

Monergism

CHRISTOLOGY

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST



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Christology

The Doctrine of Christ

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Chapter 1

THE COVENANT OF GRACE

Previously, we beheld humanity in its sacred essence, abiding with God in a resplendent Covenant of Works; thereafter, we witnessed humanity mired in wretchedness under sin and punishment, through the breach of this Covenant of Works; now, we shall contemplate humanity under grace, and for this purpose, first address the Covenant of Grace.

Designation in the OLD TESTAMENT

I. The Hebrews call the word Covenant תרבו Berith; it is more consistent with the nature of that language to derive it not from ארבו Bara to create, but from חרבו Barah to choose; for indeed, in a covenant, persons and conditions are chosen. The covenant was often consecrated and confirmed with various ceremonies; among these was the slaughtering of beasts; they were cut in half, and the pieces laid opposite each other, and the covenant-makers would pass between these pieces, thereby declaring: thus should I be cut asunder, should I break this covenant. See this in Gen. 15:9, 10; also Jer. 34:18. And I will give the men who have violated My covenant... which they made before My face, with the calf which they had cut in twain, and had passed between the pieces thereof.

Hence, making a covenant in Hebrew is called Berith kerot, Ps. 50:5 and in Latin percutere foedus, to strike a covenant. It was also customary to eat and hold feasts when making a covenant. Gen. 31:44, 45. For this purpose, salt was used, which in itself is pure and enduring, preserves food from corruption, and renders it tasty; perhaps for this reason, a steadfast and a pleasant covenant is called a covenant of salt. 2 Chron. 13:5.

In the NEW TESTAMENT

The Greeks call a covenant Diatheke; with this word, the LXX - the Septuagint - translates the Hebrew Berith. In the NEW TESTAMENT, it is sometimes rendered Covenant, other times Testament. It is without basis, and contrary to the Greek authors, the LXX translators, and against various texts of the New Testament to want the word Diatheke to be translated not as Covenant but solely as Testament, subtly undermining the covenantal act with God, and the practice of faith.

Distinction between covenant and testament.

Among other differences between a testament and a covenant is that in the making of the former, the consent of the heir is not required, whereas the latter necessitates the consent of both parties. The word *diatheke* fits very aptly and emphatically with the Covenant of Grace; for it is a covenant that includes something of a testament, and it is such a testament that it carries something of a covenant within. It is a Covenantal Testament, and a Testamentary Covenant.

Covenant in our language is derived from binding, whereby things that were previously separate from one another are joined together and united. In a covenant, parties that were not one but separate from each other are bound together and thus united.

Various meanings.

II. The word covenant has various meanings in God's Word, due to the resemblance with one aspect or another of a covenant. Thus it means:

(a) an immutable promise: Gen. 9:9, 10. But behold, I establish My covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you, of the birds, of the cattle, and of all the beasts of the earth with you. Here there is no consent on the part of the creatures, and yet it is said that a covenant is made with them, which is nothing else but a promise, because in a covenant there are promises, at least on one side.

(b) Ordinance. A fixed unbreakable ordinance: Jer. 33:20. If you could break My covenant of the day, and My covenant of the night, so that there would not be day and night in their season.

(c) Peace. Peace is a fruit of the covenant, hence it bears the name of covenant by analogy: Job 5:23. For you shall have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.

(d) Watchfulness. The confederate must take great care not to do anything against the covenant, therefore careful watchfulness is called a covenant. Job 31:1. I made a covenant with my eyes.

(e) Command. In a covenant, there are laws that are demanded as conditions, therefore a command bears the name of covenant: Deut. 4:13. And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments. The ten words were not actually the covenant itself, for the covenant had been made earlier; but they were laws according to which the confederates had to live as a rule.

(f) Ministry of the covenant. The ministry of the covenant also sometimes bears the name of the covenant: Gen. 17:10. This is My covenant ... every male among you shall be circumcised. Thus, also the new ministry of that single covenant, which took place immediately after the fall with Adam and Eve, is called a covenant. Jer. 31:31 ... that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. These all are figurative meanings of the word covenant.

Description.

III. Properly speaking, a covenant is a mutual commitment between two or more persons, promising certain matters under certain conditions to each other. Between God and man, there is such a proper Covenant of Grace, which is a holy, magnificent, well-ordered, and everlasting agreement or pact between the All-

Sufficient, Good, Almighty, Just, Faithful, Truthful, and Unchangeable God on one side; and on the other side, the elect, who by nature are sinful, condemnable, powerless, repulsive, hateful, and unbearable; in which God promises deliverance from all evil, and the conferment of all bliss out of Grace, through the Mediator Jesus Christ; and in which man, with all his heart and full satisfaction in those promises, and in the way to come into possession of those promised goods as presented in the Word, consents, accepts them, and surrenders himself to God in that Covenant, which God, to assure the confederates, seals with Sacraments; all to the glorification of God's free and inscrutable Grace.

IV. It will be necessary and beneficial for us to lay out these matters more plainly.

God interacts with man in the manner of making a covenant.

If one is to engage with God in the manner of a covenant, and is to derive the right benefit from the established covenant, he must first be very clearly convinced in his heart that God establishes a covenant with man, invites man to enter into that covenant, and that man may, can, and does interact with God in the manner of a covenant.

To persuade your soul of this, pay close attention to all those texts of the Holy Scripture, in which talk of a Covenant, the establishment of a Covenant, entering into a Covenant is mentioned. It is true that believing, accepting Christ, and surrendering to Him encompass the covenantal actions, and that the simple-minded, engaging with God through Christ under that conception, partake in the Covenant and its benefits, such that the proposal of covenantal actions should not hinder or grieve them if they notice that they have not acted so strictly under that conception; but because the covenantal action provides more clarity, firmness, comfort, and more steadfast

progress, we wish to motivate everyone to engage under this notion of entering into a covenant with God, because the Holy Scripture speaks so clearly and frequently of it. See these:

Which is demonstrated, as much on the side of God.

V. Gen. 15 presents a covenant between God and Abraham, with several notable circumstances. In which God, conforming to the manner of men, commands Abraham to slaughter animals, cut them in half, and lay the pieces opposite each other. Abraham obeys, gives his consent thereto, and prepares everything. God causes a smoking furnace and a fiery torch to pass between those pieces, thus confirming a covenant with Abraham.

- Gen. 17:7. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and your seed after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto you, and to your seed after you.
- Jer. 31:31, 33. I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel... But this is the covenant... I will put my law in their inward parts... and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.
- Jer. 32:38-40. Yes, they shall be My people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

In the NEW TESTAMENT, this Covenant is also often spoken of, just as much on the side of God:

- Luke 1:72. That He would show mercy to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant.
- Ephesians 2:12. Strangers from the covenants of promise.

- Hebrews 7:22. Jesus has become the surety of a much better covenant.
- Hebrews 8:6. The mediator of a better covenant.

As on the side of man.

Also consider these texts, which speak of man's entering into that Covenant:

- 2 Chronicles 30:8. Give the Lord your hand.
- 2 Chronicles 15:12. They entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and soul.
- Ezekiel 20:37. I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.
- Nehemiah 9:38. In view of all this, we are making a firm covenant.
- To this end serves: Isaiah 44:5. This one will say, 'I am the Lord's'... and another will write on his hand, 'The Lord's.'

From all these texts, it is clear that there is a covenantal action between God and the believers, and that it is established from God's side by offering, promising, and from the side of man by accepting and surrendering.

Has been taught and practiced at all times in the Church.

Just as the Holy Scripture presents this covenantal action, so has it always been taught and practiced in the Church, not only before the antichrist but also at the onset of reformation. The reformers presented and impressed it both with words and pen; it is urged in the forms of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and of marriage. The subsequent teachers have written extensively and powerfully on several of these. So, it is not a truth that has been elucidated only in

recent years, as some, in search of glory, would have it because they perhaps were ignorant of both the matter and the writers.

Parties.

VI. To understand the nature of this Covenant more clearly and to lose oneself in wonder over this matter, it is necessary to consider attentively the parties that come together and are united in the Covenant. Never have such opposing parties been reconciled, never have such unequal been united. Here is God, the Creator of everything, here is the holy Lord, and a despicable sinner.

Let us consider each one in particular, that the matter may be recognized as more glorious and surpassing all admiration, thereby enticing everyone to enter into this Covenant, and arousing those who have entered to rejoice and glorify God.

The one is God, as all-sufficient.

VII. One party and Covenant-maker is the Lord God; who in this Covenant must be considered:

1. as all-sufficient. God is self-sufficient; He does not need to be served by human hands. Man's goodness does not affect Him. He gains no benefit from someone entering into this Covenant or living righteously; it is solely for the benefit of the confederate. And as He is self-sufficient, so He is also Shaddai, sufficient for all and each confederate, to fill and satisfy them with so much light, love, peace, joy, and bliss that they desire nothing but God alone, or can desire. Yes, they find that they can only grasp a tiny droplet of that sufficiency; and if a soul experiences the slightest ray of it, she says: Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is nothing on earth that I desire

besides You. It is good for me to be near God. Psalm 73:25, 28. In your presence is fullness of joy, Psalm 16:11. I will be satisfied with your likeness, Psalm 17:15. They are abundantly satisfied with the fatness of your house Psalm 36:9. This all-sufficient God establishes a covenant with man, who lacks everything. Oh, how fortunate is he who stands in covenant with this God! Who will, who can refuse to enter into a covenant with this All-Sufficient? Who is not enlivened to do so immediately?

2. As good. VIII. Moreover, God presents himself as good. God is truly good.

- Nahum 1:7. The Lord is good.
- Ex. 34:6. The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.
- Ps. 119:68. You are good and do good.
- Ps. 136:1. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endures forever. That is God's nature, and from this goodness comes the doing of good, and especially this Covenant of Grace.
- Luke 1:78. Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Dayspring from on high has visited us.
- Titus 3:4, 5. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.

It pains any lover of God that many always carry with them a misrepresentation of God. Many view the good God always, indeed as it lies at the core of their hearts and their actions testify, as harsh, unmerciful, without pity, unforgiving, having no regard for the small and the humble. With such a heart they come to prayer, and have little or no hope of being heard; with such a heart they carry

themselves all day long after they have sinned, as if there were now no grace to be obtained. Thus, they dishonor God and ruin themselves. Let those who turn away from God, who do not desire or seek Him, tremble before Him as an avenger; but you, who are about Him and His grace, yet see Him as good; for that is how He makes Himself known in nature, in Scripture, to other believers, and how He has also often revealed Himself to you. Lamentations 3:25. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeks him.

Therefore, whoever you are, come with fear to the Lord, and to His goodness, Hosea 3:5. With such a good God, man has to deal in making the covenant. Who then would not desire and take courage to enter into a covenant with the Lord?

3. As Almighty.

IX. In the covenant, God also presents Himself as an almighty God, one who not only wills but is also able to impart His sufficiency and goodness. When the Lord made the covenant with Abraham, He declared beforehand:

- "I am God Almighty." Gen. 17:1.
- "He who is mighty has done great things for me," sang Mary, Luke 1:49.
- "I am... the Almighty," says the Lord, Revelation 1:8.
- "He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think," Ephesians 3:20. How secure, then, is the one who is in covenant with this God! How peacefully may he rest in Him! How surely can he expect the promises!

4. As Faithful.

X. In establishing this Covenant, the Lord reveals Himself as faithful, one who will not forsake His confederates or let them lack anything. He is the faithful Creator: 1 Peter 4:19. His faithfulness endures forever, Psalm 146:6. "Great is Your faithfulness," Lamentations 3:23. "He will not let your foot slip; He who watches over you will not slumber. The Lord will keep you from all harm; He will watch over your life," Psalm 121:3, 7. Behold, all is faithfulness that the faithful God does. Yes, even when He afflicts, it is out of faithfulness, Psalm 119:75. "If we are faithless, He remains faithful," 2 Timothy 2:13. "I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered," Psalm 89:34, 35. Believe this, have no suspicions, rest in this, all you who have entered the covenant, for your God is a faithful God. He will complete everything for you.

5. As True.

XI. God is also true and unchangeable. He is JEHOVAH, "I am who I am," Exodus 3:14. "I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed," Malachi 3:6. He does not lie, He who is the Glory of Israel does not change His mind, 1 Samuel 15:29. "God's gifts and His call are irrevocable," Romans 11:29. Thus, a confederate may await the goods as surely as if they were already in hand, and rejoice in them without care, as Abraham did. "He did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had the power to do what He had promised," Romans 4:20, 21.

6. As Holy and Just.

XII. In this Covenant, God also reveals Himself as holy and just. "He does not leave the guilty unpunished," Exodus 34:7. When Joshua brought the people into a covenant with God, he said: "You are not

able to serve the Lord. He is a holy God," Joshua 24:19. One might think: this deters, who would dare to enter into a covenant with such a holy and just God? But they must know that it should attract them; because the righteousness has been satisfied by the Mediator, so the righteousness of God is now for the confederates, and therefore the Covenant remains unshakeable. "He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins," 1 John 1:9. Dwell upon these divine attributes displayed above, and see God in such a light, until the soul is truly persuaded that God as such truly precedes in the establishing of this Covenant, thereby taking boldness to enter into this Covenant, and once entered, to rest with great certainty in that God. This is the one party.

The other party is a wretched human.

XIII. The other party is mankind, as wretched, as sinful, as condemnable, as powerless, as we have depicted them above. Compare these two together. Could one believe that between such two unequal parties there could ever be a covenant, and such a covenant, unless God Himself revealed it? And now that such a covenant has come to pass between the two, what wonder and joy does it deserve? Let angels, let heaven and earth, let humanity stand amazed that the high, holy, and glorious God takes such filthy, wicked, and worthless creatures into a covenant, yes, into such a close covenant of friendship, and leads them by that Divine path to salvation.

The Conditions. Promises.

XIV. To more fully understand the nature of this magnificent covenant, it is necessary that we recognize the conditions, stipulations, or promises of this Covenant.

- First, we shall present the goods and promises extended by God's side;
- and then we shall observe what conditions must be contributed by man's side. Take heed, reader, whoever you are, pay close attention to the articles of this Covenant, whether it might stir your desire, your wonder, your joy. Is it not a Covenant of God? That alone would be sufficient to investigate. But in addition, the promised goods are so plentiful, so great, that they surpass all understanding. In each matter lies an infinite bliss. We shall present only some principal matters with brevity. We will condense them into fourteen articles. • The first seven are the miseries from which the Lord promises to deliver the confederates; • the second seven encompass the goods that the Lord promises to bestow. Would to God that we could view these with an understanding and believing heart as the promised goods of the Covenant, and not hear or read them in passing, but contemplate them until we could affirm them with an 'amen' and hold them very dear! Hear then! These are the terms of the Covenant. From these seven evils, God promises deliverance to those who wish to enter into this Covenant with Him.

1. Redemption from Sins.

XV. God offers as a condition of the Covenant, redemption from all sins. See this: Jer. 31:33, 34. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD... "I will forgive their wickedness." God promises such forgiveness:

(a) That He retains not a single sin but forgives them all, small, great, known, unknown, brazen, often repeated, out of weakness, out of impetuosity, persistently clinging, even the sinfulness of nature, with none excepted: Jer. 33:8. "I will cleanse them from all the sin they

have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion."

(b) God promises such forgiveness that He forgives them forever, never to recall them again: Jer. 31:34. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." Isa. 43:25. "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more." Isa. 44:22. "I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist."

(c) Thus, God promises to forgive sins in such a way that He no longer regards the sinner as a sinner, but as if he had not transgressed against Him, as if he had fully atoned for all his sins and accomplished all righteousness. Col. 2:10. "And you have been given fullness in Christ." 2 Cor. 5:21. "So that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

(d) God promises to forgive sins so that He will henceforth view their sins with compassion, as a father does when his frail child falls. Blessed is the one whose sins are forgiven.

2. From Wrath. XVI. God promises deliverance from His wrath. Because of sin, every person is subject to wrath. We were by nature children of wrath, Ephesians 2:3. This wrath is unbearable: Psalm 76:7. "Who can stand before you when once your anger is roused?" From this, the confederates are fully delivered: 1 Timothy 1:10. "Who rescues us from the coming wrath."

3. From Curse. God promises liberation from the curse. This curse lies upon every person: Deuteronomy 27:26. "Cursed be anyone who does not uphold the words of this law." God completely

removes this: Galatians 3:13. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."

4. From Adversities. God promises salvation from all bodily adversities and from death, insofar as they would harm the confederates and not be to their advantage: Hosea 13:14. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave."
5. From the Devil. God promises deliverance from the power of the devil; every person in nature is caught in the snare of the devil at his will, 2 Timothy 2:26. From this, God delivers His own, by the power of this covenant: Acts 26:18. "To open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God."
6. From Sin's Dominion. God promises liberation from the dominion of sin: Romans 6:14. "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace."
7. From Condemnation. God promises deliverance from eternal condemnation: Romans 8:1. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

What do you think of these conditions, you who have ever felt what sin, wrath, curse, death, the power of the devil, the dominion of sin, and condemnation are? Are these matters not precious? Are these conditions not acceptable? Are they at all to be rejected?

Blessings.

XVII. It was not enough for the Lord to free His confederates from all these woes; He also sets forth other conditions, by which He

promises all blessings that can contribute to the felicity of the confederates. Namely:

1. God to be their God. God offers Himself to be the God of a poor, repentant sinner: Gen. 17:7. "I will establish my covenant to be God to you." Jer. 31:33, 34. "This is my covenant... I will be their God, and they shall be my people."
- In this lies all happiness, yet none knows what it is, save for those who partake of it. It is not about receiving a gift from God, but having God Himself as one's portion: Jer. 10:16. "The Portion of Jacob is not like these, for he is the Maker of all things."
- In this, the Church rejoiced: Lam. 3:24. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."
- In this, Asaph found rest and comfort in all adversities: Psalm 73:25-26. "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Who can articulate such vast happiness? It's to be overshadowed by God's gracious presence; to be encircled by His helping and preserving omnipotence; to rest in His infallible faithfulness; to rejoice in God's eternal blessedness, majesty, and glory; to be illuminated by His light; to be warmed by His goodness and love; to be satisfied with His sufficiency; to lose oneself in His infinity and incomprehensibility; it's that contented and loving surrender to Him, that placing oneself under Him, that adoration of Him; it's, in the sight and feeling of His perfections, with heart, tongue, and deeds to give Him honor and glory, for He is worthy; it's to fear Him, to serve Him, and in all things to be united with His will, because He is God; it's that which I cannot comprehend, and you cannot fathom,

but in whose infinity we must lose ourselves, exclaiming: Hallelujah! Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, Psalm 33:12. That alone encompasses everything.

Nevertheless, it has pleased the Lord to set forth various specific blessings as conditions, stipulations, and promises of the Covenant of Grace, which we shall then present for clearer knowledge and greater stirring.

2. Spirit. God promises to give His Spirit to His confederates: Isaiah 44:3. "I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring." Ezek. 36:27. "I will put my Spirit in you." Joel 2:28. "I will pour out my Spirit on all people." Gal. 4:6. "Because you are his children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts."
3. Friendship. God offers friendship with Him, as close as father and children. By the power of this Covenant, Abraham was called a friend of God, James 2:23. And Christ says of His own: "You are my friends," John 15:14. "Behold, you are beautiful, my love," Song of Solomon 4:1. The Church calls Jesus her Beloved, Song of Solomon 5:16. Indeed, God desires to be a Father to them, and they shall be His children. 2 Cor. 6:18. "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters." What a privilege, how glorious and sweet it is to be able to cry out: Abba, Father!
4. Peace. God offers peace: Isaiah 54:13. "All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children." This peace is with God, with angels, with conscience; indeed, one is in such a state as if all creation were at peace with them; it's such a sweet condition that it is indescribable, surpassing all understanding. Philippians 4:7. It is a foretaste of heaven. "For the kingdom of God is peace," Romans 14:17.

5. Sanctification. God offers sanctification in all aspects. (a) Enlightenment: Isaiah 54:13. "All your children shall be taught by the Lord." "This is my covenant... they will all know me." (b) Life. Malachi 2:5. "My covenant was with him, a covenant of life." (c) Truth: Isaiah 61:8. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that their offspring shall be known among the nations." (d) Freedom: 2 Corinthians 3:17. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." (e) Willingness: Psalm 110:3. "Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments." (f) And to sum it all up: godliness, faith, hope, love, fear, obedience, humility, meekness, wisdom, etc. Jeremiah 31:33. "This is my covenant... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts." Ezekiel 36:26, 27. "I will give you a new heart... And I will make you walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules." This is what the godly so ardently long for, and over whose lack they mourn so bitterly; this is what is pledged here.

6. Preservation. God guarantees that He will preserve His confederates in the state of grace and friendship, so that neither they themselves nor any creature shall rob them of this. The stability of their state will not depend on the confederates themselves, for a hundred times in a day they would fall away, and He promises that He Himself will never leave nor forsake them: Jer. 32:40. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing good to them, and I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me." How firm and certain is the state of a confederate! They can confidently say: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Rom. 8:35.

7. Salvation. God offers as a condition of this covenant eternal salvation: Luke 22:29. "And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me." John 10:28. "I give them eternal life." Matt. 25:34. "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world."

These are the proposed articles of the covenant. Take these fourteen articles together and consider if there is any article that displeases you, that you wish to remove; ponder if there is perhaps something more you would desire, and you will find it is perfect and more glorious than all people together could have devised or dared to ask for. Is it not enough to be freed from all evil under which one might fall, and to enjoy all blessedness into eternity? Is it not sufficient to compel your soul to wholeheartedly decide to enter into this Covenant with God? What do you think, is he not bereft of reason who would not enter into such a Covenant, on such terms, and that with God? Unless God should demand from man unacceptable conditions.

Man is required to offer nothing as a condition.

XVIII. Let us see what conditions God demands in return from man. I do not say what conditions, which man offers, for man knows nothing of the covenant and is not inclined to enter into a covenant with God; therefore, he makes no petition and sets forth no promises to move God to make a covenant; but God comes first (oh, wonder!) to petition and promises conditions to move and entice man. Now the question is: What are the conditions that God demands from man in return, and which He would promise in return? I answer: God demands no conditions from man; man promises nothing upon which he would enter into the Covenant. It is important for the mind

to be well-instructed in this, to step into this Covenant more boldly and to stand in the Covenant more steadfastly with fewer doubts. I say then: on man's side, there are absolutely no conditions that God demands as conditions, and that man promises as conditions. This is evidenced by: Proof 1. From Scriptures.

XIX. From specific texts:

- Isaiah 55:1. "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."
- Revelation 21:6. "I will give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life without payment."
- Revelation 22:17. "Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price." Nothing could be stated more clearly.

2. Possesses and can contribute nothing.

What could the impoverished man offer and promise? He possesses nothing; he is capable of nothing. Should he pledge anything, it would be deceitful; what he would vow must be within his power, for he cannot pledge what belongs to another; he himself has nothing, and God cannot be satisfied with a dishonest promise. God knows him well and is aware that he can do nothing and will do nothing of himself. God delights in truth.

3. It is a Covenant of Grace.

It is entirely a Covenant of Grace, entirely excluding the Covenant of Works; accordingly, all conditions on the part of man are utterly excluded; for if it is by grace, then it is no longer from works; otherwise, grace is no longer grace, Rom. 11:6.

4. Otherwise, the Covenant would be breakable.

If something were demanded from man as a condition or stipulation and was promised by him, then the Covenant of Grace would be breakable and mutable, for whoever does not fulfill the condition breaches the covenant made upon that condition. Now, if man were to promise something, he would not fulfill it, and thus he would break the Covenant, never partaking of any salvation through this Covenant's power. Then the sanctified could fall away, which is against the Bible.

5. What he would promise, God promises.

And if man could do anything, and thus promise, what would that be? Repentance, love, holiness, obedience? Besides his inability, these matters are promised by God as conditions on His side. God offers to give these to the man who enters into this Covenant with Him, as shown above. If they are conditions that God promises to work in man on His side, they cannot be conditions that man would promise to do on his side.

Objection. 1.

XX. One might think, is it not necessary for man to will and to believe; for all promises are under the condition of faith, and there are threats for those who do not believe. Where there are conditional promises and threats, conditions are demanded and promised by man.

I answer:

1. The conditional promises and threats are motives by which God draws and entices man to the Covenant to enter into it.

2. The conditional promises and threats relate to the greater or lesser application of the Covenant's goods to the confederates and are means to invigorate them. This does not imply that willing and believing are conditions of the Covenant of Grace itself, which, strictly speaking, has only promises and no threats.
3. Willing and believing are prerequisite qualities in someone who enters into the Covenant. Now, prerequisites are not conditions but merely make one capable of making a covenant. The willingness and acceptance of a suitor's proposal, the commitment in the marriage covenant of a daughter, are not marriage conditions but the act of marriage itself; similarly here, at most, willing and believing could be called a *conditio sine qua non*, a condition without which not, which does not form the essence of the matter itself.

Objection 2. One might further think: If God does not demand anything from man in establishing the Covenant, and God alone promises to do everything for him, then God alone is bound, and man is not bound, and may thus live as he pleases.

I answer: A poor daughter, who commits to a rich suitor who promises conditions solely for the good of that poor daughter, is as much bound without offering conditions, as the rich suitor with all his conditions. So it is here: a believer, entering into the Covenant, binds himself to the Lord and says and writes: I am the Lord's. But to what does the believer commit? To be owned by the Lord. To be a recipient of all the goodness of God. To be led and governed by the Holy Spirit in all his ways. The fifth article of the blessings mentioned above was sanctification in all aspects. If a man is to enter into this Covenant, he must have a true desire and love for that article, and he, being enamored with sanctification, thus lets himself into this Covenant. So, he does not wish to live ungodly, but godly.

Besides many other ties which he feels bound to sanctification, love binds him to it. The commitment makes the marriage, and therefore it is not a condition of the covenant. This about the conditions.

III. Christ the Surety.

XXI. Since the majesty, holiness, righteousness, and truth of God do not allow for God to deal with the sinner as a sinner, it is necessary that a Surety and Mediator come between them, who removes everything that was in the way. This Surety is Emmanuel, Jesus Christ, truly God and man, and thus equally close to both parties. In Him, both natures are united, to unite God with man. He intercedes for man before God, takes upon Himself all the sins of the elect as if He had committed them Himself, and guarantees to pay the debt, having also borne their sins in His body on the tree, 1 Peter 2:24. He commits Himself to fulfill the law for the elect and has made them righteous by His obedience, Rom. 5:19. He also stands, so to speak, for God before man, and confirms that God will uphold the promises promised in this Covenant, and dies upon it as the Testator, in whose death the Testament is irrevocable. For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it; for a testament is in force after men are dead, Heb. 9:16, 17. Thus, He brings those two, God and man, together and brings the sinner to God in reconciliation and peace, 1 Peter 3:18. How desirable, how steadfast is this Covenant, in which all heavy conditions lie upon the Surety, and all blessings come upon the confederates through the Mediator Jesus Christ, in whom all the promises are yes and amen! 2 Cor. 1:20.

IV. Form, mutual consent.

XXII. Now we come to the consideration of the form and the very essence of the covenant, which consists in mutual consent. Not the

goods, not the charm, not the love makes a marriage, but the mutual consent declared to one another. This is known to all: when both parties consent to the terms, then peace is made between those who were previously at war. So it is here. For clearer understanding, these four things must be noted:

1. God's offer to the sinner to take him into a covenant.
2. The attraction by offering many advantageous conditions.
3. The consent and acceptance of that offer.
4. The right that the confederate acquires by virtue of this established Covenant to request those goods, promised by God, to which he is now entitled, through prayer in faith.

On God's side is consent, for He makes the offer and extends the invitation. When man, understanding the terms, desiring them wholeheartedly, and believing the truth of the offer, turns away from all else and turns solely to God, and in calmness, truth, and splendor declares his consent to that Covenant, and commits himself to God in Christ, the Covenant is made, and it shall remain eternally steadfast. Blessed is he whom God has opened his eyes, bent his will, and brought to such earnest consent. He can be assured of his present and future blessed state, even if he enters into much obscurity: for his state is not dependent on his feelings or faith, or holiness, but on this Covenant. However, this is not to be imagined by those who merely consider these matters and acknowledge them as lovely in themselves, yet have not earnestly and truly engaged in dealings with God in Christ, and therefore have never partaken of the first fruits of this Covenant, which is the transformation of the heart. But all who choose Jesus Christ, accept Him, look to Him, long for Him, and wait upon Him to receive forgiveness of sins, peace, comfort, and strength for sanctification through Him, truly enter into this Covenant, even if they do not expressly have this Covenant and making of a covenant

in view, due to a lack of clearer light and guidance; which should serve to strengthen the faith of the small in faith.

V. End, the glorification of free grace.

XXIII. The purpose of this Covenant should also be specially noted, for it gives great boldness to the poor man. Since God alone promises conditions and demands nothing in return from man, what then is the purpose of God establishing a Covenant with man? I answer: not His benefit; for He does not become more blessed, more perfect, or more glorious by it; but on His side, it is a revelation of His grace, goodness, wisdom, righteousness, and power, and on man's side, to lead him in love to salvation. See this:

- Ephesians 1:5-6. "He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves."
- Romans 9:23. "What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory—"
- Ephesians 3:10-11. "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."

