδης, Hades, was translated “the grave.”

b. Other names for this place are “the eternal fire,” “the lake of fire,” “the furnace of fire,” and “the lake of fire and brimstone.”

Matt. 25:41 – *Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Rev. 20:14 – *And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire ...*

Matt. 13:50 – *And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.*

Rev. 20:10 – *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone ...*

## 2. The Condition of the Condemned

### a. “Death” or “Second Death”

The condition of the condemned is called “death” or “second death.”

Rom. 6:23 – *For the wages of sin is death ...*

Rev. 20:14 – *And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire.*

Death came into the world when Adam and Eve sinned. It developed into its different aspects: spiritual death and temporal death. Its climax and culmination, i.e., death in its fullest development, is eternal death, everlasting separation of both body and soul from God. Death, according to its essence and nature, is always in all its forms eternal; i.e., when man dies, he will forever remain dead unless God interferes and raises him from the dead. That will never happen to those who on the last day are condemned; therefore, we call their condition eternal death. The term “eternal death” is not found in the Bible; but as stated, the condition or state of the condemned is called death, and this condition is, in the Bible, said to be eternal; hence, “eternal death.”

### b. Punishment, Torment, Destruction

The condition of the condemned is designated as punishment, torment, destruction, darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth.

Matt. 25:46 – *And these shall go away into eternal punishment ...*

Rev. 14:11 – *And the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever ...*

II Thess. 1:9 – *Who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might.*

Matt. 8:12 – *But the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.*

### c. Under the Wrath of God

The condemned are said to be under the wrath of God.

John 3:36 – *... But he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Rev. 6:16-17 – *And they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?*



#### **d. Eternal Punishment**

The punishment to which the wicked will be sentenced is endless. The fire, the punishment, the destruction, and the torment are said to be eternal.

Matt. 25:41, 46 – ... *Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire ... And these shall go away into eternal punishment ...*

II Thess. 1:9 – *Who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction ...*

Rev. 14:11 – *And the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever ...*

Rev. 20:10 – ... *And they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

Christ calls hell an unquenchable fire, and He says that the worm of those there dieth not.

Mark 9:43-48 – *And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire. And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell. And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

## **H. The Place and Condition of the Righteous**

### **1. The Place of the Righteous**

The place to which the righteous shall go for eternity is given different names in the Scriptures. It is called:

- The new earth (II Pet. 3:13 – *But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.* Rev. 21:1 – *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth ...*)
- The new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2 – *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God ...*)
- The kingdom of God (Luke 13:28 – *There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without.*)

- The kingdom of heaven (Matt. 8:11 – ... *Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.*)
- The paradise of God (Rev. 2:7 – ... *To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.*)

## 2. The Condition of the Righteous

### a. “Eternal Life” or “Life”

The condition in which the righteous and blessed shall be on the new earth is called “eternal life” or only “life.”

Matt. 25:46 – *And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.*

Rom. 6:22 – *But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life.*

Matt. 18:9 – *And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire.*

I Tim. 6:19 – *Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed.*

The life of the blessed took its beginning here on earth when they were regenerated. Therefore, spiritual life is said to be eternal life.

As death is always essentially eternal death, so the life which God gives His children is always qualitatively eternal life; i.e., the children of God will ever continue to live provided that no disturbing element enters in.

John 6:54 – *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life ...*

John 11:25-26 – *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die ...*

### b. Perfect Bliss and Happiness

The condition of the righteous is one of perfect bliss and happiness. This condition of bliss and happiness has both negative and positive elements in it.

#### (1) The Negative Elements of Perfect Bliss

The righteous shall be completely delivered from sin and from all the consequences of sin.

(a) The righteous shall be delivered from sin.

Rev. 21:27 – *And there shall in no wise enter into it [the new Jerusalem] anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie ...*

Because the blessed will be delivered from sin, they are pictured as being *arrayed in white robes* (Rev. 7:9). Their deliverance, of course, includes the fact that they will be delivered also from all temptations to sin and from all possibility of sinning.

(b) The righteous shall be delivered from sickness, suffering, sorrow, hunger, thirst, cold, and heat – in short, from all kinds of evil to which our bodies and souls are subject in this life.

