



DAILY MEDITATIONS ON THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

by Pastors of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America

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MAR
Lord's Days 10 - 13

The Second Part - Of Man's Deliverance

Of God The Father

Lord's Day 10

Question 27. What dost thou mean by the providence of God?

Answer. The almighty and everywhere present power of God; [a] whereby, as it were by his hand, he [b] upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain [c] and drought, fruitful [d] and barren years, meat and drink, [e] health and sickness, [f] riches and poverty, yea, and all things [g] come, not by chance, but by his fatherly hand.

Question 28. What advantage is it to us to know that God has created, and by his providence doth still uphold all things?

Answer. That we may be patient in adversity [h]; thankful [i] in prosperity; and that in all things, which may hereafter befall us, we place our firm [j] trust in our faithful God and Father, that nothing shall [k] separate us from his love; since all creatures are so in his hand, that without his will they [l] cannot so much as move.

[a]: Acts 17:25,26,27,28

[b]: Heb. 1:3

[c]: Jer. 5:24

[d]: Acts 14:17

[e]: John 9:3

[f]: Prov. 22:2; Job 1:21

[g]: Mat. 10:29,30; Eph. 1:11

[h]: Rom. 5:3; Psa. 39:10

[i]: Deut. 8:10; 1Thes. 5:18

[j]: Rom. 5:3,4,5,6

[k]: Rom. 8:38,39

[l]: Job 1:12; Job 2:6; Mat. 8:31; Isa. 10:15

March 5 – LD 10, Day 1: What is God’s Providence?

by Rev. G. Van Baren

Read: Hebrews 1; Acts 17

Question and answer 26 presents a definition of “providence of God.” Simply put, it is the “almighty and everywhere present power of God” whereby all things without exception are under His direction. He, who has created all things, must continue to “uphold and govern” all of this to serve His sovereign purpose: the glory of His Name in the way of gathering His people to everlasting glory and life. It is especially comforting to know and believe that this is all done by His “fatherly” hand.

Some, who claim to believe that God created all things, also claim that God subsequently withdrew from that creation. Creation now continues on its own. Those called “Deists” insist that what now takes place is a matter of chance. The universe and history itself could evolve in a myriad of different ways.

The evolutionist neither recognizes creationism, nor will he acknowledge that there is “providence.” He scoffs at the idea that there is direction and purpose in all things that exist. He denies that there is necessarily a God who must sustain and govern all things, whether it be the stars in their courses or the smallest of creatures which live on the earth. He would insist that if there were a Supreme Power directing all things, He would not allow the devastating things which occur on the earth: earthquakes, floods, fires, which destroy vast sections of the land. Surely a “Supreme Power” would not allow for wars and diseases.

The Christian confesses that the Almighty Creator also reveals in all things that He sustains and directs everything. Acts 17:24-26, “...(He) hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation....” He counts the number of stars (Ps. 147:4). And we read in Acts 14:17 that God gives witness of Himself in that He gives rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons.

We see God as both Creator and the God of Providence. These two truths are inseparably connected. If this were not true (and then the Bible lies), we would be of all creatures most miserable.

But the Christian has confidence and assurance, not merely in some “Supreme Being,” but in the Almighty Creator and Sustainer of all things who is our Father for Jesus’ sake.

March 6 – LD 10, Day 2: Providence: the Almighty and Everywhere Present Power of God

by Rev. G. Van Baren

Read: Psalm 73

The Catechism speaks of “providence.” It is striking that the word only appears once in Scripture (Acts 24:2) and then is not a reference to the work of God. Yet, the word is properly used in dogmatics to describe that work of God in preserving and directing all things. Matt. 5:45 speaks of the work of God which sends sunshine and rain on the just and unjust.

The word “providence” comes from two Latin words: “pro” meaning “before” and “video” meaning “to see.” The word means more than this according to Scripture. God not only sees beforehand what shall take place—and accordingly plans His action, but there is much more. Some claim that the work of God is *only* that He sees before what takes place—but has nothing to do with *determining* what happens. He sees beforetime that Adam will fall into sin, so He works out a plan to salvage as much as possible of fallen mankind by sending His Son into our flesh to pay for sin. Rather, Scripture teaches that from eternity God has *determined* everything that takes place.

Some have claimed that those who deny the teaching of “common grace,” in fact embrace the term “providence” to describe the same thing. There is, however, great difference between these two terms. “Common Grace” refers to an undeserved favor of God upon the reprobate unbelievers so that he can do many good things. Because of it he cannot be totally depraved. But this “good” that he does cannot in any way contribute to his salvation.

Providence includes good gifts of God upon all. The difference is that for God’s people, He gives in His favor, while upon the reprobate, He gives in His wrath (cf. Ps. 73).

The Catechism defines it as “the almighty and everywhere present power of God...whereby...He upholds and governs” everything. The Catechism presents this in contrast to “chance.” We live in a society where “chance” is glorified. Gambling finds its allure in its element of chance. Many abuse the good gifts God provides by using them to multiply the “chance” of obtaining vastly more. God is not in the picture.

The Christian confesses that without exception, God controls and directs all things within His creation. For those who belong to Christ, all things work together for their good (Rom. 8:28). We need neither fear nor doubt—for our Father knows what is good for us. For the wicked, all works toward their damnation.