If this is the purpose for which God undertakes the grand work of redemption in the manner of a Covenant, who would not gladly desire to be its subject? Even if we are incapable of all else, we are yet capable of having infinite Grace, a Divine and all-conquering goodness, shown to us. If God wishes to be the God of a sinner, and desires to lead them as children to glory, ... is it not then well with us,

and do we not have ample reason to enter into that Covenant with confidence, and to repeatedly commit ourselves to it? Come then: if the demonstration of grace is God's end, let that also be your end, and accept this Covenant out of love for the glorification of God's great and free grace, and let yourself be made blessed to that end; aiming at this in the making of the Covenant glorifies God, and gives the soul both humility and confidence, and a sweet stillness.

VI. Attributes.

XXIV. For a clearer understanding of the nature of the Covenant, and its loveliness, it also helps to contemplate its attributes. These are both varied and exceedingly lovely.

1. Unilateral. This Covenant is largely unilateral; for God conceives it, God alone promises the conditions, God provides the Surety, God makes the first appeal, God works the knowledge, the will, and the action; therefore, it is commonly said in Scripture: I will establish My covenant. I will make a Covenant. I will bring them into the bond of the Covenant. However, since the making of a covenant requires the consent of both parties, man must consent on his side to it, and to that extent, it is bilateral, from both sides.
2. Gracious. This is an entirely gracious Covenant. Here, there are no good works, no good condition of the heart, no good will; no attractiveness, no pitiable misery, nothing, nothing on the side of humans, which would move God to consider a redemption, a covenant, to be first moved by man's side to help him. God wants to show Grace, and man wishes to receive everything solely out of Grace. God appears as Gracious, Exodus 34:6. And man receives from His fullness, grace upon grace, John 1:16.

3. Holy. It is a holy Covenant. Holy is the Lord, holy is the Mediator, holy is the way through which the confederates obtain the promises, holy are all the promises, and the confederates too are sanctified, so that everything on every side is a holy Covenant. Luke 1:72. "To remember his holy covenant."
4. Glorious. It is a glorious Covenant. The Lord God possesses all glory, the Mediator is glorious and crowned with glory, high and glorious are the goods that are promised; and it is particularly glorious for man, that he is so exalted, that he becomes a confederate of God, and that he is led by the way of this Covenant to glory, Hebrews 2:10. Thus may every confederate say: "He who is mighty has done great things for me," Luke 1:49.
5. Well-Ordered. It is a well-ordered Covenant: 2 Samuel 23:5. "Yet he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure." Everything fits together: beginning, middle, end, and there is such a neat order that on all sides the manifold wisdom, the pure righteousness, the unquestionable goodness, the irresistible power shines through. There is that eternal purpose to be glorified in inconceivable grace, and that seeing it would be the joy and blessedness of angels and men; upon this God creates man perfectly holy, and lets man by his own will break the Covenant through sin, and so concludes them all under sin. Thereupon, the Lord sets forth another way to be saved, namely, the Covenant of Grace. The Lord promises the Surety, and lets Him be portrayed through the ceremonies, lets Him be born at the appointed time, and through suffering pays for sin; exalts Him at His right hand, and puts everything in His hands. He lets the Gospel be proclaimed, and thereby draws His elect to this Covenant, and leads them through many remarkable and wondrous ways to glory. Thus, it is all well-ordered.

6. Love. It is a Covenant of peace and friendship: Isaiah 54:10. "The covenant of my peace shall not be removed." Hence come the mutual names of friend and beloved. Yes, it is an offensive and defensive Covenant, so to speak. God says to Abraham, Genesis 12:3: "I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse." And the confederate in turn says, Psalm 119:63: "I am a companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts." Psalm 139:21-22: "Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies."
7. Marriage Covenant. It is a marriage covenant: as a man and a woman are bound together in love and are one, so too a close union and unity come between God and Christ on one side, and between the confederates on the other side. Ezekiel 16:8. "When I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age for love, and I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness; I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord God, and you became mine." Hosea 2:19-20: "I will betroth you to me forever." Isaiah 54:5: "For your Maker is your husband." Hence come the mutual names of Bridegroom and Bride, and that mutual mine: Zechariah 13:9: "They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The Lord is my God.'" Song of Solomon 2:16: "My beloved is mine, and I am his."
8. Eternal. It is an everlasting Covenant. It is not for ten or twenty years, it is not for as long as one lives, but it is a Covenant without end. Therefore, it is often called an everlasting Covenant, Jeremiah 31:33-34. It is, therefore, steadfast, firm, and unbreakable. This is evident:

(a) Isaiah 54:10, "The mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed."

(b) It flows from the purpose according to election, which stands firm, Romans 9:11.

(c) It is grounded on the covenant of redemption and the counsel of peace, which is unbreakable. Psalm 89:34: "I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips."

(d) It is confirmed in the death of the Testator. "For a will takes effect only at death," Hebrews 9:17.

(e) It rests on the truth and faithfulness of God. Psalm 146:6: "The Lord who keeps faith forever."

(f) It is ratified by the oath of God. Hebrews 6:17: "So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath." These are the attributes.

Consider these attributes and qualities of this Covenant attentively. Is it not wondrous and lovely on all sides? Who can resist committing their whole heart to it at once? Which of the confederates does not leap for joy over such great salvation, and rest sweetly in God through this Covenant?

VII. Seals.

XXV. This Covenant also has seals attached to assure its confederates of its steadfastness. The confederates do not set their seal upon the Covenant, for they promise nothing; but because God alone makes promises, He alone also seals it. Under the old administration, Circumcision and the Passover were seals, and under the new administration, Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the seals. God desires first to prepare man to be a possessor of eternal blessedness out of that free Grace and leads him through many marvelous paths, as Israel in the wilderness, which seem to go off from heaven. And lest he faint on the way, the Lord gives him seals.

The power of them.

1. That he may continually bring to mind the promised goods, deeply perceive them, and steadfastly gaze upon them.
2. That he may be increasingly strengthened in faith and assured of the certainty of the promises made to him.
3. That he may continually get a foretaste of the heavenly goods and savor their power somewhat.
4. That he may be continually awakened to willingly forsake the world, to fight against his desires, to take up his cross, and to seek honor and glory through good deeds. Thus, one must use the Sacraments, and not rest in the act itself, in that performed work; but see in it on one side, as in a picture, the suffering and death of the Mediator Jesus Christ, and on the other side draw from it the unbreakability of all the promises promised in this Covenant.

VII. Seals.

XXV. This Covenant is also endowed with seals to assure its confederates of its firmness. The confederates themselves do not affix their seal to the Covenant, for they promise nothing; but since

God alone makes promises, He alone seals it as well. Under the old dispensation, Circumcision and the Passover were seals, and under the new dispensation, Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper serve as seals. God intends to first prepare humanity to be inheritors of eternal blessedness out of His free Grace, leading them through many wondrous paths, like Israel in the wilderness, which seem to veer away from heaven. And lest they falter on the journey, the Lord grants them seals.

The efficacy of these seals is manifold:

1. That they may repeatedly recall the promised goods, deeply contemplate them, and fix their gaze upon them.
2. That they may be increasingly fortified in faith and assured of the certainty of the promises made to them.
3. That they may regularly receive a foretaste of the heavenly goods and taste their power to some degree.
4. That they may be continually invigorated to depart from the world in spirit, to combat their own desires, to take up their cross, and to seek honor and glory through righteousness. Thus, one must approach the Sacraments, not resting in the act itself, but in it seeing on one side, as in a mirror, the suffering and dying of the Mediator Jesus Christ, and on the other side deriving from it the unbreakability of all the promises made in this Covenant.

Causes why many do not enter into the Covenant.

XXVI. Thus, the excellence of the Covenant of Grace has been presented to you. Who would not desire to be a confederate of it? Who does not affirm all these, acknowledging, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes"? Yet, many are found who will not. The Lord Jesus marveled at the unbelief of the Jews, and so will all

who know this Covenant in its glory marvel at how many have no desire for it and do not enter in. One might wonder: How is it possible? And one might ask: What are the reasons for this? I answer:

1. Ignorance. What is unknown is not desired. Many do not pay attention to what preaching means, what is proclaimed, and if they hear it somewhat, they do not linger on it, they do not strive to understand the matter in depth, and thus it remains hidden from them. Others consider it only to know and to be able to speak of it, to gain the esteem of being knowledgeable. Thus, they regard the excellence of the Covenant as something foreign, of no concern to them.
2. Unbelief. They hear the matters, regard them as good and lovely, but they do not know if it is the truth; although they dare not dismiss it as untrue, they do not believe that people could partake of these things and come into such a state; thus, they let the matters be and turn away, and the word of preaching is of no benefit to them because it is not mixed with faith.
3. Indolence. Lethargic laziness. Some see something, they would like to have it: but it is the desire of a sluggard, who does not want to work; it is the dreaming of someone half asleep, who falls asleep with the desire, and simultaneously loses both desires and efforts; therefore, they gain no part in it; one finds upon seeking, and not otherwise. Proverbs 2:4-5. "If you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God." But for these, any work is too much, they would let it come of its own accord if they could; but to investigate, to pray, to struggle

to believe, and to grasp it by faith, and to keep busy in it, that is too arduous a work for them, it is not worth the trouble.

4. Worldly concerns. Many have a desire for it and are sometimes moved to enter in, but adversities, excessive busyness, the fear of once again lacking, the consuming thoughts and considerations take the heart away, and make them abandon the good movements with a sigh; these are the thorns that choke the good seed and weigh down the heart, keeping a person in their state.
5. Desires of the flesh. These might have a desire for the goods of the Covenant in themselves, but in the context that they would then have to give up their honorable, profitable, pleasurable sins, to hate and fight against them, then they do not fancy the goods of the Covenant; the present is too sweet, the fleshly too delightful, therefore they choose this with action, and leave the spiritual aside; if they cannot come to heaven in any other way, patience, sin cannot be abandoned; if one will not let go, that is certain, let it go as it may.
6. Erroneous imaginings. Many have knowledge of the truths, regard them as glorious and lovely, and consider it very blessed those who are confederates; they attend church, they are outwardly religious, they guard themselves against the gross pollutions of the world; and so they consider themselves as confederates, although they: (a) do not know the inner truth, do not consider the matters in their spiritual nature, do not value the Surety of this Covenant dearly in their hearts, and love Him alone. (b) Though they do not stand apart from the alliances and covenants, in which they are by nature with the world and their flesh, do not break them, and do not consider them as their

enemy, and act overtly as enemies, but inwardly remain united with their affections and love. (c) Though they have no dealings with the Surety of this Covenant, and with the God of the Covenant, to enter into the Covenant with heart and tongue, but only consider the promises as lovely. (d) Though they are content, even if they do not possess and feel the goods of this Covenant; even though they live separated and far from God; even though they have no holiness, but live in the earth and in themselves, and in inward sins, with their heart, thoughts, affections, and endeavors not above with God, but in the bodily and visible. These things are in all true confederates, and because they are not in the presumptuous and temporary believers, they should be convinced that they have been deceiving themselves with false reasoning until now.

XXVII. You who are convinced that you have not yet entered into this Covenant, listen to me and be moved to become a true confederate by entering into this Covenant.

Encouragement to enter into the Covenant.

1. Outside this Covenant, there is nothing but misery. God is to you an angry Judge; you have no share in the Surety and His fullness; you have no part in a single promise, but all threats, all judgments are upon you; everything you enjoy in the world merely accumulates your sins and aggravates your judgment, and eternal damnation will be your inheritance. See this, Ephesians 2:11-12, "Therefore, remember that... at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Awaken at last, come to yourself, tremble and fear, and let the terror of the Lord move

you to faith, flee from the wrath to come by entering into this Covenant of Peace.

2. In this Covenant, there is all blessedness; go back, examine all the promises of this Covenant presented above, and see if there is anything else you would desire, and if not, as there is nothing lacking, embrace it, and give the Lord your allegiance. It is but filth that you will forsake; it is but a heavy burden that you will lay aside; it is a harsh and cruel master whom you will renounce; and conversely, it is God with whom you will live in peace and friendship; it is pure light, love, joy, and unadulterated holiness that the confederates will enjoy for now and forever; why then do you hesitate, come, make a decision and cross over.
3. You are personally solicited by God Himself. He comes before you and calls you: "Turn to me and be saved." He sent His own Son, and through Him, He speaks to you. Will you not listen to God? Will you turn away from Him who is from heaven? The Lord sends His servants, and currently me to you; what effort they make, how they plead with you, what heartrending reasons they use, even tears, to draw you to this Covenant! Please, be moved, be reconciled to God. Be overcome by the compulsion of love, and by all the prayers of the ministers to God for you.
4. The Lord will reject no one who comes to Him in truth through Christ, even if you have been disobedient to this friendly offer for so many years, even if your entire life to date has been nothing but sin, even if you have committed abominations, even if you have been a murderer, an adulterer, a fornicator, a thief, a blasphemer, and a liar up to this time, if only you recognize your sins, truly repent, and truly desire this Covenant in all its parts, and the Surety, to partake of those goods solely through Him; do

not be disheartened, there is hope in this regard, just come; for the Lord will certainly not reject you, but will accept you, for He has said: see all the promises, among others: John 6:37, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out."

Exhortation for those who have entered.

XXVIII. And to you, who have truly entered into this Covenant, which you can recognize from what we have said in section 26, 6.

1. Rejoice and delight in your share of all the goods, and in the steadfastness of this Covenant, though you do not yet enjoy as much of it as you desire, you will yet enjoy it all in full measure.
2. Always regard God as He now is in this Covenant, and interact with Him as a confederate, graciously accepted by Him, employ humble boldness to commune with Him, pray in faith for the enjoyment of those goods, await them with patience, and rely on Him in every way, trusting that He will make all things well.
3. Now walk worthy of the Gospel, as befits a confederate, look not back to your friends, the world, and all that is therein, deny carnal desires. Be heavenly minded, let your conduct be in heaven, let your light shine before men, that they may see that a more excellent spirit is in you than in them; strive for humility, meekness, to love enemies, act wisely in the upright way, and be holy, as He who has taken you into His Covenant is holy.
4. Walk in love and peace with the confederates, show the world that you are of one heart and one soul, and by your example stimulate all other confederates, that the love of many for each other may kindle a fire and also ignite those who are outside.
5. Glorify God for this great work, make every effort to not only mention but deeply perceive the perfections of God that are

revealed in this Covenant, so that your soul may lose itself in wonder, and your tongue be loosed, to proclaim the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name, make known His deeds among the peoples! Declare that His name is exalted. Sing to the LORD, for He has done glorious things; let this be known in all the earth. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you, Isaiah 12:4-6.

The Covenant began with Adam.

XXIX. Alongside this Covenant, we have two questions to answer. The first question is: When did this Covenant of Grace begin? The Socinians and the Remonstrants, who agree with them in this matter, even though they do not correctly understand the nature of the Covenant of Grace, claim that it did not exist during the days of the Old Testament. Although they concede that it was revealed to them that a Savior would come and that a Covenant of Grace would be established, they maintain that they did not have it, were not confederates of this Covenant, had no promises of eternal salvation, and did not obtain eternal life through faith and hope in the coming Savior, but out of Grace, through their virtuousness. We say, although the administration is very different in both Testaments, that the same Covenant, in respect to its essence, has been in the OLD TESTAMENT, beginning with Adam, as it is now in the NEW TESTAMENT. This is evident:

Proof 1.

XXX. It was established immediately after the fall in the Paradise, in the promise, Genesis 3:15, "He (the seed of the woman) shall bruise your (serpent's) head." This Seed of the woman is the Lord Jesus,

who was born of the virgin Mary without the intervention of a man, unlike any other human has been or will be. And Christ alone, and no other, has crushed the serpent, the devil, as is evident: Hebrews 2:14, "That through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil." 1 John 3:8, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil." Christ, the Seed of the woman, who would crush the devil's head, is promised here, and it is noteworthy that it is in the form of a threat, and that to the serpent; it is not said to Adam and Eve, but only within their hearing; from which it is clear that the Covenant of Grace was not established with Adam and Eve and in them with all their descendants, as the Covenant of Works was established with him; but Adam and Eve, hearing this promise, had to accept the promised Savior for their own consolation, as every believer thereafter did, which will become evident in the following reason.

Proof 2.

XXXI. The Gospel, which is the offering of this Covenant, was preached in the OLD TESTAMENT as well as in the NEW TESTAMENT. See this in Galatians 3:8, "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.'" In you, that is, in your seed, which is Christ, v. 16. He does not say, "and to seeds," as of many, but as of one: "And to your seed," which is Christ. Abraham believed this joyful message, not for the Gentiles who would come and believe, but for himself; he then benefited from it, namely, justification, which is a free declaration from guilt and punishment, and an entry into the right to eternal life. See this in Genesis 15:6, "And he believed (note: not the LORD, but) in the LORD, and He counted it to him for righteousness." James 2:23, "And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed

God, and it was counted to him as righteousness'—and he was called a friend of God." That this was not an extraordinary privilege to Abraham alone, that the Gospel was preached to him, but that the same happened to the church of the OLD TESTAMENT, is evident from Hebrews 4:2, "For good news came to us just as to them." It is preached to us so that we might accept it for our benefit, so also for their benefit; and that many derived no benefit from it was not because it was not offered to them, but because they did not accept it by faith. But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. Therefore, if Christ in the OLD TESTAMENT was proclaimed and offered through the Gospel, and everyone was obliged to believe in Christ for justification, as Abraham did, then the Covenant of Grace existed in the OLD TESTAMENT.

Behold this also in Moses, Hebrews 11:24-26, "By faith Moses... considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward." Moses knew Christ, believed in Christ, esteemed Christ as precious, and focused on the promises through Christ. This chapter enumerates a complete register of believers in the OLD TESTAMENT and the benefits they partook of through faith in Christ.

Proof 3.

XXXII. The Surety of the Covenant was in the OLD TESTAMENT just as powerful as in the NEW TESTAMENT, hence the Covenant was present then as it is now. See this in Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." By "today" the present time is indicated, by "forever" the future, and by "yesterday" the past. The apostle does not merely say that Christ was, is, and will be; he states that Christ has always been the same, for reconciliation, for

consolation, and for aid, and therefore one must not falter under persecution. By "yesterday" we cannot understand the time just before Paul, the time of Christ's sojourn on earth; for it is clear that the apostle encourages believers to remain steadfast because Christ has been the same faithful Savior for all time, as soon as there was a Church, and as long as there will be a Church; so "yesterday" is the time before Christ's coming in the flesh, the time of the OLD TESTAMENT, which is also evident from the fact that Christ is said to have been slain from the foundation of the world. See Revelation 13:8, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The words "from the foundation of the world" should not be connected by jumping to "whose names are not written in the book of life," there is no need for such a leap, and Christ is never said to have been slain without some addition or description; and moreover, if one were to take the words in that manner, "whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb from the foundation of the world," it remains certain that from the foundation of the world, there was a book in which the names of the believers were written, and that this book was of the Lamb, that is: of Christ, and consequently Christ's death is considered as present in power, because no one can be written in His book except by the power of His death by slaying. But it is simple and clear that the words should be joined as the apostle has joined them: "of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Question. But how has Christ been slain from that time? For the apostle seems to contradict this in Hebrews 9:26, "Otherwise, He would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world."

Answer. The apostle demonstrates that the death of Christ had to happen but once, and that single offering was powerful from the foundation of the world, and thus he emphatically confirms that the single death of Christ was then as powerful as if He had suffered both at that time and immediately thereafter, and so he confirms that Christ is the same yesterday and today. Christ, then, was not actually slain from the foundation of the world, but in power, in offering; and the believers from that time believed in Him through the offerings, in which they saw the death of the coming Savior, and accepted it by faith for justification. As is evident in Abel, Hebrews 11:4-5, "By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts." Abel offered in faith, Abel pleased God, Abel was righteous; all this unequivocally indicates that Abel represented Christ in his offering.

Proof 4. In the OLD TESTAMENT, the spiritual goods.

XXXIII. The believers in the OLD TESTAMENT had all the spiritual benefits of the Covenant of Grace, thus they had the Covenant itself, just as we in the NEW TESTAMENT.

(a) God was their God and their Father: Exodus 20:2, "I am the LORD your God." Isaiah 41:10, "I am your God." Isaiah 64:8, "But now, O LORD, You are our Father." Jeremiah 3:4, "Will you not from this time cry to Me: 'My Father!'"

(b) They had forgiveness of sins: Psalm 65:3, "But with You is forgiveness." Psalm 32:5, "You forgave the iniquity of my sin."

(c) They had the spirit of adoption as children: Romans 9:4, "Theirs is the adoption to sonship." 2 Corinthians 4:13, "Since we have the

same spirit of faith." Psalm 143:10, "Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground."

(d) They had peace of conscience with God: Psalm 4:7, "You have put more joy in my heart." Psalm 62:1, "For God alone my soul waits in silence."

(e) They had a childlike fellowship with God: Psalm 139:18, "When I awake, I am still with You." Psalm 73:28, "But for me it is good to be near God."

(f) They were partakers of sanctification: Psalm 119:97, "Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day."

(g) They looked to enter into blessedness after death: Hebrews 11:10, 16, "For he was looking forward to the city with foundations... But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one."

(h) They attained that blessedness: Acts 15:11, "But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." The apostle here does not speak of the Gentiles, nor would he set the salvation of the Gentiles before that of the Jews, but he speaks of the fathers, who could not bear the yoke and yet were saved by faith, from which he infers that they too expected salvation by faith and not by the works of the ceremonial law, and from this, he concludes that the Gentiles should not be compelled to be circumcised to observe the law of ceremonies.

From all these, it is evident that the believers in the OLD TESTAMENT enjoyed the goods of the Covenant of Grace, thus they had this Covenant itself, and were confederates in the same Covenant with us, having all eaten the same spiritual food and drunk the same spiritual drink, 1 Corinthians 10:3-4. Therefore, the apostle

Peter calls the Jewish nation: "Children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'" Acts 3:25.

Objection 1.

XXXIV. In the OLD TESTAMENT, they did not obtain the promises. Hebrews 11:13, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises." Answer. The promises to which the apostle here refers are of Christ in the flesh, whom they saw from afar, believed in, and embraced.

Objection 2.

Hebrews 7:19, "For the law made nothing perfect." Answer. The ceremonial laws, of which the apostle speaks, did not have the power of atonement but pointed to Christ and were thus a prelude to a better hope; through faith in a coming Messiah, they were perfect in Him, Colossians 2:10.

Objection 3.

Hebrews 9:8, "The Holy Place was not yet revealed while the first tabernacle was still standing." Answer. Christ is the Way, John 14:6. Christ inaugurated the way to God and to glory through the veil, that is, His flesh, Hebrews 10:19-20. The text says that Christ had not yet actually paid the ransom and acquired salvation for His people as long as the rites still stood; but once that was accomplished, they had served their purpose. The apostle does not say that no one had entered heaven at that time, which the parties themselves would not dare to say. Enoch, Elijah, Moses, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would contradict them. The apostle also does not say that the way to heaven

was not yet known; for where there is faith, hope, and love, there the way is known; but he says that Christ Himself had not yet come in the flesh, who would do what the entire tabernacle service could not accomplish, namely, bring salvation.

Objection 4.

XXXV. 2 Timothy 1:10 states that Christ has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Thus, there was neither light nor life before Christ's coming in the flesh. Answer. The text indeed says that Christ is the one who has brought life and immortality to light; however, it does not say that Christ has done this only with His coming and not before. We have shown above that Christ, the same yesterday and today, has also done this in the OLD TESTAMENT; for the Gospel was preached to them as well. But the text regards the degree of revelation, and the revelation to the Gentiles, previously given to Israel alone, as evident from the following verse 11. I am appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. This is explicitly shown by the apostle: Ephesians 3:5, 6, 8, Which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed... namely, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs... To me, the least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. Thus, Romans 16:25 is also to be understood, about the revelation of the mystery hidden for ages and generations, vs. 26, But now revealed, and through the prophetic writings made known by the command of the eternal God, so as to lead to the obedience of faith among all nations. This shows that the contrast is not between the OLD and NEW TESTAMENTS regarding the revelations of the way to salvation but between the Jewish nation, who then had the revelations exclusively, and the Gentiles, who now also possess them.

Objection 5.

XXXVI. Hebrews 11:39, 40, All these, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promises: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Also, 1 Peter 1:12, It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you. From these texts, it appears that they in the OLD TESTAMENT did not possess these goods. Answer. The texts clearly speak of the coming of Christ in the flesh, and it is apparent that they did not obtain the promises in their time. They proclaimed that Christ would come, but they did not expect Him in their era; in that respect, they served not themselves but us, who live after the coming of Christ and see and enjoy the fulfillment of that promise. And so, we enjoy better things than they, as much better as the fulfillment is better than the promise. This shows that the texts do not speak of the enjoyment of the goods of the Covenant, which they partook in as much as we do, as has been shown, and the apostle himself indicates in the text when he says: that they without us should not be made perfect. Thus, they were made perfect, not by the works of the law but by Christ, whose coming they had in the promises and have in the fulfillment, and so they are saved not by a different cause than we are, but we and they by the same Mediator; yet in terms of administration, the New Testament is better than the Old.

Whether There is an External Covenant

XXXVII. The second question is: Besides the Covenant of Grace, has God established another external covenant, whether in the Old Testament or the New? Answer. Before we respond to this question, it is necessary to define what an external covenant is. An external covenant is:

(a) A commitment between God and man; it is a covenant of friendship, of union.

(b) The parties are: on one side, the holy God, whose eyes are so pure that He cannot behold evil; Habakkuk 1:13; who takes no pleasure in wickedness, with whom the wicked shall not dwell, before whose eyes the foolish shall not stand, who hates all workers of iniquity, who shall destroy those who speak lies, who abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man, Psalm 5: 5-7. The other party are the unconverted, whose throat is an open sepulchre; with tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes; Romans 3:13-18 and being and remaining thus, they are children of wrath; Ephesians 2:3 and vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, Romans 9:22. These would have to be the parties.

(c) The promises are only physical blessings, whether the land of Canaan or beyond that, food and clothing, money, delicacies, and pleasures in this world.

(d) The condition is external obedience; they would suffice with the law of the ten commandments and of the ceremonies to be outwardly kept; and now with attending church, making a confession of faith, partaking in the sacraments, and all this just outwardly without involving the heart.

(e) This covenant would have no Mediator, but it would be directly between God and man.

(f) In the Old Testament, this would be the national covenant established with Abraham's seed alone, it would be a figurative

covenant, to depict the spiritual service in the days of the NEW TESTAMENT. And in the NEW TESTAMENT, it would serve to create an outward church. This assertion must define the external covenant, for it is set to be distinct in nature from the Covenant of Works, and also distinct from the Covenant of Grace.

When one closely examines this external covenant, although perhaps some may not wish it to be scrutinized so closely, the question arises: is there an external covenant? Some deny its existence in the NEW TESTAMENT, but assert it in the OLD TESTAMENT. Others posit it also in the NEW TESTAMENT. We distinguish between an external admission into the Covenant of Grace and an external Covenant itself. We affirm that at all times there have been those who externally entered into the Covenant of Grace, and behaved outwardly among the covenant people without true faith and conversion, but their external behavior does not constitute an external covenant; and God is not satisfied with mere outward conduct but will extraordinarily punish those who flatter Him with their mouths and lie to Him with their tongues. Thus, there is an external admission into the Covenant of Grace, but no external Covenant; which we demonstrate as follows.

No One Intends an External Covenant.

XXXVIII. 1. No one aims for such a covenant when joining the Church, or has ever intended to join, by which one would only obtain some physical advantages; rather, one aims for salvation. Thus, such a covenant would be without covenant partners. Not that man does not love physical goods, but he does not seek them through such a covenant; he does not acknowledge, does not believe in such a covenant, nor is man presented with such a covenant, nor is he solicited or enticed to enter into it; not a single text in the entire

Word of God serves this purpose. Therefore, what is not offered, and what no one aims for, does not exist.

It Cannot Coexist with God's Holiness.

XXXIX. 2. It cannot coexist with the holiness of God, that God, who is as we have just described Him, would enter into a covenant of friendship with man, who is as we have just depicted him. It cannot conform to God's nature to be pleased with outward work without the heart. God demands the heart, even when He promised Canaan and other external blessings. Deuteronomy 6:5, 10: "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. And it shall be when the LORD thy God hath brought thee into the land, etc."

God severely threatens those who serve Him without heart. Isaiah 29:13, 14: "Therefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me. Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder." Thus, it cannot conform to God's nature to be satisfied with outward obedience, and by virtue of a covenant of friendship to grant outward blessings upon outward obedience. Further still; how can it conform to God's truthfulness to have external friendship and internal and genuine hatred; outwardly to bless by a covenant, and inwardly and truly to condemn; externally to be a possession in friendship, and internally and truly to be a people of wrath? If humans made such covenants with one another, would not such dealings be abhorred even by the ungodly? Far be it then from the Almighty to do wrong! And even if it were possible, which it certainly is not, it would be an imperfect covenant of works; it had work as a condition, and physical promises. Now,

God cannot establish a covenant of works with the powerless sinner, as will be shown in its place.

Evasion.

God grants many, because of their outwardly good behavior, external blessings, as seen in Ahab, the wicked king of Israel. 1 Kings 21:29. "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days."

Response.