Rev. 21:4 – *And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.*

Rev. 7:16 – *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat.*

Rev. 22:5 – *And there shall be night no more ...*

Isa. 33:24 – *And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick ...*

(c) The righteous shall be separated from all evil and from ungodly people.

I Cor. 6:9-10 – *Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

Rev. 22:15 – *Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie.*

(d) The righteous shall be forever delivered from death.

Luke 20:36 – *For neither can they die any more ... being sons of the resurrection.*

Rev. 20:14 – *And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire ...*

Rev. 21:4 – *... And death shall be no more ...*

## **(2) The Positive Elements of Perfect Bliss**

(a) The righteous shall be together with God and shall see Him and Christ face to face.

Rev. 21:3 – *... Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

John 14:2-3 – *In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

I Cor. 13:12 – *For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face ...*

I John 3:2 – *Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is.*

Ps. 17:15 – *As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with beholding thy form.*

To see God and to see Christ as He is will undoubtedly be one of the greatest sources of our felicity in the next world; for to see Him will mean to know Him better, and to know Him better will mean to love and admire Him more. Here on earth, says God, *Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live* (Ex. 33:20). But then we shall see His glory.

(b) The righteous shall be in the company of all the saints and the holy angels.

Rev. 7:9 – *... I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number; out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb ...*

Matt. 8:11 – *... Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.*

Luke 12:8 – *... Every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.*

(c) The righteous shall live in the most beautiful and pleasant surroundings on the new earth where all things have been made new and where righteousness dwells. See the passages quoted under H, 1. The Place of the Righteous, p. 345-346.

(d) The righteous shall have a more correct understanding, a more perfect knowledge, and a deeper insight into everything than they had here.

I Cor. 13:12 – *For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully ...*

(e) The righteous shall possess and enjoy felicity, joy, satisfaction, contentment, and glory.

Isa. 35:10 – *And the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their*

heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Matt. 25:21 – ... Enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Ps. 17:15 – ... I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with beholding thy form.

Matt. 13:43 – Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father ...

Rev. 2:7 – ... To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

I Pet. 1:3-4 – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

II Tim. 4:8 – Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

Jas. 1:12 – Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him.

I Pet. 5:4 – And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

(f) The best part of all for the righteous is that this state of perfect felicity shall last forever. On the last day, the righteous [shall go] into eternal life (Matt. 25:46). Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads (Isa. 35:10). They shall receive an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away (I Pet. 1:4). And they shall reign for ever and ever (Rev. 22:5).



## **Appendixes**

- 1. Theses on Election**
- 2. The Work of Evangelists**

## Appendix 1

### Theses on Election<sup>\*</sup>

#### Thesis One on Election

God wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth; therefore, God has redeemed all men, and, therefore, He has commanded that the Gospel be preached to the whole creation.

I Tim. 2:4-5 – [God] *would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus.*

Mark 16:15 – *And he [Jesus] said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.*

#### Thesis Two on Election

When the Gospel is thus preached, it is God's will and counsel that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who does not believe shall be condemned.

Mark 16:16 – *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.*

#### Thesis Three on Election

As God's will and counsel are in time, so have His will and counsel been from eternity.

Acts 15:18 (KJV) – *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.*

John 1:17-18 – *For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

\* J. N. Kildahl, "Prof. Kildahls punkter," *Beretning om det enogtyvende aarsmöde for den forenede norsk lutherske kirke i Amerika* (Minneapolis, MN: Den forenede kirkes trykkeri, 1910), 75-76, Jonathan D. Anderson, trans. Kildahl's citations of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions have been filled in by the translator. Kildahl prepared these theses in 1908 for discussion within a Norwegian church union committee of which he was a member.



### Thesis Four on Election

Just as God wills in time that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, so has He willed it from eternity. Therefore, He has not from eternity made an absolute or unconditional decision to save some while passing by others who lie in the same guilt. Wherefore also, He has not called the elect with a more powerful grace than those who are lost; but the means of grace always have the same inherent power to work repentance, faith, perseverance, and eternal salvation.

