THE PRESBYTERIAN STANDARDS.

4.28.97.

Library of the Theological Seminary,

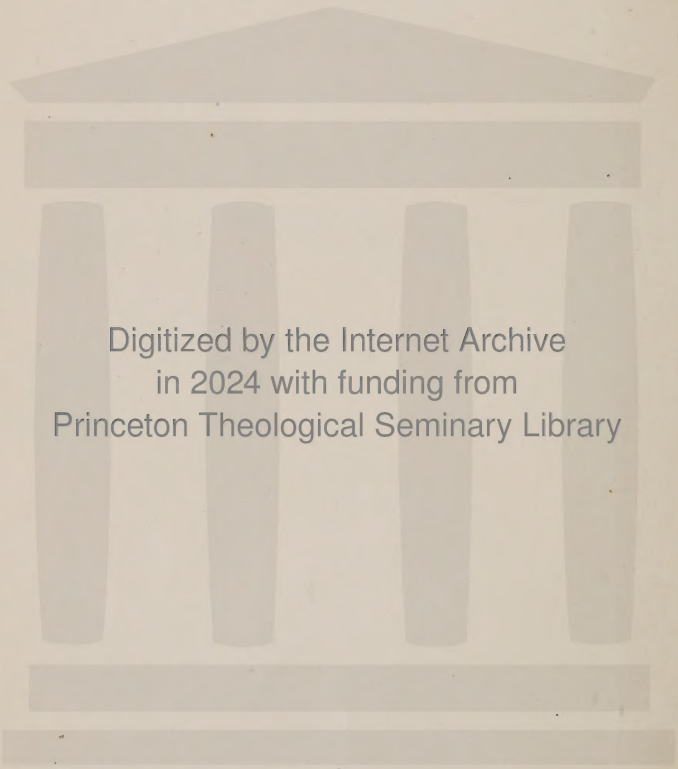
PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by The Author.

Division BT

Section 75

Shelf ..... Number .B428 1896


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024 with funding from
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

https://archive.org/details/presbyterianstan00beat_0

THE

PRESBYTERIAN STANDARDS:

AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH AND CATECHISMS.

BY

REV. FRANCIS R. BEATTIE, B. D., PH. D., D. D.,

PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND APOLOGETICS IN LOUISVILLE PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, AND AUTHOR OF "AN EXAMINATION OF UTILITARIANISM," "THE METHODS OF THEISM," AND "RADICAL CRITICISM."

Richmond, Va.:
THE PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.



COPYRIGHTED BY

JAMES K. HAZEN, *Secretary of Publication*,

1896.

PRINTED BY
WHITTET & SHEPPERSON,
RICHMOND, VA.

PREFACE.

THE aim of the following pages is to give a simple, connected exposition of the entire Westminster Standards. The Shorter Catechism is made the basis of the exposition, but the contents of the Larger Catechism and the Confession of Faith are carefully incorporated at every point. In addition, certain topics not included in the Catechisms are embraced in the Confession. Brief explanations of these topics are also made, so that the whole ground of the Standards is thereby covered.

It is not claimed that anything really new is presented in these chapters. From the nature of the case there could scarcely be. There are excellent treatises on the Confession by Hodge, Mitchell and others; while Paterson, Fisher and others have given us excellent expositions of the Shorter Catechism. But we are not aware of any book which follows closely the order of topics found in the Standards, and which at the same time weaves into a single exposition the contents of the three documents of which the Westminster symbols are composed.

It will be readily observed that in making this compend the language of the Standards has often been closely followed, and that it has at times been quoted more or less literally. At other times their statements have been expanded or condensed, explained or simplified, in order to present a somewhat compact and readable outline. Quotation marks are not used anywhere, since it is to be understood that the whole exposition is so closely conformed to the Standards as to be at times a reproduction of their form as well as of their contents.

It is the conviction of many earnest minds that there is need at the present day of careful instruction in the great doctrines of the Christian faith and life. No one who is even slightly acquainted with the movements of thought at the present time in the sphere of religious inquiry can fail to realize that there is diligent investigation, much unrest, and some scepticism. Modern scientific methods have been carried into the field of theology and applied to the subject of Christian doctrine and duty. The result is, that in certain quarters we are solemnly assured that the old ways of looking at religious questions must be changed, and that former statements of the system of doctrine must be modified, if not abandoned. We are far from saying that this earnest activity of thought upon matters pertaining to the Christian faith is altogether evil, but we are convinced that it calls for careful caution and rigorous reflection upon the various problems with which the religious teacher must engage himself at the present time. Hard work by devoted and scholarly men is absolutely necessary in interpreting and defending the faith once delivered to the saints.

In these circumstances it is important that Presbyterians should be well instructed in the contents of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, wherein their creed is clearly and fully exhibited. It may be too often true that even Presbyterians are not fully informed in regard to what their own creed contains. In proportion as this is true, it must prove a source of weakness; and a diligent study of the Standards should be undertaken at once in order to remedy this. It is hoped that this book may, in some measure, foster and further this study.

That other branches of the church of Christ are often sadly ignorant of Presbyterian doctrine and practice, and because of this ignorance often misconstrue and caricature Presbyterianism, must be confessed. Such ignorance and misconstruction are the main causes of the erroneous im-

pressions of the Presbyterian system which so often prevail in other churches. It is hoped that an outline like this may be found of some service in removing part of this ignorance and correcting a few of these misconstructions, for some may read this outline who would not peruse the Standards themselves with any care.

It may be proper to say that, whilst all through this exposition care is taken to explain the various teachings of the Standards, equal care is exercised not to explain away anything which they contain. It is assumed that the system of doctrine which they exhibit is generic and consistent Calvinism, and due diligence is exercised to present this system in its entirety and proper proportions. That there are difficulties inherent in the very nature of the case is not denied, nor is any attempt made to evade these difficulties. From time to time in the course of the exposition of this consistent and scriptural system, it will be suggested that the same and more serious difficulties press even more fatally against every other system. Hence, the Calvinistic system is seen to commend itself to thoughtful minds as the sound philosophy of nature and providence, and as the true interpretation of the Scriptures and of religious experience. This system has a philosophic completeness, a scriptural soundness, and an experimental accuracy which afford it strong logical confirmation, and give it secure rational stability. It may be safely said that no other system can justify so fully this high claim, for even those who profess no sympathy with the Calvinistic system have never yet been able to present a better one for our acceptance.

It is humbly hoped that Bible class and Sabbath-school teachers may find this book of some value to them in their important work. It may give them in a simple, systematic form a useful summary of the doctrines and practices as well as of the ethics and polity of the Presbyterian Church. In connection with the International Series of Lessons, where doc-

trinal teaching is not usually made prominent, the need of some such book as this may be felt.

For the members of Young Peoples' Societies this outline of Presbyterian belief may be found of some service in supplying that doctrinal teaching which, with God's blessing, is so important for advance in the Christian life and for effective service in the Master's name. In addition, the various office-bearers of the church often desire to be instructed in the doctrines and practices of the church they seek to serve. This book has also been prepared with this important end in view, and the hope is cherished that not a few of these earnest men may be helped by what its pages contain.

Two introductory chapters are added for those who may care to read them. One of these gives a brief history of the chief creeds of the Christian church, and the other seeks to explain the nature and uses of such creeds. These chapters are intended to prepare the way for a more intelligent and sympathetic study of the Westminster Standards, which constitute the creed of the Presbyterian churches. An index has also been added for purposes of speedy reference to the contents of the volume.

This book is sent forth with the earnest prayer that it may be of some service to those who are seeking to advance Christ's kingdom on the earth. May the Lord bless its contents to his own glory and the good of the church.

FRANCIS R. BEATTIE.

Louisville, Ky.

CONTENTS.

PAGE.

CHAPTER I.

A Brief Description of the Great Christian Creeds, . 13

CHAPTER II.

The Nature and Uses of Religious Creeds, . . . 29

CHAPTER III.

The Doctrine of Holy Scripture, ... 40

Shorter Catechism, 1–3; Larger Catechism, 1–5; Confession of Faith, I.

CHAPTER IV.

The Being, Attributes and Persons of the Godhead, . . 52

Shorter Catechism, 4–6; Larger Catechism, 6–11; Confession of Faith, II.

CHAPTER V.

The Decrees, or the Eternal Purpose of God, . . . 64

Shorter Catechism, 7, 8; Larger Catechism, 12–14; Confession of Faith, III.

CHAPTER VI.

Creation and Providence, ... 76

Shorter Catechism, 9–11; Larger Catechism, 15–19; Confession of Faith, IV., V.

CHAPTER VII.

Thl Covenant of Works, or of Life, ... 89

Shorter Catechism, 12, 13; Larger Catechism, 20, 21; Confession of Faith, VI., VII.

CHAPTER VIII.

PAGE.

ORIGINAL SIN, ... 102

SHORTER CATECHISM, 16–19; LARGER CATECHISM, 22–29; CONFESSION OF FAITH, VI.

CHAPTER IX.

THE COVENANT OF GRACE, ... 113

SHORTER CATECHISM, 20; LARGER CATECHISM, 30–35; CONFESSION OF FAITH, VII.

CHAPTER X.

THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST THE MEDIATOR, . . . 124

SHORTER CATECHISM, 21, 22; LARGER CATECHISM, 36–42; CONFESSION OF FAITH, VIII.

CHAPTER XI.

THE OFFICES OF THE MEDIATOR: THE PROPHETIC, . . 136

SHORTER CATECHISM, 23, 24; LARGER CATECHISM, 41–43; CONFESSION OF FAITH, VIII.

CHAPTER XII.

THE OFFICES OF THE MEDIATOR: THE PRIESTLY AND THE KINGLY, 147

SHORTER CATECHISM, 25, 26; LARGER CATECHISM, 44, 45, 55; CONFESSION OF FAITH, VIII.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST, . . 159

SHORTER CATECHISM, 27, 28; LARGER CATECHISM, 46–56; CONFESSION OF FAITH, VIII.

CHAPTER XIV.

MAN'S FREE AGENCY AND ABILITY; GUILT AND ITS DEGREES, . 170

SHORTER CATECHISM, 82–84; LARGER CATECHISM, 149–152; CONFESSION OF FAITH, IX.

CHAPTER XV.

PAGE.

UNION WITH CHRIST; EFFECTUAL CALLING; REGENERATION, . 187

SHORTER CATECHISM, 29–31; LARGER CATECHISM, 57–60, 66–69; CONFESSION OF FAITH, X.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION; JUSTIFICATION, . . . 199

SHORTER CATECHISM, 32, 33; LARGER CATECHISM, 70–73; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XI.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION; ADOPTION AND SANCTIFICATION, 212

SHORTER CATECHISM, 34–36; LARGER CATECHISM, 74, 75, 77–81; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XII., XIII.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FAITH AND REPENTANCE, ... 223

SHORTER CATECHISM, 85–87; LARGER CATECHISM, 72–76, 153; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XIV., XV.

CHAPTER XIX.

GOOD WORKS; PERSEVERANCE; ASSURANCE, ... 234

SHORTER CATECHISM, 36; LARGER CATECHISM, 78–81; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XVI.–XVIII.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAW OF GOD; CHRISTIAN LIBERTY, ... 245

SHORTER CATECHISM, 39–42, 82, 83; LARGER CATECHISM, 91–98; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XIX., XX.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, AND RELIGIOUS WORSHIP, . . 257

SHORTER CATECHISM, —; LARGER CATECHISM, 68, 82, 83, 86; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XXI., XXVI.

CHAPTER XXII.

PAGE.

THE MEANS OF GRACE; IN GENERAL; THE WORD, . . 267

SHORTER CATECHISM, 88–90; LARGER CATECHISM, 98, 99, 153–160; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XIX.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MEANS OF GRACE; THE COMMANDMENTS; THE FIRST TABLE, 278

SHORTER CATECHISM, 43–62; LARGER CATECHISM, 101–121; CONFESSION OF FAITH, —.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MEANS OF GRACE; THE COMMANDMENTS; THE SECOND TABLE, ... 288

SHORTER CATECHISM, 63–81; LARGER CATECHISM, 122–148 CONFESSION OF FAITH, —.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE MEANS OF GRACE; THE SACRAMENTS; GENERAL, . . 298

SHORTER CATECHISM, 91–93; LARGER CATECHISM, 161–164; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XXVII.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE MEANS OF GRACE; THE SACRAMENTS; BAPTISM, . . 309

SHORTER CATECHISM, 94, 95; LARGER CATECHISM, 165–167; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XXVIII.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE MEANS OF GRACE; THE SACRAMENTS; THE LORD'S SUPPER, 323

SHORTER CATECHISM, 96, 97; LARGER CATECHISM, 168–175; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XXIX.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MEANS OF GRACE; PRAYER, ... 335

SHORTER CATECHISM, 98–107; LARGER CATECHISM, 178–196; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XXI.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Page.

The Church and her Censures, ... 345

Shorter Catechism, —; Larger Catechism, 62–65; Confession of Faith, XXV., XXX.

CHAPTER XXX.

The Synods and Councils of the Church, ... 356

Shorter Catechism, —; Larger Catechism, —; Confession of Faith, XXXI.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Lawful Oaths; The Civil Magistrate; Marriage and Divorce, ... 368

Shorter Catechism, 70–72; Larger Catechism, 137–139; Confession of Faith, XXII.–XXIV.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Death and the Middle State, ... 384

Shorter Catechism, 37; Larger Catechism, 84–96; Confession of Faith, XXXII.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Resurrection and the Judgment, ... 392

Shorter Catechism, 38; Larger Catechism, 87–90; Confession of Faith, XXXII., XXXIII.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Summary and Conclusions, ... 405

THE PRESBYTERIAN STANDARDS.

CHAPTER I.

SOME DESCRIPTION OF THE GREAT CHRISTIAN CREEDS IN GENERAL, AND OF THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS IN PARTICULAR.

BEFORE the exposition of the doctrines contained in the *Westminster Catechisms* and *Confession of Faith* is entered on, some account of the origin and contents of the leading doctrinal symbols of the Christian church in its various branches may be of interest and value. In particular, the history of the Westminster Assembly, and of the work which it did, as exhibited by the Catechisms and Confession, is in a measure necessary to the intelligent exposition of the doctrinal system which they unfold.

In this connection it is interesting to notice the modes by which the great creeds have usually been produced. Historically, there seem to have been three chief methods according to which they have come into existence. *First*, In some cases creeds, or statements of Christian doctrine, seem to have been formed as an attempt to express, at certain periods, the mind of the Christian community in regard to the doctrines contained in the sacred Scriptures. It is likely that the Apostles' Creed and some later doctrinal symbols came into existence in this way. *Secondly*, In other cases certain summaries of Christian doctrine seem to have been prepared for purposes of religious instruction. These catechetical statements of religious truth evidently arose from a desire to have a simple, orderly outline of the elements

of the Christian system for purposes of instruction in holy things. Such catechisms were usually intended for the young. *Thirdly*, In most cases the great historical creeds were forged in the fires of controversy. The great credal statements of divine truth made in patristic times nearly all originated in this way. The elaborate symbolic documents of the Reformation period very generally had the same violent origin. In proof of this we need but recall the circumstances under which the Nicene Creed, the Augsburg Confession, and the Canons of Dort were formulated. It is proper to add that, although these three modes of creed formation are to be observed in the history of the church, yet as a matter of fact they ought not to be entirely separated, inasmuch as more than one of these purposes may, to a certain extent, be served by any single creed, confession, or catechism.

In giving a brief description of the most important religious creeds, those symbols other than the Westminster Standards will be first described in a very general way, and then a somewhat more detailed account of the origin of the Westminster Catechisms and Confession will be given.

I. *The Creeds other than the Westminster Standards.*

In describing these creeds they may be arranged under three heads, following the order of their historical sequence. These three heads represent the ancient, mediæval, and modern periods respectively.

1. *A Description of the Ancient Creeds.*

In the New Testament age the germs of a creed, or confession of faith, may be seen in the personal confessions of Peter and Thomas. In the early apostolic age these germs were doubtless expanded in various ways, and thus the earliest Christian creeds were formulated. The creeds to be considered under this head are those which came into existence during the period when the church remained undivided. On this account these doctrinal symbols are known as the

ecumenical creeds. At the present day they are generally regarded as the precious heritage of all branches of Christendom. Mention is now to be made of the more important of these summaries of religious truth.

(*a*), *The Apostles' Creed.*

This ancient statement of the leading facts or doctrines of the Christian system has usually been held in high esteem. Though not inspired, it has a place beside the ten commandments and the Lord's Prayer in the literature of the early apostolic age. Though it bears the name of the apostles, there is little reason to believe that it was drawn up, as we now have it, by them. Still less is there ground for believing the old tradition that each of its significant clauses was produced by one of the apostles, and that the whole was formed by putting these clauses together. This creed appears in several different forms, and has always been held in greater reverence by the Western church than by the Eastern, since the division between them. In early times it was used in connection with the rite of baptism, and it is found incorporated in nearly every subsequent creed. At the present day many of those who advocate a comprehensive reunion of divided Christendom propose this creed as a doctrinal basis for the unified church of Christ.

(*b*), *The Nicene Creed.*

This important symbol is the product of the first General Council of the Christian church, and like many other ancient creeds has passed through several forms. It has always been regarded with favor by the Eastern church. In its orignal form it dates from the year 325 A. D. In its Nicene-Constantinopolitan form it comes to us from the second General Council, held at Constantinople in the year 381 A. D. It received its final form and general recognition at the Council of Chalcedon in the year 451 A. D. As it now exists, the great difference between its Eastern and Western form is the presence of the word *filioque* (and the Son) in the

latter, and its absence from the former. It seems pretty clear that this word was not in its original form, since the first distinct trace of it is found in the proceedings of the third Council of Toledo, in the year 589 A. D. In these great historical statements of religious truth the doctrine of the Trinity was stated in the Nicene Creed in such a way as to lay emphasis upon the deity of the second person, and then the person of Christ is further defined in the creeds of Constantinople and Chalcedon.

(*c*), *The Athanasian Creed.*

The origin of this creed is almost as obscure as that of the Apostles' Creed. Since about the ninth century it has been popularly ascribed to Athanasius, but there is no good reason to believe that it came from his hand, or that it existed till long after his time. Indeed, it seems to presuppose the great trinitarian and christological creeds already mentioned. To a large extent it repeats their contents, and adds some of the views of Augustine concerning the incarnation of Christ. In addition, it contains some strong damnatory clauses quite unlike anything in the creeds which precede it. This creed was held in high esteem in the Latin or Western churches, and in some of the Reformed creeds it received marked approval. This is specially the case in the Lutheran Form of Concord and in the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.

The three great ecumenical ancient creeds have been described. The most important of these is the Nicene symbol in its various forms. The next period in the history of the church is one very prolific in the production of creeds, confessions, and catechisms.

2. *The Mediæval Creeds.*

Under this head we place some creeds which might very properly be classed as ancient. But as they arose after Christendom began to divide into its eastern and western branches, it may be best to put them with the mediæval

creeds. These creeds may be naturally divided into two classes, as represented by the Eastern, or Greek church, and by the Western, or Roman church. In both cases the final statements were not reached till after the Reformation, still the explanations to be made may be very properly ranked under the two heads just mentioned.

(*a*), *The Eastern or Greek Creeds.*

Three of the great creeds of the early church have already been explained, and four others are to be considered in connection with the doctrinal products of the Eastern church. After the division between the east and the west, the eastern branch in the course of time came to be known as the Greek church, but its adherents are now to be found in all the old eastern lands, and throughout the Russian empire, where it is the established religion. A great many creeds and confessions might be mentioned here, but only brief summaries can be made. The four great creeds above referred to were produced at four celebrated councils, viz.: Ephesus, 431 A. D., Second Constantinople, 553 A. D., Third Constantinople, 682 A. D., Second Nice, 787 A. D.

In addition to the seven ecumenical creeds, excluding the *filioque* clause, the following may be mentioned as important, viz.: The Orthodox Confession, by Peter Mogilas, 1643 A. D., The Decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem, 1672 A. D. The latter is a very important document. Mention may also be made of the Russian Catechisms, published 1839 A. D.

There are also some less important confessions of a somewhat local or private nature which need scarcely be named. There are also some interesting statements of doctrine made in reply to some approaches for sympathy and union made by the Lutheran branch of the Reformation. So far these approaches have been in vain, for the Greek church remains immovable, or indifferent to the overtures made by the Lutherans.

The creed of the Synod of Jerusalem contains eighteen

articles, and is a full statement of the doctrines of the Greek church in Russia at the present day. The two chief catechisms used in Russia at present are that of Platon, issued in 1813 A. D., and that of Philaret, published in its final form 1839, as above noted.

Attempts to come to a doctrinal agreement with the Greek church, whether made by the Roman, the Lutheran, or the Reformed branches of Christendom, have all failed. What may be the result of the efforts of the present pope remains to be seen.

(*b*), *The Western or Roman Creeds.*

This great branch of Christendom accepts the historic ecumenical, or council creeds, including the *filioque* clause respecting the procession of the Holy Spirit. In addition, the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, published in 1564 A. D., hold a high place among the Roman creeds. They were projected specially against the doctrines of the Reformation, and are cast in the form of anathemas. This council sat for twenty years, and its decisions, both as to doctrine and discipline, were intended to check the progress of the Lutheran and Reformed doctrines.

The *Professio Fidei Tridentinæ* is an outcome of the same council. It consists of the Nicene Creed and eleven other articles. The Roman Catechism also grew out of this great council, and was issued in 1566. It was intended for the religious instruction of the people, and it is made up of four parts, treating of the Apostles' Creed, of the Sacraments, of the Decalogue, and of the Lord's Prayer.

Other catechisms by Canisius and Belarmine are also in use among Romanists. Then the bulls of the popes, issued from time to time, and the decrees of recent councils in regard to the immaculate conception, passed in 1854, and of the papal infallibility, passed in 1870, are also of importance in this connection. There have also grown out of the controversies between Jansenist and Jesuit, and between

Ultramontane and Gallican, other statements of doctrine and practice which have also their value as parts of the Romish creed. The Vatican Council of 1870 has much importance in this regard, as it virtually clothed the pope with power to make religious creeds, and to settle the doctrines of the church. Against this extreme action the old Catholics have always made their stand.

(*c*), *Modern Reformation Creeds.*

Here the field is very extensive, for the Reformation, both in its Lutheran and Reformed branches, was very fruitful in the production of creeds and confessions. A brief sketch of the chief of these, with the exception of the Westminster Standards, will be given in this section.

(*a*), *The Lutheran Creeds and Catechisms.*

As very important among these, the ancient ecumenical creeds are to be included. These have already been described, so that the discussion of the creed products of Lutheranism may be at once begun.

The *Augsburg Confession*, drawn up in 1530, rightly stands first. It was first called an Apology, and it was prepared chiefly by the hand of Melancthon, no doubt with the full approval, and perhaps by the assistance of Luther himself. As a statement of Reformation doctrine it is of very great importance. It consists of two parts. The first is positive, or dogmatic. The second part is largely negative, rejecting the main tenets of Romanism in seven articles.

The Apology of the *Augsburg Confession* followed soon after, appearing in 1531. It was prepared by Melancthon in order to defend the Confession from the assaults which the Romish theologians had made upon it. It is a splendid production, and in some respects it is judged by many to be superior to the Confession itself. As a complete refutation of the Romish theologians it was entirely successful.

The Catechisms of Luther, issued in 1529, are of much importance in their bearing upon religious instruction. They

are the heralds of many such outlines of Christian doctrine produced by the Reformation, and intended for catechetical purposes. These Catechisms are two in number. They are called the Larger and the Smaller, and in many respects they resemble the Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly, which were issued a hundred years later on. No description of these Catechisms can be given. The fact that they stand at the head of the catechetical creeds is emphasized.

The Articles of Smalcald may be next mentioned, for they were drawn up in 1537. Melancthon's hand again appeared in these articles, although others were also prominent in drafting them. They consist of three parts, and are directed more definitely against Romish doctrines than was the *Augsburg Confession* of a few years before.

The Form of Concord is the great Lutheran creed to which the Lutheran churches the world over adhere with more or less strictness. It was matured in 1577, and its great purpose was to bring peace and concord to the Protestant cause after a long period of bitter controversy. Much of this controversy was about the Lord's supper, and concerning the ability of man to coöperate with divine grace in the experience of redemption in the soul. Augustus, Elector of Saxony, was active in the movement to frame the *Formula Concordiæ*. Andrea, Chemnitz, and Selnecher were the theologians who drew it up. It is composed of two parts, both of which treat of the same points. There are in all twelve articles in the *Formula*, and they contain comprehensive statements upon such topics as original sin, free-will, justification, good works, the law and the gospel, the Lord's supper, and the person of Christ. After a good deal of diplomacy and discussion, this statement was generally accepted by the Lutheran branch of the Reformation. While in many respects a good statement of doctrine, it exhibits at several points a decided toning down of the doctrine of the *Augsburg Confession*, especially in regard to what is known

as synergism. Two other catechisms, called the Saxon and the Wurtemberg, were drawn up about 1550, but they never obtained recognition as of authority in the church.

(β), *The Reformed Calvinistic Creeds.*

The field here is even more extensive than among the Lutherans. In addition to the ancient creeds there are many symbols which we can do little more than mention in this connection. Dr. Schaff states that the number of Reformed creeds is about thirty. On the continent of Europe there are two classes of these creeds, one of Zwinglian and the other of Calvinistic type. Then the Thirty-nine Articles in a measure stand by themselves, though they are nominally Calvinistic.

The early Swiss creeds are connected with the name of Zwingle. His Sixty-seven Articles were issued in 1572 at Zurich. The Bernese Theses, ten in number, were issued by Zwingle, Ecolampadius, Bucer, and others, as a refutation of the Romish assault upon the Sixty-seven Articles. The contents of these Theses are compact and convincing. Zwingle, in 1530, also sent a Confession of Faith to the Augsburg Diet, addressed to Charles V., but it received scanty courtesy there. From that time and stage in the Reformation, Luther and Zwingle unfortunately drifted apart. The last doctrinal statement made by Zwingle was an Exposition of the Christian Faith to Francis I. Of Zwingle's doctrinal views, as distinct from those of Luther and of Calvin, nothing definite can now be said. The chief subject of contention between them was the Lord's supper.

The First and Second Confession of Basle were framed in 1534, and form the transition symbol in the passage from the creeds of Zwingle to those of Calvin, whose advent they precede and herald. They are simple and orthodox in form, evangelical and temperate in spirit, and consist of twelve articles.

The First Helvetic or Swiss Confession, dating from 1536,

is a much more important document, and is to be really identified with the Second Confession of Basle above named. Its authors were Bucer and Capito, though others seem to have been associated with them in the work. Luther was so pleased with it that he sent letters of approval. This is the first of the Reformed creeds which obtained what may be called national authority.

The Second Helvetic or Swiss Confession, dating from 1562–1566, is the last, and Schaff says the best, of all the Zwinglian Creeds. It is the work of Henry Bullinger, who was in correspondence with leading Reformers everywhere. This is a creed of much value, and it is more largely recognized than any of the continental creeds, except, perhaps, the Heidelberg Catechism. It is a well-matured product, and consists of thirty chapters. It deals with all the doctrines and ordinances of the church in a very clear and comprehensive manner. In many respects the Westminster Confession of Faith seems to follow this creed. In this connection the Consensus of Geneva, 1552, the Consensus Formula, 1675, the Gallican Confession, 1559, the French Confession, 1572, and the Belgic Confession, 1561, can only be mentioned.

The Synod of Dort, 1618–1619, dealt with the rising Arminian controversy. Arminius, 1560–1609, and Episcopius, 1583–1644, were the chief promoters of the Arminian views. The debate in the Synod gathered about five points, viz.: unconditional election, original sin, particular redemption, invincible grace, and final perseverance. On all of these points the Calvinistic views were confirmed, and they have been ever since that time known as the five points of Calvinism. The Arminians drew up a remonstrance against the conclusions of the Synod, in which they set forth opposing views, hence they have been known as the Remonstrants ever since.

The Heidelberg Catechism is the great creed of the Re-

formed Church in Germany, and, indeed, of that church everywhere throughout the world. It dates from the year 1563, and was drawn up by Ursinus and Olivianus, who were called to the task by the elector, Frederick II., who was a truly good man. Many editions of it have been issued, and it has been translated into many different tongues. This Catechism is divided into three parts, which treat of the sin and misery of man, of redemption by Christ, and of the Christian life. It will be observed that the order of topics is about the same as that found in the Epistle to the Romans. In the second part there is a full explanation of the Apostles' Creed. This Catechism is admirable in many respects, and especially for purposes of religious instruction.

The Waldensian Catechism, whose date is 1498, and the Bohemian Catechism, made out in 1521, are interesting because they are so early, the former, indeed, being a prereformation document. Minor Reformed Confessions, such as that of Sigismund, 1614; of Anhalt, 1581; of Nassau, 1578; of Bremen, 1598; of Hesse, 1607, can only be named. Of the symbols of Hungary and Poland nothing can be said.

The Church of England Articles deserve some more adequate notice. As a matter of fact, they were a gradual growth. At first they consisted of forty-two articles, but they were afterwards reduced to thirty-nine, whence the title, Thirty-nine Articles. These Articles, with slight modifications, constitute the doctrinal symbols of the Anglican churches everywhere. No history of their production can be given here. The Reformation in England is not easily understood, especially as connected with Henry VIII. First of all, ten articles were formulated in 1536. In 1538 thirteen articles were issued, and these became the basis of the forty-two, which are sometimes called the Articles of Edward VI. Under Elizabeth these Articles were revised and re-

duced to thirty-nine, in 1562, and they were ratified by Parliament in 1571. These are known as the Articles of Elizabeth, and they have remained substantially the same ever since.

A comparison of these Articles with the continental creeds is a very interesting and instructive task, as they represent various types of Calvinism. These Articles have been revised by the Episcopal churches in America, to meet the changed conditions of church and state in this country. The Church of England Catechisms, a larger and a smaller one, as also the Lambeth Articles, of 1595, nine in number, deserve mention in passing. These Articles are decidedly Calvinistic in their contents. The Irish Articles, drawn by Usher in 1615, are also strictly Calvinistic, and they are of much interest in relation to the Westminster Standards, for they exhibit in a large measure the same type of doctrine. The Reformed Episcopal Church in this country in 1875 changed the Articles in many important respects, and reduced their number to thirty-five.

The Methodist churches are usually Arminian in doctrine. The Articles of Religion, twenty-five in number, Wesley's Sermons and Notes, together with the Book of Discipline and Catechisms, constitute the standards of the Methodist churches in general the world over. The stage has now been reached where the passage may properly be made to the history of the Westminster Standards, the creed of the Presbyterian churches almost everywhere.

II. *The Westminster Catechisms and Confession.*

Prior to the Assembly which met in Westminster Abbey, London, doctrinal standards of Calvinistic type and Presbyterian in polity had been formulated in Scotland. Among these the National Covenant of 1581, and its renewal in 1638–1639, may be mentioned. The latter marks the second Scottish Reformation. The solemn League and Covenant was drawn up and signed in 1643, and it forms the stepping-

stone to the Westminster Assembly. The reasons for formulating these leagues were in a measure to defend both civil and religious liberty. They were testimonies against error as well as confessions of faith.

There were native Scottish catechisms prior to those of the Westminster Assembly. Two such Catechisms were made out by John Gray, 1512–1600, about the time of Knox. The larger appeared in 1581, and the smaller in 1591. Latin catechisms, one by Andrew Simpson and another by John Davidson, were in use prior to 1640.

The Westminster Doctrinal Standards and Directory of Worship arose out of the Puritan conflict in England. Episcopacy of various types was on the one side, and Presbyterianism with Independency was on the other. The conflict was partly civil and partly religious, and the real cause of the struggle lay in the fact that the Church of England, as established after the Reformation, was not thoroughly reformed. There were many earnest spirits who desired to see the Reformation completed. This was the early Puritan element. The struggle was long and violent.

In July, 1643, Parliament issued instructions to have an Assembly called at Westminster Abbey, in London, on July the first, of that year, to effect the complete reformation of the Church of England, in its liturgy, discipline and government, according to the word of God, and in harmony with the Reformed churches in Scotland and on the continent. The members of the Assembly were named, and their number was one hundred and fifty-one. There were one hundred and twenty-one divines and thirty laymen, ten of the latter being lords and twenty commoners.

The work of the Assembly was difficult, for there were really four parties in the body. There were some strict Episcopalians, a number of able Independents, several Erastians, and a large body of Presbyterians. In matters of doctrine proper there was not much difference of opinion.

There were no Pelagians and really no Arminians, so that the type of doctrine which prevailed was well-defined Calvinism. Dr. Twisse, the moderator, was a supralapsarian, but the sublapsarians were greatly in the majority in the Assembly. It was concerning matters of government and discipline that the diversity of view soon appeared. Hence it is that upon these matters the Westminster Standards do not give such clear statements as they do upon points of doctrine; nor were the respective provinces of the church and civil authority at first clearly defined. The Episcopalians, as a matter of fact, never took much part in the discussions. The Independents and Erastians really withdrew before the Discipline was finished, so that the Presbyterian system was finally agreed upon, but without the support of any but the Presbyterians. A little less strictness on their part at that time might have made England permanently, as she was for a short time nominally, Presbyterian.

The Assembly held one thousand one hundred and sixty-three regular sessions, from July 1, 1643, till February 22, 1649. It was never formally dissolved, but simply vanished with the Long Parliament, which, under Cromwell, had brought it into existence. No account of the civil features of the struggle can be given here.

The first task the Assembly undertook was to revise the Thirty-nine Articles, somewhat in the line of the Lambeth and Irish Articles, which were distinctly Calvinistic. This task was given up by the direction of Parliament in October, 1643, and the work on a new Confession was then begun. By means of committees and sub-committees the work was pushed on, so that in two years and three months, with many breaks in the work, it was completed about the close of the year 1646, and reported to Parliament in 1647.

The Scripture texts were added in April, 1647. In regard to the Catechisms, the Larger was prepared first and the Shorter soon after. Dr. Tuckney had much to do with

framing both of them, and they were completed towards the close of the year 1647. The Scottish General Assembly approved of them in July, 1647. These Catechisms, together with Luther's and the Heidelberg Catechism, are likely to be enduring instruments of catechetical instruction in the church.

It would be interesting to follow the action of the English Parliament in regard to these Standards. They were carefully considered by both Houses of Parliament, and some slight changes were made. The House of Lords agreed to the Confession on June 3, 1648, and the Commons on June 20 of the same year. The English Parliament twice endorsed the Confession as to its doctrinal articles, but it was inclined to an Erastian position in regard to matters of government and discipline. When the monarchy was restored, the Confession shared the fate of Presbyterian polity in England, and Scotland was afterwards to become the heroic scene of its life and triumphs.

With some slight changes, made necessary by the different conditions of the country, these Standards were adopted by all the Presbyterian churches in America, and in other parts of the world, as people sought new homes in foreign lands. The Congregational churches in New England also adopted these Standards "for substance of doctrine," but their adherence to this type of doctrine has loosened during the past century in this country.

Early in this century the Cumberland Presbyterian Church originated. It modified the doctrine of the Confession in regard to predestination, so as to become virtually Arminian, while it retains a Presbyterian polity. It is really an Arminian Presbyterian Church, just as the Welsh Church is a Calvinistic Methodist Church.

Finally, the great body of the regular Baptists, in America especially, while they do not formally accept the Confession and the Catechisms, yet they hold and teach the Calvinistic

doctrines which they contain in such a systematic and scriptural form.

At this point the historical sketch is concluded. The next chapter is also to be introductory, and will seek to explain the nature, and show the important uses, of religious creeds and confessions.

CHAPTER II.

THE NATURE AND USES OF RELIGIOUS CREEDS.

BEFORE entering on the formal exposition of the Westminster Standards, which form the creed of the Presbyterian Church, a short chapter explaining the nature and uses of religious creeds may also serve a useful purpose. It is all the more necessary to make some such explanation at the present day, when it is to be observed that from many quarters the cry comes to abolish all definite creeds, and thus give larger liberty of religious thought and action. It is assumed by some who object to religious creeds of any kind that they hamper the spirit of free inquiry, and hinder unbiased research concerning religious problems. Hence they are an evil to be abolished as soon as possible. Such views and claims are doubtless largely the result of misapprehension, so that a simple explanation of the nature and function of religious creeds, or ecclesiastical symbols, may do something to remove this misapprehension, and show that creeds in their proper place are important and useful.

I. *The Nature of a Religious Creed.*

A creed may be defined as a brief and orderly statement of the system of divine truth contained in the sacred Scriptures. It is the meaning which one or more persons may take of the system of religious truth and life which is found in the Bible. In other words, a creed is that interpretation of the contents of the Scriptures, in relation to life and experience, to which certain persons may agree as revealed authoritative truth. The creed thus becomes an expression of religious belief and life based on the Bible. From this point of view a creed is a confession of faith, which means that acceptance of, and submission to, the creed is confessed. A

creed and a confession are really the same thing from different points of view. The more technical term applied to a creed or confession is *symbol*. This term first denotes a sign or mark. It next means a signal or watchword. Then in its religious sense it signifies a Christian creed or confession of faith. As such it is that summary of religious truth which is set forth as the official doctrinal statement of belief and practice by any branch of the Christian church. The word symbol thus becomes a third term to denote the same thing. The word catechism is also used in this connection, and in many cases catechisms are regarded as creeds or confessions. This is the case with the Presbyterian and some of the Reformed confessions. A catechism is a summary of religious truth used for purposes of religious instruction. Where catechisms are regarded as parts of the creed they may be defined as creeds framed by question and answer, and so fitted for use in catechetical instruction. The Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms are of this nature, and as they form part of the standards of Presbyterianism, they must have a proper place in this exposition.

A very important question which arises in connection with the subject of creeds is that of their relation to the Scriptures. As it is at this point that much of the misunderstanding concerning creeds and confessions has arisen, it may be well to explain this relation with some care. First of all, let it be distinctly understood that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be regarded as the infallible rule of faith and life. It alone sets forth a revelation from God which is distinctly inspired, and hence of infallible truth and divine authority. The supreme standard in religion, therefore, is holy Scripture. The Scriptures are the standards in the highest sense, and to them the appeal must always be made. This position is held as firmly by those who have a formal written creed as it is by those who profess to have no other religious standard than the Bible. The divine creed is the

Bible, and the ecclesiastical creed is the church's interpretation of this divine creed. Such being the case, the creed is derived from, depends on, and is subordinate to, the Bible. The creed, therefore, cannot take the place of the Bible, much less can it be put above the Scriptures. The Scriptures, as the inspired word of God, rightly sit upon the throne in all matters pertaining to religious belief, conduct and worship. They cannot abdicate in favor of, nor be supplanted by, any summary of their contents, no matter how true and complete it may be. The Bible is the fixed, unchanging and infallible rule, while the creed may be regarded as the secondary, subordinate, temporary standard of faith and life. Nor is the latter to be divorced from the former, for the creed derives its meaning and value only from the Scriptures, whose contents it professes to exhibit. Hence, the true view of the relation of the creed to the Bible may be expressed by the phrase, the Scriptures as interpreted by the standards. The Bible is the infallible rule, the creed is the accepted interpretation of that rule in systematic form. Thus the real standard is not the creed in itself considered, but the Scriptures as interpreted by the creed. If this intimate relation and dependence of the creed upon the Bible be kept clearly in mind, some confusion, and perhaps some mistakes, would be avoided.

It may be well to add, that while the creed in the sense above explained is taken to be a written creed, yet the same thing is virtually true of an unwritten creed. This fact is often overlooked, and the objection to a written creed sometimes comes from those who have a very definite and sometimes a rather narrow creed, though unwritten. The creed, as we have seen, is the meaning of the Scriptures accepted by any body of Christians, and it may be written or unwritten. The fact that it is written does not alter the case, for the unwritten creed may be as well defined and as firmly held as any written confession can be. It is well understood

that some honored branches of the church have no written creed, but profess to take the Bible pure and simple as their standard. This claim sounds well, and it certainly gives the Bible the place of honor which it deserves. But a little reflection will show that some of these churches do not honor the Scriptures any more than those which have written creeds in the sense explained; and some of those churches which have no written creed, but rest upon the Bible alone, have an unwritten creed which is just as rigid as any written creed can possibly be. This is evident from the fact that when a minister seeks ordination in such a church, he must accept its credal interpretation of the doctrines, of the ordinances, and of the polity which it understands the Scriptures to teach. This is further seen to be the case also in the fact that in such branches of the church which have no written creed, the conditions of membership are much more rigid than in the Presbyterian Church, with its elaborate written one. It is clear, therefore, that an unwritten creed is exposed to all the objections which lie against one that is written, and at the same time the latter has many advantages over the former, as will be shown later on in this chapter.

Another important question naturally arises from the inquiry concerning the permanency of a creed. Can a creed once accepted be amended? The answer to this question appears from what has just been said about the relation of the creed to the Bible. From the view already taken of that relation, it is clear that the way is open for the church at any time, in accordance with her own chosen methods, to revise or modify her credal interpretation of the Scriptures. She dare not undertake to revise or amend the Scriptures, although even here room must be left for the textual critic to provide us with as correct a text of the Scriptures as it is possible to obtain, and for the legitimate work of the higher critic to shed what light he can upon the origin and struc-

ture of the Bible. Leaving a place for the proper work of the textual and the higher critic, the position is still maintained that the church has no right to revise her divine religious standard, which is holy Scripture. But the church may revise her credal interpretation of the Scriptures. In other words, creed revision is not to be denied as a right pertaining to the church. But such creed revision must be in accordance with the Scriptures themselves, and in order to set forth their meaning more clearly and completely. No other reason than this exists for creed revision. The reason sometimes given, to the effect that the church should revise her creed in order to bring it into harmony with the life and the thought of the church in a new age is not valid, unless it can also be shown that the creed is not in harmony with the Scriptures. In any case the need for creed revision should be really urgent before it is undertaken. Recent attempts in regard to the Westminster Standards cannot be regarded as successful. The aim of such revision, if undertaken, should be to express more clearly and fully the teachings of Scripture, rather than to bring the creed into harmony with the thought and life of the church. The thought and life of the church is to be determined by the Scriptures, as the rule and norm thereof, and by the Holy Spirit, who applies the truth to the members of the church from age to age. Thus the creed, as the interpretation of the Scriptures, becomes the norm of the life of the church under the tuition of the Holy Spirit. But the creed can never, in the first instance, consist in an interpretation of the life of the church, however clearly that life may in turn reflect the contents of the Scriptures as interpreted in the Standards.

As to the proper length of a creed as an interpretation of the Scriptures, opinions will differ. Some think that a very short and simple creed best suits the purpose. Others prefer a much more extended creed or confession of faith. Here, of course, each church must decide for itself. It may be

admitted that there are some things in favor of a short and simple creed, and at the same time be maintained that a compact and complete statement of religious truth, especially for the purpose of doctrinal instruction, may have many advantages. It may be said that some things might be omitted from the Westminster Standards without affecting the substance of their doctrine; still, the strong and complete outline of doctrine, and the clear and logical form in which it is presented in these historic Standards, have no doubt had much to do with making Presbyterians what they are the world over, as an intellectual and moral force. If the doctrinal area covered by the creed statement of any church be narrow, the danger of a decrease in intelligence and moral power will surely threaten that church. Hence a comprehensive creed has some important advantages which exhort to hesitation before the demand for a short creed is acceded to. If a shorter creed would comprehend a greater number of Christians in one fold, it might fail to secure those clear and definite views in regard to religious truth which are found so necessary to give it strong vitality, and to make it a real and lasting power. What was gained in extension might be lost in intension.

II. *The Uses of Religious Creeds.*

In what remains of this chapter some of the chief uses of religious creeds will be indicated. From what has been said concerning the nature or function of religious creeds, it was hinted that creeds, confessions, and catechisms are valuable and useful. This hint must now be expanded, and it is hoped that the explanations now to be made shall elicit greater interest in the exposition of the Westminster Standards which the next chapter begins. Under four heads the main uses of creeds and confessions may be summed up.

In the first place, a creed provides a well-defined bond of union as to doctrine, rite, and polity for those who belong to any branch of the church. The creed thus forms an intelli-

gent basis for all those who are associated in any one Christian communion. Especially does it secure a definite system to which all the office-bearers of any branch of the church profess agreement. Without some such common basis or bond it would be almost impossible to secure general harmony of opinion and action. The Bible is such an extensive book that the task of each one for himself would be too great, and the prospect of harmony would be exceedingly small. Then, without a written creed it would be very difficult to examine any one who presented himself as a candidate for the ministry. But with a definite written creed the examination becomes comparatively easy, and can be intelligently attended to, both by the church court and the candidate. So, when a man takes upon himself the solemn vows of ordination, both he and they who ordain him have a definite system of religious truth to which it is understood that the vow relates. The Scriptures as interpreted by the Standards, the Standards as founded on and agreeable to the word of God, become the form according to which the ordination vow is presented. This affords a common systematic interpretation of the contents of the Scriptures, to which the office-bearers are committed, and which produces a given type of life and teaching in any church communion.

Here it may be well to add that the subscription to the creed in the Presbyterian Church is required only from the office-bearers. For membership in this church, all that is required is an intelligent and credible profession of faith in Christ, and a sincere promise to obey and serve him in life. This fact is not always understood by Presbyterians themselves, and many in other communions are not even aware of this fact. Of course, those who become members in the Presbyterian church may expect to receive the teaching of those who have accepted the doctrine of the Confession and Catechisms, but even then their private judgment is in no way denied an opportunity for exercise. But for the officers

of the church, the Standards are of the very highest value in providing a compact and comprehensive outline of Scripture truth which they are to maintain, promulgate and defend.

In the second place, a creed is of much value in enabling the church to deal in a satisfactory way with cases of heresy. The church which has no written creed apart from the Scriptures is at a disadvantage in such cases. It has no generally accepted statement, in written form, of the meaning it takes of the Scriptures, by which to test the truth or error of any opinions which may be alleged to be heretical. The written creed supplies as fully as possible just such a test. Moreover, it is also the test to which the accused party gave his assent at some earlier time. By this once-accepted test, which is still binding upon him, the views of the accused are to be judged. This test is not the creed, apart altogether from the Scriptures, but the Scriptures as interpreted in the creed.

At this point objection is sometimes made to the effect that this view virtually puts the creed above the Bible, and renders an appeal to the Bible impossible in the case; but this is not so, for the appeal is to the Scriptures, as their meaning is expressed in the Standards, so that the appeal is as directly to the Bible as it can be, even where there is no written creed. If at any time it should appear that the creed does not correctly express the meaning of the Bible, then there is a proper and regular way, by means of the revision already spoken of, to bring them into harmony; but when a case of trial for heresy is actually entered on, it does not lie in the power of the accused to make the objection alluded to, for the reason that the creed represents the doctrine of the church to which he belongs, and which doctrine he himself had accepted. This does not imply that creed revision is inadmissible; it simply means that a trial for heresy is not the proper way or time to revise the creed. As has been stated, the church may at any proper time seek to bring her

creed into closer harmony with the Scriptures, but the party accused of heresy is not the one to plead for this revision, when he is placed on trial by the church for his views. He is to be fairly tried according to the creed interpretation of the Scriptures to which he had subscribed, under which he had been serving the church, and which for the time being is the church's view of the Scriptures. The accused is judged by the Scriptures as interpreted in the creed, and the church, not the individual, is the party to give the final decision as to whether any controverted views are in harmony or not with the meaning of the Scriptures set forth in the creed. There can surely be no injustice in this.

But, further, if any office-bearer of the church finds that his views are not in accord with those taught in the Standards, he may withdraw from the church, and hold and even teach his views elsewhere. His remaining in the church is a voluntary matter, and the church simply protects herself when she says that if a man wishes to remain in the church he must conform to the opinions and practices of the church. Nor can there be injustice or hardship in this connection.

In the third place, a creed serves to exhibit to other branches of the church the views of doctrine, polity, discipline, ritual and worship held or observed by any particular branch of it. The Westminster Standards are very valuable in this respect. Those who are in communion with other churches may learn from these Standards what the Presbyterian Church believes and teaches. By this means misconception can be avoided. In regard to those branches of the church which have no written creed, it is exceedingly difficult to obtain any clear knowledge of the concensus of teaching in those churches. The result of this is lack of definiteness and loss of force.

Now, while dead uniformity is a thing not to be desired, and is not here advocated, still a definite written creed may combine that degree of uniformity and flexibility which shall

produce the best results. For those within the church there is unity and flexibility, and for those without the church there is a full exhibit of the teaching of the church, so that all who read may understand. If, as is sometimes the case, the Presbyterian Church is charged with holding views which it does not, then it is easy to show that the charge is unfounded, by a reference to the Standards. Thus it appears that the idea of a well-ordered doctrinal system, of a fully-organized form of government, and of a high ideal of life, such as is usually associated with the Presbyterian church, is of great use in showing to other churches what the Presbyterian Church believes and teaches. In like manner this is true of all those churches which have a *definite* written creed, and live in conformity with it.

In the fourth place, one of the most practical uses of a creed remains to be considered, and with a brief notice of it this chapter concludes. The creed, confession, or catechism always provides a valuable compend of Christian doctrine for religious instruction. A good catechism is of immense use for the instruction of the young, and for the indoctrination of those in more advanced years. It is in this connection that catechisms, which are merely creeds in catechetical form, have value. As a mere confession of faith, a creed may be the best form in which to have the Standards stated in, but even a creed is a very useful instrument of instruction. But catechisms like the Shorter Catechism are of the utmost value for this important purpose. Churches which have no doctrinal symbols, or catechetical creeds, find difficulty in this connection. They have not a form of sound words in which to sum up the teaching of Scripture regarding the doctrines and duties of our holy religion. It behooves the Presbyterian Church not to neglect her duty and privilege in this respect, with such excellent instruments of instruction in her hands. She should diligently instruct her children and young people especially, and not neglect to

teach constantly those in more advanced years. It is only by doing so that the people will grow to be strong, intelligent, and robust Christians, able to give a reason for the hope that is in them, and qualified to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things.

These are some of the main uses of creeds and confessions in general, and of the Presbyterian Standards in particular. Other minor uses might have been mentioned and enforced, but what has been said may suffice to give the reader some idea of the value of creeds, and perhaps remove some of the prejudice which not a few sincere persons have in regard to creeds of any kind except the Bible. In the next chapter the formal exposition of the Standards of the Presbyterian Church, which consist of the Catechisms and Confession, will be begun.

CHAPTER III.

THE DOCTRINE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 1–3; LARGER CATECHISM, 1–5; CONFESSION OF FAITH, I.

TWO chapters have been devoted to introductory matters. In one a brief history of the leading symbols of the church was given, and in the other the nature and uses of religious creeds were explained.

In this chapter the exposition of the Westminster Standards is formally begun. The Shorter Catechism is to be made the basis of the order in which the various topics are to be considered. At the same time a constant endeavor will be made to gather up the parallel and additional teaching which we find at various points in the Larger Catechism and the Confession of Faith. A chapter or two, towards the close, will be devoted to some subjects of which the Confession alone treats.

The present chapter is to deal with the doctrine of Holy Scripture which the Standards exhibit. It is appropriate that the Standards should deal with this subject first of all, for the Scriptures are the source from which the various truths which enter into the creed are to be derived. The chapter of the Confession now to be explained deserves the most careful study at the present day, when the questions which it treats of are raised anew and earnestly discussed.

As a fitting preliminary to the exposition of the Standards, the Catechisms have something to say in regard to the nature and end of man's being and destiny. By implication this topic is involved in the first chapter of the Confession. This is the first topic about which a few things are to be set down.

I. *The Nature and End of Man's Being and Destiny.*

The teaching of the Catechisms upon this topic is very brief, but exceedingly comprehensive. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to fully enjoy him forever. From this statement we gather two things: *First*, we have a statement of what man's nature is; and, *secondly*, there is an assertion in regard to the purpose of his being and activity.

1. In regard to man's nature, it is taught in the Standards, just as it is implied in the Scriptures, that man possesses a nature different from and higher than the beasts of the field. In the higher elements of his nature he is allied to God. This, again, implies two things:

First, That the nature of man has in it a religious element, or that man has been made a religious being, is taken for granted by the Standards. It is not necessary to explain in detail in what respects man differs from the brute, nor is it requisite to expound at length what is meant by the assertion that man is a religious being. It is enough to be sure of the fact, and the Standards, like the Scriptures, simply assume the fact. Since man has this nature he is the subject of religious experiences, and the agent in religious activities, which are to be in harmony with the moral relations which he sustains to God. In addition, since in his present sinful state man needs further light in matters of religion than his own nature or powers can supply, a revelation such as is found in the sacred Scriptures is urgently needed.

Secondly, It is implied that man has been endowed with immortality; so that he shall have a real existence beyond this temporal life is also assumed by the Standards. It is not necessary to determine whether man's spiritual nature is inherently immortal, or whether God so endowed him when he created him. Here, as in the previous case, the fact as assumed or announced in the Scriptures is simply accepted. This is what the Standards do when they speak of the chief end of man to be in part the enjoyment of God forever.

There is, therefore, no need to present the rational arguments for the immortality of man in this exposition.

2. The second thing in this connection is that the chief end or purpose of man's being is to glorify God, in the exercise of this religious nature, and to enjoy him forever in an immortal state. This sets a lofty aim before man, and indicates a high purpose for his existence and activity. It is the pole star of his life on earth, and the goal of his destiny in the world to come. Two things are to be noted here:

First, The life and activity of man are not to be self-centered. The end of his being is not to be autocentric. The selfish and self-seeking life are alike condemned, not only for present, but also for the life to come. This cuts by the root all forms of the selfish or hedonistic theory of morals. Nor does it leave any place for even a refined type of utilitarianism.

Secondly, Man's purpose or aim is to be directed towards God. Man, the creature, is to glorify God, the creator, and to enjoy him forever. The aim of man is to be theocentric. The thinking of his mind, the love and trust of his soul, the homage and devotion of his spirit, and the obedience of his life, are to be turned away from self, and centered in God. Even the fact of the enjoyment of God, here emphasized, does not make the teaching of the Standards utilitarian at this point, for what is denoted by the word "glorify" is not merely future blessedness in a selfish sense, but rather a perfect joy in the service of God in the eternal state. It is sometimes said, with a measure of propriety, that there is a double aim for the being and destiny of man. This may be stated as blessedness in the service of God, or happiness in holiness. The glory of God, the service of God, the holiness, constitute the true end, while the enjoyment, the blessedness, the happiness, are secondary, and not to be sought as ends in themselves. If so sought they will never be found. This is the nature and end of man's being and destiny,

which is to be carried forward into the exposition of the Standards.

II. *The Holy Scriptures.*

That men may be taught aright how they are to glorify God, some instruction which shall be the rule for their direction is needed. This rule is given us in the Scriptures. They are said to be the only rule to direct us in fulfilling the end of our being. This rule chiefly teaches us what we are to believe and do in attaining that end. This rule consists in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the word of God given by inspiration, consisting of sixty-six books. The number is merely mentioned in the Larger Catechism, but a complete list of these books by name is given in the first chapter of the Confession. The doctrine of the Standards is that these Scriptures form the only and all-sufficient rule for the guidance of men in all matters of religion. In expounding the contents of the Standards, and especially of that remarkable chapter with which the Confession opens, the particulars may be summed up under three heads. These are the nature, the contents, and the interpretation of the Scriptures.

1. *The Nature of the Scriptures*

As already stated, the sacred Scriptures are the sole and sufficient rule of faith and duty. In regard to this general statement, the Confession sets forth several particulars which are now to be noted in order.

First, The place and value of the light of nature is suggested. By the light of nature is meant that manifestation of God's will and man's duty which may be derived from external nature, from the events of providence, and from the mental, moral and religious nature of man. The opening utterance of the Confession very clearly teaches that the power, wisdom and goodness of Almighty God are made known to men in these ways, to such an extent that they are conscious of moral responsibility, and without excuse before

God, if they fail to serve him. The light of nature is thus adequate to ground man's responsibility to God, and to make it just for God to punish man for disobedience. In this way the Standards assume the validity and value of natural religion, and it is upon this sure basis that revealed religion is made to rest. It is important, therefore, to keep in mind that the Standards assume the reality of the religious element in man's constitution, and of the primitive knowledge of God, which, in the exercise of that religious element, man may obtain from nature and the events of providence.

But with equal clearness the Confession asserts that the light of nature is not sufficient to give man that complete and correct knowledge of God which is necessary for salvation, duty, and destiny. Hence, mere natural religion can never secure for men who are in a sinful state that knowledge of God and of the way of life which they need. If men were not disabled by sin the case might be different. It might be further argued, that if any member of the sinful race of mankind could be found who did so live up to the light of nature as to be without fault or sense of guilt, such a person would be acceptable to God. But the fact is, that no such case is to be found anywhere, and a sense of guilt rests universally on the race. It is, therefore, with great propriety that the Standards take the position, that while the knowledge of God and his will which men have in a natural way is adequate to leave them without excuse before God, still, it is not sufficient to save and rightly guide them.

Secondly, The light of revelation is next considered. By the light of revelation is denoted that knowledge of God and his will which is set forth in the sacred Scriptures. These Scriptures contain God's revealed will touching salvation, duty and destiny, committed to writing. The Confession teaches, as do the Scriptures also, that God was pleased to meet man's need by revealing himself at sundry times and in divers manners, and in thus revealing himself to declare his

will to the church. In all the ages the revelation was made primarily to the church, and then by the church to the world. The church thus becomes the candlestick of the Lord, which is to hold forth the light of divine revelation to the world in darkness and sin.

These special ways of revealing God's will, and committing it to writing, continued for a period of about sixteen hundred years. In due time this was to cease, so that God was further pleased to secure, that the necessary things thus revealed should be committed entirely to writing, by the hands of men who were chosen and qualified for this purpose. This was necessary to preserve the revealed will of God, and to render its propagation possible in the world. The possession of the sacred oracles by the church ministers to the stability and comfort of her people in all ages, and affords her protection against the corruptions of the world and the assaults of Satan. For such reasons as these the Confession concludes that the revealed word of God, in permanent written form, is most necessary for the welfare and progress of true religion.

The Confession next defines the canon of Scripture, and gives a complete list of the canonical books of the Old Testament, thirty-nine in number, and of the New Testament, twenty-seven more, making sixty-six in all. The Confession expressly excludes the Apocrypha from the canon of Scripture, and it is not admitted to have divine authority. It is not to be regarded nor used in a way different from other merely human writings. The only authoritative word of God is the sixty-six books.

Thirdly, The inspiration of the canonical Scriptures is to be considered.

This is one of the most important questions in regard to the nature of the Scriptures, and this is the feature of them which mainly constitutes their authority. While the Confession plainly states the fact of the inspiration of holy Scrip-

ture, it does not fully define in what that inspiration really consists. This does not imply that any view whatever may by taken of the scriptural facts denoted by their inspiration. The whole of the sixty-six books are given by inspiration of God, and the Confession in its teaching implies the full force of the claim which the Scriptures thus make as to their own origin and nature. God, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, is their divine author, through the free active powers of the men who wrote the books.

Owing to the importance of the statement of the Confession that the whole of the sixty-six books are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life for sinful men, some expansion of its meaning may be of service at the present day. This expansion can only give the headings of the statement of the doctrine of inspiration which is involved in the Confession. *First*, The divine inspiration of the canon of Scripture is supernatural, so that the various books are not the *natural* products of the times in which they were produced, or of the men who spoke or wrote their contents. Inspiration is not merely a natural genius for religion. *Secondly*, The agency of the Holy Spirit is dynamical, not mechanical. The Holy Spirit so operated upon the activities of the human authors of the several books that, while they were divinely controlled and directed, they were not coerced or compelled. They were not machines, but free men divinely guided. *Thirdly*, So far as the contents of the Scriptures are concerned, their inspiration is plenary, not partial. The whole of the Scriptures, not merely the more important parts, are inspired, and all these parts are possessed of equal divine certitude. *Fourthly*, So far as the form of the contents of the Scripture is concerned, their inspiration is verbal, in the sense that the writers were divinely guided in the choice of the language form, as well as divinely moved in regard to their thoughts. This does not imply mere dictation, but it asserts that the sacred writers were not

left to themselves in regard to the form of their writings, any more than in respect to their contents. The inspiration of the Scriptures, therefore, is supernatural, dynamical, plenary, and verbal. Infallible truth as to contents, divine accuracy as to form, and supreme authority as to their claim, are the qualities of the sacred Scriptures as of no other writings. It is proper to add that these qualities belong in an absolute sense to the original writings of the inspired authors. Subsequent copies have been kept pure and authentic by divine providence in a most remarkable way. It is in this field that the work of the textual critic renders such a useful service, but the question of the correct text should never be confounded with that of the inspiration of the text, no matter how closely they may be related.

Fourthly, The question of the authority of the Scriptures next claims attention. What are the grounds upon which confidence in the supreme authority of the word of God may securely rest, and on account of which it is to be believed and obeyed? The answer to this question forms a very important part of the doctrine of the Confession at this point. Negatively, as against Rome, the authority of Scripture does not depend on any merely external support, such as that of any man, no matter how learned, nor upon any church, even though it be ready to speak with a great deal of authority. Positively, its authority depends wholly upon God, who by his Spirit is the divine author of the Scriptures. They are to be accepted as authoritative because through them the voice of God is undoubtedly uttered.

At the same time the Confession indicates, with great caution and skill, the proper place and form of the evidences which lead to the conviction that God is speaking to men in and by the Scriptures. When these evidences lead to this conviction, the ground or basis of their authority is not the evidence itself considered, but rather the fact that God is now known to be uttering his voice in the Scriptures. Three classes of evidences are mentioned in the Confession.

First, There is the external or the historical evidence of the divine origin and inspiration of the Bible. This is found in the witness of the church, either testifying in her corporate capacity, or by means of individuals within her ranks. By the testimony of the history, by the witness of the miracles, and by the fulfilment of prophecy, men may be moved to a high and reverent esteem for the Scriptures and to a conviction of their truth and divinity.

Secondly, There are the internal evidences which arise from the nature of the contents of the Scriptures. This is a very important branch of the evidences described in the Confession. It embraces the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, which is to give glory to God, the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, and many incomparable excellences, and the entire perfection of the Scripture, are arguments whereby it abundantly evidences itself to be the word of God. But when thus proved it is still true that the basis of authority is not in the evidence, but in the fact of the divine authorship of the writings.

Thirdly, There remains what may be termed the spiritual evidence, which is the highest and strongest of all. This consists in the agency of the Holy Spirit, the divine author of the Scriptures, bearing witness by and with the word in the souls of men, and thereby producing a full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of the word in the heart. This is an exceedingly important but not easily understood position. It asserts that the same Spirit who gave the word by his inspiration, also produces by his illumination the full conviction in our hearts that it is what it claims to be, the sure word of God. This is the witness of the Spirit in experience.

2. The contents of the Scriptures are next to be considered. The topic which the Confession here raises is that of

the completeness of the Scriptures, as the rule of faith and life. This simply means that the whole counsel of God in regard to all things necessary for his glory, and the salvation and duty of man is contained in the Holy Scriptures. These things are discovered in the Scriptures in a twofold way. They are either expressly set down in Scripture, or deduced therefrom by good and necessary consequence. In the first case the matter is clear, and in the second, care must be taken that no improper inferences are made.

The idea of the completeness of Scripture also implies that nothing is to be added to or taken from them at any time. The canon of Scripture is complete and closed, and all that men need for faith and life is therein contained. Hence no supposed new revelations of the Spirit are to be added, and the opinions and traditions of men are to be excluded.

The Confession further asserts, that for the saving knowledge of the contents of the Scriptures the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit is also needed. Spiritual things are to be spiritually discerned. The saving knowledge of the word is spiritual knowledge, and to give this kind of knowledge the divine Spirit is necessary. The conclusion is that the Spirit first gave the word, the Spirit evidences the word, and the Spirit teaches the saving meaning of the word.

At this point a very important principle, sometimes overlooked and sometimes pushed too far, comes into view. This principle relates to certain circumstances of government and worship, but it does not apply to matters of doctrine. According to the Confession, there are certain circumstances in the government and worship of the church which are common to human actions and societies, such as the hours for public worship, or the number of ruling elders to be chosen in any church, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence. But even in these cases nothing is to be ordered or instituted in the church which is not in accordance with the general rules of the word. This plainly

means that even in these matters the great principles of the word of God are not to be departed from.

3. The interpretation of the Scriptures is the third and last topic for discussion in this chapter. Some care is needed here also in order to understand the doctrine of the Confession.

It is first stated that all the things contained in the Scriptures are not equally plain, or alike clear to all who read. At the same time everything which needs to be known, believed, and observed for salvation is so plainly and fully set forth, that the unlearned as well as the learned, with a proper use of the ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient knowledge of them for salvation and life. This being the case, the common people are to have access to the Scriptures.

To secure this, generally and continuously from age to age, the Scriptures are to be translated out of the original tongues in which they were immediately inspired by God, into the common language of every nation unto which they come, so that all may be taught thereby. In this connection the Confession states that, by the singular care and providence of God, these Scriptures, passing from age to age, and from one language to another, have been kept pure and authentical; that is, they have been preserved correct and intact. Consequently they may be relied on as in every way worthy of confidence. In all controversies of religion the appeal is to the Scriptures, and the people have a right to, and an interest in, the perusal of the Scriptures, so that, the word dwelling in them, they may worship God in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures have hope.

Two important statements of the Confession remain for brief explanation. One pertains to the infallible rule for the interpretation of the Scriptures, and the other relates to the supreme judge in matters of religion. To the first, the answer of the Confession is that the Scripture itself is its

own rule of interpretation. This is what is known as the principle of the analogy or proportion of faith. By means of this principle the meaning of one passage is to be ascertained by the comparison of it with others which are perhaps more easily understood. Every part of Scripture is to be understood in the light of the analogy of the whole. To the second question the Confession makes the reply that the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures is the judge, whose sentence is to determine all matters of religion, alike for the church and the individual. The decrees of church councils, the opinions of good men, and the impressions of private spirits are all to be guided and formed by the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures. Thus it appears that the Holy Spirit is the final exegete, as well as the invincible apologete, of the sacred Scriptures. The infallible rule for the interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself, and the supreme judge in matters of religion is the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures. It may be added that the Spirit thus speaks to the church, and through the church to the world.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BEING, THE ATTRIBUTES, AND THE PERSONS OF THE GODHEAD.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 4–6; LARGER CATECHISM, 6–11; CONFESSION OF FAITH, II.

THIS chapter is to explain what the Standards teach concerning the nature, attributes, and tri-personality of the Godhead. The Shorter Catechism has brief, but exceedingly clear and comprehensive, statements upon these topics. The Larger Catechism has a more extended outline of the doctrine of the Trinity, while the Confession gives prominence to the subject of the attributes of God.

It is worthy of notice that the Standards do not undertake to prove in any way the fact of the divine existence. They take precisely the same position upon this point as the Scriptures. They simply take for granted that there is a God, and then proceed to expound the contents of the revelation which he has been pleased to give. Incidentally, some of the arguments for the being of God are suggested in the Scriptures, but the fundamental position of the Bible is, that it assumes the existence and government of God without the presentation of formal proof. The Standards very properly take the same clear, bold ground, and proceed to state the teaching of the Scriptures in regard to the nature, attributes, and tri-personality of the divine being. There are three heads of exposition under which the teaching of the Standards may be arranged.

I. *The Nature of the Godhead.*

Here, of course, no attempt is made to define the essence of the Godhead, for there is a profound sense in which the divine essence, though the most real of all essences, is at the

same time the most mysterious of all. The thought of man cannot find out the Almighty unto perfection, so that a reverent humility is the proper spirit to cherish in considering such a profound theme as the essential nature of the divine being.

1. The Standards in all their parts assert that there is only one living and true God. This is a plain assertion, based on Scripture, which excludes tri-theism, and every form of polytheism. It is a positive statement that there is only one divine essence, and that this single essence subsists as a unitary, personal being. No space need be occupied in showing, by various proofs, that there can be only one deity who meets the demands of man's reason, conscience, and life. It need only be stated that reason is at one with Scripture in the assertion of well-defined monotheism. But, further, the assertion that there is only one God implies that his essence has what may be called a unitariness, and that he is absolute and independent in his existence. The essence of God is such that it is incapable of any sort of division. There is one God, and his essence is unitary and indivisible. Since God is such a being as he is, there cannot be another such as he.

2. The Standards further describe the nature of God as living and true. The Scriptures frequently draw the contrast between the true God and false gods, between the living God and dead idols. The Standards very properly give emphasis to the same facts. The idea conveyed by the word *living* seems to be that of activity in originating all forms of life and motion, and in controlling and governing by active energy and omnipresent will all the events which transpire in the universe. The notion expressed by the word *true* seems to be that there is none beside this God which is truly of the nature of deity. He, and he alone, is the one living and true God, and beside him there is none else worthy the name of God.

3. In regard to the nature of God, the Standards further assert the spirituality of the divine essence. God is Spirit. This is, perhaps, the chief description of the nature of God which the Scriptures, and the Standards also, contain. The spirituality of God is his distinguishing quality, apart from the material world. This excludes all materialistic conceptions of the divine nature, and places him in the category of pure spirit. Such a conception lays the foundation for the intelligence and personality of God, and at the same time affords the proper ground for his volitional agency. It is in this connection that the Confession says that God, being a most pure spirit, has no body, nor parts, nor passions. This means that he has no material organism of any kind, in analogy with that of man; that his essence cannot be divided into parts, and that he does not experience the passions to which man is subject. This statement ascribes to Almighty God pure, absolute, independent, active, spirituality of nature. Such a conception of God is found nowhere else than in the Bible.

The idea of the divine Spirit can only be relatively understood. From the human spirit and its activities some faint conception can be obtained, by analogy, of the nature and operations of the divine Spirit. If the human spirit is made in the likeness of the divine Spirit, then there is an analogy between them which provides a basis for some reasoning from the one to the other. The spirituality of God is the peculiar possession of the Scriptures. As a pure spirit he is invisible to the bodily senses of man, still it is possible for him to reveal himself, just as one human spirit can make itself known to another. This kinship of nature is the basis for the dwelling of the divine Spirit in the human spirit, and thereby of a revelation from God to man.

4. There are several terms in the Standards which do not, strictly speaking, denote divine attributes, but which rather describe, further, the divine nature, so that it may be proper

to notice them at this point. He is self-existent, and thus has his being in and of himself. His existence is not a dependent one in any sense, for as self-existent he depends upon no one else for his existence. He is also absolute, and in himself all-sufficient, and is thus not in need of any of the creatures which he has made. He does not derive any essential glory from any of his creatures, but his abiding and eternal glory is simply manifested in, by, unto, and upon the works which he performs. He is infinite also in all his being and perfections. His being is complete and boundless, and all his attributes, natural and moral, are absolutely without any defect. Finally, God is said to have sovereign dominion over all his creatures at all times, governing each according to the nature he has given to it. He is the source of all finite being, and upon him all things depend for their origin and continuance in being. With all his works he may at any time do as he pleases.

II. *The Attributes, or Qualities of the Divine Nature.*

This is an important topic, for it is chiefly by a knowledge of the attributes of God that an acquaintance with his nature and perfections is obtained. Consequently, in the Scriptures whereby God has made himself known to man, much is said about the attributes of the divine nature, and in the Standards prominence is given to the same thing. The Shorter Catechism, in its matchless answer to the question: What is God? gives the main categories of the divine attributes. The Larger Catechism, and still more the Confession, enlarges this description considerably.

A difficulty will be felt in the confessional statement of the attributes by almost any one who tries to define and classify them. As a matter of fact, no classification of the attributes is attempted in the Standards, nor is there given any definition of what an attribute is. And some qualities which denote certain aspects of the essence are regarded as attributes, and this increases the difficulty. In a general way an

attribute may be defined as some quality which pertains to the essence or activity of God. This supplies a twofold general division of the attributes: the one essential, pertaining to the essence; and the other determining, pertaining to the activity of God. But such a division is not formally followed in the Standards, and so, for the sake of simplicity, it may be better to gather their teaching around the definition of the Shorter Catechism. This opens up a fourfold division.

1. Attributes which pertain to the essential nature of God, and which qualify all the other attributes. From this point of view God is immutable, or unchangeable, which means that his essential nature is not subject to any mutation. Immensity is also an attribute of the essence of God. This is the basis of his omnipresence, which means that he is everywhere present. God is also eternal, which simply denotes the fact that his being has had no beginning, and shall have no end. He is from everlasting to everlasting. Then he is incomprehensible, which expresses the idea that the essential nature of God cannot be fully understood. God is also almighty and glorious, which means that he possesses all power, and is clad with all glory. This is the basis of his omnipotence, which is his power over all things, boundless and free, rendering him all glorious. These are the chief essential attributes of God mentioned in the Standards.

2. Attributes which are chiefly intellectual in their nature come next. God knows all things, for in his sight all things are open and manifest. His knowledge is infinite and infallible. It is also independent of the creature, and cannot in any real sense be contingent or uncertain. This is his omniscience. Then he is all-wise, which signifies that he not only knows all things in all their connections and conditions, but that he has power to arrange all events according to the counsel of his own will, and thereby to adapt means to intended ends. This is the wisdom of God. Then God has absolute freedom, as the Standards say that he is most free.

His doings are not determined by anything apart from himself. All that he does in creating the world, and in sustaining it, and all his gracious activity in the wide field of redemption, is freely done. In a sense this brings into view the moral attributes. The absolute freedom of God is the stepping-stone between the intellectual and the moral attributes.

3. Attributes which are mainly moral in their nature are now to be considered. Here the Standards enumerate quite a list, and in several cases it is evident that no clear line of separation is observed between the intellectual and the moral attributes of the divine nature and modes of operation. He is most holy, which denotes the absolute purity and moral perfection of his nature. He is also most righteous in all the exercises of his holy will, which means that all his doings are in harmony with the rectitude of his moral nature, as expressed in the moral law. He is also most just in all his dealings with his moral creatures, rendering unto each according to his deserts. These three attributes of holiness, righteousness, and justice are not to be entirely separated, for in a sense they are different aspects of the same thing rather than three different qualities. He is holy, says the Confession, in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. This description is all-embracing. As judge he administers his moral government in accordance with his holiness, righteousness, and justice; and if terrible, he is also just in all his judgments. In like manner God does, as he must from the very nature of the case, hate all sin. He cannot look upon it with the least degree of allowance.