It is one thing for God in His common goodness to grant outward blessings to the ungodly on certain occasions, which we readily admit; for, the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works, Psalm 145:9. And it is another thing whether God does this through an external covenant, through a commitment with the unconverted and wicked, to give them external blessings for outward good behavior; this we earnestly deny. The example of Ahab serves no proof; for the kindness shown to him upon his external humiliation was not by virtue of an external covenant, the matter in dispute here, and which had to be proven, but it was due to the ordinary goodness and forbearance of God.

Then Christ Would Not Be Needed.

XL. 3. If God could enter into a covenant of friendship with the unconverted without a Mediator of reconciliation, as it is posited and must be posited, then the Surety Jesus Christ would not be needed, and one could be saved without satisfying the righteousness of God; for if God can establish a covenant of friendship with a sinner without a Mediator of reconciliation, to give external blessings for outward obedience, then God could also establish a covenant of

salvation without a Mediator of reconciliation, promising eternal life to all sincere godly ones. And if that could happen, Christ would not be needed; it could happen without Him. But this is impossible, as will be shown in the next chapter, and so is such an external covenant; from which it also appears that the driving of an external covenant undermines the truth of the Reformed religion and gives foothold to parties.

An External Covenant Lacks Sacraments.

XLI. 4. This covenant either has sacraments or it does not; if it does not, then it is not a covenant; for God has never established a covenant without signs. If there are any, what are they? Circumcision and the Passover in the OLD TESTAMENT, and Baptism and the Lord's Supper in the NEW TESTAMENT? It cannot be; for then the same signs would seal two covenants distinct in nature, which is absurd. Moreover, the seals of the Covenant of Grace relate only to Christ and are signs and seals of the righteousness of faith, Romans 4:11. This covenant, however, did not have Christ as a Surety, nor did it have spiritual promises or the righteousness of faith; thus, the seals are not sacraments of an external covenant. Furthermore, no one has the right to use the seals of the Covenant of Grace for themselves unless they are a true believer because these are seals of the justification of faith. Now, the unconverted are posited to be true members of the external covenant, yet they have no right to the sacraments; thus, the sacraments cannot be seals of this external covenant. Consequently, there is no external covenant.

The Covenant of Grace Encompasses Everything.

XLII. 5. Everything proposed in the external covenant is encompassed by the Covenant of Grace, which includes outward obedience arising from and united with the inward holy disposition

of the heart; the Covenant of Grace has both all external promises necessary for salvation as well as the spiritual. Consider the first: 1 Corinthians 6:20. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 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."

Regarding the latter, see: Genesis 17:8. "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." 1 Timothy 4:8. "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Since the Covenant of Grace also obligates outward obedience and has external promises, there is no need for an external covenant, nor can there be an external covenant by which matters and goods, included in the Covenant of Grace, would be demanded and promised.

Evasion.

XLIII. It will be said that all these arguments have no weight because the external covenant presupposes and goes along with the Covenant of Grace.

Response.

(a) This is irrelevant because this covenant is posited as entirely different in nature: thus, it must be considered on its own, and so all the arguments remain fully effective.

(b) The unconverted, though they outwardly enter into the Covenant of Grace, are not truly in it; but in the external covenant, they would be actual and true members, and thus without any regard for the Covenant of Grace: they, not being true members of the Covenant of Grace, and thus without Christ and without promise, are posited as true members of this external covenant. Therefore, the Covenant of Grace does not come into consideration here; it does not matter that an external covenant is established with them, presuming the Covenant of Grace; thus, this evasion is powerless, and our proof stands firm.

Objection 1.

XLIV. In the OLD TESTAMENT, the entire nation, every individual, both the godless and the godly, had to enter; they all had to use the sacraments, and they were all in that covenant and used the sacraments, and many of them broke that covenant; thus, there was an external covenant distinct in nature from the Covenant of Grace; for that is established only with believers, and it cannot be broken.

Response.

(a) The Covenant of Grace is an incomprehensible grace and benevolence of God; when God offers it to anyone, it is the utmost impiety to scorn it and refuse to enter into it; thus, everyone to whom the Gospel is preached is obliged to accept it eagerly with all their heart and enter into the covenant. This is a certain and indisputable matter. Hence, the obligation to enter is no evidence that it is an external covenant.

(b) The godless, being obliged to enter into the Covenant of Grace, should not remain godless; for the promise of this Covenant was also sanctification, for which they must have a desire, and the desire for

sanctification should move them to enter. If someone remained godless, that was a sign that they were not truly dealing with God as they were obliged to do, but that they were only outwardly entering for the appearance before people, and that they were not true covenant members.

(c) They were to use the sacraments in faith, and if they did not so use them, they provoked the Lord. A godless person has no right to the use of the sacraments, neither in the OLD TESTAMENT nor in the NEW TESTAMENT; to such God says, Psalm 50:16-17 "But to the wicked God says: 'What right have you to recite my statutes or take my covenant on your lips?'"

(d) Just as the godless only outwardly enter, so they also break it again, make shipwreck of their faith, and show by their actions that they had neither part nor lot in the word of the promises. Their breach was not with respect to an external covenant but with respect to the Covenant of Grace, into which they had outwardly entered; the nature of their entry was such that the breaking was likewise.

(e) God had established the covenant with the entire nation, viewed collectively, but not with each individual, head for head; each had to truly enter into that Covenant for themselves through faith. See the nature of the covenant in the OLD TESTAMENT in the second part.

Objection 2.

XLV. In the NEW TESTAMENT, the Church consists of true believers and the unconverted, who are generally the majority. The unconverted are not in the Covenant of Grace, yet they are covenant members, so they must be in an external covenant, in respect to which there is also an external Church, and in that regard, the children of believers also, who show themselves to be godless as they

grow up, are called holy, 1 Corinthians 7:14, which can only be a holiness of the external covenant. Thus, such a covenant exists.

Response.

(a) The unconverted are in, but not of the Church; they are not true members that make up the Church, but are mere followers. All those who are in someone's house are not therefore of the house and household. They are in the Church through an external admittance; and external admittance into the Covenant of Grace does not constitute an external covenant.

(b) There is no external Church other than in respect of the external gathering, and not in respect of the membership, with evil being mixed among the good.

(c) The children of believers are called holy, not with respect to an external, but with respect to the Covenant of Grace, into which the parents have entered, whether truly or outwardly only, and into which they may also commit their children, as they do when they baptize them; for they aim for no other Covenant than that through which they and their children might be saved. Thus, we have presented the Covenant of Grace in all its aspects, wishing that everyone would fall in love with it and truly enter into it. AMEN.

Chapter 2

On the Necessity of Satisfaction by the Mediator Jesus Christ.

In the previous chapter, we have dealt with the Covenant of Grace in general; now we shall proceed to some particulars of this Covenant, namely:

1. The Mediator.
2. The covenant members, the Church.
3. The ways through which the Lord transfers the covenant members into the Covenant; how He guides them therein, and how He leads them to that end, namely, glory.

First, we shall speak of the Mediator of the Covenant. It is necessary that we discuss Him in detail, so that knowing Him, one may believe in Him in an enlightened manner. However, it is futile to address the Mediator and His work if one does not understand the Necessity of Satisfaction. Therefore, we will first clarify this matter to the mind, as a matter of the utmost importance.

I. To properly understand the nature of Atonement, one must consider sin, the Judge, and the work of redemption.

(a) Sin imposes guilt, wrath, and punishment upon mankind. Should the sinner be redeemed, they must be freed from guilt; God must be reconciled and the punishment must be borne.

(b) The Judge is God, who here does not primarily appear as the Creditor, or as the Lord and aggrieved party, but as the Judge. A creditor may forgive a debt if he wishes, and an aggrieved lord may relinquish his right; such liberty has been granted to mankind by the supreme Judge; but a judge may not depart from justice, and thus not from punishing crimes; yet, the manner, time, place, and type of punishment God has left to the discretion of the judge. Now, being the highest Judge, His justice demands that the offender be punished.

(c) The work of satisfaction varies according to the nature of the debt. In the satisfaction of financial debts, the identity of the debtor is irrelevant, but only the debt itself, which is settled with the same amount as was owed, whether paid by the original debtor or by another as surety; that does not concern the creditor, who is satisfied with the same sum; there is no concession. But in criminal debts, that is, in crimes, it is different. There the debt cannot be satisfied by the same means, but punishment is necessary to satisfy justice, which is in the hands of the judge. There, not only the debt is considered but also the person who incurred the debt, the offender. If this were to be satisfied by a surety, then along with the punishment borne by the surety, there must also come forgiveness for the offender. Justice is satisfied, but the judge must be willing to allow, accept, and punish the guilt in the surety, which he need not do according to his utmost rights, and thus must not impute that punishment to the offender, absolving him of guilt, wrath, and punishment, because it was transferred to the surety. Thus, in satisfaction, mercy and justice come together, satisfaction and forgiveness. Such is the case with Christ.

Various Terms.

II. The word 'satisfaction' may not appear as such in Scripture, but the matter itself is clearly expressed in Scripture with many other words, such as:

- kippoer, to make atonement, Exodus 30:10. From this comes ransom, the Day of Atonement;
- pada, to redeem, by giving a compensation, in place. Exodus 13:13
- lutron, ransom, Matthew 20:28,
- antilutron, ransom, 1 Timothy 2:6,

- apolutrosis, redemption through the payment of a ransom. Ephesians 1:7,
- hilasmos, atonement;
- hilasterion, atonement by satisfaction. Romans 3:25.

All these words mean, by virtue of the original languages, such reconciliation, such redemption, which occurs through payment and satisfaction.

III. Regarding the matter itself, we will demonstrate that atonement is absolutely necessary. Since humanity, through sin, has not only brought upon itself guilt, wrath, and punishment but also lost the right to eternal life through the non-fulfillment and violation of the law, merely by satisfying the demand for punishment, one could be freed from punishment but not gain the right to eternal life, for this is promised only upon perfect fulfillment of the law; therefore, along with the bearing of punishment, complete holiness and fulfillment of the law are required. We will show the necessity of both these aspects separately.

The Bearing of Punishment is Necessary IV. Question: Is it absolutely necessary, to remove the guilt and punishment of the sinner, to satisfy God's justice by bearing the deserved punishment? The Socinians deny this; we assert that it is absolutely necessary that God's justice be satisfied for sin by the bearing of punishment, so that without this, no forgiveness of sin can be expected, not only in view of God's decree and truth but also in view of the nature of God's justice, which cannot leave sin unpunished. This is evident from the following reasons:

Evidence 1. Imprinted in Nature.

1. It is ingrained in nature that there is a God, that He is a Judge, that vindictive justice demands punishment, Romans 1:32. Consequently, that God punishes sins. The writings of the pagans, who know only what is naturally inherent in God, are full of this. God wears a robe of vengeance. The scoundrel seldom escapes punishment. God, being a Judge, will not acquit the guilty. The punishment of the wicked reassures me and excuses God. Those of Melita said: Acts 28:4, "This man is certainly a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live." Even though it was more obscure to them that God cannot forgive sin without satisfaction, they nonetheless showed this with their actions. They always wanted to do something to atone for their sins, whether by inflicting pain on themselves, by killing animals in their place, by offering up something else, indeed, they even sacrificed humans in their place, saying, "Being guilty themselves, an offered beast could not satisfy for them, and that the wrath of God could only be appeased by human blood." All these sayings and deeds indicate that they knew of God's avenging justice, that there had to be satisfaction, and that God could allow a Substitute. This argument is greatly strengthened when one sees the Scripture in addition.

2. God's Righteousness. V. It is evident from the attributes of God, namely: (a) from the righteousness of God. The entire Scripture is full of expressions of God's righteousness, not only understanding that God in his nature and deeds is right, just, fitting, but righteous as a Judge. See among others:

- Genesis 18:25. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?
- Psalm 7:12. God is a righteous Judge.

- Psalm 119:137. LORD! You are righteous, and all Your judgments are just.

Now it is known that the righteousness of a judge in matters of judgment is a perfection that gives each their due, that treats each according to what they are, condemns the guilty, and acquits the innocent. If an earthly judge does not do this, and does the opposite, he is an abomination to God, Proverbs 17:15. God, being a Judge and going to judge all men, can do nothing else but condemn or justify; as both are said of God in Scripture. Mark 16:16. He that believeth not shall be damned. Romans 8:33. It is God who justifies.

The Hebrew and Greek words *hitsdik*, *dikaioun*, never mean to absolve or forgive, but as a judge to declare righteous. From this, it is certain that God cannot justify anyone who is not righteous and free [from guilt]. Furthermore, since God justifies many, they are surely righteous. Furthermore, if they are to become righteous, when they are certainly sinful and condemnable in themselves, then their sin must first be punished, and the Law must first be perfectly obeyed, through which they are righteous and can stand in God's righteous judgment. Thus, it becomes clear that God's righteousness does not permit sin to go unpunished; if one concedes that God is a Judge, one must concede that God cannot fail to condemn the sinner, and one must concede the absolute necessity of atonement for sins through the bearing of punishment for those He justifies.

Retort.

If it is said that God's righteousness is nothing other than His fairness, uprightness, that is, holiness in His nature and deeds, and not a vengeful justice. Response. I respond, that is just a claim; the contrary has just been shown concerning God's righteousness in judgment as a Judge, and also, if God's righteousness is His fairness

and uprightness in His nature and deeds, as some want to say, then it would follow from this proposition that God could also be just and fair or not, act rightly or not; for He does everything voluntarily, which is blasphemous. But if He is necessarily just and fair in nature and deeds, then He is also as a Judge in judgment.

Retort.

If it is said that the righteousness of God is an act of free will, which God may or may not exercise, and thus punish or not. Response. I respond: If the righteousness of God is God's fairness and uprightness in His nature and deeds, as some claim, then this would imply that God could also be just and fair or not, act rightly or not; for He does everything voluntarily, and that is slanderous. However, if He is necessarily just and fair in nature and deeds, then He is also as a Judge in judgment.

Retort.

If it is said, if the avenging righteousness were natural to God and not in His free will, then God would always and at every moment have to punish, just as fire always burns. Response. I respond: God is not forced to be just, but does so voluntarily. Voluntariness and necessity or naturality do not conflict. For voluntariness is not a matter of indifference, but of self-determination, from one's own perfect nature and motions. He who works necessarily and according to his nature, and also rationally, knows the time and manner.

God's Holiness.

VI. (b) That atonement for sin through the bearing of punishment is absolutely necessary for human salvation is also evident from God's holiness. God is holy; by His nature, He is holiness itself. Because

God is holy by nature, He also naturally abhors sin. Because God is infinitely holy, He hates sin infinitely more than an angel, more than a devout person, who only possesses a speck of holiness. Because God naturally, and infinitely so, abhors sin, He cannot unite with or love that which is sinful or who is a sinner; thus, by His nature, He can do nothing other than cast away and reject the sinner eternally. That eternal rejection of a sinner is an eternal punishment: 2 Thessalonians 1:9, "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord."

Indeed, natural and infinite holiness, and the ensuing hatred of the sinner, can have no other consequence than to utterly destroy the sinner, thus not to leave the sin and the sinner unpunished but to inflict punishment. This reasoning from the nature of holiness, sin, and hatred is apparent to anyone who can or wishes to use reason; moreover, Holy Scripture clearly states this, just look at these texts:

- Habakkuk 1:13, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil."
- Psalm 45:8, "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness."
- Joshua 24:19, "Ye cannot serve the Lord: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins."
- Psalm 5:5-7, "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man."

Look at these texts attentively, and you will see that because God is holy, He hates the sinner, and because He is holy and hates sin, He cannot leave sin unpunished. Consequently, if a sinner is to be redeemed, it is absolutely necessary that through the bearing of punishment, both guilt and wrath and punishment be removed.

Retort

If it is said: God hates sin voluntarily, because He chooses to hate it. I respond: Although the hatred is carried out by the free will of God, just as God is and does everything voluntarily; yet, the hatred does not arise from indifferent voluntariness, so that He could also not hate sin, indeed, could love sin, which is blasphemous; but it flows from God's holiness, and because holiness is His image, He naturally loves holiness; and because unholiness and sin are contrary to His image, and thus the opposite of His Being, He naturally hates sin; and that hatred, because He is just and holy, and God is Sovereign, and the sinner is subject to Him, can do nothing but cast away and punish the sinner.

Mercy.

VII. (c) It is also evident from God's mercy that He cannot leave sin unpunished. It is indisputable that God is infinitely merciful, and that by His nature. If now God's justice could allow the sinner to remain unpunished, then no sinner could be punished, neither temporarily nor eternally; for the eternal mercy and grace of God would not permit Him to exercise His right and power to punish; for even among humans, it would be condemned as cruelty if someone had the right and power to make someone miserable, and it was within their freedom to execute or not execute that right, and they could draw no other benefit from using their right than to show that they had the right and power to put someone in the utmost misery, poverty, painfulness, and horror, whereas they could gain more praise through mercy.

If this is so among humans, much more would this be the case with the supreme Goodness, with infinite grace and mercy. Could it allow its creature to be in the utmost pain and distress eternally, in soul and body, without any respite, and that out of sheer freedom, when it

could do otherwise? Therefore, because God punishes both temporarily and eternally, and His punishments are not cruelty, for He is goodness itself, it necessarily follows that the punishment flows not only from God's right and power but from His perfect justice, which is in itself as lovely as His goodness, and which cannot fail to punish sins. Thus, there is an absolute necessity that sin be fully punished if man is to be redeemed.

Truth.

VIII. (d) This is also evident from God's truthfulness. Quite explicitly it is written:

- Exodus 34:7, "Who will by no means clear the guilty."
- Nahum 1:2, "God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies." This is the pronouncement upon Adam, and upon all who were in Him, and in him sinned: Genesis 2:17, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This is the sentence not only upon the Jews but upon all who have received the Law, whether in nature or in Scripture. Deuteronomy 27:26, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them." Also see: Romans 1:18, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death." And similar. Now it is certain that God cannot lie, nor will He revoke His word; consequently, there is no other way to be redeemed than through complete atonement by bearing the punishment.

Excuse.

IX. A natural person may easily think: all threats and judgments are conditional upon repentance, faith, and conversion. Answer. I respond, that is not mentioned; they are absolute without condition. If it is said: in Scripture, there are such threats, as in the case of Nineveh. I answer:

1. Just because there is a single example from which it appears that a condition is implied, it does not follow that all threats and judgments are such.
2. When God postpones temporal punishments due to outward repentance, that is not the removal and forgiveness of sins, nor liberation from eternal punishment.
3. When one speaks of the condition of repentance, faith, and conversion, one must surely understand true repentance, faith, and conversion, which are pleasing to God, not such as man conceives according to his own understanding and not according to God's Word. Now in true faith, the satisfaction of the Mediator is firmly established, for that is what one accepts in faith; also, in all true conversion there is faith in Christ, and from that faith, an inward change from death to life, from earth and oneself to God, upon which follows the manifestation of that spiritual life in all actions. If God then removes sin upon, and not because of such faith and conversion, it is because His righteousness has been satisfied by the Mediator Jesus Christ, whose ransom is accepted by faith, and whose fellowship is shown in conversion. Therefore, it is never said that God removes sins and punishment because of the worthiness, because of faith, or because of conversion, but always upon or through faith and conversion. Thus none of the threats of curse, death, damnation are made conditionally, but they are certain and unchangeably fixed. Whether to bear punishment in one's own person or through the Mediator is necessary; whoever does

not receive the payment in the Mediator will have to bear the punishment themselves eternally and will find that an outward and natural repentance, a historical and temporal faith, an outward conversion will not free him from that punishment. If it is then said: if the Mediator pays, then the sinner himself does not pay, and consequently the threat is not absolute but conditional. I respond: Indeed, the threat remains absolute and unchangeable; for upon sin the threat was made, sin is also punished, the law gets its demand, which is satisfied, even if it is through a Mediator, and the Mediator has the same nature that has sinned, and thus the sinner and the Payer are the same in that respect. Therefore, the Apostle says: Romans 3:21, 22, "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ."

The fulfillment through the Mediator is fitting for God.

X. It is also evident from the execution of the suretyship. This shows that there is an absolute necessity for satisfaction to be made to God's justice. For:

(a) The Scripture says that it was fitting for God, if He would save sinners, that the Mediator should pay. Hebrews 2:10. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. If God forgave sin and saved the sinner without the Mediator's suffering, then God would be doing something that was unfitting for Him; because that is far from God, there is then a necessity for satisfaction.

(b) In the sending of the Mediator, there is the greatest and most unfathomable love. John 3:16. For God so loved the world, that He

gave His only begotten Son. It would truly not be love, but the greatest cruelty, to allow the holy Jesus to suffer and die if there was no necessity, if man could be saved without satisfaction. But now it is such a great love, therefore satisfaction is absolutely necessary.

(c) The Scripture straightforwardly states that the Mediator Jesus Christ is to demonstrate the righteousness of God. Romans 3:25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness. Not to demonstrate His power or right, so as to be able or permitted to do so, but to demonstrate His righteousness, which was thereby satisfied.

(d) When one considers all the circumstances from Adam onward, all the prophecies, all the ceremonies, all the promises, all that longing and hope, who could think that it was all just play, and that it was all for something that was not necessary? Does all that not show the absolute necessity, and that there is no forgiveness of sins or salvation without satisfaction?

Objection 1.

XI. Mercy and vengeful justice are two opposing attributes, and therefore cannot coexist in the same God; and because mercy is natural to God, vengeful justice cannot be natural to Him. Answer. I answer:

(a) The judges on earth will answer this for me; they can be exceptionally merciful, yet this does not prevent them from being just in punishing wrongdoers.

(b) The whole Scripture teaches that there is mercy in God, as well as wrath, and daily experience in the punishment of people with all

kinds of afflictions. Now, mercy and wrath are as much opposing attributes as mercy and vengeful justice, from which wrath arises.

(c) The objects are different, not the nature of God, which remains merciful and just in itself, even before creation, when there was yet no object; but after creation, now that there are diverse objects, some sinful, others in the Mediator, the same Divine nature manifests itself in justice to the sinner, and in mercy alongside the covenant partners. Nevertheless, mercy does not arise from man's misery, not even from the satisfaction of Christ, which are means and presupposed conditions through which mercy descends to the covenant partners, but are not causes of God's mercy, which has no higher and earlier or preceding cause than God Himself, who, as wise and as voluntary, not by indifference or necessity, but by selfhood, executes vengeful justice over the wicked, according to the measure of their wickedness, and shows His mercy to His elect in Christ. Romans 9:18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

Objection 2.

XII. Cannot God forego His right as a man can, who may and can forgive debts and offenses done to him without satisfaction, and if so, He can forgive sins without satisfaction. Answer. I answer:

(a) Man is given a law by which he must conduct himself, so one cannot draw a conclusion about God's actions from man's duty. Isaiah 55:8. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.

(b) Also, right and justice are not the same thing; right implies power, justice is a virtue. An individual may forego his right in many

cases, but never justice as a virtue. An authority may not give the subjects freedom to be ungodly.

(c) A judge may not depart from justice, or he would be committing injustice. God does not appear in this case as an offended party, but as the supreme Judge of heaven and earth. Man and God do not stand in a position of equality against each other.

Objection 3.

XIII. If sins are forgiven by grace, as the Scripture says, then satisfaction is not necessary; for to satisfy and to forgive are opposites, where one occurs, the other is excluded. Answer. I answer:

(a) How satisfaction in respect to the Mediator and forgiveness in respect to man can coexist, and do, has been shown in this chapter, section 1. It is altogether grace and forgiveness with respect to man, who has done nothing to earn it, who is miserable, hateful, and powerless; but God Himself has chosen these and those according to His good pleasure, has devised, ordained, and sent the Mediator, accounts to His own the merits of the Mediator, and thus forgives His own their sins and pardons them; thus man receives forgiveness; but with respect to the Mediator, it is complete payment; thus the apostle combines grace and satisfaction. Romans 3:24 And are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Objection 4.

XIV. If God has given Christ out of grace, then the elect were already first loved and accepted in grace, therefore satisfaction was not necessary. Answer. I answer: God has chosen them in Christ, Ephesians 1:4. God loved them with the love of goodwill, therefore

God ordained the Mediator so that by his satisfaction he would remove the sins, which God hates, and prevent God from uniting the sinner with Himself in the love of complacency, and doing them good. Because God loved them, He sent them the Mediator so that they might live with Him eternally in blessedness.

Complete Holiness is Also Necessary.

XV. Having seen the necessity of satisfying the righteousness of God through the bearing of punishment, one must also know that complete holiness is necessary for man to be redeemed and saved. This is evident:

Proof 1. Salvation Promised on No Other Condition.

Salvation was promised on no other condition than on complete holiness. Romans 10:5. Moses writes about the righteousness that is of the law, saying: The man who does these things will live by them. Transgression merits temporal and eternal death. Once that is fully borne and overcome, man is no further than in his very first state in respect to punishment; punishment could not be laid upon him, nor could he inherit salvation because the condition, which is complete doing of the law, that is perfect internal and external accordance with the law, was not yet fulfilled. The law had to justify: Acts 13:39 ... from everything you could not be justified by the law. Romans 8:3,4. What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh... That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. Now, the law is not capable of justifying as long as man has not fulfilled it and has righteousness, which is the right of the law. Therefore, for man to be saved, he must first have complete holiness.

Proof 2. God's Judgment According to Truth.

XVI. God's judgment is according to truth. Romans 2:2. And justifying is not only acquittal from punishment but also the endowment of the right to eternal life. When man is placed before the judgment of God, it will not only be investigated whether he is worthy of punishment or whether the punishment has been suffered, but also whether he has holiness beyond that and has fulfilled the law. A man is not blessed who has no punishment to expect, but his blessedness consists in perfect communion with God. If God is to justify man and endow him with the right to eternal blessedness, he must truly be righteous and holy; for God's judgment is according to truth, His verdict is right and just. There comes no overlooking and forgiving here; for God is Judge, and the work of a judge is either to condemn or to acquit and endow with his right and possession; therefore, there must be complete holiness for man to be justified and to obtain salvation.

Proof 3.

The holiness of Christ is imputed. It is also evident from the imputation of Christ's perfect holiness to the elect, which will be dealt with in its place hereafter. See now: Romans 5:19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. 2 Corinthians 5:21. That we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Colossians 2:10. And ye are complete in him. It is clear then that perfect holiness is necessary for the sinner to be justified and saved.

Man cannot redeem himself.

XVII. Now, having seen that for man's redemption these two things are absolutely necessary, namely: satisfying the righteousness of God by bearing the punishment, and complete holiness, it remains to consider by whom this can and is accomplished; whether by man

himself, or by another as a Mediator. And if by another as a Mediator, who can and is the suitable Mediator. Man can do neither for himself; he cannot satisfy by bearing the punishment, nor can he endure and overcome the punishment. What can a man give in exchange for his soul? Matthew 16:26. That is, he can do nothing about it; here, pleading for mercy does not help, here, ceasing from evil, and doing something he deems good, does not help; the guilt is already there, he can pay nothing. All his suffering in the world cannot suffice; for the punishment is eternal, there is no end to it, he must remain under it forever; the finite, as man is, cannot overcome the infinite. Also, he remains a sinner and continually increases the guilt, so the punishment can never cease. He also cannot convert himself, he cannot make himself perfect and fulfill the law, so that he does not transgress in one point, which makes him guilty of all. For there is no man that sinneth not, 1 Kings 8:46. Who can say: I have purified my heart, I am clean from my sin? Proverbs 20:9. We all stumble in many ways, James 3:2. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, 1 John 1:8. So that man must be absolutely desperate to redeem himself.

It may be done by a Mediator.

XVIII. If a sinner is to be saved, it must be done by another as a Mediator. Here comes into consideration: Whether it can indeed be done, and whether it is just, that a Mediator satisfies in the sinner's place? Socinians deny it. I answer: yes, it can be done, and it is just, and also necessary. This is evident:

Proof 1.

From nature. It is customary among the Gentiles and among the godly, as mentioned in Scripture, for a mediator to pay for another. It is just that he who has bound himself as a mediator pays and that the

authority enforces it. The Gentiles would kill hostages who had committed themselves for another if the other fled or did not keep his word. They killed animals, even humans, in their place to reconcile God over their sins, so that they were somewhat aware that God could be reconciled through another on their behalf. In Scripture, we have the example of Paul. Philemon 1:18-19. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I will repay it. Judah offered to be a mediator and was willing to be a slave for his brother Benjamin all his life. Genesis 44:32-33. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father... Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord.

Proof 2. From Scripture. Scripture explicitly says that the Lord Jesus is the Mediator.

- Hebrews 7:22 Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant.
- 1 Peter 3:18. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust.
- Isaiah 53:6,7. The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted.
- Matthew 20:28. The Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. More on this will be discussed later.

Objection 1.

XIX. One may become a guarantor for another in matters of debt because one can and may share his own with another, but that cannot and may not be done in matters of life, and much less then to become a guarantor for another to bear the punishments of eternal damnation, and to fulfill the law on behalf of another, thereby

acquiring the right to eternal life. I answer: No one has the power to become a guarantor for another in matters of debt unless God has given that right to man; but one man may not become a guarantor for another who has deserved death, and authorities may not accept a guarantor in such cases,

(a) because it is expressly forbidden by God: Numbers 35:31. Do not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer.

(b) God has not placed life within His own power, therefore man may not pledge it, it does not belong to him, therefore it may not be accepted as a pledge.

(c) A man pledging his life would pledge beyond his power; for he cannot fulfill the payment and remain standing but remains under the payment because he cannot make himself alive again.