March 7 – LD 10, Day 3: God’s Providence Directs All Things!
by Rev. G. Van Baren

Read: Job 2

How inclusive is this work of God’s Providence? The Catechism emphasizes that it includes everything that takes place: both that which is considered “good” and that which would seem to be “bad.” He upholds and governs the heaven, earth, and all creatures. Very specifically, this includes everything on the earth and all events of history on the earth.

Lest there be any doubt concerning the extent of this Providence, the Catechism states that “herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come not by chance, but by His fatherly hand.” That is truly comprehensive.

Most who confess to believe in God would readily agree that all the “good” things come from our Father (fruitful years, riches, and health). Many insist that we must earnestly pray for these good things. If we do not receive these things, it is because our prayers are not fervent enough or not uttered in the strong faith that God will provide. Did not Jesus teach, “Ask and you *shall receive*?”

Others have insisted that the “bad” things (sickness, poverty) come not from God but from the devil. Is not God a loving God? Does He not earnestly love all His creatures? Would a loving God cause sickness or suffering on any of His creatures? The devastating things which occur fit in with the character of the devil.

Scripture, however, clearly teaches that all things without exception are under the direct control of our Father. Job (cf. Job 2) experienced that truth. He confessed that God sends both the good and evil (Job 2:10). Whether we understand or not, He sends these in His wrath on the reprobate unbeliever; but He sends these also on the believer in His grace.

King David acknowledged this control by God. Concerning Shimei, who was cursing the king as he was fleeing his son Absalom, David said, “Let him alone; let him curse, for the Lord has told him to” (2 Sam. 16:11).

To deny that God sends “bad” things would be to deny His sovereignty. It would place the devil on a par with God. This would be a devastating view for the Christian who is suffering some serious sickness or terrible adversity. We would be questioning our very faith in God. Rather, our Father is Sovereign over all things. Thank God that this is absolutely true.

March 8 – LD 10, Day 4: God’s “Fatherly hand” Also Sends the “Bad”
by Rev. G. Van Baren

Read: Matthew 10

One thing often misunderstood is the statement concerning God’s “Fatherly hand.” The Catechism clearly sets forth what the “Fatherly hand” of God provides. We might state simply that His Fatherly hand provides not only the “good,” but also the “bad.” Many object to the idea that God would send anything “bad” on His people. Surely the “Fatherly hand” provides that which is good (sunshine, fruitful years, health, and prosperity). Should we not find some other cause for the “bad” than the Fatherly hand of God? Is He not a loving and kind God? Would a loving God send some terrible disease leading to my death? Would He cause dreadful sorrow and grief for dear ones left behind?

But consider the figure well. How did your earthly father deal with you? Did he only give you what you wanted? Were there no occasions that he punished or chastised you in your rebellion? One young lad was heard to cry out as his father spanked him, “Daddy, you don’t love me.” Yet, upon reflection, one must confess that parents discipline their children *because* they love them.

We see this in God’s work. The “good” things He sends upon the wicked are sent in His wrath. All things He sends upon His people, He sends in His love. Danger is that we think the “good” things we receive because of what we are or what we have done. But it is not so. The “good” things the righteous receive are given to be used to God’s glory and in mercy for Jesus’ sake. In fact, it is a very great responsibility for the Christian to receive much wealth or good health. Why? It is because he deserved none of these things but now has the calling to use all to the glory of Father in heaven.

Are the “bad” things indeed bad? Not when viewed in the light of Scripture. In the first place, we must never consider it as God’s punishment for our sins. The punishment for our sins was borne on the cross by Christ.

But secondly, we must understand that adversity can both instruct and correct the Christian. He can often fall into sin. In the way of adversity (as parents correct their children), God corrects His people. But also, it is God’s way of instruction, turning us away from the earthly and temporal, and directing our eyes heavenward.

Many Christians, even in their most difficult trials, state emphatically, “God is good.”

And so it is.

**March 9 – LD 10, Day 5: “Patient in Adversity, Thankful in Prosperity”
by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: Job 1

The Catechism, true to form, again brings the doctrine of “providence” down to us in a very practical manner. It does not ask, “Can prayer change His providence concerning me?” It does not claim that I have the right to complain about God’s way with me or use this truth of providence to excuse my sin. (If God determines all these things, then I could not help but commit certain sins!) Rather, the catechism asks about the “advantage” to me of this doctrine. It is not a question, “*Will* God work all things to my advantage?” The Christian makes the bold assertion that *all* things *will* work out to my advantage. Psalm 119 repeatedly asserts this truth. The Psalmist insists that affliction has been for his profit.

One is overwhelmed by this fact. Life can sometimes be so confusing. One may think that everything is against him. All seems hopeless. And, let us face the facts, were it not for the truth of God’s providence, there would be no hope—ever. But the Christian confesses that the profound doctrine of providence is of great value and comfort to him. It speaks to him when he receives of God’s hand health and prosperity. It speaks to him in a comforting way when he must endure great trial, pain, and adversity. Everything will work out to his advantage.

The emphasis here must be: what does the doctrine of providence mean *for me*? We must not treat this doctrine in the abstract. Were we to ask ourselves, what does this doctrine mean for “people,” then this study would have no comfort for *me*.

This is not a selfish attitude. It is rather the way to lead us to recognize the great work of our Father. Imagine: from eternity our Father has determined my way. All works for my good only for Jesus’ sake.

What a comfort it is for the Christian who knows that God works all things for his good.