4. Attributes which are rather of the nature of emotions remain to be considered. Speaking by way of analogy, what may be called qualities of the heart of God are to be explained. It is well to remark, however, that while the term heart is used, the language is taken from human analogies, for God has no such passions as human nature possesses.

Still, there are certain qualities exhibited by the divine activities which can only be expressed by terms which denote human emotions. First of all, the Confession says that God is most loving. This is a wide, all-comprehensive statement of the love of God in all its aspects and exercises, as set forth in the Scriptures. The Confession cannot, therefore, be justly charged with giving no proper place to the love of God in its creed statement. God is also most gracious, showing free and abundant favor to all his creatures, especially to those who are undeserving. In like manner, he is most merciful, and so extends clemency, on righteous grounds, to the guilty. He is long-suffering, too, bearing long with the wayward and hard-hearted; and to emphasize the love, grace, mercy and patience of God, it is added, both in the Confession and the Larger Catechism, that he is abundant in goodness and truth. The fact that he also forgives iniquity, transgression and sin, and rewards those who diligently seek him, is in like manner stated in the Confession. If he hates sin, and will by no means clear the guilty, he shows mercy, that he may be feared, and is loving, patient and kind.

Such, in four particulars, is the portrait which the Standards draw of God, as his being and modes of activity are exhibited by his attributes; and this portrait is true to Scripture, presenting God as a being alike strong and tender, at once just and loving. Moreover, it is a portrait which fully justifies the statement of the Confession that to God is due, from angels and men and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.

This completes the exposition of the attributes. In making it, the contents of the Standards have been exhibited with some care, and nothing additional has been introduced. The remainder of this chapter deals with the tri-personality of the divine being. This raises the subject of the Trinity.

III. *The Tri-personality of the Divine Essence.*

This important doctrine is merely stated in the Shorter Catechism, and has only a single brief section devoted to it in the Confession. In the Larger Catechism, however, there are three comprehensive questions bearing upon it. These will be followed closely in the brief statement now to be made, and all further theological speculations upon a very intricate subject will be avoided.

In general, the doctrine of the Trinity may be stated thus: In the Godhead, three distinct persons, who are the same in substance and equal in power and glory, subsist in a single indivisible essence. This is a slight expansion of the Shorter Catechism. The Larger Catechism names the three persons, and adds that these are one true eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory, although distinguished by their personal properties. The Confession makes a very compact utterance when it says that in the unity of the Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity. Putting what our Standards teach upon this great subject in an orderly form, there are four particulars to be noted.

1. The Godhead subsists in three persons. The names of these three persons are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. These three are properly called persons, because in the Scriptures the qualities of personality, such as individuality, intelligence, and free agency, are ascribed alike to these three. In other words, self-consciousness and self-determination, the elements of personality, are applied in the Scriptures equally to the three persons of the Godhead. The Father stands first in the order of being and operation. Hence, he is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding. Uniformly he is spoken of as first in order. The Son always stands second in order, and is eternally begotten of the Father. He is, and ever has been, the only-begotten and well-beloved Son of the Father. The Holy Ghost, or Spirit,

always stands third in order, and is represented as eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son, for he is called alike the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ. On account of this order of subsistence and operation, they are called the first, the second, and the third persons of the Godhead. But this does not denote that there is any inferiority of essence, or any limitation of attributes, in any of the three persons. It is only meant that there are eternal and abiding relations subsisting between the three persons, in the indivisible essence of the Godhead.

2. The second point relates to the peculiar property pertaining to each person. This is a point about which the theologians say very much, but the Standards do little more than state the fact, as is done in the Larger Catechism. These personal properties are to be carefully distinguished from the divine attributes already described. The attributes qualify either the essence, or the modes of the activity of the essence. The personal properties are possessed by the three persons, and modify them separately. The attributes pertain equally to all the persons, while the properties pertain only to each of the several persons in order. This distinction must always be kept carefully in mind.

First, The peculiar property of the Father is paternity, or fatherhood. The term is here to be taken in its narrow sense, as expressing the relation of the Father to the Son. The property of the Father is to beget the Son eternally. This does not imply the genesis of the Son in time; it expresses an eternal relation between the first and second persons in the Godhead, which relation may be suitably represented by analogy with the relation subsisting between a father and a son among men, leaving out of view the fact of origin in time.

Secondly, The peculiar property of the Son is filiation or sonship. Sonship is to be taken here in its special sense, as it bears upon the relation of the Son to the Father. The

Son is begotten eternally, which simply means that the Son from all eternity sustains that relation to the Father, according to which the person of the second person is constituted and ever abides, time not being taken into account at all. It is eternal constitution of person, and not temporal communication of essence, which should be made prominent here.

Thirdly, The peculiar property of the third person is procession or spiration. This means that from eternity the Holy Ghost holds the relation of one proceeding from the Father and the Son. It is to be remembered here also that this relation does not imply a beginning in time of the third person. It is rather an assertion that from eternity the third person sustains a certain inner constitutive relation to the other persons, which the term procession, in a measure, denotes. There has been much debate between the Latin and the Greek churches as to whether the Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, or from the Father only. This is the chief doctrinal barrier between the Eastern and the Western churches to-day. Protestantism has followed the opinion of the Western church, and holds that the Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son.

3. In regard to the proofs for the fact of the Trinity, the Standards in the Larger Catechism merely state the headings of the proof from the Scriptures. In a large measure this proof relates to the divinity of the second person and the personality of the third person, for the personality of the second and divinity of the third have scarcely ever been called in question. The complete proof of the Trinity requires the proof of the true deity and the real personality of each of the three persons. Omitting special points of proof which are peculiar to one or other of the three persons, the following heads of proof are common to all the persons, and are now mentioned.

First, Divine names in various ways are applied indiscrimi-

nately to each of the persons. This is done by the Scriptures in such a way as to indicate the true deity and personality of each of the persons. In the Scriptures names often indicate nature.

Secondly, Divine attributes, such as omniscience, omnipresence, absolute rectitude, and many others are applied equally to the three persons. This is done in such a way as to imply community of essence and true deity in each case.

Thirdly, Divine works, such as creation, inspiration, working of miracles and regeneration, are connected with the agency of each of the persons, and this again involves true deity and personal agency.

Fourthly, Divine worship and homage are to be given to each of the three persons. This is evident from the terms of the apostolic benediction, and of the formula of baptism. If none but God is to be worshipped, and if each of these three persons is to be reverenced as God, then each must be truly of the essence of deity.

From these mere heads of proof it is very evident that essential deity and true personality belong to each of the persons, and that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are distinct divine persons. This is the doctrine of the Trinity as taught in the Standards.

4. But a word may be added in regard to the modes in which the three persons stand related to the divine activity in creation, in providence, and in redemption. In general, it may be said that the Father works through the Son, by the Holy Ghost. Another statement is to the effect that the Father and the Son operate through the Holy Spirit. Still another way to state the same thing is to say that in all divine acts the three divine persons concur and agree. This is true of all the activities of the Godhead, but especially of those which pertain to redemption. Therein the Father originates the great and gracious plan by his wisdom and

his love. Then the Son, as the Mediator of the covenant and the Redeemer of his people, works out its conditions and provides its benefits; and, finally, the Holy Spirit brings sinful men into the personal possession of these benefits, and so he becomes the executive of the Godhead in the souls of men. But of this topic no further expansion can now be made.

CHAPTER V.

THE DECREES, OR GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 7, 8; LARGER CATECHISM, 12–14; CONFESSION OF FAITH, III.

THIS chapter leads to the consideration of a very difficult set of topics, and has to deal with what forms one of the great distinguishing features of the Westminster Standards. In general, the doctrine of predestination is to be explained, according to its statement in the Standards. The Shorter Catechism at this point states the general doctrine of the decrees, and then, in connection with the doctrines of redemption in Christ, it sets forth the subject of election. The Larger Catechism does the same thing, though not quite so distinctly. In this celebrated third chapter of the Confession, the whole doctrine of predestination, together with that branch of it termed election, is fully exhibited. For purposes of compact and complete statement the plan of the Confession is perhaps best; but for practical purposes of exposition there are some advantages in the order pursued in the Catechisms. According to the latter plan the general doctrine of the decrees, or God's eternal purpose, would be explained at this point, and then, in connection with the great redemptive work of Christ, election as a branch of the eternal plan of God would be explained. This would be in harmony with the true order of the factors involved in the purpose to redeem, according to the view of that order held by generic Calvinism, as taught in the Standards. This would also avoid even any appearance of the supra-lapsarianism, which has sometimes been unjustly charged against the Confession. The Confession has the best order for a rigid creed state-

ment, while that of the Catechisms is no doubt the best for purposes of religious instruction.

I. The explanation of some terms involved in the doctrine of this chapter may be useful at the outset. In this discussion there are several terms which are often used, and which it may be of advantage to have explained at once. This is now briefly done in a few paragraphs.

It may be well to remark that the term decrees used in the Standards is often rather misconstrued. It is often popularly taken to mean some sort of efficient and entirely sovereign enactments, which, in an authoritative, if not in an entirely arbitrary, manner determine all events in precisely the same way. But this is not the correct meaning of the term, and the term itself is perhaps not the best one that might have been used. The idea denoted by some such word as purpose, or plan, made and executed, is what is meant by the term decrees in the Standards. In this there cannot be, in the nature of the case, anything arbitrary or irrational. The definition in the Catechisms in a measure explains the term decrees from this point of view, and so relieves the difficulty to a certain extent. The Shorter Catechism says that the decrees are God's eternal purpose, and the Larger Catechism describes them to be the wise, free and holy acts of the counsel of God's will. This signalizes the term purpose, which is a very good one to denote what is here meant. Perhaps the best single word to signify what is intended by the term decree, is the simple word, plan. According to this idea, it is asserted that God has had from all eternity an all-wise and intelligible plan, and that all the events in nature, in providence and in grace, are but the bringing certainly into effect of the various parts of this all-embracing plan. After this preliminary remark, the terms already alluded to may be explained.

First, Foreknowledge is a term often used in these discussions. It expresses the fact that God, in the exercise of his

wisdom and omniscience, knows always and at all times everything which is to come to pass. Strictly speaking there is nothing future for him, as there is for finite minds, so that all events are at once present to his infinite knowledge. God knows beforehand all events in their relations, and with their conditions, so that there can be nothing entirely contingent, as a matter of fact.

Secondly, Foreordination is a general term which is used to express the fact that the divine ordination is related in some way or other to all that happens. The word really means to arrange beforehand, and so to predispose all events and their conditions in such a way that all shall come to pass according to the eternal plan. This fact pertains alike to the sphere of the natural order of the physical universe, and to that of the moral order of the divine government of responsible agents. Foreknowledge and foreordination are closely related, inasmuch as God foreknows events because he has in some way prearranged the happening of these events. To admit foreknowledge carries foreordination with it.

Thirdly, Predestination is still a stronger word, and it needs to be thoroughly understood. It literally means to bound or limit, and so to fix very definitely the happening of any event. Usually it stands as the word which specially denotes the Calvinistic views upon this subject, and so to express the plan of God as it relates to the acts and destiny of moral agents. In the Standards it is uniformly applied to the case of the elect, but never to that of the non-elect. The case of the latter is always denoted by the term ordination Predestinated to life and ordained to death is the fixed language of the Standards, and this should never be forgotten.

Fourthly, Election is the special term which, with abundant Scripture warrant, is applied to the heirs of salvation. The word means selected, designated, or chosen out. It relates to God's gracious plan or purpose to save certain per-

sons through Jesus Christ, and by the appointed means. This eternal plan, in its bearing upon those who are finally saved, must, in the nature of the case, be a gracious choice, and an efficacious salvation of sinful men. This is a very important term, and great care should be taken not to explain away its true scriptural signification.

Fifthly, Reprobation is the strongest word used in the discussions upon this great subject. At the very outset it is proper to say that this term, often so severely criticised, does not occur in the Standards. It has been introduced into theological discussions to denote the divine purpose in regard to the lost. But the Standards clearly do not quite justify the use sometimes made of this strong word. The Standards simply speak of the non-elect being passed by and left in their sin, so that the best word to express this fact is the word preterition, or passing-by. The non-elect are passed by and left in condemnation, on account of their sins. This word is certainly a much better one than reprobation, and the latter, let it never be forgotten, is not found in the Standards. But this explanation of terms must suffice for the present.

II. The fundamental fact in the doctrine of the decrees is the sovereignty of God over all things. It is needful to keep this in mind, in order to avoid narrow mechanical views of this great subject. The basal fact in the doctrine of the Standards at this point is the absolute sovereignty of an omniscient, omnipotent, and holy God. If this fact be rightly understood, as it is taught in the Scriptures and set forth in the Standards, then foreknowledge, foreordination, and predestination, which includes election, all follow as a matter of course. And, further, if this view of the divine sovereignty be held in its proper scriptural proportions, the Calvinistic view will appear to be the only one which does justice to all the facts in the case. If God be before all, over all, in all and through all things, and if by him all

things exist and subsist, then his absolute direction and control of all things, each according to the nature and powers which he has given it, must be admitted. And this is all that predestination, and that branch of it known as election, means; and less than this cannot be held and justice be done to Scripture. Emphasis, therefore, must be laid upon the fact of the divine sovereignty in the intelligent interpretation of the third chapter of the Confession.

III. The decrees, or eternal purpose of God, are next to be explained in a general way. The Shorter Catechism expresses this aspect of the decrees when it says that God by his eternal purpose foreordains whatsoever comes to pass. This, in briefest form, is a statement of the general scope of the eternal purpose of God, and it includes several particulars.

1. The purpose, or plan, is eternal. That God did from all eternity ordain, predestinate or elect, is the language of the Standards. This means that God ever had the plan in view which is being wrought out in the order of successive events, and his decree or purpose concerning all the parts and conditions of the plan is eternal. No part of the plan is an after-thought. The entire plan was present to the infinite wisdom of God from before the foundation of the world, and all events were arranged to fall out in time just as they do. The plan is eternal, while its execution is temporal.

2. The eternal plan or purpose involved in the decrees is wise, holy, and free. All the parts of its complex frame are wisely adjusted to each other. The means and ends, the conditions and results, the causes and effects, are all fitted to each other in such a way as to constitute a complex and organized whole. So far as God's immediate, or direct and efficient agency is concerned, it is holy. The plan had in it no evil of any kind, for everything was pronounced very good. Sin is an abnormal factor in the plan, as shall be

seen more fully in another chapter. Then, too, in framing the purpose, and in executing it, God is absolutely free. To decree, or purpose to create, was God's free choice. He was under no necessity of any kind in the case. So, also, in all the events of providence his free ordination is seen, for nothing happens by chance. And in the sphere of redemption everything is of God's own free favor and choice, for the grace and good pleasure of God everywhere appears in the salvation of sinful men.

3. God's eternal purpose is unchangeable, immutable, and unconditioned. These three words are grouped together to denote several general features of the eternal purpose of God. That God has unchangeably ordained whatsoever comes to pass is evident from Scripture, and from the nature of the case. As an omnipotent and omniscient sovereign he does not change. If at any time there be apparent change in the relations between the creator and the creature, the change must always be in the creature. The word immutable, used in the Standards, means almost the same thing as unchangeable. The word unconditioned brings in a slightly different idea. It means that nothing apart from God himself moved or determined him in forming his purpose or eternal plan. While God knows that certain things will come to pass upon certain conditions, yet these conditions of such events are not the condition of the purpose of God concerning these events. Hence God has not purposed or decreed anything simply because he foresaw it as future, or because he perceived that it would happen upon certain conditions. Thus a careful distinction must be made between events within the plan, which may stand related as condition and result, and the purpose of God which so related them as itself an unconditioned purpose. As related to the divine purpose, the whole plan and all its parts are unconditioned, while as related to each other the several parts may condition one another.

4. Several other features of the decrees may be grouped under a fourth head. The Standards carefully assert that God is not the author of sin. However and wherever sin had its genesis, it was neither in God, nor from his decree in any productive or efficient way. God simply, as will be seen in subsequent chapters, permits sin, and at the same time bounds and controls it for his wise and holy ends, even though these ends be inscrutable to men. In like manner the free agency of the creature is not impaired, nor in any way made to suffer violence by the purpose of God. The decree or purpose, viewed as a mere plan, cannot possibly affect the will of the creature, for it never comes into contact with it. It is the execution of the decree, if anything, which would do violence to the will of the creature. But in this sphere consciousness very clearly testifies that men are free agents, and not under any sort of necessity, even though the acts of men as free agents effecting the divine purpose are in themselves certain. And, again, the reality of second causes, with their dependent efficiency, is not destroyed, but rather established by the eternal purpose. The reason of this is that God's plan includes means and ends in their relation to each other, so that both are alike related to the divine decree, and the result shall surely come to pass.

5. The supreme end of the eternal purpose, plan, or decree is to manifest the glory of God. The Catechisms both say that God foreordained all things for his own glory. The Confession declares that it is for the manifestation of his glory, the glory of his grace, his power, and his justice that the purpose of God was formed and is carried out. The good of the creature, whilst a result which follows, is always subordinate to the glory of God, which is the chief end to which the divine purpose always has reference.

IV. God's eternal purpose is now to be viewed in its special or more limited sense. This brings up the teaching of the Standards in regard to the nature and destiny of

moral agents, such as men and angels, in relation to, or as affected by, the eternal purpose of God. This leads to the subject of predestination, in its bearing upon men and angels, and this requires an explanation of what the Standards teach regarding election and preterition. In making this explanation a few plain statements are set down in order.

1. As to the use of the terms foreordination and predestination, a remark of importance ought to be made. Predestination in the form of election is used only in regard to those who are chosen in Christ to be the subjects of salvation. It is never applied to the non-elect, who die impenitent and are finally lost. The term applied uniformly in the Standards to the latter class of men and angels is foreordination. They are foreordained to dishonor and wrath for their sin. In the Shorter Catechism the saved among men are said to be elected, and nothing whatever is stated regarding the lost. In the Larger Catechism some angels are said to be elected, certain men chosen to eternal life, and the lost are simply passed by and foreordained to their destiny. The Confession distinctly asserts that some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and some are foreordained unto everlasting death. The elect are predestinated, and the non-elect are foreordained. This is the fixed usage of the language of the Standards, and it is of the utmost importance to observe this usage in order to understand the doctrine, to avoid some of the difficulties in the case, and to ward off certain objections made against it.

2. Again, the elect are always said to be chosen in Christ, while the non-elect are simply said to be left in their sin. The divine purpose in election, therefore, is not an arbitrary choice, even if it is, so far as the creature is concerned, entirely unconditioned. Believers are chosen in Christ, and unto holiness, and with a view to everlasting life. The Larger Catechism says that God hath in Christ, by an eternal and immutable purpose, chosen some men unto eternal life.

The Confession says that God before the foundation of the world hath chosen in Christ those who are predestinated unto life. So, also, the purpose of preterition is not an arbitrary decree fixing destiny without any conditions on the part of those who are passed by. The sin of the non-elect is always presented as the ground of their final condemnation. The Larger Catechism states that those who are passed by are foreordained to dishonor and wrath to be for their sin inflicted. The Confession with equal distinctness makes the same assertion, when it says that those of mankind who are passed by, God has ordained them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice. The elect are chosen in Christ to holiness and life, while the non-elect are ordained to death for their sin. This is a point often sorely overlooked by many of those who reject the teaching of the Standards upon this subject.

3. According to the Standards, the ground of the salvation of the elect, and that of the doom of the non-elect, are very different. In the former case it is the love, the free favor or good pleasure of God, or the unsearchable counsel of his will. The Larger Catechism says that it was out of his mere love, and for the praise of his glorious grace, that some men and angels were elected. The Confession is much more explicit at this point, and says, negatively, that the ground of the choice of the elect is not God's foresight of their faith and good works, or their perseverance therein, nor is it anything in the creature that forms the basis of the electing purpose of God; and, positively, that it was out of his mere grace and love, and according to his secret counsel and good pleasure, that their election was made before the foundation of the world. In the latter case the ground or condition of the condemnation of the non-elect is entirely different. It is not merely the secret counsel and good pleasure of God which grounds the passing-by and condemnation of the non-elect. It is not merely the fact that God giveth and withholdeth mercy

as he pleaseth that conditions their destiny. It is the sin of the non-elect, and their continuance therein, which is the fundamental ground of their condemnation. This is simply ordination to death in harmony with the conditions and sanctions of God's moral government, for they, being left in their sin, are treated as their sin deserves. All were under sin, and so, guilty before God. Some are chosen to life, others are passed by and left in their sin. The ground of the choice is grace, while the ground of the passing-by is sin. The Standards must not be misunderstood at this point.

4. As to the number of the saved and of the lost, the Standards have something quite definite to say. This is a point, also, where they have been assailed with great misapprehension of the real import of their meaning. It is necessary, therefore, to explain this point with some care. The Confession alone speaks upon it. It says that these men and angels, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished. This much-criticised passage gives no favor to the charge sometimes made, to the effect that the Standards teach that only a few are elected and shall be saved, whilst the vast majority of men and angels shall be lost. The real point in this statement does not lie in the reference to the number of the elect and non-elect respectively, but it relates to the certainty of the destiny of each, from the standpoint of God's eternal purpose. If the fact be certain as to the final estate of each man from the view-point of the foreknowledge and foreordination of God, then the statement of the Confession is the only possible assertion in the case. If the matter be viewed from the standpoint of the result at the day of judgment, it will be seen that the number of the saved and of the lost is fixed. That this result is not of chance, nor even fixed by the choice of the moral agents concerned, apart from the divine purpose, is evident. Consequently,

the result, whatever it be as to the number saved and the number lost, was intended by God, and provided for in the purpose of election. From the view-point of the decree of God, or the divine purpose of election, the statement of the Confession is the only possible one which meets the facts in the case, if any statement at all is made.

5. The means requisite for the salvation of the elect are also provided for and included in the eternal purpose. This is a fact often overlooked in the interpretation of the Calvinistic doctrine. In the Confession alone is this clearly brought out, when it says that as God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so he hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. This being the case, all men are viewed as fallen in Adam, and then the elect of the fallen race are chosen in, and redeemed by, Christ, effectually called and enabled to believe in Jesus Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit in due season. Those who are thus called, regenerated, and believe, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. All these steps, as means to the end, are included in the purpose to save, and in due time these means are made effectual according to the same purpose, which secures that the sinner shall be made willing in the day of divine and gracious power. It naturally follows that none others are redeemed, called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved but the elect only. This means that of those given by the Father to the Son not one is lost, and that all who are thus saved were so given.

6. The end of predestination and foreordination is the glory of God. This does not mean that his essential glory is in any degree enhanced, but it implies that his glory is manifested in and by the divine purpose of election. The elect, in their final salvation, are for the praise of his glorious grace; and the non-elect, in their final condemnation, are for the praise of his glorious justice. The supreme end of the

eternal purpose is the glory of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

7. The Confession very properly utters a closing word of caution in regard to what it calls the high mystery of predestination. It is a doctrine to be handled with care and prudence. For the sinner, the doctrine has no practical meaning whatever. The only way by which a sinner can give evidence of his election is by attending to the revealed will of God, and by embracing the offer of the gospel, that by means of his effectual call he may prove his eternal election. Prior to this, nor in any other way, should the sinner ever raise the question of his election. But to the believer the doctrine becomes a matter of boundless praise to God, and of humble diligence in the service of Christ. When the believer thinks, as he may, that God had set his love upon him from all eternity, and in time wooed him from sin to the feet of the Saviour, and surely keeps and guides his steps all along the way to the gates of glory, then will his faith be made stronger, his love warmer, and his zeal in the service of his Master increase from day to day. The believer, therefore, finds comfort, strength, and joy in the doctrine.

CHAPTER VI.

CREATION AND PROVIDENCE.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 9–11; LARGER CATECHISM, 15–18; CONFESSION OF FAITH, IV.–V.

THIS chapter carries the exposition forward from the decrees to their execution, from the eternal purpose to its realization in time, from the all-comprehensive plan to its actual coming to pass. God executes his decrees, realizes his purpose, or carries out his plan in the works of creation and providence. At first glance, there may be some surprise felt that grace or redemption is not also mentioned here, but on looking into the Catechisms, and especially the Shorter, it will be found that the covenant of works is described as a special act of providence, which God exercised toward man in the estate in which he was created. In some respects it might have been better to have said that God executes his decrees in the works of creation, providence, and redemption, though the truths taught under this threefold arrangement would be substantially the same. In this exposition the twofold plan of the Standards will be followed, and it is at once entered on.

I. *Creation is First Considered.*

The Shorter Catechism states that God executes his decrees in the works of creation and providence. The Larger Catechism adds that this is done according to God's infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will. The Confession in a formal way devotes a chapter to the subject of creation, and one to that of providence. The former of these is now to be noticed.

The fact of creation has reference to the origin of all finite existing things. There is a twofold distinction which it is necessary to keep in mind in this whole exposition. This is

the distinction between what may be called primary and secondary creation. The former has reference to origin, strictly speaking; the latter to formation, or organization. That which relates to origin is real creation, and it consists in causing something to be where nothing was before; and that which pertains to formation relates to the organization of elements already existing into new forms.

Now the Standards, though they do not formally announce this distinction, do keep it in view in their various statements concerning the doctrine of creation. Perhaps it may be best to open up what the Standards say upon this subject by arranging their teaching under two general heads, the one dealing with the things created, and the other with the nature of the divine act in creating, so far as it can be understood.

1. *The Finite Existing Things which were Created.*

(*a*), The world, or cosmos, and all things therein, comes first. This includes the whole frame of the material universe, and not simply the earth, which is the abode of man. This also involves the origin of the primal elements which true creation brings into being, as well as new results which secondary creation produces in orderly form. The Confession says that things visible and invisible were created. The term visible no doubt relates to the material or substantial elements of the universe, and the word invisible was likely intended to denote the invisible forces with which the elements were endowed, and the orderly forms according to which they were arranged. Here, too, may properly be included all forms of life, no matter what view is taken of its nature. The term invisible might also embrace the souls of men and also the angels, but it is doubtful whether the framers of the Confession so intended. The main idea, no doubt, is that the whole cosmos of matter, force, and form was originated by the creative act of God. It is likely that angelic beings existed prior to the material universe.

(*b*), After God had brought into existence, either by primary or secondary creation, all other things, he created man as the crowning product of his hand upon this earth. He made the race to consist of male and female, and endowed them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls. This statement cannot be easily harmonized with the theory that man was, either as to his soul or body, slowly evolved by some purely natural process from some lower animal form. There is evidently a genetic difference between man and brute, according to the Standards. His body and his rational and immortal nature are alike due to the creative power of God, either directly or indirectly exercised. His body was formed of the dust of the ground, and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he thus became a living soul. Then the woman was made of the rib of the man, as the Larger Catechism, following the Scripture, states.

Further, man was created in the image or likeness of God. This image does not consist in mere bodily resemblance, but in spirituality of nature, and especially in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. Hence the likeness of man to God consists chiefly in possessing a mental, moral, and religious nature. As a result of this, man was created with the law of God written on his nature, which means that he was made, not merely in a state of negative innocence with no bent of disposition toward God, but that he was created with original righteousness as a positive possession of his nature. He was also created with ability to fulfil the moral law, and to render that service to God which was required of him. Perfect obedience to the law under which he was placed by virtue of his creation was possible, and man's fall into sin was by no means necessary. He was also endowed with free agency, or liberty of will, so that whatever he did was done freely and without compulsion of any kind, such freedom being necessary to moral responsibility. Then, having this moral freedom, and at the same time being finite and

not confirmed in virtue, his will, and consequently his actions and moral disposition, was subject to change, and so man was liable to fall away from his state of obedience and rectitude.

The last thing mentioned in the Standards concerning man at this stage is that he had dominion over the creatures. This is what the Scriptures say, and it is in accordance with the well-known facts in the case. The Confession at this point hints at what is afterwards described as the covenant of life or works, but as this topic is referred to later on in the Confession, and is definitely treated of in the Catechisms at a subsequent stage, its consideration may be properly deferred at present.

(*c*), In the Larger Catechism special mention is made of the fact that God also created the angels, and that this was done by him before man was brought into being. Angels were created as spirits, immortal, holy, excelling in knowledge, of mighty power; and it is added that the purpose of their being is to execute the commands of God, and to praise his great and holy name. Like man, the angels possessed moral agency, which involves freedom, and were therefore subject to change. It may be properly added that the angels were not created a race, or species, as man was. Each angelic being was a separate creation, and each one that fell must have fallen personally, even as those that were confirmed in holiness must have experienced personal confirmation. This will be seen to be a very important fact when God's covenants with man come to be considered. Race connection is a fact in the case of man, but it does not exist in that of the angels. This race connection is the ground of the covenant constitution between Adam and the human race. And the fact of the incarnation of the Son of God provides the basis for the covenant relation which subsists between Christ and his people.

2. The nature of the creative activity in general is now to

be described. This topic is, of course, inherently mysterious, so that all that need now be done is to mention some of the things which are stated in the Standards. What is here referred to is the nature of the genesis of finite dependent existence. It relates not merely to material substance and physical force, or even to forms of life, but also to the origin of spiritual substance, and the rational and moral endowment of responsible personal agents, such as men and angels. Here several items are to be noted.

(*a*), The divine creative act produced its result out of nothing. This does not mean that nothing was the something out of which the finite universe was made. This language merely lays stress upon the fact of a real origin, the genesis of something *de novo*. It simply means that something began to be where nothing existed before, even in elemental form. All speculative notions of matter being eternal, or of finite substance being part of the essence of deity, are set aside by the teaching of the Standards upon this subject.

(*b*), Next, the Standards teach that the world was made in the space of six days. Here secondary creation comes chiefly into view, and the way in which the result of primary creation in chaotic form was reduced to an orderly cosmic condition during a period of six days is described. It is not necessary to discuss at length the meaning of the term days here used. The term found in the Standards is precisely that which occurs in Scripture. Hence, if the word used in Scripture is not inconsistent with the idea of twenty-four hours, or that of a long period of time, the language of the Standards cannot be out of harmony with either idea. There is little doubt that the framers of the Standards meant a literal day of twenty-four hours, but the caution of the teaching on this point in simply reproducing Scripture is worthy of all praise. The door is open in the Standards for either interpretation, and the utmost care should be taken not to shut

that door at the bidding of a scientific theory against either view.

(*c*), The agency by which creation was effected is said to have been the word of God's power in the beginning. The Confession, with great scriptural accuracy, connects creative power and agency with each of the three persons of the Trinity. The Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are all concerned in the matter of creation. The order of execution here is what is usually found in the outward trinitarian operations. The Father creates through the Son and by the Holy Ghost. In other words, the three persons concur in all creative acts.

(*d*), The nature of the product of creation was all very good. It was without defect of any kind. This does not imply that everything had reached its goal of absolute perfection, but that everything was rightly fitted for its place and purpose. Physical disorder did not exist, nor did moral evil at first pertain to the results of the creative activity of God, so that it cannot be in any sense the product of divine origination. The purpose of creation, it need only be added, is the glory of God's eternal power, wisdom and goodness. This is the high aim which the Standards always set for the creative acts of God, and in like manner for the activity of the creature.

Many inferences might be made from the teaching of the Standards regarding creation. It is clear that the universe had a beginning, even as to its elements, so that matter cannot be eternal. Spirit is prior in time to matter, and hence materialism in every form is excluded. The result of creation is the origin of something entirely new, and hence pantheism is rejected, as it also is by the fact of the personality of God. It is evident, too, that mere natural development cannot explain the origin and intelligible order of the universe; nor can it be maintained that man is the gradual product of organic evolution from some brute species. The

reality of man's moral nature, and the validity of God's moral government, are both clearly involved in the teaching of the Standards.

II. *The Doctrine of Divine Providence.*

This is a subject of much importance and of great difficulty. Its treatment in the Standards is as complete and satisfactory a discussion of the subject as is to be found anywhere. The Shorter Catechism defines providence as God's most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions. The Larger Catechism expands the last clause by saying that God orders his creatures and all their actions to his own glory; and it also makes special allusion to God's providence with respect to the angels. Both Catechisms suggest the two branches of the doctrine of providence which theologians usually discuss. These are known as "Preservation" and "Government." The Confession, in its very complete statement of the doctrine of providence, does not so clearly announce this twofold division, although it virtually implies it. According to the Confession, God upholds, directs, disposes, and governs all creatures, actions, and things, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will. This is a very complete statement. The upholding of this passage is the preserving of the Catechisms; and the directing, disposing, and governing of which it speaks come naturally under the Catechism notion of government. These two heads of the doctrine are to be now explained.

1. *Preservation is the First Branch of Providence.*

God, who created all things, also continues to preserve the works of his hands. As to this fact, the Standards very plainly assert it, so that all deistical theories of God's relation to his works are excluded. Blind chance does not rule in the universe, but a free and intelligent preservation, which is not of the nature of continuous creation, is exer-

cised over all things by the same God who made them. God is immanent in all his works, as well as transcendent in relation to them. In him all things live, move, and have their being; and his tender mercies are over all his works.

This preserving and upholding extends to all God's creatures, and to all their actions. Inanimate creation and all forms of organic life are not only upheld in being by him, but maintained in the exercise of all the powers which God may have given to each. All free moral agents, such as men and angels, are also preserved by God's providence, and are thereby sustained, directed, and disposed, in accordance with the free, rational, moral nature which each possesses. And the same preservation pervades the sphere of grace, and by means of it believers and the church are securely preserved. Nothing is too great to be above divine direction, and nothing is too small to be beneath God's preserving care. He numbers the sparrows as they fall, and counts the hairs on the heads of the children of men. God preserveth man and beast. This is a very important branch of the doctrine to keep in mind at the present day, when the tendency of certain modern types of science and philosophy is to put God as far as possible in the background of his works.

2. *Government is the Other Branch of Providence.*

It is under this branch of the doctrine of divine providence that the chief difficulties lie. The contents of the Standards at this point must, therefore, be explained with some care. A bold mechanical philosophy assails the doctrine at this juncture, and some theologians are in danger of conceding too much to this philosophy. The following particulars are of value here.

(*a*), The nature of God's government is first stated. The Standards affirm that it is holy, so that there can be no element of evil in it. It is also a wise government, for under it

there is a wise adaptation of means to ends, of conditions to results, and of causes to effects. All this adaptation serves to bring to pass what God has ordained, so that all things happen under God's hand, and not by chance. Further, it is a powerful government, so that whatsoever God pleases comes to pass under his almighty hand.

(*b*), The ground or basis of this government is next to be stated. It rests upon God's infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his will. God sees the end from the beginning, and he is able, therefore, to govern all things with certainty and wisdom. In the fact of the divine foreknowledge certainty is provided for, inasmuch as future events can only be known as certain by assuming that they are under the ordaining government of a wise and powerful God. Hence, if God foreknows all things, it is because he has ordained all things, and is effectively governing all that comes to pass.

(*c*), Then the end of the government which God exercises over his creatures and all their actions is his own glory. The Confession says that it is for the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy. This is a very suggestive statement, and it emphasizes the fact again that the glory of God is his chief end in the works of creation, providence, and redemption. For the manifestation of his glory he created the universe; in governing it he continues to manifest his glory; and in redeeming those who are the heirs of everlasting life he specially shows forth his glory.

(*d*), The mode of the divine government is also exhibited in a variety of connections in the Confession. The chief particulars are now set down in order.

Though, as has been seen in connection with the foreknowledge and ordination of God, all things that come to pass happen certainly, or, as the Confession says, immutably and infallibly, yet the same providence which, in the form

of divine government, brings these things to pass with absolute certainty, also causes them to happen in harmony with the nature and powers of the things, creatures, or actions concerned. Hence, second causes, with their dependent and constituted efficiency, are called into play. These second causes operate under God's hand, and according to their several natures and original endowments. Hence, in the sphere of physical nature these causes operate according to the law of necessity, and the divine government is exercised in harmony therewith. In the case where one event is conditioned upon another, as, for example, the rising of the sun with the revolution of the earth upon its axis, or the saving of the ship's crew with Paul in the shipwreck if they remained on board, the event, though certain, is yet relatively contingent; but the government of God in the case extends to both the condition and the result.

In the case of the actions of free moral agents, their actions, as events, happen or come to pass in conformity with the laws of the nature of such agents. Hence, while all volitions and acts of free agents are, as a matter of fact, certain, though not necessary, yet God's providential government extends over all the acts of free agents. From the divine side they are certain, because God governs them, and from the side of the free agent their production is consciously free.

Secondly, In thus governing, God usually uses means in his ordinary providential procedure, yet he is not so bound by such means as to be compelled always to resort to their use. As an absolute sovereign, he is free to work without, above, or against means at his pleasure. This allows a proper place for the introduction and operation of the extraordinary or supernatural activities of God in any sphere of his providential government. This statement of the Standards provides a place for special divine revelation, for the miracle, for answer to prayer, and for the experiences of divine grace

in the soul. Hence, God is not bound by the order of nature which he has constituted, but is free to intervene, and in any way deemed proper to modify that order by his providential government. This is the secure philosophical basis of the supernatural activities of God.

Thirdly, God's providential government in respect to sin is also to be explained. Here there is a profound mystery in regard to which the Standards speak with remarkable caution. The Confession says that the power, wisdom, and goodness of God are so manifested in providence that they extend themselves to the first fall of man, and also to all other sins of men and angels. This is a plain assertion that even sinful and sinning moral agents are under the providential government of God. As to the mode of this government, the Confession teaches, negatively, that it is not a bare permission by which God has simply allowed sin to come into his domain. He does permit sin in the sense that he neither produces nor hinders it; but he also bounds the operations of sin by his wise and powerful providence, and he so orders and governs the sinful acts of moral agents that they are made to minister to his own holy ends. Thus, positively, God by his providential government permits and yet so controls sin, that the sinfulness always pertains to the creature and proceeds from him, and never from God, who cannot be the author or approver of sin.

Fourthly, The relation of the government of God to his church and people deserves brief remark. In a special sense God takes care of his church, and by his providence disposes all things for its good and his own glory. In regard to his people the Confession teaches that God may leave them to manifold temptations, and to the evil of their own hearts, for some wise and gracious end. This may be partly to chastise them for their former sins, or to reveal to them the evil and deceit of their own hearts, or partly to humble his children, and so lead them to walk more closely with God, and to

cause them to exercise dependence and watchfulness, that they may not fall again into sin. In this connection the solution of many of the perplexing problems of religious experience may be found. It is the paternal discipline of the Father scourging every son whom he receiveth.

Fifthly, The effects of God's providential government upon wicked and ungodly men is alluded to in a comprehensive and important section of the Confession. In respect to such men God is a righteous judge, and his government in their case is judicial. As punishment for former sins, God may blind the mind and harden the heart of the sinful moral agent. He may also withhold grace, and withdraw gifts, for all grace and every gift depends upon his good pleasure. The result of this procedure is to expose them more than ever to the evil of their own hearts, to the temptations of the world, and to the power of Satan. The consequence is that they harden themselves more and more. Even the same conditions which, with grace and divine favor, would soften and sanctify the heart, will produce hardening when grace is withheld and God's judicial displeasure incurred. This is a solemn fact set forth in the Scriptures, and often sadly confirmed by the experience of men.

Sixthly, A single brief paragraph remains to be added in regard to what the Larger Catechism says about God's providence in reference to the angels. Under his inscrutable providence, God permitted some of the angels to fall wilfully and irrecoverably into sin, and so to come under condemnation. Yet even their sin he limits and orders for his own glory. The rest of the angels he has been pleased to establish in holiness, and he also employs them at his pleasure in carrying forward his purposes of power, mercy and justice. His angels do his pleasure, and are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation.

This concludes what the Standards teach in reference to the great topics of creation and providence. In the Cate-

chisms, as already mentioned, the sad fact of the fall of man into sin and guilt, and in a sense the whole economy of redemption, is construed under the scope of providence. But the Confession does not so strictly follow this arrangement. The next chapter proceeds to explain the first covenant constitution made with man.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COVENANT OF WORKS, OR OF LIFE.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 12, 13; LARGER CATECHISM, 20, 21; CONFESSION OF FAITH, VI., VII.

IN this chapter profound questions connected with God's moral government arise. Here, too, the dawn of that bright day of grace which God was preparing for the darkness of man's sin appears, for even the covenant of works, legal as it at first sight appears to be, is essentially gracious in its nature. The Catechisms describe the covenant of works as a special act of the providence of God; and, as the covenant of grace is founded on the ruins of that of works, the whole scope of sin and redemption may be regarded as phases of God's providential dealings with the children of men. Three topics are to be explained in this chapter. These are the original state of man and his relation to God, the covenant of works or of life, and the sad failure of that gracious arrangement. On each of these the Standards have something to say, and what they say is now to be explained.

I. *Man's Original State and Relation to God.*

The original moral state of man, and his relation to God at the instant of his creation, and prior to the institution of the covenant of life with him, first come to view. Man is now to be considered under the conditions of pure moral government, apart entirely from all reference to any sort of covenant arrangement. What view of man in this primitive, pre-covenant state do the Standards present? The Confession does not clearly distinguish between this and the covenant state, and curiously enough it treats of the fall and of sin before it sets forth the covenant relations, and when it does set them forth it presents both covenants side by side.

The Shorter Catechism lays stress upon the covenant relation, but says nothing definite about the pre-covenant state. The Larger Catechism has a good deal to say about this prior state of man, as well as of the covenant of works and its failure in the fall of Adam. The following particulars are to be considered here.

1. The circumstances of man's primitive condition are of some interest. Touching this the Larger Catechism follows the narrative in Genesis very closely. Man at first was placed in what is called Paradise, which consisted in what is known as the garden of Eden. His pleasant task there was to till and dress the garden, and so to keep it in order. How delightful this task must have been, and how beautiful the garden as it was thus kept in that happy sinless era prior to the cursing of the ground for man's sake!

Man was also given full liberty to eat of all the fruits of the earth, for at first there seems to have been no prohibition such as the subsequent covenant presented. It is also probable that in this early age man used vegetable diet only, and that animal food was not taken at all till a later period. And over the lower animal creation God gave man dominion; and thus, as king of all created things on earth, man is represented as naming the animals, and the animals in turn are seen to be subject to him. Man and beast dwelt together in unity and peace in that joyous and happy Edenic state.

Then marriage was also instituted, so that Adam and Eve were husband and wife in their primitive condition. They were to be helpmeets to each other, and all that true joy and support which the marriage relation would afford in a sinless state was no doubt theirs. In this way the ideal home and family were constituted among men. In addition, the Sabbath, as a day of rest and as a season for worship, was appointed. By this means the great creation process was kept in memory, and special opportunity given to man for communion with God. For this communion no mediator would

be needed in this holy, unfallen state, for therein man would have direct access to his Maker.

2. Man's nature in this primitive state is now to be further explained. Already, in the preceding chapter, some things have been said touching this point, so that further remark may be quite brief. Man in this state was possessed of a completely endowed mental, moral, and religious nature. God's law was, so to speak, written in his heart, so that he had thereby an immediate knowledge of that law in relation to the divine moral government under which he, by the very fact of his creation, was placed. Hence, man had not to await instruction and experience in order to constitute him an intelligent, moral, and religious being. And in this connection it is worth while remarking that man in this primitive stage of his career was not a primeval savage. The biblical account, which is reproduced in the Standards, entirely forbids the acceptance of some of those modern theories of primitive savagism, which are quite popular in certain cultured circles at the present day. While not in possession of all that knowledge of the arts and sciences which is involved in modern civilization, yet man was evidently in the enjoyment of a high degree of mental power, of a well-defined measure of moral culture, and of a decided religious attainment. This position must be firmly held.

3. Man's moral endowment and ability are also to be explained. This, too, was touched upon in the last chapter, so that only a remark or two need now be added. Made in the image of God, man had kinship with his Maker, and was qualified to know and serve him. By this fact man was lifted high above the brute, and was made a little lower than the angels. Man also possessed what is known as original righteousness. This righteousness was con-created, and was part of his original constitution, just as much as his mental and moral endowment. The Romish view, that original righteousness was a gracious gift bestowed upon man some-

time after his creation, and so not an inherent quality of his nature, is rejected by the teaching of the Standards. With a nature thus endowed and equipped in the knowledge of the will of his Maker, man had entire ability to do all that God required of him in the way of moral obedience and religious service. It was in his power, therefore, to keep perfectly the law of God, in the proper exercise of his moral nature and ability. Thus was man qualified to stand perpetually in the favor of God, though as free and finite he was mutable and subject to fail in his obedience, and fall away from the divine favor.

4. The condition of securing the divine favor, and of obtaining eternal life in this pre-covenant state must also be understood. This is a point of some importance, especially in enabling one to understand the nature and benefits of the covenant constitution. In the pre-covenant state man was, as has been shown, under pure moral government. God was moral ruler and man was moral subject. Personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience was required on the part of man. Had many men appeared on the earth under this relationship, each one for himself would have had to stand, and on purely moral grounds win life and divine favor by personal obedience or good works. A single disobedience would bring the man into condemnation, and from this he would have no possible way of escape. Each man, too, would stand or fall for himself, and the standing or the falling of any particular man would not affect the legal status of his posterity in the least, or bring them any imputed benefit or disability. It is easy to see that under this relationship mutable man would surely find his standing before God far from secure. Some might stand and others might fall, and there would be no adequate ground upon which any one could be confirmed in holiness and the favor of God. Above all, there would be no possible remedy for the sin of those who were disobedient. At this point the gracious nature of the covenant of works is evident.

II. *The Covenant of Works, or of Life.*

The Catechisms speak very plainly of this first or legal covenant, but the Confession alludes with brevity to this covenant, as a sort of introduction to what it has to say at length about the covenant of grace, or the second covenant. All that the Standards have to say upon this important topic will now be gathered together in the statements of this section. The covenant relation is called by different names in the Standards. The Catechisms describe it as a covenant of life. The Confession terms it a covenant of works, and also describes it as a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is sometimes known as the legal covenant, to distinguish it from the evangelical covenant of the New Testament. All these terms of description denote different aspects of the new relation into which God entered with man. This new relation is known as the covenant relation, and the first form of it is that known as the covenant of works. This consists essentially in the fact that God made certain promises upon certain conditions, and attached certain sanctions to the promises. This is the essence of the covenant idea.

1. The covenant relation, even in its first form, was gracious in its nature. While its condition was legal and required obedience, still the constitution itself and the result which it aimed to secure were gracious. The Confession emphasizes this by pointing to the fact that there is a vast distance between God the Creator and man the creature. This distance is so great, and the demands of God's moral government are so exact, that although as reasonable creatures men did render perfect and constant personal obedience, they could never have any fruition of God. This simply means that men under pure moral government could never acquire any merit beyond that involved in meeting the strict demands of the perfect moral law of God; and men all the while under pure moral government would be servants, rendering a legal

obedience, and not sons established in the favor of God, and enjoying the blessedness which was to be secured through the covenant relation. To secure for man such benefits, a voluntary condescension on God's part was necessary, which would transpose the status of pure moral servitude into that of covenant merit and reward. This condescension, which was voluntary and gracious, God has been pleased to express by way of a covenant, and it is the first of these, that with Adam, which is now to be explained.

2. *The Nature of the Covenant of Works.*

Literally, a covenant is a compact, a bargain, an arrangement, a constitution or a treaty. As already stated, its essential features are certain promises made upon certain conditions. If it is found that promises were made by God to Adam upon certain conditions, and that these conditions were not fulfilled by him, so that certain penalties were incurred, then the essential elements of a covenant exist. Here several particulars require to be mentioned.

(*a*), In the covenant arrangement there are certain parties who enter into an agreement, wherein certain promises are made and accepted upon certain conditions. To use a legal phrase, these are the parties of the first and second parts. In the covenant of works the parties are God and Adam. But Adam in some way stood for, and represented, the race. The Catechisms simply assume this when they say that God entered into a covenant of life with man, for Adam was as yet the only man. The Confession speaks even more plainly, for it says that God in the covenant promised life to Adam and his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience. The Larger Catechism, in the twentieth question, asserts that the covenant was made with Adam as a public person, in which capacity Adam must have acted not only for himself but for the whole human race as his posterity.

This federal or representative status of Adam in the cove-

nant is one which is very important, not only in regard to the way in which the whole race has become sinful and guilty by reason of its relation to Adam and his sin, but also in regard to Christ and in the covenant of grace, and the way in which those who believe in him obtain the benefit of his sufferings and death. In other words, the federal relations of Adam and Christ are the ground of the imputation of guilt and righteousness respectively. At this point, therefore, it may be well to give emphasis to this relationship. In the Standards two facts seem to be set side by side, in regard to the relation between Adam and the race in him, according to the covenant arrangement. The one is the natural rootship, and the other is the federal headship. According to the former of these ideas, Adam is the source or fountain from which the whole race has come by natural generation, or hereditary descent. According to the latter, the whole race was legally represented before God in and by Adam. The fact that he was the natural root of the race fitted him to be the federal head, so that there could be nothing arbitrary or unjust in the covenant relation. If proof of the fact that such a covenant relationship really existed in the case of Adam were asked, it can be found in the covenants with Noah, Abraham, Jacob and others, as set forth in the Scripture record. Further proof may be derived from the fact that the divine method of procedure in the case of families and nations is to deal with them through representative persons. But the crowning proof of Adam's covenant status is the scriptural analogy between him and Jesus Christ, in regard to whose covenant relation there can be no doubt in the great matter of redemption. In some sense, therefore, the race was in Adam. As to the nature of this in-being in Adam, the doctrine of the Standards is that the race was in Adam both naturally and federally, under that modification of the divine moral government which is exhibited by the covenant of works. The race naturally springs

from Adam, and it is in some way involved in the legal disabilities which Adam incurred.

(*b*), *The Condition of the Covenant.*

Broadly stated, the condition of the covenant was perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience to what God required. The Shorter Catechism says that perfect obedience, the Confession that perfect and personal obedience, and the Larger Catechism that perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience is the condition of the covenant. Of the two trees specially mentioned, the tree of life seems to have been the pledge of the covenant, while the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the test of the obedience required. This tree was prohibited, and of its fruit man was forbidden to eat upon pain of death. The simplicity and suitableness of this test are evident. It served to test loyalty to, and confidence in, God, in an exceedingly effective way. It was a positive command to abstain from what in itself, apart from the prohibition of God, was entirely lawful. It was thus not a difficult moral achievement, from which man might justly have shrunk, but it was a simple act of abstinence, based upon the fact that God gave the command as a test of loyalty. This view of the case removes many of the objections brought against the divine procedure in connection with the covenant of works, to the effect that it was an artificial one. It was a simple, suitable, gracious test.

(*c*), *The Sanctions of the Covenant.*

This is the third important factor in the covenant. The promise attached to the covenant really constituted the sanction. This sanction is twofold in its nature. It is at once a promise and a threatening. It involves both a reward and a penalty. The penalty follows disobedience, and the reward comes as the result of obedience. The Standards, following the Scripture narrative closely, describe the sanctions of the covenant chiefly on their negative side. Both the Catechisms set forth the sanction as pain of death, following closely the

words of Scripture, "thou shalt not die." The Confession presents the positive side when it says that life was promised to Adam and his posterity on condition of obedience. If the sanction, "eat and thou shalt die," be true, equally true is the converse, "eat not and thou shalt live." It is to be kept in mind that the death here spoken of is death in its deepest sense, as the penal sanction of the covenant. This includes, as will soon be further seen, physical, spiritual, and eternal death.

3. *The Result of the Keeping of the Covenant on Man's Part.* Not much need be said upon this point, as the Standards say but little directly concerning a happy result which was never attained, for the destiny of the race soon passed into the dark shadow of the failure of the covenant on man's part. If the condition of the covenant had been fulfilled by Adam, life at the end of the covenant probation period would have been secured for Adam himself, and for the whole race in him. This is usually taken to include two things: *First*, There would have been permanent establishment in the favor of God, and possibly elevation to the status of sonship; and, *Secondly*, Confirmation in personal holiness would also follow. If the probation under the covenant had been successful, these two results would no doubt have been the inheritance of the race. The gracious nature of the covenant plan again very clearly appears in this connection, for the whole race was given a probation under the most favorable circumtances, there was limitation in the number of persons whose obedience was required, Adam was as capable as any man could possibly be to render the obedience, and there was limitation, in all probability, in regard to the time during which covenant obedience was required. Each of these facts shows divine grace towards man in the covenant relation.

III. *The Fall, or the Failure of the Covenant of Works.* This is the third and last topic for this chapter, and it raises some exceedingly deep and difficult problems con-

nected with the coming in of sin to the sphere of human history. Why a holy and almighty God should permit the fall of man is one great problem, which only carries the inquiry further back, and raises the question of the origin of moral evil in the apostasy of Satan and his hosts. To this no answer can be given, so that, with bowed head, the dark mystery can only be confessed. In like manner, the sin and moral apostasy of a holy moral agent with a disposition inclined to God and righteousness is a mystery scarcely less serious. The Standards, with their usual wisdom, do not speculate upon these deep problems; they simply state the dark, sad facts as they appear in Scripture and are illustrated in human history. Several particulars are to be set down.

1. *The Possibility of the Fall of Man from his Holy State.* That the fall occurred is evidence of its possibility. But to explain its possibility is not so easy a matter. Man, as has already been seen, was endowed with moral freedom, and as a free, responsible agent he was placed under the covenant relation. Both Catechisms say that our first parents were left to the freedom of their own will; and the Confession, in the ninth chapter, asserts that man in his unfallen state had power to will and to do what was good, yet he was mutable, so that he might fall from his holy state. The teaching here seems to be, that in some mysterious way the possibility of the fall lay in the fact that man was endowed with finite, mutable, moral freedom. In the particular nature of the test of loyalty, under the covenant already referred to in this chapter, there is another side-light cast upon this dark subject. The prohibition not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree was a positive command, not in its own nature moral. Hence, innocent desire for that which was in itself morally indifferent might pass over into the transgression of a positive divine command relating to that which was morally indifferent. This may be the line along which the solution of the problem of the possibility of the fall of man lies, but it is not presented

as a full explanation of the problem. The facts are simply accepted.

2. *The Source of the Fall.*

Touching this inquiry the Shorter Catechism is silent, but the Larger and the Confession have something to say upon it. On the one hand, our first parents were tempted by Satan; and on the other, this temptation and their fall under it were permitted by God. Our first parents were seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, and so sinned by eating the forbidden fruit, says the Confession; while the Larger Catechism says that it was through the temptation of Satan that they transgressed the commandment of God, and so fell from their estate of innocence. This sin God was pleased to permit, according to his wise and holy counsel, having purposed to order it for his own glory. This permission is not a bare permission, but a bounding and controlling to holy ends of the sin of man. Man fell, tempted by Satan, permitted by God, and freely acting.

3. *The Process of the Fall.*

This, of course, is not described fully in the Standards, yet it is so implied therein that a few sentences setting forth the account in Genesis may be of some value here. The tempter came upon the scene; he approached the woman first; he appealed to her physical appetite, to her desire for knowledge, and to her natural pride. She was persuaded to eat, and she gave also to her husband, who was now with her, and he did eat. And when they did thus both eat, the transgression of the covenant law was complete. The test of loyalty was broken, and man went into apostasy and rebellion. A breach between God and man was made. Moral and spiritual separation between them took place. As a proof of their sense of guilt, Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of God; and, as an evidence of their sense of inward defilement, they sought to cover their nakedness. In this way, by eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree, our

first parents failed to fulfil the covenant condition of life, and so they forfeited the life that was promised by the covenant.

4. *The Results of the Fall of Man.*

This is a large subject, which can only be briefly treated here. The Standards are closely followed, and a few items are noted.

First, By reason of the fall of man sin came in. It entered the sphere of man's activity, and became a part of the stream of human history. Want of conformity to, and transgression of, the law of God were introduced. Man became sinful and sinning. And, further, our first parents were reduced from their representative status. They became private persons, and began a career of actual transgression, which would have ended in eternal death had the promise of a deliverer not been made to them. Thus sin entered, and thus the promise appeared.

Secondly, Guilt was incurred. The race of man fell into an estate of condemnation. This condemnation was judicial, and by means of it they lost their original righteousness, and were deprived of their communion with God. The influence of the Spirit of God would be judicially withdrawn, and all spiritual fellowship with God would be broken. This judicial infliction, and the spiritual death in sin which would follow, are the penal consequences of the sin of our first parents and of the failure of the covenant thereby. It is also sad proof of the fact that all men became guilty before God, and that the penalty of that guilt was death, which involves the separation of the soul from God, and the defilement of all the faculties of both soul and body. The image of God was effaced, original righteousness was lost, and the corruption of the whole nature of man followed.

Thirdly, Life and divine favor were no longer possible by means of this covenant. The Confession says that man by his fall made himself incapable of life by that covenant of

works which he failed to keep. Man lost all by failing to keep the covenant condition, and, in the very nature of the case, man could not repair the damage which his sin had wrought, either for himself or for the race in him. If saved at all, another covenant must be devised, which shall meet the conditions of the guilt and depravity into which man, by his sin and fall, had brought himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

ORIGINAL SIN.

Shorter Catechism, 16–19; Larger Catechism, 22–29; Confession of Faith, VI.

THIS is a dark subject, and, withal, one which is treated at some length in the Standards. The Catechisms especially give large space to it, for at this point they set forth the entire doctrine of sin which they teach. The Confession, as already indicated, treats of the fall and its effects upon man before the covenant of works is described. In a single brief chapter the teachings of the Standards in reference to the dark, sad fact of sin will be gathered up in an orderly way. It will be noted that this exposition connects itself closely with the conclusion of the last chapter.

I. *Three General Introductory Remarks.*

It may be of some advantage in grasping the doctrine of the Standards in regard to sin to have some general explanatory remarks made concerning three important points. This is now done at the outset.

1. The Standards evidently assume that the race of mankind is bound up with our first parents in some close and intimate way. This connection, however it be understood or explained, is assumed by the Standards to be a great and basal fact in their doctrine of sin. The race was in some sense in Adam, sinned in him, and fell with him in his sin. He was the root from whence the race sprang, and under the covenant he was also the legal head of the race. The covenant was made with Adam for himself and his posterity, so that he was a public or representative person in this relation. Then, when Adam sinned, the race which was bound up in him sinned in and fell with him, and so it lost all that was

in prospect by the covenant. This is the basis of the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin to his posterity. This race connection is the first important point to keep in mind.

2. The precise nature of sin as held by the Standards needs to be understood. The definition of the Shorter Catechism, with an addition from the Larger, gives a full view of their doctrine of sin. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature. This is very comprehensive. On the positive side it calls all transgression of God's law sin, and on the negative side it points out what men are ready to forget, that defect, omission, or lack of conformity to what God's law requires is sin also, and brings men into condemnation just as surely. For a man to fail to love God and his neighbor is sin, just as truly as murder or blasphemy, though there may be differences in the degree of guilt incurred thereby. It must also be carefully kept in mind that the notion of sin implied in the Standards includes all those states of mind and dispositions of heart which are not in harmony with the will of God. These are also of the nature of sin, and incur guilt. This is the second important point to be observed.

3. The distinction between guilt and depravity must also be clearly conceived. This is of the utmost importance in interpreting the Standards. Guilt is legal liability to punishment due on account of sin. Depravity is moral and spiritual defilement of the nature. Guilt springs from the relation of the agent to the law and its penalty. Depravity arises out of the relation of the defilement of sin to the nature of the agent. These two things always go together, though they are quite distinct aspects of the same thing. Guilt may be said to rest on the agent, and depravity to abide in him. The doctrine of sin involves both.

The importance of this distinction lies in the fact that guilt is imputable, but depravity is not; and that depravity de-

scends by heredity, while guilt does not. In a word, guilt, as liability to punishment, may be imputed or reckoned from one to another, while depravity, or spiritual defilement, is inherited or communicated from one generation to another. Depravity, or the corruption of the nature, is often, or, as the Catechism says commonly, called original sin. It is hereditary sin, native corruption, inbred or birth sin. Now, in the case of Adam's sin in his covenant relation, the guilt of his sin, and thereby its penalty or liability to punishment, was imputed or reckoned to his posterity, but the corruption of his whole nature, which as spiritual death is part of the penalty, is conveyed from generation to generation by hereditary descent. This is the third point of an introductory nature, and perhaps it is the most important of the three. The way is now prepared for the discussion of the doctrine of original sin contained in the Standards.

II. *The Doctrine of Original Sin Exhibited in the Standards.*

The three remarks just made pave the way for the intelligent presentation of this doctrine. It must always be kept in mind that original sin in its wide sense includes both guilt and depravity. In this sense it includes the whole state of sin in which men, descended from Adam, are born. In its narrower sense it denotes hereditary depravity as distinguished from imputed guilt. The usage of the Standards is not quite uniform in regard to this matter, though it is necessary to take the wider sense of the term original sin in order to embrace all that the Standards teach upon the subject. In a word, original sin in the Standards really includes every evil and disability, legal and spiritual, which has come upon the race through its natural and covenant relation with Adam, who sinned and fell, and carried the race with him into apostasy. But some analysis must now be made of this state.

1. All men are in an estate of sin. This is the teaching of the Scripture and the verdict of experience. This is a somewhat general statement of the state into which the fall brought

all mankind. The Confession calls it a death in sin. There are several factors which the Catechisms and the Confession both emphasize as entering into that sinful condition into which men are born.

First, There is the guilt of Adam's sin. This came upon the race by imputation, and on account of Adam's failure to keep the covenant of works. Men became liable to punishment and are born under penalty. In some way the whole race has become involved in the penal disability which came upon Adam. The Catechisms mention this element of guilt first of all, which favors the theory of immediate imputation.

Secondly, Comes the loss of original righteousness. As has been seen, man was created with this as part of his original religious endowment, and in this, in part, consisted the image of God. With the loss of original righteousness the image of God was effaced, and the divine spiritual likeness in man disappeared. Thus man lost that which allied him to God, and the basis of communion between man and God was destroyed. Then came the sad estrangement between them which history reveals. In this way man's chief divine ornament was broken and cast to the ground when man lost his original concreated righteousness.

Thirdly, The corruption or spiritual defilement of the whole nature followed. This corruption of the nature is original sin in the narrow sense, and it is what is sometimes called spiritual death. Man is thereby dead in sin, and insensible to anything spiritually good. In this state man's spiritual nature is wholly defiled. This means that all the powers and parts of both soul and body are thus defiled. The mind is darkened, the affections are polluted, the conscience is perverted, and the will has become helpless to choose that which is holy. The body, too, has felt the corrupting effects of sin, and, above all, the balance between the soul and body, between the lower and the higher powers of man's nature, has been destroyed. The practical result of

all this is that man, as the Confession and Larger Catechism both teach, is utterly indisposed to the good, and so all his desires are averse to it. Further, man is helpless to do anything good, and hence moral and spiritual inability has smitten him. Still further, man is also made opposite to all good, and is thereby at open enmity with God and not subject to his law. And, to crown all, the Standards teach that man is wholly inclined to all evil, which simply means that the whole bent of his disposition and activity is away from God, and towards evil. The love of God is not in him, and the love of evil is in his heart. This inclination is also said to be a continual one. It is thus a fixed bent and habit, which needs a radical revolution to set right. This dark picture drawn by the Standards is true to Scripture, and the experience of man uniformly confirms it.

Fourthly, Out of this sinful, corrupt nature all actual transgressions flow. Both Catechisms and Confession agree in saying that all actual transgressions proceed from this perverted and polluted nature. Of course, if the source of voluntary action be the nature and disposition, and if that nature be depraved and opposed to all good, then it necessarily follows that actual sinning will be the result. The tree is known by its fruits. The tree of fallen humanity is corrupt and inclined to evil, hence its fruitage of voluntary acts is sure to be sinful. Actual transgression is the self-expression of a sinful nature. In like manner, the fact that all men, if left to themselves, go astray, and without exception become guilty of actual sin, is positive proof that the nature is corrupted, and the disposition perverted. Sinful self-expression proves a sinful nature.

2. Men, as sinful in and through Adam, are in an estate of misery. This fact is emphasized in the Catechisms. This miserable condition is the inevitable result of the sin of Adam, and part of the imputed penalty of that sin. Here, also, there are several particulars to be noted.

First, The displeasure, or wrath and curse of God, rests upon man. This evil comes in connection with the loss of communion with God, which gave such peace and joy to the soul of man in his unfallen state. When this communion was broken, the smile of God was turned into a frown. A sense of the displeasure of that God, whose favor is so necessary to the comfort of the soul, filled the heart of man with fear and alarm. This brought sore misery to man. To be without God is to be without hope in the world. This brought a desolation to the soul of man which is sad beyond all description.

Secondly, Man became liable to all miseries in this life. Here very many things might be said, but the statement must be briefly made. Pain and sickness, disappointment and misfortune, grief and sorrow are all to be thought of in this connection. The burden which sin lays upon the body, and the wounds which it makes in the soul, are all to be traced to the same source. Then the curse which was passed upon the ground for man's sake comes in to make his lot all the more miserable, as he toils for his daily bread in the sweat of his face. The believer, of course, feels the burden of this in a measure, though he has a well-spring of consolation to support him at all times. But the man still in sin must endure all the misery without any support or comfort in it. All the miseries of this life make up a painful category of ills which pertain to the lot of man in his sinful estate.

Thirdly, The bondage of Satan is next to be noted. This important factor is mentioned in the Larger Catechism only, but the Scriptures often teach that man by reason of the fall has lost his true liberty and become the bond-slave of Satan. By nature men are the children of darkness and of wrath. In this state they are led captive by Satan at his will. By the fall, therefore, men have in some sense passed under the dominion of Satan, and his cruel bondage rests upon them as a painful part of their sinful estate. It would, of course, be

going too far to say, as some ancient divines did, that man had so passed under the power of Satan that the atonement was a ransom-price paid to Satan for the redemption of the elect. Still, in some sense men by the fall have become the servants of sin, and the bond-servants of Satan. This galling yoke greatly increases the misery of the race.

Fourthly, Death itself and the pains of hell are mentioned last. Both of these facts cause much fear and trembling in the heart of man. Death is dreaded because it ushers man into his eternal state, and launches him on his everlasting destiny. The torments of hell, to be further described under the next head, even in anticipation render man's condition most miserable. Then the actual realization of this must be ten times worse. Had man not sinned, death, as we now understand it, would not likely have been experienced; and hell, so far as man is concerned, would have had no meaning at all. Still, it would not necessarily follow from this that all the members of the human race would always have remained alive upon the earth. This might have been the case, but it is more likely that the transition known as death would not be the dark and dreadful thing it now is, but would have been a happy translation to the heavenly estate, for which the earthly career, long or short, was a suitable preparation. There would have been no fear in looking forward to this transition, and no misery would attend its actual experience.

3. Men in this state of sin and misery are in a condition of guilt. Many passages of these Standards, as they reproduce the teaching of the Scriptures, must be understood as asserting that all men by nature are exposed to the wrath of God and the penalty of sin. By guilt, as already explained, is meant liability to punishment or exposure to suffering on account of sin. This guilt rests upon all men when they are born; and when actual transgression is committed and remains unforgiven the guilt becomes all the greater. Every

sin, says the Confession, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, does in the nature of the case bring guilt upon the sinner. He is thereby bound over to the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, and so made liable to death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. The Larger Catechism says that, by reason of their sinful estate, men are made justly liable to all punishments in this world and in that which is to come. Such passages of the Standards clearly show that they teach that man by nature is in a guilty state before God, and so exposed to the penalty of sin. They also show that the penalty which rests upon them is death. This term must be here taken in its deep penal significance, wherein the notion of separation is fundamental. Temporal death is separation of soul and body, spiritual death is separation between God and the soul, and eternal death is perpetual separation of man from God. This awful threefold penalty sums up everything under it.

Under this general head the Larger Catechism states some additional particulars which must now be set down in order.

First, There are certain punishments which come upon men in this life because of their guilty state. These are said to be of two classes, and very dreadful in their nature.

In the first place, there are those which are inward in their nature. Here there are several factors. Blindness of mind is one of these. This is really judicial blindness of the understanding in spiritual things. A reprobate sense, which may be taken to mean an utter insensibility to God and spiritual things, is also mentioned. Then strong delusions, or fixed self-deceptions of some sort, hardness of heart, which is in part judicial and in part the result of habit, horror of conscience as a sense of danger in the soul, and vile affections which cling to some object degraded and degrading, make up the remaining factors noted in this Catechism.

In the second place, there are punishments which are out-

ward in their nature. They are such as these: God's curse resting upon the creatures on account of the sin of man, the ground bringing forth briars and nettles before him, and all other evils which come upon men in their bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments, culminating in death itself. This dreadful list of penal inflictions, inward and outward, is the heritage of the race on account of the guilty state into which it has been brought by means of sin.

Secondly, There are also certain punishments in the life to come, mentioned in the Larger Catechism. Everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God is properly mentioned first. In the world to come, the lost shall not be beyond the dominion of God, but they shall be forever shut out from the comfortable presence of God, and excluded from communion with him. In some respects this will be one of the most awful things in future punishment. Then there shall be endured most grievous torments in soul and body without intermission forever. This is a dreadful statement, but not more so than the assertions of the Scripture texts quoted in its support. Both body and soul will be the seat of the torment, and it shall be constant and unremitting. It is said to be in hell-fire. The Standards here simply use Scripture language, and they no more mean literal physical fire than do the Scripture passages denote this. Denying the presence of literal fire does not lessen the intensity of the torment, but perhaps deepens it. In any case, the torment will be spiritual in its nature, and suited to an endless and immortal existence. The question of the endlessness of the punishment will come up later on in the exposition, so that nothing further need be added now.

4. Another important question remains. It relates to the precise nature of the relation between Adam and his posterity in the matter of sin and guilt. The special point which now emerges refers to the way in which guilt and depravity come upon the race, in, through or from Adam. The

Shorter Catechism simply says that the race sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression. The Larger Catechism says that original sin, by which it evidently means only the corruption of the nature, is conveyed from the first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so that all proceeding from them in that way are conceived and born in sin. The Confession states the matter thus: Our first parents, being the root of all mankind, the guilt of their sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature was conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation. It would thus appear that the Shorter Catechism simply states the fact that the race sinned and fell in Adam, the Larger Catechism deals only with the transmission of depravity by hereditary descent, while the Confession treats of the whole subject of guilt and depravity. According to the statement of the Confession, the guilt of the sin of Adam was imputed, and the corruption of his nature was conveyed by ordinary generation. It would thus appear that the Confession clearly teaches the doctrine of imputation; and, from the order in which the factors of guilt and depravity are mentioned, there is much in favor of the view of immediate imputation. The legal guilt of Adam's sin was imputed or reckoned to Adam and his posterity. This imputed guilt as liability to punishment brought penalty. That penalty in part was to be born with a corrupt or depraved nature, and this is simply spiritual death viewed as the penal result of Adam's sin. Guilt passes upon all men first, depravity comes next as part of that guilt. Again, it is seen that guilt is imputed, and that depravity is inherited. This is the doctrine of the Standards, and it is undoubtedly the best philosophy of the facts. If depravity is held to come first in the logical order, then it can only be an arbitrary infliction without any just ground; but if guilt is held to come first logically, then depravity stands as part of the penalty inflicted on just covenant grounds, unless the

justice of the covenant arrangement be denied altogether. It is proper to add that, in the experience of men, guilt and depravity are bound up together, so that they are not to be separated in time. The order is only a logical one, and yet it has its significance.

5. The last point for this chapter relates to a topic which fully emerges later on when sanctification is explained. Still, as the Confession alludes to it here, what it says must be set down to make the discussion complete. The point raised has reference to the remains of the corrupt nature which exists in the regenerate. This is not cast out all at once, but it continues to subsist along with the new regenerate nature. Through Christ it is pardoned and mortified. The regenerate believing man is justified, and this places him in an abiding state of acceptance with God, through the merits of Christ. As the believer lives in this state of grace, his sinful deeds are pardoned, and the corrupt nature itself, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, is mortified, crucified and subdued more and more, until it is finally conquered at death. And it is expressly added that this old sinful nature, and all its motions or activities, are truly and properly sin. This statement cuts the roots of Plymouthism on the one hand, and leaves no ground for entire sanctification in this life on the other. At this point, again, the wisdom and caution of the Standards are abundantly evident.

CHAPTER IX.

THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 20; LARGER CATECHISM, 30–35; CONFESSION OF FAITH, VII.

WITH this chapter the passage is to be made from the dark shadows of sin to the bright landscapes of grace. Here it will be seen how God in his wonderful mercy has provided a suitable and complete remedy for man's sad, sinful estate as fallen in Adam. The method according to which this remedy is set forth in the Standards is that of the covenant relation. Just as man in the first Adam failed under this relation, so by the second Adam he is recovered under the provisions of a covenant, which is usually called the covenant of grace. This is the topic for study in this chapter, and its explanation will present the gracious basis upon which the whole scheme of redemption securely rests in a plan of grace.

Sometimes the distinction is made by theologians between what is called the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace. According to the former, God enters into covenant with his Son, giving him a people whom he redeems and assuredly saves. According to the latter, God enters into covenant with his people to redeem and save them by his Son, as the Mediator whom he has appointed. In the first case, God and the Son are the parties to the covenant, and the Son is the surety for his people; and in the latter case, God and the elect are the parties, and the Son is the Mediator between them. The Standards do not distinctly recognize this twofold aspect of the covenant. They speak of a second covenant, commonly called the covenant of grace, according to which God has been pleased to provide for and secure the salvation of the elect. This distinction may

be regarded as a valid one, so long as the idea of two covenants is not entertained. Strictly speaking, there can be only one covenant, but that covenant may be viewed in the twofold aspect, which this distinction implies. The Scripture terms mediator and surety, as applied to Christ, quite justify this twofold view of the covenant of grace, though the covenant itself is always one and the same.

It is a matter worth noticing at the outset that the Shorter Catechism has only one question given to this topic, while the Larger devotes six questions to it, in which almost the same points are covered as are treated of in the Confession. From the two latter parts of the Standards the materials to be explained in this chapter are chiefly drawn.

I. *The Nature of the Covenant of Grace.*

The very essence of this covenant is that it is gracious. Both of the Catechisms emphasize the fact of electing love and grace in this connection. The Shorter says that God, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, and did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver and save them by a Redeemer. The Larger says that God, out of his mere love and mercy, delivers his elect out of their estate of sin and misery. The Confession, after setting forth the fact that the covenant of works was a gracious condescension on the part of God, goes on to say that by the second covenant he freely offers unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ. In this way, stress is laid by the Standards upon the gratuitous nature of the second covenant. And were it not that the grace of God thus appears in it, man would indeed have no hope. By reason of the fall he had incurred guilt, which he could neither atone for nor forgive. He had also, by the fall, come into the possession of a depraved nature, which he was helpless to change or remove. Hence, grace alone could rescue him, and that grace must be divine. The Larger Catechism lays special stress upon the gracious nature of the second covenant.