(d) Even if God had not forbidden it, and man could remain in the state he was in by making himself alive again, there would be no reason why one should not redeem another from death by dying for that person, just as one would redeem another from distress by his money. But God is the Lord, the Supreme, the Sovereign, who gives laws to men but Himself is above the law; He is not bound by the law given to men. God knows what can satisfy Him and what can satisfy His righteousness; He has appointed the Mediator Himself and is pleased with His mediation. Matthew 17:5. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And the Mediator Jesus Christ:

(1) is the Master of His own life, being God.

(2) He has the power to lay down His life, and the power to take it up again, John 10:18. So that He can raise Himself again and overcome the payment.

(3) He voluntarily becomes a Mediator, Hebrews 10:7. He wills, it is His pleasure.

(4) He can, by His death, as a sufficient ransom, grant eternal life to a vast multitude; as indeed God is thereby reconciled, and the elect are reconciled with God. Romans 5:10. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son... Colossians 1:19,20. It pleased the Father... by making peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself.

There lies the truth in its clarity, that a Mediator can satisfy for the sinner. What then is there to say of cruelty, it is all willingness, it is all goodness. That would be cruelty if God inflicted so much terrible anguish and distress upon the holy and innocent Jesus, and made Him die, without having appointed Him as Mediator, without others thereby being redeemed, and it would only be to serve as an example of patience. Thus, by snarling and grimacing against the truth, they themselves accuse God of cruelty.

Objection 2.

XX. Deuteronomy 24:16, "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers." Ezekiel 18:4, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." I answer:

(a) These texts do not speak of dying as a Mediator, and in place of another, to redeem them, which is the issue here; but of dying because another has sinned, and to share their sins in their punishment. So these texts do not apply here.

(b) God forbids people from killing others for someone else's sin; but He Himself remains sovereign and does punish parents in their

children, for it is a heavier grief than bearing it in themselves. Exodus 20:5, "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children."

(c) Children, like all people, are sinful and therefore deserve to bear all temporal and eternal punishments, so no injustice is done to them, even if God's wrath is expressed over them, on the occasion of others' sin: whether fathers, authorities, or others to whom we have some relation. Yet God does not always do this but declares that He will not do so in this or that case, at this or that time, especially not if the children do not follow in the footsteps of their parents; and when the godly are subject to the usual land plagues for the sins of the inhabitants, those are paternal chastisements.

Who Cannot Be Mediators.

XXI. Having seen that satisfaction can be made by another as a mediator without injury to God's righteousness, it comes into consideration where a suitable mediator can be found. For not everyone is fit to become even a guarantor for another in matters of debt; one who can be a guarantor often will not.

- If we go to our fellow man, he is as miserable as all others. He cannot satisfy for himself. He cannot overcome eternal punishment but would remain under it forever. He would not want to be eternally condemned for another. He cannot fulfill the law, neither for himself nor for another, even if he might be holier than another; indeed, if he were perfect, he would have it through another, and it would be only for himself. God would also not want to accept such a guarantor. How wretched those will fare who let it come to a man.
- If we go to the angels, they are of a completely different nature. The nature that has sinned is punishable, must bear the

punishment itself. The human nature was given the law, the punishment threatened, it has transgressed, so no one but one who has the same human nature can be the mediator. The angels are also finite and therefore cannot overcome the infinite punishment. All that they are, they are only for themselves, and cannot share theirs with others, and thus clothe others with perfection. There is then no expectation.

The Mediator must be truly human.

XXII. If someone were to be a mediator, he must have these four qualities. He had to be:

1. Truly human from humanity.
2. A holy human.
3. Truly God.
4. God and human in one person.
5. The Mediator had to be truly human.

(a) Because the law was given to man, whose main content is to serve God with body and soul, to love God and his neighbor; and because death was threatened to man if he became disobedient, and eternal bliss was promised to man upon complete obedience; and because man has now transgressed and therefore had to die. If man were to regain salvation, the human nature must yield someone who both bore the punishment completely and fulfilled the set law completely.

(b) Scripture says it clearly: Hebrews 2:14. "Forasmuch then as

the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." So, the incarnation and being under the law are combined, and thus shown that no one can be under that law unless he is human. Galatians 4:4. "... God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." These texts and the nature of the matter show that the Mediator not only had to be a human but also a human from humanity, just as the Mediator Jesus Christ is the seed of the woman, of Abraham, of David, of Mary, and thus according to the flesh, from the fathers, Romans 9:5. If another human nature were created anew from earth or from nothing, it could not be a mediator, because it was not the same nature, but only a similar nature. That nature had not transgressed, therefore it could not bear the punishment; the nature that had sinned had to yield one who could be a mediator.

Holy human.

1. XXIII. The Mediator had to be a holy human. For:

(a) otherwise that nature could not be taken up in the personhood of the Son of God, for God cannot unite with anything sinful.

(b) Then he himself would be guilty of suffering everything, and his suffering could not aid another.

(c) Then his offering would be tainted, could not be pleasing to God, and serve to take away sins.

(d) Then he could not clothe others with holiness, because he

did not possess it himself.

(e) Then he could not approach God to intercede for the elect; for God does not hear sinners.

(f) Yes, all the reasons given above, which show that God's righteousness must be satisfied by bearing the punishment and perfect obedience, show that the Mediator must be a holy human.

(g) This is clearly stated in Scripture, among others: Hebrews 7:26, 27. "Such a high priest truly befits us, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners... who does not have daily necessity, as the high priests do, to first offer sacrifices for his own sins, and then for the people's."

Truly God.

XXIV. The Mediator had to be truly God.

(a) For otherwise, his suffering would not possess infinite power and dignity. If he were to endure eternal punishment in terms of duration, the suffering could never be complete, nor could it overcome the punishment; therefore, the payment had to be made through such suffering that was as powerful and worthy as eternal in duration. This could be done by no one but One who is Himself infinite. It's true, the Divine nature did not suffer and cannot suffer; but the Person who suffered in His human nature was God, and therefore the suffering has as much power and dignity as the Person Himself. Not that this is an acceptance, taking something as the whole, which would not be true satisfaction, but a remission without payment. This is also not a respect of persons through which the

suffering is taken as fully sufficient, but it is in truth, such a person, such power, and such worthiness. An infinite Person suffers according to His human nature, so then that suffering also had an infinite power and dignity, having brought about an eternal redemption, Hebrews 9:12.

(b) The human nature needed more strength than a general man to bear the power of God's wrath, therefore the Divine nature had to support it and add strength, as God can do for a creature more than we can comprehend or say, so that he would not collapse under the burden. Therefore it says: Hebrews 9:14, "Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God."

(c) The Mediator had to clothe not just one, but all the elect with His holiness, through the complete obedience of the law given to man. A finite human, even if holy and even if not subject to the law for himself, which still cannot be, could at most, suppose it so, fulfill the law for one; but because the law had to be fulfilled for all the elect by the Mediator, He had to be truly God. It is true, a human person is subject to the law for themselves; but this does not apply to a Divine Person who has taken on human nature and not a human person; He is not subject to the law of Himself, but He places Himself under the law as Mediator. Thus, the fulfillment of the law is a sufficient and complete satisfaction for all the elect, because the Person is infinite. Acts are of the persons. An infinite Person places Himself under the law, an infinite Person as Mediator fulfills the law; so then the fulfillment of that law is perfect and sufficient, therefore He had to be God.

(d) The Mediator had to immediately deliver His own from the power of the devil, bring them to freedom and make them children of God, regenerate them, bring them to God, preserve them and give

them eternal life; for this is required for salvation. Now, this can be done by no one but One who is truly God.

God and Man in One Person.

XXV. The fourth quality is that the Mediator had to be God and man in one Person. The reason is clear from what has been said. God alone cannot be subject, suffer, and die. A man alone, subjecting, suffering, and dying, could not overcome the suffering, raise himself up, and besides, it would only be beneficial for one; so that the suffering and obedience would be of eternal strength, and He himself would overcome the suffering and death, without the help of another, by His own power, as it had to happen, the Mediator had to be God and man in one Person, from the fathers, as far as the flesh is concerned, who is God above all to be praised forever, Romans 9:5.

Jesus Christ is called by various names.

XXVI. Now it remains to show who this Mediator is. He is Jesus Christ. The Mediator bears various names due to his office:

(a) Mediator, because He stands in place of the sinner, takes the debt from him and upon Himself, as if He had incurred it Himself, bears the punishment, fulfills the law. See Hebrews 7:22, and Jeremiah 30:21, "Who is he who will pledge his heart to approach Me?" says the LORD.

(b) Mediator, because He brings together and reconciles God and man, removing on both sides what hinders their approach, by satisfying God's justice, and by making man from unwilling to willing, desiring, coming, and praying. See: 1 Timothy 2:5, "There is one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus," Hebrews 12:24, "The mediator of the new covenant, Jesus."

(c) Redeemer, because He rescues from all that makes man miserable, Romans 11:26, "The Deliverer will come from Zion."

(d) Savior, because He immediately brings to man everything that can make him completely happy eternally, Matthew 1:21, Luke 2:11.

(e) Prophet, Priest, King, Goel (Redeemer), Bridegroom, Emmanuel. Each for their special reasons.

This is the Mediator and Savior.

XXVII. It is not necessary for Christians to prove that the Lord Jesus, born in Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary, who preached throughout the Jewish land and performed countless miracles, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate on the hill of Golgotha near Jerusalem, who rose again on the third day, and ascended into heaven after forty days, that He, I say, is the Christ, the Messiah who was promised, the Mediator and Savior, this is evident to everyone; but it is beneficial, refreshing and strengthening of faith, to see how exactly all prophecies and examples are fulfilled in Christ, therefore we will briefly present some of those.

Proof 1.

The Timing of His Coming. The time in which the Messiah was to be born was:

(a) When the tribe of Judah was still distinct, in its proper genealogical record. Genesis 49:10, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes." The word "scepter" signifies a tribe, rod, staff. Because kings have a staff, one more costly than another, it means, though not often, a scepter. Most often it signifies a genealogical tribe, from

which one can prove to be sprung from that noble tribe; such as the tribe of Judah, Reuben, Levi. I believe that the word "scepter" here signifies genealogical tribe, meaning: Judah shall remain a genealogical tribe, that tribe shall not be mixed with other tribes or peoples, its genealogical records shall remain intact, until Shiloh, the Messiah, comes. And this was necessary, so that one could know that the Messiah, having to come from Judah, also came from Judah. If you say: other tribes were also still intact. I answer: the ten tribes were mostly already amalgamated, only these and no others still knew from which tribe they were. Anna was from the tribe of Asher, Paul was from the tribe of Benjamin; but that does not affect the matter, even if all tribes had still been intact at the time of Christ's birth; after all, Judah had to remain intact, and it did remain intact until Christ. It is evident that our Lord sprang from Judah, Hebrews 7:14. If we interpret "scepter" as the royal rule, I cannot reconcile the matter well.

- Firstly, the rule first came upon Judah in the time of David, before that Benjamin reigned in Saul, and here the scepter of Judah should not depart; this implies that he was already in Judah as the tribe, and in his children, who he already had as branches in him. But the royal rule was not yet in Judah then; what is not, cannot depart.
- The scepter had long departed from Judah before the coming of the Messiah, they were under a foreign sovereign, namely, the emperor, and they had to depart from Judah before the Messiah came. Ezekiel 21:26-27, "Remove the turban, and take off the crown!... It will not be restored until he to whom it rightfully belongs shall come, and I will give it to him." Thus, how can one then say that the royal rule from Judah would not depart, but remain on him until Shiloh the Messiah? But if we translate it as

genealogical tribe, the matter is clear; for it was still on Judah at the time of the birth of Christ, as shown in the genealogical records of Joseph, Matthew 1, and Mary, Luke 3. And shortly thereafter, it departed from Judah to this day.

(b) The Messiah had to come while the second temple still stood. Haggai 2:7-8, "I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory." Add to this Malachi 3:1, "And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight." That this house, this temple, is understood not to be the first but the second is beyond question because these two prophets prophesied after the Babylonian captivity, while the second temple was being built and was built. The second house was much inferior to the first. The elders who had seen the first temple wept when they saw the foundation of the second temple because it was so inferior to the first, Ezra 3:12. From the second temple, they also missed various things that greatly glorified the first house, yet the second temple would be filled with glory, which glory would consist in that the Messiah, the fulfillment of all the examples, would come to the temple. The Lord Jesus, the Desire of all nations, has come to the temple, as is evident from all the Evangelists. And the second temple was destroyed forty years after His suffering and death to this day. So then, the Lord Jesus is the Messiah.

(c) The Messiah had to come after seventy weeks, that is, four hundred and ninety years after the revelation to Daniel. Daniel 9:24, "Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish transgression." Verse 25, "From the issuance of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (which one may take for the command of Cyrus, Ezra 1:1-2) until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven

weeks and sixty-two weeks." Precisely at that time, the Lord Jesus was born.

Proof 2.

The Place. The place where the Messiah was to be born was Bethlehem: Micah 5:1. "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel." This was fulfilled in the birth of Christ, Luke 2:4, 6, 7.

Proof 3.

Lineage. The lineage from which the Messiah was to be born is Judah: Genesis 49:10, "The scepter will not depart from Judah... until Shiloh comes." And from the house of David: 2 Samuel 7:12, "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom." Therefore, the Messiah is often called David, Hosea 3:5. This is fulfilled in Christ. Hebrews 7:14, "It is evident that our Lord sprang from Judah." Luke 1:32, "The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David." That Mary, the cousin of Elizabeth, the wife of the priest Zacharias, does not prevent Mary from being of Judah; for cousins are also nieces. The Levites, because they had no inheritance, could take wives from all tribes, yes all daughters who had no inheritances could also marry into other tribes, so even Elizabeth could have been from Judah. The law of not marrying into other tribes only applies to those daughters in whose family there was no male seed, and they had the inheritance, so that the lands of the tribes would not be mixed.

Proof 4.

Born of a Virgin. The Messiah had to be born of a virgin, Isaiah 7:14, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son." He was not to be the seed of man so that He would be born without original sin but the seed of the woman, Genesis 3:15. Our Lord Jesus is the fruit of Mary's womb, Luke 1:42, Matthew 1:18.

Proof 5.

Is God. The Messiah had to be God, Psalm 45:7-8, "Your throne, O God... Therefore, God, Your God, has anointed You." Jeremiah 23:6, "The Lord our righteousness." Now our Lord Jesus is true God, 1 John 5:20.

Proof 6.

Offices. The Messiah had to be Prophet, Priest, and King. Prophet, Deuteronomy 18:15, • A Prophet from among you... the Lord your God will raise up. This is the Lord Jesus, as seen in all His teachings and prophecies mentioned in the Gospels, Luke 24:19, "Who was a Prophet powerful in deed and word." • Priest, Psalm 110:4, "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." This is Christ, Hebrews 2:17, "...a merciful and faithful high priest." • King, Psalm 2:6, "Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion." That is Christ, Revelation 19:16, "King of kings."

Proof 7.

Miracles. The Messiah had to perform many miracles. See this in the entire chapter, Isaiah 35. Fulfilled in all the Gospels.

Proof 8.

Fulfilling Examples. The Messiah had to fulfill all examples, suffer and die, Isaiah 53, entirely. Fulfilled in all the Gospels. And 1

Corinthians 5:7, "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."

Proof 9.

Gentiles Believing in Him. The Gentiles would believe in the Messiah, Genesis 49:10, "The obedience of the nations shall be his." Haggai 2:8, "The Desire of all nations." The Gentiles have never believed in anyone from the Jewish nation and followed him, but they believe in the Lord Jesus, the Son of Judah and David, and since His ascension, the Name of Jesus is glorious and beloved over the whole world.

Proof 10.

Ceremonial Service Ceased. The Messiah would cause all ceremonial service to cease: the temple had to be torn down, Jerusalem destroyed, the Jewish nation dispersed, and scorned among the Gentiles to wander for a long time. Daniel 9:26-27 states, "The people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary... He (the Messiah) will put an end to sacrifice and offering." Hosea 3:4 prophesies, "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or household idols." This was fulfilled shortly after the days of Christ and remains so to this day. From all this, the heart is fully affirmed and assured that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing, you may have life in His Name, John 20:31. Yet, the Jews will still not see, but will remain hardened until the Redeemer comes from Zion and turns away ungodliness from Jacob.

This truth should stir the heart. See here, we have presented to you the essence of the gospel, the necessity of Atonement through the Surety Jesus Christ. To err here is to stray to one's eternal ruin; thus,

take this to heart. You know you have and commit sin, but do you truly feel it? Do you realize deeply that every sin deserves death? And if this begins to concern you, what movement does it cause?

(a) Perhaps you evade this conviction and distract yourself with other thoughts and work because it takes away your peace. But know, every time you resist the Holy Spirit, whose work it was, you flee from heaven, and it is as much as saying: I do not want to be saved, the way to heaven does not appeal to me, it is not worth that much to me, if I cannot be saved otherwise, so be it. Poor soul, how will you be saved! How hard will it be for you to contemplate this in hell! Then you will say: how contrary and wicked I was, that I ignored those knocks on my heart and even set myself against them. Whom did I capture but myself? Then I could have been saved, but I did not want to, now it's too late, now here forever! Eternally damned! Woe, woe to me! So, take heed now! If ever you are convicted, your heart struck by sin, terrified of God's wrath and eternal damnation, count it an unspeakable blessing, open your heart and say: Speak, Lord! I am listening; Lord, what do you want me to do? Do not stop, do not let the conviction pass, let it continue to work until I find grace in your eyes and am converted.

(b) Perhaps when you are convicted of sin and punishment, you take the wrong path; you may not know the righteousness of God, and that it is impossible to be saved without complete atonement through the bearing of punishment, and without complete holiness; therefore, you seek to be saved by sorrow for your sins and your state. You think: I will pray to God for mercy, I will convert, and do my best to leave sin, to go to church more, I will partake in Holy Communion, I will read God's Word, give alms, do good to my neighbor, live chastely, no longer indulge in drunkenness, dancing, gambling, and playing, I will be righteous in my dealings and walk,

and then I hope God will be merciful to me, there is nothing more I can do. But, miserable soul, this is the net with which the devil captures thousands of people and drags them to hell; this is the way in which many people tragically deceive themselves and run to eternal ruin, and they do not realize it until it's too late. To this applies the proverb of Solomon; Proverbs 16:25 "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."

XXXI. I impart unto you, by divine decree, the solemn truth that not a single transgression shall be forgiven by God without it being chastised, both temporally and eternally, as we have incontrovertibly demonstrated above. Ponder these matters with due diligence until you discern and feel their veracity.

When you approach God in prayer, let this truth first halt you in your tracks, and realize that God is a consuming Fire to the sinner, His ear closed to you, thrusting you away, thus you fall into despair, and think, "My sins are present, God hears not the sinner, the righteous Judge can only be appeased by punishing sin both temporally and eternally—what counsel for me? There is no hope, absolutely none for me. I cannot satisfy, but must eternally bear the punishment; my suffering here does not repay." Remain thus in this plight until you look away from yourself and become aware of the path of the Mediator, Jesus Christ; until He becomes dear to you, and you flee to Him, seek salvation there, and thus you shall find.

As impossible as it is for you to bear the punishment and to atone for your debt, so impossible is it also for you to convert yourself. In the heart of man resides a delusion of capability, and upon this foundation, he is not exceedingly troubled about his state; for it lies within his grasp, he shall one day convert, as he proudly assumes. Upon this foundation, he finds courage, and the gnawing of

conscience ceases somewhat, having resolved to convert; for now, it shall be done, and upon this ground, he is vexed with himself when he does not follow through, as though there were still so much good within him to desire consistently and rightly, and to be able to convert. And if he cannot make amends perfectly, God shall yet be satisfied therein, and though he does not merit heaven, it shall move God to grant it to him. Thus, the poor soul proceeds to his eternal ruin; for he misses the true path.

That man cannot convert himself at all, we have demonstrated above. Let me reveal to you, about yourself, that you cannot, and that all your abstaining from evil and your doing of good is of no value before God, by briefly presenting to you what true conversion is. One imagines that conversion consists merely in forsaking gross sin and performing some good deeds, yet conversion is a total reversal of the human being in the disposition of the soul, of understanding, will, thoughts, words, and deeds. It is such a transformation as if one born blind could see, a deaf person could hear, a mute could speak, a completely lame person could walk adeptly.

The Holy Spirit is bestowed upon the individual who shall now be converted. Having taken residence within the soul, He reveals filth on all sides, stirring up abhorrence, disgust, shame, smallness, and confusion over one's condition. Moreover, the Holy Spirit presents to the soul the vision of God in His holiness, supremacy, justice, goodness, and truth, displaying the Mediator in His necessity and sufficiency, and imparts an understanding of reconciliation and union with God, of love, fear, and obedience beside God.

Upon this awakening, the soul rises and approaches the Mediator Jesus to receive from His abundance. From this arises sorrow, a grief for the soul's attachment to all that is visible and to sin, both grave

and minor, internal sins now seen and felt, previously unnoticed; its pursuit becomes the practice of fellowship with God, being near Him; its joy or sorrow is contingent upon its proximity to God. It lives turned away from the world and sin, though it may yet be ensnared; it lives turned toward God, seeking Him out in darkness for light, life, spirit, comfort, strength against sin, and sanctity. Not content with mere actions or omissions, it knows all must be done through faith in union with Christ and through Him with God, in the envisaged presence of the Lord, in love for God, in fear of God, in obedience to God, and in self-denial. It feels deep pangs over ulterior motives; it shuns sinful, merely civil, and natural company, but delights in godliness, preferring to suffer with the despised and oppressed than to be enriched and glorified with others.

This briefly outlines conversion, expanded upon below in Chapter XXXI. What think you now? Do you find guidance here? Begin and compare but a single day's deeds and undertakings against this measure, strive with all your might, and see if you can thus comply. Surely you will find that not only can you not reach even one step towards it, but it is impossible to even begin the first breath of life, and that all your deeds are flawed.

Remain here until you become disheartened within yourself, feeling utterly bereft, powerless, and desperate. And see, even if you made some progress, it would not be in that spiritual manner that could stand before God or move Him to regard you and grant salvation, as shown above.

There you lie in your wretchedness, helpless; you cannot satisfy God's justice by enduring punishments, nor can you attain holiness. Oh, if only you were truly stripped and perplexed! Then there would be hope for your salvation, not because you are perplexed, but

because there is a Redeemer for all who are perplexed, namely, Jesus Christ, whose call is: Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

I call out to you, the perplexed, the desperate, the stripped, the terrified, there is a Savior, unknown to the natural understanding of the Pagans, although they know there is a God, they do not know there is a Savior and Redeemer, but among us, the Savior is proclaimed. This Redeemer calls you, invites you, promises that He will save you if you come to Him.

Come then, rejoice in this fortune, step out of yourself, go to Him, accept Him by faith and be saved.

Chapter 3

On the Divinity, Incarnation, and Union of the Two Natures in the One Person of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the previous chapter, we have demonstrated that the Mediator must possess four essential attributes, namely:

1. He must be truly God.
2. He must be truly human, born of a woman.
3. He must be a holy human.
4. God and man must unite in one Person; and we have affirmed that the Lord Jesus Christ is this Mediator and Redeemer;

therefore, these four conditions must be met in Christ Jesus.

We hereby establish:

1. That there is but one sole God, not two, not three. There is no subordinate deity, and accordingly, no supreme deity above another, for there is no other God. 1 Corinthians 8:5-6 states, though there be that are called gods ... yet for us there is but one God.
2. That this one Divine Essence exists in three distinct Persons or Forms, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. 1 John 5:7 proclaims, For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.
3. That these three Persons are neither separated from the Divine Essence nor from each other, but are one God. 1 John 5:7 continues, ... and these three are one.
4. That these three Persons are distinct so that One is not the Other. Each Person is a distinct Other, yet not a distinct God: John 14:16 mentions, Another. The Spirit of truth, whom I will send to you from the Father, John 15:26.
5. That each Person is the one and true God.

The Lord Jesus is truly God.

1. It is now necessary to demonstrate that the Lord Jesus is indeed true. The Socinians and Anabaptists deny this, but we affirm it as a central tenet of the Christian faith. This is evident from all the proofs by which one is persuaded that JEHOVAH is God. How then shall we prove that JEHOVAH is God, if not: (a) that He is everywhere called God in Scripture; and it is beyond question that wherever Jehovah is called God, we are not to understand an angel or a ruler, but the eternal God. (b) That He is eternal, infinite, omniscient, omnipotent. (c) That He has

created and still maintains and governs heaven and earth. (d) That we must honor and worship Him, believe in Him, fear Him, and serve Him. None have the audacity to question these proofs. If these proofs are firm and certain, as they indeed are, then the Lord Jesus is the true God; for all four matters are abundantly spoken of Him in Scripture. It is blasphemous to deny that He is the true God, and to dare to say that He is only called God because of His miraculous conception, His mission in the world, God's love for Him, His miracles, ministry, resurrection from the dead, and glorification. Those things cannot make anyone God. They are proofs, not the grounds of His Divinity.

II. That Christ is the true, eternal God is then apparent from the four reasons just mentioned.

Proof 1. Titles. He is everywhere called God, and with such circumstances that remove all excuses. Consider only these texts: (a) Psalm 45:8. Therefore, God, Your God, has anointed You. That this "O God" refers to the Lord Jesus is clear from Hebrews 1:8-9. But to the Son, He says: Your throne, O God, is forever and ever ... Therefore, God, Your God, has anointed You. That in the texts, by "Your God," the true, eternal God is understood, is beyond doubt; but why is that? One might answer, because He is expressly called God. Well then, the Lord Jesus is called God just as much as the Father, so He is then the eternal, true God.

(b) Add to this the texts in which He is called JEHOVAH. That this name is ascribed to none but the eternal, true God in all of Scripture, or can be, has been confirmed in Chapter III, paragraph 23. That the Lord Jesus is called JEHOVAH is evident, among other passages, in Jeremiah 23:5-6, I will raise unto David a righteous Branch... And this is His name whereby He shall be called, JEHOVAH OUR

RIGHTEOUSNESS. That the Lord Jesus is here called JEHOVAH is clear because He is the BRANCH, the King over Zion, who is called by this name. So, the Lord Jesus is the true, eternal God.

(c) Add from the NEW TESTAMENT Romans 9:5, To them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, came Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. The preceding does not speak of God the Father but only of the Lord Jesus, and He is said to be from the fathers according to the flesh, which, beyond all contradiction, is the Lord Jesus, according to His human nature; of the same, it is immediately said, as if in one breath, that He is God, blessed over all forever. I say: as if in one breath, for nothing comes in between, no period, no semicolon, just a comma and then the Greek word *o wn*, who is, which always continues a discourse, and refers to the one of whom was just spoken. The Lord Jesus then is the God blessed forever, which expression is a description of the eternal God.

- Romans 11:36. To Him be glory forever.
- Revelation 4:11. You, Lord, are worthy to receive glory, etc.
- Psalm 89:8. God is... to be feared above all who are around Him.
- Psalm 95:3. For the LORD is... a great King above all gods.
- Psalm 99:2. The LORD is great... and high above all nations.

(d) This also applies to 1 John 5:20, This is the true God. Here it states not only God, not only the true God, but the true God, and there is none other. Also, He is said to be *en morphe theou*, in the form, in the image of God, Philippians 2:6, being the brightness of His (the Father's) glory, Hebrews 1:3. That the Name, that is the essence of JEHOVAH, is in His inward parts, Exodus 23:21.

Excuse.

From the designation, one cannot conclude the eternal Godhead of Christ; for rulers too are called gods.

Response.

When they are called gods, it is with such circumstances that one can see that the title is set against true being, 1 Corinthians 8:5-6. And with such descriptions, it is immediately apparent that they are creatures, and this title is ascribed to them only in regard to something special laid upon them by God, see Psalm 82:6. Here, godless judges are understood, verse 2, and death is threatened to them, verse 7. But when the Lord Jesus is called God, He is named with Jehovah and praised as God in eternity, and the true God, in the form of God, the express Image of the Father's person. Neither angel nor ruler is called God in the singular.

2. Attributes.

III. The second proof that the Lord Jesus is God, we take from the Divine attributes ascribed to Him. Whoever is from eternity, omniscient, omnipotent; that is the true God; this is indisputable. Now, the Lord Jesus is such; so He is the true God.

(a) That Christ is from eternity is evident, Micah 5:1. Out of you, (Bethlehem) shall come forth unto Me, that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. That this refers to the Lord Jesus is clear from Matthew 2:6 and John 7:42. It is the Lord Jesus, who would come forth according to the flesh from Bethlehem, the same one who was from eternity. Thus, He is also called the Everlasting Father, Isaiah 9:5; to exist before Abraham was, John 8:58. That He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. He who is, and who was, and who is to come, Revelation 1:8. Which is a forceful description of eternity. This attribute belongs

solely to the true God. Genesis 21:33. He called upon the name of the LORD, the everlasting God. So Christ is the true God.

(b) That Christ is omniscient is evident from: Revelation 2:23 ... I am He who searches minds and hearts. John 2:25. He needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man. This is an attribute of God alone. 1 Kings 8:39. You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men. So Christ is the true God.

(c) That Christ is omnipotent is shown: Revelation 1:8. The Almighty. Philippians 3:21. According to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. Now, God alone is almighty. Revelation 19:6. The Lord our God the Almighty reigns. So Christ is the true God.