**March 10 – LD 10, Day 6: But Must One be “Patient” in Adversity?
by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: I Corinthians 15; Romans 8

We have confessed that “God has created and by His providence doth still uphold all things.” There are spiritual consequences to that confession. We acknowledge thereby that *all things* are in His hands. We confess, further, that all things work together for good to the child of God. This becomes a very personal confession when we state that all things work together for *my* good. That is true for me both in adversity and in prosperity.

Whether it is sickness or health, whether it is fruitful or barren years, whether it is riches or poverty—God sends these upon the wicked in His wrath, but on His people in His love and grace. How, then, is the Christian to react to all of this?

The Christian is, and must be, “patient in adversity; thankful in prosperity.”

One surely would agree that we are to be thankful in prosperity. Of course. We enjoy health, prosperity, fruitful years, etc. Often, however, that is not the case. We can take these “good” things for granted. We begin to reason that it was our wisdom, our great effort that made us prosperous. We attribute our health to much exercise, to proper diet, to careful supervision over our health by a good doctor. But however much these means are contributing to our welfare, the fact is that God, our Father, directs and governs all of this. We must be thankful to God for it all. Never are we to forget that.

But it might be more difficult to be “patient in adversity.” This “patience” surely means that we don’t complain about what God has sent upon us. We do not rebel against His way with us. We do not conclude that God is punishing us for some specific sin. Rather, we bear all of this patiently. Have you not heard the Christian who is in great pain and in very difficult circumstances confess, “God is good”? That’s patience!

We ought, however, to go even beyond this. The Christian must also be *thankful* in adversity! Is that too hard for us? Is it not enough simply to “grit our teeth and bear it?” Yet if affliction is for our profit (Ps. 119), if all these things work together for our good (Rom. 8:28), then we can be thankful even through our tears. In ways we do not always understand, affliction “*works* for us a far more exceeding weight of glory.” (II Cor. 4:17)

In all these things, we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 8:37).

March 11 – LD 10, Day 7: How Great It Is: I Can *Trust* My Father!
by Rev. G. Van Baren

Read: Acts 7:51-60

There is a striking confession made by the child of God: he has a “firm trust” in God his Father. That firm trust remains no matter what my Father determines for me.

That confession is so contrary to much which one hears today. One is told that he must pray—earnestly pray—that Father will provide with good health or great wealth. If he is very sick, he is to pray for recovery and deliverance. If only his faith is strong enough, Father will answer with healing. If one seeks many others to pray for and with him, the certainty of healing would be greater.

Lest we be misunderstood, we must assert that God hears and answers prayer. That, however, does not mean that God will give whatever we ask Him.

What is it that we can “firmly trust” that God will surely do? We confess that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God. That’s the truth of greatest comfort for the Christian. Whether I have serious sickness which may lead to death or I have been given health and strength, neither can separate me from the love of God. Whether I am in abject poverty or have great wealth, neither can separate me from the love of God. Whether I am martyred for my faith’s sake or remain relatively free to worship, neither can separate me from the love of God.

Scripture gives remarkable proof of this. Rom. 8:35-39 states this explicitly. Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 7:50-60). King Herod killed James, the brother of John, but was unable to kill the Apostle Peter because God’s angels delivered him from prison (Acts 12).

The conclusion is Scriptural: God will work whatsoever He sends to His own so that they are preserved in His love.

It is the great truth of God’s Providence that “all creatures are so in His hand that, without His will, they cannot so much as move.” That is a profound statement! Fallen angels (including the devil), governments, storms, earthquakes, yes—and all conceivable things in God’s creation are “in His hand.” Because that is true, we can believe that “nothing can separate us from the love of God.” If that were not true, we could fear separation from God’s love. Then God is not almighty. He Himself could not prevent His people from being forever lost. Thank Him that He is indeed Sovereign and surely preserves His own in love.

The Second Part - Of Man's Deliverance

Of God The Son

Lord's Day 11

Question 29. Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is a Savior?

Answer. Because he saveth us, and delivereth us from our [a] sins; and likewise, because we ought not to seek, neither can find [b] salvation in any other.

Question 30. Do such then believe in Jesus the only Savior, who seek their salvation and welfare of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else?

Answer. They do not; for though they boast of him in words, yet in deeds they deny [c] Jesus the only deliverer and Savior; for one of these two things must be true, that either Jesus is not a complete Savior; or that they, who by a true faith receive this Savior, must find all things in him [d] necessary to their salvation.

[a]: Mat. 1:21

[b]: Acts 4:12

[c]: 1Cor. 1:13,31; Gal. 5:4

[d]: Col. 2:20; Isa 9:6,7; Col. 1:19,20

March 12 – LD 11, Day 1: The Savior from Sin
by Rev Allen Brummel

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

This Lord’s Day begins a treatment of God the Son.

We begin by looking at the proper name God gave to His Son. The name Jesus is the personal name given to the Son of God by God Himself through an angel. This name reveals to us one of the most important truths of Scripture: There is only one way of salvation. It is striking how the catechism immediately switches from speaking of the name to speaking of the person of the Son of God. Who He is and what He does are described by His names. The name Jesus teaches us that not man, but God determines the way of salvation, and that way is through Jesus Christ alone. The name Jesus says it all! He came to save His people from their sins.