There are two ideas presented in the Confession in regard to this gracious covenant relation. *First*, There is the idea expressed by the term covenant, presently to be explained at length; and, *Secondly*, that denoted by the word testament, according to which the Confession says that the covenant of grace is frequently set forth in Scripture. The ninth chapter of Hebrews is the important passage in this connection. There the reference is to the case of a man making his last will or testament, by means of which, in view of his death, he bequeaths his property to those whom he appoints his heirs. So, in regard to the covenant of grace, when the term testament is applied to it, special reference is made to the death of Christ, the testator, by means of which the everlasting inheritance, and all that pertains thereto, is bequeathed to those who are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. This is a precious factor in the covenant. In the covenant, strictly speaking, there is made prominent the fact of the divine promise of salvation through faith in Christ; but, with the testamentary idea, the fact of divine heirship is emphasized. Both the fact of covenant promise and of testamentary heirship are to be kept in view in explaining the covenant of grace.

II. *The Parties to the Covenant.*

As in the first covenant God and Adam were the parties, so in the second covenant God and Christ are the parties. And as in the first covenant relation Adam stood for himself, and the race in him as his seed, so in the second covenant relation Christ stands and acts for himself and his covenant-elect seed. Hence, the parties in the covenant of grace are also twofold.

First, There is God the Father for the Godhead. In this case the first party is precisely the same as in the first covenant. It is proper to note with care the fact that, while it is said that God the Father is the first party, he stands for and represents the entire Godhead, as all the persons concur in

the divine procedure. Moreover, the covenant does not contemplate the eternal Son merely as the second person of the Trinity, but also, if not chiefly, as the incarnate God-man, who is made partaker of the human nature.

Secondly, There is Christ for himself and his elect seed, given him by the Father, as the second party. This statement blends the distinction already explained between the covenant of redemption and of grace. The covenant was made with Christ for himself, and in him on behalf of the elect, or those whom the Catechism says were ordained unto life. The Catechisms both clearly teach that Christ stood and acted for the elect in a direct covenant relation with God, in order to deliver them from an estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation and glory.

This brings distinctly into view the federal or representative principle in connection with the work of Christ, in such a way as to make it plain that the Standards are constructed according to what is known as the federal idea, and that they consequently exhibit a distinct phase of what is termed the covenant or federal theology. It is quite true that the Standards do not push the covenant idea so far as some representatives of that type of theology, but it is evident that on broad scriptural outlines they are constructed under the control of the federal principle, both in regard to the natural and the legal relations in Adam, and in reference to the gracious and redemptive relations in Christ. There is some need to emphasize this aspect of the structural principle of the Standards at the present day, as there is a tendency in certain quarters to overlook, or lay it aside. This principle is the very essence of both covenants.

III. *The Conditions of the Covenant.*

This is a very important point, which can only be considered in part at this stage of the exposition of the Standards, for it really raises the whole mediatorial work of Christ, as

prophet, priest, and king. The full discussion of this work comes up later on, so that at this stage only a general view is to be taken of the covenant conditions. These conditions are really twofold, as suggested by the Standards at this point.

1. On Christ's part, perfect obedience to the covenant law, and full satisfaction for the penalty incurred by the failure of the first covenant, were made. In this way Christ, standing in the covenant place and relation of the first Adam, took up the covenant liabilities just where they had been laid down by our first parents. He rendered the obedience required, he met the penalty incurred, and this complete twofold satisfaction made by Christ is the condition of the covenant fulfilled by him on his part. Had he failed, its saving benefits would not have been procured by him, to be made over to his people. But he fully met all the covenant conditions assumed by him, and so wrought out an everlasting righteousness which is unto all and upon all those who believe in him.

2. On man's part, the only condition is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. By means of this gracious condition, those who believe in Christ obtain the benefits of the fulfilment of the legal conditions of the covenant of grace. This is implied in the statements of the Catechisms at this point, and it is more fully brought out in the Confession later on, when it announces that God requires faith in Jesus Christ, on the part of sinners, that they may be saved. This saving faith, to be afterwards more fully explained, is the single gracious condition of the covenant on man's part. Satisfaction made by Christ, and faith exercised in Christ, make up the twofold condition of the covenant.

It is worth while observing, further, that the condition, so far as Christ himself is concerned, was purely legal, with a view, of course, to a gracious end. Christ, as the Redeemer, was made under the law, he obeyed the demands of the law,

and he also suffered under the curse of the law. Hence, his standing under the covenant, and the conditions which he fulfilled, were alike legal. This being the case, the reward of his obedience and the result of his death became a matter of debt to him. His claim to this reward is justly made, so far as he himself is concerned, on the basis of a strict, legal satisfaction made by him, as the second Adam. But when man's case is considered, the benefits of the covenant, coming to him by the way of faith, are entirely a matter of grace to him. Christ, having fulfilled the legal conditions, has purchased life and salvation for all those who believe in him; then, when that life and salvation are conveyed by faith to the believing sinner, it is offered and received as a gift. Hence, eternal life is debt to Christ for his people, but gift to his people from him.

IV. *The Results of the Covenant of Grace.*

The conditions of the covenant being fulfilled, certain results follow. The result, so far as Christ is concerned, is life and salvation purchased for his people. This precious result is fully secured and freely offered to men in the message of the gospel.

But the results of the covenant are set forth chiefly in their relation to sinful men. These are now to be briefly exhibited, as they are expressed in a threefold way in the Standards. The Catechisms present the case in a positive and a negative way, while the Confession also points out the agency which brings the sinner into possession of these results.

1. There is deliverance from the guilty estate of sin and misery. Those who believe in Christ are delivered from sin, both as to its guilt and its depravity, and from the misery which that state of sin involves. Hence by the provisions of the covenant of grace, whose conditions Christ has fulfilled, there is deliverance for the elect who believe in Christ from the sin, guilt and misery, which the failure of the first cove-

nant entailed. This is the all-important negative result which the covenant of grace secures for those to whom it relates.

2. Then, introduction into a state of grace is the positive result of the covenant promise to sinful men, through the fulfilment of its legal conditions by Christ. The word salvation must be taken here in its very widest sense, as including everything which comes to the believer through Christ, the Mediator of the covenant. It embraces all that eternal life involves. Justification, adoption, regeneration, sanctification, and glorification, with all that is therein implied, make up the splendid category of the things entering into the full salvation which flows from the covenant of grace. Not only is there full remission of sin, as under the preceding head, but there is also complete salvation from sin procured in due time for all the elect who are ordained unto life and salvation.

3. The promise of the Holy Spirit is also made good unto all those who are ordained unto life and salvation. The presence and work of the Holy Spirit have been procured by Christ in fulfilling the conditions of the covenant. The special office of the Spirit is to make the elect, who are ordained unto life and salvation, both able and willing to believe in Jesus Christ. This is a very important feature of the theology of the Standards. It sets forth the doctrine of determining grace, which is sometimes known as the irresistible, or invincible, grace, which operates in the case of the elect. Being dead in sin, men need the Holy Spirit to renew them, and to unite them to Christ, who is their life. The Larger Catechism speaks very distinctly upon this point, when it says that God gives the Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces, and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as evidence of the truth of their faith and thankfulness to God. This ministry of the Spirit is the result of the work of Christ, the Mediator of the

covenant; and the outcome of the Spirit's work is to make good in actual experience, in the case of the elect, the benefits of the covenant, by leading them to believe in the Mediator thereof. When they thus believe, being united to Christ, they are delivered from their estate of sin and misery, and are brought into an estate of salvation through the Redeemer in whom they trust.

It may be well, in closing this topic, to point out the fact that certain common operations of the Spirit and certain outward benefits are secured indirectly through the covenant for the non-elect. Respite from the immediate punishment of sin, the opportunity to repent in the day of divine mercy, the quickening of the conscience within, and the restraints from sin without, together with all the care and gifts of divine providence which the non-elect receive, are to be traced indirectly to the work of Christ as the Mediator of the covenant. This is implied in the doctrine of the Standards, but it is not emphasized as much as, perhaps, it ought to have been, in order fully to represent the teaching of the Scriptures upon this important subject. So far as the case of the elect is concerned, the doctrine of the Standards is, that all the elect, and they only, have given to them that renewing and determining grace which makes them willing and able to repent of sin and to believe in Jesus Christ.

V. *The Administration of the Covenant of Grace.*

This heading opens up a very interesting and instructive line of study, which leads to the consideration of the historical unfolding of the covenant among men from age to age. The Shorter Catechism has nothing to say upon this point, but the Larger Catechism and the Confession have statements which are quite complete, and almost entirely similar. Several important items are now gathered up.

1. It is said that the covenant of grace is one and the same in all ages and under all dispensations. From the promise made to our first parents, that the seed of the woman should bruise

the head of the serpent, onward through all the stages of the unfolding of the purposes of grace, there appears but one gracious method of providing and bestowing the benefits of God's purpose to redeem. However the outward form may vary, there is but one underlying covenant relation. Its essential nature, or, as the Confession says, its substance, always remains the same. In the patriarchal and the Mosaic eras, in Old and in New Testament times, there is one and the same covenant, with the one only Mediator, Jesus Christ, the same promise of life and salvation, and the similar condition of faith in order to the reception of the blessings of the covenant, which is well ordered in all things, and sure.

2. But the mode of administration may, and does, differ from age to age. Hence arise what may be called different dispensations of the covenant of grace. By this is meant that there are different ways of exhibiting and conveying the gracious benefits secured by the provisions of the covenant. In the early dispensations the mode was quite simple and direct; in the Mosaic it became much more elaborate in its outward forms; and in the New Testament it appears to be more distinctly spiritual. It is not an easy matter to make clear divisions between some of these dispensations, and various writers are by no means agreed as to the number of them to be defined. As a matter of fact, they seem to shade into each other, just as one prepared the way for another. Some would divide as follows: From Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to Christ, and from Christ to the end of the world. A careful study of these covenant eras, noting in each the measure of truth revealed, the form of the ordinances instituted, and the measure of grace conveyed, makes a most interesting biblical inquiry. As the historical unfolding of the covenant moves on, it assumes more and more definiteness. The stream narrows its channel, but it flows ever more deeply till the time of Christ, when it overflows all its banks and exhibits again its

primitive universality. There are two great dispensations recognized in the exposition of the Standards, and these are to be briefly considered in closing this chapter. They are known as the Old and New Testaments.

These two great dispensations, are not covenants strictly speaking. That of the Old Testament has law so much in the foreground that it is sometimes called the dispensation of law; that which is called the New Testament has grace so much in the foreground that it is very properly termed the gospel; yet both are gracious. But law is in the foreground and grace is in the background in the Old, while grace is in the foreground and law in the background in the New Testament. Thus law and grace are blended in the covenant relation. A few things are now to be said concerning each of these dispensations.

First, The Old Testament, or covenant, dispensation is considered. Here the mode was by promises which related to the blessings of the covenant, by prophecies which set forth the nature and work of the Messiah and his kingdom, by sacrifices which pointed constantly to the one great sacrifice to be made in the fulness of time, by circumcision which was the seal of the covenant, by the passover which was a perpetual memorial of a past deliverance and an abiding pledge of the deliverance from sin, and by other types and ordinances, such as the kingly and priestly official lines, and the various rites of the Jewish economy. By means of all these things the coming of Christ was foresignified, and thereby the faith of the true Jews in the advent of the expected Messiah, by whom they were to obtain salvation and eternal life, was constantly built up. In every case Christ in the new was the substance and antitype of the shadow and the type of the old dispensation.

Secondly, The New Testament, or covenant dispensation follows. Under this dispensation Christ the substance was exhibited. In it, also, although the ordinances are fewer in

number than in the Old Testament, and although there is more simplicity in outward form and less glory in ritual, yet in these few simple ordinances there is held forth with more fulness, evidence and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, whether Jew or Gentile, the blessings of the covenant of grace. The ordinances by which the benefits of the covenant of grace are dispensed are the preaching of the word, no doubt including prayer, together with the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, which have taken the place of circumcision and the passover of the old dispensation. These, as means of grace, will come to be spoken of in a later chapter, so that no exposition need be added here.

3. Men, specially the elect, were, and are, truly saved under both dispensations. The Standards teach distinctly that the Old Testament saints were as truly saved as those in the gospel dispensation, and that they were saved by the Holy Spirit, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and by means of faith on their part. The Confession and Larger Catechism agree in saying that the modes by which the covenant was administered under the law of the Old Testament dispensation were for the time sufficient and efficacious through the operation of the Spirit to instruct and build up the elect in the faith of the coming Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins and eternal salvation. Thus the Old Testament believers were as truly saved by faith as are those of New Testament times. The Romish opinion of the *Limbus Patrem* is not only unscriptural, but entirely unnecessary, in the light of the exposition of the covenant of grace just made. Hence, the doctrine is, one covenant with two dispensations, one Mediator and one method of salvation, and multitudes fully saved under both dispensations of the covenant of grace.

CHAPTER X.

THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST, THE MEDIATOR.

Shorter Catechism, 21, 22; Larger Catechism, 36–42; Confession of Faith, VIII.

IN this chapter the heart of the redemptive scheme, an outline of which was given in the last chapter, is reached. The Confession and both Catechisms have very complete statements concerning the person of Christ. The Larger Catechism gives a specially full outline of this cardinal doctrine of the Christian system. The Confession unites in a single chapter what it has to say concerning both the person and the work of the Redeemer. In the first three sections the person of Christ is described.

It can scarcely be necessary to insist upon the vital importance of true scriptural views in regard to this great subject. The Standards, though not, strictly speaking, Christocentric in their structure, yet give very great prominence to the person and work of the Redeemer in their system. They rightly make this the central topic in their redemptive scheme. As that scheme is wrought out by the method of grace known as the covenant relation, and as Christ is the Mediator of that covenant, and the only Redeemer of the elect who are ordained to life, so he is the centre from whose person and work all the lines of redeeming love and grace radiate. It is the glorious person of the blessed Redeemer, as the God-man, that awaits description in this chapter, as it is set forth in the Standards.

I. *A General Statement.*

In the Confession there is at the outset a general comprehensive statement relating to the person of Christ as the Mediator of the covenant between God and man. It is first

announced that in his eternal purpose God was pleased to choose and ordain for the work of redemption the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the Mediator of the second covenant between God and man. In this official and divinely appointed capacity, he was commissioned to act as a prophet, as a priest, and as a king. He was, also, the head and saviour of the church, and heir of all things for himself and his people. He was, also, appointed to be the judge of the world; and this judicial function relates not only to his own church and people, but also to the unbelieving world that remains impenitent, and is finally cast out and punished. Then, the gracious purpose of electing love is emphasized by the Confession in this connection. It is said that from all eternity God the Father did give to the Son, as Mediator, a people to be his seed, and that this people are in time to be redeemed by him. In like manner all things involved in their salvation are made certain, so that all this elect covenant seed shall in due time be called, justified, sanctified, and glorified. Here the representative principle again emerges. On behalf of that people given in covenant to the Son by the Father, the Son stands and acts. Thus his people are federally identified with him from all eternity, in the covenant. They are his sheep given to him by the Father. And those thus federally in Christ through the covenant are in due time to be spiritually united to him in their effectual calling, and then they are experimentally and consciously joined unto him by faith unto justification. It is in relation to this broad and eternal basis of electing love and grace that the person and work of the Redeemer come into view in the Standards.

II. *The Two Natures of the Redeemer.*

The doctrine of the Standards touching the person of Christ is to the effect that in his person there are two natures, the human and the divine, joined in an eternal union. This makes the God-man, or the theanthropic person of the

Redeemer, according to which he is represented as subsisting with these two natures in one person for ever.

1. The divine nature is to be first described. In this respect Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Redeemer, is the eternal Son of God. He is not Son either as the highest and first creature, or as the official Redeemer only. As the eternal Son of God, he is the second person of the Trinity, and truly of the essence of deity. He is thus of one and the same divine essence as the Father, and equal with him in power and glory. In no respect, therefore, is there any essential inferiority in the Son to the Father. This is a plain emphatic statement of the true deity of the divine nature in the theanthropic person of the Redeemer. In view of the ancient heresies, and of modern kenosis theories concerning the person of Christ, this statement, with its scriptural proofs, is of the highest value. In no respect were the trinitarian relations disturbed by the assumption of the human nature, and hence the stability of the Trinity and the true deity of the eternal logos are preserved in the person of the Redeemer. This is a simple statement of the fact, without any attempt to explain its mystery.

2. The human nature is to be next explained. In the fulness of time this eternal Son became man, or took upon himself man's nature. The former is the language of the Catechisms, and the latter is that of the Confession. In some respects the confessional statement seems to be the better one, although the meaning of the Catechisms is afterwards explained in almost the same sense. The eternal Son did not become man in the sense that he no longer retained his true deity. He did take man's entire nature into abiding union with his deity. In the human nature thus assumed there were all the essential elements of man's nature. He had a true human body of flesh and blood, just like that of any man, sin excepted. He was thus of the seed of Abraham, and not of the nature of angels. Then, too, he had a

reasonable soul, which means that he had all the rational faculties, and the moral powers, and the religious sentiments pertaining to human nature. He became man by taking to himself this true body and reasonable soul, and then he grew up from infancy to manhood just like any other member of the human family. Hence, the Scriptures describe him as increasing in stature, as to his body, and in wisdom, as to his soul; and as growing up in favor with God and man.

This human nature, the Confession further states, had all the essential properties and common infirmities of man's nature, with the exception of sin. This means that all the physical, mental, moral and spiritual qualities necessary to true humanity were possessed by him. Every essential quality pertaining to the body, to the mind, to the heart, and to the spirit of man were possessed by the God-man. By the common infirmities here mentioned are meant, not sinful weaknesses, but the ills and pains to which human nature is heir, together with the sorrows and disappointments which the soul of man may feel. And in these very facts there is further proof of the true and complete humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. How was the human nature assumed? is the next question answered in the Standards. To this point the Standards speak but briefly, and in almost similar language in the Confession and both Catechisms. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin. This is simply stating this most mysterious fact in the language of Scripture. The parentage of the child Jesus was not human on the father's side. Through a miracle wrought by the Holy Ghost, the human nature of the Redeemer was brought into union with the eternal Son of God. The work of the Holy Ghost in this connection is worthy of careful remark. He is the divine person by whose agency the two natures were joined together in the incarnation, so as to constitute the

theanthropic person of the Redeemer. How far the work of the Spirit is continued in this connection it is not easy to say, and how far the Holy Spirit should even now be regarded as the medium through which the divine nature acts on, or through, the human nature, is an inquiry in regard to which much care is needed. It can hardly be the case, that the Holy Spirit's agency is constantly exercised in holding the two natures together in the God-man. There can be no doubt, however, that the Holy Spirit rested upon Christ and upheld him in his human nature throughout his mediatorial work on earth.

It is further added, that Jesus was of the substance of Mary, and born of her. By partaking of her substance, Jesus truly participated in human nature. That Jesus was thus born of the substance of Mary, sin excepted, excludes those curious theories which maintain that he had not a real human body, but that it was some sort of an angelic body which was given him, and which was brought forth from the womb of his mother, Mary. The body was true and the birth was real, and the incarnation, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, is the answer to the question: How did the Son of God assume the human nature? The whole mysterious process involved in the miraculous conception, and in the remarkable birth of Jesus, is denoted by the term incarnation. And this includes more than an ordinary birth. In its deepest aspects it relates to the way in which the union of a true, yet impersonal, human nature with the eternal Logos, or second person of the Trinity, was effected, in order to constitute the unique and suitable person of the Redeemer and Mediator of the covenant of grace.

IV. The next question raised in the Standards relates to the way in which the natures are united in the one person. This is another difficult point upon which the Catechisms say but little, but of which the Confession speaks at greater length. The former both simply say that Jesus Christ, as Media-

tor of the covenant of grace, was, and continues to be, God and man, in two entire distinct natures and one person, for ever. The Confession, however, enlarges upon this, and asserts that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, which are termed Godhead and manhood, are inseparably joined together in one person. The whole divine nature of the second person of the Trinity, and an entire human nature were thus united. The divine nature was not robbed of any of its perfections, nor was the human nature wanting in any of its essential qualities, as they were brought into union. The natures were essentially distinct as they were brought together, and though joined in what is called the hypostatic union, which is a personal union, the natures are not blended nor commingled. Moreover, the union thus constituted is inseparable in its nature.

As to the manner in which the union of the two distinct natures in one person is effected, and as to the results of that union, the Confession, after the manner of the ancient ecumenical creeds, says that they are joined inseparably in the one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. To explain all that this statement means would be to recite some of the most earnest controversies of the early Christian church, and it is by no means the purpose of this chapter to do this. Only a sentence or two, by way of explanation, shall be set down. The natures, then, are not converted into each other, either the divine into the human, so as to make a divine man, or the human into the divine, so as to make a human God. Nor are the natures compounded in some strange way, and so blended together as to be no longer one or the other, but a third, different from either. Nor, again, are the natures confused in any way, or so mixed together that the essential properties of both natures are indiscriminately existing in the theanthropic person. But, positively, the Standards teach that in the one person of the Redeemer true deity and real humanity are

joined together in an inseparable personal union. Hence, Christ is truly God and really man, yet there is only one Christ and one Mediator between God and man. The theanthropic person is one, yet it is constituted of the two natures, complete yet not commingled.

V. The Standards next take up the question: Why must the Mediator be God? To this interesting inquiry the Larger Catechism alone speaks, and what it states is worthy of study. There are here given, in a simple way, the reasons why the Mediator must be divine. These are now to be mentioned in order.

1. The human nature is thereby sustained. As Mediator the sins of his people were laid upon him, and the infinite wrath of God, as his fixed purpose to treat sin as it deserves, came upon him; and the penalty of death, in all its dreadful punitive meaning, was to be met and endured. This being the case, the human nature, unsupported by the divine, would surely have been crushed beneath the load. Gethsemane and Calvary needed the supports of the divine nature for the burden which rested on the human in the agony of the garden and the sufferings of the cross.

2. The presence of the divine nature gives value to his redemptive work. Though it cannot be said, nor do the Standards teach, that the divine nature really suffered, yet the fact that the human nature, which was the real basis of the sufferings of the Redeemer, was in union with the divine nature, gave a worth and an efficacy to the sufferings in the human nature, which render them entirely different from, and of higher value than, the sufferings of any mere man. This fact marks the difference between the sufferings of Christ and of the martyrs. In like manner, the active obedience which Christ rendered in the human nature has attached to it a meaning and a dignity far above that which the obedience of any mere man could possibly deserve. And his intercession, too, was endowed with a value and an effi-

cacy of the very highest order, because the divine nature sustained the human. Indeed, without the divine nature, there would have been no access on the part of the Mediator into the presence of God at all. By reason of the exalted dignity given to the person of the Mediator, through the presence of the divine nature, his intercession is all-prevailing.

3. The divine nature along with the human was necessary to give assured success to his work. Here several particulars need only be mentioned in the briefest way. To meet and satisfy the demands of the law and justice of God, one who was clad with divine power and dignity was needed. The favor of God was to be procured, and this could not be done by man alone, but it required one who was the well-beloved Son in whom the Father is ever well pleased. A peculiar people, his elect covenant seed, are to be redeemed, and to give value to the ransom-price the presence of the divine nature was required. To secure the mission of the Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, it was requisite that the second person of the Godhead should be so related to the theanthropic person, who made the atonement, as to justify the claim he might make for the efficacious grace of the Holy Spirit for his people. Then, too, the enemies of Christ and his people are to be conquered, and this needs more than human power. Satan is stronger than man, but not mightier than God. To crown all, in order to bring in an everlasting salvation from sin and Satan requires one who is at once God and man, that by the omnipotence of his divine nature he may conquer his foes, and bring his people off more than conqueror in the end.

VI. Another question dealt with in the Standards is: Why should the Redeemer be man? On this question the Larger Catechism chiefly speaks, although the Confession has also some valuable statements which bear, indirectly at least, upon the inquiry here raised. To effect mediation between

God and man, it was just as necessary for the Mediator to be man as to be God. A few particulars are noted to show this.

1. It was necessary that he should be man in order to advance the human nature. Through union with the divine nature, the human nature was greatly elevated, and endowed with a high and advanced dignity. With this advancement of nature, the man Christ Jesus was qualified to render suitable satisfaction to law in the room and stead of sinful men, and also to make a prevailing intercession for them, seeing that he was made in their nature. Above all, by the possession of a human nature Jesus Christ the Mediator of the covenant, and the Redeemer of his people, was invested with a tender sympathy and compassion, which fully fitted him to have a fellow-feeling for their infirmities. But these points need not be enlarged upon, although they are very important and precious. Having the human nature, he is in every way fitted to be the Redeemer of the children of men.

2. It was necessary that Christ should be man in order that his people might be made sons and heirs. Jesus, as to his divine nature, is the Son of God. Having assumed the human nature, this relation to the Father abides, so that the Son of God is also the Son of man. Thus, by the human nature in the theanthropic person, Christ has lifted up into the relationship of sons all his covenant people. They thereby receive the spirit of adoption, and become the sons of God through Jesus Christ. In addition to all that adoption and heirship implies, they also have the comfort of the children of God, and have access to him with holy boldness at a throne of grace. This sonship and heirship, this source of comfort and freedom of access in prayer, all come through the fact that the Mediator possesses the human nature. If these precious privileges were ever to be granted to sinful men, it was needful that Christ should be man. Christ's

covenant people have, therefore, in him a great high priest who acts in their nature, and is fully equipped to do for them all that they need.

VII. Another question discussed by the Standards relates to the reason why the Mediator should be of one person. But a sentence is needed here, based chiefly upon what the Larger Catechism says. Since the Mediator is to reconcile God and man, it is evident from the nature of the case that he must not only have the natures of both the parties whom he is to reconcile, but that in his person, as reconciler, he shall be only one. It is in this way alone that the proper works of both natures, in the ministry of reconciliation, are capable of being ascribed to the one person, and be accepted of God for his people, and at the same time relied on by sinful men. The two natures must, therefore, be bound up in the unity of the one person, in order to give efficacy to the works which the natures severally perform as the instruments of redemption.

Herein is seen the importance of the unity of the person. As the result of this unity, the attributes and works of both natures may be ascribed in common to the person, and at the same time they cannot be ascribed to either nature indiscriminately. In like manner, it is proper to remark that, while both natures are necessary to the completeness of the personality of the Redeemer, as distinguished from the Logos, that is, the theanthropos, as distinct from the eternal Son of God, yet the seat of the personality of the theanthropic person is in the divine nature. This is in analogy with the case of man, for while body and soul are both necessary to the personality of man, the seat of the personality is really in his soul, or spiritual nature.

VIII. Why is the Mediator called Jesus and Christ? is the last question raised by the Standards, in regard to the person of the Mediator. This double question may be answered from the Larger Catechism also in a sentence or two.

1. He is called Jesus in the Scriptures, because he shall save his people from their sins. The name Jesus, or Joshua, means "saviour," or "deliverer," and, as applied to the Redeemer, it denotes the precious fact that he delivers his people from their sins, both in regard to their guilt and their pollution. As Jesus, he is Saviour, or Deliverer.

2. Then, he is called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure to fit him for his work. The Greek word *Christos* means "anointed one," and it has precisely the same meaning as the Hebrew word *Messiah*. By the anointing of the Holy Ghost he was set apart for his work of redemption, and at the same time he was thereby fully furnished with all ability and authority for his mediatorial service. He was thus qualified in every way to execute the office of a prophet in revealing the will of God, of a priest in making atonement and intercession, and of a king in ruling over his people and defending them from all their foes. All these things, and everything else necessary, Christ, as the anointed of God, effects, alike in his estate of humiliation and of exaltation, even as he is Mediator in both natures, and under all dispensations.

3. The Confession adds a few things which can be best set down at this point. It says that the Lord Jesus, in his human nature as united with the divine, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Ghost. As the result of this, he was filled with all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; for in him it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. And, further, by reason of this anointing of the Spirit, he was holy, harmless, and undefiled, full of grace and truth; and in this way he was thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator and surety. The Confession adds, that Jesus Christ did not take this office of Mediator to himself, but was called to it by the Father. And when the Father thus called him to this office, he gave into his hand all power

and judgment; and he further gave him command to execute his mediatorial commission.

The exposition of this important chapter is now completed. The closing paragraphs form a suitable preparation for the next chapter, which will deal with the work of the Mediator in his several offices. That the person of our adorable Redeemer, as the Catechisms call him, or of our Mediator and Surety, as the Confession terms him, is amply adequate for his work, is abundantly evident from the careful summary of the splendid statements of the Standards given in this chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

THE OFFICES OF THE MEDIATOR—THE PROPHETIC.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 23, 24; LARGER CATECHISM, 41–43; CONFESSION OF FAITH, VIII.

THE last chapter dealt with the person of the Mediator; this one will begin the explanation of his work as the Redeemer. At the very outset it is worthy of notice that the Catechisms and the Confession unfold the great work of the Redeemer according to very different plans. The same well-defined doctrine is presented in both, but that doctrine is opened on different lines, and according to diverse structural principles. In the Confession the statement is general, and is based mainly on the idea of mediation, and of what the Mediator suffered and secured. In the Catechisms the subject is unfolded under the guidance of the idea of the three offices which Christ executes as our Redeemer. He is at once prophet, priest, and king. The Confession, again, alludes in only a brief way to the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, while the Catechisms, especially the Larger, give much space to these facts in the work of the Redeemer. It will be noted, also, that there is no definite discussion of what is known as the doctrine of the atonement, under the heading of that term. There is, of course, a very clearly-defined doctrine of atonement presented in the Standards, both as to its nature and design, but its factors are assumed and incidentally unfolded, rather than formally discussed. These differences in the treatment of the work of Christ as our Redeemer in the Catechisms and the Confession make it rather difficult to gather together what they have to say upon this great theme. Perhaps the ends of orderly and compact discussion can be best secured by first present-

ing the general view which the Confession gives, and then unfolding the scope of the three offices of the Redeemer, as they are stated in the Catechisms. Then, the whole may very properly be concluded by exhibiting the factors which enter into the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, especially as given in the Catechisms. To do all this will require at least three chapters.

I. *A General Statement of the Mediator's Work.*

Several particulars are to be mentioned under this general view, in order to give an outline of it.

1. The office of mediator and surety Christ did most willingly undertake. And it was necessary that he should voluntarily engage to enter upon this work, even as he was called and appointed to it by the Father. For it is in the very fact that he voluntarily entered upon his work, and willingly completed it, that the whole virtue and value of his obedience and sacrifice consist. Had he been driven to this work, or had he obeyed as a slave and died against his will, the real efficacy of his work would have been entirely destroyed.

2. Then Jesus Christ was fully qualified for his mediatorial work, not only in his person, as was seen in the preceding chapter, but also in the relations which he assumed, and in the experiences to which he submitted. That he might, as Mediator, redeem those who were under the penalty of the law, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it. He also observed the ceremonial law; he kept the moral law, both in its letter and spirit; and he fulfilled, both negatively and positively, the legal conditions of the covenant of grace. He entered precisely into that covenant place under the law at which the first Adam failed to render the obedience required, and was condemned to suffer the penalty incurred. Hence emerge the two great branches of his work. He obeyed the law whose precept had not been carried out by the first Adam, and thereby he purchased for his people a title to the reward of that obedience. He also endured

the penalty which, by transgression, the first Adam had incurred for himself and his posterity, so that by his one sacrifice of himself a just basis is provided for the removal of that penalty, and the remission of the punishment which it entailed. In this twofold way he perfectly fulfilled the law in the threefold sense above noted. He obeyed the precept of the law, he suffered the penalty of the law, and he met the covenant conditions of the law.

3. In doing this he served as a sacrifice, and as Mediator he was made perfect by suffering. He also learned obedience by the things which he suffered. At this point the Confession recites, in a manner something like that in which the Catechisms describe the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, the painful things which he experienced. He endured sore torments immediately in his soul, and he was subjected to most painful sufferings in his body. He was crucified, and did really and truly die on the cross. He was buried in a borrowed tomb, and remained under the power of death for a season; yet his body did not undergo dissolution, or see corruption. Then, on the third day he rose from the dead, and his resurrection body was not only real, but it was the same which was his prior to the crucifixion. He afterwards ascended into heaven in the selfsame body, which was, no doubt, glorified to fit it for its heavenly state. Having ascended into heaven, he took his seat at the right hand of his Father, in the place of honor and authority, and there entered upon his work of mediatorial intercession. Then, finally, in due time he shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world. In all these things there is a careful recital of scriptural facts and teaching, and no mere theory of the nature of these facts is propounded. The meaning of these facts is more fully presented in the next paragraph.

4. This perfect obedience which Christ rendered, and the sacrifice of himself which he voluntarily made in offering himself up to God through the eternal Spirit, has fully satis-

fied the justice of the Father. Here it is distinctly announced that the sacrifice of Christ was an offering to satisfy the justice of the Father. This means that it was penal and vicarious in its nature. The result of this satisfaction to the justice of the Father is twofold. He secured, by purchase, reconciliation for his people, so that God is reconciled and his wrath is propitiated. Christ has also purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father has given unto him. These two classes of benefits are connected with the two aspects of Christ's work already alluded to in this chapter. By suffering the penalty of the law he procured reconciliation, and by obeying the precept of the law he purchased the inheritance. The plain and simple way in which, on a sure scriptural basis, without needless speculation, the satisfaction of Christ is presented in the Standards, deserves much praise, and merits careful study.

5. The Confession, further, points out the fact that, although the work of redemption was not actually wrought out in time till after the incarnation, yet that work was in the divine purpose and plan viewed as a fact, so that the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof were communicated unto the elect in all ages and dispensations, even from the beginning of the world. These benefits, prior to the incarnation, were exhibited in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices which revealed Christ, and showed him to be the Seed of the woman who was to bruise the head of the serpent, and that he was the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. By faith the elect in all the ages and dispensations previous to the advent of Christ laid hold of the promises to which the types and sacrifices related, and thus there was communicated to them by the Holy Spirit the proper grace and salvation which these things represented in Christ, the Messiah, who was to come.

6. At this point the Confession emphasizes a fact alluded to in the last chapter. In the work of mediation it is ever to be kept in mind that Christ acts according to both natures. This means, against the doctrine of Rome, that Christ is truly Mediator in both natures. In thus effecting mediatorial work, each nature does that which is proper to itself. Still, by reason of the unity of the person, the qualities and acts which are proper to the one nature are ascribed to the person, even when that person is denominated by titles which pertain to the other nature. "The Son of man which is in heaven" is one passage to illustrate; and "the church of God which he has purchased with his own blood" is another.

7. The last general point to be noted here has reference to the actual application of the benefits of Christ's mediation. As this important topic comes up again for remark, only a brief notice of it is now needed. To all those for whom Christ, according to the purpose of electing grace, has purchased redemption, he does in due time certainly and effectually apply and actually communicate this redemption, together with all that it implies. This he does in four important ways: *First*, by making intercession for them. This is the basis of all. *Secondly*, by revealing to them in and by the word the mysteries of salvation. This is done by the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures, to the end that the elect are spiritually enlightened thereby. *Thirdly*, by effectually persuading them, by the same Spirit, to repent of sin, and to believe and obey the gospel. This relates to the renewing and sanctifying work of the Spirit in their souls, by which they are made willing to believe and to obey; and, *Fourthly*, he governs in the hearts of his people, and rules over their lives, by his word and Spirit, and he also overcomes all their enemies by his almighty power and infinite wisdom. This splendid category of benefits will be further expanded in later chapters, but it is of value to have it set down in outline even thus early in the exposition.

II. *The Offices of Christ as Mediator.*

Strictly speaking, there is only one office, that of Mediator; but the Mediator in that office discharges three functions. Still, as the Catechisms use the term office in the sense of function in this threefold way, it will doubtless be best to follow this familiar usage in the explanations now to be given. The brief statement of the Catechisms is that Jesus Christ, as the Mediator between God and man, and the Redeemer of his people, exercises under all dispensations three offices, that of prophet, that of priest, and that of king. These three offices he occupies, and fulfils their duties both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation. Without further preliminary remark the explanation of these offices is entered on. The rest of this chapter will deal with the prophetic office, and in the next chapter the other two offices will be expounded.

III. *Christ the Mediator and Redeemer, as the Prophet of the Covenant of Grace.*

The generic idea of a prophet is of one who speaks for God, and from God, to man. His work is to bring a divine message, and this message may be brought in various ways and forms. Prediction is often a part of the message, but it is not the essential element in the mission of the prophet. In the sense of one who speaks for God to men, Jesus Christ is the prophet of the covenant of grace. He is the great teacher sent from God to men, so that whosoever heareth him heareth the Father. In this sense he is the eternal Logos, or Word, and the revealer of the Father. He it is who reveals to sinful men, by the word and Spirit, the will of God for their salvation. As the Mediator of the covenant and the Redeemer of his people he first discharges the office or function of a prophet in this broad sense. This implies several things to be noted.

1. Those to whom this revelation of God's will is first made are stated. The position of the Standards is here plain

and unmistakable. It is to the church that he reveals God's will. This, of course, follows from his place and service in the covenant of grace. As Mediator of that covenant he acts for his elect seed, given to him by the Father. This seed is the whole body of the elect, and this constitutes the church in the sense of the invisible church. But, as the visible church stands, with her divinely-ordained laws and appointed ordinances, as the concrete form of the invisible church at any particular age, the visible church is also to be included in the view now taken of that body to which the revelation is made by the prophet of the covenant. To this body God makes known his will in this way, and this same body having received the divine oracles, is also the appointed custodian of them. She is also to be the interpreter of the revealed will of God, and also its exponent and herald to the world. Hence, according to the Standards, God does not reveal his will directly to the world by his Son, Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the covenant, in a general or indiscriminate way, but he reveals that will primarily to the church; and, then, it is the duty and privilege of the church to make it known to the world. Here, in its covenant aspects, emerges the fundamental principle of all forms of missionary effort, both at home and abroad. God, through Christ, by the Spirit, has given the message of life to the church, and the church in turn is to give this saving message to the whole world.

2. The instrument and agent by which this is effected is the word and Spirit of God. In Old Testament times, and in the apostolic age, men, divinely chosen and inspired, received and communicated, by the aid of the Spirit, the will of God; and, under the same divine direction, then reduced to permanent written form as much of the things revealed as divine wisdom deemed necessary for the church in all ages. In all this period the word and Spirit are the instrument and agent of Christ, as the prophet of the covenant.

Since the days of the prophets and apostles, and the com-

pletion of the canon of Scripture by them, the word as instrument has remained complete; and in and by this word the Spirit acts in making known to men the will of God for their salvation. The word is the sword of the Spirit, and that sword is wielded by the Spirit. The Spirit also unfolds the meaning of the message contained in the word; but no additional message, other than that contained in the word, is to be looked for, either by the individual or the church. This is an important practical thing to remember, in order to guard against the vagaries of those supposed revelations which men, even in these later days, are supposed to receive. The revelation is completed in the word, which, as was seen in an early chapter, contains all that was needful to direct men in the way of life, salvation, and duty. The Spirit, then, enlightens the mind, and teaches the meaning of the message given in and by the word of Scripture. This is an important position which the Standards hold fast throughout.

3. The Larger Catechism alludes to the various modes by which, in different ages, the prophetic office has been administered by Christ, and the will of God thereby made known. It does not enlarge upon this point, however, so that only a hint or two need now be added. In general, there are two modes of the administration of this office, which may be readily observed in the history of the revelation from God which is given by the prophetic office of Christ.

First, In some cases it is administered *immediately*. In the Old Testament, instances of this are found in the theophanies, as they are called, wherein God, usually by the angel of the covenant, revealed in various ways some measure of his will to men. In all these cases the pre-incarnate prophet of the covenant was administering this office immediately. So, also, in the New Testament, in the personal teaching of Jesus Christ, there is to be seen another way in which the prophetic office is directly administered. He was

the great teacher sent from God, and his utterances were the voice of God.

Secondly, In other cases Christ administered the prophetic office of the covenant *mediately*. In the Old Testament dispensation the prophets were his messengers. God, by Christ, the true mediatorial prophet of the covenant, was constantly revealing his will to his church and people. So, in the New Testament dispensation, Christ mediately administered his prophetic office by the agency of his apostles, whom he commissioned to speak for him, and to whom he promised the Spirit to lead them into all the truth. All the inspired utterances of the apostles, therefore, were through Christ, the prophet of the covenant, and by the Holy Spirit acting for him through the agency of the apostles. Then, finally, since the canon of Scripture has been completed, and for men now, the administration of the prophetic office is mediate in still a different sense than that which appears in the case of the apostles. It is now through the inspired word alone, and by the Holy Spirit speaking therein, that the will of God, in all that pertains to life and salvation, is made known. In no case is the administration now immediate; it is mediate, through the word by the Spirit.

4. The extent of the prophetic work of the Mediator is again emphasized here in the Larger Catechism. The whole will of God, in all things pertaining to the edification and sanctification of his people, is unfolded through the prophetic office of Jesus Christ. This is true in regard to the contents of the message which is found in the inspired Scriptures. It is true, also, in regard to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ which the believer possesses. The whole will of God necessary for salvation is found in the Scriptures, and that message brought home to the mind, the heart, and the life by the Spirit, affords all the means necessary for a knowledge of salvation and duty. This being the case, there is no need of any special present-day revelations. The duty

and privilege of all men is to search the Scriptures, as the oracles of God, and to pray earnestly for the gracious aids of the Holy Spirit, to make the message clear and saving to their souls.

5. The last point which merits notice in the Standards refers to the period during which Christ continues to discharge this prophetic office. As he is the Mediator of the covenant in all ages, so, as Mediator, he discharges the prophetic office during all these ages. Directly or indirectly, he is the one only true revealer of the Father, and the only divine unfolder of the will of God. He was with the church in the wilderness, as its prophet, priest, and king. Amid all the changes in the mode or manner of administering this office, the fact remains that the abiding relation of the prophetic office is the fixed and unchanging factor. In patriarchal times, in the Abrahamic covenant, in the Mosaic economy, and in the gospel dispensation, the office of the pre-incarnate Logos, second person of the Trinity, either as pre-incarnate Logos or as the theanthropic Redeemer, was to reveal the Father, and to make known the will of God to the church in all the ages. Even now, the Holy Spirit is obtained by men only because the Mediator of the covenant exercises his prophetic office as well as his priestly. By this means Christ, by and through his word and Spirit, is constantly revealing to his church and people those things which make them wise unto salvation. And then his church is in turn commissioned to declare to men the will of God in the message of the gospel. Here, again, in a slightly different way, the great duty of the church, to give the good news of life and salvation to all the nations of the earth, is announced. The Standards, therefore, exhort the church to forget not her true mission among men in the world. She is to be the living mouthpiece of God, through Christ, by the word and Spirit, to the world.

It may be interesting to note an inference which can be

properly made at this point, in regard to the nature of the office of the minister of the gospel. It is evident, from what has just been said, that the office of the gospel minister stands closely connected with the prophetic office of Christ. It does not, therefore, stand directly related to the priestly office, so that in no proper sense are the ministers of the gospel to be regarded as priests, nor should they assume any priestly functions. They are but the mouthpieces of the church, as she seeks to declare the message of God to the world. They are the stewards of the manifold mercies of God, and they are to interpret the word and declare the message to the world. Behind all this lies the prophetic office of Christ, and to this office that of the gospel ministry is directly related. Christ alone is the priest at the altar, and his servants are ministers, not priests.

CHAPTER XII.

THE OFFICES OF THE MEDIATOR—THE PRIESTLY AND KINGLY.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 25, 26; LARGER CATECHISM, 44, 45, AND 55; CONFESSION OF FAITH, VIII.

IN this chapter the exposition of the offices of Christ as the Redeemer is to be continued. What the Standards teach concerning the priestly and kingly offices is to be explained. Some simple introductory remarks are necessary in order to understand aright the general teaching of the Standards, especially in regard to the priestly work of the Mediator of the covenant of grace. Two such remarks are made.

The first is to the effect that much that was said at the beginning of last chapter, in the general outline of the teaching of the Confession in reference to Christ's mediatorial work, relates directly to the two offices now under consideration. Though the terms priest and king are not there used, the things which they denote are really implied in what the Confession states. Then in the Larger Catechism, the intercessory work of the Redeemer, as a priest, is spoken of at some length, in connection with his exaltation in the fifty-fifth question, as it is also in the eighth chapter of the Confession, from the fifth section onwards. It is worthy of remark, also, that all through what the Larger Catechism has to say in regard to the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, many things which pertain to his priestly and kingly offices are at least indirectly expressed.

The second remark of an introductory nature is to the effect that the space in the Standards which is devoted to the priestly work of Christ seems very limited, when com-

pared with that devoted to this subject in many of the great treatises on theology. In not a few of these treatises much more space is given to the priestly office than is devoted to both the prophetic and kingly offices taken together. In the Shorter Catechism almost the same length of statement is used in regard to each of the offices, while in the Larger Catechism the kingly office has more space assigned to its statement than either the prophetic or priestly. In the Confession, all the offices are so blended together in their statement under the general idea of mediation that no clear line of division appears between them. One thing, however, is evident from the mode of statement given in the Confession, and that is, that what the theologians discuss at great length as the atonement does not receive special or separate treatment in it; and it is a matter which causes some surprise that the term atonement does not formally occur in the Standards. Reconciliation and intercession, redemption and salvation, sacrifice and satisfaction, are the great words which the Standards use to express what the term atonement includes. It may not be going too far to say that the statement of the Confession can scarcely be regarded as so clear and strong as that of the Catechisms. One, indeed, could almost wish that the Confession had laid a little more stress upon this cardinal doctrine.

I. *The Priestly Office of the Mediator.*

In general, it may be said that the special function of a priest is to act for man to God. If the prophet speaks from God to man, the priest acts for man towards God. The idea of mediation between God and man, which the priest among men represents, is that which appears as the priestly office of Christ is considered. Many things bearing upon this office in a general way were stated at the beginning of last chapter. In the further exposition of this chapter several important particulars, based largely upon the Catechisms, are to be set down in reference to the priestly office. This

office has really two great branches, and it may be best to consider these separately under different heads. These may be called the atoning and intercessory phases of Christ's priestly work.

1. The atoning or sacrificial work of Christ, the Mediator, is to be first considered. The Standards in various ways emphasize this phase of Christ's priestly office. At times the sufferings and death of Christ, as the means by which atonement or satisfaction was made, are given great prominence; and at other times the results of this atonement in purchasing redemption, or in making reconciliation, are chiefly dwelt upon. In the explanations now to be made, the contents of the Standards may be summed up under several heads, some of which, on account of their intrinsic importance, may be somewhat expanded.

First, As a mediatorial priest, Jesus Christ is the one who makes the offering which is to secure satisfaction. Being taken from among men, and being appointed by God, the priest is one who officiates on behalf of men. He officiates at the altar, and offers both gifts and sacrifices for men. So in the case of Christ in his priestly office, and as the representative of his elect covenant people at the holy altar of the divine justice, there is a priestly satisfaction made by him for them. And he himself is the divinely-appointed and fully-qualified priest who officiates at this altar.

Secondly, Christ is not only the priest, but he is also the sacrifice. He offered himself once for all. Hence, the remarkable fact appears that he is both the priest who makes the offering, and the sacrificial victim offered. In this respect his priestly service is entirely different from that which appears among men, even in the Jewish dispensation. With them the priest was one thing, and the sacrificial offering was another thing. But in the case of Christ, the offerer and the offering were found united in the same person. He himself as an offering was perfect, or, as the Larger Catechism says,

he was without spot before God. This was in accordance with what the law of Moses required, for the sacrificial lamb was to be without spot or blemish. He was the spotless Lamb of God, as an offering laid upon the altar. This means that he was sinless in his humanity. He was faultless in his theanthropic person. He was in this way qualified to be a true sin-offering for sinful men, and so to bear the sins of his people in his own body on the tree.

Thirdly, As a priest he rendered a perfect obedience to the law of God. This is what is termed Christ's active obedience. By means of this he fulfilled the precept of the law which Adam left unfulfilled, when he failed and fell. In this relation he rendered a perfect obedience, and became entitled to the reward of that obedience on behalf of his people. And all the sufferings and humiliation of his earthly lot, as he kept perfectly the whole law of God as no mere man since the fall could keep it, are to be taken into account in this connection. This phase of the priestly work of Christ is one which is often left too much in the background. It is by means of it that the everlasting inheritance has been purchased, as the positive benefit of redemption. The mere remission of penalty, even where satisfaction has been made, is purely negative, and in the nature of the case cannot bring reward.

Fourthly, As a priest Christ makes a sacrificial atonement for the sins of his people. This is the very core of the work of Christ in his priestly office. It is sometimes called the passive obedience of Christ, and by means of it he rendered satisfaction to the penalty of the law which had been incurred by the whole race through the transgression of Adam. All parts of the Standards give prominence to this point. The Confession says that he offered up a perfect sacrifice of himself once unto God, and thereby fully satisfied the justice of the Father, and purchased reconciliation. The Larger Catechism states that he offered up himself to be a recon-

ciliation for the sins of his people. The word reconciliation is evidently used here in the same scriptural sense as the term atonement in modern theology, and it seems a capital word. The Shorter Catechism to a certain extent modifies the language, but presents the same idea when it asserts that Christ once offered up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God. This is perhaps the best brief statement of the doctrine to be found anywhere outside the Scriptures. It will be observed that the Catechisms do not distinguish between the active and the passive obedience of Christ, the former meeting the precept of the law, and the latter its penalty under the covenant, as the Confession does when it says that Christ rendered a perfect obedience and sacrifice. The result of the passive obedience, expressed by his sacrifice of himself, is that he purchased reconciliation for his people.

Fifthly, It is clearly the teaching of the Standards that Christ's obedience and sacrifice, in the priestly office, are penal and vicarious. These words are not directly found in the Standards, but they are distinctly implied in all their teaching at this point. The very idea of the priestly office suggests that its service is vicarious, as the priest in it officiates on behalf of others, and answers for the legal liabilities of those whom he represents before God. Then the phrase, "for the sins of his people," which is found so often in the Standards, can only mean the same thing. Very many passages of Scripture fully justify the statements of the Standards upon this subject. And in like manner, the whole status of Christ, as the Mediator of the covenant, as it is presented in the Standards, and according to which he is the legal representative and voluntary substitute of his covenant people, implies that his priestly service is vicarious, and that his sacrifice is not merely an exhibition of unselfish, moral heroism, but a penal offering to the justice of the Father for the sins of his people. As a sacrifice, his atoning death

was penal and vicarious, according to the teaching of the Standards; and it is very evident from the proof texts that the Standards do not overstate the truth of Scripture upon this subject.

Sixthly, The closing remark concerning the sacrificial work of Christ is of a somewhat general nature. The priestly work of Christ, as exhibited in the preceding paragraphs, has a twofold bearing upon the results of the mediation which Christ performs between God and man. *First*, Towards God: the perfect obedience and sacrifice of Christ, having made satisfaction to divine justice, propitiated the wrath of God, and procured his favor. Hence, God is reconciled, and his anger is turned away. It is in this sense that Christ is a propitiation for the sins of his people. *Secondly*, Towards man: the same obedience and sacrifice of of Christ expiates the guilt of the sins of his people. That guilt is met and fully removed by Christ. In this sense Christ is an expiation for the sins of his people. The sacrifice which he offered was offered on their behalf, and, as a result, their guilt was expiated by him, as he bore their sins in his own body on the tree. Hence, by the sacrificial branch of Christ's priestly work, the wrath of God is propitiated, and the guilt of man is expiated. He makes our peace with God, and takes all the guilt of his people away.

2. The intercessory work of the Mediator of the covenant of grace is now to receive some attention. On its own account, and because of the present comfort which this branch of the doctrine brings to the believer, it deserves careful attention. What the Standards say concerning it is scattered through several sections, so that an effort must be made to gather these together in the form of a complete summary at this point. Both Catechisms announce that one important part of the priestly work of Christ is to make continual intercession for his people. The Confession says that Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father, making intercession;

and, again, that he maketh intercession on behalf of those for whom he hath purchased redemption. But it is in the Larger Catechism that the fullest statement of the intercessory work of Christ, the Mediator, made in the Standards, is to be found. It contains several items of much interest and value.

First, He appears continually in the human nature before the Father in heaven. He is the God-man in his theanthropic person, having a glorified human nature, still in union with the divine nature, in his Father's presence in heaven. His person, therefore, is well qualified to do the work of intercession. The dignity of his divine nature gives him equality with God, and his human nature gives him a kinship with men that enables him to bring them into his Father's presence with favor and acceptance.

Secondly, As the meritorious ground of his intercession, Christ presents the virtue of his perfect obedience and sacrificial death. This is the condition of the covenant which he fulfilled perfectly, so that he can justly claim the promised covenant reward for his people as well as for himself. In the advocacy which he thus makes as a priestly Mediator he presents the value of the satisfaction which, by his active and passive obedience, he rendered as Mediator of the covenant. By this means he abundantly provides for the virtual justification of all his covenant seed. This might be called federal justification.

Thirdly, In making his intercession, or advocacy, Christ pleads with his Father that the benefits of the redemption which he purchased may be applied to all his people who believe in him. This means that there shall be given to them the Holy Spirit, to renew them and unite them to him, and thus grant to them eternal life, and produce in their hearts and lives all the Christian graces. In like manner he engages to answer all charges or accusations made against them, and to secure their justification and adoption at the

hand of his Father. By this means the intercession of Christ secures the application of all saving benefits to all believers, and consequently their acceptance with God and assured salvation from sin, both in respect to its guilt and its power.

Fourthly, By his work of intercession Christ also secures for his people peace of conscience, which means that relief from the inward sense of guilt, and the dread thereby engendered, is procured by him for all his believing people. This inward sense of peace and reconciliation flows from the outward removal of the guilt of sin almost as a matter of course, and this all the more surely when it is remembered that prior to the exercise of the faith which conditions the removal of the guilt of sin in justification, the nature of the believer has been renewed, and has become spiritually alive. Even in the face of daily faults and failures, believers have, through the prevailing intercession of Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the covenant of grace, constant access with holy boldness at a throne of grace, where they may obtain the pardon of their sins, and grace to help in every time of need. And, further, it is only by virtue of the intercession of Christ that believers possess, and may assuredly rejoice in, an abiding sense of the acceptance of their persons and services in the sight of God. This point of view will emerge again when justification is explained, so that it is not dwelt on at length now. Christ intercedes in heaven with the Father, and he procures the Spirit, who intercedes with men on the earth. The former is conducted before God, and the latter is effected in the soul of the believer. Made effective by the intercession of Christ, they bring God and the elect believing seed into peace and harmony. Considerable space has been devoted to the two branches of the priestly office of Christ, because of its transcendent importance and on account of some modern tendencies to make less of it than the Scriptures demand. The Standards are only true to the Scriptures when they lay great stress upon this part of Christ's work of redeeming grace.

II. *The Kingly Office of the Mediator.*

The kingly office of Christ is now to be taken up and developed with some care. In the great treatises on theology this office of the Mediator is disposed of far too hurriedly, especially when it is to be observed that it has great prominence both in the Scriptures and in the Standards. Thus the elder Hodge devotes one hundred and thirty pages to the exposition of the priestly office, and only thirteen to that of the kingly, while Shedd really gives no proper separate treatment to the kingly office at all. This is not in harmony with the structure of the Standards and the balance of the parts of Christ's work which they exhibit. This exposition will seek to guard against this defect.

Here, too, the Catechisms, especially the Larger, contain very complete statements of the doctrine taught in the Standards upon this point. The fact that Christ discharges the office of a king implies that there is a kingdom, or spiritual commonwealth, of which he is the king or head. This kingdom is the invisible church, strictly speaking; but this will be fully considered later on in the explanation of the Standards. The fact is only pointed out now, and the remark added, that the visible church, in its outward organization, is the concrete expression, for the time being, of that spiritual kingdom of which Christ is the king and head. The particulars here involved are now set down in order.

1. It is as a king that Christ gives the Spirit, as was seen in the explanation of his intercession, to effectually call a people out of the world to be his peculiar people. They are thereby translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and delivered from the bondage of Satan to be introduced into the liberty of the children of God. In this way Christ, as mediatorial King, constitutes his own kingdom, and makes his own subjects. All true believers are subjects of this invisible spiritual kingdom, while all professing Christian are the members of the visible form of this kingdom.

2. As a king he also subdues his people unto himself. They are made willing in the day of his power. Having called them by his Spirit, that same Spirit, dwelling in them, brings them into sweet and willing obedience to his holy and righteous will. Having given to them in the Scriptures the laws of the kingdom, they are enabled, by the aid of the Spirit, to obey from the heart these laws, which express the will of God. This experience proceeds through all their life, so that head and heart, will and conscience, words and actions, are brought ever into more complete harmony with his will.

3. As a king he next rules his people as the subjects of his kingdom. This rule or control is exercised with the sceptre of love in the hearts of his people, so that from the heart they submit to his authority in all things. Before him every knee bows and every tongue confesses. In this connection the Standards signalize the important fact, to be enlarged upon afterwards, that Christ as king has given to his people, as his kingdom, certain officers, laws, and censures, by means of which he visibly governs them. These things evidently relate to the visible church in the world, just as the rule of love and grace in the heart pertains to the members of the true invisible church. The visible church has thus had given to it certain officers, who are to rule for Christ in his kingdom. These officers are announced in the Scriptures, and their several duties are prescribed. He has also given them suitable laws, and these are to be found in the Holy Scriptures, which may almost be termed the constitution and statute-book of the kingdom. And, finally, necessary censures are appointed in the Scriptures, and these are to be administered, not by physical or temporal pains or penalties, but by divine sanctions and spiritual penalties, in order to secure propriety of conduct on the part of those who profess to be the subjects of the kingdom of Christ. These three things form the confessional basis for the system of church polity to be afterwards unfolded.

4. Again, as a king Christ defends his people. There are spiritual foes, and they are many, subtle, and strong. From the assaults of these Christ defends his people by his word and Spirit. As a king he corrects his people for their sins, so as to make them more careful in time of temptation, and to cause them to rely more and more upon the gracious support of their king. He also rewards them for their faithful service, and thus cheers them in their conflict with sin and all their foes. He also supports them in all their temptations, and makes his powerful grace sufficient for all their need, for he will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able to stand. So, also, in the season of sorrow and suffering, they will not be overlooked nor forgotten by their king, but will receive strong consolation, seeing that they have fled to him for refuge. This is a very precious doctrine which the Standards thus exhibit so fully.

5. But Christ, as mediatorial king, does still more than this, for even the enemies of his people are under his control, and he powerfully restrains them. Satan is but a creature, and, though he is allowed to tempt believers, yet even he is not free to exercise all his evil designs upon them, for the reason that Christ, as their king, not only stands for their defence, but also restrains and overcomes their enemies. For the individual believer this fact is full of comfort and cheer. At times it may almost seem as if the enemies of the kingdom were going to have things all their own way; but there is divine assurance that the gates of hell shall not prevail against this spiritual kingdom, and that not one of its subjects shall be destroyed. Through Christ, their king, they shall all be more than conquerors in the end.

6. Finally, as king, Christ powerfully orders all things for his own glory, and for the good of his church and people. It is in this respect that he is head over all things to the church, which is his body, and of which body he is the head. Thus he rules over the realm of nature and in the sphere of

providence. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. The cattle upon a thousand hills, and the silver and the gold, are his. He orders all the events of providence among men and among the nations of the earth in such a way as to truly further the interests of his kingdom, and at the same time to promote his glory in the world, and to secure the present and eternal welfare of the individual members of his kingdom. And thus it is that all things shall work for the good of his people, since the "all things" are in his hand. He is thus able powerfully to order them all for the good of those who love him, and who are the called according to his purpose. This fact cannot fail to greatly cheer the believer in his earthly pilgrimage.

In this connection it is added, last of all, that, as a king, Christ takes vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the gospel. Thus, the Standards teach that the authority of Christ as the mediatorial king extends, in a judicial way at least, over all his enemies and over the enemies of his kingdom. They shall one day be made to lick the dust, and they shall become his foot-stool; and he shall be exalted King of kings and Lord of lords, to the glory of God the Father.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION OF CHRIST.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 27, 28; LARGER CATECHISM, 46–56; CONFESSION OF FAITH, VIII.

THIS chapter leads to the exposition of what is usually called the estates of the Redeemer. So far, at least, as the Confession is concerned, some of the same things will come up for discussion as have engaged attention in the two preceding chapters. It is in the Catechisms that special and very complete statements are to be found. The Shorter has two suggestive questions upon this subject, while the Larger has no fewer than ten, which cover the whole ground very fully, and give a more extended statement of the same facts as are set down in the fourth section of the eighth chapter of the Confession.

In a general way, the estates of Christ embrace all those stages of experience and activity through which the Redeemer passed, specially during the period from his incarnation till his glorification. They describe all that he was, did, and suffered from the time that he left his Father's bosom till he returned to his Father's right hand. It is evident, therefore, that a knowledge of what is involved in these estates is very necessary in order to obtain a complete view of what Christ was, what he became, and what he endured, and how he triumphed as the Mediator of the covenant and Redeemer of his people. These estates are, therefore, considered with some care in this chapter.

I. *Christ's Estate of Humiliation.*

In this estate the prophetic office comes clearly into view in the personal teaching of Jesus Christ on the earth, but the priestly work of the Redeemer is still more prominent,

especially towards the close of his ministry among men. As a great teacher sent from God he was exercising the prophetic office when he spake as never man spake; and then, in the obedience which he rendered and in the sufferings he bore, and specially in the death which he endured, he was discharging the important functions of the priestly office. It is at the same time to be remembered that the kingly office was not in abeyance, though it was in the background, in this estate, whose particulars are now to be explained.

1. *Christ Humbled Himself in his Birth.*

The humiliation of Christ, which is that low condition in which for our sakes he emptied himself of his glory, and took upon him the form of a servant, really begins with his incarnation and birth, although in the divine purpose it was ideally in view from all eternity. All that was involved in emptying himself of his glory, and in assuming humanity into union with his deity, of course, cannot be fully understood or explained. The Standards state the fact, but do not offer any elaborate explanation of it. In his conception and birth it is evident that he greatly humbled himself. The second person of the adorable Trinity appeared as a helpless babe at Bethlehem. He was the eternal Son of God, and dwelt in the bosom of the Father; yet, in the fulness of time he became the Son of man and was found in fashion as a man. Then he was born of a woman in the lowly walks of life. He was not born of princely parentage or of lofty lineage, though he was of the house of David, for that once royal house was now in decadence. His advent, too, was marked by not a few circumstances of more than ordinary abasement. He was born among strangers, far from home, and in a stable. He was cradled in a manger with the dumb animals about him, yet out on the plains near by the heavenly hosts, with their divine anthem, heralded his advent. The Lord of glory was a babe in the lowly manger.

2. *Christ Humbled Himself in his Life.*

Here the whole of that wonderful life of Jesus of Nazareth might be properly described, and this would give a picture such as men had never seen, or the world never known. He subjected himself to the stern demands of law, although as its author he was really above the law under whose claims he voluntarily passed for a time. Having thus taken his place under the law, there came to him as a matter of course much of hardship and humiliation. He submitted to the ceremonial law, and so was circumcised, observed the Passover, and lived as a Jew. He also came of his own volition under moral law, and assumed his place under the legal conditions of the covenant of grace, and thus undertook to render the perfect obedience which was required in all these relations.

Thereby he perfectly fulfilled all forms of legal obligation thus assumed. He came to fulfil and not to destroy the law and the prophets. His life was in perfect conformity, both in its form and spirit, with the moral law of God. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled. He also completely fulfilled all the conditions of the covenant of grace of which he was the mediator, so that he could say that he had finished the work which the Father gave him to do. With the cold and heartless indignities of the world he was in constant conflict. The spiritual dullness and actual unbelief of his disciples, the impenitence of his own people, and the cunning and cruel opposition of the Jewish rulers, all laid heavy burdens upon him during his life. And worse than all, the temptations of Satan, especially in the wilderness of Judea, were one of the severest conflicts, and no doubt one of the sorest humiliations, of his earthly career. This temptation, let it be remembered, was real, and one specially painful factor in it, doubtless, was the close contact with sin and suffering which must have been so abhorrent to his holy soul. He was also subject to the usual infirmities incident to the estate of man. He was weary, hungry, thirsty, and often kept his sleepless

vigil upon the mountains. And all this was aggravated by the fact that in his lowly earthly condition he had no temporal resources to support him, or to afford relief amidst it all. He was dependent upon others for many of the ordinary necessaries and supports of this life.

3. *Christ Humbled Himself in his Death.*

At this stage the humiliation of the Redeemer becomes still deeper. All the sufferings associated with his closing days on the earth come into view at this stage, and of these the Larger Catechism gives a good summary. The description of these sufferings may begin with Gethsemane and the agony there. Then comes the betrayal by Judas, one of the twelve, by means of which he was put into the hands of his enemies. This perfidy must have pierced his true and trustful soul with sore sorrow. Worse still, in some respects, was the fact that all the rest of his disciples forsook him and fled, and one of them who had sworn that he would never leave his Master denied him in that trying hour. He was thus left to tread the winepress of his humiliation alone; and how deeply he must have felt the isolation of that season! In addition, by the cold and heartless world he was scorned and rejected. He was scourged, mocked, smitten, spat upon, and crowned with thorns, at the hands of the Jews and Romans, who may be taken to represent the world. He was condemned by Pilate on the testimony of false witnesses, and to appease the clamor of the Jewish rulers he was sorely tormented by his persecutors. Then of a still deeper nature was the humiliation which arose at this point from his conflict with death as the penalty of sin, and as he stood face to face with the powers of darkness in deadly spiritual combat. He felt the pangs of the penalty of sin and he bore the awful weight of the wrath of God, and this led him, in the desolation of his soul, to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This wrath of God which he bore is not to be understood as passionate anger or revengeful rage, but as the

inexorable moral antagonism of God against sin, expressed by the necessary infliction of penalty. In this sense he endured the wrath of God, and the measure of the shame and humiliation which this entailed no tongue shall ever be able to tell. Finally, he laid down his life as an offering for sin. He laid it down willingly, for he was not forced to die. He had power to lay down his life, and he had power to take it again. Hence, he made his soul an offering for sin, and presented himself as a sacrifice without spot unto God. Nor can the fact be overlooked that the mode of his death was painful and humiliating in the extreme. It was the cursed death of the cross, with all its shame and woe. The Lord of life and glory was nailed as a malefactor to the tree.

4. *He Humbled Himself after his Death.*

This brings us to the deepest depths of his humiliation. His body was taken from the cross by kind-hearted strangers, who were, perhaps, secret disciples, and buried in a new-made tomb. He remained in the state of the dead and under the power of death for a time. It is the midnight of his humiliation now. It seemed as if now, surely, the powers of darkness had gotten the victory, and that Satan had triumphed. Death, the penalty of sin, had laid him low, and the grave held him firmly in its grasp. He was really dead. His spirit had gone to God who gave it, and his body lay cold and lifeless in its rock-hewn tomb.

It is in this connection that the phrase in the Apostles' Creed, "and he descended into hell," which is alluded to in the Larger Catechism, properly comes up for some brief remarks. This much-discussed phrase does not mean that Christ, in his disembodied spirit, actually went, after his death and prior to his resurrection, to the spirit world, and to that region of the unseen abode where the spirits of the saints of the Old Testament dispensation were held for the time, to declare the full gospel message to them, and so to bring them into the enjoyment of the felicity of the heavenly

state. Nor does the phrase mean that the human soul of Christ went really into hell, there to secure a victory over Satan in his own proper abode. Nor, again, can it be rightly taken to signify that his human soul actually went to that place of punishment where the souls of the lost are kept, that he might there fully endure all that was needed to make a full penal satisfaction for sin. To understand the phrase, the meaning of the word *hell* must be observed. It does not mean the place or state of the finally lost, but it rather denotes the invisible world of departed spirits. Hence, the meaning of the phrase is, that during the period between his death and his resurrection Christ's human spirit, or soul, was in the region of departed disembodied souls in the unseen world, and at the same time his body was lying in the tomb. In his case, of course, the departed human spirit would go to the estate of the blessed, for he had said to the thief on the cross, who died penitent, that they would be together that day in paradise. And all through even these experiences, the personal union of the human and the divine natures was not destroyed in the God-man. This completes the teaching of the Standards in regard to the humiliation of the Redeemer.

II. *Christ's Estate of Exaltation.*

The humiliation of Christ leaves him under the power of the last enemy in the state of the dead, and it is just at this point that the description of his exaltation given in the Standards finds him. This estate embraces several important particulars as follows:

1. *Christ was Exalted in His Resurrection.*

Though he came under the power of death, he was not suffered to see corruption, for on the third day he rose from the dead, even as he said he would. By his resurrection the very same body in which he was crucified was reanimated, as he rose triumphing over the grave. This body, thus raised, possessed all the essential properties which it had

prior to his death on the cross, but after the resurrection it was to die no more, so that it did not possess mortality, or other common infirmities incident to this present mortal life. In the article of the resurrection the human soul of Christ was reunited with the reanimated body, thereby constituting the complete human nature which remained all the time in indissoluble union with the second person of the Trinity. He also raised himself by his own power, having power to take up his life again, even as he willingly laid it down. By this fact he gave forcible proof that he was truly the Son of God. Moreover, by the fact of his resurrection Christ gave final and convincing proof that he had conquered death, and vanquished him who had the power of death, and so became the Lord of the quick and the dead.

All this, the Larger Catechism says, he did as a public person and as the head of the church. By this fact the representative and vicarious nature of Christ's office and work is further evident. By the resurrection of Christ the justification of all his people is assured, for as he died for their sins, he also rose again for their justification. Thus, by virtue of his atoning death and triumphant resurrection, he secured the virtual justification of all his elect covenant seed before his Father's face. In like manner, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, his people have the assurance of quickening grace in their hearts, the promise of almighty support against their enemies, and a sure pledge of their own resurrection at the last great day. The resurrection of Christ, therefore, has much meaning and great comfort for the believer.

2. *Christ was Exalted in His Ascension.*

In this important fact the exaltation of Christ appears more distinctly. After his resurrection he was often seen by his disciples, conversed much with them, especially in regard to the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and at the close of forty days he gave them the commission to

preach the gospel to all nations, and added the promise that the Spirit would be poured out upon them. Having done these things, he ascended up into heaven from the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem. He ascended still in the human nature; and he was also the federal head of his people, and mediatorial king of his kingdom. Triumphing over all his foes, he went up into heaven visibly, and entered the highest heavens, there to receive gifts for men at his Father's gracious hand. It is further said, that by the fact of his resurrection and ascension Christ raises the affections of his people heavenward, and that he has gone to his Father's house of many mansions to prepare a place for them. There he now is, and shall continue to be, till his second coming, at the end of the world, when he shall come to judge the quick and the dead at the appointed day.

Two interesting questions are suggested by the statements of the Standards at this point. The first relates to the precise time when the body of Christ was really changed into the glorious body, and the second has reference to the time and purpose of the second advent of Christ. As to the first of these questions, the Standards do not directly speak. Some things seem to indicate that the body was at least partly changed soon after the resurrection, but definite conclusions cannot be drawn from what even the Scriptures say. It is clear, however, that in connection with the ascension the change was completed, and that his body was then glorified, and made meet for its heavenly estate. As to the second question, it is evident that the Standards teach what is now known as the post-millennial view of the time and purport of the second advent of Christ. Their teaching is, that he has ascended to the right hand of the Father, where he shall remain till the end of the world, and that when he shall come again it shall be to judge the quick and the dead.

3. *Christ is Exalted by Sitting at the Right Hand of God.* This fact marks a distinct onward stage in the exaltation

of the Redeemer. It is in his theanthropic person, as the God-man, that he sits at the Father's right hand, where he is advanced to the very highest favor with God the Father. And, as he wears the nature of his people, and represents them, he makes them sit together with him in the heavenly places. There he is also granted fulness of joy, and invested with divine glory, and at the same time he is given power over all things in heaven and on earth. He is thus in the place of honor, power, and glory, at the right hand of the majesty on high.

The kingly office comes now more and more distinctly into view, though the prophetic and priestly are, of course, still exercised. At the right hand of the Father he administers the affairs of his great spiritual kingdom. He gathers in his people, as the subjects of his kingdom, and then defends them by his good providence and powerful grace, and at the same time subdues all their enemies under him. He also furnishes his ministers with gifts and graces, so that they may be fitted for their work. This section closes by adding that Christ makes intercession for his people at his Father's right hand; but as this point was fully explained in last chapter in connection with the priestly office of Christ, nothing more need now be added. It will suffice to observe that intercession seems to be a priestly function exercised specially by Christ in his estate of exaltation, just as atonement is a priestly function exercised in his estate of humiliation.

4. *Christ is to be Exalted in Coming to Judge at the Last Day.*

This is the final factor or stage in the exaltation of the Redeemer. The exercise of this stage lies yet in the future, for the stage of the exaltation now in progress is the one described in last section. In coming again to judge, it is eminently appropriate that he who was unjustly judged, condemned, and put to death by wicked men, should be the

judge of men and angels in the end. The Standards say that he shall come in great power, and in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of his Father's as well. The contrast between his first and second advents is indeed very marked. Then he was an infant in the manger, now he is the judge upon the throne. Of his first advent the angels were the attendant heralds, of his second all the holy angels are also to be attendants at the world's last great assize. He shall come with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, to judge the world in righteousness. The resurrection of the dead, which will be treated at length in its proper place later on, will come to pass, and then the judgment will be set. Thus, in the midst of this august scene, Christ will appear on the highest summit of the estate of his exaltation. He is now the judge upon the throne. The whole race of mankind will be assembled for its final judgment. The holy angels, as has been seen, are to be there as attendants, and all mankind, both the just and unjust, the former on the right hand, and the latter on the left hand of the judge, shall be present. The apostate angels, with Satan at their head, will also be there, to have meted out to them their final and irrevocable doom. The elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens shall be rolled up as a scroll. The membership of the invisible church shall then be found complete, ready to hear its last joyful welcome, and to enter upon its eternal home. Then time shall be no more, and when the judgment is over the destiny of men and angels will be forever fixed. Then, last of all, Christ will deliver up to the Father the kingdom of which he is the mediator, and the purposes of redemption will enter on their final and eternal stage.