3. Works.

IV. The third proof we take from the works of God. Whoever has created heaven and earth, who sustains and governs all things, who performs miracles by Himself, who regenerates man, who raises the dead, that is the true God. This is not disputed, see Jeremiah 10:11-13 and Isaiah 44:25-28. Now, Christ does all these things, so He is the true God.

(a) That Christ created the world is evident from John 1:3. All things were made by it (the Word), and without it was not anything made that was made. The Word is Christ, verse 1. The creation here is not the rebirth but the bringing forth of everything from nothing. All things, so nothing is excluded. So also Colossians 1:16-17, For by Him, the Image of the invisible God, Christ, were all things created, that are in heaven and that are on earth... all things were created by Him and for Him. By Him, not as an instrument or tool, for then He

must have been before creation, but by Him as the working Cause, as the Word denotes the first cause. Romans 11:36. For of Him ... are all things. Galatians 1:1. Through Jesus Christ and God the Father. Also, all things are unto Him, which is proper to the first cause and not to an instrument. Romans 11:36. Of Him, (God) are all things.

(b) That Christ sustains and governs all things is evident from John 5:17, 19. My Father is working until now, and I am working also ... For whatever He (the Father) does, that the Son does likewise. That He is said to do nothing of Himself, unless He sees the Father do it, refers to the manner of existence and operation of the three Persons in the Divine Being, and also in respect to the Mediatorial office, see also: Colossians 1:17. In Him all things hold together. Hebrews 1:3. Upholding all things by the word of His power.

(c) That Christ does miracles by His own power is evident: Luke 6:19. Power went out from Him and healed them all. Luke 8:46. I perceived that power had gone out from Me. When the apostles performed miracles, it was not by their own power but by the power of Christ, Acts 3:12, 16. Why look so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man to walk? Through faith in His name has His name made this man strong. Acts 4:10. By Him does this man stand here before you whole.

(d) That Christ raises the dead is evident from: John 5:21, 28, 29. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will... All who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth. This work belongs to God alone; so Christ is the true God.

4. Honor.

V. The fourth proof we take from the Divine honor. He who must be honored as the Father, in whose Name one must be baptized, whom one must worship, in whose Name one must believe, upon whom one must rely, He is the true God. See this in Isaiah 42:8; Matthew 4:10; Jeremiah 17:5-7. Now, all the aforementioned acts must be done unto the Lord Jesus, so He is the true God. See this:

(a) of honor: John 5:23. That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.

(b) Of baptism: Matthew 28:19. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

(c) Of worship: Hebrews 1:6. Let all the angels of God worship Him. Revelation 5:13. Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.

(d) Of faith: John 14:1. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. That Israel believed Moses in Exodus 14:31, refers to the doctrine of Moses; they believed Moses was sent by God. That Israel is said to have been baptized into Moses in Exodus 14:22; 1 Corinthians 10:2, is through Moses' agency, by his service.

(e) Of trust: Psalm 2:12. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him. Each of these proofs is potent enough to believe in the Godhead of the Lord Jesus; and when they are all combined, they cannot but lift the mind to the Lord Jesus, and exclaim: The Lord Jesus is God.

Objection VI. One might think, there are several expressions in the Word that some might find difficult to reconcile with the aforementioned. How shall we understand that Christ is said to be

(a) less than the Father? John 14:28. My Father is greater than I.

(b) Unable to do anything by Himself, John 5:19.

(c) To have received all things from the Father, 2 Peter 1:17; Matthew 28:18.

(d) To be the Servant of God, Isaiah 42:1.

(e) To be sent by the Father, John 10:36.

(f) To pray to the Father, Hebrews 5:7.

(g) To be distinct from God, John 17:3.

(h) To be the Firstborn over all creation, Colossians 1:15. And the beginning of God's creation, Revelation 3:14.

I answer: These difficulties will resolve themselves when one considers:

(1) that in Christ there are two natures, and that certain things are said of the Person according to one nature.

(2) That it has a wholly different aspect, whether one considers Christ according to His Divine nature, or with respect to His mediatorial office and ministry; in these respects, He is said to be less, to be the Servant, to pray, to receive, to be sent.

(3) He is a distinct but not separate Person from the Father, and of one substance with the Father. The text John 17:3 does not deny Christ's Godhead, nor does it say that the Father alone is God, in contrast to Christ, but that the Father is the only God, in contrast to the idols, thus also the Son is the only God, and so is the Holy Spirit.

Christ is there distinguished from the Father with respect to His mediatorial office, and to know this distinction is necessary to obtain eternal life.

(4) He is indeed called the Firstborn of all creation, but never the first created. He is the Firstborn of the Father, by eternal generation, and with respect to creation, He is the Heir of all things, and as Mediator has the rights of the firstborn in the OLD TESTAMENT.

(5) When He is called the Beginning of creation, it is not to be understood passively, as though He were first created, but actively, that He has created all things, that all things have their beginning from Him, and that all things must return to Him, as to their beginning.

VII. The Lord Jesus, being truly eternal God, assumed human nature; not the Divine Essence, not the Father, nor the Holy Spirit became man, but solely the second Person, the Son; so that Christ in His divinity is the eternal Son of the eternal Father, through the eternal and incomprehensible generation, hence He is called the Son par excellence, Hebrews 1:5.

- Romans 8:32. His own Son.
- John 1:18. The only begotten Son.
- Colossians 1:15. The image of the invisible God.
- Hebrews 1:3. The express image of His person. This Son makes all believers sons and daughters of God, through their betrothal as Bride to Him as Bridegroom, and through faith, as members of Him, their Head.

Jesus Christ is truly Man.

VIII. The Lord Jesus is not only truly and eternally God, but He is also truly man, and man from man. I say: He is truly man; not in appearance, but in actuality and truth, in nature.

Proof 1. Naming. For He is often called Man:

- Romans 5:15. By the one man, Jesus Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 15:45. The last Adam.
- 1 Timothy 2:5. The man Christ Jesus.

2. Parts. He had: (1) a true human body. Hebrews 2:14. Since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same. Luke 24:39. See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have. (2) He had a true human soul, such that the Godhead was not to Him in place of a soul. Matthew 20:28. The Son of Man came to serve, and to give His soul as a ransom for many. Matthew 26:38. My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.

3. Emotions. He was subject to all kinds of human emotions and movements, yet without sin. He hungered, Matthew 4:2. I thirst, John 19:28. He was sorrowful, Matthew 26:38. Jesus wept, John 11:35. He rejoiced, verse 15. He was tired, John 4:6. So then, Christ was truly Man.

Is man from man.

IX. He did not bring His human nature from heaven, it was not created out of nothing, or from some substance, as various Anabaptists assert; but He is man from man, that He might have the same, not just a similar nature to those whom He would redeem.

This is evident as much from the OLD TESTAMENT in the prophecy, as from the NEW TESTAMENT in the fulfillment.

Proof 1.

From texts of the OLD TESTAMENT From the OLD TESTAMENT, for He is called the seed of the woman. Genesis 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head. You are the serpent, the devil, who had beguiled Eve, 2 Corinthians 11:3. The seed of the serpent are the wicked, the children of the devil, John 8:44. This woman is the woman who had sinned; the woman who was deceived by the serpent; the woman who would experience pain in pregnancy and childbirth; this woman is Eve, the wife of Adam, the mother of all living. The Seed of the woman is not all people who came from her, but the Lord Jesus Christ. This is evident not only because the word Seed is well taken for that one Christ, as in Galatians 3:16; not only because He is the fruit of Mary's womb, Luke 1:42 and made of a woman, Galatians 4:4; but especially because that which is said of this seed, can fit none but Christ; which is to bruise the serpent's head, that is, to overcome the devil, Hebrews 2:14.

Add to this the texts in which Christ is called the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Genesis 22:18, Genesis 26:4, Genesis 28:14. By Seed are not meant Isaac nor Jacob, for the same promise was also made to them. And Abraham and his godly descendants have not obtained the promise, see Hebrews 11:39. But Isaac he already had. And neither in Isaac nor in Jacob have all the nations of the earth been blessed; but only in Christ: He is the Seed of Abraham. Galatians 3:16. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Christ. Not a spiritual seed, for Christ is not a spiritual Seed of Abraham, that are the believers who walk in the

footsteps of Abraham and do the works of Abraham, but a seed of Abraham because He has come forth from his descendants according to the flesh, as can be seen from the genealogy of Christ, Matthew 1 and Luke 3.

The same is also evident from: 2 Samuel 7:12. When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your Seed after you, who will come from your body, and so on. It cannot be denied that this passage speaks of Christ, from Acts 2:30. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his (David's) loins, concerning the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. See also: Acts 13:23. Of this man's seed has God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus. Whether some things can also apply to Solomon, they are chiefly said of Christ. And of Christ alone, and in no part of Solomon, are the other things said, as:

(a) I will raise up your seed after you; for Solomon was already born during David's life and sat on the throne during his life.

(b) I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. Solomon has died, and his descendants have ceased to be kings; but of Christ, the angel says: Luke 1:33, He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever. This text, speaking of Christ, clearly states that He would come from his seed, from his body, concerning the flesh.

2. From texts in the NEW TESTAMENT X. The same is so evident from the NEW TESTAMENT that it is unnecessary to cite specific texts; yet consider:

(a) all those texts in which Mary is called the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in which Christ is called the Son of man. Nature and Scripture teach and affirm that no one is a mother except she

who has borne a man from her seed, and no one is a son of man except he who has received his being from humans.

(b) Add to this: Blessed is the fruit of your womb, Luke 1:42. All the fruits of trees, of animals, are from their own substance, the fruits of the womb of humans are their children, and so also from their own substance; so then Christ is from the substance of Mary. To this also belong those texts that speak of Mary's conception, as in Luke 1:31, just as it is said of other women, as in Luke 1:39.

(c) Add to this: Romans 1:3. Concerning His Son, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh. Romans 9:5. Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came. Galatians 4:4. Made of a woman. Hebrews 2:11. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

(d) Add to this the genealogies, Matthew 1 and Luke 3. All these texts fully persuade the mind that Christ is truly man from man.

Objection 1.

XI. Matthew 1:20, For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. I answer: it is not from substance, for God is a Spirit, but from the cause. Mary did not become pregnant by herself or by her nature, but by the creating power of the Holy Ghost, yet He is therefore not a son of the Holy Ghost; for fatherhood and sonship take place in generation, in which one is brought forth from someone's substance, like from like; but here, with respect to the Holy Ghost, there is not a generation, but a creation from the seed of Mary, which is why He is said to be without father concerning His human nature, Hebrews 7:3.

Objection 2.

Romans 8:3, In the likeness of sinful flesh. Philippians 2:8, Being found in fashion as a man. I answer:

(a) Likeness, form is not to be understood as outward appearance, but as inner truth, as a man is a true man. Genesis 5:3. Adam begot a son in his own likeness, after his image. In the likeness of the flesh, of the human nature, which all sinful men have, yet Christ without sin.

(b) Or if one wishes to take likeness, form for not own, but what appears to be similar, then it must be taken with respect to the sinful man. Christ did not have the form, the nature of sin, of a sinful man, whereby natural men, who did not rightly know Him, considered Him as they knew, that all men are sinful; but He being a true man, and thus being recognized, was without sin, and only seemed to other natural men sinful by the erroneous reasoning, because all men are sinful, Isaiah 53:4.

Objection 3. That He is said to be from heaven, John 6:33; Ephesians 4:9; 1 Corinthians 15:47.

I answer: in Christ there are two natures. To be from heaven is proper to His Person, according to His Divinity, just as it is proper to His humanity to be from man.

Objection 4. If Christ was man from man, would He not have original sin? I answer:

(a) Those who deny original sin cannot truly make this objection.

(b) Original sin comes through the generation of man and woman to their offspring; that has no place on Him, who was conceived without the intervention of a man, nor out of the will of man, but who was

formed by the creative power of the Holy Ghost from the blood and seed of Mary, which in itself is not sinful.

The Lord Jesus was born of the virgin Mary.

XII. Christ, being man from man, was born of the virgin Mary. She was a virgin when the Lord Jesus was formed within her; she remained a virgin throughout her pregnancy, during which the body grew in the usual way of all people; she was a virgin when she gave birth to Christ after the usual time, in the usual manner, and it is believable that she remained a virgin until her death. This was the prophecy: Isaiah 7:14. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son. This is fulfilled, Matthew 1; Luke 1-3.

The exact time is not known. The Lord has hidden from us the month, the day, and the hour of Jesus Christ's birth, so it would not give rise to superstition; but the time of His birth is approximately made known to us, namely:

(a) during the reign of Emperor Augustus, in the first census by him, when Cyrenius was governor over Syria, Luke 2:1-2.

(b) when Herod was king in Jerusalem, Matthew 2:1.

(c) around the fifteenth year of Emperor Tiberius, when Pilate was governor over Judea, and Herod was tetrarch over Galilee, Jesus Christ was baptized, being about thirty years of age, Luke 3:1-23. Having examined this from Roman histories, it appears that it is now about 1700 years ago.

Is a holy Man.

XIII. Thus, we have seen that the Lord Jesus is truly God, the Son of God, and that He is truly man from man; that He is a holy man

without sin, is not necessary to show, as He is recognized as such by all. The angel calls Him: that Holy One, Luke 1:35. Peter and John call Him the holy child Jesus, Acts 4:30. Paul: holy, harmless, undefiled, Hebrews 7:26. Peter: a lamb without blemish or defect, 1 Peter 1:19.

Is God and man in one Person. XIV. Now it remains to show against the Socinians and Anabaptists that He is truly God and man in one Person. This is evident:

1. from many explicit texts in which the two natures are combined and spoken of one and the same Person. See: Romans 1:3-4. Concerning His Son, (who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh) and declared to be the Son of God with power. Romans 9:5 ... of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. 1 Timothy 3:16. God was manifested in the flesh.
2. The properties and actions of both natures. The same Christ has divine and human properties and actions, as mentioned above. Christ is eternal, almighty, all-knowing, has created the world, maintains and governs all things; Christ has a body and soul, was born in time, has suffered, has died; so then Jesus Christ is God and man in one Person.

XV. Christ's human nature, composed of soul and body, did not possess independent existence, was not at any time by itself, but from its first moment existed through the substance of the Son of God; so that the human nature, not being a person of its own, has existed from its very beginning through and in the Person of the Divine nature, with which it is personally united and remains so.

The union occurred through assumption. This union happened through assumption. The Divine nature, being a Person, took upon

the human nature, which did not have its own existence separate from the Personhood of the Divine, into itself. Thus, the Scripture speaks in Philippians 2:6-7. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant.

This is also evident from Hebrews 2:16, For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

- "The seed of Abraham" here does not refer to all the natural descendants of Abraham, but "seed" is singular, it is one, Galatians 3:16.
- "Takes on" is in the present tense because the taking on of the seed of Abraham, that is of the human nature from Abraham, is a lasting assumption and union without end into eternity.
- To "assume" does not mean to redeem, so that the meaning would be: He has not redeemed the angels, but the seed of Abraham; because:

(a) that word does not have that meaning anywhere in Scripture, but always means to take, to accept, to grasp, to seize; and whether upon that seizing something follows by which someone is redeemed, this word does not convey that, but what is indicated by other words added to it.

(b) It cannot be taken in that sense here either, for Christ redeems not only the seed of Abraham but also all the believers who lived before Abraham, and also all the believing Gentiles; all of these would have to be contrasted with angels, and not only the seed of Abraham; but since that does not happen, it is clear that to "assume" here does not mean to redeem.

(c) In this entire letter, the devils are never called angels, and nowhere is it considered whether the devils would be redeemed; but the preceding discussion is about good angels, who are not redeemed by Christ and do not need Him for that, so then "to assume" cannot mean the redemption of angels.

(d) The context shows that to take on the seed of Abraham is to have His human nature from the seed of Abraham, according to the promises; for in verse 9, the apostle declares that Christ was made a little lower than the good angels because of suffering death to redeem humanity. Verse 11 shows that for this purpose He had to be one with them, that is, man from man in verse 14. That for this purpose, He also partook of flesh and blood, just as the children do; and so continuing in verse 16, He demonstrates that He did not take on the nature of angels but the human nature, and that from the seed of Abraham, according to the prophecies.

In the unity of the Person of God.

XVI. Since then the human nature, having no existence in itself, has existed from its first moment through the existence of the Son of God, with whom it is indivisibly and inseparably united and remains so; it is then clear that in Christ there are two natures, but not two persons—one divine and one human—but only one, namely one divine Person; so that Mary did not give birth to a nature, nor to a human person, but to a human nature, existing through the substance of the Son of God, and thus a divine Person has been brought into the world; not that the Divinity was born from her, but the Person according to his humanity.

The union did not occur through change.

XVII. This union, then, occurring through assumption, did not occur by the transformation of the Divinity into humanity, for God is and remains immutable, invisible, immortal, Psalm 90:2; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 1:12. When John says: The Word became flesh, John 1:14, this indicates the union of the two natures in one Person, but in no way a transformation of the Divinity into humanity. For 'became' does not always imply change. This is evident: Galatians 3:13, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, by becoming a curse for us; this cannot mean changed into a curse. Genesis 1:3, Let there be light; this did not happen by changing something into something else, but by creating something that was not there. Genesis 2:7, And man became a living soul, not that the body changed into a soul, or the soul into the body, but through the union of the two parts; so also in many other texts. Thus, to become flesh is not to change into flesh, but to take on flesh, that is, the human nature, and to unite it personally with oneself.

Just as in this union the Divinity does not change into humanity, so the humanity does not change into Divinity; for what is finite cannot become infinite and eternal, and also the Divinity is incommunicable to a creature.

Nor did this union occur through the mixing of the two natures, such that a third type of person would have emerged, but the union occurred without change and without mixing, so that each nature retains its properties, and those two natures each contribute their properties to the Person. So the same Christ has divine and human properties, by union of those two natures in Him; but one nature does not have the properties of the other.

From this arises:

XVIII. The union of the two natures in one Person has three consequences, namely: communication

1. of gifts and honor;
2. of properties;
3. of work and office.

1. A communication of gifts.

The first is a communication of gifts and honor. Through this union, Christ's human nature has obtained a great dignity above all creatures, even above the holy angels, because it is the body and soul of the Son of God, which no one else partakes in. It has also thereby received an extraordinary measure of the Spirit, of wisdom, of holiness, and other gifts. See: Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. Psalm 45:8 Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions. John 1:14 Full of grace and truth. John 3:34 For God gives the Spirit without measure to Him. Yet all these gifts are not infinite, for the finite cannot grasp infinity; but it is outstanding above all creatures, above Adam, above the glorified in heaven, above all the angels. Not that Christ according to His human nature had all the gifts from His very beginning and before His birth, or immediately from His birth in such a degree that they could not increase in degree or have increased, but Jesus grew in wisdom, Luke 2:52. He learned obedience from what He suffered, Hebrews 5:8. Christ, according to His human nature, may not be worshipped.

XIX. Although Christ, in His human nature, has received such excellent gifts above all creatures, He must not be worshipped as a man, nor as a Mediator. It is true, Christ the Mediator, Christ as God and man, must be worshipped, He is the object of worship; but the foundation of worship is not the mediatorial office, the human nature, or the excellence of the gifts, but solely the Divine nature. The mediatorial office is indeed a motive which should compel us to worship the Mediator, but worship does not terminate, does not end, is not confined to the mediatorial office, or to the gifted human nature; for:

(1) Only God should be worshipped, Matthew 4:10. Now, the human nature of Christ, however glorified and endowed, is not God; thus, it should not be worshipped.

(2) It is idolatry to worship something that is not naturally God, Galatians 4:8. Now, Christ's human nature is not naturally God. So, it would be idolatry to worship it.

(3) All the gifts of the human nature are given glory and gift, as seen in the aforementioned texts, and as is evident from the matter itself, therefore they cannot be the foundation of worship.

(4) Even the works of God, such as creation, maintenance, and governance, are not the foundation of worship, but only motives, because they are not God Himself; so also the mediatorial office or the endowed human nature is not the foundation of worship.

3. Communication of properties.

XX. The second communication is of properties. The union of the two natures in Christ has occurred without change, without mixing, so that each nature has retained its own properties. Each nature

communicates its own properties to the Person, so that the Person is eternal, infinite, all-knowing, almighty, because He is God. Again, the Person of Christ was born in the fullness of time, is in one place and not simultaneously in another, does not know all things, experienced all human passions without sin, hungered, thirsted, suffered, died, because He was man; these diverse properties are attributed to Him in Scripture, and that in three different modes of expression, which we will presently show in paragraph 25.

No Divine properties have been communicated to the human nature of Christ.

XXI. Just as the human nature has not communicated its properties to the Divine, so the Divine nature has not communicated its properties or any of them to the human nature. We prove this against the Lutherans as follows:

1. From the word 'property' itself, for that which is communicated is no longer peculiar but common; if the Divine properties were communicated to the human nature, they would no longer be peculiar to the Divine nature, which is tantamount to saying: God is no longer God.
2. Since all properties of God are the Divine Essence itself and are comprehended by us mortals as properties, then all properties of God would have to be communicated if one or some were communicated, and so the human nature would be God; then the human nature was eternal and before it was born of Mary, for eternity is also a property of God. Then He could not have been born according to the body, for He already existed; then He was not buried, for He was already in the grave; then He could not rise and go out of the grave, for He was already outside it,

and after His resurrection, He remained in the grave, and similar absurdities.

3. Scripture not only does not say this anywhere, but speaks expressly against it; it says that Christ in His human nature was not omnipresent.

(a) In the state of His humiliation, in which He is said to depart from a place, to go to a place, not to be here or there, John 11:15. I am glad ... that I was not there.

(b) He is also not omnipresent in His exaltation: Matthew 28:6. He is not here; for He has risen. John 16:28. I leave the world. Hebrews 8:4. If He were on earth, He would not be a Priest. Some say that it is to be understood as visible. I respond: that is not stated, but it is absolutely stated, and it cannot be understood that way, for it is an inseparable property of a human body to be visible; the same could then be said of all the immediately reported absurdities.

Objection 1.

XXII. The human nature is united with the Divine; thus, it must also possess the properties thereof. I respond:

(a) Our body is also united with our soul, so it would then also have to have the properties of the soul.

(b) By that same reasoning, then the Divine nature would also have to have the properties of the human.

(c) On that basis, all properties would have to be communicated, including eternity.

(d) From the union, it follows that the Person has the properties of both natures, but not that one nature has the properties of the other.

Objection 2.

It is said, the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily, Colossians 2:9, so then also the properties. I respond:

(a) on that basis, then all properties, including eternity.

(b) That passage speaks of Christ's person, not of the human nature. There is no conclusion from the Person to the nature.

(c) Bodily is to say clearly, truly, not by likeness, not under figures and ceremonies, of which shadows Christ is the body, verse 17.

Objection 3. It is said, if the properties are not communicated, then the natures are separated from each other. I respond:

(a) by the same reasoning, the human properties would also have to be communicated to the Divine nature.

(b) The opposite is evident in the union of soul and body.

(c) The union is not local, but personal.

Objection 4.

It is said, there stands: Ephesians 4:10 That He might fill all things. I respond: it is not spoken there of all things with His body, but of the filling of His church, and all its true members with His Spirit and His workings.

Objection 5.

It is said: John 3:34 Not by measure.

I respond: that is not infinite, but exceedingly excellent and above others.

Objection 6.

It is brought forth: Matthew 28:18 All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

I respond: it is spoken, not of the human nature, but of the Person; also, it does not stand there as dynamis dynamis, power, but as exousia exousia, authority, dominion.

Objection 7.

It is brought forth: Colossians 2:3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I respond:

(a) there it is spoken of the Person, and not of the human nature.

(b) One may regard Christ there as the object, and thus all wisdom and knowledge for the believers is to be drawn from contemplating Christ, in whom all the mysteries of the gospel are to be seen. Thus, it remains firm that the human nature has not received the properties of the Divine nature.

Communication of Work.

XXIII. The third communication concerns the work and ministry. Since both natures are personally united, each nature does not act independently, but the work belongs to the Person; since Christ is one Person, there is also only one principle that acts; because in that one Person are two natures, indivisible and inseparable with respect

to the Person, and united with each other without change or mixture, the Person acts through both Natures; and because each nature acts according to its kind and properties, there is a twofold action; the Person as God acts according to His Divine nature, and as man according to His human nature. Thus, each nature contributes to the enactment of the one work of redemption in all its parts.

Christ is Mediator in both natures.

XXIV. Thus, Christ is Mediator in both natures; not only according to His human but also according to His Divine nature. This is evident:

Proof 1. The Divine is the beginning.

Because the Divine nature is the Person, and thus the first principle of the work of redemption, not only by the incarnation, acting on behalf of His church, but also in the incarnation, emptying Himself by veiling His Deity, taking the form of a servant, and thereby becoming obedient to the Father unto death, Philippians 2:7-8. This is a work of the mediatorial office, and the acts are of the Person; so Christ is also Mediator according to His Divine nature.

2. The mediatorial office requires both natures. The mediatorial office requires both natures and their actions, as has been shown. The Divine nature had to sustain the human nature and raise it from the dead; had to impart dignity and power to the suffering, as well as the fulfillment of the law; had to directly apply everything, and redeem His own from the greatest evil, and make them partakers of the highest good.
3. Texts. Scripture expressly attributes the mediatorial office to the Divine nature, see: Acts 20:28 ... to feed the church of God,

which he hath purchased with his own blood. 1 Corinthians 2:8. Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Hebrews 9:14 ... who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.

XXV. From the union of the two natures in one Person, arise various modes of speaking of the same Christ.

1. The Person is named, and attributed with what belongs only to one of both natures. As: Christ is from eternity, Christ is made of a woman in the fullness of time; Christ is all-knowing, and Christ is not all-knowing; Christ is omnipresent, Christ is not omnipresent; Christ had glory with the Father before the world was, Christ died.
2. The Person is named according to one nature, and then attributed with what belongs to the other nature. God has purchased His church with His blood. The Lord of glory was crucified.
3. One nature is named, and attributed with what belongs to the Person and thus to both natures. The Man Jesus Christ is Mediator, 1 Timothy 2:5.

Upon this mystery one must gaze intently, to perceive the Divine perfections within.

XXVI. Thus, we have demonstrated that the Lord Jesus is truly God, truly Man, a holy Man, God and Man in one Person. It is necessary that we dwell here a while and contemplate this Mediator, whose name is Wonderful, from all angles for the pure stirrings of godliness.

1. In eternity, this marvel will neither be comprehended nor fully perceived by angels or by humans, but it will forever remain an impenetrable wonder; yet, while still on earth, one can and should endeavor to perceive it.

(a) None other could serve as a Surety and bring mankind to God than He who was God and man in one Person. First, the Son of God had to be personally united with human nature before the sinful man could once again come into friendship and union with God. Behold, such a grand endeavor it was to save the sinner. What manifold wisdom was there, to devise such a means! All the holy angels together would not have devised such a means as God has invented and revealed. Now they eagerly seek to look into it, but they will never fully understand it. What goodness it is, that when no one else could do it but Himself, He Himself sends His Son, and makes Him personally unite with human nature! What omnipotence it is, to be able to execute that!

(b) How closely are the elect united with God, that even their nature is taken up and adopted in the Person of the Son of God! In this, they are even exalted above the angels, whose nature is not personally united with God. Is it a small thing to be so near to God? If we endeavored more to immerse ourselves in the contemplation of this wonder of all wonders, which even the angels long to look into and with which they, unable to satiate themselves, continually occupy themselves, we would. If we kept ourselves constantly engaged in it, we would lose ourselves in amazement, we would so joyfully approve of it, and before we realized it, find ourselves wonderfully close and familiarly united with God, and would understand what it means when the Lord Jesus says: John 17:21 That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us. This, this surpasses all understanding and wonder, not only the

matter itself but also the enraptured state of the heart of those who engage in this contemplation; this, this would fill our mouths with praise, and continually end with the Psalmist: What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Psalm 8:5. That Thou shouldest magnify him, and that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him? Job 7:17.

What is revealed in the contemplation of Christ's Divine nature.

XXVII. 2 Do not remain in the general, but proceed in the contemplation of both His Divinity and His humanity.

a. Of His Divinity: if our Lord Jesus is God, and as His Divinity is also our Mediator, then we see that His ransom possesses eternal and infinite power and dignity, Hebrews 9:14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works. Then all the sins of all believers, however great and numerous they may be, not one, nor the least part thereof excluded, are completely paid for, no slightest guilt or penalty remains, yes, so completely is everything satisfied, as if they had committed no sins, but had perfectly kept the law; for He who has satisfied is true and eternal God.

b. If the Lord Jesus is God, that contemplation will arouse in our hearts great awe, and exalt Him far above all things; will cause us to bow down before Him, to worship Him with the angels, and to honor Him as the Father, because He is one with Him; it will make us join with every creature, in heaven and on earth, saying: Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever, Revelation 5:13.

c. Contemplating His Divinity will cause us to trust in Him, according to His command: John 14:1 Believe in God, believe also in

Me. Oh, how secure one can be, having accepted Him and entrusted all our matters and occurrences into His hands! How safe is the keeping of a soul that has surrendered itself to Him? That soul may well cast off all fear and anxiety, and with a sure and steadfast heart say: Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory, Psalm 73:24. For He is God, and therefore the supreme Goodness itself. He is all-knowing and understands the form, the desires, the sincerity, the distresses of the soul. He is almighty to deliver it, to preserve it, to comfort it, and to bring it to salvation. Blessed then is such a soul, which has the Lord Jesus as its Savior; let it rejoice in His Name.