Jesus did not come for political or social reasons. He came for a spiritual reason- to save you from your sins. Your sins are the most serious problem in your life. God demands that every sin be punished by His wrath. No sin will escape that wrath. The soul that sins, that soul must die! God has given us a Savior from sin in Jesus Christ. Knowing that my sins are forgiven, I can face the trials and sorrows and struggles of today with blessed assurance. I have a Savior who did what was necessary to save me from death. He will continue to uphold me and give me all I need as I live my life for Him. Confess your sins. Look to Jesus alone today! He is your complete Savior.

**March 13 – LD 11, Day 2: The Only Savior
by Rev Allen Brummel**

Acts 4:12 “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

From the beginning, when God came into the Garden of Eden to clothe Adam and Eve’s nakedness as sinners, God determined that there could be no remission of sins without the shedding of blood. (Leviticus 17:11, Hebrews 9:22)

Jesus made outstanding claims through His ministry concerning Himself: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6b) Can you come to the Father by your own works? Can you approach God on the basis of your obedience? There are many who imagine they are Christians because they live according to the golden rule and do the best they can to be good people. In sharp contrast, the Bible teaches that no one will ever be justified by their own works. (Romans 3:20) We must look to Christ. And, what a Savior God has given us in our Lord Jesus Christ! His name is the only name under heaven by which there is salvation.

Through the years there were many who were required to give their lives for this truth. They insisted with their mouths- Jesus alone and they were killed because of their confession. May the testimony and blood of the martyrs strengthen our resolve to live our lives with this confession on our lips and in our hearts. Today, may we give thanks to God for the wonderful gift of a Savior who is Jesus Christ, our Lord.

March 14 – LD 11, Day 3: Glorifying in Jesus Alone
by Rev Allen Brummel

I Corinthians 1:31 “That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

Out of Lord’s Day 11 rises the question that Jesus often posed through his ministry- whom do you think I am? We can hear Jesus Himself come and ask us personally- what do you think of me? Do you love me? Do you know your need for my work, and do you live your life in devotion to me? Or, do you actually deny me even though you praise me with your mouth?

We so easily deny the perfect work of Jesus when we believe that Jesus’ work needs to be added to in some way. If there remains something in Jesus’ work that needs to be supplemented by our obedience, then the work is not complete and some glory belongs to man. God sets forth only two possibilities- either Jesus is everything to me or He is nothing to me. There is no third possibility. From the beginning of God’s work of election to the working of new life in me, to the conversion and all the good works, I confess that everything is of Him. Without Him I can do nothing.

Martin Luther said to the devil: “If you accuse me of my sins, then I refer you to Jesus because He has taken all my guilt on Himself; if you have comments to make about my good works, I refer you to Jesus again because He works these in me.” There is no basis for glorying in myself. Today, may all your glorying be in Jesus Christ, the perfect and complete Savior.

March 15 – LD 11, Day 4: Salvation all of Grace
by Rev Allen Brummel

Galatians 5:4 “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”

A constant temptation is to look to our own works for the worthiness of our salvation. Even though we reject the theology of work’s righteousness, we look at our lives and we think we deserve better than we have. We think that we don’t deserve the troubles that we are experiencing. It should not be so difficult for us to pay our bills. We should have more joy in our lives. And, if asked why, we point to our own faithfulness. Look at all we have done for our parents and for our church and look at how godly we’ve lived. Our sins don’t disturb us much, and we don’t focus on them. Instead we are as focused as the Pharisees on all the ways in which we are better than others.

That kind of attitude reveals that we don’t see a deep need for Jesus. By our walk we deny and show hatred for Jesus. We are guilty of the sin of counting the blood of Jesus of no account- we act like a man who could be saved by his own works, therefore Jesus was crucified in vain. Remember, Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost.

God works the difficult confession- I am a sinner who cannot live in obedience to the law. The good that I would I do not. (Romans 7:19) My only hope is the wonder of grace shown me in Jesus Christ. He seeks me as one who is lost and He gives to me as one who has strayed and continues to stray each day, the assurance that salvation is not of works but by His wonderful grace alone. Don’t return to the bondage of living for yourself- enjoy and live out of the liberty of seeking the glory of God. Look to the wonder of God’s unmerited favor in giving to you Jesus- your complete and only Savior.

**March 16 – LD 11, Day 5: The One Way to the Joy of the Father
by Rev Allen Brummel**

John 14:6b “I am the way, the truth, and the life:”

Every other way and every other voice in this world leads to death.

The devil and the wicked world are seeking to draw us down the path that leads to destruction. The way of the devil and the way of Jesus Christ stand in sharp antithesis of one another. This sharp distinction will be seen most fully during the time of the antichrist. He will not permit anyone to be honored except himself. He will insist that he is the only way to prosperity, happiness and salvation. The antichrist will try to force us to submit to him with violence, boycotts, imprisonment, and terrible persecution.

Jesus Christ comes simply to us with a clear command- “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28) By the power of His Spirit in our hearts, we respond by faith and we come to Him who alone is able to lift our burdens and give us peace. The fact that we believe Jesus to be the only way of salvation must be evident in our lives. Today, you must be a witness of the power of Jesus Christ by living your life in quiet submission to Him. He ordains all things. He is working all things for good to those who love Him.

We do not merely confess that Jesus is Savior, but we show by our walk who we are! We are followers of Jesus! Let people see what Jesus has done for you and how important He is to you. Show that you are a different person and that with Jesus, salvation is certain and the joy is eternal.