Acts 10:34 – ... *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.*

Rom. 2:11 – *For there is no respect of persons with God.*

II Cor. 1:20 – *For how many soever be the promises of God, in him [Jesus Christ] is the yea: wherefore also through him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us.*

### Thesis Five on Election

And just as God in time follows the rule that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned, so has He from eternity followed the same rule in determining who shall be saved. God has chosen us in Christ, and he who, when the Gospel is preached to him, receives Christ and by faith remains in Christ until the end is the one chosen unto eternal life.

Eph. 1:3-12 – *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love: having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved: in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth; in him, I say, in whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his*

*will; to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ.*

*Matt. 22:1-14 – And Jesus answered and spake again in parables unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, who made a marriage feast for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage feast: and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, Behold, I have made ready my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come to the marriage feast. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise; and the rest laid hold on his servants, and treated them shamefully, and killed them. But the king was wroth; and he sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore unto the partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast. And those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was filled with guests. But when the king came in to behold the guests, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding-garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few chosen.*

*Rom. 8:28-30 – And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose. For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren: and whom he foreordained, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

*II Thess. 2:13-14 – But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Mark 16:16 – He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.*

Matt. 24:13 – *But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.*

Rev. 2:10 – ... *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.*

### Thesis Six on Election

Therefore, one should not seek to investigate election in God's secret counsel, but one should seek it in and learn it from the holy Gospel of Christ wherein it has been revealed.

Formula of Concord, Part I (Epitome), Ch. XI, 6-10 –

“This is not to be investigated in the secret counsel of God, but to be sought in the Word of God, where it is also revealed.

“But the Word of God leads us to Christ, who is the Book of Life, in whom all are written and elected that are to be saved, as it is written (Eph. 1:4): ‘He hath chosen us in him’ [Christ] ‘before the foundation of the world.’

“Thus Christ calls to himself all sinners, and promises them rest, and he is anxious that all men should come to him and permit him to help them. To them he offers himself in his Word, and wishes them to hear it, and not to stop their ears or [neglect and] despise the Word. He promises besides the power and efficiency of the Holy Ghost, and divine assistance for perseverance and eternal salvation [that we may remain steadfast in the faith and attain eternal salvation].

“Therefore we should judge concerning this our election to eternal life neither from reason nor from the Law of God, which would lead either into a dissipated, dissolute epicurean life, or into despair, and would excite in the heart of men pernicious thoughts (and such thoughts cannot be effectually guarded against as long as they follow their own reason), so that they think to themselves: ‘If God has elected me to salvation, I cannot be condemned, although I do whatever I will.’ And again: ‘If I am not elected to eternal life, it matters not what good I do; for my efforts are nevertheless all in vain.’

“But the true judgment concerning predestination must be learned alone from the Holy Gospel concerning Christ, in which it is clearly testified that ‘God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all,’ and that ‘he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance’ (Rom. 11:32, Ez[ek]. 18:23; 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:2).”

**Thesis Seven on Election, Part 1**

Taking the word “election” in a wider sense, election includes the whole doctrine of God’s purpose, counsel, will, and ordination in Christ concerning our redemption, call, justification, and salvation – as is further explained in the Formula of Concord, Part II (Solid Decl.), Ch. XI, 13-24 – and in this sense, election must be regarded as the cause of our salvation.

Formula of Concord, Part II (Solid Decl.), Ch. XI, 8 –

“But the eternal election of God not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but is also, from the gracious will and pleasure of God in Christ Jesus, a cause which procures, works, helps and promotes what pertains thereto; upon this [divine predestination] also our salvation is so founded that ‘the gates of hell cannot prevail against it’ (Matt. 16:18). For it is written (John 10:28): ‘Neither shall any man pluck my sheep out of my hand.’ And again (Acts 13:48): ‘And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.’”

Formula of Concord, Part II (Solid Decl.), Ch. XI, 13-24 –

“Therefore, if we wish to think or speak correctly and profitably concerning eternal election, or the predestination and foreordination of the children of God to eternal life, we should accustom ourselves not to speculate concerning the mere, secret, concealed, inscrutable foreknowledge of God, but how the counsel, purpose and ordination of God in Christ Jesus, who is the true book of life, has been revealed to us through the Word, viz. that the entire doctrine concerning the purpose, counsel, will and ordination of God pertaining to our redemption, call, righteousness and salvation should be taken together; as Paul has treated and explained this article (Rom. 8:29 sq.; Eph. 1:4 sq.), as also Christ in the parable (Matt. 22:1 sqq.), namely, that God in his purpose and counsel decreed:

“1. That the human race should be truly redeemed and reconciled with God through Christ, who, by his faultless [innocency] obedience, suffering and death, has merited for us righteousness which avails before God, and eternal life.