What emerges in the contemplation of Christ's human nature.

XXVIII. 3. Let the incarnation of the Lord Jesus frequently be the subject of your reflection; for God manifested in the flesh is a mystery of godliness, 1 Timothy 3:16. All true godliness springs from the knowledge and from faithful union with the Lord Jesus; from this arises love and all that love works. There is no godliness that does not arise from this foundation; yet, it is a mystery not revealed by nature, which indeed impresses upon us a sense of God and religion. An outwardly enlightened one also does not know the state of the soul it is, from the knowledge and faithful union with the Lord Jesus, God and man, to have peace in and with God, to rest in Him without fear, to love Him, and to live pleasingly to the Lord in all things, thereby being led to glorify God for His perfections, which reveal themselves in the incarnation.

God's righteousness.

(a) For herein is shown the dreadfulness of sin on one side, and the pure righteousness of God on the other; sin could not be removed, and this righteousness could not be satisfied unless the Son of God

became man, veiling His glory behind the veil of His human nature, and allowing all disgrace and suffering to be inflicted upon His human nature, yes, the Lord of glory had to be crucified.

Divine love.

(b) Herein is seen the unfathomable love for mankind. The elect were not lovable but detestable in themselves, and God loved them out of Himself, because He willed to love them. This love moves the Father to send His Son in the flesh, over which the Lord Jesus exclaims: John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. From this love, the Son goes forth, takes on human nature, and endures all suffering and death. Ephesians 5:25 As Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it. If anything can evoke love, this love of God and of Christ should ignite and fuel our love.

Truth.

(c) Herein reveals itself the unfailing truth of God. As He has spoken, so has He done. Here is fulfilled the promise in Paradise: Genesis 3:15 The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Here are fulfilled all the promises made to the patriarchs, which they longed for; here are fulfilled all the shadows and offerings, which were as many predictions and descriptions of the Messiah. Thus, God reveals that He is truthful and will not leave any promise unfulfilled. This is acknowledged by Mary: Luke 1:55 As He spoke to our fathers. And Zechariah: Luke 1:70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began.

Wisdom.

(d) Here is the great work of God, which preeminently showcases the wisdom, goodness, omnipotence, mercy, and glory of God. To bring a

sinner back to the Holy God, and that by showing His purest righteousness, and that through a Person who is simultaneously God and man, and that through His suffering, and to lead the sinner by such and such paths to such unfathomable blessedness, yes, that is wisdom, that is goodness, that is power. All this the holy angels behold, and it is part of their bliss to see the perfections of God in the work of redemption through the incarnation of Christ. Ephesians 3:10 So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. Mary sees all this therein and says: Luke 1:49-51 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name And His mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with His arm. Thus, one must contemplate the incarnation so that in it one may clearly see the aforementioned and other attributes of God shine forth, approve of these in holy wonder, and joyfully extol with the holy angels, saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men! Luke 2:14.

One must rejoice over the incarnation of Christ.

XXIX. 4. The account of Christ's incarnation should also awaken in us joyful gratitude towards God and a welcoming of the Lord Jesus into our nature. This is signified by the angelic messenger proclaiming to the shepherds: Luke 2:10, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." If our souls can be glad about anything, they should rejoice over this great work of God. Note for this purpose:

(a) It was prophesied that there would be rejoicing when the Savior would come into the world. See this: Isaiah 9:2, 5, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light... For unto us a child is

born, unto us a son is given.” Also, Isaiah 25:9, “And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” Also, 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.” Since it was so prophesied, and we live in those times, we should then lift our souls to joy and thanksgiving.

(b) Note the longing of the saints for the coming of Christ in the flesh. When Eve had borne her first son, it seems she thought she had already obtained the promise when she said, “I have gotten a man from the Lord,” Genesis 4:1. About Abraham, the Lord Jesus says, John 8:56, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day.” David expresses his longing: 2 Samuel 23:5, “For all my salvation and all my desire, although he does not cause it to grow.” This desire was also in the godly kings and prophets: Luke 10:24, “For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see.” Indeed, all the believers of the Old Testament longed for it, as shown: Hebrews 11:13, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.” What joy they would have shown if they had seen the Lord Jesus in the flesh! We now live in those times; it befits us to be glad and to thank the Lord for that most precious Gift, for such a lovely and precious Savior.

(c) When Christ came into the world, heaven and earth were filled with joy. John the Baptist leaped for joy in his mother’s womb, Luke 1:44. Mary raises a song of praise: “My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior,” Luke 1:46,47. The tongue of the mute Zechariah breaks loose, saying, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people; And

hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,” Luke 1:68,69. The elderly Simeon takes the Child in his arms and praised God, saying, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,” Luke 2:29,30. Come join them, and rejoice with them; will the heart always remain constricted? Will it not rejoice? And if it will rejoice, over what could it be more stirred than over the incarnation of Christ? Therefore, “Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, Rejoice,” Philippians 4:4.

Exhortation to joy.

XXX. But perhaps someone will say: my heart will not release; I cannot rejoice over this, for I fear that He was not born for me, and that I have no part in it. I answer:

(a) You do not know the contrary either; it is still just a fear.

(b) The lack of rejoicing over the Incarnation is not just there, but because one does not engage in holy meditations over it, over the miracle, over the promises, over the Person, over the effect, of the great salvation through His suffering and death. What joy can one have over it who does not consider it attentively?

(c) Nevertheless, there is now a Savior; is it all the same to you whether there is a Savior or not? If not, well why not be glad about His coming into the world, even if you had no part in it yet.

(d) But you, who look to Jesus to be justified and sanctified by Him, even if with much obscurity, fear, discomfort, and anxiety; John 6:40 you, in whose heart Jesus dwells by faith, through which the passions repeatedly go out to Him; Ephesians 3:17 you, in whom Jesus has taken shape; Galatians 4:19 and in whom Jesus lives, Galatians 2:20

so that He is all your joy and desire, so that in you arises hatred against sin, and the desire to walk as He walked, and the struggle between spirit and flesh is found within; you, who love Jesus, 1 John 4:19: ... you have grounds to assure yourself that He was born for you, and therefore you have double reason to rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy and to exult in the coming of the Lord Jesus in the flesh.

Recognize Christ as His Lord.

XXXI. 5. Come then:

(a) Acknowledge Him as your Lord: Kiss the Son, Psalm 2:12. Since He is your Lord, bow down before Him, Psalm 45:12. Submit to Him, look to Him, fear Him, serve Him, and set Him before you as the singular and perfect example, and walk in His footsteps, 1 Peter 2:21.

(b) As one must interact with the Lord Jesus as true God in awe, reverence, fear, trust, and worship, so one may and must also commune with Him as Man, being our Brother; for He is not ashamed to call us brethren, Hebrews 2:11. Such fellowship with Him the Bride desired: Song of Solomon 8:1 Oh that thou wert as my brother! Now He has become our Brother, so we may and must commune with Him as such, always considering that He is so near to us, that He is of One with us, Hebrews 2:11. Flesh of our flesh and bone of our bones. This gives confidence, this gives familiarity, to lament our needs to Him, who being a Man Himself, knows how a man is weary in pain, in distresses of soul and body, and truly can and does sympathize, Hebrews 2:17, 4:15. Familiarity softens the heart, it gives us the boldness to draw near to Him, and to speak with Him as Man in a human way. To entrust our cause to Him, to confide in Him, His Divinity being the foundation. And that awakens the heart to sweet love.

Chapter 4

Of the three Offices of Jesus Christ, and particularly of His Prophetic Office.

Having spoken of the Person of the Mediator, it follows that we speak of His Offices. The Savior Jesus is commonly called Christ. The savior was promised in the OLD TESTAMENT under the name Meschiach, Dan. 9:25, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince." The Greeks call Him Christ, John 1:42. "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." In our language, it is to say: Anointed, which naming comes from the practice in the OLD TESTAMENT. In those times and lands, instead of sprinkling fragrant powder in the hair as we might, they used fragrant oils, which by the art of apothecary were made very fine, so that they brought together all the fragrance as a quintessence in a small quantity and skilfully mixed them. Of this oil, they sprinkled little droplets in the hair, both to present some aspect and to be pleasant in the scent to those who came around them. The Lord had commanded a special oil to be made very skilfully according to the art of apothecary, from various fragrant spices, Exodus 30:25. This oil could not be replicated by anyone, and no one was allowed to sprinkle themselves with that scent on penalty of extermination, Exodus 30:32, 33. With this oil, Aaron and his sons were anointed to administer the priestly office, verse 30. Prophets were also anointed with that oil, 1 Kings 19:16. Kings too were anointed with it, see 1 Samuel 10:1 and 1 Samuel 16:13.

The Anointing Encompassed.

II. This anointing signified two things: • First, that they were ordained and called to that office by God, for one could smell the scent of the Lord upon them. • Secondly, that the Lord would give them the ability for that office, by which they would be pleasing to the people, just as the scent of that oil was of a particular pleasantness, and the anointed gave off a delightful fragrance through the scent of that oil. Hence, they were called the anointed, and the Lord's anointed. This is the reason Christ is called the Anointed. It encompasses those two aspects: ordination and equipping.

Ordination.

1. Ordination. Christ did not take upon Himself the office of Mediator. Hebrews 5:5, Christ did not glorify Himself to be made a high priest; but:

(a) He was ordained for it by the Father: 1 Peter 1:20. Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world. Proverbs 8:23. I was anointed from eternity.

(b) He was sent into the world by the Father for this purpose: John 10:36. Him whom the Father has sanctified, and sent into the world. And called: Isaiah 42:6. I the LORD have called thee in righteousness.

(c) He was inaugurated into it at His Baptism: Matthew 3:17. And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Thus, He was made both Lord and Christ, Acts 2:36.

Equipping. 2. The equipping consists of:

(a) the union of the two natures in one Person, without which He could not be a Mediator; God alone, and man alone, were not sufficient, but God was to be manifested in the flesh, 1 Timothy 3:16.

(b) In the extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit: John 3:34. For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him.

Christ Has Three Offices. Just as three kinds of persons were anointed in the OLD TESTAMENT as types of Christ—namely, prophet, priest, and king—so it was necessary for Christ to have and serve these three offices, that He might be capable of removing the threefold misery of mankind: namely, blindness by His Prophetic office, enmity with God by His Priestly office, and powerlessness by His Royal office. That Christ is Prophet, Priest, and King, and serves these three offices for the benefit of His elect, is evident throughout Holy Scripture. We shall treat each in particular.

The Prophetic Office.

III. The Prophetic Office. That Christ is a Prophet is evident from the prophecy and its fulfillment.

(a) As a Prophet, He was promised: Deuteronomy 18:15. The LORD your God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren, like unto me; unto Him you shall hearken. That this passage speaks of Christ is clear from Acts 3:22, where those very words are recounted as spoken of Christ. See also: Isaiah 61:1-2. The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek, etc. Having read these words, the Lord Jesus applies them to Himself, saying: Today is this scripture fulfilled in your ears, Luke 4:21, and in verse 24 He calls Himself a Prophet in this regard.

(b) In the Lord Jesus' sojourn on earth, the Lord presents Himself as a Prophet: Matthew 17:5. This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him! In such a manner did the Lord Jesus conduct Himself everywhere: Matthew 9:35. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. In such a manner was He recognized by the people: Luke 7:16. A great Prophet is risen up among us. Luke 24:19. Which was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.

IV. The ministry of the prophets consisted in:

1. receiving the revelation of mysteries directly from God, namely, the extraordinary prophets.
2. In proclaiming and explaining the Word of God.
3. In foretelling future events.
4. In confirming the revelation through miracles.

1. In Receiving Immediate Revelations. The prophets received the mysteries through immediate revelations: Numbers 12:6. If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. 2 Peter 1:21 ... holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. So the Lord Jesus received all from the Father: John 5:20. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth. Revelation 1:1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass. Not that Christ after his baptism was taken up into heaven to receive the mysteries there, as the Socinians invent to more conveniently deny Christ's divinity; for

(a) the Holy Scripture does not speak a word of it; but when it speaks of Christ's descent, it looks to the divine nature taking on the human, and the descent stands for the ascent, where He, according to that saying, first had to ascend and then descend.

(b) It was not necessary that He be taken up into heaven to receive revelations; for as God, He was all-knowing, and it was all from Him. John 8:38. I speak that which I have seen with My Father. And according to His human nature, He had received the Spirit without measure, John 3:34. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD, Isaiah 11:2.

2. In Proclaiming Mysteries. V. The ministry consisted in the explanation and proclamation of the Word of God, as seen in the prophecies of the prophets. So also the Lord Jesus, as God, as the sole lawgiver, and as King of His people, gave the law as a rule of life for His people, explained the law, purified it from false interpretation and distortion, Matthew 5. He rebuked the transgressors, Matthew 23, and stirred and admonished everyone to obedience, Mark 1:15. Repent and believe the Gospel. Yet Christ did not preach a new doctrine, give a new law, nor reveal a new way to heaven that was not presented in the OLD TESTAMENT, not known to the godly, and not walked by them; but only fulfilled and confirmed what was previously written of Him and the way of salvation. See: Matthew 5:17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. As Christ behaved towards the law, so He proclaimed the Gospel as a Prophet.

- Christ is the Author of the Gospel, John 1:17. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

- Christ is also the Herald of the Gospel, Ephesians 2:17. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.
- Christ is also the Subject of the Gospel, 1 Corinthians 1:23. But we preach Christ crucified. For these reasons, the Gospel is called the Gospel of Christ. Romans 1:16.

3. In Foretelling Future Events. VI. The ministry of the Prophetic office also consists in foretelling future events, from whence the Greek word Prophet has its origin. Christ foretold, not only what was to befall Himself for the salvation of His elect, but also what was to happen to the world and the church, and how it would proceed until the day of judgment; of which the entire revelation, as well as the Gospels, are proof.

4. In Confirming the Doctrine with Miracles. Just as the Prophets confirmed their doctrine with miracles, as we see in Elijah and Elisha, so too did the Lord Jesus confirm His teaching through miracles, of which the Gospels are full, so that the crowd said: John 7:31. When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this Man hath done? Peter says: Acts 2:22. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know. The other prophets did wonders by the power of Christ, which Peter indicates, saying: Acts 3:12, 16 ... why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? But through faith in His name hath His name made this man strong. But Christ performed miracles by His own power: Mark 5:30. Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him. Luke 6:19. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him: for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all.

Christ served this Prophetic office in the Old Testament.

VII. Christ has served this Prophetic office.

(a) In the Old Testament through His prophets. See: 1 Peter 1:11. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 1 Peter 3:19. By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.

(b) He also served this during His earthly ministry: Hebrews 1:1. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.

(c) Christ continues to serve this Prophetic office after His ascension, through His apostles, pastors, and teachers, Ephesians 4:11-12. And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. And since they are His messengers, preaching in His name, the Lord Jesus desires that they be heard as Himself: Luke 10:16. He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me.

VIII. The manner of serving the Prophetic office is twofold, namely: • externally and • internally, which are combined: Isaiah 59:21. "As for Me," says the Lord, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth."

It is external through the Word.

Externally, Christ serves the Prophetic office through the written Word, printed and preached by His servants. This is no longer to the Jewish nation, as before the coming of Christ. Psalm 147:19-20; but now the Gospel is proclaimed to the Gentiles, who hear Christ's voice; His sound has gone out to all the earth, and His words to the ends of the world, Romans 10:18. Yet many nations remain uncovered at present, missing the means of salvation; for although not all who hear Christ's words are saved, and the word of preaching is of no benefit to them because it is not mixed with faith in those who hear it, Hebrews 4:2, yet no one can be saved unless they hear the outward preaching of Christ, according to: Romans 10:14,17. How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Internally through the Spirit.

IX. Internally, Christ administers the Prophetic office when He illuminates souls with His wondrous light, as stated in 1 Peter 2:9, and shines in hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ, according to 2 Corinthians 4:6. Through this, they understand the truth in its true form, as the truth is in Jesus, Ephesians 4:21, and they possess the mind of Christ, 1 Corinthians 2:16. When He enkindles the heart, as in Luke 24:32, when He brings about rebirth, James 1:18, when He imparts faith, Ephesians 2:8, and when He liberates them through the truth, John 8:32, enabling them to walk in truth, 3 John 1:4. When the Lord Jesus teaches inwardly, He does not convey anything different to them than to others; but the same word, the same sermons, which many hear simultaneously, some only hear with the ear, comprehend matters in a natural manner, and it does not touch their heart to transform; that same word impacts others internally, enlightens and

transforms the heart, so that the distinction is not in the word, nor in the person hearing, but in the accompanying power of Christ touching one and not another.

The Difference Between Christ and Other Prophets.

X. From this, we see the great distinction between all other prophets and this great Prophet of prophets: they were merely mortal and moreover sinful humans, they conferred authority upon the Word, they did not bring it forth from themselves; they could do no more than preach outwardly to the ear. But who is a teacher like Him? Job 36:22.

(a) He preached with Divine authority as one who had power, Matthew 7:29.

(b) He preached with a holy, penetrating zeal, so that the zeal for God's house consumed Him, John 2:17.

(c) He preached with an accompanying Divine power, so that even His enemies said: Never has a man spoken as this man speaks, John 7:46.

(d) He preached with marvelous wisdom, such that no one could resist Him, but He silenced them all, Matthew 22:34. For He says: The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned, to know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary, Isaiah 50:4.

(e) He preached with enrapturing grace; for they all bore Him witness, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth, Luke 4:22.

(f) He preached inwardly to the heart, enlightening, warming, converting, sanctifying. He baptized with the Holy Spirit and with

fire, Matthew 3:11. Oh, how fortunate is he who has such a Teacher!

Using the Prophetic Office.

XI. Two things are particularly close to us in consideration of the Prophetic office of Jesus Christ; first, we must use it for our own benefit, then we must set it before ourselves as an example for the benefit of others, to be prophets as well, since we are called Christians after the name of Christ, and have a share in His anointing.

Firstly, we must use it for our own benefit. If Christ is the Prophet, yes, such as has been shown above, come then you who are born blind, come you who are ignorant, still wholly alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in you. Come also, you who perceive some light, but dimly like the blind man who began to see men as trees walking, Mark 8:24. Come also, you who through the greater light you have received, have become eager for even more light. Come also, you who have fallen into stupor and spiritual darkness, so that what you know has no force and movement towards warmth, comfort, joy, and godliness. Come all who desire knowledge of God, and to grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; come to this Prophet, and request that He teach you, and listen attentively to His instructions.

XII. For 1. If you consider yourself in your ignorance, Solomon says of you: Proverbs 19:2 Also, the soul without knowledge is not good. You are incapable of godliness or salvation.

(1) You know that no one can be saved without faith, Mark 16:16. He who does not believe will be condemned. Now, those without knowledge of Divine mysteries cannot believe: Isaiah 53:11. By His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many. Romans 10:14.

How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? Lay this on your heart, you who boast to believe, and yet are without knowledge!

(2) You know that no one can enter heaven without repentance, John 3:5. Now, without knowledge, there is no repentance; the first thing that appears in rebirth is knowledge. Lydia's heart was first opened by the Lord: Acts 16:14. Therefore, conversion is called enlightenment: Acts 26:18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light. 1 Peter 2:9. Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. It is a sure sign that someone is unconverted if they lack knowledge of Divine mysteries, even if they live unblemished according to the law, even if they excel in good works; for ignorance shows that his works do not have the true nature of good works. Take this to heart, you who think that knowledge of the truth is not important, but that it's all about doing: without light and virtue, no doing.

(3) You know that those who do not love God and Christ are cursed: 1 Corinthians 16:22. If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema Maranatha! Now, without knowledge, no one can love God, Christ, for there is no desire or inclination towards the unknown; ignorance breeds dislike. Whether you call God: dear Lord, and whether you say: I love God, you still lie if you do not know Him in Christ.

(4) You know that no one can be saved who does not serve God: John 12:26. Where I am, there shall also My servant be. Now, without knowledge, no one can serve, honor, fear, obey God; for true worship is a reasonable service, Romans 12:1. Worship without knowledge is a fool's offering, Ecclesiastes 5:1. Is idolatry, Acts 17:16, 23. Ignorance is the cause of all sins. Paul persecuted the church of God

and forced them to blaspheme Christ out of ignorance, 1 Timothy 1:13. Through ignorance, the Jews crucified Christ, Acts 3:17. Thus, the apostle sets ignorance as the head of all sins: Titus 3:3. For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. Therefore, do not content yourself with having done some good, or not having been openly impious, for ignorance alone condemns.

(5) In one word: ignorance bars all grace from man and brings him into eternal damnation; Isaiah 27:11. For it is a people of no understanding: therefore He that made them will not have mercy on them, and He that formed them will show them no favor. 2 Thessalonians 1:8. In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God. Therefore, do not satisfy your conscience with having done any good, or not having been openly godless, for ignorance alone condemns.

(6) And you who are somewhat enlightened, do you not experience that your unbelief, that God is not more feared, loved, and obeyed, that your fright and timidity, and your sorrow arise from ignorance? Take all this together, be frightened of yourself, and let it move you to go to this Prophet, that He may teach you, and being enlightened, you may walk in the light.

XIII. If you consider the nature of light and salvific knowledge, it will urge you to be taught by this Prophet.

(1) The light He gives is uniquely delightful. Proverbs 3:17 declares, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Proverbs 24:13-14 compares it to honey, sweet to the taste. So is the knowledge of wisdom to your soul. Psalm 97:11 proclaims, "Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart." They shall

walk in the light of Your countenance, and rejoice all day, as expressed in Psalm 89:16-17.

(2) Pure knowledge powerfully sanctifies: John 8:32 assures us, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." 2 Corinthians 3:18 describes a transformation into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

(3) It provides steadfastness in faith and constancy in our entire journey: Isaiah 33:6 states, "Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of your times, and the strength of salvation." Ephesians 4:13-14 encourages us to attain unity of faith and knowledge so we are no longer children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine.

(4) Knowledge is the path to salvation and the particular joy to be experienced in heaven: Psalm 16:11 speaks of fullness of joy in God's presence, and Psalm 17:15 of beholding His face in righteousness. John 17:3 defines eternal life as knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ. As delightful as these things are, they should powerfully move us to go to our Prophet, that He may instruct us.

No One Can Give Themselves or Another Light.

XIV. Who will teach you? You cannot do it yourself; for even if you could increase in the natural knowledge of God through effort, such knowledge is merely moonlight and cannot save you. Even if you were to expand your natural understanding of God by studying the Scriptures, your knowledge would remain natural and obscure. Even if you were to understand the entire Bible in the strength of words and their coherence, you would still not know the matters expressed by the words. And if you imagine that you know God, that you understand Christ is the Savior, and that those who believe in Him

will have eternal life, what then do you know more than the demons? Labor as much as you want, seek help from wise teachers, you will still not enlighten yourselves spiritually, and even if you imagine that you see, you are still blind. But if you want to be freed from your darkness and come to spiritual light, then the Lord Jesus, this great Prophet, must undertake the work to teach you. He can, will, and does so for all who come to Him.

(a) This Prophet can teach; for He Himself is the Sun of Righteousness, Malachi 4:2. He is like the light of the morning when the sun rises, 2 Samuel 23:4. He is a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to His people Israel, Luke 2:32.

(b) He desires to teach, inviting everyone, saying: "Who is simple? Let him turn in here"; to the one lacking sense, He says, "Come, eat of my bread," Proverbs 9:4-5. He counsels in Revelation 3:18, "I advise you to buy from Me...salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see."

(c) He also indeed does teach, not only by giving His Word to various nations and sending His servants to them with this mandate: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations," Matthew 28:19, but He also enlightens His own through His Spirit: Ephesians 1:17-18, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your understanding enlightened." He is the one who fills the soul with knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, Colossians 1:9. He shines in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Corinthians 4:6.

XV. Unconverted souls, turn now to yourselves! How long has this Prophet been trying to instruct you? How many teachers has He not

already sent to you? How many stirrings have you felt? How often has He convicted you of sin and of your unconverted state, of eternal damnation? How often has He moved you to become a Christian, to repent, and to enter into a covenant with Him? But you have not heeded, you have had no desire for the knowledge of truth, you have dismissed it as foreign, as something not for you when He presented the excellence of the Gospel. All the convictions you have let pass by, you have chased away by turning to other things, perhaps you have hardened yourself against His reproofs, and thus you have only tightened your bonds.

Tell me, is it not just for this Prophet to turn away from you and let you go because you will not listen to Him? Has He not stretched out His hands to you long enough? If He now ceased from you, would not your condemnation be just? Yes, would not the judgment and damnation be more severe and unbearable for you than for others to whom God had never proclaimed the Gospel? Pay attention to this one passage, I wish it would cling to your heart; Hebrews 12:25, "See that you do not refuse Him who speaks; for if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven."

Exhortation for Believers

XVI. And you, children of God, remember how you too acted next to this Prophet before your conversion, and see from this what great mercy it is that the Lord still persisted and opened your heart by His almighty power to heed His voice, that He shone in your heart to illuminate the knowledge; so that you now know the truth in its own form, that it is lovely to you, that it warms, delights, and transforms you; recognize this, see it as a wonder and your fortune, rejoice over it, and thank the Lord, whose work it alone is. But also see how

inattentive, indeed how disobedient, you still act next to this Prophet; it's still just a twilight that you have, and would you be content with that? And even if the lack of light did not grieve you, as it surely does, you should have too much regard for this Prophet to let Him speak in vain so often.

XVII. Therefore, both unconverted and converted, listen more reverently, with more attention and desire to this Prophet. For:

(a) if you look at the Person, He is God Himself. Will God speak, and we not listen? How powerfully Isaiah begins his prophecy; oh, that it would move us! "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the LORD has spoken." Note that He is sent by the Father to you, and that He calls that admonition from heaven: "Listen to Him!" Matthew 17:5.

(b) If you look at the matters, they are all the mysteries of salvation: it's God, it's Christ, it's peace, it's joy, it's how a soul is satisfied in God; it's not only to show you the way to heaven but even to rejoice in the light here already.

(c) If you look at the manner: He does it so kindly, so gently, so quietly, adjusting Himself to your circumstances, so wisely, so timely advising, admonishing, and arousing you, always saying: "This is the way."

(d) Know also, if you do not listen, unconverted ones, He will not always speak to you, or He will take away the Word, or the Spirit, or you, and then it will be too late; therefore, today, if you hear the voice of the LORD, do not harden your heart, Psalm 95:7-8. And you, the converted, also know, if you are not diligent in listening to Him, in constantly asking Him, expecting His answer, and following His counsel, He will be silent, He will hide Himself more, and leave you

in darkness; but the more attentive and continuous you are in hearing His instruction, the more He will show you mysteries, and the deeper the known will be made to you, and how His instructive voice will be constant and more powerful in you. Therefore, listen attentively to the movement of His voice, and the sound that goes out of His mouth! Job 37:2. Listen attentively to Me, says the Lord Jesus, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance, Isaiah 55:2. Blessed is the man who listens to Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors. For whoever finds Me finds life and obtains favor from the LORD, Proverbs 8:34-35.

XVIII. All who are conscious of their blindness and yearn for spiritual light, come to this Prophet who can and will teach you. To advance through His teachings, consider the following steps:

(1) Renounce all reliance on your own intellect and cunning of understanding, and position yourself as ignorant and incapable of even being taught at His feet, heeding the counsel of Paul: 1 Corinthians 3:18. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. 1 Corinthians 8:2. If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

(2) Approach with a heart ready to obey, not just to know but to act, saying with Samuel: 1 Samuel 3:10, Speak, for Your servant hears. And with Paul: Acts 9:6, Lord, what do You want me to do?

(3) Come and listen attentively and with an observant heart, not only to the meaning of the Word but also to every enlightenment and movement of the Holy Spirit through and according to the Word. Lydia paid attention to what was spoken by Paul, Acts 16:14. Habakkuk stood on his watch, to see what God would speak within

him, Habakkuk 2:1. The Church said: Psalm 85:9, I will hear what God the Lord will speak. Cornelius said: Acts 10:33, We are all present before God, to hear all things commanded you by God.

(4) Approach this Prophet humbly in prayer, asking Him to teach and guide you, Psalm 25:4-5. Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me. Psalm 119:18. Open my eyes, that I may see the wonders of Your law. And then believe that He will answer and grant wisdom, James 1:5. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, not doubting, neither the power nor the will of God, nor the granting of things in the Lord's time, manner, and measure.

(5) Be active in reading the Word, which is the voice of this Prophet, and in hearing sermons and catechisms, and in meditating on what is read and heard, John 5:39. Search the Scriptures. Colossians 3:16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Psalm 1:2. Meditate on His law day and night. And do not imagine that you will come to know or increase in knowledge if you are not dedicated, if you are not willing to make an effort, if you do not use the ordained means seriously: Proverbs 2:3-5. If you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

(6) Be especially careful and active to immediately implement what you are taught; for only then will you truly understand each truth when you practice it: John 7:17. If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God. John 8:31-32. If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth.

Consider all these things carefully, arrange your path accordingly, and by doing so, you will be taught by the Lord, Isaiah 54:13, and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, 2 Peter 3:18. Thus, one must utilize Christ in His Prophetic office for one's own benefit.