With the close of this chapter an important stage in the exposition of the doctrines of the Standards is reached. What they have to say in regard to the work of Christ as mediator, in itself considered, is complete. In the next, and

some subsequent chapters, that aspect of Christ's work according to which it is considered in its application to his people for whom he purchased redemption will engage attention. It is at this stage that the Confession considers the exceedingly difficult and very important question of man's freedom, or the problem of the moral agency of men. The Catechisms do not directly discuss this question, but later on they deal with man's ability to keep the law of God, and thus really raise one important phase of the same question. This being the case, it may be best to exhibit what the Standards teach upon this subject in a complete statement at this stage. And it seems all the more fitting to do so in this connection, when the question of the application of the benefits of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus to sinful men is raised, and when their ability in the case should be understood. At this stage, therefore, what the Catechisms say upon this knotty point will be incorporated with the teaching of the Confession, although this will rearrange the order of the topics in the Catechisms, which has been followed quite closely thus far in the exposition.

CHAPTER XIV.

FREE WILL AND ABILITY; GUILT AND ITS DEGREES.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 82–84; LARGER CATECHISM, 149–152; CONFESSION OF FAITH, IX.

IN entering upon the exposition of man's free agency, one of the most difficult problems in metaphysics, and one of the most perplexing questions in theology, arises for consideration. The question of man's moral agency is at the same time one of the utmost importance, alike for a sound system of moral philosophy, and for a proper scheme of Christian doctrine, both in its theoretical and practical aspects. With wonderful caution, and at the same time with profound philosophical insight, do the Standards speak upon this great subject. An attempt will be made in this chapter to give a somewhat careful exhibit of that teaching.

No elaborate discussion of the metaphysics of this intricate subject can now be undertaken; although, in explaining the doctrine of the Standards, some general explanations of the philosophy of man's moral agency is necessary to a proper understanding of the subject in its theological bearings, and to clearly perceive the important issues involved in the theory of man's moral agency adopted.

I. *The Doctrine of Man's Moral Freedom.*

The doctrine of the Standards upon this great subject is expressed in the following brief and pregnant statement: "God hath endowed the will of man with that natural ability, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined, to good or evil." It will be observed that this statement is somewhat negative in form, and yet it asserts in very positive terms the fact that man in his very nature, being endowed with volitional agency, is a free moral agent, and, hence, a responsible being. This being the case, all

charges made against the Standards, to the effect that they teach the doctrine of necessity, are utterly without any grounds whatever. The fact of man's natural freedom and consequent moral responsibility is clearly taught here, and implied elsewhere in the Standards. Just as was seen in a previous chapter, that the great fact of the sovereignty of God was plainly asserted, so now at this stage, with equal force, the fact of man's free moral agency is announced. The statement just quoted from the Standards, though very brief, contains several things which are now to be carefully considered.

1. The *nature* of the will must be first explained. This is a point about which there is still much difference of opinion among both philosophers and theologians. In what does the will as a faculty or power of man's nature or constitution really consist? What is the nature of man's volitional agency? Two general views upon this question have prevailed in the history of speculation.

First, Some take a comprehensive view of the nature of the faculty called will. According to this view the will embraces the exercise of all the conative, or striving faculties of man's nature, as well as that of volitional agency. As thus used, the term "will" includes desire and appetency as well as choice or volition. The whole of those activities of human nature which are spontaneous, as well as those which are directive, are included under this broad view of the nature of the will of man. If this view of the nature of the will be taken, it will include not only those decisions which are determined by some inward disposition or motive, but also those movements of man's nature which are the result of mere external inducement. To express the same still more briefly, the will in this wide sense includes self-expression as well as self-determination. This use of the term is often found in the discussions upon this subject. When so used it includes not only volitional agency but everything related to

it. Hence, volition and conation, motive and inducement, desire and choice, are all taken together in this wide view of the nature of the will of man. It seems quite just to say that much confusion has been introduced into a very intricate subject by the adoption of this general view of the nature of the will of man.

Secondly, Others take the term will in a much narrower sense, and define its nature in a much more limited way. According to this view, the will includes only those activities of man's nature which are voluntary or self-directive. All that is conative or purely spontaneous is excluded, and only that which is of the nature of choice or volition is taken into account. According to this view, the will is the faculty of rational self-determination. It is to be carefully distinguished from conation, desire, or appetency, and may even be found running counter to it. And, further, outward inducement may be related to desire or conation, but motive, in the strict sense, is connected only with volition or choice. This view confines the scope of the nature of the will to a much narrower area than does the former, and it denotes self-determination as distinguished from self-expression. It is in this limited sense that the term is used in the Standards, and care must be taken to keep this in mind in the exposition of their doctrine upon this subject. The nature of the will, as a faculty of the constitution of man, denotes the power of choice, in the sense of free rational self-determination. In his very constitution, this endowment belongs to man. The will is not something apart from or other than the man; but it is just the man choosing or determining himself by means of free rational volition.

Into other questions, such as the relation between will and appetency, will and intelligence, will and conscience, will and the emotions, it is not necessary now to enter, nor does the space at command in this exposition permit doing so. The fact that the Standards clearly teach that man is a free

rational agent is emphasized, and this simply means that there is in his nature a power of free rational self-determination, and that this is the adequate basis of his moral responsibility before God.

2. *The Freedom of the Will, or of the Moral Agent.*

As has been indicated, this is the real point upon which the Standards lay special stress. Man is free. He has natural liberty, and so is rationally responsible for his volitions and acts. In stating their position so clearly upon this point, the Standards guard against two false views, both of them really necessitarian, of the way in which the will is determined. These may be briefly noticed before the true doctrine is set forth.

First, The will is not forced in any way. Man, in the exercise of volitional agency, is not under restraint or compulsion. He is not compelled in any way from without. Indeed, it would be a contradiction in terms to speak of a will that was forced, or of a volition that was the product of compulsion. The very notion of will is that it is a faculty or power which is free. If not free it would be mechanical, and man would be but a machine, and not a moral agent. The statement of the Standards at this point rebuts this mechanical view of the way in which the volitional activity of man is determined. It is not by force of outward circumstances that this determination is brought about. The connection between volitions and their causes is not of the nature of physical causation at all, but man in willing, or in the exercise of his power of rational determination, does not act under any kind of external restraint. Hence, physical necessitarianism is not the doctrine of the Standards.

Secondly, Nor is the will of man determined by any absolute necessity of its own nature. The statement of the Standards here relates to the inward conditions of voluntary rational action, and it is directed against all forms of what may be called rational or moral necessitarianism. If the

will of man were determined by some inner necessity of its own nature, it would not be really free at all. If man were thus determined in his volitions he would not really be a free agent. If inner necessity of nature determined the man in acting he would be after all but a rational machine and not a free agent. But the doctrine of the Standards is to the effect that man is in no sense a machine, but a free rational moral agent. By the necessity of his nature as a voluntary agent, he is not, by the very conditions of that nature, so determined to good or evil that of necessity he is determined to the one or the other absolutely. Hence, again, volitions and their causes are not linked together by what may be called a rational causal necessity.

Thirdly, On the positive side, the Standards teach that man by the very fact of his creation and by virtue of his constitution, has been endowed with a peculiar power which is of the nature of a natural liberty to choose as he pleases, or to exercise his voluntary activity as he desires. In this sense and in this way man is free. Whatever a man's nature prefers that he freely chooses, and he is responsible for the choices or volitions thus exercised. Whatever may be the connection between the nature and dispositions of the man, and his choices and volitions, the latter are truly and consciously free. If there be any connection asserted between them it can only be of the nature of free moral causation, in harmony with the power with which man has been endowed.

Here the distinction between liberty and ability appears to be of considerable importance. Liberty is simply the power to choose or decide as the man desires or pleases. Ability is the power to choose this or that course, even though it may be contrary to the desires or dispositions of the man. Liberty is freedom in willing, ability is freedom to will this way or that way. An illustration may make the difference more fully understood. A wicked man constantly sins. In sinning he chooses freely to sin. He sins freely because

he pleases to sin, and he has full liberty in that direction. It cannot be said that he sins under compulsion. But, on the other hand, he has no power to choose or prefer holiness. He has no ability to will that which is pure and good. Herein lies his inability. He has liberty in willing the evil, but he has no ability to will the good. The case of the unfallen angels who are confirmed in holiness further illustrates this distinction. They have the fullest liberty in serving God and willing the good, and at the same time they have no ability to sin or dishonor God. Hence, it is apparent, from the nature of the case, that in exercising his volitional agency man is perfectly free in that exercise. This simply means that his liberty is unquestioned. But it is equally true that a man, owing to the nature of his desires and dispositions, may be entirely without ability to exercise his volitional agency at all in certain directions. This distinction kept in mind goes far to make plain the nature of that freedom which man has.

It is proper to point out, at this place, the force of the distinction made by some theologians between natural and moral liberty or freedom. This distinction resembles that made in the previous paragraph, but is not to be identified with it. The view now under notice holds that man has a natural ability to do all that God requires of him. This implies that he has all the natural endowment necessary to enable him to will and to do what God requires. But by reason of sin he has no ability to choose, or to do, the will of God. The sinner, according to this view, has natural ability, but no moral ability; and all that he needs is merely the restoration of that moral ability in order to be saved and serve God. It will be observed that this distinction between natural and moral ability really overlooks the import of the deeper distinction between liberty and ability. Hence, what a sinful man needs is not merely the restoration of ability in regard to the choice of the good, but rather a radical change

in the desires and dispositions of his nature, for it is out of these dispositions that choice, volition, or self-determination freely flows. Till this change is effected, the man with the sinful disposition always prefers the sinful, and wills or chooses accordingly. Hence, while there may be some force in the distinction between natural and moral ability, it must not be pushed too far. It is better to clearly grasp the distinction between liberty and ability of will as it is set forth in the Standards. By doing this the disability under which the sinner lies will appear to be not merely a certain disability of the will, but a deeper perversity of the whole nature, and it also will become evident that regeneration is not merely a change in the will or volitional agency of the sinner, but a radical renovation of the dispositions of the whole nature. The force of this will be seen more fully later on.

3. The question of the freedom of the will now requires some more definite discussion. In explaining more fully the doctrine of the Standards upon this subject, it may be instructive to give an outline of the main types of theory which have been announced concerning this knotty subject. This may, perhaps, be done in a twofold way, for the subject of the freedom of man has been discussed from two distinct standpoints. It may be considered from the view-point of philosophy, and in its relation to theology. A brief sketch of the chief types of theory under each of these aspects of the subject may help to shed some light upon it. Throughout, it will be seen that philosophy and theology run in parallel lines.

First, The philosophical theories of man's moral freedom are to be considered. In general, all these theories may be reduced to three heads. The first may be termed that of mechanical necessity, the second that of contingent liberty, and the third that of moral certainty. A very brief statement of each of these is all that can now be made.

The theory of mechanical necessity is first explained. This theory virtually denies freedom to man. Volitions and their causes are connected by the law of physical causation, so that man is a mere machine. Events in the moral sphere are in no essential respect different from those that happen in the physical. The will of man is determined in precisely the same manner as the forces of nature produce their effects. According to this theory, all events belong to the same category, and the distinction between the physical and the moral, between freedom and necessity, is obliterated altogether. If this theory be correct, man's volitional agency is a piece of refined mechanism, and his supposed freedom is a delusion.

The theory of contingent liberty is next considered. This type of theory is not easily described, because it appears in various forms, and is often stated in very ambiguous terms. In general, it goes to the opposite extreme of the preceding view, and regards the will as an entirely unstable element in our nature. It is looked on as not only distinct, but as separated, from the desires and dispositions of the nature of man. It is further held that the will is possessed of the power of asserting itself against the dispositions of the nature. And, in order to freedom and moral responsibility, this theory also holds that the conscious power to choose the contrary is necessary. It is asserted that if there be no such power to choose, man's freedom is destroyed, and his moral career can have no reality. Hence, the ability of will to choose the opposite of that which is actually chosen is needed to make man a free agent, and to render him responsible for his acts. This is contingent liberty, or power of contrary choice.

This theory is right in asserting that man is a free agent, and that freedom is necessary to moral responsibility. But it errs in disregarding the close connection between the dispositions of the nature and the volitions of the will. It errs, also, in assuming that the power of contrary choice is necessary to moral freedom and responsibility, and it is in danger

of taking the position that a man can be conscious of ability to choose in any other way than is actually chosen. Moreover, this theory, as will be seen later on, confounds necessity and certainty, and concludes that since the former is inconsistent with freedom the latter is also.

The theory of moral certainty remains for remark. This theory takes middle ground between the two already expounded. It maintains that man has moral freedom, and is endowed with the native power of self-determination. Man has liberty of will, is able to choose as he pleases, and to will in accordance with his desires and dispositions. Between his desires and choices, between his disposition and volitions, there is intimate connection, yet that connection is not mechanical or necessary, but moral and certain. In all his volitional activity man chooses, wills, or decides freely, yet his desires, dispositions or moral states determine certainly, though not necessarily, the volitions which he exercises. All that is necessary to true freedom and responsibility is liberty or freedom in willing, not ability to will the contrary. Hence, this theory maintains that freedom in volition and certainty in regard to the direction of the volition are not inconsistent with each other. This is the theory of moral certainty.

This is accepted to be the true theory of the philosophy of man's moral freedom, which is involved in the doctrine of the Standards. It takes the middle ground between two extremes, and does justice to all the facts in the case. Nor is it open to the objections to which both of the other theories are exposed, for they are both one-sided, and hence defective. The will of man is not bound up by an iron law of necessity, nor is it in a condition of entirely unstable equilibrium. Man has freedom or liberty in all his choices or voluntary decisions, which simply means that he determines himself. That his moral self-determinations are certain to be in accordance with his dispositions and moral states is quite con-

sistent with their freedom and the moral responsibility of the agent. This is a very important position.

Secondly, Theological theories in regard to man's moral freedom open up the other view of this intricate subject. The speculations of the philosopher upon this subject have passed over into the hands of the theologian. To a certain extent the philosophical theory has determined the theological doctrine, but care should be taken not to allow this to take place at the expense of the facts set forth in the Scriptures. The phase of the subject which now comes specially into view relates to the effects of sin on man's freedom, and to the liberty of man as he lies under the disabilities of his sinful estate. Touching this aspect of the problem, there are three distinct types of theory, to a certain extent corresponding to the philosophical theories just described. These are now to be stated in outline.

What is known as the Pelagian view comes naturally first. This theory denies that sin has in any way disabled man's moral agency. He has always possessed the power to will good or evil, or to choose rightly or wrongly. The first man had this power, and men ever since have retained the same ability. This theory denies, also, that any evil result has come upon the race by reason of its relation to the first man. Men are brought into the world now with the same moral character that the first man had, and there is in it no natural bias to good or evil. Every man, as a moral agent, is free to choose or decide in one way or the other upon all moral questions. At first, character has no moral quality, and volitions produce character according as they are good or bad. Each man voluntarily stands or falls when he acts in a holy way, or commits personal sin. However much of force this theory might have in the case of unfallen moral agents, it is evident that it is not the true view of the moral agency of sinful man. It is not in harmony with the teaching of the Scriptures in regard to the condition of man in his sinful

estate, and it is inconsistent with the facts of experience, observation, and history.

The Arminian theory is properly considered next. This theory denies that sin has entirely disabled the moral agency of man. It holds that it has been greatly weakened by reason of the sin of the first man, but the benefits of what is called common grace, bestowed upon all men as the result of the universal atonement for sin made by Christ, restores to all men their moral ability. The moral weakness or disability which rests upon the race is a misfortune for which it is not responsible; hence, justice to the race on the part of God required that he should in some way restore to man his moral ability, otherwise God could not justly punish men for remaining in their sinful estate. By reason of this restored ability men are able to choose or reject the good, to accept or refuse the gospel. In this way man was placed in substantially the same position that Adam was in prior to the fall. Thus, by the aid of common grace, man is put in the same position that the Pelagian assigns to him, and the theory of his moral freedom held is virtually that of contingent liberty, according to which the power to choose the contrary is held to be necessary to his responsibility. This theory of man's moral agency under sin is inadequate. It is not in harmony with the statements of Scripture in regard to his helpless estate in sin, about the gratuitous nature of salvation, and in reference to the necessity of determining grace to enable the sinner to turn and choose the good, to decide for God, for Christ, and for holiness.

The Calvinist theory remains for some simple explanation. This theory asserts that man's moral agency has been totally disabled, so far as any ability to choose the good, or to will that which is holy, is concerned. The nature of man has been corrupted by sin, so that his desires and dispositions are perverted, and his whole voluntary activity is turned away from God and holiness. Still, men are free in

all their wicked acts, and consequently responsible for them. Man has liberty in regard to all the exercises of his will, but he has no ability to choose the right or holy. Thus man is perfectly free, even while he acts certainly in the line of evil. The disabling effects of sin, which he has inherited, and the guilt of which rests upon him, have entirely destroyed his ability to know, to love, to choose, or to will the good, but they have not destroyed his liberty or his ability in the love and choice of the evil.

The theory thus briefly stated is accepted as the true one. It is in harmony with the teaching of Scripture, and in accordance with the true philosophy of man's moral agency already described. It is also consistent with all the facts in the case. According to this view, man has free agency in all that he wills and does. This implies that he chooses and acts freely, in accordance with his dispositions and inclinations. Still, man in his sinful state and apart from special grace has no ability to choose or will the good or holy; and for this inability he is held responsible, by reason of his race relation to the first man. This inability, moreover, is part of the penalty of original sin, as was seen in a former chapter, and guilt rests upon the race on this account. This brings up directly the question of the inability of man in his sinful state, as this is exhibited in the Standards, especially in the Confession, where the subject is treated at greater length than it is in the Catechisms.

4. Man's moral inability under sin is now to be explained. The Catechisms state plainly that no mere man is able in this life, even when assisted by divine grace, to keep perfectly the holy law of God. The Confession covers the whole field in the fourfold view it gives of man's moral agency and ability in relation to the effects of sin. These four phases of the question of man's ability and inability will now be presented in outline.

First, In his unfallen state of innocency the first view of

man's moral agency appears. In this state man had freedom of choice between good and evil, and ability both to will and do that which was pleasing to God. This freedom and ability were not absolutely confirmed, though, doubtless, the desires and dispositions were towards the good. Hence, man's moral agency in the state of innocency was a mutable ability to do all that God required of him, and being mutable he was liable to fall from it.

Secondly, In his sinful fallen state the moral agency of man has undergone important changes. By reason of his fall into a state of sin, man has wholly lost all ability to will any spiritual good accompanying salvation. This statement fixes attention upon a single important fact. Man by the fall has lost all ability to will any good which is spiritual, or which looks to salvation. He has lost ability to will in the direction of the spiritually good. His dispositions have been corrupted, and made averse to that which is holy, and the result is, that though he chooses as he pleases when he freely wills the evil, yet he has no ability in his natural state to choose in the opposite way. He is under spiritual death, and has no power to will or do the spiritually good. He cannot by any effort of his own convert himself, which means that he cannot change his natural dispositions, and consequently he is unable to restore to himself the ability to prefer and choose the good; nor can he prepare himself thereto. This means that a man cannot do anything to change for the better the natural evil dispositions out of which his choices or volitions all proceed. This, of course, does not mean that a man cannot put himself in the way of obtaining, through the appointed means of grace, that spiritual renewal which alone can work a change in the desires and dispositions of the nature. In this state man is under total inability, and he remains so till his nature is renewed by the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, In a state of grace, man is freed from his natural

bondage in sin, and is delivered from his inability to will that which is spiritually good. This is brought about by the effectual grace of God, which works a radical renovation in the sinful, helpless state of man's moral nature, and by means of which he is translated into a state of grace and favor. In this gracious spiritual condition he is delivered from the bondage of his moral and spiritual inability, and the consequence of this is that the sinner is endowed with ability to freely will and do that which is spiritually good. He is made willing in the day of God's gracious power, which delivers him from the thraldom in which sin holds him, and makes him a freeman in Christ Jesus. It is added in the Confession, that by reason of his remaining corruption man does not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but he does also will that which is evil. This may be called a mixed state, wherein the will freely chooses good or evil, having power to do so, though not in the sense of having the power of contrary choice. The remaining corruption, which is only slowly extirpated from the nature of the believer, sometimes leads him into sin. But the bondage of sin is broken, and ability to will and do the good is enjoyed, though holiness is not yet confirmed.

Fourthly, In the state of glory, the will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone. There is now confirmation in holiness, the corruption of the nature has been entirely removed, certainty of holy volitions is fully and for ever assured, and the saints in glory enjoy a freedom and enlarged liberty, such as they cannot know in this life. Here, again, is illustrated the fact that while freedom and necessity exclude each other, still freedom of volition and certainty in regard to the kind of volitions are entirely consistent with each other.

The teaching of the Standards in regard to the subject of man's ability and inability may now be summed up in a closing sentence. In the state of innocence man had full

moral ability, yet was mutable; in the state of sin man still had freedom, yet no ability to will that which was good; in a state of grace man has freedom with a mixed ability to will both the good and the evil; and in the state of glory man has an immutable freedom to will the good, and no ability to will or do that which is evil. This is, indeed, a matchless creed statement.

II. *Guilt and its Degrees.*

This is a topic which the Catechisms handle in close connection with that of man's moral inability, and, perhaps, it can be best treated as the concluding part of this chapter. The Catechisms, after stating that no mere man is able in this life, either of himself or by any grace received, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed, proceed to consider the question of the heinousness of different sins in the sight of God. The position taken is that all sins are not equally heinous in God's sight, but that in themselves and by reason of several aggravations some sins are worse in God's sight than others. At the same time it is stated distinctly, that every sin, small and great, even the least, since it is an offence against God's sovereignty, goodness, holiness, and righteous law, deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life and in that which is to come. The Larger Catechism adds that man cannot atone for his own sins, but that the blood of Christ alone can expiate the sins of men. Here there are two things to be briefly explained.

1. The nature of guilt must first be understood. Guilt, strictly speaking, is liability to punishment, or the infliction of punitive suffering. The penalty of sin is punitive suffering on its account. The guilt of sin, or its liability to penalty, is to be carefully distinguished from its depravity or pollution. Guilt comes upon the transgressor, depravity abides in the sinner. Guilt is directly related to the law and its sanction, depravity pertains directly to the nature of the

agent. Both always go together, but they are not to be confounded with each other. The pardoning mercy of God, on the ground of Christ's mediation, takes away guilt; the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit removes depravity.

If guilt is liability to penalty, or responsibility under violated law, then in the very nature of the case the penalty which the sanction of the law threatens is incurred through sin. Then it is in relation to this fact that the second point arises. This raises the question of the degrees of guilt, or the measure of penalty incurred by various transgressions.

2. The degrees of guilt is the question now to be briefly explained. The Standards plainly teach that guilt is graduated according to the sinfulness of the sin. This graduation arises from two considerations: *First*, Some sins in themselves are worse than others. Murder is worse than evil speaking, stealing than covetousness. If the sin be against the express letter of the law, if it be not only conceived in the heart but break out in act, if it allow of no reparation, if it be in violation of any promise, or be done deliberately, the sin is more heinous than if not so done; and such sins deserve a severer punishment. *Secondly*, By reason of various aggravations some sins are more heinous in the sight of God than others, and bring the transgressor into greater condemnation than others. The Larger Catechism is very complete in its statement upon this point, for it mentions several sets of aggravating circumstances.

First, From the persons offending. If the persons be of mature years, and of wide experience or grace; or if they be eminent for profession, gifts, place, or office; or if they be guides to others whose examples are likely to be followed, the sins of such persons are to be regarded as more heinous than they might be in other persons.

Secondly, From the parties offended. If the sin be directly against God or his attributes, or worship; or against Christ and his grace, or against the Holy Spirit, his witness; or if

it be against superiors, or those with whom we are closely related; or if it be against the brethren, especially against the weak; or against the common good of all or many, the offence becomes the more heinous on this account, and entails a greater degree of guilt.

Thirdly, From circumstances of time and place. If the offence be committed on the Lord's day, or during divine worship, or just before or after such worship; or if it be done in a public way, or in the presence of others who may be led astray by example, the offence becomes all the more heinous.

Man, of course, cannot estimate the exact degree of guilt which each several sin deserves, but there can be no doubt that the judge of all the earth will do right, and graduate the penalty of each sin according to its just deserts.

This concludes a very difficult subject, upon which the Standards have very important teaching. The nature of man's moral agency, and the question of the moral freedom of man, have been explained. The moral ability of man in his fourfold estate of innocence, of sin, of grace, and of glory has also been expounded; and the nature and degrees of guilt, or liability to punishment, has had brief treatment. In the next chapter the way by which man is recovered from this helpless estate of sin and guilt will be entered on, and another important stage in the exposition of the Standards will be reached.

CHAPTER XV.

EFFECTUAL CALLING; UNION WITH CHRIST; REGENERATION.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 29–31; LARGER CATECHISM, 57–60 AND 66–69; CONFESSION OF FAITH, X.

IN preceding chapters it has been seen how, by the mediation of Christ, redemption has been procured, and an everlasting inheritance has been purchased for his elect believing people. In the last chapter it was shown that man was in a state of guilt and sin, and unable to turn to God or to remedy his sad estate. The question which next arises relates to the way in which the redemption purchased by Christ comes into the possession of guilty, helpless sinners. This is the question which the chapter on effectual calling undertakes to answer. How are the elect from among sinful men made partakers of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and of all the benefits which are connected therewith?

It is interesting to note the fact that the Standards do not use the term *regeneration* in this connection, while this term has a large place and a well-defined meaning in theological writings. At first glance it may seem that the Standards are defective in their statement upon this point, but a little reflection will show that such is not the case, for it will appear that what the theologians call regeneration is included under the term *effectual calling* in the Standards; and the great fact of the union of the believer with Christ is also implied in effectual calling. To signalize all this, these three terms are set down at the head of this chapter.

It may be well to remark, further, that the Confession and the Shorter Catechism deal with this subject in a compact and comprehensive way, while the Larger Catechism introduces five or six questions at this stage which deal with the

church viewed in its visible and invisible aspects. As the subject of the church is not touched upon in the Shorter Catechism at all, and as it is treated of in another place in the Confession, its discussion may be properly deferred till a later stage in this exposition, so that attention can be entirely devoted to the all-important topic of this chapter.

I. The various ways in which the different parts of the Standards deal with effectual calling must be first explained. The question is, How are believers made partakers of Christ's redemption? How are the benefits of the Redeemer's work applied to the elect? The briefest form of the answer, which is found in substance in all parts of the Standards, is that we are made partakers of the benefits of Christ's redemption by the effectual application of it to us by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, therefore, is the agent in this important matter. The truth is the instrument which the Spirit usually employs, yet the truth, in the way of instruction or moral suasion, does not itself effect the work. There must also be a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the dead, sinful soul, in order to the saving reception of the benefits of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus by that soul.

It is exceedingly instructive to observe the manner in which the Confession and the Catechisms describe the mode by which this effectual application takes place. This is now briefly noticed.

In the Confession, what is prominent is the change in the moral state of the sinner. God, by his word and Spirit, brings the elect out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, thereby taking away their heart of stone and giving them a heart of flesh. This statement emphasizes the change of nature involved in regeneration.

In the Larger Catechism vital union with Christ is signalized. This union is described as one which is spiritual and mystical in its nature, and at the same time it is said to

be real, and to unite the believer and Christ inseparably. The figures of the head and the members, and of the husband and wife, are used to illustrate this union, which is the work of God's grace in the heart of the believer. By means of this union the basis of communion between Christ and his people and of the communion of the saints with each other is laid.

In the Shorter Catechism stress is laid on the fact of faith in this connection. The Holy Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ by working faith in us, thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling. This statement puts the stress upon the experimental or practical side of the great truth here taught, and thus faith is in the foreground.

These three aspects of the same great fact are exceedingly instructive, and, taken together, they supply a very complete view of the various factors involved in effectual calling. The Confession accents the change of nature, the Larger Catechism signalizes union with Christ, and the Shorter Catechism gives emphasis to faith in Christ, while the agent behind all three factors is the Holy Ghost. Thus, in the complex process by which the Spirit applies, and the believer receives, the benefits of Christ's redemption, there is the change of nature usually known as regeneration, the mystical union with Christ, the source of spiritual life, and saving faith, which is the sinner's act of appropriating Christ and his benefits. The first two are implied in effectual calling, and the third grows out of it. Effectual calling viewed Christwards effects spiritual union with him; viewed manwards it produces regeneration, and in the sphere of man's activity it evinces faith in Christ. This is the complete statement of the matter as taught in the Standards.

II. The nature of effectual calling must now be more fully explained. It is a very important matter to understand the precise nature of that change of nature and union

with Christ which effectual calling denotes. What was said in the previous paragraph paves the way for a more careful statement in this one.

1. The distinction between the external and the internal aspects of the calling now under notice is of some importance. This distinction is not fully set forth, though it is distinctly implied, in the Scriptures. The term *effectual* indicates that there is a peculiar phase of this calling or vocation to be considered. Then the Confession speaks of some who may be called by the ministry of the word, and who may have some of the common operations of the Spirit, yet who never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved. And the Larger Catechism speaks in almost the same terms. This brings out the distinction between the two phases of the calling in question. The outward call is by the word, which is to be preached to all men. Some who hear it may not be saved. The inward call is by the Spirit, usually through the word, and it comes, as will be presently seen, to the elect. All who experience this call are surely saved. It is the latter aspect of the call which is termed effectual, and which is now under discussion.

2. This effectual call is entirely gracious in its nature. The Confession clearly asserts that this effectual call, addressed by the Holy Spirit to the elect, is of God's free and special grace alone. What are known as the common operations of the Spirit are not sufficient, hence the effectual grace is special. It is grace which changes the nature, unites to Christ, and works faith in us. Hence, it may also be called efficacious grace, or invincible grace.

And, as gracious, it does not rest in, nor spring from, anything foreseen in the nature or actions of men. Neither the believer's faith nor his good works can be the ground of the call, for these facts imply or follow effectual calling. Further, man is viewed as passive in experiencing this call; and, until quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is not able to

answer the call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it. But, when thus quickened and renewed by the effectual call which results in regeneration and union with Christ, the sinner is able to answer the call by the response which his personal faith gives. The Larger Catechism emphasizes the gracious nature of this call in slightly different terms. It is said to be a work of God's almighty power and grace, and that it is bestowed out of God's free and especial love to the elect, and while nothing in them moves him to bestow this grace, yet in the fulness of time he doth invite and draw them to Jesus Christ by his word and Spirit. Hence, the application of redemption is gratuitous at the very outset. Salvation is all of grace. The Arminian view, which requires, as a matter of justice at God's hand, common grace to restore man's lost ability, destroys the gracious nature of salvation at its very root; and the further Arminian claim, that the improvement of common grace purchases renewing grace, makes salvation depend upon the yet unrenewed will of man.

3. The several factors which enter into effectual calling are next to be considered. All the three parts of the Standards enumerate these factors in a somewhat similar way. Perhaps the clear-cut statement of the Shorter Catechism gives the best outline to follow in making further explanation of this doctrine.

First, There is conviction of our sin and misery. It has already been pointed out that, by reason of the fall, man is in a state of sin, misery, and guilt. The first thing which the Spirit does is to convince us of our sinful, miserable, and guilty condition, and to show us that we are without God and without hope in the world. This factor is properly set down first in order. The inward spiritual sense of sin, and the conviction of our ill-desert and guilt, is a very important matter in a true religious experience.

Secondly, The enlightenment of the mind in the knowledge

of Christ comes next. This is, of course, spiritual enlightenment, and not merely intellectual knowledge. And it is not merely a general knowledge about Christ, but a knowledge which relates to him as the only means of deliverance from the guilt and power of sin. The Confession speaks of this as an enlightenment of the mind spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, while the Larger Catechism briefly describes it as savingly enlightening the mind. This is that spiritual discernment which the Scriptures say is necessary in order to know the things of God, which the natural man does not, and cannot, know.

Thirdly, The renewal of the will follows. This is the simple language of the Shorter Catechism. The Larger Catechism is more complete in its statement, saying that the will is not only renewed but also powerfully determined, so that, although dead in sin, we are made willing and freely able to obey his call. The Confession has a complete statement, to the effect that our wills are renewed by his almighty power, determining them to that which is good. This is the determining grace already spoken of in its bearing upon the will, in accordance with the true doctrine of the will as set forth in a former chapter. The Confession has a phrase at this point which is worth adding here. It says that the heart of stone is taken away and a heart of flesh is given. This statement clearly relates to the change of the nature of the believer, and thus of his moral states and dispositions, which is effected by regeneration.

Fourthly, Embracing Christ as he is freely offered in the gospel is the culmination of effectual calling. The will being renewed, the sinner is persuaded and enabled to accept Christ as his Saviour. The Holy Spirit by means of the word persuades, and by his divine operation in the soul enables, the sinner to embrace the Saviour as he is presented in the gospel message. The Larger Catechism says that we are invited and drawn to Christ in effectual calling, and are made

able and willing to accept the call. The Confession says that we are effectually drawn to Jesus Christ, and at the same time we come most freely, being made willing by his grace. This is an admirable statement of an exceedingly difficult topic. We are effectually drawn, and our wills are determined by his almighty power; and yet that power is so exercised by the agency of the Holy Spirit that no violence is done to the faculties of our nature. The sinner comes to Christ as a free, rational, responsible agent, and yet he comes because he has been made able and willing to come. Thus the people of God are made willing in the day of his power.

III. The next question is: Who are the subjects of this effectual call? Under this general heading several subjects remain to be considered in this chapter. The four following topics are touched upon in the Standards: Those who are effectually called, the salvation of infants dying in infancy, the failure of some who hear the gospel to attain unto salvation, and the salvation of those who have never heard the gospel at all. These several points are now taken up in order, and very briefly considered. In regard to some of these topics there has been a good deal of controversy, and some of them have been made the ground of objection to the system of doctrine taught in the Standards. In regard to these controverted points the wise caution with which the Standards speak is abundantly evident.

1. Who are effectually called? This question is referred to in several places in the Standards, and receives somewhat various answers. The Confession opens its statement upon this subject by saying that all those whom God hath predestinated to life, and those only, he is pleased in his appointed and accepted time, to effectually call by his word and Spirit. Others, not elected, may be outwardly called by the ministry of the word, yet are not inwardly called so as to truly come to Christ for salvation. The Larger Catechism says that all the elect, and they only, are effectually called, and that

others, even though they may have the common operations of the Spirit, do never truly come to Christ. For their wilful neglect and contempt of the grace offered they are justly left in their unbelief. This simply means that the non-elect are not effectually called, but are just left in their sinful state. Another way to state the answer would be to say that all those for whom Christ has purchased redemption are in due time effectually called, and have that redemption so applied to them that they are made sure partakers of it. This, of course, leads back to the gracious purpose of God's electing love. All those who by that purpose are given in covenant to Christ are in due time redeemed by him, and in due season they have made good to them, by the word and Spirit of God in effectual calling, all that Christ has procured for them.

In this connection it is very instructive, as well as confirmatory of the teaching of the Standards at this point, to note that in the Scriptures the *elect* and the *called* are regarded as identical. For "whom he did predestinate, them he also called." All who are elected are effectually called, and those who are thus called are thereby assured of their election. The reason of this harmony lies in the fact that the eternal purpose of grace has regard not only to its end in the salvation of the elect, but also to all the means and agencies necessary thereto.

2. The second question relates to the salvation of infants dying in infancy, and of others, elect persons, who are incapable of receiving the outward call by the word. This raises a difficult question, which needs some careful remark. And there is the more need of careful explanation here, because the Standards have often been charged by ignorant persons with teaching infant damnation, and with giving no proper ground for the salvation of idiots. In general, it may be at once said that these charges are utterly unfounded. The teaching of the Standards at this point is entirely consistent

with their teaching elsewhere. They also speak with the utmost care, and what they say relates only to those who are elected and saved, and not to the non-elected at all. The Confession simply says that elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit. It says not a word about any other infants, and leaves it open to make the reasonable inference that all infants so dying are among the elect. This inference is just as valid as to say that there are non-elect infants who die in infancy, for the contrast drawn in the Standards is not between elect and non-elect infants, but between elect persons who die in infancy, and elect persons who do not die in infancy. Elect persons who die in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, and in the case of elect persons who reach adult years, precisely the same conditions of salvation are required, only in the case of adult elect persons personal faith comes into exercise.

So all other elect persons, such as idiots and incapables of any sort, are saved by Christ and the agency of the Spirit. They are not saved because they are incapable of responding to the outward call of the word, but because they do receive the benefits of the mediation of Christ, and experience the renewing work of the Holy Spirit in their souls. Hence, when the root of the matter is reached, the conditions of salvation are the same in the case of all elect persons, whether they be infants, incapables, or adults. These conditions constitute effectual calling, whereby the elect are united to Christ and regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and thus made partakers of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. If any of these die in infancy faith does not emerge, but in case of others who do not die in infancy faith in the Saviour in due time appears.

To make the dogmatic statement in a creed that all infants dying in infant years are saved, whether of believers, unbelievers or pagans, can scarcely be justified by the Scriptures, although a well-grounded hope that this is true may be cherished,

for where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. But it can with the fullest confidence be asserted, in the language of the Confession, that elect infants dying in infancy are saved, because they are regenerated and saved through Christ by the Spirit. This statement cannot be modified without trenching upon the fundamental positions of the Standards in regard to election and effectual calling. This teaching also magnifies the grace of God, and better than any other system provides a good and gracious ground for infant salvation. Thus, those who deny infant baptism cannot consistently maintain infant salvation, and those who make the decision for salvation turn finally upon the choice of the human will, apart from determining grace, have serious difficulty in giving any basis for infant salvation, unless they deny that the infant is guilty and depraved, or make its salvation depend on the mere fact that it happens, in the order of providence, to die in infancy. But the doctrine of the Standards is free from these and other difficulties, so that it may be confidently relied on as in harmony with Scripture and sound reason.

3. The failure of some who hear the outward call to attain to salvation is the third question to be considered. This point calls for but brief remark. The position of the Standards in reference to it is that all who hear the gospel and live within the visible church are not saved. This follows directly from what was stated in the previous section. By means of effectual calling we become members of the invisible church, which is the body of Christ, and those who are not so called are not saved, whether they belong to the visible church or not. Those who are not elected are not saved, and yet it is their wilful neglect of grace and continuance in sin which grounds their condemnation. Even the common operations of the Spirit are not enough, for, as has been seen, special renewing and determining grace is needed.

4. The last topic relates to the salvation of those who do

not profess the Christian religion. This raises a wide and important inquiry, upon which the Confession announces no uncertain opinion. The persons who now are to be considered are not those who may profess but do not possess the benefits of redemption, but it is the case of such as do not profess the faith of Christ at all. This class includes the mere moralist and the profane man in Christian lands, and it also embraces the devotees of all forms of pagan religion. The cautious teaching of the Confession relates to the case of those who are seeking to frame their lives by the light of nature, or to follow the law of the religion, other than the Christian, which they profess. The position of the Standards upon this subject is that such persons shall not be saved, no matter how great their diligence or earnest their efforts. To assert that they may is very pernicious and to be detested, is the strong language of the Standards upon this matter. It will be observed that this teaching bears in a very practical way upon the faithful preaching of the gospel in Christian lands, and that it is of vital moment in regard to the spread of the gospel among the people of heathen countries. To teach, directly or indirectly, that the heathen may be saved without the knowledge of Christ which the gospel gives is unscriptural, and must be fatal to all missionary effort.

But the case is not now to be argued. The fact is simply pointed out that the teaching of the Standards is to the effect that, in the case of the moralist, he cannot be saved by the light of nature, be he ever so careful to frame his life by that light, for no man has ever so lived up even to this light that he has no sense of defect and sin. Even if it be admitted that salvation were possible by the light of nature, which could only be if man were unfallen, the fact remains that no mere man has ever fulfilled the conditions.

Then, in regard to the heathen, three things are to be kept in mind. *First*, A sense of hopeless guilt rests upon them,

from whose awful burden their systems of religion do not set free. *Secondly*, The Scriptures insist upon such a change of heart and life as is never produced by any of the pagan systems of religion. *Thirdly*, The Scriptures plainly teach that men who are ignorant of the gospel, and who have no saving knowledge of Christ, go down to a hopeless eternity. The solemn teaching of the Scriptures, as set forth in the Standards upon this great topic, should be seriously pondered by all who are interested in the success of missionary labor.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST'S REDEMPTION—JUSTIFICATION.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 32, 33; LARGER CATECHISM, 70–73; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XI.

THE benefits which those who are effectually called obtain through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, are now to be considered with some care, as they are fully set forth in the Standards. It is clear that a very important stage in the exposition of the Standards is now reached. At this point, too, there is considerable difference between the Confession and each of the Catechisms, in regard to the order in which the various topics are arranged. Before taking up the proper subject of this chapter some explanations must be made in regard to this diversity of order.

In the Confession, justification, adoption, and sanctification are exhibited in successive chapters, immediately after effectual calling is explained. Then follows a chapter on saving faith, one on repentance unto life, and another on good works. After this come two chapters, one on the perseverance of the saints, and one on the assurance of grace and salvation. Then comes, last of all in this connection, an important chapter on the law of God.

In the Larger Catechism, after effectual calling and the communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ are considered, justification is expounded; and, in connection with it, saving faith is fully explained. Then comes adoption, and after it sanctification is set forth. Then, in connection with sanctification, repentance unto life, together with the security, perseverance, and assurance of believers, is considered. Following this, there is something further said regarding the communion of

saints, and then their death, resurrection, and final judgment are described. At this point this Catechism concludes what it has to say in regard to what man is to believe concerning God. Then, in its second part, it takes up the law of God, and sets forth a full discussion of the contents of the decalogue, and thereby unfolds a splendid scheme of Christian ethics.

In the Shorter Catechism, the topics are treated in still a different order, resembling in part that of the Confession, and in part that of the Larger Catechism. After effectual calling is stated, the benefits which those who are effectually called obtain through Christ are exhibited. Thus, in clear-cut and well-defined order, come justification, adoption, and sanctification, as in the Confession. Then some further benefits which believers receive from Christ in this life, at death, and at the resurrection, are mentioned, but at this stage there is no reference to faith or repentance at all. The law of God is next taken up; and, after some preface, the ten commandments are carefully recited and expounded, both in their positive and negative aspects. At the close of this exposition the question of man's ability to keep this law of God perfectly is raised, and the degree of the ill-desert of various sins is stated. Then the conditions of escape from the wrath of God which every sin deserves are laid down, and it is at this point that faith and repentance are explained, in connection with the means of grace. In the Shorter Catechism there is nothing about the church, visible or invisible, nor is there anything said concerning the resurrection of the wicked, or the final judgment of all men.

It is no easy matter to decide between the merits of these three orders of treatment. That of the Confession, and that of the Shorter Catechism, though they are different, both have the merit of logical consistency. Perhaps the Confession, in handling faith and repentance before it takes up the law of God, has the better order, for that law then becomes

the rule for the Christian man in his walk and conversation. On the other hand, it is to be observed that the order in the Larger Catechism, which connects faith with justification, and repentance and good works with sanctification, has the merit of presenting the factors in harmony with the order of their development in religious experience. On the experimental side, therefore, a good case could be made out for this order of treatment.

It only remains to add that the Larger Catechism at this point makes a comparison between justification and sanctification which is of much value, and that both Catechisms are in advance of the Confession in the exposition which they give of the law of God, and especially of the ten commandments. Having made these comparisons in regard to the order in which the topics are treated in the several parts of the Standards, the way is clear to take up justification, which is the first of the benefits of Christ's redemption which those who are effectually called receive. The exposition of this great doctrine may be presented in an orderly way under several heads.

I. The *nature* of justification is to be the first topic. The Standards have a good deal to say about this subject, although they do not formally separate the discussion into distinct sections, as is done in the explanations now to be made.

1. The meaning of the term itself needs some explanation. It is a distinctly legal or judicial term. It does not mean to make just, holy, or pure. The word sanctify properly denotes this. To justify does not mean merely to pardon, which is the act of a sovereign alone. But the word only and always means to declare just. Its experience implies that all the demands of law and justice have been fully met, and that the justified person is entitled to all the reward which that perfect conformity with law secures, and then he is regarded and treated accordingly. That this is the proper

meaning of the term is evident, not only from its general use in the Scriptures, but also from its analogy with the term *condemn*, which is its opposite. To condemn does not mean to make wicked and guilty, but simply to declare guilty in relation to the law which has been disobeyed. So it may be rightly argued, that to justify simply means to declare just in relation to law and its penalty, and not to make just, righteous or holy. This gives a clear hint as to the nature of justification.

2. Then justification is an act of *God the Father*, acting for the Godhead. The Standards, following the Scriptures closely, always connect justification with the first person of the Trinity. The Father justifies, the Son redeems, and the Spirit sanctifies, and yet at the same time all three persons concur in each of these acts.

3. Next, justification is a *judicial* act of God. God in justifying the believing sinner acts neither as a sovereign nor as a father, but as a judge. If justification were a sovereign act it would be nothing more than mere mercy or executive clemency, and would result only in pardon or the remission of the penalty. If, on the other hand, it were the act of a father, it would be mere paternal dealing, without any necessary relation to justice or the demands of law. But being the act of God, proceeding as a judge to administer in a judicial way his moral government in accordance with the provisions of the gospel, justification, resting on the basis of Christ's redemption as fully satisfying all legal demands, declares the person just in relation to law and justice, and hence entitled to the reward of conformity with the law.

4. Further, justification is God's *gracious* act. The Standards make this very plain. The Shorter Catechism says that it is an act of God's free grace, and the Larger that it is an act of God's free grace unto sinners. In the Confession the statement is to the effect that those who are effectually called are freely justified, and that justification is only of free grace,

that both the exact justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners. The Larger Catechism also goes on to show how justification is so entirely a matter of grace in three particulars. *First*, Because God graciously agreed to accept in the sinner's stead a mediator and surety. God was under no obligation to do this, yet he did so arrange it in the provisions of the covenant of grace. *Secondly*, Because he provided in the gift of his own Son the suitable surety, and agreed to accept his obedience and death as a satisfaction in their stead. All this was a matter of grace entirely. *Thirdly*, Because the condition of justification, which is faith alone, is itself gracious, being the gift of God, so that even the ability to accept Christ, and so obtain the benefit of his mediation, is also a matter of grace. Thus it is all of grace to the sinner, and at the same time all of debt to Christ the mediator.

5. Then, negatively, justification is in its nature very carefully described in the Standards, especially against the errors of the Romish and the Arminian theologies. The Shorter Catechism does not formally state this negative aspect, but it so presents the positive side as to imply the negative aspect also. The Larger Catechism says that we are not justified because of anything wrought in us, or done by us. The Confession, however, is much clearer in its statement on the negative side. Justification, it says, does not consist in infusing righteousness into us; nor does it consist in anything wrought in us or done by us, for this would destroy its gratuitous nature altogether; nor does it consist in imputing faith itself, the act of believing, for this is merely the instrument of justification; nor does it consist in reckoning any of the Christian graces which do always accompany faith, and flow from justification, for these graces only follow justification; nor, finally, as the Larger Catechism says, is it good works, the fruits of faith, nor the grace of faith, nor any act of faith itself which constitutes justification. In this

statement every possible error seems to be met and warded off.

6. The last point here has reference to what may be called the contents of justification, or the actual blessings which it brings. Both Catechisms agree in the brief statement that justification grants the remission of our sins, and secures the acceptance of our persons as righteous in the sight of God. The Confession, however, expands these statements, and three points are to be noted in order.

First, Justification administers the pardon of our sins. This consists essentially in the remission of the penalty, and secures deliverance on adequate grounds from the punishment of sin. This is an important part of justification, but it is not, as the Arminian says, all that it implies.

Secondly, Justification secures the acceptance or accounting of our persons as righteous or just in relation to the law of God. The righteousness of Christ thus becomes ours, and in this we are accepted in him. Hence, no charge lies against us, and we are treated as if we had rendered a perfect obedience, and had met all legal demands.

Thirdly, Those who are justified are thereby given a title to the reward which the perfect obedience of Christ merits. Christ as their surety, having by his perfect obedience and sacrificial death earned the reward which this deserves, provides that this reward shall be made over to them, and this is effected when God justifies the believing sinner. We thus come into possession of a sure title to the reward, as really as if we had rendered the obedience ourselves. Hence, on the positive side, justification brings three important things: the pardon of all our sins, the acceptance of our persons as righteous, and a title to the reward of the work of Christ the mediator.

II. The *ground* of justification is the next important question to be considered. Its consideration leads back to what was explained in a previous chapter on the offices of Christ

the mediator. Especially what is secured by the priestly office of Christ comes again into view at this stage, for it is by means of what Christ does in that office that he provides the ground for the justification of his people. But as this matter is set forth at this point in a slightly different way, it calls for a little further explanation. This is, perhaps, all the more necessary, since it has been previously indicated that, in the chapter already alluded to, no very complete treatment of the atoning work of Christ was given. In general, according to the Shorter Catechism, the ground of justification is the righteousness of Christ alone. The Larger Catechism in slightly different language says that it is the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ which forms the ground. This latter statement gives a very good explanation of what the righteousness of Christ is. In nearly the same terms the Confession says that the ground of justification is the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, and this obedience and satisfaction is, later on in the chapter, called the righteousness of Christ, in accordance with its two branches of active and passive obedience, spoken of in a former chapter.

But, following the Confession, the ground of justification must be more fully expounded. The Confession says that Christ by his obedience and death did fully discharge the debt of those who are justified. Nothing stands charged against them by justice, and nothing which the law demands is wanting to them. In discharging this debt Christ did make a real and full satisfaction to his Father's justice on their behalf. This is one of the clearest statements of vicarious atonement to be found anywhere. The satisfaction which Christ made was a proper one, not a satisfaction in itself inadequate, though accepted instead thereof by God. It was also a real satisfaction, and not a fictitious one, to serve merely as a shining example of patient suffering, or to make a profound impression upon moral intelligences every-

where, or to sustain the authority of the moral government of God. And it was a full satisfaction, and consequently an entire moral equivalent. This, however, does not imply what has been called the commercial theory of the atonement of Christ, but it simply teaches that Christ, by the dignity of his person and the perfection of his obedience, as well as the merit of his death, did fully meet and answer all the demands of law and justice, of penalty and reward. This was rendered to the justice of God, and so it was made strictly under law, and served to meet all its requirements. And, finally, to make the vicarious factor plain, the statement is added that this satisfaction was rendered to the justice of the Father on behalf of all those who are justified. This real and complete obedience and satisfaction of Christ is alone the ground of the justification of believers, and this is the sure basis upon which the divine procedure securely rests.

Positively and negatively this ground is further expounded in the Standards, in analogy with what was said a little while ago in regard to the nature of justification. Negatively, the ground of justification is not good works of any kind, ceremonial, moral, or gracious; nor is it faith, nor any of the Christian graces, either foreseen, or otherwise regarded. It is not found on the sinner's side, either in anything he is, has done, or may become. In this respect justification is radically different from sanctification, though Romanists entirely confound them. And, positively, it is Christ and his righteousness, as above explained, which constitutes the ground of justification. This and this alone is the basis of the sinner's pardon and acceptance. On this basis he is pardoned, accepted, and rewarded. This is a very important point, exhibiting alike the justice of God in the full satisfaction made, and the rich grace of God in the great boon granted.

III. The *mode* of justification is now to be explained. This follows properly after the discussion of its nature and ground. How is justification effected? What is the divine

procedure in the case, and what is man's part therein? The answer which the Standards give is, in general, twofold in its nature. The Shorter Catechism says that it is the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith, and the Larger Catechism uses almost the same language. The Confession says that not faith, but the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, is imputed to those who are justified, and that faith receives and rests upon Christ and his righteousness. These statements plainly exhibit both imputation and faith. Imputation is the act of God, and faith is the act of man in the case. Each needs some explanation.

1. Imputation is taken up first. When dealing with the effects of the sin and fall of Adam upon his posterity, the meaning of the term imputation was explained. It signifies to count, to reckon, or lay to the charge of another. The same meaning is now to be retained. Now, so far as the divine procedure is concerned, imputation is the very essence of justification. Moreover, this imputation is twofold in its nature. On the one hand, the guilt of the sinner is imputed to Christ, who assumed the penalty and rendered the required obedience; and, on the other hand, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner, who believes in him. Thereby the sinner is pardoned, accepted as righteous, and given a title to the reward of the satisfaction of Christ. All the parts of the Standards agree in teaching the doctrine of imputation, for which in turn vicarious atonement lays the adequate foundation. These two facts go together.

2. Faith in Jesus Christ is the other branch of the mode of justification. In it the human instrument or condition of justification appears. By faith Christ is received and rested on, and his righteousness is embraced and trusted in unto justification. Christ crucified and Christ risen is received and trusted alone for salvation. Faith, therefore, is the instrument or occasion of justification, and it is the second branch of its mode. As the nature of faith will be fully

explained later on, its function at this point is merely mentioned, although, as has already been pointed out, the Larger Catechism treats faith fully at this stage, in connection with justification. For the sake of more systematic discussion, the order of topics in the Confession is now followed, and faith will be expounded more fully later on.

IV. The *results* of justification remain for exposition. This raises a large subject, which is not easily treated in a compact way, for at several places and in various ways these results are stated in the Standards. Of course, pardon, acceptance and reward come, as a matter of fact, along with justification. As already explained, these three factors are the main contents of justification. The Shorter Catechism also connects many precious things with justification, adoption, and sanctification, but the statement of these is also deferred till a future stage in the discussion.

At this point, however, it may be well to notice how the Standards deal with the question of the *time* when justification actually takes place, and indirectly with the distinction between what is known as virtual and actual justification. By virtual justification is meant the formal pardon and acceptance of all the elect when Christ ascended to the Father's right hand. Then actual justification is what takes place when each sinner personally believes on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Upon this difficult question the Confession speaks with the utmost caution when it says that God did from all eternity decree to justify the elect, and that Christ did in the fulness of time die for their sins, and rise again for their justification, yet they are not actually justified till the Holy Ghost does in due time actually apply Christ to them. Prospectively, according to the purpose of grace, the elect are looked upon as justified, but they are not really justified till they are effectually called, and led to believe on Christ. Having made these preliminary remarks, the way is open to set forth the results of justification in an orderly manner.

1. Peace with God comes first. This includes reconciliation and acceptance. This peace is primarily outward in its nature, and has reference to the legal relations between God and the believer. By the satisfaction of Christ, God is rendered propitious, and the guilt of the believing sinner is expiated. This lays the ground for outward peace between God and man, and it also carries with it a sure sense of inward peace, which rests upon the assurance of our acceptance with God, and which in turn is due to the work and witness of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the believer.

2. The sure production of the Christian graces also flows from justification. Although these graces are not really produced by, nor do they constitute the ground of, justification, yet justification is always followed by them. And even though the grace of faith is the instrument of justification, and though no other Christian grace sustains this relation, yet this faith is not alone in the experience of the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all the other graces of the Christian life. Faith alone justifies, but that faith is not alone, for it is a living faith which works by love, and overcomes the world. Thus, as justification is entirely of grace, it is followed by the entire circle of those graces which adorn the heart and life of the believer. Good works are the assured fruits of justifying faith, and growth in grace certainly appears in this state of grace. This result arises from the fact that, prior to the origin of that faith in the soul which secures justification, the soul itself has been regenerated and united to Christ in effectual calling. From this renewal and union with Christ, the life of Christ by the Spirit causes growth in grace, and produces good works.

3. Then, an abiding relation of security is constituted between God and his people by the fact of justification. When God, on occasion of the sinner's faith in Christ, and on the ground of the righteousness of Christ, grants the believer pardon, acceptance and reward, the relation thereby consti-

tuted is a permanent one. God's unchanging love, his eternal purpose, their covenant relation, their union with Christ, his continual intercession for them, and the indwelling of the Spirit, all conspire to secure the result that the state of grace into which justification introduces the believer is an abiding one, and that the relation it implies shall never be broken. If believers do fall into sin, God, for the sake of Christ, continues to forgive the sins of his believing justified people; and at the same time he secures, by his grace, that they will repent of their sins so as to be forgiven. In this way provision is made in the redemption which is in Christ for the removal of all the sins of believers. Still, it may be, that, like a wayward child, which remains a child still in spite of its waywardness, and is often forgiven by its earthly father, so when the believer fails, and, perhaps, falls into sin, his heavenly Father does not cast him out of his justified estate, but he forgives and restores him when he repents and returns. Justification thus provides for all the sins of believers.

Further, the Standards teach, that while the believer shall never so fall from his justified state as to be finally cast away, yet he may, on account of his sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and experience a sense of guilt and shame from which he will not be recovered till he humbles himself, seeks pardon, and renews his faith and repentance. This statement paves the way for the treatment of the perseverance of believers in due time. Believers who are once renewed and united to Christ, though they may backslide, are never finally lost. Their justification stands secure. Even if they fall into sin they will repent and be restored. They are all held secure by the provisions of the covenant of grace.

The Confession adds that the justification of believers under the Old Testament was in all these respects one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament. There is the same mediator, the same spiritual gifts, and the same condition of faith in both dispensations,

and the church of God is one, in its deepest sense, in all ages and dispensations.

This concludes the exposition of justification, and paves the way for that of adoption and sanctification. The Standards have been closely followed in their teaching upon this cardinal doctrine of the gospel and evangelical religion.

At the present day the teaching of the Standards upon effectual calling and justification merits most careful attention. If the old theology sometimes exalted the legal at the expense of the ethical side of the gospel, the new is in danger of making the ethical side the main thing, alike in the work of Christ and in the experience of the Christian. There is a tendency nowadays, both in preaching and in writing, to lay stress upon the ethical element in religion, apart from the cross of Christ on the one hand and the work of the Holy Spirit on the other. Both the legal and the ethical must be given their proper place and proportions, both in the system of doctrine and in the scheme of Christian life which is maintained. To divorce the ethics of the Christian life from the cross of Christ is to make a fatal mistake. The teaching of the Standards binds them together, and thus gives a sound doctrine and a true view of spiritual life.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION—ADOPTION AND SANCTIFICATION.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 34–36; LARGER CATECHISM, 74, 75 AND 77–81; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XII. AND XVIII.

ADOPTION and sanctification are two important benefits which come to believers through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ. These are now to be explained in a single chapter. Each will receive separate treatment, though sanctification will naturally require the more extended statement.

1. *Adoption Comes First in Order.*

The Standards throughout give a separate place to this doctrine. Each of the Catechisms has a question upon it, and the Confession devotes a separate chapter to its consideration. In view of this fact it seems a little strange that some of our leading theologians should give no distinct place to adoption in their systems, and many of them devote but little attention to it. By some it is made a factor in justification, by others it is regarded as belonging partly to justification and partly to santification. It is clear that the Standards give to adoption a place of its own, and the exposition now to be given will follow the Standards in this connection.

The Shorter Catechism defines adoption to be an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God. This definition the Larger Catechism expands considerably, while the Confession has a brief chapter which contains a very clear statement of the doctrine. Though it is not necessary to justify at length the propriety of assigning a separate place to adoption in the system of doctrine, still a

hint or two may be of some value in confirming the view taken by the Standards.

First, In the Scriptures there are two distinct sets of texts of significance in their bearing upon this question. The one set uses the terms law, justice, pardon, justify, reconcile, and other legal words or phrases, and the other set employs the terms adoption, sonship, heir, begotten, and others of a similar nature. Now, these words and phrases cannot be well construed in terms of each other, so that they naturally call for separate doctrinal places, the former under justification, and the latter under adoption. This is just what the Standards do.

Secondly, In the Scriptures justification is directly related to the law of God, and adoption to the love of God. This being so, each should have its own doctrinal place. If this be done, due prominence will be given to the love of God in the system of doctrine, and the fact of the sonship of believers will thereby be put in its proper place. It may be that the limited attention devoted to this topic in some of the great treatises on theology has had something to do with the undue development, in other directions, of the idea of the fatherhood of God, and the divine sonship of all men. This is, no doubt, the swing of the pendulum from one extreme to the other. The true position is that of the Standards, which gives a separate place to adoption, and plants the fact of the spiritual fatherhood of God and the divine sonship of the believer, as distinct from that which is merely natural, upon the redemptive work of Christ our elder brother.

Thirdly, According to Scripture, the results which flow from adoption are different from those which arise from either justification or sanctification. From justification flow peace, reconciliation, acceptance in a legal sense, and assurance of the divine favor. Under the experience of sanctification, there come the renewal of the nature and the recti-

tude of the life. But under adoption there emerges the relation of sons, as distinct from that of servants. Believers receive the adoption of sons, which makes them the spiritual children of God. As children they are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. They have power or authority to become the sons of God. They receive the spirit of adoption and can cry, Abba, Father; and they are called the sons of God, and God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, and this Spirit witnesses to the fact of their divine sonship. For such reasons as these the Standards are right in giving a separate place to the article of adoption.

1. Adoption is God's gracious act. It assumes justification, and vouchsafes a further benefit. By means of adoption the believer is transferred from the estate of legal acceptance and reward, which justification secures, to that of the filial relation, with its privileges of sonship. This transfer is effected by the judicial act of God, and in this respect adoption resembles justification. As gracious, the act of adoption, like that of justification, rests upon the work of Christ as its ground. It is in and for the sake of his only Son Jesus Christ that God makes believers partakers of the grace of adoption. Believers are thereby put in the relation of sons of God, and their standing is made secure therein. Adoption also stands related to regeneration, which produces the nature of God's sons, and then sanctification builds up that nature in the divine image. Adoption puts believers in the filial relation, with respect to God and his spiritual household, and secures to them the nature of the sons of God. Adoption thus assumes election, effectual calling, regeneration, faith, and justification.

2. By means of adoption all those who are justified are taken, or received, into the number of the children of God. By the judicial act of God this change of legal relation is effected. God's name, as the Confession and Larger Catechism say, is put upon them, so that they are members of

the household of faith and of the family of God. In this new relation the spirit of adoption is bestowed upon them, and in this new and tender relation they have the spirit of the children of God. This is the main matter in adoption on the purely legal side.

3. Again, by means of adoption those who are justified have a covenant right to all the liberties and privileges of the children of God. These liberties and privileges are recited at some length in the Confession and the Larger Catechism. These are now to be set down with some care, as they are very precious. In addition to having his name upon them, and his Spirit in them as a filial spirit, they have access with boldness at a throne of grace. Just as a child in the home has nearer access to the father, and may make his requests with more boldness than the servant dares, so in the enjoyment of the grace of adoption the believer may come at all times with boldness to a throne of grace and make known his requests, assured that as an earthly father hears and helps his children, so the heavenly Father will hear and help his children. Then, by reason of adoption it is the privilege of believers to call God, Father. Were it not for this gracious privilege of adoption, believers could never call the great God their Father in the tender way in which they now can. Further, believers, as the adopted sons of God, have the precious privilege of being pitied by one who pities as a father, of being protected under the fatherly care of Almighty God, and of being constantly provided with every good and perfect gift by his unfailing providence. Another important privilege given in adoption is that God's children are chastened by the Lord as by a father. For their sins and failures they may not be punished, strictly speaking, but they are chastened by his fatherly discipline, for their own good and growth in grace. Thus, many of the ills of this life may turn out to be blessings in disguise, while the chastisement itself is a proof of the love

of God, and of their adoption into his family. Finally, the privilege of security is more fully enjoyed by believers by reason of their adoption. They are sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption, they are heirs of God through Jesus Christ and inherit all the promises of God, and they are heirs of everlasting salvation and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory.

This comprehensive inventory of the privileges which adoption brings shows how important and precious it is. Justification could never bring these benefits, for it leaves the believer in the forum of the divine procedure, with pardon, acceptance, and a title to reward, and it can bring nothing more. But adoption takes the believer from the forum and places him in the family of God, where he may rejoice in all the privileges already mentioned. Thus adoption has its proper place as a doctrine of the Christian system, and it is a very precious practical religious experience.

II. *Sanctification is the Third Great Benefit which Believers Receive through the Work of Christ as Redeemer.*

This is a doctrine and a fact of Christian experience which is carefully considered in the Standards, and hence it must be suitably explained in this exposition. Certain closely-related topics, such as good works, perseverance therein, and the assurance of faith and salvation, must be adjourned to a subsequent chapter, after faith and repentance have been considered.

In a general way, sanctification may be described as inward spiritual renewal of the nature and dispositions, which results in outward reformation of life and conduct. Sanctification is intimately related to regeneration, and is to be carefully distinguished from justification. Sanctification grows out of regeneration as its root, and it carries on the work begun in effectual calling and regeneration.

1. The relation of sanctification to justification requires some explanation at the outset. This point is specially

treated of in the Larger Catechism, and a brief paragraph is now devoted to it. Sanctification and justification are inseparably joined together, hence all who are justified, they being also regenerated, are under the experience of sanctification, and none others but those who are justified are being sanctified. But they differ in certain important respects. In justification God imputes the righteousness of Christ to the believer; in sanctification the Holy Spirit infuseth grace and enableth to the exercise thereof. In justification sin is pardoned, so that its guilt is removed; in sanctification sin is subdued, so that it no longer exercises its supreme control. In justification all believers are equally freed from the revengeful wrath of God perfectly in this life, so that they never fall into condemnation; but sanctification is not equal in all, but of various degrees; nor is it perfect in any in this life, but growing up unto perfection. These distinctions, though not expressly stated in the Confession, are yet plainly implied in the exposition it makes of justification and sanctification, respectively.

2. Sanctification is God's gracious work in the renewed, believing, justified, and adopted soul. Instead of being an act of God done once for all, like justification and adoption, it is a work of God's Spirit carried on gradually and continuously in the believing soul. Thus sanctification is a real, personal work in the soul, by means of which its dispositions and acts are radically changed. This work, moreover, is gracious. Both Catechisms agree in saying that it is the work of God's free grace, in which the believer actively co-operates, as he works out his own salvation, God at the same time working in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure. As believers are chosen in Christ that they should be holy, sanctification actually makes them holy, so that the means as well as the end are included in the eternal purposes of electing grace.

3. The indispensable condition of sanctification is that

mystical union with Christ which is secured in effectual calling, and which results in consequent faith. The Confession says that the effectually called are further sanctified through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection. Through their union with him they are made partakers of his life, even as they have obtained the benefits of his death. The Larger Catechism says that God, through the powerful operation of his Spirit, applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them, effects the sanctification of his people. This grounds the sanctification of believers, finally, in their union with Christ, who is thus not only their peace but is also their life.

4. The agent in sanctification is the Holy Spirit, and the usual means by which his work is done is the word of God. The sanctifying Spirit of God and of Christ, for both terms are used in the Scriptures and in the Standards, is the agent by whom believers are sanctified. This Spirit first unites them to Christ and renews them, and then dwells in them to nourish the seeds of grace in their souls. The means by which the Spirit usually works is the word or truth of God. The Scriptures themselves emphasize this fact, and our Lord prays, "sanctify them through the truth, thy word is truth." The apostle also speaks of sanctification, not only being by the Spirit as its agent, but also through belief of the truth as its instrument. This brings out the function of faith in relation to sanctification. Believers are sanctified by the Spirit, and their hearts are purified by faith.

5. The *nature* of sanctification is, perhaps, the most important point to be explained in connection with the doctrine. Several things are to be mentioned here.

First, Sanctification, the Confession says, is throughout in the whole man. Body, soul and spirit are brought under its gracious operation, and every power and faculty of man's complex nature is affected thereby. Just as sin has affected the whole man, and has wrought ruin therein, so grace in

sanctification seeks to undo the dreadful ravages of sin, and, in due time, as will be soon seen, it shall succeed. The dominion of the whole body of sin is to be destroyed, as sanctification progresses. It is not mere reformation in outward conduct; it is the inward renovation of the dispositions and states of the soul in the whole man after the image of God.

Secondly, On the negative side, sanctification consists in dying daily unto sin. Believers are thereby enabled to die more and more unto sin. This is the clear language of the Catechisms. The Confession says that the several lusts of the body of sin are more and more weakened and mortified. The corruption of nature remains, but it is being subdued and will be finally extirpated. The flesh with its affections and lusts is crucified daily, and the deeds of the body are mortified increasingly, and the old man with his deeds is being constantly put off. The Standards here follow the Scriptures very closely.

Thirdly, On the positive side, sanctification consists in the believer being renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and in his being enabled to live more and more unto righteousness. The Larger Catechism has a somewhat different form of statement here. It says that believers are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and have the seeds of repentance unto life, and of all the other saving graces, put into their hearts, and those graces stirred up, increased, and strengthened as they rise unto newness of life. The Confession has still another form of statement. After stating that sinful lusts are weakened and mortified, it goes on to say that in sanctification believers are more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man can see the Lord. This statement gives a very full, complete view of the nature of sanctification on the positive side. The image of God, lost by the fall, is slowly reproduced, and righteousness is

exhibited in heart and life. Grace is poured into the heart, to the end that the graces may be stirred up and strengthened unto newness of life. True holiness is the sure result in this life, and meetness for heaven is the certain outcome for the life beyond. Thus the inward and the outward life, the nature and the acts, of the believer are all affected by sanctification.

Fourthly, Though sanctification extends to the whole man, it is yet ever imperfect in this life. There still abides some remnants of corruption in every part. The old sinful nature with its lusts, though pardoned and mortified, yet remains in part, and its motions are of the nature of sin, for sin pertains not merely to voluntary acts, but also to the states and dispositions of the heart. The imperfection of the sanctification of believers arises from these remnants of sin abiding in every part of them, and from the perpetual lusting of the flesh against the spirit. The result is that believers are often foiled with temptations and fall into various sins. They are also hindered in all their spiritual services, and their best works are imperfect and defiled in the sight of God. In this statement there is no favor for any form of perfectionism in this life, nor for entire sanctification in this earthly state. Sanctification is the goal towards which the believer is to strive, and to which he shall be finally conducted; but this goal is only reached at the time of death, and is never attained in this life.

Fifthly, As a result of the presence of good and evil in the believer, an irreconcilable warfare is found to be going on in his experience. The old man and the new, the flesh and the spirit, the law of the members and the law of the mind, are in constant antagonism, whence arises an incessant spiritual conflict, in which the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. Still, in this warfare there is no doubt as to the final outcome, for though the remaining corruption with its lusts may, for a time, prevail, yet victory is

sure in the end, because through the continual supply of grace and strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ the regenerate part of the nature overcomes the unregenerate part. It is through this conflict and its pledge of victory that believers grow in grace and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.

From all this it is evident that the Christian life is a constant conflict between good and evil in a true religious experience, and that sanctification is a constant and gradual growth going on in the heart of the Christian. It begins with regeneration, and it is continued by the Spirit of God and the suitable means of grace, till at the end of life's conflict it is found to be complete. Those who make justification a progressive work, like sanctification, as the Romanists do, make a serious mistake. No less serious is the error of some Protestants, who hold that sanctification is an immediate act of God producing entire freedom from sin. Sanctification, in the sense of setting apart to a holy service, may be regarded as an immediate act, and as alike and complete in all believers; but sanctification, in the sense in which it is chiefly used in the Standards, as denoting spiritual renewal and moral purification, is not, and in the nature of the case can scarcely be, an immediate act, either of God or of the soul. It is a slow, gradual, ebbing and flowing, progressive work, moving steadily on towards its goal, and certainly reached at death.

III. There are some important benefits flowing from justification, adoption, and sanctification which remain to be considered. The statement of these benefits is found in the Shorter Catechism. They consist in the benefits which flow to believers from justification, adoption, and sanctification in this life, at death, and at the resurrection. Little more need be done here than to mention some of these benefits, as in a future chapter, based upon the Confession and Larger Catechism, some of these same facts will have to be explained in another connection.

One of the benefits received in this life is assurance of the love of God. The believer has the good confidence of God's love, for it is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him. Then he has peace of conscience, for reconciliation has been effected, and he is admitted to the household of faith. By the word and Spirit of God the enmity of the believer's heart is also subdued. Thus, that which provides for peace outwardly in relation to God produces peace inwardly in the conscience of the believer. There also follows joy in the Holy Ghost. This is a holy spiritual joy, which the world can neither give nor take away. Increase of grace and perseverance unto the end are also assured to the believer. Grace gains momentum as it moves onward, and it halts not till its goal is reached in glory.

The benefits which come at death and the resurrection need only be mentioned. At death the souls of believers are made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory. Their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves until the resurrection. This is the precious hope of the believer. At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted at the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the enjoying of God to all eternity. This is the glorious hope of every believer, and it is the crowning benefit which comes to all those who are justified, adopted and sanctified, through the rich provisions of the gospel of God's dear Son. And this, moreover, is all that the Shorter Catechism has to say concerning death, resurrection, the middle state, and the final judgment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FAITH AND REPENTANCE.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 85–87; LARGER CATECHISM, 72–76, AND 153; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XIV., XV.

IN this chapter two very important practical topics have to be considered. The order of the Confession is now followed in taking up faith and repentance at this stage in the exposition of the Standards. The Shorter Catechism treats of these topics after the law of God has been expounded, while the Larger Catechism explains them in close connection with justification and sanctification. Faith is there made the instrument of justification, and repentance is regarded as a constituent element in sanctification. The order of the Confession, which is now followed, deals with faith and repentance in separate chapters, after justification, adoption, and sanctification are exhibited.

While speaking of the order of these topics, it may be of some service to devote a short paragraph to a deeper order. That deeper order relates to the order in experience of the several factors in salvation. It is necessary to remember that the logical order of the doctrines as arranged in the system may be different from the experimental order in which the various factors appear in a gracious religious experience. The latter is a fixed order, while the former may vary according to the logical principle of doctrinal classification which may be adopted. In the actual experience of the sinner, under the recovering grace of God, effectual calling surely comes first. Thereby the benefits of the redemption of Christ are applied to the soul, the soul is regenerated, and at the same time it is united to Christ. Conversion, or the actual turning to God in Christ for salvation, results from effectual calling. In conversion there are two factors,

in both of which the soul is active. These are faith and repentance, and they not only mark the beginning of the active experience of those who are effectually called, but they abide all through the believer's life as important factors in his experience. Thus faith conditions justification and adoption, and, along with repentance, it enters into sanctification as a factor in it; while, on the other hand, sanctification grows out of regeneration and union with Christ as its roots.