“2. That such merit and benefits of Christ should be offered, presented and distributed to us through his Word and sacraments.

“3. That he would be efficacious and active in us by his Holy Ghost, through the Word, when it is preached, heard and pondered, to convert hearts to true repentance and preserve them in the true faith.

“4. That all those who, in true repentance, receive Christ by a true faith he would justify and receive into grace, adoption and inheritance of eternal life.

“5. That those also who are thus justified he would sanctify in love, as St. Paul (Eph. 1:4) says.

“6. That, in their great weakness, he also would defend them against the devil, the world, and the flesh, and would rule and lead them in his ways, and when they stumble would raise them again [place his hand beneath them], and under the cross and in temptation would comfort and preserve them [for life].

“7. That the good work which he has begun in them he would strengthen, increase and support to the end, if they observe God’s Word, pray diligently, abide in God’s goodness [grace] and faithfully use the gifts received.

“8. That those whom he has elected, called and justified, he would eternally save and glorify in life eternal.

“And that in his counsel, purpose and ordination he prepared salvation not only in general, but in grace considered and chose to salvation each and every person of the elect, who shall be saved through Christ, and ordained that in the way just mentioned he would by his grace, gifts and efficacy bring them thereto [make them participants of eternal salvation], and aid, promote, strengthen and preserve them.

“All this, according to the Scriptures, is comprised in the doctrine concerning the eternal election of God to adoption and eternal salvation, and should be comprised with it, and not omitted, when we speak of God’s purpose, predestination, election and ordination to salvation. And when, according to the Scriptures, thoughts concerning this article are thus formed, we can, by God’s grace, simply [and correctly] adapt ourselves to it [and advantageously treat of it].”

### **Thesis Seven on Election, Part 2**

Taking the word “election” in a narrower sense, election is this: that “God has ordained unto eternal life all those who He from eternity has foreseen would accept the proffered grace, believe in Christ, and remain steadfast in the faith until the end” (Erik Pontoppidan, *Truth unto Godliness [Sandhed til Gudfrygtighed]*, question 548).

## Appendix 2

### The Work of Evangelists<sup>\*</sup>

In ordinary ecclesiastical usage, the word “evangelist” has two different meanings. It is used to refer to the men who wrote the four accounts in the New Testament about Jesus’ life, teachings, and deeds. Therefore we speak, for example, about Mark the Evangelist. This use of the word “evangelist” is not found in the New Testament. Next, the word “evangelist” is used of men who preach the Gospel, and it is with this meaning that the word is used in the New Testament.

The word occurs three times: in Acts 21:8, Eph. 4:11, and II Tim. 4:5. In the first of those passages, it is recounted that Paul, returning from his third missionary journey and on his way to Jerusalem, *came unto Caesarea: and enter[ed] into the house of Philip the evangelist.* In Eph. 4:11, evangelists are mentioned alongside apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers as those given by God *for the perfecting of the saints ... unto the building up of the body of Christ* (Eph. 4:12). And in II Tim. 4:5, Paul commands Timothy to *do the work of an evange-*

\* J. N. Kildahl, “Evangelistvirksomhet,” *Beretning om den norsk lutherske kirkes første ordinære fællesmøte* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1920), 9-12; Jonathan D. Anderson, trans., paras. 1-16; N. N. Rønning, trans., paras. 17-23. Kildahl delivered this lecture at the 1920 convention of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (NLCA, later renamed the Evangelical Lutheran Church, ELC) just months before his death. It is said that the lecture initiated and defined the NLCA’s evangelism program of the 1920s and ‘30s. Considering that two of the NLCA’s evangelists helped to spearhead the formation of the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement (LEM) in 1937 and that, following World War II, the LEM’s influence stimulated a new and larger program of evangelism in the ELC and, in turn, similar programs in the other Lutheran synods, it might also be said that Kildahl’s lecture was a progenitor of the era of evangelism among mid-20th century Lutherans. See Orloue N. Gisselquist, *Called to Preach* (pub. privately, 1999), 116-125; *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), E. Clifford Nelson, ed., 482; Gisselquist cites Eugene L. Fevold, *The History of Evangelism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (St. Paul, MN: Luther Theological Seminary, 1963), 3-4, 50.