XIX. In the second place, having been instructed by the Lord Jesus as Prophet, it is fitting for one to become somewhat conformable to His Prophetic office in a manner befitting Him, since believers are called Christians after Christ and share in His anointing. This name was first given to believers in Antioch, as recorded in Acts 11:26. Whether the believers called themselves that or whether the name was given by outsiders is unknown; the name became customary. King Agrippa also used it, saying, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian," as recounted in Acts 26:28. This name is sanctified by the Holy Spirit, as Peter wrote: "If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter," in 1 Peter 4:16. As despised as this name is among Jews and Turks, it is cherished by a Christian; for this name teaches them of their union with Christ and the fellowship of His anointing, which entails the ordination and equipping for the three offices; namely: Prophet, Priest, and King, in such a way as they can suitably apply to them. See this in 1 John 2:27, "But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie." Therefore, they are prophets according to the promise in Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17, "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." They are also kings and priests, as declared in Revelation 5:10 and 1 Peter 2:9, a royal priesthood.

XX. What Moses once desired in Numbers 11:29, "Oh, that all the Lord's people were prophets!" has become especially true in the NEW TESTAMENT above the OLD; for believers are prophets, not to

foretell future events; although we believe that the Spirit of prophecy to know future things does not entirely cease in the church; but that the Lord still reveals to some of His faithful servants such matters that concern either themselves or punishment on the enemies of the church, deliverance, or affliction of the church, and that the words of the Lord Jesus are still affirmed, "He will show you things to come," as said in John 16:13. Yet, such revelations are not rules for others, neither in doctrine nor in life, nor also for others to certainly expect those things. Human nature is inclined to predict, the devil can transform himself into an angel of light, and the predictions sometimes coinciding with outcomes lead people away from God, and incline them to superstitious predictions from dreams and other occurrences, by which one can easily fall into a snare; therefore, a Christian must be cautious, both for a disposition to know future things outside the Bible, and for a desire for revelations, and for paying attention to dreams and interpretations, or to other occurrences as if they signified something to come.

XXI. But Christians, resting in the providence of God, should guide faith and life according to the law and the testimony, and if he walks by that rule, he walks securely and has peace. He keeps his path pure if he keeps it according to the Word of God, then he will not be frightened, neither by spirit nor by word, according to 2 Thessalonians 2:2. The distinction between revelations and imaginings I will not lay down here. It is a wise saying: wisdom (or caution) is better than a prophet (who foretells future events).

Believers are prophets and ought to strive to be so more and more, in two respects: to understand the mysteries of the gospel and to make them known to others. Believers are prophets, firstly, to understand the mysteries of the gospel more clearly; they know few things yet, and they barely glimpse the things they do know, thus they need to

grow in knowledge, and through continuous study of the Word, and by immediate instruction from the Spirit of God, who reveals the spiritual nature of the written matters to the soul. Let them then turn to the Lord, open their souls to the influences of the Spirit, give the Holy Spirit time to work, so that they may wait at the door of supreme Wisdom until they are brought into the inner chambers, there to be taught by God, and that the Lord Jesus may reveal Himself to them according to His promise in John 14:21.

Also, the Lord has revealed in His word what the church in the NEW TESTAMENT will encounter until the end of the world. This they must investigate, and especially read the Revelation of John much, so that they may be able to strengthen themselves and others against oppressions that will come, and comfort themselves and others with the good outcomes foretold.

XXII. The second duty of believers as prophets is to unveil to others the mysteries revealed in the Word and sealed unto their souls, teaching, warning, admonishing, and comforting them. Yet, each must stay within the bounds God has placed them. A teacher must act differently than a member, who must be careful not to usurp the work of a sent servant or to imitate them, lest the necessity and dispatch of the servants be obscured, which would be to the detriment of the church. What is mentioned above is not only the work of teachers, but every individual must be convinced that it is indeed their duty, as commanded by God. Look attentively at these texts and impress them as God's command upon your heart, especially since this duty is so neglected nowadays. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 commands, "These words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." This is for you,

fathers and mothers of households; are you fulfilling this? Will you not earnestly observe it in the future as a work commanded by God? Isaiah 2:3 says, "Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.'" Consider this along with the prophecy in Zechariah 8:21, "The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD, and seek the LORD of hosts. I myself will go also.'" You see that here the speakers are not teachers but individuals; you see that these are prophecies of the days of the NEW TESTAMENT; so you see then your obligation, to which the Lord binds you.

Also, consider these texts from the NEW TESTAMENT with attention: 1 Corinthians 14:12 encourages, "Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church." Verse 39 says, "Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy." The apostle is not writing to teachers but to the church, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, as stated in 1 Corinthians 1:2. So, this exhortation touches each individual member of the church, including you in particular. Colossians 3:16 instructs, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another," and Hebrews 3:13 advises, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." If God's command holds any sway over you, observe this duty to which your Christian name obliges you.

XXIII. To further encourage you to this end, consider:

Accountability

1. That you have explicitly received the light, grace, and ability you possess for this purpose, and that you will give an account of its

receipt and expenditure. Luke 19:13,15 says, "He called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' And it was so, that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading." Do you see that you have received gifts and grace to invest them for profit, and that you will account for what you have gained with them? If a group of beggars were at your door, and you gave a coin, with the instruction, "Also give to others," wouldn't he be unfaithful who kept it only for himself? What happened to that unfaithful servant? Matthew 25:30.

Christ's Honor

2. Love for Christ's honor should compel you; if you love Christ, you will gladly speak of Him, eager that He be known, believed, and glorified by all; and that desire will motivate you to display Him in His beauty, proclaiming His virtues, saying, "This is my beloved, this is my friend," as in Song of Solomon 5. "How great is His goodness, and how great His beauty! Grain will make the young men thrive, and new wine the young women," Zechariah 9:17.

Love for Souls

3. Love for precious souls should drive you to this task. You see your children, servants, relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances are ignorant, living in sin, and heading towards hell, how can you quietly watch and let them be lost? If a child had fallen into the water and was in danger of drowning, would you not do your best to save them? And if you can't yourself, would you not shout and summon everyone to help? And will you see this one and that one eternally lost and keep silent? Will you not have mercy on those poor souls and warn, admonish, and instruct them? Indeed, by not doing so, are you not

complicit, as much as lies in you, in the damnation of souls you could have aided?

The Joy of It

4. Converting souls is a most sweet and pleasurable task. Someone who plants a tree or orchard finds great pleasure in seeing the sapling sprout, grow, blossom, and bear fruit. He says, "I planted that tree with my own hands"; but converting souls is unimaginably more delightful. Not only is it pleasant for oneself, but it also delights angels in heaven and believers on earth, for "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10).

Building Up the Church

5. It is a work that greatly contributes to the building up and growth of the church. If every individual made this their task, what a blessing it would be for the church. Knowledge would increase, multitudes would be converted, and everyone would be like sheep that come up from the washing; each one has its twin, and none among them is barren (Song of Solomon 4:2). When the church in Jerusalem was scattered, those who were dispersed went about preaching the Word (Acts 8:4), which was instrumental in the remarkable expansion and growth of the church. It is noteworthy that it is particularly recorded who and who helped build the walls of Jerusalem; among them, the daughters of Shallum are recorded for eternal remembrance (Nehemiah 3).

I know by experience what blessing the Lord gave in Harlingen (then my congregation) through six or eight daughters who devoted themselves as prophetesses to the Lord's service, awakening everyone they could reach to knowledge and conversion. Yes, note

that if you convert just one soul, it is not only for that one, but through that one, others may be converted, and that seed may remain from generation to generation. How sweet and glorious it will be on the last day to say, "Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me!"

Blessings

6. The Lord will multiply His blessings on those who labor in this way. If someone is unfaithful, lazy, indifferent, and neglects the work of a prophet, usually he will walk in darkness, become more spiritless, fade and become less capable; often complaining about that state of being, not realizing that neglecting this duty is the cause. If you are active alongside others, you will receive the promise: "To everyone who has, more will be given" (Luke 19:26). You will find that teaching others, you yourself will receive more light on the subjects; that admonishing others, the admonition will grip you; that encouraging others, you yourself will be encouraged; comforting others, you yourself will gain more faith and comfort, and you will travel your path with joy. All these things taken together will undoubtedly touch and move you to work as a prophet.

Answering Excuses.

As we consider the task of teaching divine mysteries to others, our nature often resists, favoring reception over giving. This may lead us to conjure various excuses and significant difficulties to abandon the work while maintaining a clear conscience. Some say:

(a) "I lack the skills. If I begin, my words falter, and I do not know what to say; and even if I do say something, it seems to have no effect."

My response: One learns by doing. If you feel incompetent to speak to some, start with those you feel less intimidated by, such as beggars or children, and speak on simple, foundational truths. Your abilities will develop with practice.

(b) "I know so little myself and am in need of instruction."

I answer, if you possess even a modicum of knowledge as a Christian, teach someone less informed. Even a simple truth, like the inevitability of death and the subsequent eternal state, could be instrumental in conversion.

(c) "My words find no entrance; they hold no authority or power; indeed, some may not even listen or may scoff."

My response: The fruit of your words does not depend on you. Your faithfulness will be credited to you, not the outcomes. If one will not listen, another might gladly hear. If one laughs, another may weep.

(d) "I am sinful, and my flaws are visible, thus rendering me incapable of edifying others. It might only lead to scandal, and people may accuse me of hypocrisy."

I answer, if one waits to prophesy until they are without sin or visible fault, there will be silence across the world and the proclamation of Christ will cease. Acknowledge your faults, show remorse, and strive for improvement. Begin your discourse with humility, including yourself in the admonition by saying 'we' instead of 'you'. Furthermore, engaging in this work with sincerity will lead to greater vigilance over sin.

(e) "I am ashamed to speak of spiritual matters, even to my own children, those under my charge, or even the poor whom I support

materially."

Answer: How dreadful to be ashamed of Christ and His words. Will the Lord find you ashamed at His return? Where is the love? This is indefensible. Take care that Christ is not ashamed of you. If ever you feel ashamed, press on more fiercely and do not yield to it. By doing so, you will conquer the shame.

(f) "Laziness is a real obstacle; inwardly, I find the work burdensome. I dread it as if it makes me ill. I postpone it again and again, and so nothing comes of it."

Answer: Shame on you, slothful in such a great, glorious, and beneficial work. Remember the fate of the lazy servant. Therefore, be zealous; be spirited in your endeavors.

(g) "I sense ulterior motives at play, such as seeking personal honor, and the fear of failing holds me back from starting. Therefore, I think it best to abstain."

I reply, first, it's good that you recognize your motives, providing a battleground for prayer and opposition. Continue in the work as purely as you can, for avoiding it will only keep you mired in impure intentions.

Means.

XXV. Having surmounted all challenges, and finding yourself inclined and willing to begin the work due to a recognition of its obligation, glory, sweetness, and benefit, it is necessary to undertake it in a proper manner. To this end, read the Gospel abundantly, with the intention of presenting Christ as an Example, and observe how the Lord Jesus acted.

(a) It is essential to start with those whom you do not revere, and with those who are either under your authority, such as children and servants, or those whom you support with alms, for they will lend a listening ear or at least appear eager and attentive.

(b) One must adapt to opportunities: at times it may be prudent to discuss civil matters, so our discretion is manifest, and to ensure that no aversion or prejudice against us forms. Having somewhat drawn their hearts to us, do not leave it at that, but seek the chance, whether at that time or another, to impress upon them with our words, many or few, the necessity of conversion and faith in Christ. Sometimes, set aside time to speak solely of spiritual matters with someone, whether by catechizing your inferiors through questions and answers or by initiating a spiritual conversation. If the heart is set on working, opportunities will arise abundantly and naturally provide material.

(c) Above all, beware of pride and a domineering attitude, for it will nullify edification; everything must be done amicably, in love, in humility; yet in such a way that others can perceive our sincerity and that we hold great reverence for God and high regard for these matters. For conversing about spiritual things is quickly noticed, and without genuineness, it will lack impact.

(d) Pray fervently to yourself, both before you begin and while engaged in the task, for both proficiency for yourself and fruitfulness for others; and upon completion, lift your heart back to the Lord with gratitude for your intention and that you could speak at all, and with humility over the imperfection of the work.

Oh, that the Lord would touch, move, and equip many to perform the work of a prophet, what blessing there would be upon the church, and how many souls would be converted!

Chapter 5

On Christ's High Priestly Office

Having spoken of Christ's Prophetic Office, we now turn to consider His second office, that of High Priest.

I. The High Priestly Office also demands our attentive contemplation, to understand the pure path through which mankind is reconciled with God. The term for priest (cohen) is often applied to persons of great esteem, such as princes, chiefs, commanders, as seen in Job 12:19.

Various Significations

- He leads away cohanim, the stripped-away leaders, 2 Sam. 8:18.
- David's sons were princes. The same word is used here, 2 Sam. 20:26, Ira was David's chief officer. These bore the name of cohen.
- Priest:

(a) because of the excellent glory displayed in the High Priest; hence the prophet calls the finest adornment Priestly adornment, Isaiah 61:10.

(b) Also, because initially the fathers, then the firstborns, and thereafter the chiefs of the families and the most distinguished,

before the tribe of Levi was set apart for the priesthood, performed the Priestly Office.

II. However, in the true sense, a priest (cohen) is one who is taken from among men and appointed for men in matters pertaining to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins, as noted in Hebrews 5:1. The Priestly Office has two parts: offering sacrifices and interceding, which includes blessing. Regarding offering, see Leviticus 4.

- For intercession: Numbers 6:23. Speak unto Aaron and his sons, saying, 'On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel,' etc. Joel 2:17. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, 'Spare thy people, O LORD,' etc.
- The High Priest was to offer a bull and a goat once a year and with that blood enter into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkle the blood upon the mercy seat, and create a smoke of incense, Leviticus 16, which signifies intercession, as can be deduced from: Psalm 141:2. Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense. Also see: Revelation 8:4. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. Thus, Christ's High Priestly Office consists of offering and interceding.

First, we will discuss the High Priestly Office in general, and then in particular its parts.

In General: What It Does Not Entail, and What It Does

III. In general, the Lord Jesus is a High Priest, not just in name but in deed; not figuratively, not by mere similarity, but truly, properly; not a Priest in eminence, so as to indicate His Royal office, but such a

Priest that His Priestly Office is entirely distinct from His Royal office. He is a Priest because of the sacrifice of a propitiation and intercession together. He did not become a Priest after His ascension solely by advocacy; but He was already a Priest when He was on earth, when He offered Himself to God as a sacrifice for sin through suffering and death, and by virtue of that offering, entered heaven, the true Holy of Holies, and there He administers the second part of His Priestly Office, namely, intercession, through the power of His offering made on earth. Such things are devised by the Socinians to undermine the atonement of Christ; therefore, it is to be noted with more attention.

Priest and King Are Not the Same

IV. We state firstly:

A. That Christ's High Priestly Office and His Royal Office are not one and the same, nor do they differ only in that the High Priestly Office would consist only in a will and inclination to help mankind, and that the Royal Office consists in the execution of that inclination. Because:

1. Scripture never states this but declares that the High Priestly Office consists of offering and interceding, as shown above; and that the Royal Office consists of ruling and protecting, so the offices are entirely different.
2. Furthermore, the High Priestly Office is carried out before God on behalf of men, as noted in Hebrews 5:1, and the Royal Office is executed among and towards men.
3. Just as the administrations in the OLD TESTAMENT were distinct, so were the persons under the Levitical services; whoever was king, was not to offer sacrifices, hence Saul was punished, 1 Samuel 13:13. He who was from Judah, like the king,

could not be a priest, as noted in Hebrews 7:14. Just as those administrations in the type were distinct, so are they in the antitype.

V. Secondly, we say: Christ is truly and properly a High Priest, not merely in name, but also in deed; not figuratively, not improperly, through any likeness, but truly, essentially. This is evident:

1. from the emphatic naming, and with such circumstances, that clearly show Christ is a true, properly said Priest. See Psalm 110:4, "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." That this passage speaks of Christ is clear from Hebrews 5:5-6, where these same words are applied to Christ as having been prophesied about Him. Here He is expressly called Priest, and appointed by God to the Priesthood, and His office is confirmed by an oath; all of which affirms that Christ is a true, properly said Priest. This is also evident from Hebrews 2:17, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." One could not express a matter more properly. Add to this Hebrews 4:14-15.
2. All the acts of a proper Priest are attributed to Him, such as offering and praying. See of offering, Hebrews 7:26-27, 9:25-26, 10:10, 14. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." See of praying, Hebrews 7:24-25. 1 John 2:1. "We have an advocate with the Father."
3. Because Christ is the antitype of the priests of the OLD TESTAMENT, and those examples were properly said priests,

much more is Christ, the antitype, the substance, a properly said Priest.

Even Before His Ascension

VI. Thirdly, we say: Christ is not only a Priest in heaven, after His ascension, but was a Priest, and served His Priestly Office, while on earth, before His ascension. This is evident firstly from: Hebrews 7:26-27, "Such an high priest became us... He did this once when He offered up Himself." This passage does not speak of what He did in heaven, but what He, being on earth, did. For He is called High Priest and said to have offered Himself, and that once, which undoubtedly refers to His suffering and death. This offering He made as High Priest, in comparison with His offering as the antitype of the offerings of the priests in the OLD TESTAMENT as types, which were offered on earth and outside the Holy of Holies. Just as Christ offered Himself on earth as High Priest, and this offering is said to have happened once. It was all done, all past, still done by His intercession, and still lasts.

B. Secondly, it is also evident from such texts, in which it is expressly stated that this offering of Christ occurred before His ascension, and sitting at the right hand of God; indeed, that He went into heaven, with His blood offered on earth, just as the High Priest with the blood of beasts entered into the Holy of Holies. See, Hebrews 1:3, "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." After, then, the purification first. Hebrews 9:11-12, "But Christ being come an high priest... neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." First, He Himself was offered as High Priest, first, eternal redemption was accomplished, and then He went with His own

blood into the Sanctuary. The same is seen in Hebrews 10:12, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." First offered, then ascended into heaven.

C. Also, Christ exercised the second part of His High Priestly ministry, namely intercession, while being on earth, as seen in the High Priestly prayer, John 17 and Hebrews 5:7, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications unto Him that was able to save him from death, was heard in that he feared."

Rebuttal to Objection 1:

VII. The suffering and death were merely preparations, not the offering itself. Response: That is not only stated outside of Scripture but is explicitly contrary to it, which clearly names it an offering, and the offering of Christ as High Priest: Hebrews 7:27. He did this once when He offered up Himself. Hebrews 10:10, 14. The offering of the body... once done. By one offering.

Rebuttal to Objection 2:

Hebrews 8:4 states, "For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest." Does that not suggest that Christ was not a Priest on earth? I respond: Not in the least; but it confirms it. For it says that it was not enough for the fulfillment of His High Priestly office to offer sacrifices, but that He must enter into the Holy of Holies with that blood. And if He had remained on earth, then He would not have fulfilled His Priestly office and thus would not have been a Priest, just as the High Priest in the OLD TESTAMENT would not have completed His ministry had he only offered sacrifices and stayed outside the Sanctuary; so also, if Christ were still on earth now, after having offered Himself, He would not have entered the Sanctuary,

and thus not be a Priest, because He would not have completed His work.

The Superiority of Christ's High Priestly Office Over the Aaronic.

VIII. Thus, we have demonstrated that Christ's High Priestly office is distinct from His Royal office; that Christ is truly and properly a High Priest, and that He is not only a High Priest in heaven through intercession but was also so on earth through offering and prayer. Yet, even though Christ is this, He still far excels in excellence over the Aaronic priests, as the body surpasses the shadow, in various respects.

(a) The Levitical priests were from the tribe of Levi, and it is evident that Christ descended from Judah, Hebrews 7:14.

(b) They were mere men, but Christ is also God, blessed forever, Romans 9:5.

(c) They were only priests, but Christ is also King, Zechariah 9:9.

(d) They were sinners, needing to offer first for their own sins, but Christ was holy, innocent, undefiled, and offered Himself solely for the sins of His own, Hebrews 7:26-27.

(e) They were shadows and examples, but Christ was the substance, the antitype, Hebrews 8:5.

(f) They were priests by succession and in the place of their deceased fathers, but Christ, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable Priesthood, Hebrews 7:23-24.

(g) They were instituted without an oath, but Christ by the oath of God, Hebrews 7:20-21.

(h) They were inaugurated by anointing with natural oil, but Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit, Acts 10:38.

(i) They served to administer the Old Covenant, but Christ is the Mediator of the New Testament, Hebrews 9:15; and of a better covenant, Hebrews 8:6.

(j) They offered animals, but Christ offered Himself, Hebrews 9:12.

(k) Their offerings could not remove sins and purify the conscience, Hebrews 9:9, 26.

(l) Their offerings had to be repeatedly made until the time of reformation, but Christ's one offering has an eternal effect of reconciliation, Hebrews 9:10 and 10:1, 14.

(m) They offered sacrifices on the altar in the temple, which was sanctified to make the offerings holy, Matthew 23:19. But Christ offered Himself unblemished to God through the eternal Spirit, Hebrews 9:14, thus being simultaneously Priest, Altar, and Offering, Hebrews 13:10.

(n) They were priests according to the order of Aaron, but Christ according to the order of Melchizedek, Hebrews 6:20. This does not mean that the Aaronic priests and their offerings were not examples of Christ, as shown above, for a thing can have various aspects and in one respect correspond with this, and in another with that; but this order signifies the preeminence of Christ.

According to the Order of Melchizedek. IX. Little is recorded about Melchizedek in the OLD TESTAMENT. The account is found in Genesis 16. He is declared to be a type of Christ in Psalm 110. However, Paul deals with him more extensively in Hebrews 7. In

these matters, we should not be wiser than what is written; it is sufficient for us to know in what ways he is a type of the Lord Jesus and how the type and antitype correspond.

Melchizedek was not the Son of God. It can be stated about him that he was not the Son of God Himself, who might have appeared to Abraham in a prefiguration of His incarnation. For:

(a) Moses describes him as truly and actually a man, whose actual name was Melchizedek, whose residence and realm was a well-known city in Canaan, called Salem, which place was later incorporated into Jerusalem, along with the nearby mountain upon which Abraham, about to sacrifice his son, declared: Jehovah Jireh, the LORD will provide; hence the two, namely, the word from Abraham, Jireh, and the name of the city Salem, were combined and united in the name of the city Jerusalem; for what was formerly Salem, later became Jerusalem, Joshua 10:1. Moses describes him as a king in Salem, a priest of the Most High God, who provided Abraham and his people with bread and wine for refreshment when he returned from the glorious battle. He blessed Abraham, whom Abraham recognized as a priest, and to whom Abraham gave a tenth of everything. All this is narrated in a proper and historical manner, so there is not the slightest indication that this should be understood figuratively, but it clearly indicates that it must be understood literally, like other histories.

(b) Melchizedek could not be said to have become like the Son of God if he had been the Son of God Himself. Christ could not be so extensively described as a Priest according to the order of Melchizedek if He Himself was Melchizedek. For likeness is not the same, and he who is according to the order of another is another.

(c) It cannot apply to the Son of God to offer animals and have an earthly realm, as Melchizedek did and had.

Objection 1.

X. Melchizedek is said to be without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. Which can only be said of the Son of God. I respond: This should not be understood absolutely, but only in relation to the knowledge of people. Either his genealogical record was not known even then, from whence he came, or at least we do not know it, and it is not made known in Scripture who his father, his mother was, when he was born, when he died. This can also apply to his priesthood: the Aaronic priests were by succession, in the place of father and son, priests, and they had to show their genealogy; but Melchizedek was a priest without succession, before him was no one of his order in whose place he came, and there was no one who followed him in that order. That he was created extraordinarily by God and taken up into heaven without dying like Enoch is not only undescribed, but it is also against Scripture, Acts 17:26. And indeed, he would have also had a beginning of days.

Objection 2.

He is said to be a Priest forever. Response. Forever often means always, as long as it can be, whether until the completion of the world, as long as one lives, Deuteronomy 15:17; or until the antitype comes. Here forever means always; he remains in respect to his order until the antitype, without anyone following him in that order and coming between him and the antitype, and he remains forever in Christ the antitype with respect to his order.

Objection 3.

Melchizedek is said to live, which cannot apply to a human.

Response. If he still lived long after the antitype had come, then he could not be a type; for the type ceases when the antitype has come, so he could not live then, other than Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are said to live, Matthew 22:32. Yet he is said to live because no one has heard of his death. He also lives with respect to his order in the antitype Christ. Therefore, Melchizedek was not the Son of God Himself.

Melchizedek was indeed a true human; not Shem. XI. Melchizedek was a real person, but his identity remains unknown. Certainly, he was not Shem because:

(a) Scripture records Shem's father's birth, age, and death.

(b) There are no reasons to believe that Moses would have changed his well-known name.

(c) It is also implausible that Shem resided in Canaan since Abraham lived there as a stranger; it would not have been a land of sojourning for him if it belonged to his ancestors. Yet from all that has been said, and from Hebrews 7, it is evident that Melchizedek was a person of unknown lineage whom God called and consecrated in an extraordinary manner as king of Salem and priest. He was exceptionally glorious and held in high esteem and honor, thus serving as an excellent type of the perpetuity of Christ's Priestly and Royal offices in one Person.

The Correspondence Between Christ and Melchizedek. XII. The correspondence is laid out by Paul in Hebrews 7.

(a) By name, Melchizedek means "King of Righteousness." So is Christ, the Lord our Righteousness, Jeremiah 23:6. Your kingdom's

scepter is a scepter of righteousness. You love righteousness and hate wickedness, Psalm 45:7-8.

(b) His realm was Salem, which means "Peace" in our language. So Christ is the Prince of Peace, Isaiah 9:5. Our Peace, Ephesians 2:14.

(c) Melchizedek appears without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. So is Christ in His human nature without father, in His divine nature without mother, without genealogy, without beginning or end.

(d) Melchizedek was Priest forever; so is Christ because He remains forever and has an unchangeable priesthood, Hebrews 7:24.

(e) Melchizedek was simultaneously King and Priest. So is Christ both, Psalm 110:2, 4.

(f) Melchizedek was more excellent than Abraham, Aaron, and all subsequent priests, for they gave tithes to Melchizedek; so is Christ more excellent than all, above His companions, Psalm 45:8.

While some of these aspects might be attributed to others, all these traits have not been combined in one person before, they did not have such an extraordinary order, and thus they were not types of Christ. The similarity does not lie in the giving of bread and wine as if he had offered them because he did not offer them to God but gave them to Abraham and his people for refreshment. Nor is Christ similar to him in that respect, for He did not offer bread and wine but His own body; and when He instituted the Holy Communion with bread and wine for His disciples, He was not offering an unbloody sacrifice; but He established it as symbols of His suffering and death, and seals of the forgiveness of sins through His death. No one is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, either before or

after Christ, except Christ alone, who has no successor in the Priesthood because He abides forever; hence, there are now no priests on earth, neither according to the order of Melchizedek nor according to the order of Aaron, who had to be from the tribe of Levi and ceased in Christ. Therefore, if someone now claims to be a priest, they must be a Baal-priest, just as every idolatrous nation still has its Baal-priests. This is a general observation about the Priesthood.

The High Priesthood Specifically Consists of Offering Sacrifice.

XIII. Observing the High Priesthood in particular, it encompasses two parts: offering and intercession. See regarding:

(a) offering: Ephesians 5:2. He gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Hebrews 9:26. To abolish sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Hebrews 10:10, 14. Through the offering of Jesus Christ's body once for all. By a single offering, He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. We will discuss the nature, truth for satisfaction, perfection, and limitation of this offering solely for His elect in chapter 22, concerning the humiliation of Christ; therefore, we will bypass it here.

(b) Intercession is the second part of His Priestly office, of which it is spoken: Romans 8:34. Who also intercedes for us. Hebrews 7:25. Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him because He always lives to intercede for them. Hebrews 9:24. To appear in the presence of God on our behalf. 1 John 2:1. We have an Advocate with the Father.

In intercession, we must consider:

1. its necessity,
2. the manner,

3. and power.

Intercession Is Necessary. XIV. The first point is its necessity. Intercession is an activity of Christ's High Priesthood, as is evident: Hebrews 8:1. We have such a high priest, seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven. As High Priest, He is in heaven; as High Priest, He sits at the right hand; the work He does there as High Priest is to appear for His own, to advocate for them with the Father; thus, the work of Christ's High Priesthood is intercession. The matters for which He intercedes there are:

(a) everything His elect need in this life to walk the path to heaven, namely, the Holy Spirit, who enlightens, comforts, and sanctifies them. This we see in John 14:16-17. I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor, namely, the Spirit of truth.

(b) He prays for them to possess salvation completely after this life. John 17:24. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am. See also, Hebrews 7:25. He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him because He always lives to intercede for them. It was not enough for the salvation of mankind that He earned salvation for His own through His suffering, death, and holiness, but it was necessary that He also apply and actively impart this to them through His intercession. This was typified in the OLD TESTAMENT by the High Priest, who not only had to offer sacrifices but also had to enter the Most Holy Place with the blood to sprinkle it on the mercy seat and create a cloud of incense; thus, the Lord Jesus, the antitype, had to enter with His own blood, Leviticus 16 and Hebrews 9:12. This was so essential that without it He could not be a High Priest. Hebrews 8:4. If He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all. And without being a Priest, there would also be no salvation for the elect, for they must go to God

through a priest and be saved. Therefore, offering and interceding are combined, Romans 8:34. Christ is the one who died... who also intercedes for us. 1 John 2:1-2. We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

The Reasons for Necessity.