The Catechisms both mention faith and repentance among the conditions of salvation, or of escape from the wrath of God due to us for our sins. These conditions are said to be faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, repentance toward God, and the diligent use of the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of his redemption. The Confession omits this arrangement altogether. It is also a curious thing to observe that the two Catechisms differ in regard to the order in which faith and repentance are mentioned. The Shorter puts faith first, while the Larger mentions repentance first. This may or may not have any doctrinal significance; still, it is an interesting fact in its bearing upon the much-debated question of the order of faith and repentance.

I. *Saving Faith is to be First Explained, Inasmuch as it Stands First in the Confession as Well as in the Shorter Catechism.*

In the chapter before the last it was pointed out that faith in Christ was the condition or instrument of justification. In the last chapter it was seen that faith was not only the instrument of justification, but that it was also an important means of sanctification. This all-important personal condition of salvation is now to be explained with due care as it is set forth in the Standards.

No discussion of the philosophy of faith in general, nor of the psychology of saving faith in Christ in particular, inter-

esting as they are, will be now entered on. These interesting and difficult questions the Standards do not raise for discussion. They simply assume faith as a fact, and take it in its somewhat ordinary, popular, scriptural sense, and proceed at once to expound its function in relation to salvation. The statement of the Shorter Catechism is worth setting down at the outset, as the starting-point of the explanation. The Confession and Larger Catechism simply expand this statement. "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is freely offered to us in the gospel." The Larger Catechism calls it justifying faith, and the Confession gives the title of saving faith to its chapter upon this subject. The Larger Catechism somewhat strangely lays considerable stress upon the fact of the conviction of sin in connection with saving faith. Some particulars are now to be noted.

1. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace wrought in the heart of the sinner by the word and Spirit of God, whereby the elect are enabled to believe in him to the saving of their souls. The Confession says that it is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their souls. It is gracious, therefore, and really God's gift to the soul. It presupposes effectual calling and regeneration, by means of which a new life is imparted to the soul, and ability to exercise faith in Christ is originated. The Confession in its exposition seems to take a wider view than the Catechisms of the scope of saving faith. The latter limit it almost exclusively to the matter of the faith which unites us to Christ in effectual calling, while the former seems to take the wider view of faith as a general religious exercise of the soul. Hence, the Confession says that by this faith the Christian believes to be true whatsoever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein, and acts differently upon its different parts. But the Confession adds that the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for

justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace. It would thus appear that the Catechisms present faith, saving faith, as the single act of receiving and resting upon Christ, while the Confession regards faith as a series of acts, some of which lay hold of the truth of the revealed word of God, and others terminate upon Christ for the benefits of personal salvation. But these two views are not at all inconsistent with each other, and the broader view of the Confession will be of service in the full exposition of faith

2. By saving faith the revealed word of God is taken to be true, and he who possesses this faith will be ready to act in accordance with the commands, threatenings, and promises of the word. This is what is sometimes called historical faith, which takes God at his word, and accepts the testimony which he has given concerning himself, concerning our sinful estate, and concerning the way of salvation through Jesus Christ his only Son. This conviction, as was seen in an early chapter of this exposition, is not a mere natural result of the truth in contact with the mind, but it is wrought in our hearts by the Spirit of God. But this intellectual conviction is not itself, even though it be produced by the Spirit of God, all of saving faith. Still, it may be said to be so necessary that if it be absent, or if there be intellectual revolt against the truth of the message which God has given in his word, then saving faith, receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation, can never rise in that soul. At this point, also, it is to be carefully noted that the intellectual factor in faith, of which explanation has been made, is not a merely natural product of man's powers leading up to spiritual saving faith in Christ. This intellectual conviction is itself the product of the Spirit of God in the heart.

3. The Larger Catechism, with peculiar propriety, emphasizes, in relation to faith, the fact of our personal conviction

of sin and misery. The Confession also hints at this fact when it says that faith in the revealed word of God leads us to tremble at its threatenings. The Larger Catechism further says that this conviction discovers to the sinner his disability in himself, or, by the aid of all other creatures, to recover himself out of his lost condition. The Shorter Catechism lays stress upon the fact of the conviction of sin in connection with repentance, but this only shows how very closely faith and repentance are associated in the complex yet unitary experience of the sinner's recovery from his sinful estate. It is undoubtedly true that all saving faith, terminating upon Christ, has connected with it a sense of sin, and a conviction of our inability to save ourselves from its guilt and power. Hence, a personal conviction of our sin and of our helplessness wrought in our hearts by the word and Spirit of God is to be intimately associated with saving faith in the believer's experience.

4. The special function of saving faith is to receive and rest upon Christ and his righteousness as it is set forth in the promise of the gospel. This faith not only assents to the truth of the promise of the gospel, but it also trusts in Christ as held forth therein for the pardon of sin, and for accepting and accounting our persons as righteous in the sight of God. This is what the Confession calls the principal act of faith, and it is really its consummation. The other two factors are necessary as leading to this one, but they might both exist, and yet if the element of personal trust in Christ, as the mediator of the covenant of grace, through whom alone we have justification, adoption, sanctification and eternal life, were absent, our faith would not be complete as saving faith.

This point connects itself closely with the exposition of justification; for when the sinner believes upon Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, then God pardons his sins, which were borne by Christ in his own body on the tree, and accepts his

person as righteous by imputing to him the righteousness of Christ, and gives to him a title to the reward of eternal life on the ground of Christ's perfect obedience, which is also laid to his benefit. Thus saving faith conditions everything on man's side in the matter of salvation.

It is worth while noting the force of the words *receive* and *rest upon* Christ for salvation. The word *receive* evidently relates to the acceptance of Christ at first unto justification of life. The phrase *rest upon* points to the abiding state and relation of the believer in Christ. It is a permanent state of grace, and the form which faith takes is a constant resting on, or trusting in, Christ, so that the life which we now live we live by faith upon the Son of God. This is an all-important point, both in regard to the function of faith in the believer's life, and as exhibiting that abiding state of grace into which justification introduces him.

5. The Confession adds a statement to the effect that this faith is different in degrees, sometimes weak and sometimes strong; and that, though it may be often and in many ways assailed and weakened, yet it gets the victory in the end, growing up in many into the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith. Here faith is viewed rather as one of the Christian graces in connection with sanctification, than as saving faith, the condition or instrument of justification. Of course, the statement of the Confession is true in both respects, but as a Christian grace it is brought specially before us in this statement. In the same believer faith may be much stronger at some times than at others; and in different believers it may be widely variant in strength. One may have the faith that could remove mountains, and another faith which is only like a grain of mustard seed. In a word, faith viewed as a Christian grace shares in the fluctuations of all the other graces in the experience of sanctification, but in every case victory is assured in the end.

II. *Repentance unto Life is the Other Topic for this Chapter.*

Repentance is always to be coupled with faith, as the twofold factors in conversion. Both have reference to sin. Faith relates to the guilt of sin, and repentance to its heinousness. Faith is directed towards the Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance is directed towards God. Both are to be preached constantly by every minister of the gospel, so says the Confession. A number of points are now noted in order, in connection with repentance as it is presented in the Standards.

1. Repentance is a saving grace wrought in the heart of the sinner by the word and Spirit of God. The Catechisms both call it repentance unto life, while the Confession calls it evangelical repentance. It is not the mere natural sorrow or regret for sin which is unto death, but a godly sorrow which is unto life. The root idea of the word is a change of mind or view, in regard, specially, to the matter of sin. It implies a radical change of heart and mind, of life and conduct, in regard to sin and its deserts. It is distinctly set forth in the Scriptures as the work of the Holy Spirit. It is said to be a gift of God, just as plainly as faith is. To give repentance unto Israel and the remission of sins is the frequent language of the word of God upon this matter. It is clear that repentance implies that the heart which repents has been regenerated.

2. Repentance implies a sight and sense of sin. This is the language of the Larger Catechism and of the Confession, while the Shorter Catechism speaks of a true sense of sin. This is a sense and sight of the danger of sin, and of the certainty that it will surely be treated as it deserves. To see sin in its relation to the law of God, which is perfect, and in the light of his holy character; and, above all, to behold sin in the light of the cross, and of the love of him who suffered thereon, is an all-important factor in repent-

ance. To be convinced of the danger of continuing in sin is another element in true repentance. From this danger repentance bids the sinner flee to God in Christ.

3. Repentance also involves a sight and sense of the filthiness and odiousness of sin. This sight shows sin to be utterly contrary to the holy nature and righteous law of God. Sin is seen to be moral depravity, and utterly abhorrent to a holy God. God cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance, and in true repentance we are led to look upon it in the same way. Sin is spiritual leprosy or uncleanness, and repentance should lead us to regard it with the utmost abhorrence. It is very important to have this feeling in regard to sin in order to true repentance.

4. Again, repentance implies an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ. A sense of danger alone will only alarm, and not lead to any action, unless some place of shelter from the danger be also pointed out. A mere sense of the odiousness of sin will afford no relief, but rather produce dismay, unless there be also provided some remedy from this odious thing, sin. The gospel message presents Christ as the refuge from the danger, and his blood as the means of cleansing from the pollution. When this message is brought home to the heart and life, the sinner turns to this refuge, and seeks the cleansing of the blood. This, too, is an element in true repentance which should ever have due importance given to it. To learn that God is merciful, gracious, long-suffering, and ready to forgive all who come to him by his Son, Jesus Christ, is a strong motive to lead the sinner to exercise true repentance by turning from sin to God in Christ.

5. Repentance further implies true penitence, and grief for our sins, and a hatred of them. The Shorter Catechism says that there is to be grief and hatred of our sins in repentance, but the Larger Catechism and the Confession use the word penitence, which is an exceedingly good term. It denotes the inward experience of the heart which has a true sense of

sin, while repentance is rather the outward action following that inward experience. Penitence is the humble, broken heart on account of sin, while repentance is the change of mind in regard to sin. The grief now spoken of points to the true sorrow for sin, and not to the sorrow of the world which worketh death. Moreover, this sorrow does not exercise itself so much with the consequences of sin, as with the inherent nature of sin, as an offence against God, whose law is just, holy, and good. The hatred here spoken of indicates the antagonism to sin which true repentance generates. The heart being renewed, and the view of sin having undergone a radical change, the nature, as renewed, is opposed to sin; and the affections, which used to go out towards it, are now turned away from it with hatred. This hatred is essential to evangelical repentance.

6. Once more, repentance involves turning from all our sins unto God, with a holy purpose and an honest endeavor to walk worthy of God, and in the ways of his commandments. This is the outward, practical side of repentance which relates to our conduct. True penitence results in piety of heart, and genuine repentance produces reformation in life. Unless our sight of the danger of sin, and our sense of the ill-desert of sin, result in our actually turning away from it into the ways of a new obedience, there is a defect somewhere in our repentance, and we have good reason to doubt its reality. There must be full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience; and if this exists in any heart, it affords one of the best evidences that the repentance is a genuine one. Thus repentance, if it is bringing forth its meet fruits, results in real reformation of life and conduct. Even though the believer fall into sin he will rise again, repent and be forgiven. Thus, penitence surely paves the way up to perfection, and repentance leads finally to complete reformation.

7. Yet again, repentance is, in a sense, necessary to salvation. True, it is not necessary in the sense that faith is

necessary. Still, it is true that without repentance no one can be saved. Repentance, of course, is not in any way to be trusted in as a satisfaction for sin, nor is it in any sense to be regarded as the cause of the pardon of sin. All this is due to the free grace of God in Christ, yet repentance is indirectly the condition on our part for the exercise of the divine clemency in the pardon of our sins. Hence, repentance is necessary for salvation, in the sense that no one can expect pardon without repentance.

Then, too, this repentance relates to all sins, small and great, as they are sometimes called. There is no sin so small that it does not deserve condemnation, hence if we are to escape we must repent and obtain forgiveness. Then, on the other hand, the Confession happily assures us that there is no sin so great that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent and turn to God in Christ for pardon. The Confession further adds, that men should not be content with a general repentance, but it is every man's duty to repent of his particular sins, particularly. This is a very valuable practical suggestion. Men are apt to be content, both in their public prayers and in their private devotions, with a very general repentance and confession, which may not mean very much. Our sins should be set in order before us, and then laid before God in sincere confession, praying that they may be forgiven, every one.

8. Finally, repentance is to be followed by confession, and, in certain cases, by reconciliation with our neighbor. Every man who repents of his sins and turns to God for pardon must make a personal confession of his sins to God, and then pray sincerely for the divine forgiveness. Then, if his repentance be true, and he forsake his sins, he shall find mercy at the hands of God and be freely forgiven. This matter of confession completes repentance, and if it be wanting no one can expect pardon or peace.

Further, in certain cases where a man by his sins has

scandalized his brother or the church of Christ, the Confession says that he ought to be willing, by a private or public confession and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those who are offended. It is their duty in turn to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive and restore him. Care must be taken here to give no favor to the Romish doctrine of penance, according to which the church forgives sins, and it is ever to be kept in mind that no man, not even one whom we may have injured or offended, can pardon our sins in the case. Man may forgive the injuries done to his fellow-man, but God alone can pardon his sins. Sin has thus, in some cases, a twofold bearing. It may be a sin against God and an injury to our neighbor. Our neighbor may forgive the injury, but God alone, and he only for Christ's sake, can pardon our sin in the case.

This completes the exposition of faith and repentance. The next chapter will deal with some additional topics in religious experience, especially good works, perseverance, and assurance.

CHAPTER XIX.

GOOD WORKS; PERSEVERANCE; ASSURANCE.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 36; LARGER CATECHISM, 78–81; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XVI., XVII., XVIII.

THREE important topics are now reached. In regard to them the Shorter Catechism says little directly, though it implies a good deal indirectly, while the Larger Catechism has not a little to say about perseverance and assurance, but has no distinct treatment of good works. It is the Confession alone which deals at length with good works, and it has a chapter of some length upon each of the topics at the head of this chapter. The Confession, therefore, must now be our chief guide in this exposition.

I. *Good Works is the First Topic to be Considered.*

Strictly speaking, good works are the outward result of sanctification which appears in the conduct of life. They imply effectual calling, justification, and adoption on the divine side, and faith and repentance on the human side. An attempt will now be made to sum up what the Confession has to say upon this great subject, which has caused so much controversy among theologians.

1. Good works are those only which are done according to the rule of God's Holy Word. The Scriptures, as we have seen, are the only rule to direct us how we may glorify God. These Scriptures are the norm of the life of the believer; and, hence, they are also the rule for the good works which he is to do. Only those things which God has commanded are of the nature of good works. Mere human devices framed out of blind zeal, no matter how much pretence of good intention they may exhibit, cannot be good works, inasmuch as they have no warrant in the word of God. This strikes at the root of many things which have been done in the name

of religion, and for which holy Scripture gives no warrant whatever. Religious persecution illustrates this point in several ways.

2. Good works are at once the fruits and the evidences of a true and lively faith. Where there is such faith there is peace with God, and a filial spirit towards him, on the one hand; and on the other, union with Christ, and the renewal of the heart. Out of this renewed heart faith, the inner principle of good works, comes. Hence, good works are done only by a regenerate heart, and they are the fruits of the faith of such a heart. This indicates one of the radical differences between the truthfulness and honesty of a regenerate and of an unregenerate heart. Thus good works become the practical evidences of regeneration, and of a true and lively faith. We thus show our faith by our works, and prove that our faith is not a dead faith. A faith that is alone is dead, but faith followed by good works thereby evinces its vitality.

3. Further, good works exhibit some important results in heart and life. By means thereof believers manifest their thankfulness to God for all his benefits, and especially for the riches of his grace toward them in Jesus Christ. Then, good works serve to strengthen the assurance of believers that they are really God's children. Having the fruits of the Spirit apparent in heart and life, they properly conclude that God's renewing and sanctifying grace is working in their hearts, and then their hearts assure them before God. Then, too, by means of good works believers edify their brethren, and so become helpers of their faith. By bringing forth good works in daily life, others seeing our good works are led to glorify our Father in heaven. And, further, by good works believers adorn the profession of the gospel which they make, and exhibit the beauty and excellency of the Christian life and conversation. In like manner, good works stop the mouths of adversaries who speak against the

religion of Christ. By this means believers may commend the faith of Jesus to a wicked and gainsaying world, and supply the very strongest evidence for the truth and power of Christianity. To crown all, good works minister to the glory of God. This is the very highest result in the case. Since believers are created anew in Jesus Christ unto good works, when they exhibit good works, these glorify their true author. Believers are thus the workmanship of God, and having their fruit unto holiness and the end eternal life, the good works which they are enabled to do redound to the glory of him whose workmanship in holiness they are.

4. In regard to the source of the ability to do good works, the Confession plainly teaches that it is not of the believer's own ability, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ that they are enabled to do good works. In order to do good works, the grace already received and improved is not sufficient, but there is ever needed an actual influence of the Holy Spirit to work in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. The believer never reaches a stage in the spiritual life wherein of his own ability he can bring forth truly good works. In every case good works have behind them the sanctifying Spirit of God. Then, on the side of the believer, the Confession points out, with wonderful care and caution, that he must be in earnest about the matter, and not indolent nor negligent in seeking to bring forth good works. Much less are believers to sit still under the feeling that they are not bound to perform any duty, unless upon a special motion of the Spirit. They are to be ever diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them. While God is working in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure, they are to be diligent in working out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Thus, the Spirit's grace and the believer's diligence produce good works.

5. A brief paragraph in the Confession is directed against the Romish doctrine of works of supererogation. The truth

here is stated in a twofold way. *First*, They who attain to the highest possible excellence in good works in this life cannot possibly do more than God requires of them, or supererogate a single element of good works. The standard of God's absolutely perfect moral law has not been in any way lowered, or abrogated, as the rule for the believer's conduct, so that, even when he has obeyed perfectly, he has but done his duty; and it is never in his power to do more than his duty in the case. On the other hand, instead of going beyond what is required by the perfect law of God, believers constantly come short of much that they are in duty bound to do. The remnant of indwelling sin always brings this sad contingency upon them; and, when they have done their best, they are unprofitable servants, and imperfect in their good works.

6. In another aspect the Confession guards its doctrine against a serious Arminian error. Good works, even our very best good works, cannot merit the pardon of our sins, or obtain eternal life for us at the hands of God. Good works are possible only after our sins have been pardoned in justification, and the title to eternal life has been thereby secured; hence, these good works cannot possibly be the ground of pardon, acceptance and the title to reward. In addition, the Confession says that, by reason of the great disproportion there is between them and the glory to come, and on account of the infinite distance there is between us and God, and owing to the fact that by our own works we cannot in any way profit him nor satisfy for our former sin, good works done by us cannot possibly merit the pardon of our sins, or procure for us the title to eternal life. And, finally, the consideration is urged, that so far as our works are good they proceed from the Spirit of God, and so far as they are wrought by us they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgment. Owing, therefore, to the mixed

and defective nature of our good works they cannot possibly be the ground of merit before God.

7. From another point of view good works are, nevertheless, acceptable to God. Since the persons of believers are accepted through Jesus Christ, their good works are also accepted in him, who is the ground of all merit for pardon and acceptance. These good works are accepted in Christ, not as though they were in this life unblamable and unreprovable in God's sight, but because God, looking upon believers in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although marked by many weaknesses and imperfections. Here, again, is seen the well-balanced statement of the Standards. Good works are not acceptable in the sense that they are the ground of merit for our pardon and acceptance, but in the sense that believers, being accepted as to their persons in Christ, their good works are also acceptable in and through him.

8. A statement regarding the works of unregenerate men concludes the chapter. These works, for the matter of them, may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others, as, for example, truth, honesty and charity; but since they do not proceed from a heart purified by faith, that is, from a regenerate heart, nor are done in a right manner according to the word of God, the only rule, nor directed to a proper end, nor prompted by a right motive in the glory of God, they are sinful and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. Such works, not done by a renewed heart, nor according to a right rule, nor from a proper motive, are not pleasing to God, even if the subject-matter of them be that which is in itself right. With great propriety it is added, that to neglect good works is more sinful and displeasing to God. This simply means, that while the honesty and charity of merely moral men cannot commend them to God's favor or acceptance apart from Christ, still the thief and the miser are more

displeasing in his sight. The propriety of this statement is evident.

II. *The Perseverance of the Saints is Next Explained.*

Concerning this important topic, information is given in several questions in the Larger Catechism, in a single clause in the Shorter, and in a chapter of some length in the Confession. It may be remarked in passing that this is what is known as the last of the five points of Calvinism. The term preservation merely means *keeping*, as the text, "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," implies. The term preservation is one which would, in some respects, more accurately express the truth here. Believers persevere because they are preserved; they follow because they are led by grace divine. What the Standards teach upon this subject may be summed up under three or four heads.

1. It is distinctly taught that those whom God has accepted in Christ, and who are effectually called by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere unto the end and be eternally saved. This signifies that all the elect, being called, justified, adopted, and sanctified, shall persevere and attain unto salvation. They cannot at any time totally fall away from their state of grace, so as to lose their standing in Christ as accepted before God; nor can they finally fall away from their gracious state, so that they cannot be restored, and at last perish. Then, positively, the doctrine is that believers shall certainly persevere in grace and good works to the end, and be surely saved at last. All the means to this end, as well as the end itself, are provided for in the purpose or plan of God's grace.

2. The grounds or reasons for this perseverance are stated with care in the Confession. Negatively, the perseverance of the saints does not depend upon their own free will. It is not the strength of their own purpose, resolution, or effort which produces their perseverance. Positively, it depends

upon a series of divine facts, which lay a sure foundation for perseverance.

First, There is the immutability of the decree of election, which flows from the free and unchangeable love of God. God's loving purpose cannot fail. His eternal gracious plan shall be accomplished. Christ, having loved his own which were in the world, loved them unto the end. Hence, as God's plans and purposes are all immutable, so his purpose to save his people secures their perseverance to the end.

Secondly, The efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ secures the perseverance of all those who believe in him. It is through the merit of his all-sufficient sacrifice that they are pardoned and accepted. This basis can never change nor fail; and the intercession of Christ is constantly available on their behalf, and this secures all those spiritual agencies of wisdom, grace, and strength, through the ministry of the Spirit, which assures the perseverance of believers to the very end. As Christ and his merit are always acceptable to God, so all those who are in Christ are accepted in him.

Thirdly, The indwelling of the Spirit of God secures the same end. The Spirit is bestowed on the ground of the meritorious advocacy of Christ, and the Spirit in the heart subdues and preserves it, by the incorruptible seed, the living word of God, unto life everlasting.

Fourthly, The nature of the covenant of grace is also such that all whom it embraces shall not fail to receive its full benefits. Christ, having made good the conditions of that covenant as its mediator, all that the Father gave to him in covenant shall receive the benefits which he has procured for them, and not one of them shall fail of attaining unto eternal life and glory. Upon these four foundation-stones the preservation of the saints rests, and their perseverance is thereby assured.

3. Still, believers may backslide for a time. This fact is clearly taught in the Confession and the Larger Catechism. The latter speaks of the imperfection of sanctification in believers, and of their falling into many sins, from which, however, they are recovered. But the Confession speaks more distinctly upon this subject. It says, in substance, that owing to the temptations of Satan and the allurements of the world, the prevalency of the corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means appointed for their preservation, they may fall into grievous sins, and may continue for a time therein. This teaching of Scripture and fact of experience is not to be regarded as falling from the gracious state, but it is backsliding for a time into sin. The result of this falling into sin for a time is that believers incur the displeasure of God, and grieve his Holy Spirit. Further, they may be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts under the fatherly discipline of God. Their hearts may be hardened and their consciences wounded, so that for a time they may seem to have lost all grace and hope of salvation. They may even hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves. But from all these things they will eventually be recovered, if they be true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, for he will bring them off more than conquerors in the end. Believers are, therefore, secure, and their perseverance is assured, because they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last day.

III. *The Assurance of Grace and Salvation is the Last Topic for this Chapter.*

Its basis is found chiefly in the Larger Catechism and the Confession. The latter has a long chapter upon assurance.

1. This chapter opens by admitting that hypocrites and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favor of God, and in the estate of salvation, which hopes shall perish; yet

such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and live in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in a state of grace, and may rejoice in the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed. The Larger Catechism states the same thing in a somewhat different way. Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavor to walk in all good conscience before him, may, without extraordinary revelation, but by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in a state of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation. The doctrine here clearly taught is that the assurance of grace and salvation is the privilege of believers, and that it is theirs to seek to rejoice in this high honor and happy privilege. It is a common blessing to which all believers may look and in which they may rejoice.

2. The grounds of this assurance are also set down in order, showing that it is not a bare conjecture, nor a probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith resting upon good grounds. It is, therefore, no mere perchance, but a well-grounded conviction or persuasion. The main grounds for it are mentioned as follows: *First*, The divine truth of the promises of salvation upon certain conditions which have been embraced. *Secondly*, The inward evidence of the possession of those graces to which these promises are made. *Thirdly*, The testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God. *Fourthly*, The Spirit dwelling in believers is the earnest of their inheritance, and by means of his work they are sealed unto the day of redemption. He that has begun the good work in them will carry it on till the day of Christ Jesus. These

grounds are all alike divine and gracious. They do not consist in our own feelings, which ebb and flow like the restless tide of the ocean, but they rest on divine promises, on the graces produced by the Spirit, and the witness of the Spirit himself. This constitutes a sure basis for assurance of a very definite kind.

3. But this infallible assurance of grace and salvation is not of the essence of faith. This simply means that there may be true faith without this assurance, and a true believer may wait long and contend with many difficulties before he is made partaker of it, yet being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain unto full assurance of grace and salvation. Hence, it is the duty of every believer to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure. Again, to guard against looseness in living, which some may suppose that this doctrine of assurance genders, the Confession says that this assurance enlarges the heart of the believer in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience. These, we are rightly advised, are the proper fruits of assurance, and that they tend to holiness and not to laxity of life.

4. The last point noted in the Standards is, that believers may at times have this assurance shaken, diminished, or intermitted. They may not always have it. They may even lose it, and yet not lose their salvation. Negligence, some special sin, some sudden temptation, the withdrawing of the light of God's face so that they walk in darkness, may affect for a season the believer's assurance. Still, believers never become utterly destitute of the seed of God in their souls, of the life of faith, of the love of Christ and of the brethren, and of the sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, their assurance may in

due time be revived, and by which in the meantime they are supported from utter despair.

It is added, in conclusion, upon this topic of assurance, that the Standards have been allowed to speak almost entirely for themselves. Only here and there has any additional comment or exposition been made. That this is wise all will agree.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAW OF GOD, AND CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

Shorter Catechism, 39–42 and 82, 83; Larger Catechism, 91–98; Confession of Faith, XIX., XX.

A GREAT theme, which is viewed in various aspects and treated of in several connections in the Standards, is now reached. With some care an attempt will be made to bring the whole together, so as to reduce the various teachings to harmony as far as possible. The Catechisms have really nothing to say about Christian liberty, but so far as the law of God is concerned they contain very full expositions, especially in regard to the summary of the law found in the ten commandments. Indeed, the very complete exposition of the decalogue given in the Catechisms forms a real difficulty for a discussion like this, which can scarcely, without undue expansion, follow out all the particulars stated in the Catechisms. In this chapter the teaching of the Confession, which is full and definite upon the law of God, and of those passages in the Catechisms which bear directly upon the nature and use of the divine law, will be explained. Then, the fuller discussion of the law of God as the rule of the believer's conduct, and hence as the basis of Christian ethics, will be taken up under the discussion of the means of grace. This mode of procedure may relieve the subject of some of its difficulties, and make it possible to exhibit the twofold aspect of the law of God set forth in the Standards. The one of these relates to the law of God in connection with divine moral government, and the other refers to the same law viewed as the rule of duty for the Christian man. Then the remainder of the chapter will give a concise statement of what the Confession has to say about the liberty which the Christian enjoys, and in regard to the liberty of conscience

which he possesses. This last is a subject of vast practical moment against Romanism and antinomianism.

I. *The Law of God is the First Question.*

1. The expression, law of God, itself needs some explanation, for it is used in a variety of senses. In general, the divine laws are either *moral* or *positive* in their nature. Those which are moral in their nature are founded upon eternal and immutable facts or relations. Here, again, there are two classes of moral laws. The one class is founded upon the divine nature viewed as morally perfect, and the other upon the fixed moral relations which subsist among men. To love and obey God is an example of the first class, and to refrain from stealing illustrates the second. The first class is absolutely immutable, and cannot be repealed even by God himself; the second class is of universal obligation, so long as the present relations subsist among men. Those which are positive in their nature obtain their authority, and find their obligation in the positive command of God. These may be of temporary obligation and intended to serve some special purpose. Many of the civil and judicial, and most of the ceremonial laws, of the Mosaic system illustrate this class of divine laws. But even here the moral and the positive are often so mixed that it is not easy to separate the two elements. Perhaps the best illustration of this class of laws is to be found in the prohibition given to our first parents not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

From the fact of moral law, either as founded in the divine nature, or upon the moral relations existing among men, it may be justly assumed that God has established a moral government which extends over all moral beings. From the same fact it may be further assumed that man has, by virtue of his creation, a moral nature, and is thus fitted to become the subject of moral government. With this moral nature, man, as a subject of the divine moral government, is under

law to God, and is bound to render perfect obedience to the law under which he is placed, and which is also written upon his nature. If he obeys he will be rewarded, but if he disobeys he surely incurs penalty. It is the law of God as moral which is now prominently in view in this discussion, and the profound teaching of the Standards upon this subject deserves the most careful study.

2. Man's relation to the moral law and government of God is set forth in several aspects in the Standards, especially in the Confession. A paragraph is now devoted to the explanation of these different aspects.

(*a.*) The first view of this law and of man's relation to it appears in his original state prior to, and irrespective of, the covenant of works, as explained in a previous chapter. According to this view, each man as a moral agent would sustain direct moral relations to God, and would have to stand or fall for himself, and an obedience which was personal, entire, exact, and perpetual would be required of each. This is, of course, largely an ideal state for man, for only Adam, and he for a very short time, ever stood in this relation. The angels, as moral agents under moral government, best illustrate this relation. From their case we can reason by analogy to that of man, apart from the covenant relation, and under pure natural moral government. This fundamental relation the Standards assume rather than fully expound, so that nothing further need be said about it now.

(*b.*) The second aspect of the law of God and of man's relation to it is represented by the case of Adam in what may be called his covenant relation. This has already been explained at length, and need not be enlarged upon at this point. The Confession says that God gave Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience. This is the covenant or federal form of the law of God, and

under it the representative status of Adam is assumed in its broadest outlines, as requiring perfect and perpetual obedience on the part of Adam and his posterity in him. Further, this covenant form of law promised life to all those to whom the covenant related upon the fulfilment of its conditions, and it threatened death for the breach of its terms or conditions. It is interesting to note the fact, that the scope of the covenant law here is broadly outlined, for it is not the eating of the forbidden fruit which is signalized here, but the whole obedience itself considered, which the covenant or federal law required. The Confession also adds in this connection that man had power and ability to keep this law. Notice, also, that it is not power and ability to eat or not eat of the fruit of the tree upon which the stress is laid, but upon the power and ability of Adam to render that perfect obedience which was required. This relation is what some writers very properly describe as moral government modified by the covenant of works, just as the former aspect of the law of God is termed moral government in its essential principles. According to the covenant form of the moral law and government of God, when the probationary term of obedience was completed, this obedience would have been accepted for the justification of Adam and of the race in him, so that thereby they would have been permanently established in holiness and in the favor of God as a reward for the obedience rendered.

(*c.*) A third aspect of the relation of man to the law of God emerges after the fall and the failure of the covenant of works. The law of God after the fall continues to be binding upon man. Upon the believer it is binding as the rule of his Christian service, and upon the unbeliever it is binding as the condition of life. This condition the unbeliever having failed to fulfil finds himself under the sentence of death. When it is said that the law of God is the rule of life for the believer, it does not mean that any man can attain,

nor that the believer does attain, to life and righteousness by keeping the moral law. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, and for him that believeth the law of God is the perfect rule for life and conduct in holiness as much as ever. According to the Larger Catechism, the moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding every one to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity thereunto, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body, and in the performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he oweth to God and man. And the Confession adds that the moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not only in regard to the matter contained in it, but also in respect to the authority of God the creator who gave it. Christ in the gospel does not dissolve, but does much strengthen, this obligation.

Thus, it appears that the moral law is binding upon all moral agents, and that there are three distinct aspects under which the moral law is exhibited in the Standards. *First*, In a state of nature the moral law is binding, both as the condition and as the rule of life; under the covenant of works, where it was the condition of life for all those included in Adam in the covenant, and it would have been their rule of conduct afterwards; and under the covenant of grace, where it appears as the condition of life in the case of Christ, who fulfilled it for himself and those included in this covenant, and then as the rule of conduct for those who believe in Christ the mediator of the covenant of grace. In every case it will be observed that moral law holds those under it in the grasp of moral obligation, only that obligation appears in different relations. It need only be added that this moral law was first manifested in man's moral constitution, and then it was revealed at sundry times and in divers manners, but specially at Sinai. It is summed up in

the ten commandments, and no part of this moral law has been, or can be, abrogated.

(*d.*) In addition to this form of the law of God, which is distinctively moral and which is permanent in its nature, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, certain ceremonial laws containing several typical ordinances. Thus, the Old Testament era is viewed as the childhood of the church, when, as a child in its minority, it is to be regarded as needing tutors and governors, and suitable special instruction. These ceremonial laws and typical ordinances have a twofold object. *First*, As ordinances of worship they pre-figure or typify Christ, and exhibit in various simple, significant ways the graces, actions, sufferings and benefits of the Redeemer. *Secondly*, They serve to minister instruction in various moral duties in all the activities of life, both towards God and towards man. In this way, both the condition of life and salvation in Christ, and the rule for the duties of a godly life, are pre-figured by those ceremonial and typical ordinances. The shadow points to the substance, the type to the antitype.

(*e.*) Once more, God also gave to his people Israel, as a body politic, that is, as a civil or national institute, sundry judicial laws. These are given at great length in the Mosaic economy. They were, so far as they did not involve strictly moral elements, positive in their nature, and not binding upon any other people, though many of these judicial laws have such marks of divine wisdom that they may well arrest the attention of modern legislators. But these laws, as well as the ceremonial laws mentioned in the previous paragraph, have expired. The former, save so far as general equity may require, passed away with the Jewish commonwealth, and the latter have been fulfilled or abrogated in the New Testament.

3. The uses of the law of God are next to be considered. This is a practical topic about which the Confession and

the Larger Catechism have a good deal to say. The latter especially has a very complete statement upon the subject. The Standards uniformly teach that since the fall of man in Adam the law of God cannot be of any use to man as a condition of life and salvation. Sinful man cannot possibly use it for this purpose; and he need not so use it, for Christ has fulfilled it for him. The law condemns, but does not save, the sinner. Christ has come under the condemnation of the law, and hence he can save. The several uses of the law are now to be noted in order.

(*a.*) Its use for all men comes first. It is useful for all men to inform them of the holy nature and will of God, and of their duty to God and their fellowmen. It is also of use to all as an authoritative rule binding them to walk according to its precepts. It is, further, of use to every man as a lamp to discover the sinfulness of his nature, of his heart, and of his life, so that, examining himself thereby, he may be humbled under a deep sense and conviction of his sin, as well as have a hatred of sin produced in him. It is added that the law of God is of use to all men in showing them their inability to keep it, and their ruin under it.

(*b.*) The use of the law of God to the unregenerate calls for brief explanation. Its use to them is to awaken their consciences with true spiritual conviction of sin, and to stir them up to flee from the wrath to come. It is also helpful in showing them clearly their need of the redemption of Christ, and of his perfect satisfaction to all the demands of the law of God. The result of this is to drive them to Christ, even as his grace draws them. Thus the law becomes a schoolmaster to teach and lead sinners to come to Christ. Further, the law is of use to the unregenerate in showing to them that they are inexcusable if they abide under the curse of the law and away from Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth. Moreover, the law serves to restrain the corruptions of their sinful natures

by what it forbids, and by the threatenings which come upon them in this life for disobedience. Then, the promises which are attached to obedience serve to lead the sinner to think of the blessings which thus follow; and that, if he cannot by works secure these, he may be led to Christ, who made the obedience.

(*c.*) The use of the law of God to the regenerate comes up last for remark. This has been in part already described, but a few important things remain to be set down in a more definite way. Those who are regenerated and who believe in Christ are so freed from the law of God as a covenant of works that they are neither justified nor condemned thereby, yet in addition to the general uses of the law for all men, the regenerate find that the law has some special uses for them. It shows them how they are bound to Christ with strong bonds for his fulfilling the law, and enduring the curse of it in their stead, and for their good. The result of this is that they are provoked to thankfulness more and more, and prompted by the constraining love of Christ to conform their walk more and more according to the moral law, as the perfect rule of their conduct. To a certain extent, what was said at the close of the last paragraph from the Confession is of indirect value here.

With its usual cautious completeness the Confession adds that these several uses of the law, especially in the case of the regenerate, are not contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it. The reason or cause for this harmony consists in the fact that the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them subdues and enables them to do freely and cheerfully what the will of God revealed in the law requires to be done. They are made both willing and able to obey the moral law as a rule of life, having rested on Christ as the condition of life and salvation.

It only remains to be added at this stage that the moral law is summed up in the ten commandments, which were

delivered to Moses at Mount Sinai. Here is the substance of our duty to God and man, though it is also to be kept in mind that the Scriptures, as a whole, contain an expansion of the moral principles implied in the decalogue. The further treatment of the moral law from this point of view is deferred till the chapters upon the means of grace are reached.

II. *Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience is now Reached.*

This is a practical and perplexing subject, upon which the Confession alone speaks. It raises one of the important principles of Protestantism, for which the Reformation earnestly contended against the spiritual domination of Romanism. What the Confession teaches upon this subject will now be set down in order, and a few simple comments upon that teaching will be made. In the chapter of the Confession which deals with this general subject there are really two closely related topics which require some explanation. The one is Christian liberty, and the other is liberty of conscience.

1. Christian liberty may be first explained. In what does it consist? To a certain extent the answer has been supplied in connection with the explanation made some time ago of the doctrine of justification, which rests upon the satisfaction or righteousness of Christ. Several points are to be noted here.

First, Christian liberty is that liberty which Christ has purchased for believers under the gospel. It consists, first of all, in their being freed from the guilt of sin, and from the condemning wrath of God. This is almost a twofold way of stating a single important fact. That fact is that, by the terms of the gospel of the grace of God, those who believe in Christ have the guilt of their sin pardoned through his atoning blood, have the wrath of God turned away from them, since they are justified and accepted in the beloved, and have the curse of the violated moral law entirely removed

from them through him who was made a curse for them. Their relation to God becomes a gracious one, in which they are no longer under guilt and condemnation, but are free from these things through the liberty which they have in Christ.

Secondly, This Christian liberty further consists in the fact that believers are, in a measure, being delivered from the power of this present world, which holds the unregenerate in subjection to its spirit and dictation. They are delivered from the bondage of Satan, who now no longer leads them captive at his will. In like manner they are set free from the dominion of sin, which now no longer rules in their mortal bodies that they should obey it in the lusts thereof. They also escape many of the afflictions of this life, and are sustained in the midst of those which they are called to endure. In addition, they are delivered from the sting of death, which holds the unregenerate in bondage. They no longer fear the grave, which has been robbed of its victory through him who has triumphed over death and the grave. And in the end, they are fully and finally delivered from everlasting damnation, and set free from the dread of the place of woe.

Thirdly, Christian liberty embraces the fact that believers have freedom of access to God through Jesus Christ. The unbeliever has not this precious privilege. It belongs to the believer as a part of his liberty in Christ, and it gives him freedom of access at all times to God in prayer, for he has an interest in the advocacy of Jesus Christ, by whom he has access with boldness at a throne of grace. In close connection with this, there is the additional fact that the obedience which the believer renders to God and his holy law is not produced by slavish fear, but prompted by a childlike love, and is the fruit of a willing mind. This is a very precious part of Christian liberty. The obedience which the believer renders is that of a son, not that of a servant; it is prompted

by love, and not by fear. It is willingly and cheerfully given to him who has brought them into such a glorious liberty as that with which Christ makes his people free.

Fourthly, The Confession further points out that though, under the Old Testament, believers had a goodly measure of freedom, yet under the New Testament they have even a larger liberty. Their liberty is enlarged by the fact that they are free from the burdensome yoke of the ceremonial law, under which the Jewish church was placed. They have freer access and approach to God, with greater boldness at a throne of grace; and in fuller measure do they receive the communications of the free Spirit of God than believers under the law of Moses did ordinarily enjoy. The true believing Jew had liberty, but the true believer under the gospel has a still larger liberty.

2. Liberty of conscience is the other topic which remains for consideration. A number of points are to be noted here also.

First, The statement here made by the Confession is to the effect that God alone is Lord of the conscience, in accordance with the word of God. This being the case, the conscience of the Christian man is free from the doctrines and commandments of men, if these be contrary in any way to his word, or beside it in matters of faith and worship. It is well to note that it is matters of faith and worship that are here signalized; and in regard to these matters the Christian conscience is free from the commands of men, and bound only by God, as he has revealed his will touching these matters in his holy word. In such a case, to believe and obey the commands of men out of conscience is to betray true liberty of conscience. And, further, to require implicit faith in such commands, and an absolute obedience to mere human authority, unsupported by, or contrary to, the word of God, is to destroy both liberty of conscience and sound reason.

Secondly, Another aspect of the case is aimed against the antinomian heresy, as the previous one is against Romish authority. The statement is, that those who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, do practice any sin or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the very end of Christian liberty, which is, being delivered out of the hands of their enemies, they might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of their lives.

Thirdly, The closing paragraph in the Confession raises some much-discussed questions. The limitations of Christian liberty are briefly indicated. Christian liberty is not absolute. It does set men free from the decrees of man, both in church and state, if these decrees are not in harmony with the word of God. But this liberty is limited on the one hand by the authority of God, and on the other by the rights and claims of our fellowmen. Absolute obedience is required to the former, and the claims of the latter cannot be ignored. Hence, Christian liberty does not mean that men may do just as they please. Hence, too, obedience to civil powers, as they are ordained by God, so long as men are not called to disobey God by that obedience, should be given. In like manner, when ecclesiastical authority is in harmony with the word of God it should be obeyed. And the well-being of a man's neighbor must also be considered. Here, in mere outline, are the fundamental principles of the relations of the church and state, and the divine warrant for their administration. Their fuller discussion will come up later on. The basis for church discipline also appears at this point, but it, too, will be treated at length in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, AND RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

SHORTER CATECHISM, —; LARGER CATECHISM, 69 AND 82, 83 AND 86; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XXI. AND XXVI.

IN this chapter two related subjects are grouped together, and what the Standards have to say upon them will now be gathered up in an orderly way. The Shorter Catechism has nothing directly to say about these subjects, except what it states under the fourth commandment concerning the observance of the Sabbath and religious worship. The Larger Catechism in three questions has some important teaching in regard to the communion of saints. It connects its exposition of this doctrine with what it has to say about the invisible church, and the union of believers in and with Christ, and their fellowship thereby with one another. The Confession has a chapter upon the communion of saints, and one upon religious worship and the Sabbath-day. But, as the Sabbath is treated of in another place, not much need be said about it here. The Confession is chiefly followed in this exposition.

I. *The Communion of Saints is First Explained.*

The teaching of the Confession is plain and simple on this point, but the Larger Catechism is not so easily analyzed, because its teaching here is not so well connected. The former gives the general basis, and the latter supplies some special applications of the doctrine.

1. The basis of the communion which saints or believers enjoy is their mystical union with Christ in their effectual calling. They are thus united with Christ their head, by the Holy Spirit on the divine side, and by their own faith on their part. By reason of this union they have fellowship with Christ in his graces, in his sufferings, in his death, in

his resurrection, and in his glory, so that they are one with him all through. He is identified with his people, and carries them with him, as it were, through every stage of his mediatorial career. They have obedience in him, they suffer with him, they are crucified together with him, they are raised from the dead in him, and in the end they are glorified together with him. This union, moreover, is of such a nature that the personal individuality of each believer is preserved, and they are not partakers of the Godhead of Christ, so as to become his equal. They are partakers of the divine nature, but not of the divine essence, so that they are not raised to the plane of deity. To say that they are is impious and blasphemous. In the light of certain theological views, founded upon a semi-pantheistic philosophy, this is a very valuable statement for the present day.

2. From the union of believers with Christ and their fellowship in him, it follows that they are united with one another in love, as the partakers of a common spiritual life in Christ. They have fellowship or communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are under obligation as brethren in Christ to the performance of such duties, private and public, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and the outward man. As members of the body of Christ, they are to cherish and nourish one another, mindful that if one member suffers all suffer, and if one is honored all are honored with it. This communion is to be extended, as God offereth opportunity, to all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus. It is very evident that the Confession does not teach close communion. By reason of the communion of saints they are bound to maintain an outward fellowship and communion with each other in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to promote their mutual edification. They are also to show their fellowship in a practical way by relieving each other in outward things, according as they have need

and are able. Here, again, one of those wise qualifications in which the Standards abound appears. The Confession, to guard against a perverted communism, says that the communion of the saints with one another does not take away or infringe the title or property which each man has in his goods and possessions. This statement is all-important in relation to some modern socialistic theories which try to claim the New Testament in their support.

3. What the Larger Catechism says regarding the communion of saints may be set down under a separate head. It relates chiefly to the union and communion which they have in Christ, and it is said to be twofold in its nature. It is a communion in grace here, and a communion in glory hereafter. As the former, it consists in the fact that all the members of the invisible church, being united with Christ, partake in the virtue of his mediation, in their justification, adoption, and sanctification, together with all else that in this life manifests their union with him. As to the latter, the communion in glory which believers have in this life, immediately after death, at the resurrection, and at the day of judgment, have a very full statement. The members of the body of Christ, the invisible church, have given to them in this life the first-fruits of glory with Christ, and so they are in him interested in that glory which he fully possesses. As a foretaste of this they enjoy the sense of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and hope of glory. On the contrary, the sense of God's wrath, horror of conscience, and fearful-looking for of judgment, are to the wicked in this life the foretastes of the torments which they shall endure in the world to come. After death, the saints are immediately made perfect in holiness, as to their souls, and are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death being united to Christ and resting in their graves till the resurrection,

shall be reunited to their souls at the last day. Thereafter, their communion with Christ and with one another shall be complete and perpetual in glory. The idea of the church, especially of the invisible church, which underlies the communion of the saints in Christ and with one another, is reserved for fuller discussion in its proper place under the question of the church of God, which comes up a little later on.

II. *Religious Worship and the Sabbath-day are Next to be Explained.*

For this topic the Confession alone is available, though it is interesting to note the fact that some of the commandments, especially the first, second, and fourth, are here in sight, and that this is the only place in the Confession where the commandments are in view. The importance of the fourth commandment is plainly evident from the fact that, in addition to all that is said in the Catechism about it, the Confession lays almost equal stress upon it in connection with what it has to say in regard to the time for public worship.

1. The duty of the worship of God has both a natural and a revealed basis and sanction. The Confession says that the light of nature shows that there is a God who has lordship and sovereignty over all, and who is good, and does good to all. This being the case, the light of nature further indicates that this God should be feared, loved, praised, called upon and trusted in with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. This is natural religion pure and simple, which, by reason of sin, has been sorely perverted and sadly corrupted. As a matter of fact, this ideal state of natural religion could exist only among unfallen sinless beings, such as man was prior to the apostasy of the fall. Yet in all these discussions, and the light of modern evolutionary theories of the origin of the religious nature of man, it is of the utmost importance to vindicate the reality of the native, or connatural religious factor in the human constitution.

2. The Confession indicates very clearly that the true mode of worship must be revealed to mankind as they are now, so it says that the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and must be according to his revealed will. As limited by what God has made known, it is clear that he ought not to be worshipped according to the ideas or devices of men, or in accordance with the suggestions of Satan. Moreover, no visible representation is to be used in worship, and throughout he is not to be worshipped in any other way than is directed in the Scriptures.

3. As to the object of worship a further remark may be made. God alone is the object to be worshipped, but it is God in the aspect of the Trinity. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are alike to be worshipped, and equally to be adored. Nor is the worship due unto the triune God to be given to any other. Hence, neither angels, saints, nor any other creatures are to be worshipped or reverenced in a religious way. This destroys the Romish doctrine and practice at one sweeping blow. The Confession adds at this point, with great propriety, that since the fall man cannot present his worship, adoration and praise without a mediator, and this mediator is Christ alone. The intervention of creature mediators is entirely excluded by this simple statement. This, again, refutes the Romish views at another point.

4. The parts or elements of worship are next set forth in the Confession. It is very interesting to observe that what the Confession includes in worship is in a large measure treated of in connection with the means of grace, as for example prayer and the reading of the Scriptures. There is no contradiction in this arrangement, for acts of true worship are means of grace, and the means of grace to be real must also be acts of worship. The parts of worship are now noted.

First, Prayer with thanksgiving is mentioned at the outset as a special part of religious worship. God requires this of

all men. To be acceptable, prayer must be offered in the name of the Son, by the help of the Spirit, and in accordance with the will of God. This gives the medium, the helper, and the rule of prayer. In the name of Christ, by the aid of the Spirit, and according to the revealed will of God is prayer to be made. Prayer is further to be offered with understanding, and in a spirit of reverence and humility. Moreover, it should be marked by fervency, faith, love and perseverance, in order to be true religious worship, and so be acceptable to God. Prayer may be either silent communion or vocal utterance. When vocal the Confession says that it should be in a known tongue.

Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but prayer is not to be offered for the dead. This, again, is a warning against the evil practices of Rome. Nor is prayer to be offered for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death. This statement must, of course, be taken with care, and no hasty judgment acted on as to whether any given man has been guilty of this dreadful sin.

Secondly, The reading of the Scriptures is another important part of religious worship. This includes not only the public reading, but also the sound preaching, and the conscionable hearing of the word by the people. This reading of the Scriptures, and the proper preaching and hearing of the word, is to be marked by obedience to God, and with understanding, faith, and reverence. This is regarded as very important, and the Presbyterian Church can only be true to her Standards and her history when she gives a large place to the reading, exposition and preaching of the word in her religious services.

Thirdly, Some other parts of worship need only be mentioned. Praise, in the form of singing of psalms with grace in the heart, is to have a place in worship. It is curious to note the fact that hymns are not mentioned by name at this

point; but doubtless the scriptural terms, "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," are properly included under the word psalms in the Standards. Still, it is well to give the psalms in some form a prominent place in the service of praise in public worship. The due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ are also parts of worship. Hence, they are to be regarded as important and solemn parts of the ordinary religious worship of God. No exposition of the sacraments is now made, as they will come up later on for full explanation. The fact that they are acts of worship is what is now emphasized. As special acts of worship several things are noted in the Standards. Religious oaths and vows, solemn fastings and special thanksgivings, are in their several times and seasons to be used in a holy and religious manner.

5. The place of worship is next expounded, and the teaching of the Confession is here broad and sensible. No part of religious worship now, under the gospel, is either tied unto, or made more acceptable by, any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed. God is everywhere and may be worshipped at all places in spirit and in truth. Hence, in private families domestic worship is to be observed. Secret prayer is to be made by each one by himself. In both of these cases it ought to be offered daily. Then, also, in public assemblies, even in a more solemn way, God is to be worshipped; and this public worship is not to be carelessly or wilfully neglected, or forsaken when God by his word and providence calleth thereto. Thus, the duty of private, domestic, and public worship, in all its parts and proportions, is to be diligently observed.

6. Some very important statements are finally made in the Confession in regard to the time or occasion of religious worship. Here the Sabbath law in its bearing upon religious worship is expounded. It is presented in a twofold way; first as a law of nature, and then as a law of God. Of course,

both are from God as their author. Each is briefly explained.

First, The Confession merely assumes the natural basis for a time to be set apart for worship. It is taken to be a law of nature that a due proportion of our time be set apart for the worship of God. By the law of nature is here meant, that upon the constitution of the natural order of which man is an important part the Sabbath law is engraved. Even inanimate nature has it, and the brute creation more clearly exhibits it, in the demand for rest which their welfare requires. But on man's nature, in the sphere of natural religion, this law still more clearly appears. The Confession at this point, it is most striking to observe, says nothing much about rest, but lays stress upon the fact of worship. This is proper at this point. When the Sabbath law is fully expounded later on, both rest and worship will be seen to enter into its demands. But now, when the special time for worship is under consideration, it is proper that the religious aspects of the holy day should be made prominent. Even natural religion points to the Sabbath as a religious institute.

Secondly, The Sabbath as the proper season for worship is also a matter of revelation. In the Scriptures, by a positive, moral and perpetual commandment, binding on men in all ages, God has particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath to be kept holy unto him. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ it was the last day of the week; and since his resurrection it was changed to the first day. In the Scripture this is often called the Lord's day, and it is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath. In this way the Confession states briefly the divine authority of the Sabbath law in its relation to the worship of God.

As to the way in which the Sabbath is to be kept in its relation to public worship, the Confession has also something

to say. There must be due preparation. The Sabbath is kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparation of their hearts and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, enter upon the worship of God. Thus, both the outward and the inward life have to be prepared and ordered aright. Then the actual observance of the worship properly follows. This is twofold. There is to be rest and also worship; but the rest is in order to the worship. In the rest there is to be cessation all the day from the works, words, and thoughts about worldly employments and recreations such as lawful upon other days. This is what is sometimes not very correctly called the civil side of the Sabbath. But there is also to be worship, for the Confession with great force asserts that the whole time of the day is to be taken up with the public and private exercises of religious worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

It is not necessary to enter upon the many lines of serious reflection which very naturally occur to the earnest mind at this point. In a closing remark it is emphasized that Presbyterians, by their Standards, are committed to a well-defined doctrine of the Sabbath, in its bearing upon religious worship. According to this doctrine, the Sabbath is not fully kept by simply resting from toil and play.

Religious worship is to have a place, and the whole day is to be spent in worship, public and private, and in doing works of necessity and mercy. The merely civil theory of the Sabbath may be all that the state should enforce, but this is not half of the doctrine of the Sabbath, according to the Standards. The rest enjoined is not merely for itself, but also in order to engage in worship, and to do deeds of mercy. At the present day, the proper scriptural observance of the Sabbath is one of the burning questions which rightly engages the earnest attention of the Christian world. If the Sabbath is lost, then religion will surely decline. Perhaps the best test of the degree in which a community is thoroughly

Christian is to be found in the way in which the Sabbath-day is observed. And this rest, to have religious value, must not be merely an enforced civil rest, but a holy rest, and a devout worship of him who is the Lord of the Sabbath. In Old Testament times severe national and other calamities came upon the Israelites for their neglect or violation of the Sabbath; and, since the Sabbath law is still binding under the New Testament dispensation, the same disasters may fall upon those who heed not the Sabbath, which is to be kept holy unto the Lord.

It is easy to see that there are influences at work in modern civilization in Christian communities which compel serious reflection on the part of all who love the institutions of our holy religion. The massing of multitudes in large city centres, the development of inventions in various industrial activities, the formation of large soulless corporations, and the increase of the worldly temper even among Christians, are some of the things which are insensibly, but very really, affecting the practice of Sabbath observance. Surely it shall not be that the Presbyterian Church will ever fail to uphold the sanctity of the Sabbath. She must be true to her history and her Standards, and then she shall be true to God, the church, and the nation.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MEANS OF GRACE; GENERAL VIEW; THE WORD.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 88–90; LARGER CATECHISM, 98, 99, AND 153–160; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XIX.

FOR two chapters the discussion has been almost entirely upon the ground of the Confession, but this chapter carries the exposition over to the Catechisms. It is only in an indirect way that the Confession treats of the means of grace, for while it discusses, in part, some of the same topics, it does not deal with them in their bearing upon the means whereby the Christian life is guided and advanced. The Catechisms, however, do this in a direct and formal manner.

The field now to be traversed in this exposition is quite extensive, so that four or five chapters will be required to explain properly what the Standards teach concerning the means of grace. It is believed that the exposition now to be made will go far to show that the Standards give due prominence to the personal and practical sides of the Christian life; and in doing so they unfold one of the most complete ethical systems, on a purely Christian and scriptural basis, that the world has ever seen. It is well to keep this fact in mind, for the objection is sometimes made against the Standards that they give too much attention to abstract doctrine, and not enough to the practical duties of the Christian life. In this connection it may be safely asserted that the Standards, taken as a whole, present doctrine and duty in their proper proportions, and in their correct relations. Sound doctrine is made the basis of correct life, and true Christian ethics in life is seen to be the product of a gracious experience in the heart. This relation between doctrine and duty, between dogma and life, is one of vital importance.

The Standards divide the means of grace into three

branches. These are known as the word, the sacraments, and prayer. Each of these branches must have due attention given to it. Speaking in a general way, all divine ordinances are means of grace, so that in addition to the three things just mentioned there are others, such as providential dealings of blessing or affliction, and the fellowship which believers have with each other, which would have to be taken into account in a full exposition of the means of grace. The Standards suggest this when they state that the outward and ordinary means of grace are the ordinances of God, and then go on to say, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer, and then proceed to give a full exposition of these three main branches of these means. This chapter will begin the explanations to be made concerning the word of God as an important means of grace, and it will set forth some general points in relation thereto, so as to prepare the way for the exposition of the ten commandments in two subsequent chapters.

These means of grace just mentioned are called *outward* and *ordinary*. This means that the reading and preaching of the word, the observance of the sacraments, and the exercise of prayer, are the usual and external means by which Christ and the benefits of grace are conveyed to the believer, so that his spiritual life is purified and expanded thereby. The word *outward* indicates the relation of these means of grace to the believer, and suggests the contrast with the work of the Holy Spirit, and the exercise of the believer's faith, which may be termed the *inward* means of grace. The term *ordinary* relates to the fact that by these means in general the work of sanctification is usually furthered, and the contrast is here suggested with unusual means of grace which are occasional in their nature, as may sometimes be seen in the dispensations of providence, or growing out of the intercourse of believers with one another. These are temporary means of grace.

It is worthy of further remark that the term *means* has a well-defined signification. As means of grace the word, the sacraments, and prayer, are mere channels through which grace is conveyed by divine appointment. In no proper sense are they agents, or are they possessed of inherent efficiency in themselves. The real agent in sanctification is the Holy Spirit. He it is who uses the word, or the sacraments to the spiritual benefit and growth in grace of believers, but these ordinances are in themselves ineffectual to this end. And on the believer's part the exercise of faith, which itself is due to the Spirit's work, is the condition of the spiritual efficacy of these means. There is no inherent virtue in any of these means, as will be seen more fully later on. The Spirit's work and the office of faith are needed.

The Catechisms present these means of grace from still another point of view. The question is raised as to the things which God requires of men that they may escape his wrath and curse due to them for their sins. The answer is threefold. They must have faith in Christ, repentance toward God, and a diligent use of the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ gives to them the benefits of his mediation. From this point of view they are means of salvation, in the full sense of the term. But, without further delay, the general exposition of the word as a means of grace must be entered on.

This is really the third time in the course of these expositions that the Word of God has been up for discussion. The first time was in the third chapter, where Holy Scripture was considered as the rule of faith and life, and as the only authoritative source of Christian doctrine. The second time was in the nineteenth chapter, where the law of God in various aspects and for several uses was expounded. And now, in this chapter and the two following ones, the word of God is to be viewed as the means used for the expansion of the spiritual life of the believer. This supplies, also, the rule of Christian ethics.

The duty which God requires of man is obedience to his revealed will. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the moral law. This law was first written in man's moral constitution, and is implied in the fact that he is a moral agent. It was afterwards more clearly and definitely revealed in the Scriptures, wherein the great principles of the divine law and moral government are unfolded. This moral law is again summed up in the ten commandments, and it is from this point that the present exposition of the Standards takes its departure. But before the commandments are explained in order, there are several important things, based chiefly upon the Larger Catechism, which may properly occupy the remainder of this chapter.

I. *The Word and its Use may be First Defined.*

The word of God is, or is contained in, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The Larger Catechism says that the Scriptures *are* the word of God, while the Shorter says that the word of God is *contained in* the Scriptures; and this difference of statement has given rise to a good deal of controversy. The Confession virtually settles the debate in favor of the view which makes the word of God and the Scriptures virtually identical, when it says, after giving a full list of all the books of the Bible, that they are all given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life. The Scriptures, therefore, are the inspired word of God. It is called Holy Scripture because it is in written form; and it is profitable in furnishing the man of God unto all good works.

The summary of the moral law is given in the ten commandments, four of which announce man's duty to God, and six his duty to his fellowmen. Our Lord, in a matchless manner, condensed these ten commands into two. The first is to love God with the whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and the second is to love our neighbors as ourselves. On these two commands, says our Lord, hang all the law and the prophets; in other words, the whole of the

Scriptures. This twofold form of the moral law is all-comprehensive, for if a man love God supremely he will keep the first four commands, and if he love his neighbor as himself he will observe the duties laid down in the second table of the law. Thus love is seen to be the fulfilling of the law, and that if men love God they will keep his commandments.

The Larger Catechism adds that though all are not allowed to read the word publicly to the congregation, yet all sorts of people are bound to read it apart by themselves, and with their families. The obligation thus rests upon all men, and great responsibility is incurred if this private and domestic reading of the Scriptures is not attended to. To repudiate the obligation does not free any man from the duty. In order that the word may be read intelligently by all men, it is to be translated out of the original languages in which it was written into the common tongue of all the peoples of the world. This teaching is opposed to the practice of Rome, which, to a large extent, discourages the reading of the Scriptures by the common people. This is one of the strong contentions of the Protestant against the Romanist. The Scriptures are to be in every man's hand in his own common tongue, so that he may read the will of God and be made wise unto salvation thereby.

The preaching of the word in a public manner is only to be done by those who are sufficiently gifted, and are duly approved and called to the office. This relates to the official proclamation of the word, and of the gospel message thereby. Those who would discharge this holy service are to have suitable gifts, not merely intellectual, but, above all, spiritual; and these gifts are to be so expanded and cultivated in the knowledge of the Scriptures that they may instruct and edify others. The call of God's Spirit and providence must lead them to seek and enter the office, and the approval of God's people, not merely in their individual capacity, but also in their corporate capacity, as constituted into what is called a

church court. Such only are to preach the word. It is worth while observing, at this point, that the Standards give no favor to preaching by women. Even the comparative silence of the Standards upon this subject cannot be adduced in favor of this practice; for at the time when they were drawn up the question of women preaching was not even raised. Hence, the supposed silence of the Standards upon the matter is no argument in its support.

The last remark to be made under this head is one which has been hinted at already in a general way. The word is made effectual to the elect for salvation only by the blessing of the Holy Spirit thereon. It is the Spirit alone who makes the reading, and especially the preaching, of the word an effectual means of grace and salvation. Here, again, as so often, the Standards emphasize the necessity and efficacy of the Holy Spirit for all true religious experiences.

II. *The Effects of the Word as Read, Preached, and Made Effectual by the Holy Spirit may be Next Noted.*

To a certain extent what was said in the nineteenth chapter is repeated here, in regard to the uses of the word or law of God to all men, and to the unregenerate and regenerate, respectively. *First*, By means of the message of the word, made effectual by the Spirit, sinners are enlightened, convinced and humbled. These are three important factors. The mind is enlightened in the knowledge of itself, the conscience is convinced of its sinful, guilty state, and the sinner himself is humbled in the sight of God, as the message of the word comes to him. Next, the result of the message of the word is to drive sinners out of themselves, and draw them unto Christ. This is an admirable statement. By means of the truth of God the sinner is led to feel and see that he cannot do what is necessary to redeem and save himself, and he is also led to see that in Christ all that is needful has been provided and secured, so that he abandons all efforts to save himself, and turns, with penitent heart and ready feet, to the

Lord Jesus Christ, to find peace by believing on him. The third result of the word is that sinners, having been led to Christ, are by means of the word conformed to his image, and subdued to his will. The nature of the believing sinner is made like that of Christ, and his will is brought into harmony with that of his Master. A further result of the word is seen in the fact that believers are thereby greatly strengthened against temptations and corruptions. The word becomes a means of defence, even as Jesus found it to be in his wilderness temptation. And, finally, the crowning result of the word as a means of grace is that believers are built up in grace and knowledge, and are established in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation. They are sanctified through the truth, the word of God being that truth. Thus, every step in the believer's experience is marked out distinctly, under the operation of the Spirit working by and with the word in his mind and heart. Here there is conviction, faith in Christ, likeness to Christ, spiritual defence, and complete salvation in the end.

III. *A Third Practical Question Relates to the Way in which the Word is to be Read, Preached and Heard.*

The Catechisms both speak upon this point, the Larger expanding the statement of the Shorter considerably. The points here are now noted in order. *First,* There must be high and reverent esteem for the Scriptures. This esteem is necessary to lead men to give heed to the message which they contain. If men have not a high regard for the Scriptures they are not likely to pay much heed to what they utter. Then, *Secondly,* There is to be a firm persuasion that the Scriptures are the very word of God, and that he alone can enable us to understand them. Here there are two related things. On the one hand, the word must be read and heard with the firm conviction that it is a message from God, and not merely a human voice; and on the other hand, it is to be kept in mind that only he who gave the Scriptures by the spirit of inspi-

ration can enable men to understand them by the spirit of illumination. *Thirdly*, The reading and preaching of the word must be attended to with a sincere desire to know, believe, and obey the will of God therein revealed. Hence, all idle speculations, or mere literary or philosophic aims, are to be set aside, and there should be an earnest desire to find out the will of God for present duty, by the reading and the preaching of the word of God. It is instructive to note the force of the three stages in these results of the word of God. There is knowledge of, then faith in, and, last of all, obedience to, the will of God. And they are mentioned in their proper order, for the end of both knowledge and faith is to obey the will of God, and so fulfil the end of our being. *Fourthly*, The word must be diligently heeded, by giving attention to the matter and scope of the Scriptures. This enjoins an intelligent, thorough and comprehensive study of the Scriptures. The importance of this is evident, and need not be insisted on. *Finally*, the word is to be preached and heard with meditation, application, self-denial and prayer. The Shorter Catechism sums up this point and the preceding one by saying that the word must be attended to with diligence, preparation, and prayer. The Larger Catechism under this last head sets down four words of much meaning. There is to be *meditation* of a serious and devout nature, *application* of an earnest and painstaking sort, *self-denial*, if necessary, of time and comfort, and, above all, *prayer* for that Spirit of all grace which alone can make the word effectual unto salvation. Thus, the word, dwelling in believers in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, causes them to grow up in all things after the likeness of him who hath called them to glory and virtue.

IV. *This Chapter at this Point may Briefly Set Down a few things which the Larger Catechism Mentions for the Benefit of those who are to be Preachers of the Word.*

There is here given, in answer to a single question, an ex-

ceedingly complete outline of homiletical advice, to which ministers of the gospel will do well to give earnest heed. Little more than the headings can be set down here.

First, The word is to be preached *soundly*. All those who are called to labor in the ministry of the word are to preach sound doctrine. The mind of the Spirit as set forth in the word is to be declared, and cunningly-devised fables are to be avoided. And the whole truth, in its proper scriptural proportions, is to be preached. *Secondly*, The word is to be preached *diligently*. The preacher is to be earnest and active in his work. In season, and out of season, he is to sow the seed beside all waters, and then leave the result with him who sends him to preach. *Thirdly*, The minister is to preach the word *plainly*. He is to so speak that the people can understand the whole counsel of God in the matter of duty and salvation. He is not to use enticing words of man's wisdom and seek to gain thereby the praise of man, but he is to seek to so preach that his words may be in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. He is to be simply a herald. *Fourthly*, The word is to be *faithfully* preached by the minister of the gospel. He is to keep nothing back. He is to be faithful to him whose message he bears, faithful to those to whom the message is sent, and faithful to himself. This fidelity is a very important factor in the case. *Fifthly*, The minister must preach the word *wisely*. He is to have the wisdom of the serpent. He will thus seek to adapt the message to the condition and needs of the hearers, whether warning, rebuke, exhortation, invitation, or consolation. He will also seek to adapt the message to the capacities of his hearers. The learned and the ignorant, the young and the old, will all be thought of and provided for. *Sixthly*, The message of the word is to be declared *zealously*. The message is all-important, and it should be declared with zeal. This zeal should be begotten, not of a desire for personal fame, but of a fervent love of God, and a tender regard for the souls of

men. This zeal will prompt to great earnestness. *Seventhly*, The word is to be preached *sincerely*. Selfish ends or aims are to be laid aside, and the glory of God in the conversion, edification and salvation of the hearers should be the controlling motive of the preacher. If thus preached, the word will be quick and powerful, and fruitful in the salvation of souls.

V. *This Chapter may Properly Close with a Brief Statement of the Rules which the Larger Catechism Lays Down for the Interpretation of the Word.*

These rules are of the utmost importance in their bearing upon the exposition of the ten commandments to be made in the two following chapters. There are eight rules, as follows:

1. The perfection of the law of God is to be kept in mind. As perfect, it binds in the whole man, and to full conformity, forever. The utmost perfection in every duty is required, and the least degree of sin is forbidden.

2. The spirituality of the law is also to be remembered. It is a law which reaches to the mind, will, heart, and all the other powers of the soul, as well as to words, works, and gestures. In the explanation of some of the commandments this is a valuable rule.

3. The relations of the commands in the law are to be kept in view. One and the same thing, in divers respects, is required and forbidden in several commandments. This must be carefully noted in all cases.

4. When a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden, and *vice versa*. When a promise is annexed, a contrary threat is implied, and *vice versa*. This is a very comprehensive rule.

5. What God forbids is never to be done. His command is always duty, yet every duty is not to be done at all times. This rule naturally opens the door for the casuist to enter with his subtilties.

6. Under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded, together with all the causes, means,

occasions, appearances, and provocations connected therewith. This is also a far-reaching rule.

7. What is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are to seek that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of our several places and relations.

8. In what is commanded to others, we are bound to be helpful to them according to our places and callings. We are also to take heed not to be partakers with others in what is forbidden to them.

These important rules stated in the Larger Catechism show how complete the Standards are on the practical side. Just as in the previous section there was much sensible homiletical advice given to those who preach the word, so here there are useful hermeneutical hints in regard to the interpretation of the Scriptures. The hints bear partly upon the exposition of the doctrines of the gospel and partly upon the discovery of the whole duty of the Christian man. Let all who read the Scriptures seek to follow the hints these rules supply.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MEANS OF GRACE; THE WORD; THE FIRST TABLE.

Shorter Catechism, 43–62; Larger Catechism, 101–121; Confession of Faith, ——.

THE exposition of the commandments in order is now to be proceeded with, and in this chapter a brief outline of the contents of the first table of the law will be given. This table contains four commands, and in these man's duties to God are set forth. It is important to note the fact that in the decalogue the duties of man to God are mentioned first, and that his duties to his fellowmen are stated afterwards. The order of the facts is the same as in the Lord's prayer, which has petitions that terminate upon God before those which relate to man are announced. The plan of treatment to be followed in this exposition divides the decalogue into two tables, with four commands in the one and six in the other. Romish theologians combine the first and second and divide the tenth, making thus a rather arbitrary arrangement to serve their own peculiar purposes.

Both Catechisms call attention to what is known as the preface to the commandments. This preface is in these words: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The Shorter Catechism says that this teaches us that because God is the Lord, and our God and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments. This statement the Larger Catechism enlarges considerably. It says that this preface manifests God's sovereignty over us, as the eternal and immutable Jehovah, and as almighty God. It further teaches that God, having his being in and of himself, gives being to all his words and works. It indicates, still further, the important fact that God is a covenant God, in

covenant with Israel, and so with all his people. It hints that as he brought Israel out of his bondage in Egypt, so he delivers us from our spiritual thraldom. Hence, we are bound to take him for our God alone, and to keep all his commandments. Thus the preface becomes a solemn introduction to the very weighty commands which follow. After this preface the substance of the several commands, together with reasons annexed to some of them, will be taken up in their order.

This chapter has the large task of seeking to expound the first table with its four important commands. The Catechisms both agree in saying that the sum of these four commands, which set forth our duty to God, is that we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind. This is virtually our Lord's summary, and is entirely complete. In this exposition the plan of the Catechism will be followed by stating the commands in order, by setting forth the things required and the things forbidden, and by explaining the reasons annexed, where there are such.

I. *The First Commandment.*

This command is very brief and to the point: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This indicates in unmistakable terms what the proper *object* of worship is. It is the one living and true God, the triune Jehovah, who is the creator of all things and the preserver of all the works of his hands, and who is high over all and blessed forevermore. He alone is the sole object of worship.

1. *The Duties Required by this Command.* In general, it requires us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and to worship and glorify him accordingly. The Larger Catechism expands this statement by saying that we are to think, meditate, remember, highly esteem, honor, adore, choose, love, desire, fear, believe, trust, hope, delight, and rejoice in God. Further, we are to be zealous for him,

call upon him, give him thanks and praise, yield all obedience and submission to him in the whole man, be careful to please him in all things, and sorry when we in any way offend him. We are also to walk humbly with him all our days. These are the positive duties here enjoined.

2. *The Sins Forbidden by this Command.* In general, we are forbidden to deny, or not to worship and glorify the true God as God, and the giving the worship and glory to any other which are due to him alone. Expanding this statement under the guidance of the Larger Catechism, atheism, or the denial of God in any way, is forbidden. In like manner, every form of idolatry, or the having and worshipping of more gods than one, or putting a false god in the place of the true God, is condemned. The failure to vouch or confess God as our God, or the omission of anything due to God, is also forbidden here. Even ignorance of God, forgetfulness of his claims, false opinions and unworthy and wicked thoughts about him, are to be set aside. So, also, all profaneness and hatred of God, as well as self-love and self-seeking, are placed under the ban. Further, all inordinate setting of mind and heart on other things, and taking them off from God, in whole or in part, is to be avoided. Unbelief, heresy, despair, hardness of heart, pride, carnal security, tempting God, carnal delights and joys, blind zeal, lukewarmness, deadness of spirit, apostasy from God, all fall under the condemnation of the terms of this commandment.

Specially forbidden here, also, are praying or giving any religious worship to saints, angels, or any creature, all compacts with the devil, or heeding his suggestions, making men lords of mind and conscience. So, also, despising God, grieving God, grieving his Spirit, discontent under God's dispensations, and ascribing the praise of any good we have, or can do, to fortune, idols, ourselves, or any other creature is absolutely forbidden.

It is added, by way of further explanation, that the words

"before me," in this command teach us that God, who sees and knows all things, takes special notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other gods, or with our giving to any other the honor and service which he alone may justly claim.