*list.* The New Testament does not give us much information about evangelists and the work of evangelists.

Besides the apostolic office, which ceased with the death of the apostles, there is in the Christian Church only one ecclesiastical office. It is the office that God has given to His Church for the administration of the means of grace, the office which we typically call the *pastorate*. There is not some official position given in the Church; there is only an office given. And those who hold this office are, in the New Testament, sometimes called elders and sometimes overseers or bishops. The fact that elders and overseers or bishops are not two different classifications but the same is evident from the 20th chapter of Acts where we read in verse 17 that *from Miletus [Paul] sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church*; and in the 28th verse, we are told that Paul, after these elders had come to him in Miletus, said to them, *The Holy Spirit hath made you bishops [in Greek, ἐπισκόπους], to feed the church of the Lord*. God has given His Church many kinds of gifts for the building up of the body of Christ, but as stated, He has established just one ecclesiastical office. From time to time, the Church may also choose presidents, teachers, secretaries, and workers of many kinds, but the Church can never in a true sense establish more than one ecclesiastical office, namely, the *pastorate*.

### **Evangelists in the Apostolic Church**

It cannot be determined with much certainty what the work of evangelists actually consisted of in the Apostolic Church, but it is certain, in any regard, that it was not a distinct ecclesiastical office in addition to the offices of apostles and elders. Nor was it the same as those offices.

Regarding the evangelist Philip, we know that he was one of the seven men chosen to be deacons or caretakers of the poor in the churches at Jerusalem (see Acts 21:8 and 6:5). When, after Stephen's death, there was a violent persecution against the Church in Jerusalem and the Christians were scattered, we find Philip in Samaria where he both preached Christ and did miracles so that many came to repentance and faith (Acts 8:1-25). It was Philip the evangelist whom the Lord sent to teach and baptize the Ethiopian eunuch who was on his way back from Jerusalem (Acts 8:26-39). Later, Philip settled in Caesarea where we therefore, as stated, find him when Paul returned from his third missionary journey. Although both Philip and Stephen, who was also one of the seven caretakers of

the poor in Jerusalem, preached the Gospel, yet we can hardly assume that they did so according to their callings as deacons. The seven deacons were chosen to be in charge of distributions to the needy so that the apostles could spend all their time in the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:2-4). Presumably, these deacons spoke the Word of God simply in the capacity of laymen. Perhaps Philip later, after leaving Jerusalem, became formally employed as an evangelist.

When Paul, in II Tim. 4:5, commands Timothy to *do the work of an evangelist*, it cannot be concluded that Timothy was an evangelist in the literal sense of the word, for we know from other places that Timothy was an ordained pastor (I Tim. 4:14). Inasmuch as every pastor preaches the Gospel, he does the work of an evangelist. And presumably, Paul means nothing else by that exhortation than that Timothy must preach the Gospel.

Besides these three passages in which evangelists are specifically mentioned, we have a passage which many have taken to be speaking about evangelists, and that is John's third epistle, verses 5-10. Here, Gaius is praised because he had taken care of some brethren who, John says, had gone forth for the sake of the name of Jesus. And he says of them that they did not take anything from the Gentiles, and then he adds, *We therefore ought to welcome such, that we may be fellow-workers for the truth* (v. 8). And then he criticizes Diotrephes who did not receive these brethren but opposed them. We understand, therefore, that these brethren were traveling preachers who labored there for the truth, that is, the dissemination of the Gospel among the Gentiles. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that they were evangelists. However, since they are not specifically called evangelists, this cannot be determined with certainty.