**March 17 – LD 11, Day 6: Living as Faithful Witnesses of Jesus
by Rev Allen Brummel**

I John 1:3 “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

It is necessary that we be faithful witnesses of Jesus as we live our lives from day to day. The authors of the catechism continue the testimony of the disciples that regardless of the situation they found themselves they could not neglect speaking about Jesus.

It is shameful that often such open and bold witness embarrasses us. By refusing to witness to those around us we reveal that we lack the love of God that would move us to love the neighbor by seeking his or her salvation. The fellowship that God has given us in the gospel is rich and blessed. The gospel is the good news of salvation, which good news is summarized in the name Jesus. That name means Savior, and that is the whole content of the gospel. Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners. In the midst of the darkness and despair of life, men and women need encouragement. God will give you opportunities today to lift high the banner of the cross. Don't be ashamed, but rather freely boast of Jesus to those around you.

May God cause us more and more to witness to those around us concerning the wonder of Jesus' work in us and for us.

**March 18 – LD 11, Day 7: Reconciled to God through Jesus
by Rev Allen Brummel**

Colossians 1:19, 20 “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”

Reconciliation with God is that which is so desperately needed by man.

We rejoice in the gift of God’s Son, by which wonder God accomplished this reconciliation. God and man are brought together through the child that was born, the Son that was given. (Isaiah 9:6) This work of God takes sinful men and women, forgives them, and brings them into the closest relationship possible with the living God of heaven and earth. We, who were lost and godless, are taken into the family of the living God. The cause of our misery and conflict with God, namely sin, is removed and we now are able to fellowship with God in Jesus Christ. There is peace with God. The frightening curse is taken out of our lives and we now realize that God is not a wrathful Judge, but a loving Father who will judge in mercy and grace.

With this confession on our lips, we are able to pray for the coming of Jesus again on the clouds of heaven. He will come to sever the last tie that joins us to this sinful world, and bring us into the fullness of heavenly bliss in the New Jerusalem where God will tabernacle with man. Praise God today for His faithfulness and treasure the glorious and mysterious union that we have with Him because of Jesus.

The Second Part - Of Man's Deliverance

Of God The Son

Lord's Day 12

Question 31. Why is he called Christ, that is anointed?

Answer. Because he is ordained of God the Father, and [a] anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be our [b] chief Prophet and Teacher, who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption; and to be our only High Priest, [c] who by the one sacrifice of his body, has redeemed us, and makes continual [d] intercession with the Father for us; and also to be our eternal King, [e] who governs us by his word and Spirit, and who defends and [f] preserves us in (the enjoyment of) that salvation, he has purchased for us.

Question 32. But why art thou called a Christian?

Answer. Because I am a member of Christ [g] by faith, and thus am partaker [h] of his anointing; that so I may [i] confess his name, and present myself a living [j] sacrifice of thankfulness to him: and also that with a free and good conscience I may fight against sin and [k] Satan in this life: and afterwards [l] reign with him eternally, over all creatures.

[a]: Heb. 1:9

[b]: Deut. 18:18; Acts 3:22; John 1:18; John 15:15; Mat. 11:27

[c]: Psa. 110:4; Heb. 7:21; Heb. 10:14

[d]: Rom. 8:34

[e]: Psa. 2:6; Luke 1:33

[f]: Mat. 28:18; John 10:28

[g]: 1Cor. 6:15

[h]: 1John 2:27; Joel 2:28

[i]: Mat. 10:32

[j]: Rom. 12:1

[k]: Eph. 6:11,12; 1Tim. 1:18,19

[l]: 2Tim 2:12

March 19 – LD 12, Day 1: Christ: the Officer of God
by Rev Allen Brummel

Isaiah 61:1a “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. . .”

The official title, similar to that of doctor or reverend, of the Son of God is Christ. Christ is the word Messiah in the Old Testament which means Anointed One or Office Bearer. ‘Christ’ points to the office that the Son of God occupies, as He represents God in the midst of this world as prophet, priest, and king.

As we proceed through our devotions this week we will look at the three-fold office of Jesus more fully. It will become evident that Jesus could not be Jesus except he be the Christ. The name Christ explains the way and manner in which Jesus saves us. Jesus was officially ordained, appointed, and called by the Father to perform this important work. The Holy Spirit anointed Him at the time of his baptism when a dove descended on Him. Anointing always referred to two things in the Old Testament. First, the person was officially chosen by God to occupy a certain office in which he would represent God. Second, the person was qualified by God for that work.

Jesus, in His human nature, needed the sacred anointing of the Holy Spirit to take up this important work. All the prophets, priests, and kings of the Old Testament were but shadows and examples pointing to this Representative of God who alone could bring about redemption. He is the One who offered the sacrifice, who perfectly reveals God’s will, and who rules and leads us in love. Rejoice that you are in the arms of Christ, the Anointed One, who will preserve and keep you to all eternity.

March 20 – LD 12, Day 2: Our Chief Prophet
by Rev Allen Brummel

Deuteronomy 18:18 “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.”

Jesus Christ teaches us as prophet through the written and preached Word.

We usually think of a prophet as one who tells the future, but we may not limit the prophetic office to that. A prophet is a spokesman for God, a teacher. He comes as an official ambassador of the God of heaven and earth with a message from the King. The prophet does not bring his own words, but the words of Jehovah. Who is better qualified for this work than Jesus Christ, who, as the Son of God designed the plan of salvation? He is the Word of God who comes to us in power and authority in order to set before us God’s will. With great clarity and power, Jesus set forth God’s will while on earth.