II. *The Second Commandment.*

This command is much longer in its terms than the first, and has some important reasons attached to it. It is as follows: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

It will be observed that this command indicates the true *mode* of worship, just as the first pointed out the only object of worship. The right manner in which the true God is to be properly worshipped is a matter of much importance, for many who believe in the one true God err in the mode in which they worship him. This command, therefore, is of much practical value.

1. *The Duties Required.* In general, this command requires us to receive, observe, and keep pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God has appointed in his word. The Larger Catechism says, further, that particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ, the reading, preaching, and hearing of the word and the administration of the sacraments, are to be regarded as parts of worship. Under this command, also, the observance of the government and discipline of the church, and the maintenance of the ministry thereof, are said to be required by this command. Religious fasting, swearing by the name of God, and making

lawful vows to God, are also to be approved. All false modes of worship are to be disapproved, detested, and opposed by the requirements of this command. And all monuments of idolatry are to be removed as far as possible. Here the sphere of foreign missions is open before our eyes.

2. *The Sins Forbidden.* In a general way, this command forbids the worshipping of God by images, or in any other way not appointed in his word. The Larger Catechism further explains this to include the forbidding of the devising, using, or approving in any way, any religious worship not instituted by God himself. So, also, the making of any representations of God, or of any of the persons of the Trinity, either in the mind or by any outward image or likeness of any creature whatever, and the worshipping of such image as God, or worshipping God by means of it, is condemned. The making of any false deities, and all worship or service of them, is forbidden also. Further, all corruption of worship of the true God by superstitious devices, all human additions to the worship of God, or the omission of what is enjoined in the Scriptures by God, whether invented by ourselves or received by tradition from others, no matter how ancient or widely observed, are condemned by this command. Finally, in connection with the mode of worship, all simony and sacrilege, all neglect and contempt for the worship and ordinances required by God's word, are equally forbidden by the scope of this commandment.

It will be seen that the exposition given in the Standards, both of this command and of the first, is pointed against the doctrines of Rome. The first is directed against its idolatry, and the second against the use of images, and its unscriptural additions to religious worship. But the Standards do not enter into any controversy upon these questions, so that the present explanation need only point out the fact above indicated in regard to the attitude of the Standards in relation to Rome.

3. *The Reasons Attached to this Command.*

These reasons are found in the latter part of the command, and are summed up under three heads in the Catechisms. *First*, There is God's sovereignty over us. He is our creator, and we are dependent upon him for our being, and all our blessings. He is also our moral governor, and has a right to require of us whatever is in harmony with the conditions of the moral government under which we are placed. That we should worship him in the way he appoints, and in no other, naturally follows from this. *Secondly*, God has propriety in us. He has made us with the moral nature which we possess; and, having giving it to us, it is proper that the return of homage and service which that nature can make should be given to him. This divine ownership of us is a strong reason for the claim which God makes upon us for worship. And, *Thirdly*, God has a zeal for his own proper worship. This being the case, all false worship, or anything which does not honor the requirements of God, as to worship, must be distasteful to him, who will have no other to even share the homage which he alone claims exclusively for himself. And he will surely punish those who hate and dishonor him, and richly reward those who love and worship and serve him aright.

III. *The Third Commandment.*

This command is a brief one, with a pertinent reason attached to it, and it is as follows: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." This command indicates the suitable *spirit* or temper in which the worship should be rendered. The name of God, and all that is implied therein, is to be hallowed in our hearts. This clearly points to the inner spirit which should prompt us to worship.

1. *The Duties Required by this Command.*

In general, this command requires the holy and reverent

use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works. The Larger Catechism adds some things of importance, after those above-named from the Shorter Catechism are mentioned. The ordinances to be noticed are the word, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows and lots. The works named are those by which God makes himself known. All these things are to be holily and reverently used in thought and meditation, in word and writing. Then, along with these, there is to be, on our part, a holy profession, and an answerable conversation, which is to be for the glory of God, and the good of ourselves and others. Thus, the inner spirit and the outer form of worship are to be in harmony.

2. *The Sins Forbidden by this Command.*

In general, this command forbids all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God makes himself known. This comprehensive statement is further explained in the Larger Catechism. It forbids the not using God's name as required, and also the abuse of that name in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane way, or a superstitious or wicked use of the titles, attributes, attributes or works of God. It also forbids all blasphemy, perjury, sinful cursing, oaths, vows and lots, the violation of lawful oaths and vows, and the fulfilling of those which are unlawful. It likewise forbids murmuring at, and misapplying of, God's decrees and providences, perverting in any way the word of God, holding of false doctrines, abusing the name of God to charms, or sinful lusts, or practices, reviling or opposing God's truth, grace and ways. And, finally, it forbids the profession of religion in hypocrisy, the being ashamed of religion, or making one's self ashamed of it, by inconsistent walk and conversation, or by backsliding from the ways of God. This fully exhibits the false spirit in religion which this command condemns in such a forcible way.

3. *The Reason Annexed to this Command.*

This reason is really a single one, to the effect that, even

if those who break this command escape punishment from men, they will not be allowed to escape the righteous punishment of God. Because he is the Lord our God his name is not to be profaned or abused by us, because if we do so with impunity and without penitence, there is in store for us only the fearful looking-for of judgment. The authority of God as moral ruler assures this result.

IV. *The Fourth Commandment.*

This is another of the longer commands, and it is now set down at length as follows: "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it."

This command evidently sets forth the *time* of worship. It enjoins that a suitable season of time shall be set apart for the worship of almighty God. Thus, in these four commands we have the object, the mode, the spirit, and the time for worship all presented by divine authority.

1. *The Duties Required by this Command.* These duties are all summed up under three heads. There is to be a holy resting and religious worship for the whole day. The duties enjoined, in general, are that men shall sanctify and keep holy to God all such set times as he has appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven. This was the seventh day from the beginning until the resurrection of Christ, and it is to be the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath, and in the New Testament is called the Lord's day.

This holy day is to be kept or sanctified by a holy resting all that day, not only from such works as are at other times

sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful. In addition, we are to make it our delight to spend the hours of the day, except so much as may be taken up by works of necessity and mercy, in the public and private exercises of the worship of God. In order that we may do this aright, we are to prepare our hearts and order our business affairs beforehand, that we may be free that day for its holy duties and privileges. The charge of keeping the Sabbath aright lies specially upon the governors of families, and other superiors who are bound to keep it themselves, and to see that those under their charge also keep it. This raises the difficult question as to how far the civil magistrate should enact and enforce the Sabbath law. It is clear that the Standards announce it to be the duty of such authorities to protect the sanctity of the Sabbath-day, but the way and the degree in which this is to be done are not prescribed.

2. *The Sins Forbidden by this Command.* In a general way, the omission of the duties pertaining to the Sabbath, the profaning of the day by idleness, the doing of that which is sinful, and all unnecessary thoughts or words or works about our worldly employments or recreations, and all careless and negligent performance of the duties of the day are condemned. Both work and neglect of worship are forbidden in the case of all men, so that merely resting from work or recreation is not the right keeping of the Sabbath, if worship be neglected.

3. *The Reasons Annexed to this Command* These are four in number, as set forth in the exposition of the latter part of this command in the Catechisms. *First*, God allows us six days of the week for ourselves, and hence we should be ready to give him the seventh which he claims. *Secondly*, He challenges a special propriety in the seventh day, and his demand in this case is most reasonable. *Thirdly*, His own example is a strong reason, for he rested the seventh day, and, *Fourthly*, He blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it,

so that he who observes it will be blessed. The word "remember," the Larger Catechism says, is worthy of some attention in this connection in regard to proper Sabbath observance.

It is to be observed that the Standards do not argue the question of the perpetuity of the Sabbath law. They very properly assume its perpetual obligation upon all men. Nor do they define carefully what are works of necessity and mercy, so that each conscience is, to a certain extent, left to make its own interpretation, always, however, in harmony with the teaching of the word of God. Whilst the Sabbath law, as expounded in the Standards, is very strict, it does not prescribe in a minute way the details of its observance as the later Jews did. Hence, in no proper sense can the teaching of the Standards be called Jewish, or even puritanical, in any bad sense.

As to the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath, it is enough to say that it is a law of nature, and hence ever binding; that it existed, and was observed, prior to the formal giving of the decalogue at Sinai; that it is part of a revealed moral code, and immutable; that it has not been revoked by anything in the New Testament; that our Lord enforced it by word and example; and that the physical, mental, moral, and religious needs of mankind demand both the bodily and mental rest, as well as the season for worship, which the Sabbath law provides. This is one of the commands for which Christians of every name need to take a firm and faithful stand at the present day.

This completes the exposition of the first table of the law. It gives information in regard to the object, the mode, the spirit, and the season for worship. It is evident that, if these four commands are carefully observed, they will be found to be useful means of grace, building the believer up in his most holy faith, through the blessing of God promised to accompany these commands when faithfully obeyed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MEANS OF GRACE; THE WORD; THE SECOND TABLE.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 63–81; LARGER CATECHISM, 122–148; CONFESSION OF FAITH, —.

THIS chapter undertakes to give a brief exposition of the second table of the law of God, viewed as a means of grace for the believer. This table contains six commands, and therein are set forth our duties to our fellowmen in various relations. The exposition here must of necessity be very brief, yet it is hoped that it will serve, to some extent, to exhibit the remarkable system of Christian ethics which the Standards inculcate.

The sum of these six commands is to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to do unto others as we wish others to do unto us. This, in a twofold form of statement, is our Lord's summary of the contents of the second table of the law, and as thus stated it is sometimes called the Golden Rule. He who rightly regards this rule will surely keep all the six commands which make up the second table of the law, and he will thereby discharge his duty towards his fellowmen in a proper way. The several commands are now to be taken up in order, and a very brief exposition of each will be made, following quite closely in the order of the Catechisms in the explanations made.

I. *The Fifth Commandment.*

This command forms what may be called a connecting link between the two tables. It brings us into the family circle, and enjoins the duties which children owe to their parents, and by implication the duties of parents to their children. Thus, after duties to God are laid down, the reciprocal duties of parents and children are set forth, before our duties to our fellowmen are exhibited. This command is as

follows: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

The Larger Catechism explains, and the Shorter implies, that the terms "father and mother" mean not only natural parents, but also all superiors in age and gifts, and especially such as by the ordinance of God are over us in the place of authority, whether in the family, in the church, or in the commonwealth. This gives a very broad scope to this command. It opens up the way for the exposition of the duties which devolve upon the men in the sphere of the family, the state, and the church. And, further, it is to be kept in mind that the duties which men owe to their superiors imply certain correlative duties which they owe to them. Hence, emerge the relations of superiors, inferiors and equals, with their respective duties, as expounded in the Standards.

1. *The Duties Required by this Command.*

In general, it requires men to preserve the honor, and perform the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations as superiors, inferiors and equals. The Larger Catechism explains these manifold duties at great length, while the Shorter Catechism merely gives an outline of their general scope. Inferiors owe certain duties to superiors, such as due reverence for them in their heart, word and conduct, prayer and thanksgiving for them, imitation of their graces, ready obedience to their lawful commands, due submission to their corrections, fidelity in the defence of their persons and authority, bearing with their infirmities, and seeking to be an honor to them and their government. This is true of parents, of civil rulers, and of the proper officers of the church from those under their care and charge.

This command also requires certain duties from superiors to inferiors. The power which superiors have is from God, and it grows out of the relation which they sustain to those

under them. It is their duty to love, bless, and pray for their inferiors; also to instruct and admonish them, and also to commend and reward them when they deserve it. They are also to reprove and chastise them when they do ill, and at the same time to protect and provide for them all things needful for both soul and body. They are also, by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary conduct, to procure glory to God, and honor to themselves. In this way only can they rightly preserve that authority which God has put upon them. This is, indeed, a fine code of ethics for all rulers.

As between equals, it is their duty to regard the dignity and worth of each other, in giving honor to go before one another, and to rejoice as much in each other's gifts and advancements as in their own. This is an exquisite code for courtesy in this relation.

2. *The Sins Forbidden by this Command.*

Speaking generally, this command forbids the neglecting, or doing anything against, the honor and duty which belong to every one in their several places and relations. The Larger Catechism so enlarges this statement that only a mere summary of what it says can be given in this exposition. The sins of inferiors against superiors are all neglect of the duties required, envying their persons or places, having contempt for their counsels and corrections, and such profane and scandalous conduct towards them as proves a shame to them and their authority. The sins of superiors, besides the neglect of their duties, are all inordinate seeking of their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure, commanding unlawful things, or favoring that which is evil, or discouraging that which is good, undue correction, careless exposing of them to temptation, or provoking them to anger. Also, all dishonoring themselves, or lessening of their proper authority, is sinful in superiors. The sins in equals consist chiefly in neglecting the duties already noted, or being guilty of the opposite evil thoughts or deeds.

3. *The Reason Annexed to this Command.*

This reason is simply an express promise of long life and prosperity, so far as it shall serve God's glory and their own good, to such as keep this commandment. This is a very practical promise, which is often seen to be verified among men. It is true of families properly regulated, of nations rightly governed, and of the church directed according to the Scriptures, that they shall be blessed with long life and useful service.

II. *The Sixth Commandment.*

"Thou shalt not kill" is the form of this brief but pointed command. The one important thing which it emphasizes is the sanctity of life, especially of human life.

1. *The Duties Required by this Command.*

In a general way, this command requires all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life and the life of others. This is further explained by the Larger Catechism to include resistance of all thoughts, subduing all passions, and resisting all temptations, which tend to the unjust taking away of the life of any. It also requires just defence of life against violence, and patient bearing of the hand of God. To the same end, a quiet mind, and a cheerful spirit should be cherished, and a sober use of meat, drink, physic, sleep, labor, and recreation ought to be observed. In like manner, the thoughts should be kind, and the conduct mild and peaceable. The spirit, also, should be forbearing and forgiving, and there should be a readiness to help the distressed, and to protect the innocent.

2. *The Sins Forbidden by this Command.*

In general, it forbids the taking away of our own life or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tends thereto. Hence, the taking away of the life of ourselves or others, except in cases of judicial procedure, or lawful war, or necessary self-defence, are all forbidden by this command. So, too, the withdrawing or neglecting the lawful means for the

preservation of life, sinful anger, desire for revenge, all excessive passion, and distracting care are forbidden. The immoderate use of meat or drink, excessive labor or recreation, provoking words, oppression, striking, or whatever else tends to the destruction of any one's life, is forbidden by the terms of this command.

Under this head there has been much discussion in regard to murder, suicide, capital punishment, self-defence, war, duelling, and other perplexing topics. Though the Standards do not formally discuss any of these questions, yet by the terms in which their contents are stated, their teaching upon these much-debated points can be pretty well understood. The care and compass of the Standards is again evident at this juncture. There are many things of value here which bear upon personal habits of life, upon social customs, and upon the administration of law by the courts, in the teaching of the Standards in this connection.

III. *The Seventh Commandment.*

This command is as follows: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." It pertains to the relations of the sexes, and enjoins chastity, or personal purity.

1. *The Duties Required by this Command.*

In a general way, this command requires the preserving of our own and our neighbor's chastity in heart, speech, and behavior. This implies chastity in body and mind, affections, words and conduct, and the preservation of it in others. It requires us to keep a watch over the eyes and senses, temperance and keeping chaste company, wearing modest apparel, marriage under proper conditions, conjugal love and fidelity, diligent labor in our callings, avoiding and resisting all temptations to the violation of this command. Such are some of the main things which this command requires to be observed.

3. *The Sins Forbidden by this Command.*

It forbids all unchaste thoughts, words and actions. Be-

sides the neglect of the duties enjoined, adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts are forbidden. Also, all unclean thoughts, corrupt communications, wanton looks, and immodest apparel are condemned. The prohibition of lawful marriages, tolerating or resorting to stews, making vows to celibacy, poligamy or polyandry, unjust divorce or desertion, indulging in idleness, drunkenness, unchaste company, lascivious songs, pictures, dancings, stage plays, and other temptations to unchastity, are all condemned by the scope of this command, as it is expounded in the Standards.

Here, also, there are several questions of vast practical moment at the present day which come up for discussion at this point, although the Standards do not enlarge upon them. The whole painful subject of what is known as the social evil, and of the best way to repress or destroy it; the great subject of marriage, and especially of divorce; and the question of polygamy, especially as it is advocated by the Mormons, are matters pertinent here upon which much might be said. The teaching of the Standards upon all of these subjects is clear and strong, and it is scriptural withal. This teaching deserves to be carefully heeded at the present day.

IV. *The Eighth Commandment.*

This command is another very brief one, as follows: "Thou shalt not steal." This command raises the great question of the origin and nature of property rights. The fact that there are such rights is assumed by the Standards, and the condemnation of stealing rests upon this basis. Nothing, therefore, need now be said about the philosophy of these rights.

1. *The Duties Required by this Command.*

It requires the lawful procuring and furthering of the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others. This implies that there must be truth, faithfulness and justice in contracts and commerce between man and man, so that every man shall receive his due. It demands the restitution to

rightful owners of goods unlawfully detained, and it requires giving or lending freely, according to our ability and the necessities of others. There should also be moderation of our minds and wills in regard to worldly goods, together with industry and economy in our lawful callings, and concerning our worldly goods or estate; and there should be frugality in all our tastes and habits of life. Further, we should avoid all unnecessary law suits and suretyships, and we should endeavor, by all just and lawful means, to procure, preserve and further the wealth and outward estate of others as well as our own. Here is the stable basis for all sound business transactions.

2. *The Sins Forbidden by this Command.*

It forbids whatever does or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbor's wealth and outward estate. This condemns all such sins as theft, robbery, manstealing, receiving stolen goods, dishonest dealing, false weights and measures, removing landmarks, injustice in contracts or in matters of trust, extortion, usury, bribery, vexatious law suits, engrossing commodities to enhance prices, unlawful callings, inordinate prizing of worldly goods, distracting cares in getting and using worldly possessions, envying at the prosperity of others, idleness, prodigality, wasteful gaming or gambling, and all other ways by which we defraud ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate to which God has given us. Such, in part, is the list of sins which are condemned by the broad exposition of this command, as it is set forth in the Standards.

Much might be said here in regard to this command in its bearing upon the ownership of property, especially of property in lands. The relations between labor and capital, and the right principles upon which business of all kinds should be conducted, might also be considered at length in this connection. Since this discussion follows the Standards closely, it must be content to set forth the general principles which

they inculcate, rather than make a detailed application of these principles to a multiplicity of cases.

V. *The Ninth Commandment.*

This command runs as follows: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." It will be seen at a glance that it relates to the right use of speech, or of truthfulness in word and act, between man and man.

1. *The Duties Enjoined by this Command.*

This command, in general, requires us to maintain and promote truth between man and man, and to preserve our own and our neighbor's good name, especially in witness-bearing. This teaches that we must always take our stand for the truth, and from the heart freely and fully speak the truth, and only the truth, in matters of justice and judgment, and in all other matters as well. We are to have a charitable regard for our neighbors, loving and rejoicing in their good name, and sorrowing for their infirmities, and at the same time being ready to defend their innocency. We are to be more ready to receive a good report than an evil one, and we are to discourage tale-bearers, flatterers and slanderers. We are also to have a love and a care for our own good name, and, if necessary, be ready to defend it. This command also requires that all lawful promises be kept, and those things which are true, honest, lovely and of good report are to be practiced.

2. *The Sins Forbidden by this Command.*

In a general way, it forbids whatever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbor's good name. The Larger Catechism greatly expands this statement. Of the long list of sins which it enumerates, only a few can be mentioned here, as follows: False testimony or evidence, false judgment, pleading an evil cause, overbearing the truth, calling good evil and evil good, rewarding the wicked as the righteous, forgery, concealing the truth in any way, failure to reprove falsehood, speaking the truth to a wrong end, using

ambiguous words, lying, slandering, backbiting, talebearing, reviling, construing in a false way any words or actions, boasting, hiding of sins, raising of false rumors, refusing to hear a just defence, impairing the credit of any, breaking lawful promises, and not hindering what may procure an ill-name to ourselves or others. From this partial list of the sins forbidden by this command it is evident that the Standards lay great stress upon its important teaching.

VI. *The Tenth Commandment.*

This command is somewhat longer than those just expounded, and it is as follows: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." It is to be observed that this last command passes from the outward to the inward, from act to thought, just as it may also be noticed that the commands, from the sixth onward, pass from the more to the less important. Hence, the order is, life, chastity, property, truthfulness, and then from these outward acts to the inner spirit of which the tenth command speaks.

1. *The Duties Enjoined by this Command.*

It enjoins full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable spirit towards our neighbor and all that is his. This implies that we should be so contented with our own condition, and have such a charitable frame of mind towards our neighbor, that all our inward motions, thoughts, and affections concerning him shall tend unto the furthering of all good pertaining to his welfare. Such is the happy, contented, charitable, and unselfish frame of mind and disposition of heart to whose precious possession this command exhorts us.

2. *The Sins Forbidden by this Command.*

It forbids all discontent with our estate, and all envying and grieving at the good of our neighbor. It condemns all inordinate motions and affections towards anything that be-

longs to our neighbor. It is to be noted that this command receives quite brief treatment in the Standards, and it is pretty clear that some of its ground was covered in previous expositions, especially in those of the eighth and ninth commands. In general, the virtue of contentment is enjoined, and the vice of covetousness is condemned, in the terms of this command, and each one is left to make the particular applications for himself.

This completes the exposition of the decalogue as a summary of the moral law, which is to be the ethical code for the conduct of the Christian man; and, by the blessing of the Spirit, it may become a means of grace to him who believes in Christ. By this means the prayer of our Lord for his disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth," will be answered. It goes almost without saying, that a good knowledge of, and a careful regard for, the ethical contents of the Standards at this point will surely build up the believer, alike in the strong and noble virtues, and in the gentle and unselfish graces. It would be well if men in this age, when the moral law of God is so often disregarded, should give very careful attention to the deep and strong exposition of the moral law which the Standards set forth. Under it, in the past, the strongest men and the noblest heroes that the world has ever seen have been developed. It cannot be regarded as a good sign to observe in some places marked decadence from the high moral standard here inculcated. Every relationship of life is explained, and exhortation to duty, and warning against sin, are faithfully given. Nowhere, it may be safely said, is there to be found such a guide-book of high moral teaching as is contained in the exposition of the ten commandments which the Standards unfold. The explanations of this chapter, and of the one preceding it, have done but scanty justice to the contents of the Standards upon this exceedingly practical and important subject.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE MEANS OF GRACE; THE SACRAMENTS, IN GENERAL.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 91–93; LARGER CATECHISM, 161–164; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XXVII.

WITH this chapter the passage is made to the second great branch of the means of grace. This leads to the consideration of the sacraments, and to very important matters in their discussion. This chapter will deal with the general doctrine of the sacraments as it is taught in the Standards, and two subsequent chapters will deal with baptism and the Lord's supper, respectively.

The doctrine of the sacraments was one of the subjects about which at the time of the Reformation there was much difference of opinion. Not only did the Reformers oppose the views and practices of Rome, but they differed widely among themselves in regard to the nature and efficacy of the sacraments. It was these differences as much as anything else which prevented the Reformers from presenting united ranks and an unbroken front against Romanism. Because of this division of opinion, the power and influence of the Reformation was very much weakened, especially upon the continent of Europe.

The debate about the sacraments was long and earnest wherever the Reformation arose, and in the Westminster Assembly much attention was devoted to this important subject. The result is that in the Standards there is the clearest and the best statement of the sacraments, especially of the Lord's supper, to be found in any creed. They hold well-defined consistent ground between the extremes which have been held upon this great subject, and they especially exalt the spiritual significance of these ordinances. It is well, therefore, to understand the doctrine herein set forth, not

only because it is clear and scriptural, but also for the reason that the true catholicity of the Presbyterian Church is to be found in her terms of communion.

It is worth while observing that the Confession and both Catechisms set forth with equal fulness, and almost in the same terms, the doctrine of the sacraments, alike in their general and in their particular aspects. Indeed, there is scarcely any topic in the Standards in regard to which there is so much completeness of statement, and so much harmony of expression in the different parts of the Standards. In this case there is no mistake in respect to the doctrine to which the Standards are committed. Some general points are now to be noted in this chapter. These relate to both of the sacraments.

I. The nature of the sacraments is first explained. The word sacrament comes to us through the Latin; and, strictly speaking, this term is not applied to these ordinances in the Scriptures. The word denotes that which is pledged as sacred, and it is applied specially to the oath or vow of the Roman soldier. The word also denotes a sacred secret, and hence the Greek word translated mystery is translated by the Latin word meaning sacrament. The sacraments, as symbols, exhibit the mysterious grace which they signify. In unfolding the nature of the sacraments, several important particulars are to be carefully noted in an orderly way.

1. A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his church. This is the statement of the Larger Catechism, and it is nearly the same as that of the Shorter. The Confession says that the sacraments are immediately instituted by God to represent Christ and his benefits. Both statements are, of course, true, for both God the Father and God the Son concur in the institution of these ordinances. The sacraments are holy ordinances, and hence they are to be regarded as peculiarly sacred. They are also instituted in the church, and for the benefit specially of those who are its

members. Unless an ordinance claiming to be a sacrament can prove that it was immediately commanded by divine authority, it cannot be regarded as a sacrament. This is one of the tests of a sacrament.

2. A sacrament signifies, seals, represents, exhibits and applies Christ and the benefits of the covenant of grace to believers, or those who are included in the scope of the covenant. This is a very comprehensive statement, setting forth the end or design of those ordinances which are sacramental in their nature. It will be observed that there are four words used in this connection, in the different parts of the Standards. A sacrament first *signifies* the benefits of the mediation of Christ, and thus it expresses, in a concrete symbolic manner, by suitable signs, these benefits in such a way as to aid our knowledge and faith. Then a sacrament *seals* these benefits of the covenant of grace to believers. The idea here is somewhat obscure by reason of the meaning of the word used. A seal is a stamp or mark which gives validity and effect to any legal document. The sacraments, as seals of the covenant of grace, are the divine marks that God will make good the contents of the covenant to those who accept its terms. Thus, the blessings of redemption are actually conveyed, not through any virtue in the sacraments themselves, but by the divine blessing going with them, and making good the benefits they signify to all those who properly receive and rely upon them for spiritual grace. Further, the sacraments *represent* Christ and his benefits. According to this aspect, the sacraments are divinely-appointed pictures which set forth in visible form Christ and his spiritual benefits. They thus symbolize certain great truths or facts pertaining to redemption. Again, the sacraments *exhibit* the benefits of Christ's work on behalf of his people. This word, as here used, means almost the same thing as the preceding one, with, perhaps, a slightly deeper signification. In this deeper sense it has about the same meaning as the term "ad-

minister"; and, hence, it has nearly the same force as is in part set forth by the word "seal." And, finally, the word *apply* is used of the sacraments in the Shorter Catechism. This term points to the question of the efficacy of the sacraments, and it more fully expresses the idea which is set forth by the words "exhibit and seal." Here the assurance is given that in some way or other, by or through the sacraments, certain of the benefits of grace and salvation are made good to believers who are in covenant with the Lord. It is clear, from the varied use of these five terms, that in some way grace is actually conveyed to believers by the blessing of Christ, in some deeper sense than that it is the truth which sanctifies. They are real channels of grace to believers, and yet they are not so in a purely mechanical way, as will be more fully explained when the question of the efficacy of the sacraments is expounded.

3. The sacraments are solemn *pledges* of our allegiance to Christ, and of our separation from the world. These two things imply each other, and may well go together. By the sacraments we make confession of our interest in, and our service of, the Lord; and by this same confession we announce our separation from the world by putting a visible distinction between those who belong to the church and the rest of the world. The sacraments from this point of view are solemn engagements to the service of God in Christ, according to his word, and at the same time a formal renouncing of the world and its ways.

4. The sacraments serve to strengthen our faith in Christ, and to develop all the other Christian graces. In this way they confirm our interest in Christ, and in the spiritual welfare of his kingdom. This point signalizes the fact that the sacraments are real means of grace, each in its own relation, and serving its own definite end. Our engagement to be the Lord's being thereby made, we are obliged to a diligent obedience, and the result of this is that the divine life in believers is strengthened, and they grow in grace.

5. The sacraments are, also, a means of communion among believers. This is specially true of the Lord's supper. In partaking of this ordinance, believers not only have communion with Christ, and participation in his benefits, but they have also fellowship with each other. When they partake of the same bread and wine they show that they belong to the one family of God, and in the ordinance of the supper the communion of the saints is exemplified.

II. The parts or elements of the sacraments is the next topic of a general nature to be considered. These parts or elements are twofold, and they are as follows:

1. There is an outward and sensible *sign* to be used according to Christ's appointment. In baptism the water as it is applied is the sign, and in the Lord's supper the bread and wine used are the outward and visible signs. This fact supplies another mark or test of an ordinance which is sacramental. These signs, moreover, are in both cases simple and entirely suitable.

2. The other part or factor in the sacraments is the spiritual *grace* signified by the signs. In baptism, as will be more fully seen in the next chapter, the grace in question is the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, by which we are united to Christ, and made partakers of his benefits. In the Lord's supper the sufferings and death of Christ, together with all that these provide for us in regard to salvation and advance in the spiritual life, constitute the spiritual grace in this case. The latter is Christ's work *for* us; the former is the Spirit's work *in* us. Both are necessary to our salvation, and both are set forth in the sacraments.

It may be added here that the sacraments of the Old Testament, which were circumcision and the passover, are, in regard to the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, for substance, the same with those of the New. The only difference is in regard to the nature of the signs used.

The covenant is one, the mediator is one, and the spiritual grace is one and the same in both dispensations, for the church of God is one throughout all ages.

III. In regard to the number of the sacraments, a few words may be set down. As in the Old Testament there were only two sacraments, so in the New there are two similar ordinances ordained by Christ. These are baptism and the Supper of our Lord. This statement tells against the Romish view, which maintains that there are seven sacraments. These are, in addition to baptism and the Lord's supper, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction. Romish writers make but little effort to find proof of these additional sacraments from Scripture, but they rely on tradition and the decrees of the church for their support. If, however, we apply the tests of a true sacrament, it will be found that every one of these five fail at some point, and some of them fail at every point. They cannot show that they were appointed by Christ, that they have sensible signs and inward grace, and that they represent and apply the benefits of Christ's redemption.

The Standards at this point further teach that the sacraments are not to be administered by any but a minister of the word, lawfully ordained. Sometimes the sacraments are called sealing ordiances, and in connection with them only an ordained minister is to officiate, while a licentiate or a probationer may preach the word. All branches of the church are virtually agreed that ordination is necessary to qualify for administering the sacraments. This position the Standards distinctly take to be the right one.

IV. The relation between the sign and the grace in the sacrament must now be carefully considered. This is one of the most difficult points to understand in the doctrine of the sacraments, and yet it is of the utmost importance rightly to understand the teaching of the Standards upon it. There are sensible signs and spiritual grace implied in the sacra-

ments, and between these two factors there is a spiritual relation, or sacramental union. According to this relation or union, there is not only a natural congruity between the sign and the grace, but a definite spiritual relation or bond, which has been constituted by the divine appointment. By reason of this bond it comes to pass that the names and effects of the one may be applied to the other. Thus it happens that the term denoting the ordinance may be taken from either one of two things—the sign which is outward, or the grace which is inward—in the sacrament. Hence, the term baptism may mean water baptism, where the outward sign is applied, or the Spirit's baptism, where the inward grace is made effective. Both of these things are called baptism, and the reason of this is that there is a sacramental union between them. In the case of the Lord's supper it is substantially the same. There is the bread and the wine which are partaken, and this is the outward sign in the case; and then there is the actual participation by faith in the benefits of Christ's work for our spiritual good, and this is the grace involved in this sacrament. Both of these things may be termed the Lord's supper, and the reason again for this is that there is a sacramental bond of union between the sign and the grace, which enables us with a degree of propriety to apply the same term to both of the factors in the sacrament.

A failure to keep this distinction properly in mind has led, not only to confusion of thought, but also to very erroneous views of the sacraments. On the one hand, some attach the whole meaning and value of the sacrament to the sign, and the result of this is that a short cut is made to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, or to the literal presence of Christ in the supper. Those who take this view apply all those passages of Scripture which speak of the spiritual efficacy of the sacraments to the outward and sensible signs, overlooking the fact that there is a spiritual relation between the

sign and the grace. On the other hand, some attach the whole meaning to the spiritual side, and so make the sensible sign nothing more than the mark or symbol of certain truths, and reach the merely figurative or symbolical doctrine of the sacraments. It is in this way that the two great historic views of the sacraments emerge. It is evident that each is a one-sided view, which results from overlooking the distinction between the sign and the grace in the sacrament, and the bond between them. The true view lies between these extremes, and is admirably set forth in the Standards. The reality in the sacraments is the spiritual grace, and yet the sensible sign is so bound to this grace that it is more than an arbitrary sign of it. It is the divinely-appointed channel, by means of which the grace signified is actually communicated by the operation of the Spirit. The experience of the grace is not entirely dependent upon the sign, but the sign may greatly aid the grace in its growth and expansion in the soul. The bond which underlies this relation of the sign and the grace has been constituted by the fact of the divine institution of the sacramental ordinances, and by the divine appointment of the signs in question.

V. The *efficacy* of the sacraments now requires some careful statement. The explanation of this topic will shed some further light on the preceding one, and at the same time guard against any possible misconstruction of that topic. The doctrine of the Standards upon this point is stated in both a negative and a positive form. The real question raised is as to the way in which the sacraments become effectual means of salvation, or the manner in which the grace exhibited in the sacraments is actually conferred. The sensible signs exhibit a spiritual grace. The question is: How is that grace applied or conferred through the signs in the sacraments?

1. Negatively, there are three remarks to be made at this juncture. *First,* The grace is not conferred by any virtue or

power in the mere observance of the sacraments, by the use of sensible signs. The efficacy is not in the signs in themselves considered. In the water and its application in itself, or in the bread and wine and their reception in itself, there is no spiritual grace or virtue, for a person may have these applied or received and yet obtain not a whit of spiritual good. *Secondly*, Nor does the efficacy of the sacrament depend on the piety of the person administering it. Of course, there is a propriety in the fact that the person administering the sacraments should be of consistent life and good character, as well as in regular standing in the church; but the measure of the spiritual grace that the person observing the sacrament receives is not graduated according to the piety of the administrator, or in proportion to the degree of growth in grace which he may have attained. And, *Thirdly*, The virtue of the sacraments is not conditioned upon the *intention* of the person who administers the ordinance. This statement is aimed specially against the Romish doctrine of intention, which is so subtle and mischievous. According to this peculiar doctrine, the person administering the sacrament can, by his intention, give degree and direction to the grace which is actually bestowed and received. This virtually puts the whole control of the grace in the hands of the administrator, and leaves no condition to be fulfilled by the participant save submission to the administrator, and the reception of the sensible signs. Throughout, the partaker of the sacrament is at the mercy of the intention of the person who administers the ordinance.

2. On the positive side, there are three very important remarks to be made in regard to the efficacy of the sacraments, and these deserve the most careful consideration from the view-point of the Standards. *First*, The efficacy of the sacraments depends upon the working of the Holy Spirit in the person who receives the ordinance. All spiritual grace comes from the agency of the Holy Spirit, and so any bless-

ing which comes to us or ours has its roots in the effectual working of the Spirit in the heart of him who receives the ordinance. The real sacramental fact is the spiritual grace in the soul; and, then, because of the sacramental union between the sign and the grace, the sign is fitted to be a channel of grace only as the Holy Spirit operates in the soul through the sensible signs, making them effectual unto spiritual ends. *Secondly*, The blessing of Christ, by whom the ordinances are instituted, is said, in the Larger Catechism, to be another factor in the efficacy of the sacraments. Christ appointed the form of the ordinances, and makes them a channel of blessing, but they are such only as Christ himself blesses them, and makes them effectual to their proper spiritual ends. And this blessing is actually obtained as the result of the mediatorial work of Christ, and is applied by the agency of the Holy Spirit. *Thirdly*, The word of institution has importance also in this connection. This is the divine warrant for its observance, and a sure ground for the expectation of blessing. This word of institution is really twofold. There is, first, the precept, authorizing the use of the sensible signs with spiritual ends in view, and there is a promise of benefit to worthy receivers. The worthy receivers are those who receive the ordinance in faith, for themselves or for their children. This is the condition on our part, and this receptive act of faith might almost be set down as a fourth condition of the efficacy of the sacraments.

VI. The Larger Catechism has an instructive comparison between baptism and the Lord's supper, and with a brief statement of this comparison this chapter will conclude: *First*, Baptism and the supper agree in that the author of both is God, the spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits, both are seals of the same covenant, both are to be dispensed by ordained ministers only, and both are to be continued in the church of Christ until his second coming.

Secondly, The two sacraments differ in that baptism is to be administered but once, and with water, to be a sign of our regeneration and engrafting into Christ, and that even in the case of infants; whereas the Lord's supper is to be administered often, by the bread and wine, to represent Christ, and exhibit his benefits to the soul, and to confirm our growth in him, and that only to those who are of years and ability to examine themselves as to whether they are in the faith or not. These contrasts could be wrought out at length, but space permits only their statement in this very brief manner.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE MEANS OF GRACE; THE SACRAMENTS; BAPTISM.

Shorter Catechism, 94, 95; Larger Catechism, 163–167; Confession of Faith, XXVII.

THE two sacraments are now to be severally explained, and in this chapter the ordinance of baptism is to be considered. This leads to a subject about which, since the Reformation, there has been more controversy than even during that great period. The controversy has in recent times been chiefly in regard to the proper mode of baptism, and in reference to the subjects who should be baptized. The two questions, therefore, are: Is immersion of the person under water necessary to valid baptism? and should the children of professed believers be baptized? It is interesting to note the fact that at no point in the Standards is there any controversy upon the subject, or any discussion of a controversial nature upon the questions above stated. In giving a strict creed statement, the Standards very properly avoid all controversy in their positive statements of the doctrines. The results are given in a clear doctrinal form, as that which is to be accepted and believed in each case.

There is one point in the controversy that has arisen about baptism which it may be well to notice at the outset of this chapter. This point relates to the actual fact in regard to the discussion and vote upon the mode of baptism in the Westminster Assembly. The statement is often made, that affusion or sprinkling, as against immersion, was made the doctrine of the Confession by a vote of only one. This is not the fact, as Mitchell's excellent account of the actual debate, based upon the Minutes of the Assembly, clearly shows. The question debated by the Assembly was not affusion, as against immersion, but it was as to whether immersion should be

acknowledged to be a valid mode of baptism at all. At the close of the debate the result of the vote was that by a majority of one it was decided that immersion may be regarded as valid baptism, but that baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling, that is, by affusion. This is a very important fact to remember.

In setting forth in an orderly manner the doctrine of the Standards upon this important subject there are two distinct, though closely-related, questions to be considered. The one is as to the proper mode, the other is as to the rightful subjects, of baptism. A single chapter must include the discussion of both.

I. *The Mode of Baptism.*

In dealing with this question there are also two aspects of it to be considered. The one relates to the real nature of baptism, and the other to the proper mode for its observance. What is baptism, and how should it be administered? Here, too, a very important distinction noted in the last chapter again appears. This is the difference between the application of the sign, and the experience of the grace. Baptism with water is one thing, and baptism with the Spirit is another thing, though there is, as was seen, a close and intimate bond between them. The former is the sign applied, while the latter is the grace experienced. The question as to the nature of baptism relates to the latter, and to the relation between the two aspects of baptism just noted. The question as to the mode of baptism pertains to the former, and to the way in which the sign should be applied. It is evident that the former of these questions is far more important than the latter; and it is rightly so regarded in the Standards. Moreover, the clear understanding of the nature of baptism will go far to decide the question of the proper mode. First, then, some things must be said in regard to the nature of baptism.

1. The nature and design of baptism now claims attention.

Under this twofold heading several factors made prominent in the Standards will be gathered up.

First, Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained or instituted in his church by Jesus Christ, to be continued to the end of time. As a sacrament, it has all the qualities described in the preceding chapter. As pertaining to the New Testament, it takes the place of circumcision in the Old. It pertains to the church, and it can only be observed by, or in relation to, the visible church. It is instituted therein by Jesus Christ, who is the mediator of the covenant of grace, the redeemer of his people, and the head of his church. It is to be administered only by a regularly ordained ministry, and is to be observed on to the end of the world and the consummation of all things.

Secondly, Baptism is the badge of the solemn admission of the baptized person into the visible church, so that those who are baptized are thereby admitted into membership therein. This aspect of the subject may be viewed in a twofold way. The Spirit's baptism first unites the person to Christ, and thereby makes him a member of the invisible church, while water baptism is the outward initiatory rite of admission into the visible church. The latter is what is chiefly under notice in this paragraph.

It is to be observed, also, that according to this view of baptism, it sustains a somewhat different relation to adults than it does to infants. In the first case, water baptism is simply their solemn admission into the visible church, upon their profession of faith in Chirst. But in the second case the ground upon which the infant seed of believers are baptized is the covenant relation of their parents. On this ground the birthright privileges of the infant seed of believers, through the covenant relation of their parents, is recognized by their baptism, and it supplies the faith-ground for the administration of baptism to them. In both cases, therefore, water baptism may be regarded as the formal initia-

tion into the visible church, just as the Spirit's baptism is the condition of admission into the invisible church.

Thirdly, Baptism is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, and particularly of our engrafting into Christ, of our regeneration by his Spirit, and of the remission of sins by his blood. This phase of the nature of baptism really raises the question of its design or meaning, and water baptism in its relation to the Spirit's baptism is the particular point in view. In regard to what is meant by baptism being a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, reference need only be made to what was said in the last chapter upon this point. Water baptism is the outward and sensible sign of certain spiritual benefits provided for in the covenant; and it is also the seal of the covenant, supplying its divine warrant, and constituting it the divine channel by which the grace signified by the sign is actually conveyed by the Spirit under the proper conditions. The particular thing signified and sealed is union with Christ, and all that this union implies. This union is described in a twofold way here, as elsewhere, in the Standards, and it is really the same thing as that denoted by effectual calling, and fully explained in an earlier chapter. The two things alluded to are spiritual union with Christ, and the renewal of the nature. The phrase "engrafting into Christ," used in the Shorter Catechism, very properly denotes the first of these things, but it scarcely does justice to the second. The Confession and the Larger Catechism are much more complete upon this point than the Shorter. They speak of regeneration, of the remission of sins, and of resurrection unto everlasting life, as all signified by baptism. Hence, the Standards, taken in all their parts, teach that water baptism signifies and seals our union with Christ, our regeneration by the Spirit, the remission of our sins, and our being raised to newness of life in Christ. All of these things are the result of the Spirit's work in us. Perhaps the briefest form in which the truth could be stated here would be to say

that water baptism signifies and seals the work of the Holy Spirit in us, thereby applying the benefits of Christ to us. This is the all-important inward spiritual fact which baptism by water signifies and seals. The Spirit is the agent who unites the soul to Christ, and at the same time regenerates the soul, takes away its sin and gives it a new life, and then the application of water signifies and seals these things. This may be regarded as one of the most important features of this whole subject, and one, moreover, where the statement of the Shorter Catechism can scarcely be regarded as complete. But the teaching of the Confession and the Larger Catechism fully supplements this defect, and gives very adequate instruction upon the subject.

Fourthly, There are several other facts mentioned in the Standards in regard to the nature of baptism which may be set down together, under the general heading of baptism being our engagement to be the Lord's. Baptism, as it denotes the inward cleansing of our nature by the washing of regeneration, also signifies the outward remission of our sins by his blood. In connection with this, our giving up of ourselves unto God, through Christ, to walk in newness of life, is properly implied. The Larger Catechism, further, makes baptism signify our adoption and our resurrection unto life everlasting by Jesus Christ. These facts all follow from the deeper fact of our union with Christ, and the renewal of our nature in connection therewith. Those who are united with Christ, regenerated, and justified, are adopted into the household of faith, and they also experience a true spiritual resurrection from a death in sin to a life of holiness or newness of life. These passages do not mean merely death, burial, and resurrection with Christ, but they express facts which are involved in our union with Christ, which is effected by the agency of the Holy Spirit. Hence, when we are united with Christ we are identified with him in all the experiences through which he passed. Thus we die with him, we are

crucified with him, we are buried with him, we are raised up together with him, we live with him, and we are finally raised with him to the heavenly places. All these are great and glorious facts, but they have meaning to us only because of our union with Christ, which union is effected for us by our engrafting into Christ, which is brought about by the great husbandman, the Holy Spirit. The outward formal sign or expression of this union and all that it implies is baptism with water, and on our part we thereby enter into a solemn engagement to be the Lord's only and wholly. In this way an outward badge of distinction is placed upon all those who are baptized. They take the oath of allegiance to Christ.

2. The mode or manner of baptism next engages careful attention. In general, baptism is a washing with water in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In this very brief statement several things are to be observed.

First, The formula or divine authority for the ordinance is here announced. It is to be administered in the name, and by the authority, of the triune Jehovah. This statement also indicates the element to be used in baptism. It is to be water only, without any of the unscriptural additions which Rome introduces, such as the use of salt, and the anointing with oil. Water is an exceedingly appropriate element for the purpose to be served. For, as water is the element used in cleansing, so it is a fit sign for spiritual cleansing, and as water is an important condition of life, so it suitably denotes that newness of life to which we are raised by our union with Christ. At this stage baptism is said to be a washing with water, without reference to the quantity of water to be used, or to the precise manner of its application. It is not at this point said that any particular mode is absolutely necessary to the validity of the washing here described. It is not positively asserted that the water must be applied

in any definite way, though it does say that the water is to be applied to the person, and not the person to the water. Later on in the exposition clearer teaching as to the proper mode will emerge.

Secondly, While the Catechisms content themselves with this simple statement that baptism is a washing with water, the Confession speaks more definitely, and yet in a very cautious way, regarding the mode of baptism. It says that the dipping of the person under water is not necessary, but that baptism is properly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person baptized. This passage does not teach absolutely that dipping or immersion is in no circumstances to be regarded as valid baptism, but the statement is simply to the effect that it is not necessary, and that baptism is properly administered without it. It is very important to note this with care in the controversy about the mode of baptism. The debate is not so much whether sprinkling or immersion is the valid mode of baptism, but whether immersion is needed to constitute valid baptism. From the position of the Standards it can be argued that it is not necessary, and those who attack this position undertake to argue that immersion of the whole person in water is necessary to valid baptism, and this means that immersion only is baptism. Such being the case, those making this attack are bound to show under all the proofs adduced, such as those from the terms used, from the early church practice, from the history of the church, and from the great creeds, that immersion only is the mode, or was alone practised, before they have made out their case. Hence, they do not succeed in their attack even if they do find immersion under any of their heads of proof, for they must show that immersion only existed, or is commanded. On the other hand, the position of the Standards may be maintained, even though immersion as well as affusion was practised, or is the meaning at times of the terms used in regard to baptism. As a matter of fact, more than

this can be done from the position of the Standards, but it is important to understand clearly the logical status of the controversy.

Thirdly, As already noticed, the Standards do not enter upon any controversy, and consequently none of the arguments by which their position is supported are presented. It may, however, be of some value to have the mere heads of the proofs of the doctrine of the Standards in regard to the mode of baptism set down at this point. Only the leading proofs are noted in bare outline.

First, The words baptize and baptism used in the Scriptures are not *modal* words. This means that they are not words which in themselves denote the mode in which anything is done. They simply denote the end, result, or state reached, but they do not indicate the means by which this is attained. Just as the word *bury* does not denote whether the dead body is put under the ground, or in a vault, or beneath the waters of the sea; so the word *baptize*, so far as the mere word is concerned, does not indicate whether baptism is to be by affusion or by immersion. All that it signifies is that the result attained by baptism is secured. The fact that the translators of our English Bible did not really translate the word baptize, but simply Anglicized it, fully confirms this view, and means much in this connection. The words by their own clear meaning do not prove that immersion only is valid baptism.

Secondly, The element is always, according to the Scriptures, applied to the subject, and never the subject to the element. This is the uniform usage of the Scriptures, and the Greek prepositions are of the utmost importance in relation to this proof. Baptism is always said to be by, or with, water, and this very usage confirms the position of the Standards. The immersionist reasonings turn things upside down at this point, and play havoc with the Greek language.

Thirdly, The practice of the early church and the testimony of church history support the view of the Standards. In the New Testament age, the household baptism, and the large number of baptisms, can be better explained from the position of the Standards than from any other, and there are serious practical difficulties in the immersionist theory in every case. In regard to the baptism of the eunuch, it is enough to say that it was not the going into the water, nor the coming up out of it, that constituted baptism, but what was done when they were both in the water, otherwise both were baptized, for the language thus applied is precisely the same concerning both.

Fourthly, The fact that the Holy Spirit is always in Scripture represented as poured out upon those who receive his benefits has great force in determining the proper mode of baptism. The uniform usage of both the Old and the New Testaments is to the effect that the Spirit comes upon those who are the subjects of his operations. Never once is there language to be found which can be construed to mean that the subject of the Spirit's influences is immersed in the Spirit. The very idea is absurd, if not almost profane. This must ever stand as a fatal objection to the immersionist doctrine and practice, and it can only be made to appear even plausible by denying that baptism signifies the Spirit's work in us. Such are some of the great lines of reasoning by which the doctrine of the Standards can be most abundantly established.

II. *The Subjects of Baptism.*

The question as to those who ought to be baptized yet remains. The teaching of the Standards is very plain upon this subject. It is stated in both a negative and a positive way. Negatively, it is not to be administered to any who are out of the visible church till they profess their faith in Christ and their obedience to him. This relates to unbaptized adults, and to the infants of those who do not profess

faith in Christ. Positively, all those who do profess faith in, and obedience to, Christ are to be baptized. This includes not only adults making this profession, but also the infants of such as are members of the visible church, and so have professed faith in Christ. This is true when either one or both of the parents are in professed covenant with the Lord in the visible church. But some details may now be given.

1. In regard to adult baptism, the Standards teach the propriety of this in cases where it was not administered in infancy. Hence, adult baptism is taught as clearly in the Standards as anywhere else. Of course, in an ideal state of the church visible, such baptisms could not be numerous, for the majority of the people would be baptized in their infant years. Such adult baptisms would be in the case of those who come into the church from the world without, whose baptism is based upon their own profession of faith in Christ.

2. But the infants of families where one or both of the parents are professed members of the visible church are to be baptized. The ground for this is the promise of the covenant, which includes the seed of those who are in covenant with the Lord. This is the plain statement of the Standards. This teaching of the Standards also forbids the baptism of the children of those who do not profess to be in covenant with the Lord, and it enjoins the baptism of those whose parents are in confessed covenant with God in Christ. The duty and privilege of parents in this connection are very important.

3. The Confession has some very careful words in regard to the efficacy of this sacrament. Its teaching runs in two directions. The first statement is that grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed to baptism as that no person can be regenerated without it, or all who are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated and saved. The reference is to water baptism, and the teaching of the Standards simply is that such baptism is not absolutely essential to salvation.

What is necessary to salvation is the true baptism of the Spirit, which unites us to Christ and renews our nature. But important as baptism with water is, and close as is the sacramental union between the sign and the grace, yet it is not so important that those who are not baptized may not be saved in some instances.

The other statement bears specially upon infant baptism, and it is to the effect that the efficacy of baptism is not tied to the moment of time at which it is administered. It may be delayed for a long time in some cases; still, by the right use of this ordinance the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conveyed by the Holy Ghost, to those, whether of adult years or in infancy, to whom this grace belongs, according to his appointed time. This implies that the benefit is not in the ordinance itself, but in the agency of the Holy Ghost, and it depends upon the sovereign will and grace of God, who sends the Spirit how and when he pleases. Hence, in some cases baptism and union with Christ may come almost together, and in other cases, perhaps the majority, it may be after baptism, a longer or a shorter time, that union with Christ and the new birth are experienced in the case of those baptized in infancy. Still, in the end, on the basis of the covenant, both parents and children have good reason to expect the grace which the sign signifies.

4. The proofs for infant baptism, though not given in the Standards, may very properly be set down at this point in the briefest possible outline.

First, Infants were in the Old Testament connected with the visible church, and they received circumcision as the sign and seal of their covenant relationship, through their parents. As a matter of fact, this is admitted on all hands.

Secondly, There is no command in the New Testament to exclude them from the church under the Christian dispensation. If any such direction had been given by divine au-

thority, it would surely have been found in the Scriptures. And if any attempt had been made to enforce such a prohibition upon the Jewish converts, they would have been sure to have raised opposition. Of these things there is no hint in the Scriptures, nor does the history of the early church contain any allusions which imply the exclusion of infants of professed Christians from the visible church. Hence, there is good ground to conclude that they are still within its pale, and have a right to its privileges.

Thirdly, Infants are capable of salvation, and hence they are entitled to baptism. They are capable of salvation, otherwise there is no basis for the belief in infant salvation. This simply means that the infant seed of believers may be united to Christ, and regenerated by the Spirit. If this be so, then, surely, they are entitled to receive the sign of this saving relation and experience. Hence, to deny infant baptism is to compel the denial of infant salvation.

Fourthly, The New Testament instances of household baptisms in all probability included infants and children. The language implies this, and the circumstances are largely in favor of this view. The New Testament church, as to its outward form, seems to have largely grown out of the synagogue; and the Jews, who were familiar with its laws and customs, would naturally bring their children to the threshold of the Christian church, as they had done to the Jewish synagogue.

Fifthly, The testimony of church history is decidedly in favor of infant baptism. In the early ages of the church, as in missionary regions at the present day, it is to be expected, in the nature of the case, that there would be many adult baptisms, as large numbers of new converts were brought into the church. But the prevalence of adult baptism in such cases does not prove that infant baptism was not also practiced. Then, all through the history of the church, the baptism of infants was in vogue. Moreover, it does not

seem to have been regarded as an innovation, but was observed as the proper scriptural usage in the case. The denial of such baptism is the innovation and the heresy.

5. The improvement of baptism is the closing topic for this chapter. Upon this matter the Larger Catechism alone speaks directly. The needful and much-neglected duty of improving our baptism is to be attended to by us all our life long. Baptism is to be administered but once, but it is to be improved constantly, even unto the end. Especially in time of temptation, and when present at the administration of it to others, we are to make serious and thankful consideration of what baptism really is, of the design for which Christ instituted it, of the privileges and benefits sealed and conferred thereby, and of our solemn vow made by our baptism. The result of this will surely be to greatly cheer us on in the Christian pathway, and to comfort our hearts continually in the service of Christ.

Then, too, baptism is suited to humble us, as we consider our sinful defilement not yet wholly removed, our falling short of, or walking contrary to, the grace signified in baptism, and our solemn engagements made thereby. This will result, under the blessing of God, in our spiritual good, by causing us to grow up to the assurance of the pardon of our sins, and of the possession of all the other blessings sealed to us in our baptism, for we thereby draw strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized by the operation of the Spirit uniting us to him. Further, sin will be mortified and grace will be quickened if we thus improve our baptism. We shall endeavor to live by faith, and to have our conversation as becomes the gospel. We will also seek to walk in brotherly love with all those who are Christ's followers, since we are all baptized into one body by the same Spirit. Such are some of the important fruits of the improvement of our baptism.

This whole subject of baptism, especially the matter of

infant baptism, deserves very careful study by all Presbyterians. There is a tendency on the part of many who bear the Presbyterian name to regard it as a matter of but little importance whether their children are baptized or not. This is a very dangerous tendency, and it should be most carefully avoided by both ministers and people alike, if they would be loyal to the scriptural doctrine upon this subject, as it is set forth in the Standards, and at the same time be true to the best interests of their children whom they love so well.

At this point emphasis should be laid upon the importance of the family and family worship as well as upon the value of religious training in the home. The breaking down of family life is one of the dangers to which we are exposed at the present day, and earnest attention should be directed to these dangers. To guard against them is a service every Christian should seek to render alike to the church and the nation. Neither the church nor the Sabbath-school can take the place of the religious training of children at the home circle. Each has its place, and they should all unite in seeking the same good end.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE MEANS OF GRACE; THE SACRAMENTS; THE LORD'S SUPPER.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 96, 97; LARGER CATECHISM, 168–175; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XXIX.

THIS chapter carries the discussion forward to the great subject of the Lord's supper. And although it is a large topic, its explanation must be compassed in a single chapter. The doctrine of the supper, or, as it is often called, the eucharist, is very carefully stated in the Standards, and has its face set firmly against the doctrines and practices of Rome.

The three chief titles applied to this ordinance are significant, and deserve a passing remark. It is called "the Lord's supper" by a term which denotes the chief meal of the day, and thereby it is presented as the means of rich spiritual nourishment. It is sometimes named simply "the sacrament," implying thereby that it is a means of grace, and a solemn pledge on our part to be the Lord's. And it is known as "the communion," a term which indicates at once our participating in the benefits of grace, Christ's work, and our fellowship one with another as his children. In the New Testament it is sometimes spoken of as the breaking of bread, and in church history it is frequently known as the eucharist.

In the exposition of the doctrine of the Standards now to be made, a summary of their teaching without argument or expansion will be given under four or five heads. At almost every point it will be noticed that the doctrine and practice of Rome is formally rejected by the views of the Standards.

I. *The Nature of the Lord's Supper.*

There are several important particulars here which call for

careful remark, in order to present clearly the well-defined doctrine of the Standards, which was forged in the fierce fires of prolonged controversy.

1. The Lord's supper is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth. The Confession describes this point in a slightly different way from that just quoted from the Catechisms. It says that our Lord, in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, and called it the Lord's supper, to be observed in his church unto the end of the world, for a perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death. It was thus instituted by Christ to take the place in the New Testament of the passover in the Old. It is a sacramental ordinance to be observed in the church till the end. It stands related in some important way to Christ's penal sufferings and sacrificial death, as the mediator of the covenant of grace. It thus exhibits the sacrifice of Christ.

2. The elements to be used, according to divine appointment, are bread and wine. These are the outward elements in this sacrament, to be duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ. They are evidently most suitable for this purpose, and have such relation to Christ crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent, to-wit, the body and blood of Christ. In both substance and nature the bread and wine remain only bread and wine, as they were before the prayer of consecration was offered. Thus, the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation is formally rejected in this connection. This doctrine maintains that by the prayer of consecration which the priest offers a change is effected in the bread and wine, by means of which it is transmuted into the substance of Christ's body and blood. The Standards allege that this doctrine is repugnant to Scripture, reason, and common

sense; that it overthrows the true nature of the sacrament; and that it becomes the cause of many superstitions and even gross idolatries. But this point comes up again, so that nothing more need be added at this stage.

It is worth while noting here that the Standards do not define in any way what kind of bread and wine is to be used in the supper. Here the flexibility and common sense of their teaching are illustrated. The common bread of the time, and the wine of ordinary use may be properly used. It is not necessary to have unleavened bread or unfermented wine. The controversy about these details is not countenanced by the Standards. This controversy is not only useless, but may be harmful, since it tends to unduly exalt the externals of the ordinance, and thus leads to ritualism. The suitableness of these elements is evident at a glance. Bread as the staff of life nourishes, and wine is a means of refreshment. In both cases the benefits which come to us through our interest in Christ's sufferings and death are fittingly symbolized by the emblems of this ordinance.

3. The words of institution are also worthy of some notice. The officiating minister is to bless or consecrate the bread and wine, thereby setting it apart from a common to a sacred use. Then he is to take these elements and break the bread, and take the wine and give it to those who are present at the table. In doing so he is to say: "Take, eat; this is my body broken for you, this do in remembrance of me;" and of the wine he is to say: "This cup is the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you." Here, also, the Standards enjoin, against the Romish practice, that the minister is to communicate along with the people, and also to give both the bread and the wine to the communicants. Rome gives to the people the bread only, and that in the form of a thin wafer, which is put upon the tongue of the communicant by the officiating priest, who himself only takes the wine of the

sacrament. Against Rome the true doctrine is set forth in the Standards.

4. The Confession distinctly asserts that the sacrament of the Lord's supper is not a repetition of the sacrifice which Christ made to the justice of the Father. In no sense is it a sacrifice made for the remission of the sins of the quick or the dead. From the present point of view, this sacrament is only a commemoration of that one offering of Christ as a sacrifice of himself by himself upon the cross. This offering is the only true sacrifice, offered once for all, and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise to God. Hence, the only true sacrifice and oblation which takes away sin is that which Christ made upon the cross, and which needs no repetition nor addition. From this it plainly follows that what is called the Romish sacrifice of the mass is most abominable and injurious to Christ's one only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for the sins of all the elect. In this bold language the ordinance of the mass, so dishonoring to Christ, is rejected utterly. In like manner, the Confession says that private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest or any other alone, and also the denial of the wine to the people, are contrary to the nature of the ordinance. And, further, the worshipping of the elements, the lifting of them up in what is called the elevation of the host, and the retaining of any portions of the bread and wine for any pretended religious use, are all inconsistent with the true nature of the sacrament as instituted by Christ. Here, once more, Romish doctrine and superstitious practice are decidedly rejected. Careful attention to these four points will give a clear view of the nature of the Lord's supper.

II. *The End or Design of the Lord's Supper.*

In some respects this is the most difficult point to explain in connection with the doctrine of the supper. In a general way, the Lord's supper is said, in the Standards, to be an ordinance showing forth the death of Christ, a remembrance

of the sacrifice of Christ till he comes. But this is a general statement, and by no means the whole doctrine of the Standards upon this point. It is to be kept in mind, too, that the relation between the sign and the grace signified, and the nature of the sacrificial bond between them, again appears. Several particulars are noted in order.

1. The Lord's supper shows forth and commemorates the sufferings and death of Christ in the church and to the world until he comes again. It is thus a memorial service, looking back to his sufferings and death as a sacrifice upon the cross for our sins. It is also a prophetic ordinance, looking forward to, and reminding us of, his coming a second time without sin unto salvation.

2. The Lord's supper is designed to signify and seal the benefits of Christ and the covenant of grace to believers. Previous explanation of the sacraments in general have shown what is meant by this. All the blessings which flow from the death of Christ for us are set forth in the supper; and by the blessing of Christ through the Spirit to the worthy recipient he obtains, by means of this sacrament, and has sealed to him thereby, the blessings exhibited to him in the ordinance to his spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

At this point it may be well to explain the teaching of the Standards in regard to the way in which Christ is present in the elements of the supper. The body and blood of Christ are not corporally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the supper. This is really the Lutheran view, which is rejected by the Standards here, just as the Romish doctrine was stated and rejected in the preceding section. Yet the body and blood of Christ, that is, his sufferings and death, are spiritually present to the faith of the worthy receiver, no less truly and really than the outward elements are present to the senses. This seems an admirable statement. It rejects the real presence which Rome asserts, it sets aside the mystical view which Lutheranism favors, it is not con-

tent with a mere symbolic view, such as Zwingle maintained, but it ascribes a spiritual presence of Christ crucified in the ordinance, and that presence has reality, not because of the ordinance itself considered, but only where faith is present. It is to this faith only that the spiritual presence of Christ in the supper has reality, and that only as Christ grants blessing by his Spirit. It is a spiritual presence, therefore, and not a real, or a mystical, or a symbolical presence which is the true doctrine of the Standards upon this important topic of great controversy.

3. The sacrament of the supper is designed to express the believer's thankfulness, and to be a constant and repeated pledge of his engagement to be the Lord's. By this sacrament believers testify and renew their gratitude to God for all his wonderful mercy and grace towards them, in the gift of the salvation which is in Christ. In this respect there will be spiritual nourishment. Then, too, every time believers partake of this ordinance they renew their vows of loyalty to Christ, and repeat their promise to discharge faithfully all the duties which they owe to him. It is their oath of allegience to the Captain of their salvation.

4. The sacrament of the Lord's supper is a means of communion with Christ, and of fellowship between believers. These two points may be grouped together. In regard to the first, believers are made partakers of the flesh and blood of Christ, with all his benefits, in the Lord's supper. It thus is a pledge of their communion with Christ, and by means thereof they have their union and communion with him confirmed. The great underlying fact here is the union of believers with Christ. Upon this their communion with him rests securely. From this fact the second follows. Because believers are in union with Christ, and one in him, they have fellowship with each other. They are members of Christ's mystical body, so that their mutual love and fellowship are thereby assured. Thus, the Lord's supper is at

once a pledge of the spiritual kinship of believers, and a means of fostering brotherly love and spiritual communion among them. This leads to the question of the efficacy of the Lord's supper, and the discussion may now pass to that topic.

III. *The Efficacy of the Lord's Supper.*

Like the question of the design of the supper, that of its efficacy is equally important, and just about as difficult rightly to understand. To a certain extent, these questions imply each other. They also raise again the much-debated question of the mode in which Christ is present in the sacrament so as to render it a means of spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. As this latter point has been already discussed, little more need be said upon it. It will suffice to say, that the mode in which Christ is taken to be present in the elements will largely determine the view held as to the efficacy of the supper. If the Romish view of the real presence be held, then the efficacy of the sacrament will be entirely mechanical. If the Lutheran idea of the mystical presence be taken, then the efficacy of the supper will be magical in its nature. If the purely symbolic view of Zwingle be adopted, then its efficacy will be precisely the same as that of any other saving truth. But, when the true spiritual conception of the presence of Christ in the supper is held, we are in a position rightly to understand the efficacy of this sacrament. Christ and his spiritual benefits are spiritually present to the faith of him who rightly receives the ordinance. From this position the efficacy of the sacrament of the supper can be intelligently understood.

1. Negatively, the efficacy is not exercised or experienced in a carnal or corporal way. This follows, of course, from the fact that the presence of Christ in the elements is not carnal or corporal. Hence, the worthy partaker of the supper does not feed upon the body and blood of Christ after a corporal or carnal manner; that is, not literally. This negative position needs nothing more than this brief statement.

2. Positively, the efficacy of the Lord's supper is spiritual in its nature. The Confession and the Catechisms agree upon this point, and two facts are emphasized therein. *First*, That the benefit of this sacrament comes in a purely spiritual way, and is itself spiritual in its nature. *Secondly*, That the faith of the recipient has a very important place in the efficiency which the sacrament exerts for spiritual ends in the soul. The Shorter Catechism emphasizes the second point when it says that by faith we are made partakers of the body and blood of Christ, with all his benefits, to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. The Larger Catechism combines the two points above named when it says that the partakers of the Lord's supper do inwardly, by faith really, yet not carnally, but rather spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, with all his benefits. The benefit is gracious and spiritual, and it comes in a spiritual way, since the Holy Spirit in the ordinance alone gives it its efficacy. And just as the outward elements, bread and wine, are present to the senses, so Christ and his benefits are present to the inward faith of the receiver of the supper. Hence, there are really three things which unite to give efficacy to the ordinance. These are the blessing of Christ, the agency of the Spirit, and the faith of the believer. It is only when these three things are present that the true spiritual efficacy of the supper is exercised, and when this simple ordinance is thus observed it becomes a precious and an efficacious means of grace to the believer. Christ, with all he is, and gives, is participated in, in a spiritual way, with blessed spiritual results to the believer.

IV. *The Conditions of Blessing on Our Part in the Supper.*

To a certain extent, this subject has been considered in what has been said about the place of faith in the efficacy of the supper. But the Standards have some additional things of value to say upon this point, and these are now gathered

up under a brief paragraph. This raises the question of what is necessary on our part in order to the worthy receiving of the Lord's supper. A warning is also uttered against coming to the Lord's supper unworthily, and bringing condemnation upon ourselves. There must, therefore, be suitable preparation and self-examination in reference to this matter. Perhaps the very best outline of preparation is that indicated in the Shorter Catechism. This is now followed, adding what the Confession and the Larger Catechism also teach.

1. There must be knowledge to discern the Lord's body. This implies that they who come to the supper must be in Christ themselves by grace and faith, and that they have a conviction of their sin and need. But, specially, they must have a spiritual understanding of the ordinance which enables them to perceive the body and blood of Christ in their true meaning, as signifying and sealing Christ and his benefits to them. Ignorant men, therefore, are not to be admitted to the ordinance. If such do come they can receive no spiritual good, and may bring judgment upon themselves by doing so.

2. There must be faith to feed upon Christ. It is this faith which on our part conditions the blessing. This point needs no expansion after what has been said in other parts of this chapter.

3. Repentance, sincere and true, is another necessary condition of blessing. This is closely connected with faith, and is very important. As we look to Christ's body, broken for our sins, we should have the broken heart for these sins; and as we behold his blood poured forth we should be bowed down with penitence for our sins, which caused his blood to be shed. Wicked men, therefore, who are impenitent have no place, and can get no blessing at the supper of the Lord.

4. There must be love to Christ and for one another in our hearts. Specially should we have ardent love to him who so

loved us as to die for us. This, also, implies a positive hatred of all that is sinful and wrong in his sight.

5. There must be a gracious and holy resolve for a new and a better obedience in life. The supper being a pledge of our loyalty to Christ, calls for a sincere purpose to render that obedience which he requires.

6. The Larger Catechism adds an important condition, to the effect that we should cherish a charitable and forgiving spirit towards all men, and especially towards those who may have done us any wrong. It is evident that this has valuable practical applications.

He who regards these conditions and fulfils them with earnest desires after Christ, and reviving these graces in his heart, and with serious meditation comes to the Lord's supper, will render acceptable service, and receive abundant blessing in turn.

The Larger Catechism raises two additional questions here. *First*, May any one who doubts his interest in Christ come to the Lord's supper? *Secondly*, Should any one who desires to come be kept back? The answer to the first is given in harmony with the teaching of the Standards in regard to the matter of assurance. It has already been seen that, while the assurance of faith and salvation is the privilege of the believer, yet such assurance is not of the essence of faith. Hence, any one who doubts his interest in Christ, and his preparation for the supper of the Lord, if he truly feels his need of Christ, and desires to be found in him, and to depart from all iniquity, and who is also anxious to have his doubts removed, such an one ought to be found at the Lord's supper, so that thereby he may have his faith strengthened, and his doubts removed. The answer to the second question is to the effect that the ignorant and the scandalous, even if they do make profession of faith, and desire to come to the supper, ought to be kept from that ordinance by the proper discipline which Christ has given to his church, till they receive in-

struction and manifest reformation. The well-balanced wisdom of the Standards is evident here.

V. *The Proper Duties At and After the Lord's Supper.*

Here the Larger Catechism alone must be our guide. What it says is exceedingly practical and searching.

1. The duties to be observed at the time of the supper are noted first. We are to have a spirit of holy reverence and attention, as we wait upon God in the ordinance. We are to diligently observe the sacramental elements, the bread and the wine, and the actions of breaking, pouring, giving, and receiving these elements. We are also to seek to discern the Lord's body, and with affection to meditate upon his sufferings and death. We should further seek to stir into lively exercise all the Christian graces, having deep sorrow for sin, and earnest hungering after Christ. We are also to feed upon him by faith, trust in his merits, receive his fulness, rejoice in his love, give thanks for his grace, renew our covenant with God, and stir up our love to our brethren. Such are the duties to be observed at the time of the observance of the supper.

2. The duties to be observed after we have received the supper are next mentioned. Here there is a most admirable outline of exhortation, and careful attention to it on our part will give the ordinance blessed significance in relation to the practical conduct of life. We are to consider, first of all, how we behaved at the supper, and how much blessing we obtained at the time. Then, if we have found quickening and comfort, we are to bless God for it, and pray for its continuance. Then, we are to watch against any relapse, and be faithful in keeping our vows, and at the same time be diligent in looking forward to the return of the ordinance. On the other hand, if no present benefit is experienced, we should carefully review our preparation for, and behavior at, the supper. Then, if on doing this, we can find no fault, but realize that our consciences are approved before God, we are

to patiently wait for the fruit to appear in due time. But if there has been failure in preparation for, or in the observance of, the ordinance, then we are to be humbled before God, and attend upon the Lord's supper with more diligence afterwards.

This completes the discussion of the Lord's supper, and concludes the exposition of the sacraments as the second branch of the means of grace. It is evident, from what has been said at several points, that the sacraments are a very important section of Christian doctrine, and that they, rightly improved, must constitute a very important means of grace to build up the spiritual life of the believer. In some respects, the supper brings Christ nearer to us, and draws us into closer fellowship with him and with one another than any other ordinance or means of grace. Believers should always cherish a high and a reverent esteem for the Lord's supper.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MEANS OF GRACE; PRAYER.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 98-107; LARGER CATECHISM, 178-196; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XXI., 3, 4.

PRAYER is the third and last branch of the means of grace specially mentioned in the Standards, and it is a very important practical matter. In the Confession there is no formal discussion or statement of the doctrine of prayer. Only two brief sections in the chapter on religious worship are devoted to it, and there the nature and duty of prayer are simply assumed without formal exposition. In the Catechisms, however, large space is devoted to the explanation of prayer as a means of grace. In the Shorter Catechism ten questions, and in the Larger no fewer than eighteen, are devoted to this subject. In these questions the general doctrine of prayer is stated in a formal way, and then the Lord's prayer is expounded at length as the rule of prayer. The result is, that in the Standards there is the most complete statement of the doctrine of prayer to be found in any of the great creeds. In the exposition of this chapter the Catechisms will be followed quite closely, and their statements will be condensed wherever the limits of a single chapter upon a great subject make it necessary.

It is proper to add that no discussion of the reality of prayer, or of the objections which are made against the efficacy of prayer, will be entered on. As just mentioned, the Standards simply assume that prayer is a precious reality, and that it has a real and powerful efficacy. This is precisely the same position that the Scriptures take in regard to this matter, so that the Standards follow a very good example in this, as they do in regard to the existence of God, the

religious nature of man, and the reality of divine revelation. This plan will be followed in the explanations of this chapter.

I. *The Nature of Prayer will be Defined at the Outset.*

Both Catechisms define prayer, the definition of the Shorter being briefer than that of the Larger. Combining the two, a very excellent definition of prayer is secured, and it is as follows: Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, by the help of the Spirit, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of all his mercies. At a glance, it will be seen that this is an exceedingly complete description of the matter of prayer, and it needs but little explanation, for every part of it is simple and clear. It rightly signalizes the place which the desires of the heart have in true prayer, and thus indicates that prayer need not be audible. It may be the silent converse and communion of the soul with God. The presentation of our desires to God, silently or vocally, is prayer. We are also to pray always with submission to the will of God, and be ever ready to say, Thy will, O God, be done! And all acceptable prayer is to be offered up through the mediation of Christ, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit. Then, in addition to the offering up of our desires to God, the confession of sin and the giving of thanks are to have a place in prayer as very important factors. In what will be said under subsequent topics some of these points will be enlarged on, so that nothing more need now be added in regard to them.