As already stated, it is difficult to determine with certainty what the work of evangelists actually consisted of in the Apostolic Church. But evangelists seem to have been traveling preachers. They seem to have been men who helped with the preaching of the Gospel. The most reasonable supposition seems to be that they were not ordained; that they, therefore, did not have any permanent congregation to take care of; but that, under the apostles' oversight, they worked in mission service by traveling from place to place and preaching the Gospel. It was the Gospel that Christ had commanded His disciples to preach to the whole creation, and it was by the preaching of the Gospel that Christianity was disseminated. It was, therefore, quite natural that the men who went about only preaching the Gospel,



without having anything to do with the many other tasks that an apostle and a church elder had to take care of, were called evangelists.

### **The Disappearance of Evangelists**

The work of evangelists is one of the many things that disappeared in the Papal Church. The thing which may correspond most closely to it is that so-called itinerant preachers have traveled around and preached the Word of God.

Likewise in the Lutheran Church, as well as in the other Protestant denominations, the work of evangelists as a distinct institution has been unknown. Among us Norwegians, we have the work of lay preachers which may in some way correspond to the work of evangelists in the Apostolic Church. But the term “evangelist” has not been used among us.

Perhaps one reason that the work of evangelists as a distinct institution ceased in the Church is that missions work among the heathen also ceased in the Church for a long period of time. As already stated, evangelists seem most likely to have been laymen who worked as Gospel preachers among the heathen; and when missionary work ceased, the work of evangelists also ceased.

### **Evangelists on the Mission Field**

Therefore, it is only natural that, since concern for missions has once again gripped the Church of God and work for the conversion of the heathen has once again commenced, so also the work of evangelists has once again been stirred to life. Our foreign missionaries have felt a need for this work as a distinct institution, and on the mission field, we have evangelists.

As far as I have been able to understand, it is the significant lack of properly educated and ordained men that has led to the utilization of evangelists on our mission fields. Evangelists in our foreign missions work are engaged partly in managing out-stations where they perform all of a missionary’s tasks with the exception of administering the sacraments; for example, they preach, teach catechumens, hand out tracts, etc. And partly, they are engaged at central stations where they sometimes travel around alone in their district and preach God’s Word and sometimes travel together with a missionary and preach likewise with him. Moreover, they are helpful to him in performing work at the stations. Yet they are not ordained men and therefore cannot, except in extremities, administer the sacraments.

The work of evangelists that is being done today on our mission fields thus does not seem to correspond exactly to the work that we believe evangelists performed in the Apostolic Church, but the reason for this is probably that missions work today is done somewhat differently than at that time. The work today is more organized and systematic. An evangelist's objective now is essentially the same as in the early Church's time, but the work is done somewhat differently. Especially is much more done now with teaching than at that time.

### **What the Work of Evangelists Consists Of**

Lately, within certain circles in our church body, an urge has been expressed to also undertake within the synod what has been called the work of evangelists. And some attempt [to do this] has been made. This work consists of either the entire synod or one of the districts in the synod calling and employing pastors or laymen to visit such congregations as might desire them to come. In these congregations, they then hold a series of meetings to awaken and strengthen the spiritual life of the congregation. It is self-evident that the synod or one of its districts cannot call someone to enter and preach in an established congregation. All that the synod or district can do is to declare a man fit for such a work and to recommend him to the congregations and pastors that might desire him to come.

Since an evangelist is not supposed to preach the Gospel in any special way different from that of other preachers of the Word of God, there might be a question as to whether the word "evangelist" is the most suitable title for such a preacher. The main objective of all Christian preachers must be to proclaim the Gospel. The Apostle Paul says that God has *made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit* (II Cor. 3:6). And the context clearly shows that by "letter," he means the Law, and by "spirit," the Gospel (see II Cor. 3:6-11). But whether or not "evangelist" is the most suitable title, it is, in any regard, certainly good to use that name; for it is the special work of such a preacher to proclaim the Gospel, and in that work, he spends all his time.

### **The Blessing That the Work of Evangelists Is**

What about the work of evangelists in established congregations in an established church body? I cannot see it otherwise than that such an activity may be a great blessing if carried on by the right men and in the right way.