But, He died, was resurrected and having ascended, He is no longer present to teach us in person. Where in this world will you come into contact with God’s prophet? You need to attend church, come under the preaching, and spend time in devotion to the Bible. That is where Christ is present. He now ministers His prophetic office from heaven, and the ministers of the Word are but servants, ambassadors of Christ. But, it is Christ Himself who speaks in every worship service through the faithful preaching, and it is Christ who personally has a message for me every time I open the Bible to study it.

With this in mind, we eagerly attend to and listen to the preaching, and we read our Bibles trusting that by His Spirit, Jesus Christ as our prophet will teach and lead us into the truth. (John 14:26)

**March 21 – LD 12, Day 3: Our Glorious High Priest
by Rev Allen Brummel**

Psalm 110:4 “The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”

Christ is not only teacher, but he is priest. What good would it be for Christ merely to tell us the way to go when we would refuse to listen and obey Him? He is our Only High Priest who by the one sacrifice of His body has redeemed us! He did what no other priest could ever do. He brought the Sacrifice and He offered it up as Priest. He is Sacrificer and sacrificial Lamb at the same time. He paid the price necessary to save us from our sins. He substituted Himself for each of His children. Jesus Christ proclaimed the way, and paved that way by going through the waves and tumults of God’s wrath against His people for their sins.

Now, Christ is in heaven as our High Priest. He makes constant prayers on our behalf to preserve us and keep us in the faith. He defends us over against the wrath of God against sin. He reminds the Father that our sins have been covered and we are justified by His blood. He is our way to God just as the Priest in the Old Testament was the way to God for the people. But, we have a victorious, glorified priest, and therefore our prayers will be heard.

Rejoice today in the wonder of Christ’s perfect sacrifice on your behalf and in the ability to come to God in prayer with the confidence that those prayers will not be cast off, but will be heard. Christ brings those prayers to the Father who has promised to give us all things we desire of Him in Christ’s name.

**March 22 – LD 12, Day 4: Our Conquering King
by Rev Allen Brummel**

Zechariah 9:9 “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”

Jesus Christ is our eternal king who defends us and preserves us from sin and causes us to enjoy all the wonders of salvation. The unique nature of Jesus’ rule is that He established His kingdom in the way of death. Earthly kings, no matter how powerful, die, and their kingdom ends. Jesus died in order to establish His Kingdom in righteousness and purchase his citizens from the bondage of sin. His kingdom, therefore, is unique in that it is not of this world, but it is a spiritual kingdom found in the hearts of God’s people and in His church.

Jesus Christ is king of the world by His power. He is king of His church by His grace and love. That sovereign rule over all things is for the purpose of preserving and saving His church. Christ takes us into His kingdom and makes us willing subjects, whose delight is to honor Him who has defended us from the devil and continues to defend us against all our enemies. Jesus testified that no one shall pluck His people out of His hand. (John 10:28) We have nothing to fear- Jesus Christ is our eternal King!

March 23 – LD 12, Day 5: Serving God as Prophets
by Rev Allen Brummel

Hebrews 13:15 “By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.”

The name Christian was most likely originally used in a derogatory manner for the followers of Christ. But, according to Acts 11:26 ,the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. As those who confess to be saved by the wonder of Jesus Christ, we count it a great privilege to take the name, Christian, to ourselves. That name depicts the wonder by which Christ has taken us into His family and makes us partakers of all His blessings, including bringing us into His offices.

We are now made representatives of God in this world, and we who lost the image of God through the fall, are by grace restored into the likeness of Jesus Christ. We are made prophet, priest and king, in Jesus Christ.

How are we prophets? We are called to speak the truth, to warn those walking in sin, and to live out of the Word. We confess the name of Jesus Christ by spending time with Him in prayer and studying the Word to grow in our knowledge of God. We teach and train our children to love God and to walk in obedience.

Do you ever feel like you are not worth much? Do others mock you and make you feel small? Remember God’s word in I Peter 2:9 “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” What a precious value has been placed on you! You are now a representative of God in this world, called to show forth His praise.

March 24 – LD 12, Day 6: Living for God as Priests
by Rev Allen Brummel

Romans 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

Our priestly calling is set forth very beautifully in the catechism. We do not merely bring our sacrifices to God, but we are called to sacrifice ourselves! That means that we are to dedicate the whole of our life in self-sacrificing love to God and to our neighbor. Throughout our lives, we need always to remember- my Christian life is not about me and myself, it is about God and His glory and His will.

This sacrifice is not always easy. There are times we begrudge the fact that we need to make the sacrifices. At times we look at the wicked and become envious for their seeming lack of struggles, as Asaph did in Psalm 73. But, God does not only will that we sacrifice, He also wills that we do so willingly.

My comfort is knowing that I am not my own, but I belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. With that spirit, submit your will to His and live as one who seeks to bring glory, not shame to His name. Don't confess Christ and then allow your behavior to stand in the way of your witness. Rather, confess Christ by your life, and in that way others will see the power of God and His grace in your life. They will be drawn to you for Christ's sake. Remember today that you occupy a special office before God as a Christian Priest, called to reflect the spirit of Jesus Christ who gave His all for the sake of the glory of God and the Salvation of His people. What a wonderful motivation to live unto Him!