II. *The Personal Object to Whom Prayer is to be Offered is Next Considered.*

The Larger Catechism says that we are to pray to God alone, and to none other. Hence, prayer to many gods is forbidden, as also prayer to saints and angels in any way. This Catechism also suggests the reasons which properly lead us to pray to God alone. He only is able to search our

hearts and know what we really desire, and he knows best whether we really need the things which we desire. Then, God only can hear and answer prayer, for he is the Creator, and all other objects of prayer must be creatures and of finite ability. And, again, since God alone can pardon our sins and fulfil our desires, he alone should be prayed to for all these things. Then, too, since God only is to be believed in and worshipped as God, and since prayer is a part of worship, to God alone should prayer be made.

III. *The Medium of Prayer is an Important Factor in it. How are We to Come to God in Prayer?*

This for sinful man is an all-important inquiry, for while a sinless creature might come directly into the presence of the Creator, yet a sinful creature cannot so come. Hence, the Larger Catechism, with the utmost propriety, and in accordance with the Scriptures, says that the sinfulness of man and his distance from God is so great by reason thereof that he can have no access into the divine presence without a mediator. And, since there is none in heaven or earth fit for or appointed to that glorious work but Christ alone, we are to pray in his name only, and in no other. In the name of, and for the sake of, Christ must all our prayers be offered at the throne of grace, which is the footstool of God. To thus pray in the name of Christ is in accordance with his command, and in confidence in his promises to ask for mercy for his sake. This is to be rightly done, not merely by the formal mention of his name, but by finding our encouragement to pray, and also by obtaining our boldness, strength, and hope of acceptance in prayer, from Christ and his mediation. He is to be our way to the Father in prayer, and the Father's way to us with the answer. The mediation of Christ, and especially the intercessory work at the Father's right hand, gives us access to God and confidence in prayer when we come, assured that we have such an advocate with the Father.

IV. *The Agent Who Aids us in Prayer is the Next Topic in Connection with Prayer.*

Because of our sinfulness we are not only far away from God and in need of a mediator, but our hearts are not naturally disposed, or, as a matter of fact, qualified, for the exercise of prayer. In this case we need a helper within us, as well as an advocate for us. The Holy Spirit is revealed and offered as that helper. Since we know not how to pray as we ought, the Holy Spirit helps our infirmities. In doing so, he enables us to understand for what and for whom we ought to pray. He also instructs us as to how prayer should be offered, so that having a proper frame of mind we may be enabled to pray with the understanding. This the Spirit does by working in, and quickening in our hearts those apprehensions, affections, and graces which are required for the right performance of the duty of prayer. It is added, that this quickening of the Spirit is not in all persons, nor at all times in the same measure, for God sends the Spirit through the Son as he pleases. The Spirit is thus the advocate within us who helps our infirmities and teaches us how to pray and what to pray for as we ought. Hence, with an advocate in heaven and one on earth, we may have confidence in prayer, and ability to draw near to God in the full assurance of faith.

V. *The Next Question Relates to what it is our Duty and Privilege to Pray for.*

This is a wide subject, and includes both the persons and the things for which we ought to offer our prayers. The Standards assume that we are to pray for both temporal and spiritual things, so that the view of those who forbid prayer for anything but spiritual blessings is to be set aside. As to the persons for whom we are to pray, the Larger Catechism tells us, first of all, that we are to pray for the whole church of Christ upon earth. This expresses the broad catholic spirit which breathes all through the Standards. Then we

are to pray for magistrates, which includes all who hold civil authority, and who exercise rule or execute law in the state. We are also to pray for ministers of the gospel everywhere, that their lives may be holy, and their labors blessed. We are next to pray for ourselves and our brethren in the flesh; and we are to make supplication before God on behalf of our brethren in the Lord, that God would in his mercy bless and save them. And we are not to forget to pray for our enemies, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter in the world. Hence, our petitions are not to be restrained, but are to extend far and wide. For the church universal and for its officers and members, for nations and earthly rulers, for ourselves and our brethren, for our enemies and for men yet unborn, and then for all sorts of men, even the outcast and neglected of the human race, we are to pray, and give them a place in our supplications and intercessions. Then, with curious caution, the Standards tell us that we are not to pray for the dead, as Rome would have us do; nor are our prayers to be offered for those who are known to have sinned the sin unto death. This is the same remark as was explained some time ago from the Confession in another chapter, where religious worship is described. In making this statement, the Scriptures are followed closely. But we should not hastily conclude that any particular person has committed that awful sin for which there is no place of pardon here or hereafter.

VI. *The Proper Spirit or Temper of Prayer Requires a few Words of Explanation.*

This raises the question: How should we pray? In what frame of mind, and what should be our disposition of heart when we pray? Here reverence is set down first, for the Larger Catechism says that we should pray with an awful apprehension of the majesty of God. We are to remember that God is in heaven and that we are upon the earth. We should also have a deep sense of our own unworthiness,

mindful that God is perfectly holy, and that we are sinful in his sight. In like manner, we are to be sensible of our necessities, and, above all, of the need of the pardon of our sins, and so come with penitent, thankful and enlarged hearts to his footstool. Our approach to God in prayer is also to be marked by understanding our need; by faith in Christ, and in the promises which are sure in him; by sincerity, knowing that if we regard iniquity in our hearts God will not hear us; by fervency, showing that we are in earnest in our desires; by love to God for all his love to us; and by perseverance, which will lead to a patient importunity. And, finally, we are to wait on God in prayer with humble submission to his will, resigned to leave the answer to his holy and gracious purpose, as he deems best to give or withhold, to bless or restrain the blessing.

VII. *The Parts or Elements of Prayer are now to be Explained.*

These, though not formally expressed in the Standards, are, nevertheless, implied, and may now be set down in a sentence or two, before the Lord's prayer as the rule to guide us in prayer is explained at some length.

Adoration stands first, whereby we praise and magnify God and his majesty, for what he is and does in creation, providence, and grace. Next in order, we may set down confession of sin, for we are sinful in the sight of God, and our sins must be removed before we can come acceptably to God. Then follows thanksgiving, for it is fitting that we should render grateful thanks for past mercies before we beg for their continuance or renewal. Then come petitions of all sorts for ourselves and others, as already described. And, lastly, stands intercession, or special pleading for any definite cases or causes. These are the main elements of prayer. Of course, we may not find it necessary to include all these factors at any one time in our prayers, still, in offering public, domestic, or private prayer, it may be well to keep this gen-

eral outline in view. It will give order to our prayers, and save us from confusion and repetition. In almost every case adoration, confession, and giving of thanks should have a place.

VIII. *The Rule or Pattern of Prayer is the Last Topic to be Explained from the Standards.*

Much importance is evidently attached to this topic in the Catechisms, and the remainder of this chapter must be devoted to its exposition in only brief outline. The Larger Catechism says that the whole word of God is of use in directing us in the duty of praying; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which our Lord taught his disciples, and which is commonly called the Lord's prayer. This prayer is to be used, not only for directing us in prayer, but as a pattern according to which we are to make other prayers. There is here sketched only a general outline. At the same time, it is added that this prayer may be used as a prayer, so long as it is done with understanding, faith, reverence, and the other graces necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer. This is an important statement, not only in regard to this prayer, but in respect to all prayer, and it contains a warning and an exhortation of great moment in regard to the use of liturgies, or the reading of prayers in public or private worship.

In making an analysis of the Lord's prayer, there are three parts to be considered. These are the preface, the petitions, and the conclusion. The first and the last are briefly considered, while the second is explained at length in the Standards. Each is now expounded in a simple way.

1. The preface requires only a few lines. It is, "Our Father which art in heaven." This teaches us that when we pray we are to draw near to God with confidence in his fatherly goodness, and our interest in that goodness. We are also taught to come with reverence, and with all other suitable, childlike dispositions and heavenly affections. In

this way we are to come with the true filial spirit, and say, Abba, Father; and at the same time we are to seek to cherish due apprehensions of his sovereign power, his transcendent majesty, and his gracious condescension. We are also exhorted to pray with and for others when we are taught to say, Our Father. This preface thus forms a suitable prelude to this remarkable prayer.

2. The petitions are now to be considered in order. These petitions are six in number. The Shorter Catechism gives a brief exposition of each, which the Larger expands considerably. In the present exposition an attempt will be made to combine these, and to offer some comments as the explanation proceeds.

The first petition is, "Hallowed be thy name." This teaches us to pray that God would enable us and others to glorify him in all that whereby he makes himself known, and that he would dispose all things for his glory. Here we confess our inability and our indisposition of ourselves to honor God aright, and we ask for grace to enable us to know and highly esteem him, and all those things by which he makes himself known to us, and to glorify him in thought, word, and deed. We are also taught here to pray that God would destroy atheism, idolatry, and everything which dishonors him, and that he would dispose all things for his own glory.

The second petition is, "Thy kingdom come." By this petition we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves brought into it and kept in it, and the kingdom of glory hastened. Here we acknowledge that we are all by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, and we pray for deliverance, that the gospel may be spread throughout the world, that the Jews may be called into the kingdom, and that the fulness of the Gentiles may be brought in. We likewise here pray that the church may be kept pure in all

respects, and that the rulers of the earth may not oppose the gospel. We also pray that by the ordinances of the church sinners may be converted and saints be confirmed, that Christ may rule in the hearts of men here, and that the time of his second coming may be hastened.

The third petition is, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." This teaches us to pray that God would, by his grace, make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven. Here we also confess our proneness to rebel against God's word and providence, and we pray that God would take away our blindness and perverseness, and make us, with humility and cheerfulness, to do, and submit to, the will of God in all things.

The fourth petition is, "Give us this day our daily bread." Here we pray that God would, of his free gift, grant us a competent portion of the things of this life, and that we may enjoy his blessing with them. Here, too, we confess that we deserve none of these outward blessings of this life, and are prone to use them unlawfully, and we pray for ourselves and others that, waiting on God's providence in the use of lawful means, we may receive a competent portion of God's temporal gifts, and be contented in the lawful use of the same.

The fifth petition is, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Here we pray that God would, for Christ's sake, freely pardon our sins, and that we may be able from the heart to forgive others. Here we also confess that we are guilty sinners before God, and hopeless debtors to the divine justice, and we pray that, through the satisfaction of Christ applied by faith, God would pardon and acquit us, and continue to do so, filling us with peace and joy, and prompting and enabling us to forgive our fellowmen.

The sixth petition is, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," or, as some would translate, "from the evil one." Here we pray that God would either keep us from

being tempted to sin, or support us when we are tempted. Here we also confess our own weakness and proneness to go astray, and we pray that God would so subdue and restrain us, and order all things about us, that we may be saved from temptation, or so succored in it that we do not fall into sin, or if we do happen to fall, that we may speedily repent, and be recovered and restored.

3. The conclusion remains for a word or two. It is as follows: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen." This teaches us to ascribe all praise and glory to God alone, in our prayers and adoration before him, who is King of kings, and whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. The word Amen, with which the prayer closes, expresses our solemn assurance that we earnestly desire to be heard, and our willingness to submit to the divine will in the answer, whatever it may be, to our prayers.

Such is an imperfect outline of the subject of prayer as a means of grace. The order of the petitions is worthy of notice. Petitions which relate to God come first, next those which pertain to his kingdom, and last those which refer to ourselves. The Larger Catechism expounds confession and petition in each of the parts of the Lord's prayer, and has a very detailed exposition of the whole prayer.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE CHURCH AND HER CENSURES.

SHORTER CATECHISM, ——; LARGER CATECHISM, 62–65; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XXV. AND XXX.

WITH this chapter the passage is made from matters of doctrine and duty to questions concerning the polity and discipline of the church. For two or three chapters these questions will engage attention. In this chapter two related topics, which the Confession treats in separate chapters, and in different connections, are grouped together, and briefly explained.

The Shorter Catechism has nothing whatever to say in regard to the church, or its form of government. This is, perhaps, a serious defect in it, so far as instruction in the principles of church polity is concerned, especially from the Presbyterian point of view. The Larger Catechism defines the visible and invisible aspects of the church in a simple, clear way. It does this immediately after it has set forth the work of Christ, and before it unfolds the benefits of redemption. The Confession devotes a whole chapter to the church, and in others deals with the form and powers of the government of the church in a somewhat general way.

As was hinted in a previous chapter, the Standards speak with much less precision in regard to questions of church government than they do in reference to matters of doctrine and ethics. It is important to remember this in relation to Presbyterianism. The reason of this difference is mainly to be found in the fact that in the Westminster Assembly there was little difference of view in matters of doctrine, while in regard to questions of polity there was great diversity of opinion. All held more or less definitely the Calvinistic or Reformed system of doctrine, but they did by no means agree

as to the form of church government which the Scriptures taught, and as to the proper functions of the church of Christ, and its relation to the civil magistrate. In the Assembly there were Episcopalians of various types, some being high churchmen and some Erastians. There was also a number of very influential Independents. The Presbyterians were also there, and while they argued very strongly for their views of the true polity of the church, as they understood it, it was not till the close of the Assembly almost, when numbers had left, that they were able to carry, to a certain extent, their views in the Assembly. But, after all, it is not well-defined Presbyterian polity that is set forth in the Standards. The general principles are there, but the details are not unfolded. This is, perhaps, just as well, for it leaves each branch of the Presbyterian family to work out the details in such a way as bests suits its special circumstances in harmony with the word of God. The Standards undoubtedly contain the fundamental principles of the Presbyterian system, and the only proper development of these principles is generic Presbyterianism, as it is hoped will be clearly seen in this exposition.

At this stage it may be well to observe that nearly every branch of Presbyterianism has drawn up a Form of Government, in which that particular form of polity is set forth more definitely, and in its full scriptural form and proportions. In the exposition to be given in this, and one or two other chapters, some of the contents of these forms of government and discipline will be incorporated, so as to make the discussion more complete. In doing this, however, care will be taken to keep these two factors so far separate that the reader will easily perceive what each, and especially the Standards, teaches.

I. *The Church is First Considered.*

In regard to the church, what the Confession and the Larger Catechism have to say about it will be set down first,

and then in mere outline a sketch of the main factors or elements in the generic Presbyterian form of church polity and discipline which grows out of it will be given. At every point brevity is enforced, by reason of the limits of this exposition.

1. The invisible church, as it is called, ought to be first explained. This is the most profound view of the church of Christ which the Standards present. It is called invisible partly because we cannot tell absolutely in this life who are members of it, and partly because we do not find all the members of it on the earth at any given period of the history of the church. The Larger Catechism defines the invisible church to be the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ the head. This terse and comprehensive statement the Confession somewhat expands. It adds that the invisible church is catholic or universal, and that it is the spouse of Christ, and that it is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. The term catholic means universal, and has no reference to the Church of Rome. Membership in this invisible phase of the church is in accordance with the purpose of God's electing love and grace, but it is only actually realized in the case of each individual through union with Christ the head. Only those who are united to Christ in effectual calling, and are truly regenerated by the Spirit, are members of this body. If they are in adult years when they become members, their personal faith will also exist, but the fundamental condition of membership for all, infants or adults, in this phase of the church is union with Christ. It is evident, also, that only those who are members of the invisible church are, or can be saved, so that the number of those finally saved shall agree with the great company of those who are members of that aspect of the church, just as the members of the invisible church agree with the innumerable company of those included in God's purpose of electing grace. And all the members of

the invisible church, by reason of their union with Christ, enjoy communion with him here, and in glory with him hereafter. They also have fellowship with each other through the communion of saints.

2. The visible church is also to be explained. This is the aspect of the church which comes up chiefly for discussion in church polity. This phase of the church is doubtless called visible because its condition of membership, which is profession of faith in Christ its head, is open for observation, and because its members can be seen upon the earth at any given period. It is sometimes called the church militant since it is engaged in conflict and struggle from age to age in the world. The church triumphant will be finally found in heaven, when the church visible and militant has won all its victories on the earth, and the church invisible will also be complete in the heavenly state.

The Larger Catechism defines the visible church to be "a society made up of such as in all ages and places of the world do profess the true religion, and of their children." This is an admirable definition, and one cannot but wish that this definition, as well as that of the invisible church, had been given a place in the Shorter Catechism. The Confession says that the visible church is also catholic or universal under the gospel. This means that the visible church, now under the gospel age, is not confined to a single nation as it was in the Jewish dispensation, but includes all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children.

The conditions of membership in the visible church are credible profession of faith in Christ, and a life of obedience consistent with that profession. It is not absolutely necessary to be a member of this aspect of the church in order to be saved, and there may be some who are members of it who shall be finally among the lost. Still, for many urgent reasons, it is most necessary that all who are united with

Christ, and are thus members of the invisible church, should profess his name before men by becoming members of the visible church.

From the definitions given of these two aspects of the church of Christ, it is not to be concluded that there are two distinct churches, the one visible and the other invisible. They are simply two different aspects or phases of the one body of Christ. The one views it from its inward side of regeneration and union with Christ, and the other regards it from its outward aspect of profession of faith in Christ, and union in a society. The former is the invisible church, and the latter is the visible.

The visible church is under God's special care, and is protected and preserved in all ages in spite of its foes. All its members enjoy the communion of saints, and the ordinary means of grace. This implies the offer of grace and salvation to all its members, through the ministry of the gospel, testifying that whosoever believes in him shall be saved, and that none who will come unto him shall be rejected. The visible church thus becomes the instrument upon the earth by means of which the knowledge of the way of life and salvation is given to the world, and the gospel message brought to men, even to the end of the world.

This visible church is, by the Confession, said to be the same as the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation. The force of the *ordinary* must be carefully noted here. It seems to emphasize the importance of membership in the visible church, and yet it is not to be held that such membership is absolutely essential to salvation. This is very carefully stated, and should be held fast.

3. The gifts of Christ to the visible church are to be considered at this stage. To the universal visible church, which God has instituted in the world, Christ has granted certain

very important gifts. These are the gospel ministry for the preaching of the word, the oracles of God contained in the sacred Scriptures, the ordinances of his house, especially the sacraments and public worship. The purpose or end of these gifts is to gather sinners into the kingdom, and to make the saints meet for glory, on to the end of the world. Then it is added, with great propriety, that Christ does, by his own presence and Spirit in the church, make these gifts effectual to the salvation of those who are appointed thereunto. This brief paragraph will be expanded later on in another connection.

This phase of the church universal has been sometimes more, sometimes less, visible; and the particular churches into which the universal visible church may be divided and of which they are members, are more or less pure according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, the ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them. Here there are three valuable tests of the purity of any branch of the church of Christ. The preaching of a pure gospel, the observance of the ordinances in their simplicity, and the spirituality of the worship in the church are the tests. The importance of these tests is evident.

The Confession further acknowledges that the purest churches under heaven are subject to both mixture and error. Some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ at all, but synagogues of Satan. The name of the Romish church is not here mentioned, but there is little doubt that the reference is to that corrupt body. But in spite of this, the statement is added that there shall always be a church on the earth, to worship God according to his will. This church is founded upon the Rock of Ages, it is inhabited by the Spirit of power and grace, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

4. The head of the church is another important topic here to

be understood. This doctrine is briefly but clearly stated in the Confession. It says that the Lord Jesus Christ is the alone head of the church. This statement brings us within sight of the kingly office of Christ, already expounded. He is the head of the church invisible, and all his people in union with him are members of his body. He is also king and head of the visible church, which is really the visible exponent of the invisible church in any given age. His law is supreme, and his will is law in all spiritual matters for the members of the visible church.

This implies two important things: *First*, It teaches that no mere man in any ecclesiastical position or office ought to assume to be the head of the church; and, hence, that the pope cannot rightly claim to be its head. The Confession adds that the pope may properly be identified with the anti-Christ of the Scriptures, who is that man of sin and son of perdition that exalts himself in the church against Christ, and even calls himself God. *Secondly*, It teaches that in no sense can any earthly civil ruler, as such, presume to be the church's head, or to exercise rule or authority therein. The headship of Christ over his church is not temporal, but entirely spiritual. Hence, no man dare take the place which belongs to Christ alone. This raises the question of the relation between the church and the state, to be treated more fully later on.

The question of the officers of the visible church is reserved for the next chapter, when the courts of the church and other kindred topics are to be explained. A few things, however, may be set down here in regard to the matter of the call to such office and ordination in that connection. Ordination, of course, presupposes a call to office in the church. This call is of God, by his Spirit and providence. This call implies three things: *First*, There is the inward testimony of the conscience of the man himself. *Secondly*, There is the manifest approbation of God's people exercising

their right of election. And, *Thirdly*, There is the concurrence of the church court, according to the word of God. Ordination follows; and it is the authoritative admission of one duly called to an office in the church of God, accompanied with prayer and the laying on of hands, to which it is proper to add the giving of the right hand of fellowship. Ruling elders and deacons are ordained by sessions, and teaching elders and ministers are ordained by presbyteries. Synods and the General Assembly do not ordain.

II. *The Censures of the Church is the Other Main Topic for this Chapter.*

It relates to the matter of government and discipline chiefly. This is a topic upon which the Confession alone speaks. Its teaching is now to be set forth. In doing so, it will appear that it is with this chapter that the contents of the rules of discipline are to be connected. Into these matters this discussion cannot enter, but must content itself with a brief presentation of the general principles laid down in the Confession upon this practical matter.

1. The Confession first asserts that the Lord Jesus, as the king and head of his church, has therein appointed a government in the hands of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate. The former part of this chapter has made plain the meaning of this statement. The last brief clause of it is of very great importance, for it asserts the clear distinction between the government of Jesus Christ in the church, which is his spiritual kingdom, and the government of the civil magistrate in the state. The two spheres are distinct, though they sustain intimate relations with each other. This will be seen more fully in the next chapter, when the question of the civil magistrate and his functions in relation to the church are discussed.

2. To the officers of the church, into whose hands the government of the church is entrusted, Christ has committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven. By this power is to be

understood the whole matter of government and discipline in the church. By virtue of this power the proper officers of the church have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by word in preaching and by censures in discipline, and to open it unto penitent sinners by the ministry of the word of the gospel and by absolution from censures, as occasion may require. This power of the keys is a very important one in the kingdom of heaven. Its proper use does not imply the doctrine of absolution, as Rome teaches and practices it. It is simply the divinely delegated power of government and discipline in the church. The statement "retain and remit sins," taken from Scripture, does not mean that the officers of the church can actually, as God alone can, pardon or refuse to pardon sins; but it denotes that these officers have power to admit or exclude persons from the visible church. Those whom they admit are thereby pronounced worthy of the place and privileges of those whose sins are pardoned, and those who are not admitted are merely judged not to be worthy of this place and privilege. Then, if those who are members of the church do not conduct themselves in propriety with their profession, the officers of the church have power to discipline and censure, as may be expedient, the erring members. This is the gist of what is meant by the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

3. The uses or ends of the power of church censures are next explained in the Confession. *First*, They are necessary for reclaiming and gaining erring brethren. In this respect church censures are unlike civil punishments, whose main end is penal rather than reformatory. *Secondly*, They are useful in deterring others from like offences, and thus are helpful to them in this respect. *Thirdly*, They also help to keep the church pure, by purging out the leaven which might infect the whole lump. *Fourthly*, These church censures serve to vindicate the honor of Christ, and the holy profes-

sion of the gospel. If men were allowed to profess to be the servants of Christ, and yet to disregard his law and bring shame upon the Christian profession, then the great name of Christ would be hopelessly dishonored. *Finally*, These censures prevent the wrath of God from coming upon the church. By reason of sin, and especially by profaning in any way the seals of the covenant exhibited in the sacrament by notorious offenders, the just wrath and displeasure of God might, indeed, fall upon the church. To save from this, the faithful use of the censures of the church is of much value.

For the attainment of these important ends aright, the officers of the church are to proceed in a wise and careful manner, seeking always to graduate the censure in proportion to the gravity of the offence. The lowest form of censure is admonition, by which the offender is simply rebuked, exhorted, and warned, but not excluded from the privileges of church membership. The form of censure next in severity is suspension from the sacrament of the Lord's supper for a season. This does not sever the offender from the membership of the church, but it deprives him of the privilege of taking the sacrament of the supper till the suspension expires, or until repentance is made and restoration is granted. The third and most severe form of censure is excommunication from the church. This form of censure severs the offender entirely from the membership of the church, and by means of it he is cast out, and can only be restored after proper repentance, and renewal of his faith in Christ. These three forms of censure are to be graduated with conscientious care by the officers of the church, according to the nature of the offence and the demerit of the offender.

This chapter in the Confession is really the basis of the rules of discipline, according to which the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven implied in these censures is to be administered. If the offender is not satisfied with the sentence of any lower court he can appeal to a higher, and so

from the session which has original jurisdiction in the case of members of the church, and from the presbytery which has jurisdiction over ministers, up to the synod and on to the General Assembly the case may go, in the interests of the offender, the purity of the church, and the honor of Christ.

This complete organization and gradation of courts is one of the features of the Presbyterian system which must ever commend it to thoughtful and practical minds. It secures corporate unity, orderly procedure, individual freedom, and justice to all sacred interests. Moreover, it provides for the harmonious balance and consistent operation of all these factors in such a way as to make Presbyterianism the symbol of law and liberty, of order and organization, wherever it is found true to its divine genius and faithful to its common-sense principles.

CHAPTER XXX.

CHURCH SYNODS AND COUNCILS.

SHORTER CATECHISM, ——; LARGER CATECHISM, ——; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XXXI.

IN this chapter some further explanations must be made in regard to the government of the church. In the preceding chapter the subject specially considered was the government of a particular church, after the idea of the church itself had been explained. In this chapter the government and discipline of the church is to be explained at some length. This leads to the question of the synods or councils of the church. In other words, the courts of the church are to be explained in an orderly way.

It is to be observed that the statements of the Standards upon this subject are of a somewhat general nature. The word synod means simply an assembly or convocation of persons in the interests of the church, and the word council indicates a deliberation or conference of those persons who are interested in the welfare of the body of Christ. But neither of these terms settles the question of the proper form which the government of the church should assume. Whether these synods and councils are to be Presbyterian, Episcopal, or Independent in their nature is not definitely decided by the use of these terms. At the same time, it is not to be forgotten that the corporate idea of the church which runs through the Confession cannot well be harmonized with the system of Independency, and the teaching of the Confession in regard to the officers of the church is not capable of being reconciled with the Episcopal system. The principles of the Confession are Presbyterian, but the details of the system are not wrought out with fulness of particulars. The idea of the church is essentially Presbyterian, and the teaching

elders, ruling elders, and deacons are evidently officers of the Presbyterian system.

After what the Confession has to say upon the subject of synods and councils has been sketched, some explanations will be added in regard to the particular form which these synods and councils assume in the Presbyterian system, especially as represented by the church courts of generic Presbyterianism. The teaching of the Confession will be first set forth, and after that some things contained in the Form of Government will be added to make the exposition the more complete.

I. *The Doctrine of the Standards.*

The Confession is to be our sole guide in the explanations now to be made, as the Catechisms are silent upon these topics of ecclesiology. Several points are to be noted in order.

1. The Confession first indicates the end or purpose of synods or councils in the church. It says that for the better government and further edification of the church there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called synods or councils. The idea here expressed evidently is that the government of single congregations separately by their office-bearers is not all that is needed to secure the best edification of the church. In addition, it is necessary and wise for the officers of the separate societies of Christians to meet together, and to confer and devise concerning those things which may be for the welfare of the whole company of societies in any locality.

The Confession distinctly announces that the overseers and other rulers of the particular churches, by virtue of their office, and by reason of the power which Christ has given them for edification, and not for destruction, ought to appoint such assemblies, and to convene together in them as often as they shall judge it expedient for the good of the church. This important teaching lodges in the officers of

the church, the elders or bishops, overseers of particular societies or churches, power to call such synods or councils, and to deliberate and conclude all such matters as may be properly considered for the edification of the whole church in any given section. This principle of corporate action between the officers of the several particular churches in an assembly thus convened is clearly inconsistent with the Independent theory of church government, and is in entire harmony with the Presbyterian system. Indeed, it is one of the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism.

2. The functions of such assemblies are next stated in the Confession. These are stated at some length, and had better be set down in order in this exposition with some care, as they embody principles of prime importance in regard to the government and discipline of the church.[1]

First, It belongs to these synods and councils, ministerially, to determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience. In exercising this function, the officers of the church act in a ministerial capacity. This simply means that as the ministers of Christ, who are in no sense priests, they are to declare and apply the will of Christ, as given in his word, the

[1] By the "adopting act" of 1729, the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in North America expressly asserted that in regard to the civil magistrate and his relation to the church, it did not receive the passages relating to this point in the Confession in any such sense as to suppose that the civil magistrate has a controlling power over synods with respect to the exercise of their ministerial authority, or power to persecute any for their religion, or in any sense contrary to the Protestant succession to the throne in Great Britain.

The original form of the section in the Confession upon which this paragraph is founded was as follows: "As the magistrate may lawfully call a synod of ministers and other fit persons to consult and advise with about matters of religion, so, if magistrates be open enemies to the church, the ministers of Christ of themselves, by virtue of their office, or they with other fit persons upon delegation from their churches, may meet together in such assemblies." The revised form upon which the exposition is based does not allow the civil magistrate the power to call together ecclesiastical assemblies.

Holy Scriptures being the rule in the case. This simple statement cuts at the very root of all hierarchical pretensions and prelatic assumptions. In exercising this function, synods and councils may form doctrinal creeds or confessions of faith, and they may also draw up a form of government for the church. In both of these matters, however, they are not to legislate as they please, but simply to expound and put in an orderly form what is contained in the sacred Scriptures. In like manner, when controversies arise in regard to doctrines of faith and cases of conscience as to matters of duty, these councils are to decide upon them, for the purity and edification of the whole body.

Secondly, These synods and councils are to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and the government of the church. These two important matters are to be attended to by these councils, to the end that there may be some order and general uniformity among the particular churches. Here, again, the rule by which the councils are to be guided in both cases above mentioned is the Holy Scriptures. The worship of God is to be in spirit and in truth, according to the word of God, and not will-worship, after the devices of men.

Thirdly, These councils of the church are to receive complaints in cases of maladministration, and they are to determine the same in an authoritative way. This clearly implies a very important principle of Presbyterianism. It involves the right to appeal from a lower to a higher court. In the case of a member of the church who has been tried for some offence by the session of the particular church, if that member feels that justice has not been done him, he may appeal to the presbytery, and from the presbytery to the synod, and from the synod to the General Assembly, which is the court of last resort, and whose decisions are final in every case. The decisions of these courts, especially of the highest to which the appeal can be made, if they are

consonant with the word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission for two reasons: *First*, for their agreement with the word; and, *Secondly*, for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God, appointed thereunto in his word. Here the direct teaching of the word, and the fact that the court is clothed with authority by the same word, unite to enforce the decisions of the church court, which is in harmony with the word of God.

The fallibility of such councils is distinctly confessed in the Standards. The Confession asserts that all synods or councils since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err and many have erred. This being the case, the decisions of these synods are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but they are merely to be used as a help in both. This is a very brief statement. It was important when it was first drawn up, and it is quite as important at the present day, especially against the claim of infallibility made by the Romish church, and by the pope as its head. Since the apostles' day, when inspiration ceased, no council of the officers of the church has had given to it the gift of inspiration. Not enjoying this gift, it cannot claim to be infallible.

The church and her councils may enjoy, in a large measure, the indwelling and guidance of the Holy Spirit of promise, but he does not give absolute infallibility. Hence, the decisions of these councils may not always be in harmony with the Scriptures. This being the case, the decisions of such councils cannot be regarded as having the same authority as the word of God itself. Hence, the Romish church greatly errs in claiming infallibility, and in putting the decisions of the church above the word of Scripture. These decisions are merely to be regarded as useful guides both in matters of faith and practice, but in no case can they bind the consciences and conduct of men as do the teachings of the Holy Scripture. This view is in entire harmony with

the doctrine of the Scripture already set forth in one of the early chapters of this discussion.

4. The last section in the Confession deals with a very difficult and perplexing question. This question has reference to the sphere of the action of the church, and its relation to the commonwealth within whose bounds it may be situated. The doctrine of the Standards is in itself quite clear, but when the attempt is made to apply this doctrine to particular cases, and at special junctures, very grave difficulties are almost sure to arise. The statement of the Confession is to the effect that synods and councils are to handle and conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical. This means that they must deal only with what is distinctly spiritual or religious in its nature, and pertains to the welfare and work of the church of Christ. This is the great doctrine of the spirituality of the church asserted from one point of view. This doctrine will be explained more fully when the question of the civil magistrate is discussed in the next chapter.

But the Confession goes on to say, further, that the councils of the church are not to meddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth. This teaches that, as a church court, no synod or council of the church should, as such, take any part in the affairs of civil government. They are not called on, as courts of the church of Jesus Christ, to take part in what is called the ordinary political affairs of the country. Of course, this does not mean that the members and officers of the church, as citizens, are not to take part in those public matters which belong to the duties of citizenship, or belong to the welfare of the country of which they are citizens. It is the undoubted duty of Christian people to exercise their civil rights, and discharge their duties as citizens. But it does not follow that any court of the church, as such, has any right to handle matters of a purely civil nature. It is quite right for the members and officers of the church to

have their opinions upon any of the public questions which are debated in the country, and which, it may be, divide the political parties of the day, and no one ought to find fault with them for voting in accordance with their opinions. But a church court, as such, has, according to the teaching of the Confession, no right to deliberate and conclude any of those matters which are purely civil in their nature and belong entirely to the state, as, for example, the trade policy of the country, or the financial theory of the nation.

This statement seems very plain and simple, yet in it application practical difficulties constantly arise. These difficulties appear in connection with certain questions which are partly civil and partly religious in their nature. Such questions as education, marriage, the Sabbath, and temperance are illustrations of what is here meant. The first raises the question of religion in the public schools of the land, the second suggests the question about the sanctity of the marriage relation and its welfare for the state, the third has to do with one of the commandments, and the last relates to a great moral reform movement. The question here, How far should the church seek to bring her moral force in a corporate way to bear upon any legislation which may be proposed in regard to any of these topics, is a very serious practical question. It is evident that the church court should be exceedingly slow to meddle with those things on the civil side. The best thing is for the same members and officers of the church to act as citizens, and to seek thereby to bring their moral influence to bear upon the legislation in such a way as to secure the passage by the civil authorites of such laws as are for the welfare of the commonwealth. It is evident that there are practical difficulties here, and that much caution is needed. Christian citizens should not hand the affairs of the country over to those who are not Christians, but church courts should not deal with purely civil matters. The Christian, as a member of the church, acts in one sphere,

and as a citizen he acts in another. In both he has duties, rights, privileges, and responsibilities, and he should be true and faithful in both relations.

The last clause in this section of the Confession introduces a peculiar qualification of the position just stated. The admission is made that the only way in which the church court may deal at all with civil matters is by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary, or by way of advice for satisfaction of conscience. And, then, the church court is only to do this when invited by the civil magistrate, who is to take the initiative in the matter, especially in the latter case.

Here, then, are two ways in which the spiritual officers of the church may approach the civil magistrate in connection with the affairs of state. They may come to him by humble petition and they may give advice. The former action is taken on motion of the church court itself, and only in cases of extraordinary gravity and moment. The latter action is to be taken only when the civil authorities require the advice at the hands of the church. In the one case the representatives of Christ act, and the representatives of Cæsar are to respond; in the other case the servants of Cæsar act, and the representatives of Christ are to respond.

The real difficulty here is twofold: *First*, It is not easy to decide what are extraordinary cases justifying petition; and then where is the arbiter who is to decide upon such cases. *Secondly*, In the divided state of Christendom in any land, especially in a country where there is no state church, the real difficulty is as to which branch of the church should the state look for the advice of which the Confession speaks. Theoretically, the principles laid down in this chapter of the Confession throughout are safe and sound; and in spite of the difficulties which attend their practical application, the utmost care should be taken to work them out and apply them as fully as possible in harmony with the word of God, and in the light of the varied and ever-varying conditions of

the church and state in any given country. In this way many a conflict will be avoided.

II. *The Presbyterian Idea of the Government of the Church will now be briefly Outlined.*

Upon the basis of the important principles laid down in the Confession regarding the church and its polity, the Presbyterian system can be very properly explained. In general, Presbyterianism may be described as ecclesiastical republicanism, or representative church government. It essentially consists in government of the members of the church visible by Jesus Christ, its king and head, through the representatives whom they choose for that purpose, and to whom the people delegate the power which Christ has lodged in them as his body. Hence, Presbyterianism is representative or republican church government, in which the people, under Christ, govern themselves through the representatives they choose to be over them. The main elements of this system of church rule may be summed up under several particulars.

1. The idea of the church comes first. This has already, from the Confession, been quite fully explained. Another definition of the church visible is given in the Form of Government, and may be here set down. The visible church has for its members all those persons in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of the holy religion of Christ, and of submission to his laws. The fact that all the definitions given in the Standards include the children of the members of the visible church is worthy of notice, and it is in harmony with the teaching set forth in the chapter on baptism, where the relation of the infant seed of the members of the church to the church was carefully explained.

2. The members of the church may next be defined. The question of who are to be members of the visible church has been partly defined by what has just been said in the previous paragraph. All adults, male and female, who profess the

true religion by professing faith in Christ, and promising obedience to the laws of Christ, are members of the church. In addition, as hinted above, the children of such persons are to be regarded as born in covenant relation to the visible church, and are entitled to pastoral care and oversight, as well as having a right to the privileges of the church. This was the relation of children in the Old Testament age, and the teaching of the Standards is to the effect that they have the same relation to the visible church under the gospel.

3. The officers of the church are to be described. Bearing in mind the important fact that Christ is the head of the church, it is to be observed that he has ordained that certain officers shall be chosen to teach, rule, and guide the members of the church. According to the Presbyterian polity, the ordinary and perpetual officers in the church are teaching elders, ruling elders, and deacons. The teaching elder is the minister of the word, and his special duty is to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments, and also to rule in the house of God. The ruling elder is to serve in the office of government alone in the church. The special function of the deacon is to distribute the offerings of the faithful to the poor, and for pious uses. The teaching and ruling elders are both included under the New Testament bishop or presbyter, so that there are not distinct grades in the office of the gospel ministry. This is important in relation to all prelatic views in regard to the officers of the church.

4. The courts of the church require some explanation at this stage. From this point of view, Presbyterianism is a form of government by means of courts in gradation, one above the other in regular order, all of which may be regarded as presbyteries, being made up of teaching and ruling elders. These courts are the church session, which is over a particular congregation; the presbytery, which is over a number of church sessions in a given district; the synod, which is over a group of presbyteries in a wider area; and

the General Assembly, which is over the whole church which may be in fellowship in a certain locality or country for the time being. Each of these courts has its jurisdiction, which is prescribed by the constitution of the church itself. These courts may now be briefly described in order.

First, The session is made up of a minister and ruling elders. Generally, it requires a minister and two ruling elders to make a session, but in certain cases one elder is considered sufficient. The session has general oversight of the affairs of the particular church whose members elected them as their spiritual representatives. They order the worship of the sanctuary, they receive and dismiss members, they deal with the erring members, and, in general, govern the church and administer its spiritual affairs.

Secondly, The presbytery is composed of a minister and a ruling elder from each church or pastoral charge. This is the typical court of the Presbyterian system, and by many is regarded as the unit of the system. The presbytery licenses preachers, ordains ministers, settles them in charges, and looses them from the pastoral care of churches. It also has the care of all the churches within its bounds, and takes special care of weak churches and of mission work within its bounds. It also deals with cases of heresy or improper conduct on the part of ministers, and guards the doctrinal purity of the teaching of the officers of the church. It also elects commissioners to the General Assembly, and in some cases to the synod, and, in general, it has charge of the welfare of the churches within its limits.

Thirdly, The synod is generally constituted in the same way as the presbytery, by one minister and one ruling elder from each pastoral charge. In some cases where the membership of the synod is large, the presbyteries elect certain representatives to make up the membership of the synod. The jurisdiction of the synod varies greatly in the different branches of Presbyterianism. It deals with appeal cases

from presbyteries, it often has the oversight of colleges and theological seminaries, and it takes general charge of the work of the church in the presbyteries within its bounds.

Fourthly, The General Assembly, in most cases, is the supreme court in the Presbyterian Church, although some branches of that church make the synod the highest court and have no General Assembly at all. The General Assembly is formed by an equal number of teaching and ruling elders elected by presbyteries according to a prescribed proportion, which is sometimes larger and sometimes smaller. The Assembly hears and issues finally all cases of appeal or complaint, it in some cases has charge of educational institutions, it conducts Home and Foreign Mission work, it raises the means necessary to carry on the great general schemes of Christian activity in which the church is engaged, and makes recommendations to the court below in regard to certain matters. Each court reviews the records of the proceedings of the court below it, and in this way oversight is regularly exercised. Such is a mere outline of the gradation of courts in the Presbyterian Church.

It only remains to be added that the jurisdiction of these courts is only ministerial and declarative, and it relates to three things: *First*, The doctrines or precepts of Christ. *Secondly*, The order of the church. And, *Thirdly*, The exercise of discipline. All these courts are essentially one in their nature, constituted of the same elements, possessed inherently of the same kinds of rights and powers, and differing only as the constitution of the church may provide, when it prescribes the sphere of action and jurisdiction of each court. At this point the explanation of the Presbyterian form of church government must conclude, although many other things ought to be said about it. Enough has been said to give a general idea of that system whose deep and abiding principles are so fully exhibited in the Confession.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LAWFUL OATHS; THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE; MARRIAGE.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 70-72; LARGER CATECHISM, 137-139; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XXII., XXIII., XXIV.

THREE important topics are grouped together for explanation in this chapter. Of these topics, the Catechisms have little or nothing to say, but the Confession devotes a separate chapter to each one of them. Two of these, marriage and the civil magistrate, are of greater importance, while the third is of lesser moment. They are now taken up and expounded in the order in which they are stated in the Confession.

I. *Lawful Oaths and Vows.*

Here, then, are two closely-related topics, which also resemble each other in various respects. The oath is made between man and man, as the parties, with God called on as witness in the case. The vow is by man alone making a solemn promise to God, so that God and man are the parties in the case. Each of these topics requires a few words of explanation, following the Confession quite closely throughout.

1. Lawful oaths are to be first explained. The language here used implies that there are unlawful oaths. The reference here is doubtless to profane swearing, and a light and trivial appeal to God in the ordinary converse of life. This is a violation of the third command, as has already been seen. But the Standards teach that there is also a proper way in which men may make a solemn appeal to God to attest the truth of any utterance they make. Several points are to be noted here.

First, The nature of a lawful oath is to be considered. At the outset, it is to be remembered that such an oath is a part

of religious worship. This is evident from the fact that God is solemnly acknowledged, and invoked to attest the truth of what is asserted. It is an act of adoration and of homage, with confession of God's right over us. The lawful oath thus regarded is an act of worship, whereby, on just occasion, the person swearing or making oath solemnly calls God to witness what he testifies or promises, and at the same time invokes God to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he swears. The usual circumstances which afford the just occasion for the use of lawful oaths are found in a court of justice, when strong assurance of truth and certainty is desired. In such cases the oath does two things: *First*, It binds with a fresh obligation the person swearing, who, by the natural law of truthfulness, is bound to tell the truth, or to assert only what is in accordance with truth and fact. And, *Secondly*, The oath calls upon God to judge and condemn him should he fail to speak in accordance with the truth in any evidence which he may be called to give in any way. By the obligation of natural morality every man is bound to speak the truth at all times, so that he is not free to be false when he is not under oath. But the oath lays upon him a double obligation to have respect unto the truth in what is spoken of or testified to.

Secondly, The name in which oaths are to be made is to be next explained. The Confession says that the only name by which men ought to swear is that of God. Hence, oaths are not to be made to false gods or idols. From this it is clear that neither an atheist nor an idolater can make oath with any meaning or propriety. There can be no meaning in a man calling upon God to witness to the truth of what he says if he does not believe that there is a God; and if a man call on gods that are not true gods, then he swears in vain. It is evident that when the name of God is used it should be with all holy reverence and fear. Hence it is a grievous sin to be abhorred, to swear vainly or rashly by the glorious and dread-

ful name of God. To dare to make oath by any other name or thing is equally sinful. At the same time, the Confession adds that, in matters of great moment, an oath is warranted by the word of God; and this is the case under the New Testament as well as under the Old. Hence, a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority in matters of great weight, ought to be taken. The proper authority to impose an oath must be some lawfully-constituted authority in the church or in the state. Usually it is imposed by the proper civil officer in the civil sphere, and in connection with testimony in a court of law.

Thirdly, The effect or result of lawful oaths is to be considered. The first result indicated is that the person who takes an oath is to seriously consider the nature and import of so solemn an act, and in connection therewith to avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth. In addition to the natural obligation to tell the truth, there is the self-imposed obligation which the taking of the oath implies. In this connection the Confession tells us that there are certain limitations to the things concerning which we may swear. No man ought to bind himself by an oath to anything but what is good and just, or what he honestly believes to be so. Nor ought he to make oath to do what he is unable or does not intend to perform. Inability indicates the limit of duty in the matter of making an oath, and a lack of intention to do what the oath implies is profane and hypocritical. The Confession adds that it is a sin to refuse an oath touching anything that is good and just, if it be imposed by lawful authority. Some persons, like the Quakers, refuse, on conscientious grounds, to make oath at all; yet even in their case, in the declaration to speak the truth which they make, the substance of what the oath implies is to be found.

Fourthly, An oath is to be taken in the plain and common-sense use of the words employed. No equivocation nor any mental reservation can be allowed. This teaching is pointed

against the doctrine of *intention*, held by Romanists, and condemns it utterly. The ordinary meaning of the words employed is to express what it is intended to be uttered; and in all the asseverations of men nothing is to be kept back secretly in the mind of the person making the oath. As to the mode in which the oath ought to be administered, nothing definite is said in the Confession, so that no particular mode is prescribed. Those who administer it are, in a measure, left to their own discretion in this matter. The use of the Bible, and the raising of the right hand prevail. Kissing the book is not necessary, so far as the Confessional teaching is concerned, and there are not a few serious practical objections to this practice in making oath. It ought, therefore, to be abolished everywhere.

Fifthly, It is added that no oath can oblige a man to sin. But in anything not sinful, the oath being once taken binds to its performance, even though it be to a man's personal injury in various respects; nor, further, is an oath to be violated, although made to heretics or infidels. Here, again, the Romish doctrine is rejected. Rome teaches that oaths need not be respected if made with those whom she regards as infidels. On this ground an attempt is made to justify many of the evil deeds of deception and cruelty of which Rome has been guilty; but it is vain to make this attempt to justify these things, and the teaching of the Confession clearly is, that when an oath is made in a lawful way regarding things just and good, whether to a heretic or an infidel, the oath must be performed. Such is the teaching of the Confession regarding lawful oaths.

2. Lawful vows remain for brief explanation. The relation of the vow to the oath has been explained. The vow might almost be called a promissory oath. It ought to be made with the same religious care, and performed with like faithfulness as the oath.

First, Like the oath, it is to be made to God alone, and

not to any creature nor to a false god. In the vow God is the party to whom the promise is made; in the oath he is merely a witness. As to its nature, further, a vow, to have any value, must be made voluntarily. It must also be made out of faith and with a conscience of duty. It may be made for a twofold reason: either as an evidence of thankfulness for past mercies, or as an earnest for obtaining what we desire. By making the vow we do not create the duty, but rather bind ourselves to the performance of necessary duties, or to other things, so long as they may fitly conduce to our necessary duties.

Secondly, The things which men may vow are to be named. No man has any right to vow anything forbidden in the word of God. This is perfectly plain. If he did so vow, his vow would itself be sin, and his fulfilment of it would also be sin. Nor may any man vow anything which would hinder him in the discharge of any duty commanded in the word of God. Further, a man should not vow what it is not in his power to do, or for the performance of which God has not given him any promise or ability to the doing thereof. In this connection, the Confession formally condemns popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, of professed poverty, and of regular obedience to a superior. These are not higher degrees of perfection in the Christian life. They are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian should entangle himself. The wisdom of the teaching of the Confession upon this point is evident; for, not only is the Romish doctrine and practice without any support from Scripture, but it is also opposed to reason and common sense, as well as condemned by the practical results which so often flow from it in the lives of those who make these vows. Such is the teaching concerning lawful vows.

II. *The Civil Magistrate.*

The chapter in the Confession which treats of this subject is a very important one, as has been already seen in other

connections. The nature and functions of civil government, and the relation of that government to the church or kingdom of Christ, are questions of great moment and much difficulty. The various points touched on in the Confession are to be taken up in order and briefly explained.

1. Civil government, as well as ecclesiastical, is an ordinance of God. This the Confession plainly emphasizes, and it should never be forgotten by civil rulers. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained the civil magistrates to be under him over the people, for his own glory and the public good. This plainly teaches that the origin of civil government is not to be found merely in some primitive social compact, or voluntary association of individuals, but that it owes its origin to the ordination of God, who is the supreme moral ruler of all men. The fact that God has given to man a moral nature, and placed him in moral relations to himself, lays the foundation for this divine ordination of civil government. This means that God's moral government over men forms the basis of civil government as God's ordinance among men. The Standards do not teach that any particular form of civil government, as, for example, a monarchy or a republic, is divinely ordained. They simply teach that the powers that be are ordained of God, and that the special form of the government in any community is to be determined by the circumstances and conditions of the people from time to time.

The end or purpose of civil government is also to be stated here. It is twofold: *First*, It is for the glory of God. This means that God as King of kings ordains the institutions of civil government in order that thereby his name may be honored among men. This is, indeed, a noble conception of civil government, which princes and rulers will do well to remember. *Secondly*, It is for the public good of the commonwealth. It is intended to secure order and the exercise of the liberty of the individual, in harmony with that meas-

ure of restraint upon that liberty which the general good requires. The great principles of the divine government, as unfolded in the Scriptures, if regarded by nations in the conduct of their civil affairs, will attain both of these ends. The glory of God and the good of the people will thereby be permanently secured.

The Confession adds, that in order to render the civil government effective for these ends, God has armed the civil magistrate with the power of the sword. The purpose of this is to defend and encourage those that are good, and to restrain and punish evil-doers. The power of the sword is the power to inflict civil pains and penalties, such as the church is not entitled to inflict. Hence, civil government is entitled to make proper laws, to institute those agencies necessary for the execution of these laws, and to inflict such punishments as may be just upon offenders. Thus the church has the power of the keys, and the state has the power of the sword. Neither has the right to exercise the power of the other. The state has the right, not by mere arbitrary assumption, nor as the result of a social compact, but by the ordination of God, to inflict such penalties as the violation of the laws of the civil magistrate may incur. This is the true foundation, not only of civil government, but also of the punishment of offenders under it.

2. The Confession next says that it is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate when called thereunto. This wisely guards against an extreme inference from the doctrine of the separation of church and state which the Standards teach. That inference is to the effect that Christians should take no part at all in the affairs of state. They should not hold office, nor should they even vote at elections, especially if the government does not formally recognize God and the headship of Christ over the nations. But the Standards recognize that a man, while a Christian and a member of the church, is also a citizen and

a member of the commonwealth. This being the case, he has a standing in both church and state, and he may hold office and exercise rule in both, as well as be a subject of both.

In discharging their duty as rulers, Christian magistrates ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth. A truly Christian magistrate, enacting and applying righteous laws, will surely secure the very highest type of civil government. It is added that even such magistrates may lawfully, even under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions. This raises the perplexing question of the justice of war; and the answer, given with caution, is to the effect that upon certain occasions just and necessary war may be entered on. As to what constitutes a just and necessary occasion, it is not easy to give a definite answer. Assuming the righteousness of the law of self-defence in the individual, it may be justly concluded that defensive war, when the life and security of the nation are in danger, is legitimate; and this is, doubtless, the meaning of the Standards at this point. In most wars there is probably some blame on both sides; and wars for the mere acquisition of territory, for personal fame, or for national glory cannot be justified from the position of the Standards or the teaching of Scripture. One of the happy results of the advance of Christian civilization is that war is becoming less frequent, and that many disputes between nations are now settled by arbitration which in past ages would have been settled by an appeal to the sword.

3. In relation to the church and her ordinances the Confession asserts that the civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments.[1] This means that the state has not the right to appoint or control those who

[1] The original text of the passage in the Confession upon which this paragraph is based was revised and changed in 1789 A. D., in connection with the formation of the first General Assembly in the United States.

are to be the religious or spiritual leaders and guides of the people, nor to interfere in public worship nor with the administration of the sacraments. These functions belong only to the spiritual officers of the church. And, further, the civil magistrate is not to exercise the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, or in the least to interfere in matters of faith. Here the spheres of the church and of the state are again expressed. The civil magistrate has no power to admit members into the church nor to apply religious tests; nor can he administer discipline and shut people out of the church. He dare not carry the power of the sword into the church, and inflict temporal penalties upon its members. The neglect to regard this in the past has led to many a bloody and shameful persecution.

Then follows a statement in the Confession which has been often misapplied, especially by those who are in favor of some close relation between church and state. The statement referred to is that civil magistrates as nursing fathers ought to protect the church of our common Lord without giving preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest. This statement has been taken by some to mean that the state as a nursing father should, out of her gifts, support the church in the nation. But this is not the meaning of the passage quoted. It evidently means simply that the state should protect all Christians, irrespective of their

The original text of the Confession prior to this change read as follows: "The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the church; that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted at them be according to the mind of God." It will be seen at a glance how very important this revision of the Confession is.

denomination, in the enjoyment of all their civil and religious rights and privileges. That this is the true view is evident from what the Confession further says upon this subject as to the manner in which the civil magistrate should discharge his duty. It should be in such a way that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions without violence or danger. This is, indeed, the Magna Charta of religious liberty for all men, under any form of civil government whatever.

To make all mistakes impossible in regard to this matter the Confession adds, that as Jesus Christ has appointed a regular government in the church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder the due exercise thereof among the members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief. It is the duty, therefore, of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner, as that no person be suffered, either upon pretence of religion or infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse or injury to any person whatsoever; and, further, it is the duty of the civil magistrate to take order that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies shall be held without molestation or disturbance. Thus, according to the doctrine of the Standards, the state has no right to interfere in the matters which the government and discipline of the church cover, yet, at the same time, the state is bound to protect all classes of her citizens in the enjoyment of their rights and privileges. It is not to be wondered that those who drew up the excellent statement of the Confession upon this topic should have resisted, as they did, all attempts of the civil arm to introduce the power of the sword into the church; and that they were willing to suffer and die for the crown rights of their spiritual king, Jesus Christ, and to resist unto blood all attempts to coerce them in matters of religion.

4. The last point noted in the Confession has reference to the duties of the people towards the civil magistrate. Four things are to be set down here: *First*, The people are to pray for their rulers. The position which civil rulers hold is a difficult one, and their duties are often perplexing. They need divine guidance, so that we should pray God to bless and guide them in all things. *Secondly*, The people are to honor the persons of their rulers. They deserve to have respect shown them, especially on account of the position they hold, and they should be held in high esteem for their official status. *Thirdly*, Men are to pay tribute and other dues. This means that all just dues and taxes necessary for the expenses of the government are to be cheerfully paid by the people who enjoy the protection of the civil magistrate. *Fourthly*, Obedience is to be rendered to the civil magistrate for conscience' sake. This teaches that citizens should be good, loyal subjects of the government under which they live. For conscience' sake, even when the laws may not have the entire approval of the citizens, they ought, nevertheless, to obey, at least up to a certain point.

But a serious difficulty arises in this connection. The Standards, in speaking of these duties of citizens, evidently assume that the civil magistrate, even if not a Christian, is yet just, and has regard to the rights and liberties of the people. But cases may arise where the civil magistrate, either on civil or religious grounds, acts in an unjust manner, and even oppresses the people. In such a case, when every other means to secure relief has been exhausted, and when the civil magistrate, being very corrupt, commands what is contrary to the will and authority of God, resistance by arms on the part of the people may be just. In such a case the civil magistrate has really forfeited the end for which civil government is instituted; and so, when the people are not able to mend the government, they may virtually end it. This affords the ground, and the only ground, upon which

the right of revolution may be justified in certain cases, in harmony with the teaching of the Standards. This doctrine also destroys the supposed divine right of kings, as it was taught and acted on in Britain years ago, to the great injury of both religious and national life. The ordination by God of the powers that be does not justify the doctrine of the divine right of kings and rulers, without any regard to the welfare of the people under their authority.

The Confession adds, so that nothing may be left out, that infidelity or difference in religion does not make void the just and legal authority of the magistrate, nor free the people from their obedience to him. Hence, Christian subjects are not justified in rebelling against infidel rulers, unless the conditions stated in the previous paragraph arise; so that ecclesiastical persons are not exempted from obedience even in such a case. Still less has the pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people. Least of all has the pope power to deprive any of their people of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them as heretics, or upon any other pretence whatever. This is a very valuable statement. The pope claims over the people of his church an authority which is above that of the civil magistrate in that land. The Confession plainly rejects this, and refuses the pope any such authority. His followers in any land are simply entitled to the same protection at the hand of the civil magistrate as any other class of the citizens. The aggression of the Romish hierarchy in several respects in this country needs to be carefully regarded. To allow it to dominate is to pay the price for religious liberty.

III. *Marriage and Divorce.*

This is the third topic for this chapter, and it has already been directly alluded to under the seventh command. It is now to be considered in the light of the chapter in the Confession which formally treats of it.

1. The nature of marriage is first stated. It is the union for life between one man and one woman, according to God's ordinance. Therefore it is not lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time. Thus polygamy and polyandry are condemned.

2. The purpose or end of marriage is next explained. In the Confession four important ends are said to be served by the marriage relation: *First*, Thereby husband and wife are made mutually helpful to each other. Each has certain duties to perform, and in their performance husband and wife, by reason of their union in the married state, may be of much help and service to each other. *Secondly*, Marriage perpetuates the race of mankind by legitimate issue. This was the divine command given to the race at first in Eden, and the marriage of one man and one woman best serves this important end. *Thirdly*, By means of marriage the church is provided with a holy seed. This is in harmony with what was seen to be the teaching of the Standards concerning baptism, and the place and privilege of the children of believers in the visible church. The children of parents who are in covenant with the Lord are born within the covenant, and are federally holy or set apart as the Lord's, and are to be trained up accordingly. *Fourthly*, Marriage serves to prevent uncleanness. Delay in marriage or neglect of it tends to vice in this respect, and suitable marriage is the proper preventative.

3. The question of what persons should marry is next answered by the Confession. It is lawful for all persons to marry who are able, with good judgment, to give their consent. At the same time, it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. Therefore, such as profess the true reformed religion are not to marry with infidels, papists, or other idolaters; nor should such as are godly marry those who are notoriously wicked in their lives or maintain damna-

ble heresies. This is scriptural and wise teaching. The marriages here condemned, if contracted, are sure to bring discomfort, perhaps misery, upon the persons themselves, certainly evil upon the families. Still, if husband or wife is converted after marriage, that is not a good reason for separation, for the unbelieving partner may still be sanctified by the believing one; but, as a rule, to marry a rake or a rascal to reform him is like playing with fire or trifling with dynamite.

4. Another important question here is the degrees of relationship within which marriage should be contracted. The Confession speaks at length regarding this question, and its teaching has been much debated and variously understood. The general position of the Confession is, that what is forbidden by the word of God is unlawful in regard to the lawfulness of marriage between those related to each other. Then there are two sets of relationships to be considered here: *First*, Those which are based on blood relation or consanguity; and, *Secondly*, those that are the result of marriage or affinity. The chief topic of debate here has arisen in regard to the question of the lawfulness of the marriage of a man with the sister of his former wife, deceased. Those who argue against the lawfulness of such marriages say that a man ought not to marry any of his wife's kin who are by affinity related to him in the same degree as those of his own kin who are related to him by consanguity, whom he ought not to marry. Thus it is argued that since a man may not marry his own sister, so he ought not to marry his wife's sister. This seems an easy way of settling the debate if the basis upon which it is settled can be made good. Those who argue in favor of the lawfulness of such marriages deny the soundness of the analogy between the degrees of affinity and consanguinity, and are content to take the cases that are forbidden in the Scriptures and the cases similar thereto in the line of consanguinity. On this basis, in recent years,

many branches of the Presbyterian family have amended or annulled this passage in the Confession, so far as it relates to the marriage of a man with the sister of his deceased wife. By those who take this view such marriages are no longer regarded as incestuous; but all marriages between persons who are related in degrees forbidden in Scripture are incestuous, and can never be made lawful, either by civil enactment or by the consent of the parties to live together as husband and wife. This is an important practical matter at the present day.

5. The only grounds of divorce are set down very clearly in the Confession. Adultery or fornication committed after promise of marriage, and detected before marriage, gives good ground for the innocent party to dissolve the contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and after the divorce has been obtained, to marry another, just as if the offending party were dead. It is not stated that the guilty party may marry again lawfully, and the civil law in not a few countries forbids the guilty party from contracting another marriage during the lifetime of the one who had been sinned against.

In addition to adultery and fornication, such wilful desertion as can in no way be remedied by church or civil magistrate is also held to be sufficient cause for dissolving the marriage bond. But even in such cases an orderly legal course ought to be pursued, and parties are not to act at their own discretion in the matter. For no other causes or reasons is divorce to be allowed, according to the teaching of the Standards.

There is much need of teaching at the present day upon this practical matter, and a warning voice ought to be lifted up in Christian lands in connection with the alarming rate at which divorces are increasing in number, and in regard to the trivial grounds upon which they are often granted. The

result of easy and frequent divorces will doubtless be ruinous to domestic, social and national prosperity. The marriage state is the foundation of the home, and the home is alike the shrine and the citadel of the nation. If the home life is to be held secure, divorce, for other than scriptural reasons, must be forever denied.

CHAPTER XXXII.

DEATH AND THE MIDDLE STATE.

Shorter Catechism, 37—; Larger Catechism, 84–86; Confession of Faith, XXXIII., 1.

FROM the difficult questions of church government, and the perplexing problem of the relations between the church and the state, this chapter carries the exposition forward to the momentous things which pertain to the church and the world in the future, as revealed in the sacred Scriptures and stated in various ways in the Standards. Upon these questions the Shorter Catechism has comparatively little to say. It speaks only of the death and resurrection of the righteous, and makes no definite statement in regard to the wicked. The statement of the Larger Catechism is more complete, and it speaks concerning both the righteous and the wicked. The Confession, although quite brief in what it has to say, is at the same time quite comprehensive in its teaching upon the great matters involved.

It is proper to remark at the outset, that at the time the Standards were drawn up the great questions in eschatology were not clearly raised and fully discussed except as between Romanism and Protestantism. This, in part, accounts for the somewhat inadequate treatment which the whole subject receives in the Standards. Since that time new and important phases of these questions have emerged, especially in regard to the nature and duration of future punishment, and the second advent of Christ; and even at the present day this department of Christian doctrine has not yet attained to that definite and complete form which has been reached in most of the other departments of it. There is room and need for special attention being given to questions in eschatology.

In this exposition two chapters will be devoted to what

the Standards teach concerning the final things of the church and the world. At some points the exposition may enlarge a little upon what the Standards say, by making such inferences as may render the whole explanation more complete and adequate for the present day. This chapter will deal with the two closely-related topics of death and the middle state. The former need not detain us long, but the latter needs more extended discussion.

I. *Death.*

The Larger Catechism says that death being threatened as the wages of sin, it is appointed unto men once to die, for that all have sinned. It also adds that the righteous shall be delivered from death itself at the last day, and even though they suffer temporal or physical death, they are delivered from the sting and curse of it. The Confession, in the brief statement which it gives of the nature of death, exhibits three things. These are now noted in order, with some brief comments.

1. Death, physical, implies separation of the connection between the soul and body, which subsists during the present earthly state of existence. Man, as already explained, consists of two distinct factors. The body is material and the soul is spiritual. During this life these two factors are bound together in such a way as to make up man's complete personality. At death the bond which holds them together is severed. But there is mystery here, for just as it is impossible to say precisely how they are joined in life, or how the body and soul are actually related to each other, so it is not possible to state definitely what death implies as an actual experience. But we can be sure of the fact that for a time soul and body are separated by means of death.

2. Death implies the departure of the soul or spiritual element in man's person, not only from the body, but also its going to the abode of disembodied spirits. It becomes a disembodied spirit by reason of death, and it seems that such

a spirit cannot tarry in this sublunary sphere. Hence, it wings its way, guided, it may be, by the angels, to the domain of spirits, where in a disembodied condition it maintains a purely spiritual career during the intermediate state, which is to be spoken of later on in this chapter. In this way the second factor involved in death is made plain.

3. The last factor in death relates to the body and its destiny. The body after death sees corruption and returns to dust. As the soul returns to God who gave it, so the body returns to the dust whence it came. Hence, death implies, not only the disembodied existence of the spirit of man to which God has given an immortal existence, but also the dissolution of the body to its simple elements. In this connection the Shorter Catechism, speaking of the righteous, says that the bodies of believers are in some way united to Christ, as they rest in their graves awaiting the resurrection. This union, of course, is not a material or mechanical one, but is an important result of the mystical union which the believer sustains to Christ. Indeed, it is a factor in that union which relates to both natures of the person of the believer. Just as the bond between soul and body is not so absolutely broken by the article of death that the resurrection of the body cannot take place, so the union which the body of the believer has with Christ is never so broken even by death as to be incapable of restoration. The germ of resurrection remains, and bond of union abides. In the case of the wicked it is to be observed that no such relation to Christ is asserted in regard to their bodies, and consequently they abide under spiritual and eternal death, while their bodies are raised by the power of Christ, and not by virtue of their union with him. It need only be added here that death fixes destiny in the case of both the righteous and the wicked.

In these three particulars physical death only has been described. Before leaving this dark and painful subject, it

may be well to repeat what was virtually said when discussing the results of the sin and fall of the race in Adam. Death in its deepest sense is the loss of spiritual life by the soul, as well as the physical death of the body, as above described. Death thus viewed is the penalty of sin, and in its most general view it denotes *separation.* Physical death is separation of soul and body. Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God, and the effect of this upon the moral and spiritual nature of man. Then, when this spiritual death becomes a fixed state, it is eternal death or permanent separation of the soul from God. Physical death happens to all men, but is different in the case of the righteous and of the wicked. In the case of the latter its sting and horror remains, but in the case of the former it is removed. The wicked die twice, and remain under the power of the second death. The righteous die but once, and are made alive forevermore. The wicked remain forever under the penalty of death, while the righteous are freed forever from that penalty. Other aspects of this topic will emerge in the next chapter, where the resurrection is explained at length.

II. *The Middle State.*

This is a subject about which in recent times there has been a great deal of discussion, and not a little idle speculation. The question as to the location and condition of the righteous and wicked, respectively, has been much debated in recent times, and the inquiry as to whether there is or shall be any opportunity to hear the gospel, and so to be saved, during the interval between death and the resurrection, has been distinctly raised and learnedly discussed. Into these discussions it is not necessary to enter in a formal way, but it will be well to keep them in mind in the exposition of what the Standards say upon this point. The period of time which now comes before us is that which elapses between death and the resurrection, and the real debate has

reference to the abode and experiences of the righteous and wicked, respectively, in that abode.

1. The souls of both the righteous and the wicked are neither dead nor sleeping during that period. They are conscious and active. The Confession says that the souls of men, both righteous and wicked, do after death return immediately to God who gave them. Hence, the doctrine of the sleep of the soul, or of its semi-conscious state during the period in question, has no favor whatever in the Standards. As the body may not be necessary to consciousness and mental activity, so the soul may be both conscious and active in its disembodied middle state.

2. The condition of the righteous and of the wicked differs in certain important respects during that period. There are several things in the teaching of the Standards which should be noted with some care.

First, In the case of the righteous, their souls are, at death, made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory. The Larger Catechism says that God, out of his love, frees them perfectly from sin and misery, and makes them capable of further communion with Christ in glory, upon which they enter. This communion with Christ in glory is further defined as something which they enjoy immediately after death, and it consists in their souls being made perfect in holiness, being received into the highest heavens, and there beholding the face of God in light and glory. The Confession uses almost the same language when it says that the souls of the righteous, being at death made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory. Both the Larger Catechism and the Confession make the significant remark that the disembodied spirits of the redeemed are in the highest heavens, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. The reference in this remark is no doubt to the resurrection of their bodies and the reunion of their souls

and bodies so as to fit them for still higher degrees of felicity and glory. In this careful way the Standards state the case of the righteous.

Secondly, In regard to the wicked, the teaching is that the souls of the wicked after death and their return to God who gave them are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. The Larger Catechism adds a very important remark regarding the bodies of the wicked during this period. It says, that just as the bodies of the righteous continue even in death to be in union with Christ, as they rest in their graves till at the last day they shall be again united to their souls, so the bodies of the wicked are kept in their graves, as in their prisons, until the resurrection and judgment of the great day. This statement is noteworthy, because it is the only remark which the Standards directly make in regard to the bodies of the wicked during that mysterious interval between death and the resurrection. In the case of the righteous and wicked, therefore, the teaching of the Standards is clear and definite in regard to both their souls and bodies. Both classes, in respect to their souls, are in their final state and abode, but they are not fully fitted for final felicity on the one hand, or prepared for the deepest experience of their final doom on the other. The state in which both are is properly called a *middle* state, and it is also an incomplete condition, so far as capacity for final felicity and future punishment is concerned. Before completeness is reached, body and soul must be reunited in the person. Hence, the resurrection must intervene to secure this, so that by the reunion of soul and body the endowment of the person may be completed, so far as capacity for joy or pain is concerned.

Thirdly, The Confession suggests a very interesting inquiry when it adds, that besides these two places above described, for the abode of the souls of men separated from their bodies, the Scriptures acknowledge none. This state-

ment is opposed to the Romish doctrine at this point, and it also effectually meets some modern theories upon this subject. The doctrine of the Standards clearly is, that the souls of men after death do not go to a temporary abode for disembodied spirits, but they go to the place, heaven or hell, where they are forever to have their dwelling-place. The difference in their condition prior to and after the resurrection and judgment is not that they inhabit different places in these two periods of their career, but it consists in their capacity, and especially in regard to the relations of the soul and body. Prior to the resurrection, the disembodied souls are in heaven and hell respectively. Then at the resurrection these souls come forth from their respective places, are reunited with their bodies, and then after judgment they return to their respective abodes, to remain there forever.

This doctrine is opposed to that of Rome in several respects. It denies entirely that there are more than two localities. The Standards do not tell us precisely where heaven and hell are, but their teaching does not admit that there are so many places in the middle state as the Romish theologians assert. There is no *limbus infantum*, which is the supposed place where unbaptized infants who die in infancy go, and where they continue in a quiescent state, neither of happiness nor of suffering. Nor was there ever such a place as the *limbus patrum*, which was the supposed abode of the Old Testament saints in a disembodied state, who lived and died before Christ came, and to whom Christ went and declared the gospel during the period when his body lay in the grave and his spirit was free. They say that in this sense Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison. He went then to the saints of all the ages prior to Christ's advent, and set them free by declaring to them his triumph over Satan. Still less can there be any such place as *purgatory* pertaining to the middle state, wherein certain souls, who when they died were not quite ready for heaven,

are purified for their habitation by purgatorial fires of some sort. The Scriptures know of no such place; nor do the Standards. Hence, the Romish perversions are to be set aside entirely. There are no such classes of persons in the middle state, and no such places. Heaven and hell are the only places.

Nor do the Standards favor the view held by some modern theologians, that the disembodied spirits of both the righteous and the wicked go to a common abode, which is temporary, and in which they abide only till the resurrection. Here both classes are supposed to be together in the region of departed spirits during the middle state. After the resurrection and judgment these completed persons, with soul and body reunited, enter heaven and hell for the first time, according as their award at the day of judgment determines. This general theory has no favor at all in the Standards. The souls of the righteous do immediately pass into glory, and are received into the highest heavens. The souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain for the judgment day. The former are in heaven and the latter are in hell in a disembodied state. The resurrection reunites these souls and bodies, the judgment publicly announces their destiny respectively, and they re-enter the abodes whence they came for judgment, and remain forever therein.

In closing this chapter it may be added that in the middle state there is no sanctification of the soul in the disembodied state, in the sense that some remnants of sin which have been carried forward by the redeemed into the middle state are purged away. There may be advance in knowledge of divine realities and growth in the positive experiences of the divine life in their souls, but there shall be no experience of sanctification in the sense of dying unto sin, for that was all removed at death. Death thus fixes destiny, and, to a certain extent, the general moral state of every person. Such is the teaching of the Standards.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE RESURRECTION AND GENERAL JUDGMENT.

SHORTER CATECHISM, 38; LARGER CATECHISM, 87-90; CONFESSION OF FAITH, XXXII., XXXIII.

THE two concluding topics of the Standards which call for exposition are now reached. They very properly stand at the close of the outline of Christian doctrine, since they mark the close of the history of the human race and of the church in the world, and lead on to the consideration of the eternal destiny of men in a future state of existence. The Shorter Catechism has a brief statement upon these two topics, in which it states the fact of the resurrection without explaining it, and in which it asserts the fact of the general judgment and the eternal felicity of the redeemed in glory. The Larger Catechism and the Confession give much more extended statements upon these subjects. In this chapter the meaning of these statements will be opened up in an orderly way. There are two separate topics to be considered.

I. *The Resurrection of the Dead.*

Upon this subject the teaching of the Standards, in general, is to the effect that at the last day there shall be a general resurrection both of the just and the unjust. This great event shall take place at the end of the world, and at the completion of the history of the church upon the earth. This resurrection shall be general in its nature, including as its subjects all the dead, small and great, good and bad. When the trump of God shall sound, all in their graves shall come forth, and those in the sea shall appear in the resurrection. It is clear that the doctrine of the Standards does not favor two resurrections, as is held by some. All men, according to their teaching, are to be raised at the same time, and both just and unjust are to come forth to the issues

of the judgment day. It is proper to remark, that when the Standards were drawn up premillennial ideas did not much prevail, and the notion of two resurrections in the premillennial sense had not definitely arisen. In the general statement of the Standards the following particulars are implied

1. Those who are alive when the resurrection occurs shall not die, but shall be changed. This change will be some sort of transmutation, by means of which the bodies of those then alive shall be so changed as to fit them for their eternal abode. The change which Enoch and Elijah experienced illustrates this in a measure, and the modification which the body of our Lord underwent prior to or at the time of his ascension was, no doubt, a somewhat similar one. Thus in a moment, by divine power, the living shall be changed, and made to assume those qualities of body which the spiritual conditions of the future state of existence shall require. This change shall be experienced by all then living on the earth, whether good or bad, whether righteous or wicked.