There is hardly a pastor or any other enlightened church member who considers the conditions in the congregations so ideal that nothing more is to be desired. In many of our congregations, conditions are, unfortunately, far from encouraging. In many of them, there is not much evidence of spiritual life. Many church members sleep, and the Christians live a retired life and belong, much more than is good, to “the quiet in the land.” The purpose of all our church work is, of course, that the spiritually dead may arise from the dead, that the believers may be strengthened in their faith and may increase in sanctification, and that our congregations may be like the city on the hill, that they may be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. And how many a God-fearing pastor does not grieve in his heart that he often sees so little of that fruit which the preaching of the Word of God should bear in the congregation. It should, therefore, seem self-evident that such a pastor would gladly receive the help which wise and intelligent evangelists could give him in his work. There is none of us, no matter how gifted, who has received all the gifts; we are all more or less one-sided. And it may be that the evangelist possesses gifts which the pastor of the congregation has not received and that these gifts of the evangelist may complement the pastor’s lack and produce what the pastor’s preaching has not been able to bring about. There is often something strange about the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men. Much preparatory work may have been done, but it does not lead to any breakthrough; there is no ripe fruit. But then there comes another servant of the Lord who speaks just the word which is necessary for the Holy Spirit to do His work. God has given different kinds of gifts, and one is not unnecessary to the other.

There is something peculiar about special meetings. I do not want in any manner to give support to the false notion which exists in certain circles that revival and spiritual life do not come through the regular work in the congregation and that something extraordinary is required. Such a view is based on a misunderstanding of the order of God in His Church. And still I say that there is often something peculiar about special meetings. The pastor and other believers in the congregation pray earnestly for blessings upon the meetings and approach them with a sense of expectancy. People thus come to the meetings with greater expectancy. And it is a law in the economy of God that the one who has shall receive more.

### The Gifts of Evangelists

But if this work is to become a blessing, it is of the greatest importance that the evangelists be the right sort of men for this kind of work. Whether they be ministers or laymen, it makes no difference. We do not believe that a man who is ordained receives any *character indelebilis* (indelible character). Nor do we believe that the Word becomes more effective when preached by a layman. The only thing to consider in employing evangelists is whether the men employed have special gifts for the special work. It is self-evident that an evangelist must have the ordinary gifts and qualifications which ought to be possessed by every preacher. But it seems to me that, in addition to these ordinary gifts and qualifications, he ought to possess special gifts. What are the gifts and qualifications which must be possessed if one is to serve successfully as an evangelist? It is not necessary for all evangelists to have the same gifts; one may have one gift and another a different gift. One, for example, may have the gift of awakening. There are, in particular, certain men to whom God has given in a greater degree than to others the gift of awakening resulting from their preaching. If a person has received this gift, it seems right and wise that it should be used as much as possible. Not all pastors have to an eminent degree the gift of awakening. How welcome it must be for a pastor to receive a visit from a man who has received in greater measure the gift of stirring up the conscience.

Another man may have received the special gift of leading seeking souls to Jesus. There are members of our congregations who feel and realize that everything is not well with them. There has been awakened in their hearts a longing for something different and better than this world. But by nature, all people are self-righteous and, therefore, are slaves under the Law and do not catch a vision of free grace. Now, there are certain men who have received the gift of presenting Christ and the objective redemption in an unusually clear and simple way so that seeking souls may more easily see that all things are ready and may, therefore, receive grace to throw themselves with all their sin and imperfect preparation into Jesus' open arms of grace.

Another may have the special gift of stirring up believers, chastening them for their sins, bringing about a deeper conviction of sin and a higher appreciation of grace, and lifting the Christ-ideal higher for them so that Christians may not remain satisfied with a minimum of sanctification but may begin to take their Christianity more seri-

ously, in order that they may shine more brightly in this world and, to a greater degree, be a salt within their communities. We know how easy it is for Christians to sink down into a condition of formalism, drowsiness, and spiritual drought. They go on and have a feeling that things with themselves are not as they ought to be, but they cannot pull themselves together; there is no initiative toward a change. One day goes by like another. How good it is, then, to receive a visit from one who can rouse them from their slumber that there may be a stronger faith life, rich in good works, in the congregations.

It is evident that there must be brotherliness, good understanding, and complete cooperation between the evangelist and the pastor of the congregation. The evangelist must consider himself one who comes to help and support the pastor in his difficult work.