March 25 – LD 12, Day 7: Doing Battle as Kings
by Rev Allen Brummel

Ephesians 6:11,12 “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

God has placed you as His soldier in the midst of a fierce battle. This battle, for the most part, is against ourselves, against our own sinful nature. The fight that is within is that which requires the most effort. Knowing our own weakness and the strength of the devil, we would despair if it were not for the union we have with Christ. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Philippians 4:13) We go into this battle knowing that the end result is decided. Jesus Christ has crushed the head of the devil, and He has sealed the victory. We may lose individual battles, but the war has been won by Jesus Christ.

As members of the militant church on earth, we take on the full armor of God, knowing and confessing that our strength in battle is not our own, but from God. Christ has taken us to be His kings, ruling on His behalf with glory and power. As we do battle against our own nature, against the wickedness in the world, and against the devil, we long more and more for the glorious reign that will take place in glory. We will reign with Him eternally! In the midst of the daily fights and discouragements, keep in mind what a glorious future God has given to you and me by grace.

The Second Part - Of Man's Deliverance

Of God The Son

Lord's Day 13

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

Answer. Because Christ alone is the eternal and natural Son of [a] God; but we are children [b] adopted of God, by grace, for his sake.

Question 34. Wherefore callest thou him our Lord?

Answer. Because he hath redeemed us, both soul and body, from all our sins, not with gold or silver, [c] but with his precious blood, and hath delivered us from all the power of the devil; and thus hath made us his own property.

[a]: John 1:1; Heb. 1:2

[b]: Rom. 8:15,16,17; Eph. 1:5,6

[c]: 1Pet. 1:18,19; 1Cor. 6:20

**March 26 – LD 13, Day 1: Only Begotten and Adopted Sons
by Rev Allen Brummel**

John 1:12 “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.”

Sometimes we are confused by the fact that the Son of God is called the Only Begotten Son while we are also children of God.

We are taught in this Lord’s Day an important and beautiful distinction that is lost in many of the modern versions of the Bible which simply identify Jesus as the Son of God. Not only is that a bad translation, but that teaches bad theology.

There are two kinds of children in the family of God. Jesus is the natural Son while we are adopted children. The point of this Lord’s Day is to set forth the similarity, but also the distance that there is between Christ and believers. The difference is as great as that between the creature and the Creator. There is a huge chasm! But, at the same time we are made brothers of Jesus Christ by being taken into His family by adoption.

Adoption is a wonderful thing. A child, who had nothing, was not wanted by parents, who had an uncertain future, is given a home, security, and legal rights. The one who is adopted should be eternally grateful to God for the parents who took them into their homes and gave them their love. We, who are adopted into God’s family, likewise have reason for constant joy and thankfulness. God took us, fallen children in Adam who deserved to be destroyed with the devil and his family, and brought us into His household. Our adoption was based in no way on what we were or what we would be. But He adopted us so that we would be His children. Think on that wonder today. Your value is not found in what you have been able to accomplish or what others think of you. Your value is found in the fact that the Living God of heaven and earth, the Creator of the universe has taken you into His family. You are a child of God, and no one can take that wonder from you!

March 27 – LD 13, Day 2: A Gracious Election
by Rev Allen Brummel

Ephesians 1:4,5 “According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.”

God takes us into the family of God by the wonder of predestination. In love, God chose us to Himself from before we were born. That decision to choose us was based on nothing other than His good pleasure. He did not choose us because we were more in number or more worthy, but He chose us so that we would praise and glorify Him, and so that we would be holy.

In time Jesus Christ takes us into that family by regeneration. He makes us heirs with Christ of all the blessings of salvation. (I Peter 1:2-5) We who are created from dust, who rebel daily against the will of God, are brought into the family of God and nothing can separate us from that family.

Here the analogy of adoption falls away. Earthly parents can reverse the adoption process when their children show themselves to be rebellious. Earthly parents can't change the moral makeup of their children. God changes His children and makes us look like Him spiritually so that we resemble our Father. He makes us partakers even of His divine nature! (II Peter 1:4) He pledges His love toward us as a love that is unconditional, not at all dependant on our obedience. (Romans 8:35-39) Rejoice in the wonder of God's everlasting and unfailing love!

March 28 – LD 13, Day 3: Redeemed by Blood
by Rev Allen Brummel

I Peter 1:18,19 “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:”

As the Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ is our Lord. He purchased us to be His own. We by nature forsook God and found ourselves in captivity to sin. We were slaved and put on the auction block. Christ entered the auction barn and took up the bid to buy us. The language that the catechism uses here, as well as in other places, is warm and tender and speaks of the great distress and death from which we were delivered. His was the winning bid because the value of it far outweighed the value that anyone else could provide. Gold and silver fluctuate in value. What He might have paid for us in money thousands of years ago, would no longer be worthy. But, Jesus Christ laid down his own life. He paid the price of the bid with His own blood.

The result is that we are His servants and He is our loving Lord. We serve Him in love. We belong to Him. He has a right to do with us as He pleases. And, we know that whatever He does to us is done out of love and for our salvation. He sends trials, afflicts us with cancer and other sicknesses, and brings death into our homes. He does this as our Loving Lord to whom we submit in humility praying for the grace, never to forget the wonder of our spiritual adoption and the thankfulness we owe to Him.