2. All the dead shall be raised with the self-same bodies, and none other. The Larger Catechism says that the self-same bodies of the dead which are laid in the grave, being then again united to their souls forever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ. Both of these statements teach that all that is necessary to preserve bodily identity is preserved in the resurrection body. In some well-defined sense, it shall be the same body which in this life was inhabited by the soul, and was the instrument of all its activities, that shall be raised up at the last day. This sets aside the idea that an entirely new body is to be created, or that in no sense is there to be any relation between the body that is laid in the grave and the resurrection body. It is the same body that dies and is buried which is reanimated and raised. Just as truly as Jesus had the identical body after the resurrection and ascension which he had before, so shall all the

dead possess the same body after the resurrection which they had in this earthly life, however much it may be changed to fit it for its eternal home. The main thing to hold fast here is the fact that there is identity in some real sense between the present body and that which shall be ours by the resurrection.

3. The fact of the resurrection further implies that the soul and body shall be reunited. Death severs the bond between them, and leads to the dissolution of the body. The resurrection not only reanimates the body, but it also reunites the reanimated body to the disembodied soul. By this means the person is again made complete, and the basis of responsibility is fully preserved. Just when and how this union is effected we are not told, and may not be able to say definitely. Whether the body shall be reanimated by having its physical life restored to it prior to its reunion with the soul, or whether the presence of the soul itself in the lifeless gathered elements of the body shall be the cause of the reanimation of the body, we do not venture to assert. The simple fact is before us that the body and soul are reunited, the identity of the body is not destroyed, and the personal identity of those raised up is entirely preserved amid all the changes which take place.

4. In regard to the just, the Confession says that they shall be raised by the Spirit of Christ unto honor, and be made conformable to his own glorious body. The Larger Catechism, to a certain extent, expands this statement when it says that the bodies of the just are raised by the Spirit of Christ, and by virtue of his resurrection as their head, in power, spiritual and incorruptible, and made like unto his glorious body. Herein there are several things to be observed. The agency by which the resurrection of the just is effected is the Spirit of Christ. His Spirit dwelling in the just not only saves the soul, but is the agent by which the resurrection of their bodies is effected. The Larger Cate-

chism signalizes a very important matter when it says that the resurrection of the just is also due to the virtue of the resurrection of Christ, their head. Through their union with Christ, as has been already stated, believers are joined to him both as to their bodies and their souls. Hence, their bodies, after death, are still united to Christ as they lie in their graves. At the resurrection that union supplies an important factor in effecting the resurrection of the just. And, finally, the resurrection of the just is to be a glorious one. It is unto honor, and in power. It is to be a spiritual and incorruptible estate in heaven. Such is the glorious hope which the believer has of life and immortality by the gospel.

5. In the case of the unjust or finally impenitent, the Standards set forth in a very brief way the bearing of the resurrection. The Confession simply says that the bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor. The Larger Catechism, after stating, in general, that all the dead shall be raised by the power of Christ, and the just specially by his Spirit, adds that the bodies of the wicked shall be raised up in dishonor by him as an offended judge. Here it is asserted that Christ, by his power, and not by his Spirit, shall raise the bodies of the wicked. There is no bond of union between Christ and the unjust or unbelieving, as thereby the divine power may effect their resurrection. And as their resurrection is not a benefit of redemption, the unjust are raised up by Christ acting in the capacity of the judge of the quick and the dead, and their resurrection is consequently judicial in its nature, and in order to judgment, as will presently appear. This doctrine, it may be added, is inconsistent with the views of those who teach that the wicked shall not be raised at all, or, if raised, shall be annihilated as a punishment for their sins. Hence, the wicked are raised up by Christ unto dishonor, to be finally judged by him.

6. An important and difficult question yet remains. It is one upon which the Standards speak in a somewhat indirect way, but it is one about which a good deal is said in writings upon this subject. This question relates to the precise nature of the resurrection body. It has already been shown that the resurrection body shall in some real sense be the same as the present body. It will be the self-same body, and none other. The question as to the sense in which it is the same at once arises. If there be identity between the body that now is and the body that shall be, the question is as to that in which the identity consists. In regard to this inquiry a few remarks are made, inasmuch as a number of objections are lodged against the whole doctrine of the resurrection of the body at this particular point.

First, Negatively, this identity does not necessarily imply identity or sameness of the material elements or atoms of which the body may be composed. Objections to the doctrine assume that the fact of the resurrection requires this identity. But the Standards do not so teach, nor does the Scripture so state. Personal identity may be continued and personal responsibility be preserved, without absolute preservation of the material particles of the body. This is true even in this present life, as the body undergoes change from youth to maturity, and from maturity to old age. The Confession gives the key to the solution of the problem when it says that the body which is raised as the self-same body shall possess different qualities from those which it now has. It shall doubtless be endowed by the agency which raises it up with all those qualities which it needs for its eternal destiny and abode. Those qualities are stated in the Scriptures, and are such as these: It shall be incorruptible, it shall be glorious, it shall be clad with power, and it shall be made a spiritual body. With such qualities it is fit for a spiritual state and place, and yet it can be properly called the self-same body, and none other. Personal identity and

responsibility are carried up to the judgment, and on to eternity. Another passage bearing upon this point tells us that Christ shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. Hence, what Christ's body became after the ascension and glorification, ours shall become by the change which the resurrection effects. Another passage indicates that we shall, in some respects, be like the angels of heaven.

Both Scripture and the Standards speak of the case of the just almost entirely at this point, but it is a proper inference to make that the bodies of the unjust shall also be changed, and yet their personal identity be entirely preserved. They shall have given to them by divine power those qualities necessary for their eternal abode in darkness and dishonor. This dark aspect of the subject need not detain us.

II. *The Final Judgment.*

This last solemn event is not alluded to at any length in the Shorter Catechism, but both the Larger Catechism and the Confession speak at length and clearly upon it. The Shorter Catechism simply says that there shall be a general judgment, when believers shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted, and made perfectly blessed in the enjoyment of God to all eternity. Concerning the place and destiny of the wicked in the judgment, this Catechism is silent. Only by way of inference can there be any statement made from the basis of this Catechism. The doctrine, therefore, must be drawn from the Larger Catechism and the Confession. The following remarks may supply a general summary of the teaching of the Standards upon the great subject of the last general judgment.

1. The judgment is to be general and is to come immediately after the resurrection. It relates to angels, specially the apostate angels, to all men, good and bad, small and great. Christ is to be the judge at that great day. Before him, gathered it would seem by the angels, shall be assem-

bled men of every nation, tongue, and clime. The good and the bad shall be gathered at the world's last grand assize; and in regard to the judgment process, they shall be judged out of the records of heaven and according to the deeds done in the body. Just as there is one resurrection, so there shall be one judgment also. This is inconsistent with the premillennial idea of the judgment. The Standards teach that there shall be one general, final judgment, and that all men, just and unjust, are to be present at it. The world is to be judged in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment has been committed by the Father. The parties to be judged are apostate angels, and all the members of the human race who have ever lived upon the earth. They are all to appear before the tribunal of Christ at that great and notable day.

2. The day of judgment has had its time set by God, yet he hath not made the exact time known to men. The fact is frequently asserted in the Scriptures, but the precise time of its occurrence is never stated. This is, for good reasons, kept hidden from men. It comes after the resurrection, and at no great interval of time from it. The day and the hour of the judgment no man knoweth, that all may watch and pray and be ready for the appearance of the Lord when he comes the second time without sin, unto salvation, to judge the quick and the dead at his appearing. This is evidently a wise provision. It tends to deter men from sin, and it affords consolation to the godly in their adversity. It stirs up men to shake off carnal security, and it leads them to be sober and watchful, for they know not at what hour the Lord may come. They may thereby be the better prepared for his coming.

At this stage the topic of the second advent of Christ naturally comes before us. In regard to this great event, the Standards simply assume that it shall take place in connection with the resurrection and with a view to the final judg-

ment. He comes the second time without or apart from sin to judge the living and the dead at his second advent in the world. Hence, the Standards do not favor the premillennial view that Christ shall come personally at the beginning of the millennium, and reign in person over his people on the earth for a thousand years before the general judgment now under notice shall come to pass. Moreover, the Standards never mention the millennium at all at any place in their doctrinal statements. The reason for this was chiefly the fact that the question was not really raised at that time, nor regarded of much doctrinal importance. It is only of late years that the premillennial theory of the second advent of Christ has become quite prominent, and is held by many good men. We cannot enter into the whole merits of the case here, and content ourselves with simply pointing out the fact that the Standards are not favorable in any way to premillennialism. At the same time, since many good, earnest men hold it, we shall not use hard words against it, however clear our own convictions may be that the premillennial theory is, if not unscriptural, at least extra-confessional.

3. The purpose of the judgment process next calls for some explanation. All men are to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words and deeds, and also to receive their award according to what they have done in the body, whether good or bad. As they are assembled on that solemn occasion, all things will be naked and open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Our thoughts, our words, and our acts will all be inspected and pronounced upon. The underlying question will be in regard to our interest in Christ as our Redeemer, and whether or no our names are written in the Lamb's book of life. Our interest in Christ will be the ground of our acquittal and reward, but our deeds of loving service to Christ and his people will be the measure of our reward. The wicked, in like manner, will be condemned be-

cause they are not in union with Christ, and the degree of their punishment will be the measure of guilt which they have incurred by their profane and wicked deeds.

A further result of the judgment day and its highest end will be the manifestation of the glory of God. It will secure this in a twofold way. On the other hand, the glory of the mercy and grace of God is manifested in the eternal salvation of his people. They, in their salvation, are for the praise of his glorious grace. And on the other hand, the glory of his justice is manifested in the damnation of the reprobate, who remain wicked and disobedient to the end. Their wickedness and disobedience is the ground of their condemnation, and in their condemnation they but receive the due reward of their deeds, to the praise of God's glorious justice.

The glory of God's mercy in the case of the righteous appears in the fact that they go into everlasting life, and there receive that fulness of joy and refreshing which comes from the presence of the Lord. The glory of heaven and the praises of the redeemed through all the ages, as they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, will continually manifest the glory of the mercy and grace of almighty God; and the glory of God's justice in the case of the wicked appears in the fact that since they did not know God, nor obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, they are cast into eternal torments, and are punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. They did not seek to know God nor retain him in their thoughts, nor did they obey the gospel invitation, hence their condemnation is in accordance with the eternal justice of God, and it vindicates that justice in a very impressive manner.

4. The general results of the judgment remain to be briefly explained. To a certain extent, some of these results are involved in what is stated in the preceding section; but in the Larger Catechism, especially, the results of the judgment upon

the parties who are judged are fully stated. It is interesting to note that the order in which the case of the wicked and that of the righteous is taken up in the Catechism is different from the order of treatment usually followed in the treatises on theology. Usually they deal with the case of the righteous first, as the Scriptures generally do, and conclude with a statement about the final doom of the wicked. The Larger Catechism reverses this order, and so it deals with the case of the wicked first, and concludes by reference to the glorious destiny of the righteous. This order is pleasant to think on, for it leads our thoughts last of all up to heaven, after they have been for a time at the gates of hell. Moreover, this order is justified by the text which says: And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. This is the order of the Catechism, while the Confession follows the other order. For many reasons, the order of the Catechism is to be preferred.

First, In the case of the wicked, a few things are to be set down. At the day of judgment the wicked shall be set at Christ's left hand. The evidence of their guilt shall be adduced. Upon the presentation of clear evidence in the case, and upon the full conviction of their own consciences, there shall be pronounced against them the fearful but just sentence of condemnation. In the justice of this sentence, both the outward fact of guilt and its inward evidence shall agree. After sentence is pronounced it shall be executed, and as the result of this the wicked shall be cast out from the favorable presence of God, and be separated from the fellowship and glory of Christ, and of his saints and the holy angels. And not only so, but they shall be cast into hell, and there punished with unspeakable torments in soul and body, with the devil and his angels forever. This is strong language, but not more so than the expressions of Scripture, even of our Lord himself, upon this subject. They are banished from God's favorable presence, but they are not beyond his judi-

cial control. They are separated from the saints and angels forever, and they are in the company of the devil and his angels for eternity. And, to crown all, they suffer sore torments, in which the whole person suffers continually. There may be no literal fire, but that which such fire symbolizes in the way of punishment shall be endured.

It is well to add that the duration of this punishment is assumed by the Standards to be eternal. No care is taken to argue the matter, but the same language which is used in the Scriptures to denote endlessness is set down in the Standards; and the eternal duration of the punishment, and the impossibility of deliverance from it, are simply assumed in the Scriptures and the Standards. No place is allowed for any kind of second probation, and no hint is given that the infliction of the penalty shall end. In recent years the doctrine of the endlessness of future punishment has been called in question in various quarters, and much controversy has been indulged in regarding it, so that a few additional sentences may with propriety be devoted to it here: *First*, The Greek terms here used in the Scriptures are the only ones in that language to denote endlessness. *Secondly*, There are no passages of Scripture to show that men will hear the gospel after death, which fixes destiny. *Thirdly*, There is no promise made in the Scriptures that man shall have the aid of the Holy Spirit beyond the grave. *Fourthly*, The circumstances and influences around the soul which dies impenitent cannot be so favorable to repentance as in this life. *Fifthly*, The force of habit and long continuance in sin must make the heart harder. *Sixthly*, Mere punishment hardens the soul when grace is not present to sanctify the suffering. *Seventhly*, The immortality of the soul implies eternal punishment, unless there is some way to get rid of sin after death. *Eighthly*, Endless sinning implies endless punishment, unless it can be shown that wicked men cease to sin after death. *Ninthly*, The reasons which take away the ground for endless

punishment would also remove the ground for endless felicity in heaven. Abolish hell, and heaven is obliterated. Revelation is clear in regard to the perpetuity of both, and this means that both states are fixed, and that the experiences of the citizens of both abodes are perpetual.

Secondly, The case of the righteous needs only brief remark. At the day of judgment, the righteous, being caught up to Christ in the clouds, shall be set on his right hand, and there be openly acknowledged and acquitted. At death their happy destiny was fixed, but they were not qualified for full felicity till the resurrection reunited soul and body. Thus qualified for full felicity, they appear at the judgment, and are found on the right hand of Christ the judge, where their sure title to heaven and their fit character for it are made manifest before men and angels. Then, further, they are associated with Christ in some way in judging apostate angels and reprobate men. What the precise nature of this office shall be we are not clearly told. Some would interpret it in harmony with premillennial views of Christ's second advent, and it is about the only passage in the Standards which may be so understood. Yet it is better to take this passage in the light of other clear passages which are opposed to premillennial theories.

Then, after the judgment process is over, and their acquittal and reward announced, the righteous shall be received into heaven, where they shall be fully freed from all sin and misery. They shall also be filled with inconceivable joys. They shall in like manner be made perfectly holy and happy, in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints and angels. But the crowning element in their joy shall consist in the immediate vision and fruition of God the Father, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, to all eternity. This is the perfect and full communion which the members of the invisible church enjoy with Christ in glory at the resurrection and day of judgment.

This completes the splendid inventory of the blessed experiences of the redeemed in heaven. Acquittal by Christ before all men and angels; association with him in judging apostate men and angels; introduction into heaven itself and all its glory; fellowship with saints and holy angels there; and, above all, an immediate vision of the triune Jehovah to all eternity, make up the category of felicity and glory which the redeemed enjoy at and after the judgment.

The locality of heaven is not stated, nor is the place where hell is to be found named. Here the Standards exhibit their usual reserve and caution. Where Christ and the redeemed are is heaven; where the devil and his angels are is hell. The main thing is that, through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, we should prepare for heaven by seeking union with Christ, which faith in him implies; and then, being thus united with him, we may be sure that he will carry us up to his Father's presence with exceeding joy, and present us faultless before his throne, and at the same time introduce us into the experience of those things which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive, but which are reserved for all those who love his appearing, and who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

THE proposed exposition of the Presbyterian Standards has been completed. A closing chapter may be devoted to some remarks based upon this exposition. Some general features of the contents of the Standards as a whole may be signalized now, in a more intelligent way than was possible prior to the exposition. A very brief summary of these contents may be first given.

At the outset, a chapter was devoted to a brief history of the creeds of the Christian church, and another to the nature and uses of religious creeds. Then the topics were taken up according to the general order of the Shorter Catechism, and the contents of the Larger Catechism and Confession of Faith were carefully woven into the discussion throughout. In addition, some topics set forth in the Confession alone were also explained, so as to make the exposition complete. Then the several topics of Christian doctrine were unfolded in an orderly way. The doctrine of Holy Scripture came naturally first, then God and his attributes followed, together with an explanation of the Trinity. The decrees and their execution came next in order, to be followed by the outline of the covenant of works, and man's failure and fall in that covenant relation, together with an exposition of original sin. Then the covenant of grace came into view, and this led to an exposition of the person and work of the mediator of that covenant, under the three official relations of prophet, priest, and king, together with an outline of his humiliation and exaltation. This led to the nature and free agency of man, and to the important matter of effectual calling, and union with Christ. Then came the benefits of Christ in justification, adoption, and sanctification, together with faith and

repentance. This was followed, very properly, by some explanation of good works, perseverance, and assurance. Next came the law of God and Christian liberty, to be followed by the communion of saints and religious worship. The means of grace was the topic next explained, and this led to an exposition of the ten commandments, and of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper at some length. After this a variety of topics, expounded chiefly in the Larger Catechism and Confession, were explained in regard to the church, her censures, her synods and councils, and her relation to the state. The exposition concluded with some explanations of death, the intermediate state, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment.

The first general remark to be made is the obvious one that the Standards, taken as a whole, are exceedingly comprehensive in their scope. They set forth with great fulness the teaching of the Scriptures in regard to the three great departments of the Christian religion. *First*, A very comprehensive statement of the doctrines of the Scriptures is given. These relate to God and his plan and its execution, to man and his fallen moral state, to Christ and his redeeming work, and to the results of that work both for this life and for that which is to come. *Secondly*, A very complete and detailed code of morals or Christian ethics is unfolded. The Scriptures are thereby regarded not only as a rule of faith, setting forth the doctrines to be believed, but also as a rule of life, unfolding the principles or laws which are to guide men in all they think and say and do. The summary of this rule is the ten commandments, and therein man's duty to God and to his fellowmen is explained with much care, both on the positive and negative sides. And, *Thirdly*, The general principles of the government, discipline, and worship of the church are exhibited. This department of religious truth is not so fully wrought out in the Standards as the other two, yet many important matters in harmony with the Presby-

terian system are propounded and enforced. The discussion of the sacraments is unusually complete, and is one of the great excellencies of the Standards in comparison with other creeds. In this way it appears that doctrine, ethics, and polity are all embraced in the Standards. Matters of faith, duty, and worship are all explained.

In the second place, the Standards constitute a definite creed with a catholic spirit. That there is definiteness about the creed is evident from the exposition made. Some have found fault with the clear-cut form in which the doctrines are expressed, and with the minute way in which the rules for the conduct of life are set forth. Some have even been displeased with the general way in which matters of polity, especially in regard to the relations between church and state, are defined in the Standards. It is freely admitted that the doctrines are definite, that the ethical system is strict, and that the doctrine of the church is lofty and pure; but these features may be justly claimed to be excellencies rather than defects, so long as it can be shown that they are founded on and agreeable to the word of God, as we believe them to be.

Then, on the other hand, it is equally evident that the spirit of the Standards is of the broadest and most charitable nature. They give lofty views of God; they present honest descriptions of sin; they unfold a full, free gospel; they outline a high ideal of life and destiny; they exhibit a very exalted conception of the church of Christ; and yet all through there breathes the spirit of true freedom and a large liberty. The doctrine of the invisible church, and of the oneness of all who are members of that phase of the church which is the body of Christ, lays the basis for the communion of saints, and of the standing of all these members in Christ, no matter by what name they may be known. He that is true to the spirit of the Standards may have strong convictions in matters of religion, but he can never be a

bigot, or persecute, for religion's sake, any true believer in Christ. The doctrine of the sacraments, especially of the Lord's supper, and the conditions of its observance, exhibits the same catholicity. All who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and who trust and obey him, are made welcome at the Lord's table. He that is true to the teaching and spirit of the Standards in this connection can never be an advocate of close communion, nor exhibit towards his brethren in Christ the temper of the Pharisee. Such is the catholic spirit of the Standards.

A third general remark is to the effect that the application of the contents of the Standards to individual, domestic and national life produces the highest and most beneficent results. The individual man who is consciously a freeman in Christ, and who enjoys the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free, can never be a coward or a slave; and he whose life is framed according to the ethical rules of the Standards will be found glorifying God in his body, soul and spirit as his reasonable service.

In the case of the home, he that follows the teaching of the Standards in regard to the duties of the domestic circle, whether it be those of parents or those of children, will find that the home life is properly regulated. Hence it is that wherever this teaching has prevailed, and regulated domestic life, that life is seen at its very best. Nowhere is the home so sacred and its life so pure as in those communities in which the doctrines of the Standards have been believed, and their ethical teaching observed in the family circle. History and observation abundantly confirm this position.

In regard to national life, the same thing is true on a larger scale. The teaching of the Standards in regard to civil government balances in a fitting manner the largest degree of individual liberty, and the necessary measure of control requisite for free yet stable national life and action. The form of church polity which the Standards exhibit has

the same balanced structure, so that religious and national life, each in its own sphere, has the same stable adjustment. Those whose spirit is tempered by the teaching of the Standards cannot long be the subjects of oppression, nor will they, if in the place of authority and power, be the instruments of tyranny. History abundantly confirms this on both sides. Presbyterians, as a matter of fact, have always been the friends of freedom and the foes of oppression. Again and again they have fought the world's battle for religious freedom and civil liberty. This is the result not merely of the doctrines and ethics of the system which the Standards unfold, but also of the clear manner in which the provinces of church and state are marked out. The sphere of each is plainly prescribed, and the true basis of the nature and ends of civil government is laid down, so that neither is allowed to usurp the functions or invade the sphere of the other. Hence it is that those branches of the church which have been moulded by the true reformed doctrine contained in the Standards, and which have been permeated with its spirit, have led the van in the world's onward progress in intelligence, morality and self-government. They have been the pioneers in all that goes to lift up mankind to its divine ideal, and to supply it with a lofty motive to live for the glory of God and the welfare of men the world over.

In the fourth place, a few things may be properly said now in regard to the general type of doctrine which the Standards exhibit. Speaking generally, it may be described as typical Calvinism, using the term Calvinism in its historical rather than in its personal sense. The type of doctrine in the Standards is neither high Calvinism nor low Calvinism. It is generic, consistent, well-balanced Calvinism. Therein there is no special effort to reconcile seeming contradictions, which lie in the nature of things, but the utmost care is taken to exhibit in proper proportions the complete teaching of the Scriptures, alike in regard to the human and divine

factors which enter into the system. This is what is meant by consistent, well-balanced Calvinism.

In regard to the doctrine of election, which is the divine sovereignty operative in the sphere of man's redemption, the doctrine of the Standards is sublapsarian rather than supralapsarian. Men are not, in the order of thought, elected and then created, but viewed as already created and fallen, and then elected or passed by. The order of the facts in the Catechisms entirely confirms this view, while the Confession, though it states the whole doctrine of the decrees in a single chapter before it sets forth the doctrine of creation, is not supralapsarian in its type of doctrine. As a creed statement it simply states the whole doctrine of the decrees in a single chapter, but does not thereby intend to adopt the supralapsarian order of the various factors.

In reference to the matter of our race relation to Adam and his sin and fall, the Standards are not absolutely committed to any one of several *theories* in regard to the facts. The fact that sin, guilt, and misery have come upon the whole race by reason of its connection with our first parents and their apostasy is plainly asserted, yet the Standards may be harmonized with either of several theories in regard to the fact. While we are clearly of the opinion that what is termed the immediate imputation theory is most consistent with the contents of the Standards, and especially with the covenant principle upon which they are constructed, yet we would be far from maintaining that the theory of mediate imputation, of generic unity, or of concurrence is to be regarded as heresy.

So, in like manner, broad middle ground is taken in the Standards in regard to the atonement. The fact that the sufferings and death of Christ are sacrificial and vicarious, and a satisfaction to the divine justice, is emphasized in various ways in different parts of the Standards, but they are not absolutely committed to any single theory in regard to

that important scriptural fact. This being the case, there is some room for diversity of opinion in regard to the precise nature of the atonement, as a sacrifice for sin, and as a propitiation to the divine justice and an expiation for human guilt. In regard to the design or extent of the atonement, the doctrine of the Standards is more definite. So far as the efficacy of the death of Christ and the application of its benefits are concerned, the Standards always confine these to the elect. For them alone Christ efficaciously died and made full satisfction. Still, even here, there is nothing to hinder the view that, in addition to the sure benefits of salvation secured to the elect by the death of Christ, there are also benefits of various kinds which come even to the non-elect, whose final condemnation is, nevertheless, grounded upon their wilful sin and continued impenitence.

So, also, in regard to the doctrines of grace in the recovery of the sinner, the Standards assert constantly the necessity and efficacy of sovereign grace to renew and recover the sinner. Yet, at the same time, the mode in which the Standards describe the operation of that grace shows clearly that it works in no mere mechanical way, but in entire harmony with the mental and moral powers of man. This grace operates so as to make men both able and willing to receive and obey the gospel. Here, too, the Standards take middle ground between historically extreme opinions. In regard to perseverance and assurance, the same statement is true. Careful middle ground is held in all these important matters of doctrine and experience.

In regard to the much-debated question of the second advent of Christ, while we understand the Standards to teach the postmillennial view in a general way, and that the framers of the Standards intended to teach this view, still we admit that, from the way in which the Standards state their doctrine, premillennial views may not be condemned as seriously contra-confessional. The debate concerning this

topic was not really broached in the Westminster Assembly in a formal way, so that the Standards are content to teach in a positive way the postmillennial view, and to remain silent in regard to the premillennial doctrine. Premillennialism is extra-confessional rather than contra-confessional. At the same time, we are constrained to add that in our own judgment the teaching of the Standards is more in harmony with the Scripture than premillennialism is. Many good men hold the latter doctrine. Some Scriptures seem to teach or favor it, but many other Scriptures teach the opposite doctrine, and we believe the doctrine of the Standards best exhibits the teaching of the whole Scripture upon this point.

In regard to ethics, some may be inclined to regard the teachings of the Standards as Puritan in their nature and requirements. Yet it may be successfully maintained that the Standards hold a consistent middle position between legalism and license. The experience of the great ethical principles set forth in the Standards, and the operations of the spirit of Christian liberty which they inculcate, secure this well-balanced result in life. The legitimate scope of the freedom of the Christian man, and the clear statement of the will of Christ set forth in the Standards, together conduce to this end. The spirit of ready obedience to the will of Christ as the rule of life and conversation is generated, so that a free and vigorous Christian life and experience is the result.

The polity of the Standards is generic Calvinism, for Calvinism is a polity as well as a doctrinal system. The polity is broad and comprehensive in its nature, securing stable government, and the liberty of the people in their balanced and harmonious relations.

In the fifth place, it is interesting to make inquiry in regard to the constructive principle of the Standards. In the interests of theology this is an important inquiry. The subjects treated of in the Standards are not formally classified into heads or divisions. The Catechisms have an implicit

classification of the topics into two general divisions. The one relates to what man is to believe concerning God, and the other pertains to the duty which God requires of man. The Confession has no formal classification at all, but in its statement goes on through doctrine, duty, worship, and polity, chapter by chapter, without any division of topics.

The inquiry now raised may be considered from a twofold point of view: *First*, A general view of the principle upon which the entire Standards are constructed may be taken. Here what may be termed the theocentric principle rules. Everything is from God, is subject to God, and is for the glory of God. The absolute sovereignty of God in creation, in providence, and in grace, is the fundamental idea of the Standards. He is sovereign in the sphere of natural or physical government, and in the realm of moral government, as well as in the domain of his spiritual redemptive government. Thus the sovereignty of God, rightly regarded and applied, is the root idea of the generic Calvinism of the Standards, and it supplies their constructive principle. The first question in the Catechisms strikes the key-note, and the entire contents of the Standards are in harmony with this view. God is the ruler of nature, and he is the Lord of the head, the heart, the conscience, and the life of all men. He is also King of kings and Lord of lords, as well as the king and head of his church. The theocentric principle is the constructive principle of the Standards as a whole, and it gives great majesty and remarkable completeness to the doctrines, ethics, and polity which they contain.

Secondly, A narrower or special view of the constructive principle of the Standards may be taken. This raises the question of the central principle of the redemptive scheme which they unfold. In general, this is the Christo centric idea or principle. Redemption centres in, and flows from, Christ. The incarnation is in order to redemption, and Christ is the sum and substance of redemption. If the ques-

tion be further raised as to what particular form of the Christo centric scheme the Standards exhibit, the answer is to the effect that they set forth the federal or covenant idea, in its general broad outlines. The federal principle in its general outline, rather than in definite detail, is adopted in the Standards. Both the Adamic and the Christic relations are construed in the Standards under the federal principle. Adam was the natural root and the federal or representative head of the race, and his failure in that covenant relation brought guilt and depravity upon the whole human race. And Christ, the second Adam, is the federal or representative head of his elect people, and by his obedience, death, and intercession he obtains for them, and applies to them, all the redemptive benefits which are secured for his seed by the provisions of the covenant of grace. This, in general, is the federal principle. It is applied in the Standards alike to the first Adam and to Christ, the second Adam. Both hold covenant relations, and both represent and act for others. The first Adam acted for the race, the second for the covenant seed. This twofold covenant idea is that according to which the Standards construct their redemptive scheme. It explains the facts of sin in which the race is involved through Adam, and it accounts for the facts of redemption which come through Jesus Christ, the mediator of the covenant. The Standards, therefore, while Christo centric in regard to their redemptive scheme, at the same time represent what may be termed the generic federal phase of that scheme. Whatever theologians come finally to think of this scheme, one thing may be safely said, and that is, that there has not yet been presented any other scheme which is more entirely scriptural, which is more consistent and comprehensive, and which more adequately accounts for all the facts of sin and redemption, than that type of the federal theology represented by the Standards.

In the sixth place, it is proper to emphasize the ethical

system of the Standards, especially as it is found in the Catechisms. In most treatises on theology so much prominence is given to doctrine that the ethical side of religion is often left in the background. Indeed, the whole department of Christian ethics is often relegated to a different department altogether, and receives treatment apart from theology. The Standards do not so regard this topic, nor do they so treat it, but they deal with the practical as well as with the doctrinal side of religion. This is a very important matter, and it deserves careful consideration at the hands of those who are drawing up treatises on theology. Then, too, it is evident that no attempt to formulate a code of Christian ethics apart from the ten commandments, especially as interpreted by Christ, can succeed. The Standards in this connection deserve high commendation. The manner in which the ten commands are expounded in the Standards is fitted to develop strong and sturdy Christian character, wherein virtue and righteousness shall be the ruling principles. Moreover, the ethical system therein unfolded fits men to fulfil their duties in all the relations of life in the very best way, whether it be in the home, in the state, or in the church. The importance of teaching children these things, and of expounding them from the pulpit, and enforcing them in all legitimate ways, is evident in this connection. Even theological instruction given to young ministers should not overlook the importance of this branch in its teachings.

In the seventh place, a remark in regard to the finality of the Standards ought to be made in this connection. Highly as they are to be admired and regarded, and valuable and useful as they are as a matter of fact, still the position should not be dogmatically taken that they are a finality. They contain the most complete and scriptural outline of Christian doctrine to be found in any of the great creeds; and we are inclined to think that none of our modern theo-

logians have made any notable or valuable additions to the system of the Standards, yet no one should hold that they are perfect in form and contents. It may even be confessed that the more one studies the Standards the more one will admire their logical consistency and scriptural completeness, and the more one will marvel at the insight of the men who framed them into Holy Scripture, and into the philosophical soundness of the principles which underlie the doctrinal system; yet at the same time it may be held that the Standards, being the productions of the hands of godly and learned men, who were illuminated by the Spirit, though not inspired, cannot be regarded as infallible. They are the product of an assembly or council of the church, and, as the Standards themselves say, such councils are liable to err; so that the Standards, even by their own claim, are not to be regarded as perfect or necessarily final. And while the Holy Spirit does dwell in the church, and is promised to keep and lead it aright, yet this promise does not mean that the church is inspired. If the church may not claim inspiration and infallibility, then the Standards, being the product of the church, cannot be infallible.

The Standards, therefore, are not to be placed on a par with the Scriptures, much less are they to be put above the inspired word of God. They are not necessarily a finality, as the word of God is a finality. The Standards express for the time being the general outline of divine truth, which the church, taught by the Holy Ghost, finds in the Scriptures. The Spirit may lead into new views of the truths of God's word and of their relations and connections, and he may enable the church more fully to understand the mind of the Lord as revealed in the Scriptures. When this result has been clearly reached, the time may have come for the revision of the Standards, either by omission, addition, or change. But, in the meantime, till that stage is actually reached, the Standards constitute for the church the definite

doctrinal system under which it lives and does its work, as its interpretation of the teaching of Holy Scripture. But this does not hinder the church from holding the door open, or at least unlocked, for new light to shine in from the lamp of revelation, and if such light comes, the Standards may be modified in order more fully to express the contents of Scripture. That the time is now at hand for such a revision or readjustment can scarcely be maintained. But to assert that such a time shall never come may not be wise. What, in our judgment, is much needed in many quarters is a more diligent study of the contents of the Standards, and a careful observation, in the light of the Scripture proofs, of the scriptural and comprehensive nature of the Catechisms and Confession alike. If such study and observation be made, the result will, in all probability, be that the supposed need for revision will be very much less sensibly felt than it was prior thereto. The simple point contended for here is, that all creeds and confessions are fallible; that Holy Scripture alone is the supreme rule of faith and life; that the Holy Spirit who first gave the Scriptures dwells in the church; that the Spirit may lead the church in the future, as he has in the past, into new and larger views of the truth contained in the Scriptures; and that these new and larger views may, if deemed necessary, be incorporated by the church in a creed statement. The Scripture, as the supreme rule, is complete, infallible, and final, and can in no way be added to, but the church may, in coming ages, be led into a fuller knowledge of the will of God and the mind of the Spirit therein contained. This is virtually the view the Standards themselves take, when they confess that synods and councils of the church may err, and have erred.

In the last place, the expression of an opinion may be ventured in regard to the bearing of the Standards upon the question of a closer union among the various branches of the church of Christ. The opinion ventured is to the effect that

if the various branches of Protestantism are ever to be brought together, it must be on the broad middle ground represented by the general teaching which the Standards exhibit in regard to doctrine, worship, ethics and polity. This may seem a bold and foolhardy assertion of an ill-grounded opinion, but we are inclined to think that a good case can be made out for it. A few hints may suggest the line of reasoning in its support.

In the matter of doctrine, history shows that the choice has always been between extremes, the one honoring God, and the other exalting man. As to the Trinity, it has been between definite Trinitarianism and Socinianism. As to Christ's person and work, it has been between Calvinism and Arminianism. As to man, it has been between Augustinianism and Pelagianism. And so with all the doctrines of grace, the choice lies between a purely natural theory and a supernatural one. Now, consistent generic Calvinism has always honored God, and held fast by a true scriptural supernaturalism, and if ever the churches are to come together without loss of scriptural doctrine and spiritual force, they must take their stand on this doctrinal basis. In our judgment this ground cannot be deserted, even if the price should be a divided Protestantism. In such a case union might be weakness, and not strength. Doctrinal union on the basis of generic Calvinism would be immense gain of strength.

In regard to polity, perhaps a still better case can be made out for the essential principles of the Presbyterian system as the common meeting-place for all branches of Protestantism. The Standards clearly hold a middle position in this sphere, between Episcopacy, with its orders in the ministry, and Independency, with its denial of the corporate idea of the visible church. The Standards undoubtedly hold the middle ground here; and, so far as the unification of Protestantism is concerned on the side of polity, the principles of the Standards, call them Presbyterian, or by any other name, supply

the middle meeting-place. Presbyterianism, as a spiritual republic, avoids the dangers of hierarchical pretension which arise from the prelatic system, and it avoids the dangers of separatism and isolation which are sure to flow from Independency. Other features in Presbyterian polity need not be dwelt on at length.

In the sphere of ethics, too, the same claim can be made good, that the position of the Standards in regard to life and conduct is a safe middle one. They hold the balance between asceticism and epicureanism, between legalism and license. They set forth principles of action rather than minute prohibitions for the direction of the conduct of the Christian man, and yet the statement of these principles is such as to render loose living impossible. The men who have made a mark upon their age for moral good have nearly always been men whose lives were under the dominion of the redemptive and ethical system contained in the generic Calvinism of the Standards. This is another valid plea for unity among Protestants on the ethical basis of the Westminster Standards.

And, finally, in regard to worship and discipline, a good case may also be made out for union upon the basis of the Standards. Simplicity and spirituality of worship are emphasized in the Standards, and they present a scheme of discipline in outline which secures the purity of the church wherever it is administered. The evils of ritualism are avoided on the one hand, and everything is done decently and in order on the other. Spirituality of worship and the preaching of pure scriptural doctrine in all its fulness is what men need, both for this life and for that which is to come. This position the Standards hold, and so supply another plea for the unity of Protestantism on the basis they provide. Thus outlined, this plea is left to speak further for itself.

The exposition of the Standards is now complete, together with the inferences made in this concluding chapter. It is

hoped that in no respect has injustice been done to their contents, and that the word and Spirit of God have not been dishonored. If an increased interest in, knowledge of, and devotion to, the system of divine and saving truth exhibited in the Standards is produced by these pages of simple exposition, their aim will have been attained.

Two hundred and fifty years have passed away since the Westminster Assembly met and did its noble work. During these years the world has seen wonderful changes, and the human race has, in various ways, made remarkable progress. Civil liberty has in many lands been planted on a sure foundation, intellectual activity has gained much splendid renown, commercial energy has conquered many an unexplored region, and missionary zeal has reached out to the ends of the earth. How much of all this is due to the silent and salutary operation of the Reformed doctrine, polity and ethics can scarcely be estimated. The verdict of history tells the splendid story. And to-day, the world over, there are many millions of people who accept the system of Reformed doctrine and Presbyterian polity of which the Standards are such a complete exposition. Generic Calvinism is not dying out, nor shall it be allowed to die. Its noble history, often bathed in tears and baptized with blood; its deep philosophy of the facts of nature, of providence, and of grace; and its absolute submission to the will of God as made known in the Scriptures, guarantee its vitality and efficiency till time shall be no more. and grace be fully crowned in glory.

INDEX.

Ability—Ability and freewill, 170; ability and liberty, 174; natural and moral ability, 175; ability in innocence, 182; in fallen state, 182; under grace, 183; in glory, 183; to do good works, 236.

Adam, natural root and federal head of the race, 95; proof of his headship, 95; his covenant relation, 102.

Acceptance, perfect obedience necessary to, 96; justification secures it, 204; good works have acceptance as fruits of faith, 238.

Administration, of the covenant of grace, 121, 122; men truly saved under both dispensations of its, 123; in various dispensations, 120; one in all dispensations, 120.

Admonition, a form of censure, 354.

Adopting Act, note on, 358.

Adoption, the Standards give a separate place to it, 212; reasons for this, 213; God's gracious act, 214; makes believers God's children, 214; gives the rights and privileges of such children, 215.

Adoration, a part of prayer, 340.

Adultery, condemned, 293, 382.

Advent, time of Christ's second, 166; not premillennial, 398.

Advice, in cases of conscience, 363.

Andrea, reference to, 20.

Angels, related to the purpose of God, 71; created by him, 79; not a race, 79.

Anointed, Christ as Saviour, 134; by the Holy Ghost, 135.

Appeal, power of, 354.

Application, of the benefits of the work of Christ, 189, seq.

Arminian, view of man's freedom, 180; error in regard to good works, 237; heresy rejected, 256.

Arminius, reference to, 22.

Articles, of Smalcald, 20; the sixty-seven, 21; of the Church of England or Anglican, 23; the thirty-nine, 23; of Edward, 23; of Elizabeth, 24; Irish, 24; of Reformed Episcopal Church, 24; of religion of the Methodist Church, 24.

Assembly, General, a court of the church, 367.

Assurance, of God's love, 222; of grace and salvation, 241; grounds of it, 242; not of the essence of faith, 243; may be shaken, 243.

Atonement, term not used in the Standards, 148; Christ's work of, 149, seq.; basis of intercession, 153; doctrine in the Standards, 410.

Attributes, of God, explained, 56, 57.

Authority, of Holy Scripture, 47; rests not in church, as Rome says, 47; on God alone, 47; of God and Christian liberty, 256; of church courts, 360.

Backsliding, believer may for a season, 241.

Baptism, explained, 309, seq.; it mode and subjects, 309; of the Spirit and with water, 310; its nature and design, 310, 311; a sacrament, 311; admits to visible church, 311; sign and seal of the covenant of grace, 312; a pledge to be the Lord's, 313; its mode, 314; its formula, 314; immersion not necessary for it, 315; arguments for this view, 316; the subjects of, 317, 318; by the Spirit, necessary to salvation, 318; grace not tied to the time of, 319; reasons for infant, 319, 320; improvement of, 321; importance of infant baptism, 322.

Baptists, and the Standards, 27.

BENEFITS, of Christ's work, 140; applied to believers, 154; justification a, 199; adoption a, 212; sanctification a, 216; additional, 221; at death and the resurrection, 222.
BODY, separated from the soul at death, 385; of believers in union with Christ, 389.
BUCER, reference to, 21, 22.
BULLINGER, reference to, 22.

CALLING, effectual, 187; its nature, 189; outward and inward, 190; its agent, 190; its subjects, 190; is gracious, 190; factors in it, 192; effectual in the case of the elect, 193; others may be outwardly called, 193.
CALVIN, reference to, 21.
CALVINISM, its view of the freedom of man, 180, 181; of Standards is sublapsarian, 410; not dying out, 420.
CANONS, of Trent, 18.
CAPITAL, punishment, 292; and labor, 294.
CAPITO, reference to, 22.
CATECHISMS, Russian, 17; of Platon and Philaret, 18; Roman, 18; of Canisius and Belarmine, 18; Lutheran, 19; Heidelberg, 22; Waldensian, 23; Bohemian, 23; Church of England, 23; Wesley's, 24; Early Scottish, 25; Shorter, the basis of this discussion, 40; Larger (and Confession) woven in, 40.
CENSURES, of the church, 345, 352.
CEREMONIAL, laws of Moses described, 250.
CERTAINTY, theory of moral, 177.
CHEMNITZ, reference to, 20.
CHILDREN, believers are God's, by adoption, 214.
CHRIST, the Mediator of the covenant of grace, 115; represents his people, 115; obedience of, the condition of the covenant of grace, 117; brings deliverance from sin and misery, 118; procures the Holy Spirit, 119; person of, 124; fulfilled all law, 137; qualified for his work, 137; obeyed the precept, and suffered the penalty of the law, 138; his work valid before as well as after the incarnation, 139; Mediator in both natures, 140; made an offering for sin, 149; renders full obedience, 150; his intercession, 152; subdues and rules his people, 156; defends them, restrains their enemies, and orders all things for their good, 157; takes vengeance on their enemies, 158; humiliation and exaltation, 159, 168; his cross in relation to Christian ethics, 211; the medium in prayer, 337; and civil government, 377.
CHRISTIAN LIBERTY, and the law of God, 245; and liberty of conscience, 253; explained, 253; purchased by Christ, 253; its nature, 253, 254; limitations of it, 256.
CHRISTOCENTRIC, the redemption of the Standards is, 413.
CHURCH, may revise her creed, 33; revelation made to the, 141; is to hold forth the light of revelation, 142; and her censures, 345; form of government of, 346; the invisible, 347; the visible, 348; conditions of membership in, 348; its purpose in the world, 349; Christ's gifts to the, 349; mixed with error, 350; the head of it, 350; officers in it, 351; censures, 352; its government and discipline, 352; government different from civil, 352; power of the keys in, 353; courts of the, 355–357; Presbyterian form of, 355–364; Synods and councils of, 356; and state, 363.
CIVILIZATION, its influence on Sabbath observance, 266.
COMMANDMENTS, a summary of the moral law, 253; of men, 255; preface to the ten, 278; the first, 279, 280; the second, 281–283; the third, 283, 284; the fourth, 285–287; the fifth, 288–290; the sixth, 291, 292; the seventh, 292, 293; the eighth, 293, 294; the ninth, 295; the tenth, 296, 297.
COMMONWEALTH, its relation to the church, 361, 362; may confer with the church in two ways, 363.
COMMUNION, of saints and religious worship, 257; its basis, 257; believers are in, 258; leads to helpfulness, 258; of grace and glory, 259; not communism, 259.

COMPACT, in connection with the covenant of works, 94.
COMPLETENESS, of Scripture, 49.
CONDEMNATION, every sin brings into, 184.
CONDESCENSION, of God in covenant of works, 89–93.
CONDITIONS, of escape from the wrath of God, 269; of justification, 205, 206.
CONFESSION, of sin implied in repentance, 230; to be made to God only, 233; in relation to our fellowmen, 233; part of prayer, 340.
CONFESSIONS, the Orthodox, 17; Augsberg, 19; of Basle, 21; First Helvetic, 21; Second Helvetic, 22; the Westminster, 24; Westminster changed by Presbyterian churches in America, 27.
CONFLICT, results from the experience of sanctification, 221.
CONSCIENCE, believers have peace of, 154, 222; God alone is Lord of the, 255; cases of, 358, 365.
CONTINGENT, theory of liberty, 176.
CONVICTION, of sin an element in repentance, 230.
CORRUPTION, of the whole nature of man, 105.
COUNCILS, Chalcedon, 15; Toledo, 16; Ephesus, 17; Vatican, 19.
COURTS, jurisdiction of the church, 367.
COVENANT, the national, 24; solemn league and, 24; of works or life, 89–93; gracious, 89–95; man's original state prior to the covenant of works, 89; implies promises upon certain conditions, 93; gave man an opportunity to secure his standing before God, 93; God's condescension in the, 94; the nature of that of works, 94; its condition, 95; its sanctions, 96; its result had it been kept, 97; its failure, 97; that of grace explained, 113; its two phases of redemption and of grace, 113; also gracious, 114; its benefits, debt to Christ, grace to believer, 118; substance the same in all dispensations, 121; two great dispensations, 122; a ground of assurance, 240.
CREATION, described, 76; primary and secondary, 76; the things created, 77; of man distinct from that of brute, 78; nature of the activity in, 80; creature *ex nihilo*, 80; of world in six days, 80; connected with agency of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, 81; results of, all good, 81; evil not in it at first, 81.
CREEDS, the formation of, 13; Ancient, 14; Apostles, 15; Nicene, 15; Athanasian, 16; Greek, 17; Roman, 18; Reformation, 19; Calvinistic, 21; Swiss, 21; nature of, 28; relation to the Scriptures, 30; written and unwritten, 31; permanency of, 32; revision of, 32; uses of, 34; subscription to, 35; heresy and, 36; secure unity, 37; for instruction, 38; Presbyterian, definite with a catholic spirit, 407.
CRITICS, textual, 32; higher, 32.
CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, reference to, 27.

DAYS, of creation, 80.
DEACONS, officers in the church, 365.
DEATH, the penal result of sin, 109; is separation, 109; sanctification complete at, 220; and middle state, 384; explained, 385.
DECALOGUE, the inner spirit of the, 296; an estimate of its ethical system, 297.
DECREES, are God's eternal purpose or plan, 64; term explained, 65; foreknowledge, foreordination, predestination, election and preterition, 66, 67; the nature of the, 68, 69; do not destroy the freedom and responsibility of man, 70; establish second causes, 70; their chief end is the glory of God, 70; their bearing on men and angels, 71.
DEGREES, of guilt, 170, 184; of relationship for marriage, 381.
DEPRAVITY, connected with sin, 103; inherited, 103.
DEVELOPMENT, as natural not enough to explain the facts of creation, 81.
DIET, of Augsberg, 21.
DIRECTORY, for worship, 25.
DISCIPLINE, Methodist book of, 24.
DISPENSATIONS, of the covenant of grace, 120–122; men truly saved under both, 123.

DIVORCE, question discussed, 293; grounds of, 382; warning in regard to, 383.
DOMINION, by man over the creatures, 90.
DUST, man's body from it, 78.

ECOLAMPADIUS, reference to, 21.
EFFICACY, of the sacraments, 304–307; of baptism, 312; of the Lord's supper, 329.
ELDERS, are officers in the church, 365.
ELECTION, explained, 66, 71–75.
ELECTOR OF SAXONY, reference to, 20.
ELIZABETH, queen, reference to, 23.
ENLIGHTENMENT, an element in effectual calling, 191.
EPISCOPIUS, reference to, 22.
ERASTIANS, reference to, 26.
ESTATE, man's original, 89.
ETHICS, Christian, and the cross of Christ, 212; of the Standards, 413.
EUCHARIST, a name for the Lord's supper, 323.
EVIDENCES, their place, 47; the historical, 48; the internal, in the Scriptures, 48; the spiritual evidence in religious experience, 48.
EVIL, tree of the knowledge of good and, 90; the social evil, 293.
EXALTATION, of Christ, 164–168.
EXCOMMUNICATION, a form of church censure, 354.
EXPIATION, Christ's work makes, 152.
EXTENT, of the atonement, 150.

FAITH, the human condition of justification, 207; its relation to repentance, 223; is one of the conditions of escape from wrath, 224; saving explained, 224; Catechism answer, 225; further description of it, 226, 227; the condition of salvation on man's part, 228; implies effectual calling and regeneration, 225; has degrees, 228; necessary to the value of the Lord's supper, 330.
FALL, its possibility, 98; its source, 99; permitted by God, 99; implies temptation of Satan, 99; process of the, 99; result of the, 99, 100; sin came in by it, 100; guilt incurred thereby, 100; the covenant of works failed through the, 100.
FALLING AWAY, believers shall not finally fall away, 209, 239.
FASTS, are an element in worship, 265.
FEDERAL, Adam the head of the race, 95, 102; Christ the head of his people, 115, 116; principle is that of the Standards, 116; type of theology in the Standards, 414.
FINALITY, the Standards not necessarily a, 415.
FOREKNOWLEDGE, of God, 66.
FOREORDINATION, term explained, 66; applied to the case of the finally lost, 71.
FORGIVENESS, an element in justification, 204.
FORM OF CONCORD, reference to, 20.
FORM OF GOVERNMENT, in the church, 346, 352, 364.
FREDERICK II., reference to, 23.
FREEDOM, man's moral, 169; statement of, 170; explanation of, 171; of the will or of the man, 173–175; a question of philosophy and of theology, 176; philosophical theories of, 176; theological theories of, 179; Pelagian view of, 179; Arminian idea of, 180; the Calvinist doctrine, 180; of access to God, 254; believers have, 255; Presbyterianism is the friend of, 409.

GIFTS, of Christ to the church, 349.
GLORY OF GOD, the end of creation, 74; the end of redemption, 400.
GOD, his being and attributes, 52; his existence assumed, not proved, 52; his nature described, 52; his essence mysterious, 53; one living and true, 53; his spirituality, 54; his personality, 54; his self-existence, 55; as absolute, 55; as infinite, 55; his dominion over the creatures, 55; his attributes explained, 56–58; subsists in three persons, 59; not the author of sin, 70; permits and controls sin, 70.
GOOD WORKS, what they are, 234; their relation to sanctification, 234; their rule is God's word, 234; the fruits of faith, 235; ability to do them of the Holy Spirit, 236; believers to be diligent in, 236; do not merit pardon, 237; accepted only through Christ, 238.

GOSPEL, the sinner has to do with its offer only, 75; and the law in harmony, 252.
GOVERNMENT, a branch of God's providence, 83; its nature, 83; rests on God's foreknowledge and will, 84; its end is the glory of God, 84; God uses means in it, but is not bound thereby, 85; revelation, the miracle, and prayer, all have a place in it, 85; has relation to sin, 86; has relation to his church and people, 86; paternal discipline under it, 86; has relation to sinful men, 87; hardening under it, 87; has relation to the angels, 81; in the church, 352, 353.
GRACE, covenant of, 113; in foreground of the covenant, 122; in effectual calling, 190; in justification, 203; in adoption, 214; in sanctification, 217; faith a saving, 225; is emphasized in the Standards, 411.
GRACES, their sure production under the experience of the gospel, 209.
GRACIOUS, the covenant of works is, 89, 94; the application of the benefits of Christ's redemption are, 199, 212, 216.
GRADATION, of church courts, 355.
GUILT, man, as sinful, is in a condition of, 108; degrees of, 170, 184; defined, 184.

HARDENING, under the providence of God may take place, 87.
HEATHEN, salvation of the, 196–198; light of nature not enough to save the, 197; natural religion inadequate, 198.
HEAVEN, the abode of the saved, 388, 390, 403.
HEIRS, believers, as sons of God, are, 213.
HELL, place where the wicked are to abide, 389, 390, 403.
HENRY VIII., reference to, 23.
HERESY, in connection with creeds, 36; trial for, and revision of the creed, 36.
HOLINESS, the inward result of sanctification, 216, 219.
HOLY SCRIPTURE, confession and texts of, 26; and religious creeds, 30; the doctrine of, 40· the rule to
HOLY SCRIPTURE—
guide man in attaining the end of his being, 43; the nature of, 43; kept pure and authentic in all ages by God's providence, 47; authority of, 47; Romish doctrine of, 47; complete as the rule of faith and life, 49; nothing to be added to or taken from, 49; Holy Spirit needed to interpret, 49; settles all controversies in religion, 50; to be publicly read and preached, 262, 273; a means of grace, 268, 269; rules for interpreting, 276, 277.
HUMILIATION, of Christ, 159, 163.

IDIOTS, salvation of, 195.
IDOLATRY, rejected by Standards, 280.
IMAGE, man made in God's, 78; God's, explained, 78; and likeness, 78; lost by the fall, 105; sanctification restores, 219; God not to be worshipped by an, 282.
IMPUTATION, of the guilt of the sin of Adam, 111; immediate or mediate, 111; of the righteousness, 207.
INABILITY, man's moral, 181.
INCARNATION, of Christ, 128.
INDEPENDENT, reference to, 26.
INFALLIBILITY, the pope has not, 351; the church has not, 360.
INFANTS, salvation of, 194; the baptism of, 311, 318, seq.
INFIDEL, rulers to be obeyed so far, 379.
INJURY, men may forgive an, but God only can forgive the sin in the case, 233.
INSPIRATION, pertains to the canonical Scriptures, 45; not fully defined in the Standards, 46; makes the Holy Spirit the divine author of the Holy Scriptures through the free active powers of certain men, 46; supernatural, dynamical, plenary, and verbal, 46.
INTENTION, Romish doctrine of, rejected, 370.
INTERCESSION, of Christ, 133, 240; a part of prayer, 340.
INTERMEDIATE STATE, reference to, 384.
INTERPRETATION, of the Scriptures, 50; the Scripture itself its own infallible rule of, 50.
INVISIBLE, phase of the church, 347.

JOY, in the Holy Ghost, 222.
JUDICIAL, justification is, 202.
JUDGE, Christ is to be the, 167, 389, 390.
JUDGMENT, Christ at the, 167; the process of the, 168; after the resurrection, 397; the day of, not revealed by God, 398; the purpose of the, 399; final awards of the, 399; the general result of the, 400; of the wicked, 401; of the righteous, 403.
JUSTICE, satisfied by Christ, 138.
JUSTIFICATION, described in general, 199; order of topics, 199; Shorter Catechism, 200; nature of, 210; is to declare just, 201; God's act, 202; gracious and judicial, 202; not of works, 203; the mode of, 207; results of, 208; virtual and actual, 208.

KEYS, the power of the keys in the church, 352, 353.
KINGDOM, Christ rules in his, 156.

LAW, man under God's, 82, 92; requires obedience of man, 92; man's standing under, 92; in foreground in Old Testament, 122; Christ fulfilled all, 137; of God and Christian liberty, 245; of God in relation to moral government, 245; positive and moral, distinguished, 246; moral, two sorts, 246; civil and judicial, 246; moral, implies two things, 246; man's relation to moral, in precovenant state, 247; his relation to moral, under covenant of works, 247; his relation after the fall, 248; ceremonial, 250; uses of the, 250; and gospel in harmony, 252; moral summed up in the ten commandments, 253; first table of the, 278; second table of the, 288.
LIBERTY, to eat the tree of life, 90; forbidden the tree of knowledge, 90; man has, 173, 174; and ability distinguished, 174; natural and moral, 175; theory of contingent, 177; limitations of Christian, 256.
LIFE, the tree of, 90.
LIGHT OF NATURE, explained, 43; leaves men without excuse, 43; but not sufficient to lead sinful men to life and salvation, 43; to be the guide in some circumstances of government and worship in the church, 49.
LIMBUS, no *patrum* or *infantum*, 390.
LIMITATIONS, of Christian liberty, 256.
LORD'S SUPPER, described, 323, seq.; names of the, 323; nature of, 323; sacrament of the New Testament, 323; bread and wine in the, 324; and the death of Christ, 324, 327; the sensible signs in the, 324; kind of bread and wine for the, 325; the words of institution in the, 325; the bread and wine both to be given to the people, 325; is not a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ, 326; the design of the, 326; the presence of Christ in the, 327; a pledge of the believer's loyalty to Christ, 328; the efficacy of the, 329, 331; the Romish view, 329; the agency of the Holy Spirit in the, 329; may the doubter come to the, 332; duties at and after the, 333; the importance of the, 334.
LOVE, of God in the covenant of grace, 114; of God in relation to adoption, 213; assurance of God's, 221; electing, 240; to God and man, 270.

MAGISTRATE, civil, and the Sabbath, 286; civil, an ordinance of God, 373; the end of the civil, 373; power of the civil, 374; the Christian may be a, 374, 375; must not administer the word or sacraments, 375; duties of the people to the, 378; the right of resisting the, 378.
MAN, his nature, 41; a religious being, 41; made immortal, 41; his chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy him forever, 42; his activity not to be self-centered, 42; the end of his being is happiness in holiness, 42; distinct from the brute in creation, 78; from the dust, 78; made in the image of God, 78; has dominion over the creatures, 79; under the covenant of works, 79; had mental, moral and religious nature at first, 91; had God's law on his heart, 91; not a primitive

MAN—
savage, 91; had converse with God, 91; was liable to fall, 92; under the moral government of God, 92; the race of, related to Adam, 102.
MARRIAGE, in Eden, 90; the relation discussed, 293; and divorce, 379; nature of, 380; its purpose, 380; between whom is it to be, 380, 381.
MASS, the Romish doctrine rejected, 326, 329.
MATERIALISM, rejected by the Standards, 81.
MEANS, of grace, 267, seq.; three branches of, 268; outward and inward, 268; term defined, 269; the Holy Spirit the agent through the, 269; of grace necessary to escape the wrath of God, 269.
MEDIATOR, of the covenant of works, 95; of the covenant of grace, 113–115; must be God, 130; must be man, 131; called Jesus, 134; called Christ, 134; general statement of his work, 137; offices of, 141.
MELANCTHON, reference to, 20.
MERIT, good works not the ground of, 238; of Christ the ground of the sinner's salvation, 206.
METHODIST CHURCH, the articles of the, 24.
MIDDLE STATE, described in general, 387; soul does not sleep in the, 388; no sanctification in the, 388, 391; the body during the, 389; no special places other than heaven and hell in, 390; no common place for good and bad, 391.
MINISTERS, are to preach the word, 271; advice to, 275.
MISERY, the result of man's sin, 107.
MONOTHEISM, taught in the Standards, 53.
MORAL, evil abnormal, 81; law and government, 245–248.
MORMONS, the polygamy of, rejected, 293.
MURDER, condemned, 292.

NATURE, the light of, 43; the corruption of man's, 105; transgressions flow from sinful, 106; divine, of Christ, 126; human, of Christ, 126; how human, assumed by Christ, 128; how the two natures related in Christ, 128; the union of the two mysterious and abiding, 129; the human, sustained and advanced the divine, 130.
NECESSITY, theory of mechanical, 177; works of, 265.

OATHS, false, forbidden, 295; lawful, described, 368, 369.
OBEDIENCE, to God's law required, 254, seq.; new, in relation to repentance, 231; and the Lord's supper, 332.
OFFICE, those of Christ, 136; the prophetic, 136; in the Catechism, 136; the priestly, 148–154; the kingly, 155–158.
OFFICERS, of the church, 351, 352; of the church named, 365.
ORIGINAL, man's, 89; circumstances of man's, 90; sin, 102; righteousness, 78.

PANTHEISM, rejected by the Standards, 81.
PARADISE, that in Eden, 90.
PARDON, an element in justification, 204.
PARENTS, and children, 288, 289; and infant baptism, 318, seq.
PARLIAMENT, English, and the Westminster Assembly, 27.
PARTICLES, material, not necessary to personal identity in resurrection body, 39.
PARTIES, to the covenant of works, 94; to that of grace, 115.
PEACE, w'th God, from justification, 209; of conscience, 222.
PELAGIAN, view of man's freedom, 179.
PENALTY, of sin is death, 109; Christ suffered the, 138.
PENITENCE, an element in true repentance, 230.
PETITION, a part of prayer, 340; humble, 363.
PERSEVERANCE, to the end, 222; of the saints, 239; grounds of, 240.
PERSON, of Christ, 124; Christ unites three offices in one, 125; two natures in his, 125; the theanthropic, 125; of the Mediator must be one, 133.
PERSONALITY, of God, 54.

PLEDGE, of the covenant of works, 96.
POLYTHEISM, rejected by the Standards, 53.
POPE, not to be the head of the church, 351.
POSTERITY, related to Adam, 102; relation of Adam to his, 110.
POSTMILLENNIALISM, alluded to, 166.
PRAISE, an element of worship, 262.
PRAYER, an element in worship, 261; medium of, 262; for the dead to be no, 262; defined, 336; God to be addressed, 336; things to pray for, 338; the spirit of, 339; parts of, 340; the rule of, 341; the Lord's, 341; its preface, 341; its petitions, 342, 343; conclusion of, 344.
PREACHING, the duty of the minister, 271; by women not allowed, 272.
PRECEPT, Christ obeyed the, 138.
PREDESTINATION, explained, 66, 71; applied to the saved, 71; is choosing in Christ to holiness and life, 71; not arbitrary, 72; grounded in grace, 72; in the purpose of God fixes the number of the saved, 73; a high mystery to be handled with care, 75; the sinner has nothing to do with it, 75; gives comfort to the believer, 75.
PREFACE, to the ten commandments, 278.
PREMILLENNIALISM, alluded to, 166; Christ's second advent not, 398; is extra confessional, 411.
PRESBYTERY, a court of the church, 366.
PRESERVATION, a branch of providence, 82; not continuous creation, 82; relates to all things, 82; relates to each kind of things according to its nature and laws, 82.
PRETERITION, term explained, 67.
PRIEST, Christ acts as a, 147; Confession on Christ's work as a, 147; office of a stated, 148.
PROCESS, of the fall of our first parents, 99; of the judgment, 403.
PROMISE, made to our first parents, 79, 120; connected with the covenant of works, 94.
PROPERTY, Christ has all those of man, 127, right of, 294.
PROPHET, Christ the, of the covenant of grace, 141; speaks to the church, 141; is taught by the Holy Spirit, 142; acts mediately or immediately, 143, 144; extent of the work of the, 144; periods of its exercise by Christ, 145; he speaks from God to man, 141.
PROPITIATION, Christ's work makes, 152.
PROVIDENCE, doctrine stated, 82; its two branches, 82; not continuous creation, 82; extends to all God's creatures and all their actions, 82; angels are under it, 87.
PRUDENCE, Christian, 49.
PUNISHMENT, is incurred by sin for the present and the future, 109; future, discussed, 110, 402; capital, 292.
PURGATORY, alluded to, 390.
PURITANS, reference to the, 25.
PURPOSE, eternal, of God, 63.

REFORMATION, the sacramentarian controversy at the time of the, 298.
REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH, change of articles by the, ——.
REGENERATE, remains of sin in the, 112; use of moral law for the, 252.
REGENERATION, described, 187; Confession emphasizes, 188; term not used in Catechisms, 188.
REMONSTRANTS, reference to, 22.
RENEWAL, sanctification is inward spiritual, 216.
REPENTANCE, unto life, 229; coupled with faith, 229; is toward God, 229; is wrought by the word and Spirit of God, 229; its particulars, 230–233.
REPROBATION, the term not used in the Standards in connection with the doctrine of the decrees, 67.
RESURRECTION, of the dead, 392; who are raised, 392; the nature of the resurrection body, 393–396.
REUNION, the Presbyterian Standards and the branches of the church, 418.
REVELATION, explained, 44; makes known the will of God, 45; is made to the church, 45, 141; is committed to writing, 45.
REVISION, of the Standards discussed, 415.
REVOLUTION, the right of, 378.

RIGHTEOUSNESS, original, 78; Romish view of, 91; original, lost, 105; that of Christ the ground of justification, 207; sanctification produces personal, 219.
RULE OF FAITH AND LIFE, the Holy Scriptures only, 43–49.
RULES, for interpreting the word of God, 276, 277.

SABBATH, in Eden, 90; and worship, 260; how to be kept, 265; preparation for, 265; implies rest and worship, 265; its observance enforced, 285, 286; its perpetuity, 287; reasons for its perpetuity, 287.
SACRAMENTS, general description of the, 298; controversy about, 298; teaching of Standards about, 299; the nature of the, 299; the purpose of the, 300; sensible signs in the, 302; the inward grace, 301; their number, 303; Romish view, 303; to be administered by an ordained minister, 303; the relation of the sign and grace in the, 303; same term applied to the sign and grace, 304; views as to the efficacy of the, 304; the teaching of the Standards as to the efficacy of the, 305, 306; of the Lord's supper and baptism compared, 307.
SACRIFICE, Christ saves as a, 138; he offered himself a, 138; that of Christ was penal and vicarious, 151.
SAINTS, shall persevere, be preserved, and not finally fall away, 239.
SALVATION, God's purpose provides for the means as well as the end of, 74; relates to the elect, the redeemed, the called, the believing, 74; its end is the glory of God, 74; under both dispensations, 123; of infants, idiots, and incapables, 195.
SANCTIFICATION, described in general, 216, seq., its nature, 216; its relation to justification, 216; is God's gracious work, 217; its condition, 217; its nature in particular, 218, positive and negative aspects, 219; ever imperfect in this life, 220; complete at death, 220; causes a conflict in the soul, 221; is a growth, 221, gives assurance of victory, 221.
SATAN, tempted our first parents, 99.
SATISFACTION, Christ made it, 188.
SAVAGE, man at first not a primæval savage, 78, 91.
SECURITY, believers have it in Christ, 209.
SELNECHER, reference to, 20.
SEPARATION, is the central idea of death, 109.
SESSION, a court of the church, 366.
SIN, God not the author of, 70; does not destroy the freedom of man, 70; its nature, 103; brings guilt, 103; its guilt is imputable, 103; original, 102–104; all men in, 104; brings misery, 106; incurs God's wrath and curse, 107; puts men in bondage, 107; death flows from it, 108; some sins more heinous than others, 185, 186; the sense of it in true repentance, 229; repentance to be for all, 232; God alone forgives, and he only for Christ's sake, 233.
SONS, believers are sons of God by adoption, 215.
SOUL, of man described, 78; of Christ, 127; of man does not sleep between death and the resurrection, 388.
SOURCE, of the fall of man, 99.
SOVEREIGNTY, of God the fundamental fact in the decrees, 67; of God in relation to worship, 283.
SPIRIT, the Holy Spirit is the infallible judge in matters of religion as he speaks in the Scriptures, 51; is the exegete and apologete, 51; he applies the work of Christ in the experience of the believer, 120; is the agent in regeneration, and effectual calling, 188–190; is agent in sanctification, 218; gives ability to do good works, 236; his indwelling, 240; agent in blessing the means of grace, 269; in the Lord's supper, 330.
SPIRITUALITY, of God, 54.
STANDARDS, not, strictly speaking, Christo-centric, 124; give a proper place to doctrine and ethics in their system, 211; are comprehensive, 406; are definite, yet catholic in spirit, 402; commended, 408.
STATE, and the church, 373, seq., middle, 387, 388.

SUBSCRIPTION, to creeds by the office bearers in the church, 35; relation of the member of the Presbyterian Church to, 35.
SUBSTANCE, Christ partook of that of Mary, 128.
SUICIDE, reference to, 292.
SUPEREROGATION, works of, impossible, 237.
SUSPENSION, a form of church censure, 354.
SWEARING, false, condemned, 295.
SWORD, the power of, in civil government, 374.
SYMBOL, a name for a creed, 30.
SYNODS, of Dort, 22; and councils of the church, 356; are church courts, 357; their purpose, 357; their functions, 358; they make rules for worship and government, 359; their authority, 360; their decisions not infallible, 360; have the Holy Spirit to guide them, 360; described, 366.

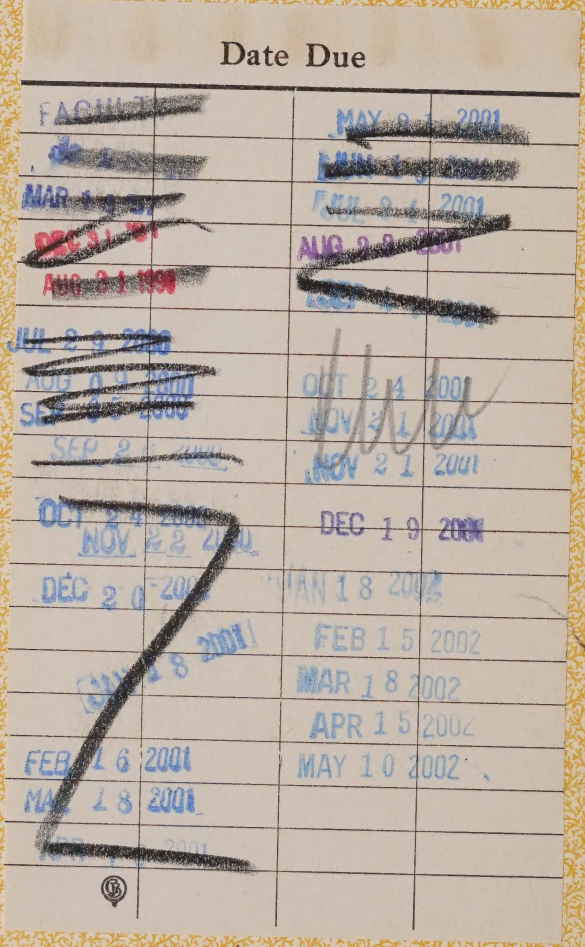
TABLES, the two, of the law, 279.
TEMPTATION, of our first parents, 99.
TESTAMENT, and covenant compared, 115.
THANKSGIVING, an element of worship, 261; a part of prayer, 340.
THEFT, forbidden, 294.
THEOCENTRIC, the principle of the Standards, 413.
THESES, reference to, 21.
TRANSGRESSION, actual, flows from sinful nature, 106.
TRANSLATIONS, of the Scriptures to be made for the people, 50.
TREE, of knowledge of good and evil, 90; of life the pledge of the covenant of works, 96; of knowledge, its conditions, 96.
TRINITY, of the Godhead stated, 59; three distinct yet related persons in one essence, 59; each person has a peculiar personal property, 60; the first has paternity, the second has sonship, and the third has procession, 60, 61; proofs of the Trinity, 61, 62; each person has its own mode of subsistence and activity, 63.
TRITHEISM, excluded by the Standards, 53.
TWISSE, reference to, 26.

UNFERMENTED, wine not necessary in the Lord's supper, 325.
UNION, of two natures in the person of Christ, 125.
UNLEAVENED, bread not necessary in the Lord's supper, 325.
UNREGENERATE, works of the, 238; such men may deceive themselves, 241; use of the law of God for the, 251.
URSINUS, reference to, 23.
USHER, reference to, 24.

VENGEANCE, Christ takes it upon his enemies, 158.
VICARIOUS, the work of Christ is, 151
VISIBLE, a phase of the church, 348.
VOLITION, man free in it, 174.
VOWS, lawful, described, 370; Romish doctrine of, rejected, 370; to be made to God alone, 372.

WAR, subject discussed, 292.
WESLEY, reference to John, 24.
WESTMINSTER ABBEY, reference to, 24.
WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY, reference to, 24, 25; its work approved by the Scottish Assembly, 27; and baptism, 309; and premillennialism, 412.
WILL, of man described, 171, 172; its relation to the other faculties, 172; its freedom, 173; not determined by any kind of necessity, 173; man needs more than a mere change of will, 175.
WITNESS, of the Holy Spirit by and with the word, 48; of the Spirit in believers, 242.
WOMEN, are not to act as preachers of the word, 272.
WORD OF GOD, as the rule of faith, 43; the gospel call is by the, 193; a means of sanctification, 218; the rule of good works, 234; a revelation of the law of God, 246; a means of grace, 268, 269; the use of the, 270; what it is, 270; summary of, in ten commandments, 270; to be publicly read, 271; Protestant practice in regard to the, 271; made effectual only by the Holy Spirit, 272; the effects of,

WORD OF GOD—
272; how it is to be preached, and heard, 273; the attitude of the hearer of the, 274; advice to ministers about preaching the, 275; rules for interpreting the, 276, 277.
WORKS, the covenant of, 89; good, 234; of supererogation, 273.
WORLD, product of divine creation, 77; made in six days, 80; had a beginning, 81.
WORSHIP, directory for, 25; religious, 259; and the Sabbath-day, 260, 263; the duty of, 260; the true mode of, 261, 281; the proper object is God alone, 261, 279; images not to be used in, 261; the parts of, 261; special acts of, are oaths, vows, and fasts, 263; the place of, 263; the time for, 263, 264, 285; the spirit of, 283.
ZWINGLE, reference to, 21.


Date Due
MAY 2001
FEB 2001
AUG 2001
OCT 24 2001
NOV 21 2001
DEC 19
JAN 18 2002
FEB 15 2002
MAR 18 2002
APR 15 2002
MAY 10 2002
FEB 16 2001
MAR 18 2001

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 01086 5873