**March 29 – LD 13, Day 4: Redeemed to Glorify God
by Rev Allen Brummel**

I Corinthians 6:20 “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

The fact that Jesus is your Lord, and you are a servant to Him requires a certain attitude in life. Having been bought with a price, Paul admonishes us to glorify God in our body and in our spirit which are God’s.

We were set free from the guilt and power of sin. Sin is such a tremendous power in our lives. We who were captives to sin have been set free. With this redemptive work comes great comfort, but also an obligation. We are called to live unto Him. Your body belongs to Jesus Christ. What you do with your body must be in accordance with His will. If you pursue the ways of sin in your body, you involve Jesus Christ in those ways of sin. If you unite yourself with a prostitute or commit adultery, you unite Christ with the ways of wickedness (I Corinthians 6:15-17).

Some try to make Christ the Lord of their spirits, but they want to retain the control of their bodies. Christ has redeemed us both soul and body. When His name is Lord, then our name must be servant. And, by His grace, we will serve Him and pursue His will. The way of joy and happiness is not found in rebellion, but loving submission to the one who gave His life so that we might live forever.

**March 30 – LD 13, Day 5: Our Sonship Proven by Chastisement
by Rev Allen Brummel**

Hebrews 12:5-8

What a remarkable word of God here in Hebrews 12 in connection with our sonship. How do we know that we are sons of God? In part, that confirmation comes in the way of trials and afflictions, in the way specifically of chastisement. Our loving Heavenly Father corrects the son whom He loveth. He does not look the other way and allow us to walk in all kinds of wicked behaviors. He makes it so that we are caught. We don't get away with our sins.

And, the result is troubling for us. We have to suffer the consequences of our sins. Our sorrow for sin is tested. Are we sorrowful because we have offended our Heavenly Father, or is our sorrow due to the fact that we got caught? Our sorrow must be a sorrow for the sins we committed in offending our heavenly father. And, we must be thankful to our God who loves us so much that He will not allow us to continue indefinitely down the path of impenitence. So, rather than ask- why is God causing these afflictions in my life? Is this because He hates me?

We realize with thankful hearts- my Heavenly Father loves me as a child to such a degree that He is willing to stop me from destroying myself, my family, and my life. He causes my sin to be exposed so that I might humble myself before Him, repent, and go forward, trusting more fully His strength.

March 31 – LD 13, Day 6: Our Complete Deliverance
by Rev Allen Brummel

Romans 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

Christ has delivered you from all the power of the devil. What a glorious and wonderful truth! The Bible gives us an insight into the power of the devil. He came to Jesus Christ with three compelling, powerful temptations. Again and again he sought to destroy the seed of the Woman. The sorrow and pain he caused for the people of God was much. He bruised or crushed the heel of the seed of the woman.

In our lives we see His power repeatedly. Every night as we think on the events of the day, we see how he moved us to pride, and to use our tongues wickedly. We see the strife and trouble in our lives. We see how weak we were with regard to the specific “pet” sins against which we constantly fight. We are tempted to despair. Then, we wake up in the morning and immediately we see again His power and influence in our lives. Is there no relief? Is there no possibility of victory?

Then, we meditate on the wonder that Jesus Christ has delivered us from all the power of the devil. The devil has been conquered! There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus! The Lordship of Jesus Christ over sin and the devil is reason for great encouragement as we launch again into the fierce battle against sin today. Look to Jesus as your Lord to preserve and keep you faithful!

April 1 – LD 13, Day 7: A Glorious Confession
by Rev Allen Brummel

I Corinthians 12:3 “Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”

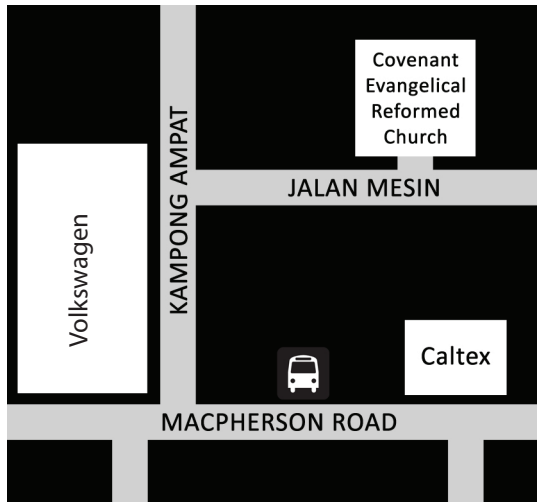
We confess Jesus Christ to be our Lord because of the wonder of God’s work in us. By the Holy Spirit, God takes hold of our sinful, rebellious natures which would turn our backs on God altogether, and transforms them. We are given ears to hear and tongues to confess wonders that we would never have confessed on our own.

There are those who will call Him Lord merely in fear. At the final judgment, all men will be forced to bow before Him in adoration and praise, confessing that He alone is Lord of all. Some will call Him Lord with their mouths, but not their hearts. Those, Jesus will reject as never having known them. They merely called Him by name, but never from the heart, nor with their lives. Just saying “Lord, Lord” does not do us any good if we refuse to walk according to the will of His Father who is in heaven. By word and by deed we submit to Him. We willingly and joyfully confess Jesus as our Lord and seek to live as His faithful servants, looking forward to the day when our faithfulness will be as that of the angels. And, then we will hear too those glorious words- “...thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!” (Matthew 25:23b)



COVENANT EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH

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2.00 – 3.00 pm

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