XV. The necessity is further demonstrated for these reasons:
Regarding God:

(1) Because it was fitting for God to be continuously acknowledged as scorned by humanity, and His justice would not allow man to approach Him, nor for Him to approach man, except through a satisfying Mediator who continually presented His atonement. Therefore, He lives forever to intercede for them, Hebrews 7:25.

(2) The exalted dignity of God did not permit Him to approach man or even the Mediator directly, but the Mediator had to come to Him, so to speak, to bring the ransom home and lay it down before His presence.

(3) Also, in saving the sinner, God desires to display His free grace, both in regard to man himself and in the provision of the Mediator. Romans 3:24. We are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Therefore, although Christ's sacrifice was complete and eternally satisfying, the application must be made through and by intercession: Hebrews 4:14-16. Since we have a great high priest ... Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Behold, although there is satisfaction, there is still grace for mankind and recognition of grace.

It was also necessary with respect to the Lord Jesus. He was the Surety and could not be released from His suretyship until He had actually placed His elect in the possession of salvation. Now, to prepare a place for the elect and to bring them into salvation had to be done through intercession, John 17:24, Hebrews 7:25. Thus, the Lord Jesus must continue to intercede until all His elect are gathered in heaven. 5. The Lord also desires that the Lord Jesus be recognized as still working for their good, and that they come to the throne through Him, and upon arrival, find Him at the throne as an Advocate, bringing their prayers before the Father, Revelation 8:3-4, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father, John 5:25.

With respect to the elect. Continuous appearance before the throne is also necessary with respect to the elect:

(a) so that there may be no remembrance of sin. In the OLD TESTAMENT, there was a repeated remembrance of sins because they had not yet been actually atoned for, and because the blood of animals could not cleanse the conscience, as the High Priest continually came out of the Most Holy Place and entered again every year, Hebrews 10:3. But in order that no remembrance would be made, this High Priest had to remain at the throne forever, had to sit at the right hand of God eternally, verse 12, and so God will remember their sins and their iniquities no more, verse 17, because the High Priest remains in the sanctuary before the throne.

(b) And also, to prevent God's wrath from rising due to daily sinning, it is necessary for the atonement to be continually presented by the Mediator; this is what Paul indicates, Romans 5:10, For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved

through His life. And how are we saved by His life? Because He always lives to intercede for them. Hebrews 7:25.

The Manner of Intercession as Surety.

XVI. The second aspect to consider in intercession is the manner in which He prays. Christ fulfills the second part of His High Priestly office, intercession, as Surety, just as He carried out the first part, the offering of His body, as Surety. He stands not merely as a friend advocating on their behalf but as a Surety, having undertaken to fully work out salvation for His own; this is evident from Hebrews 7:22-25. In verse 22, the apostle explicitly names Him a Surety; in that respect, he speaks in the following verses of Him who remains forever and has an unchangeable priesthood, verse 24. And that He lives forever to intercede for them. Moreover, just as He performed the first part of His Priestly office as both God and man, with the power of His offering coming from the Divine nature, from the Person, so Christ must also be regarded as both God and man in the administration of the second part; and that the power of intercession also comes from the Person, from the Divine nature. The apostle demonstrates this in Hebrews 4:14, "Since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God." He was great, equal to the Father, the Son of God. That gives force, that gives comfort and assurance; therefore, the apostle adds: "Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess;" and verse 16, "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence."

Displaying the Power of His Atonement.

2. One should not think that Christ falls on His knees there, crying out with loud pleas and tears, no, that was the work in His humiliation, Hebrews 5:7. But His intercession consists of His appearance in the Sanctuary, in the presence of the Father, with His

blood, which speaks better things than that of Abel, Hebrews 12:24. It lies in the presentation of the power of His suffering and death.

Demanding According to the Covenant.

3. It consists of the powerful will by which He claims, according to the covenant, all promises for His own, both in this life, John 17:15-17, and in the future, John 17:24. "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am." The Father allows Him the boldness to demand, saying: "Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession," Psalm 2:8. The Father had promised Him; when His soul shall make an offering for guilt, He shall see His offspring; He shall prolong His days; and the will of the Lord shall prosper in His hand, Isaiah 53:10. This the Son claims.

Advocating.

4. Intercession consists in speaking up for and advocating the cause of His elect against any accusations that may be brought against them; hence, the apostle John calls Him an Advocate, 1 John 2:1. This the apostle illustrates in Romans 8:33, 34. "Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is Christ who died... who also intercedes for us." Because He presents that He has fully paid for every sin and because He has met the law's demand by His subjection to and obedience to the law, from which He deduces that there is now no condemnation for His own but that they have a right to eternal salvation.

The Sanctification of Prayers

5. It consists of the presentation of the prayers of His children, made through the Spirit of grace and supplication in His name, and

because they are made in His name, His merits must have the power to ensure their prayers are heard. See this: Revelation 8:3-4, "That he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."

6. The Power of Intercession

XVII. The third aspect of intercession to consider is its efficacy. This is evident for three reasons:

7. From the righteousness of the matter. There is no favoritism or overlooking of issues here; the matter which Jesus as Advocate argues is entirely just and is proven with the most compelling evidence. He appears on behalf of His own with His fully paid ransom, so complete that not the smallest coin is missing. He has brought about purification from our sins by Himself, Hebrews 1:3. He has entered the holy place once for all by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption, Hebrews 9:12. He has so perfectly fulfilled the law in their stead that they, being in Him, become the righteousness of God, 2 Corinthians 5:21. The law's requirement is fully met in us, Romans 8:4. He shows this to the Father, thus nothing else can follow but their immediate justification and entitlement to eternal salvation.

8. The efficacy of intercession is also evident from the relationship between God and the elect, as Father and children. Jesus prays for those whom the Father has loved with an everlasting love, whom He has adopted as His children, whom He has designated as objects of His grace and kindness, over whom His heart tenderly dwells, and therefore He is eager for someone to speak for them to Him. How then can such an Intercessor be denied?

9. It is also evident from the Person Himself who is the Advocate. This is the great High Priest, Hebrews 4:15, 10:21. He is great in His Person, being of one substance with the Father; He is great in friendship with the Father, John 5:20. "The Father loves the Son." He has become Surety with full consent and satisfaction; He is inaugurated into His Priestly office by an oath. He is obedient to the Father in all things, even unto death on the cross. The Father Himself says to Him, "Ask of Me, and I will give." How can such an Advocate be rejected? Take all this together. Such a High Priest, Himself the Son, one party to the covenant of redemption, who willingly and obediently endured all, comes in the most just cause, which He can demonstrate from His suffering and death, and from obedience to the law, and with that pleads the case of the elect. And that before such a gracious and kind Father for His beloved children and heirs. Thus, the intercession is most efficacious, and surely it will be heard, and the matter will be granted to His children. Yes, if Christ, while still on earth, was always heard, John 11:41-42, much more will He now in heaven obtain everything upon His request!

The Sufficiency.

XVIII. The fourth aspect to consider in intercession is its all-sufficiency. This Advocate alone is sufficient, there need be no more, nor can any other advocacies exist. The saints in heaven are not intercessors for those on earth; one must not attempt to go to God or Christ through them. For:

1. That is pagan, who wanted to go to God through lesser gods.
2. It is an affront to Christ, as if He were not sufficient, not compassionate enough, not approachable enough toward His elect, His bride, members of His own body, but that there must be other advocates through whom one goes to God or to Him.

This is entirely outside of Scripture; therein is neither command nor example.

3. It is outright against Scripture, which teaches us that Christ alone is the Advocate, and that no other can be.

(a) That Christ alone is the Advocate is clear from 1 Timothy 2:5, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus." In the original text, it states *eis heis*, one or only. And it is in conjunction with God, just as there is only one God, so also one Mediator. See also 1 John 2:1, "We have one advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous One." The Scripture says one, only; those then who wish to act according to Scripture may not contrive any more.

(b) The Bible also teaches that no other advocacies can exist apart from the one High Priest Jesus

4. The departed saints do not possess a specific knowledge of everyone's needs, their desires, and the sincerity of those who ask them to intercede. It is against the nature of a human to simultaneously know every person on the earth, their need, their request at the same moment; what intercession can then take place? Even if they were aware of everyone's needs, which is not the case, it would still not be a basis for them to act as intercessors because the foundation of intercession is different.

Objection XIX. Believers on earth pray for one another, so why shouldn't the saints in heaven intercede for those on earth?

I answer: From the same reasoning, one might conclude that the godly on earth should pray for the saints in heaven; if there is such mutual fellowship, there should also be such mutual work. But

beyond that, one cannot deduce from the actions of people on earth what the saints in heaven might do. Each is in an entirely different state. There is a command for intercession on earth; for the latter, there is not a single word. Those on earth are aware of each other's needs; those in heaven do not know the needs of those on earth. Those on earth do it for one another as equals, not on their own merit or worthiness, but in the name of Christ. But in the saints in heaven, one seeks to attribute superiority, worthiness, merit, power of intercession. Thus, it is clear that the intercession of the saints is but an invention, and requesting it and placing trust therein is idolatry.

Using Christ's High Priestly Office

XX. The Priestly Office of Christ obligates us to two kinds of exercises: first, to use Him as Priest, and second, by sharing in His anointing, according to our name as Christians, to also be spiritual priests in a manner befitting us. Firstly, one must use Christ as High Priest, both in respect of His offering and intercession. This involves:

- 1.

- (a) Recognizing one's sins and feeling them as a heavy burden, despising oneself due to the filth and repulsiveness, vividly seeing and acknowledging God's hatred and wrath against the sinner, understanding that this cannot be removed except by the complete bearing of the deserved punishment, which is the curse in this life and eternal damnation, and that there is neither counsel nor power in the sinner for this. Remain with these matters until you utterly sink into your misery, feeling completely stripped and helpless. Present yourself so before the Lord, declare and confess that you are such; thus, anyone who had sinned in the OLD TESTAMENT came to the Lord when he would offer. Leviticus 4.

(b) Just as a sinner desiring reconciliation had to go to the priest with an offering, and lay his hand on the head of the beast which would be offered in his stead, thereby indicating that he was placing his sin on the offering, and thus through faith on the depicted and yet-to-come Messiah; so now everyone, who is thus disposed concerning his sins as just mentioned, must come to Christ, recognizing Him as the complete Ransom, the only Atonement, and the most perfect High Priest, who has offered Himself for sin, as the compassionate and merciful High Priest, who calls all distressed sinners to Him with the promise that He will not cast them out but reconcile them with God, give rest, peace, and salvation; and in that recognition, coming to lay his sins upon the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world, John 1:29. And just as in the OLD TESTAMENT the sinner remained by his offering, and saw the beast offered in his place, so must such a person now remain with Christ, and behold Him in His suffering and death, as His offering for himself; and just as in the OLD TESTAMENT the sinner was ceremonially reconciled, and truly so if he believed in the Messiah, so now one must apply Christ as his atonement for reconciliation and peace.

Through Him to God

XXI. 2. If the Lord Jesus is High Priest, then one must, just as in the OLD TESTAMENT through the priest, go through Him to God. Hebrews 7:25. "He is able to save completely those who come to God through him." You ask, how does one go through Christ to God? I answer thusly:

(a) Accepting the offered ransom as His sufficient and complete satisfaction, and His perfect fulfillment of the law as His righteousness.

(b) Present that to the Father and ask God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 3:21. "Are not my sins paid for by that suffering and death? Is Your justice not satisfied? Am I not reconciled with You now? Do I not now have peace with You?"

(c) Taking all the promises that are yes and amen in Christ, as made to oneself, accepting that God is now our Father, and we are His children, and thus calling God by faith: Abba, Father!

(d) Thus, go further, and request in the name of Christ everything that your soul desires: enlightenment, comfort, sanctification, and preservation; as well as everything one would like for the body: deliverance from the cross, health, prosperity, and believe that God, our merciful Father, will hear us and give us as much as we need; rest in that, be content in all things, and thank God in all things, because it comes from our Father in love and for our best, and will come.

Christ's intercession lends great strength to prayer.

XXII. 3. The intercession of Christ lends great strength to prayer. When one considers and believes that every prayer, every sigh, every glance heavenward for Spirit and grace is a fruit of His intercession, through which every believer receives the Holy Spirit, John 14:16; and that He takes up every motion and display of desire, presents it before the throne, and shows it to the Father, that they are done in His Name, with regard to His merits, by His Spirit, and thus through Him; and shows that it is just, by the power of His merits, that they be answered, and further, that He makes their desires His own, and thus adds His incense, making their prayers pleasing to the Father; if one, I say, considers and believes this, it greatly encourages prayer, it brings focus in prayer, it makes it fervent, it provides boldness, it gives confidence that our prayer, however weak, is acceptable and

will be taken up and answered. Yes, when one cannot pray, whether due to poor condition or in the hour of death, and thinks and believes that the Lord Jesus is still praying for us, and as the faithful Advocate remains active, will not neglect our affairs but will surely bring them to completion, and will not rest until He has brought us to Himself; that then gives great strength, and lets one surrender in quiet trust into His hands, and say with confidence and peace through the power of His intercession: He will complete it for me.

Comfort in all adversities.

XXIII. 4. Here is great comfort against all miseries, both physical and spiritual.

- Are your sins pressing down on you, do you walk bent over because of them? He is the propitiation for our sins, 1 John 2:2.
- Is the soul ashamed because of nakedness? He is the Lord, our righteousness, Jeremiah 23:6. He clothes them with the garments of salvation, and the robe of righteousness He wraps around them, Isaiah 61:10.
- Is the soul terrified of the wrath of God? He delivers us from the wrath to come, 1 Thessalonians 1:10.
- Does it fear eternal damnation? There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, Romans 8:1.
- Does it long for fellowship with God? He brings them to God, 1 Peter 3:18.
- Is the soul in abandonment, in sorrow, does it mourn like a solitary sparrow, is it disheartened and desperate, does it suffer physical adversities, many and severe, and do they persist? Against all this, there is great comfort in this High Priest; He is Priest in name and deed; He is the great High Priest; He is moreover the faithful and merciful High Priest; see this with

attention in these two texts: Hebrews 2:17-18. For this reason, He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 4:15. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.

Misconceptions of the believers.

XXIV. If one believes that Christ is as He is, why would one not take refuge in Him, and having sought refuge, why would one not believe that He will have compassion on us, and grant the desires of our heart? Many weak believers feel that the Lord Jesus is not as easily moved now as He was when He walked the earth. One might think, if I could interact with Him as the disciples and the women did; if I could enter a house where He was, and speak with Him as intimately as Mary and Martha; if I could be in His company on the road, I would touch the hem of His garment, I would wet His feet with my tears, I would lament my plight closely to Him, and plead with Him to have mercy on me, to take away my sins, to give me a new heart, and to let me feel His love; I would then have hope that He would have compassion on me, and assist me. But now He is so far away, now He is so exalted in heaven, and in such grand glory, that I cannot address Him so closely, now He will not be moved by the prayer of such an insignificant person as I am. But know, such thoughts are too earthly, arising from ignorance and weak faith. I assure you by the Word of God, that the Lord Jesus is just as compassionate now as He was then, just as attentive to human misery and desire as then; that one may speak to Him now as freely

and intimately as then. It grieves me that the compassion of the Lord Jesus is underestimated; oh, that one might know Him as such! How many a weak believer would have bold access, pour out their heart through tears and lament, and what confidence they would have that He would help.

Christ in heaven truly has compassion.

XXV. Note then, that the Lord Jesus, now in heaven, is compassionate, not only as God, in a manner befitting God, stemming from eternal and infinite love, by which He regards and takes to heart the sad and sinful plight of His children and is willing and ready to help them; but Christ is now also compassionate as a man, that He might be capable of compassion; therefore, He had to assume human nature, as evident from Hebrews 2:14-17 and beyond. Therefore, He was also tempted with many adversities and was in distress and suffering, that He might know by experience how affliction smarts, and how a wretch is weary, that He might be more capable of compassion, Hebrews 4:15. Now consider both natures together, and regard Him as God and Man, as Mediator, as High Priest. This High Priesthood requires the most sensitive compassion; Hebrews 5:1-2, Every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because Christ is a High Priest, He then also possesses the particular quality that belongs to that office, which is compassion. How compassionate was He when He was on earth! Again and again, it is said: Jesus, moved with compassion. The Lord Jesus not only retains the same compassionate nature in heaven; for if a perfect nature can be compassionate, so too a glorified one; indeed, as perfection increases in degree, the quality of compassion must also be outstanding, for it springs from love. Now,

the Lord Jesus in heaven is also the High Priest, indeed He now serves in the most excellent degree; therefore, He also has the High Priest's quality, which is compassion, in an outstanding manner.

There is a close connection between them.

XXVI. Observe the close bond that the Lord Jesus has with His elect: they are given to Him by the Father, that He might redeem them as His children, preserve them, and bring them to salvation; would He not then have tender care over them and be compassionate towards them when they are in distress? They are His Bride, His children, His members. He shares their human nature, which is why He is not ashamed to call them brothers, Hebrews 2:11. And when they are in misery, in sorrow, they cry, they look up to Him, they call to Him for help and comfort. How could it be otherwise, that the Lord Jesus is greatly moved by compassion, especially since by His own experience He knows how their suffering tastes. You say: my grief is sin, which sorrow and pain the Lord Jesus did not feel, sin cannot move Him to compassion, it would rather provoke His wrath. I answer: Jesus is holy, He knew no sin, nor did He commit any, that is true, but He has tasted all the fruits of sin as if He had committed them Himself: the hiding of God's kindness, the wrath of God, the sorrow unto death, the curse, the condemnation, and that to such a degree that it is beyond our comprehension; so He knows how a soul feels about committing sins, and He can have and has compassion out of experience. The sins themselves are hateful, that is true, but He has already made complete atonement for them, so that no wrath remains, only compassion. Take all these things together, and believe that the Lord Jesus has such compassion for you, and if you vividly envision Him as such, will that not strengthen you in all your afflictions? Openly lament your sorrows to Him, and take comfort in His compassion, that He is afflicted in all your afflictions, Isaiah

63:9. You say: why does He not help, for He can? I answer: Because it is not yet time, because it is beneficial for you. He is preparing you to be an object of greater grace, because it will be to the glory of God. Even if one is not yet delivered, compassion from a Friend, and from such a dear Lord, High Priest, and Friend still comforts: therefore, wait with longing and silence for deliverance.

Believers are priests. XXVII.

Having seen how one must use Christ as a Priest, it is secondly necessary that we also be encouraged to be spiritual priests in accordance with our name as Christians. The name of Priest is given by God to believers. Isaiah 61:6. You shall be called the Priests of the LORD. Revelation 5:10. You have made us to our God kings and priests. They are priests, not to offer for their own or others' sins—that belongs only to the Lord Jesus, who by one offering has perfected forever those who are being sanctified, Hebrews 10:14. But they are a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 2:5.

Their work as priests is:

1. to approach God, and to enter into the Holy Place, and to be constantly engaged in the service of God: Hebrews 10:19, 22. Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus. Let us draw near with a true heart. Thus, our citizenship is in heaven, Philippians 3:20.
2. The priests had no inheritance in Canaan, but God was their portion; thus, they must also renounce all earthly things, leave those for the people of this world, and not look at the things which are seen, 2 Corinthians 4:18; but delight themselves in the Lord, who is their Portion, Lamentations 3:24.

3. They must be busy with offering.

(a) They must put to death the old man. Colossians 3:5. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature. Galatians 5:24. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

(b) They must offer their prayers on the golden altar before the throne, Revelation 8:3. And for themselves, Philippians 4:6 Let your requests be made known to God in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. And for others, James 5:16. Pray for one another.

(c) They must offer to the Lord from their goods by being generous to the poor, Hebrews 13:16. With such sacrifices, God is well pleased.

(d) They must offer themselves to God: heart, tongue, deeds, and say: Lord! here I am, I give myself entirely to Your service, I am Yours, and what I am, I will be for You, I offer myself to You as a thank offering. The apostle exhorts us to this, Romans 12:1, I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living, holy sacrifice, pleasing to God—this is your reasonable service.

(e) When the Lord leads us into hard things, and He brings us into a state where we would have to lose our life for the truth, that we do not love our lives, do not deem them dear, but willingly offer them to the Lord as a drink offering. Paul said: 2 Timothy 4:6 I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. There is no more glorious death than to die as a martyr for Christ. Oh, how

blessed is he who can use Christ as a Priest, and himself be a spiritual priest!

Chapter 6

Of Jesus Christ's Royal Office.

The Royal Office is the third. A king is a person in whom alone is the supreme dominion over a people. Thus, the Lord Jesus alone is King, and that in three senses, namely:

- as God, co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, over the Kingdom of Power, under which all creatures fall,
- and as Mediator over the Kingdom of Grace on earth,
- and over the Kingdom of Glory in heaven, of which both angels and all the elect are subjects.

Jesus as God is King over all creation. I. The Lord Jesus as God, possesses in Himself all majesty, dignity, honor, glory, and power, even if no creature existed. And now that He has created beings, He remains by the supremacy of His Being, reigning power and active governance, the great and sole King over all. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on earth is Yours; Yours, O Lord, is the Kingdom, and You are exalted as Head above all, 1 Chronicles 29:11. The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His Kingdom rules over all, Psalm 103:19. The Lord has no need of ministers or sub-regents, but it is the wisdom and

goodness of the Lord to govern all things through means, and so one human by another; to this end, the Lord has established governments of various forms and stature in the world. These are not sovereign and independent, although they often fancy themselves as such, but they are (if I may use that name in this respect, and so it is not too high for them) but little sub-kings, who must govern in the name of God, by His power, and according to His laws. No one comes to this dignity by their own cleverness, power, or friends, and they do not remain in government thereafter, but the Lord sets up and deposes kings; He elevates, He abases.

As Mediator over the Church.

II. Among humans, God has a special and peculiar people, whom He gathers together through His Word and Spirit, known as the Kingdom of Grace. Over this people, the Lord has appointed a special King, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator. The Church is not a company without a Head, not a flock of sheep without a Shepherd, not a people without a Prince, indeed, not at all. Although it pleases Him not to display His glory and sovereignty as evidently at this time as at others; although it seems that no one can harm His Church, and that one can tread upon, eradicate, and devastate the church unavenged; although it appears the Church has neither Guardian nor King, Jesus is nevertheless King over His Church. He is not just a King in heaven, He is not a King in a distant land, He is not merely a King in the hearts of His elect, but He is a King nearby over and within His Church, His own people, that assembled congregation, that visible multitude on the earth, who have accepted Him as their Head and King, who have sworn submissiveness and obedience to Him, and who live according to His laws.

Hear, believers, for your joy. Hear, world, to your terror. God has subjected all things under His feet and has given Him to the Church as a Head over all things, Ephesians 1:22. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, Acts 2:36. This Jesus has God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, Acts 5:31. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion, Psalm 2:6. Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch; and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days shall Judah be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called, The LORD our Righteousness, Jeremiah 23:5,6.

In this His Kingdom, He is appointed and inaugurated by God through anointing, Psalm 2:6. As He has not exalted Himself to be made a High Priest, so He has not lifted Himself up to be a King, but the Father has set and confirmed Him in that office by anointing (which signifies ordination and qualification) through the union of the two natures in one Person, and by the extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The administration of the royal office consists of:

(a) Gathering His Church, drawing it out of the power of darkness and translating it into His kingdom, Colossians 1:13.

(b) Protecting her against her enemies, Psalm 72; Jeremiah 23:6.

(c) Ruling her by His Word and Spirit, Isaiah 33:22. For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king.

More Excellent Than the Kings of the Earth. III. Although there are those on earth who are kings, yet this King is incomparably more excellent than all of them. For:

(a) all kings have in themselves either nothing or not much special above other people; but this One is Glory and Majesty itself, Hebrews 2:9. He had glory with the Father before the world was, John 17:5. He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the high heavens, Hebrews 1:3. He is crowned with honor and glory, Hebrews 2:7.

(b) Other kings have but a small land and but few subjects, and that but humans, and that but as far as their body is concerned; but This One shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth, Psalm 72:8. God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, Philippians 2:9,10. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, Revelation 19:16. That all the angels of God worship Him, Hebrews 1:6. He is the king over souls, 1 Peter 2:25.

(c) Other kings have little power, and have enough to do to protect themselves and their subjects, and are often overcome by others; but our King is Almighty, Revelation 1:8. All power is given unto Him in heaven and on earth, Matthew 28:18. He is the Lord strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle, Psalm 24:8.

(d) Other kings are often harsh and cruel to their subjects; but this One is very merciful, gentle, faithful, and beneficent. He is a Savior, Zechariah 9:9. He shall save the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence; and precious shall their blood be in his sight, Psalm 72:12-14.

(e) Other kings die, are sometimes deposed, driven out, and cease to be kings; but This One shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and

of His kingdom there shall be no end, Luke 1:32,33. Such a glorious and excellent King indeed is our Lord Jesus.

IV. The Lord Jesus is not only King now in heaven, but He was already King of His Church in the Old Testament and was King when He was on earth. This is evident from Psalm 2:6. As King, He made His entry into Jerusalem, Matthew 21:9; according to the prophecy, Zechariah 9:9, "Behold, your King shall come to you... riding on a donkey." And now that He is in heaven, He still reigns on earth in His Church until the end of the world. Luke 1:33. "He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Indeed, after the completion of the world, He shall remain King eternally over the Kingdom of Glory, although in terms of the mode of administration, He shall deliver up the kingdom to God and the Father, and He Himself shall be subject, that God may be all in all, 1 Corinthians 15:24, 28.

V. Through all times, earthly kings have looked upon the church with suspicion. They always believed that their rule was curtailed if they did not reign over the church; they always feared that the church would be detrimental to them because they do not know the glory of King Jesus, nor understand the nature of the kingdom of Christ within the church; for the Kingdom of Christ is of a completely different nature: this kingdom is not of this world, but it is heavenly: John 18:36. "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." Therefore, it is called the Kingdom of Heaven, Matthew 3:2. It does not come with observation, Luke 17:20. The subjects of this kingdom, though human, appear here as spiritual, 1 Corinthians 2:15. With Him are the called, and chosen, and faithful, Revelation 17:14. The goods of this kingdom are not the things of this world but are

spiritual. Romans 14:17, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The weapons are not carnal but spiritual; the Word of God is the sword, Ephesians 6:17. The weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but mighty through God, 2 Corinthians 10:4. So the earthly kings have nothing to fear from this kingdom; but if their desire to rule extends so far that they do not want Christ to be King, but they also want to draw the church itself under their domain; if they want to ordain what shall or shall not be preached; what is to be believed as saving faith or not; whether discipline will be exercised or not; if they themselves want to appoint or prevent ministers, church councils, and such, we give them to consider: Luke 19:27, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." If an Authority does not want the church to judge, admonish, rebuke her, let her remain outside the church, and she will be let go, and not meddled with; but if she wants to be a member of the church, then she must also submit to the scepter of Christ, and not resist the King to whom she has submitted, or she will find that this King is too mighty for her.

VI. Since the Lord Jesus alone is King, it is beyond all contradiction that He alone gives laws to His church, and alone has authority there, that then no one may dare to intrude in teaching and life or rule, and to act therein according to their own will; but everything must be done strictly according to Christ's order. He wills that the church always remain distinct from the State, and that the church be governed by ecclesiastical persons, just as the State is by state persons. The church must not rule over the State, and the State may not rule over the church; each must stay in its own.

- In the church, there must be no rule, neither by ecclesiastical nor by state persons; but everything that is done in the church

must be ministerial, in order and in the name of the King.

- Everything done in the State is authoritative, as a reflection of God's sovereignty. To rule in and over the church is the work of the antichrist, 2 Thessalonians 2:4. The members of the church, as people, are subject to the political authorities; to withdraw from obedience to the authorities, to reject them, to oppose them, is to resist God's ordinance, Romans 13:1-5.

Thus, the church and the State are entirely separate; the one is heavenly, the other earthly; the one concerns souls, the other bodies; in the one everything is ministerial, and there is no place for the least rule, in the other there is authority and rule; and so the one should not mingle with the other. The church labors to establish the State and to have the authorities obeyed; and the authorities should protect the church from all oppression, so that they may safely act according to the laws of their king. Blessed is the land where it is so. It is noteworthy in this regard the place, 2 Chronicles 19:11, "Behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, in all the king's matters: also the Levites shall be officers before you."

See, so must each remain in his own. Let the church not attempt to bring the State under its control, but strive for the authorities to be honored, feared, and obeyed, and let all ecclesiastical overseers beware of ruling over the Lord's heritage, 1 Peter 5:3. And let the authorities beware of touching Jesus' crown and scepter, by intruding into the church with rule, in terms of doctrine, life, discipline, appointment, and prevention of ministers and church councils. Because:

(a) the Lord Jesus, who is also King over them, has not given them that authority and power.

(b) Because the Lord Jesus has forbidden all rule in the church.

(c) Because He himself has given laws of teaching, life, and discipline.

(d) And because He has ordained in His Word, in what manner and by whom He wants teachers and overseers of the church to be called. See Ephesians 4:11-12; Acts 6:2-4; Acts 13:2; Acts 14:23.

Just as we have contemplated the other offices, both for benefit and imitation, so it is necessary that we also do so alongside the royal office. Regarding the first: There are various tasks to perform next to the Lord Jesus as King.

VII. Those who know the Lord Jesus in His royal glory and truly love Him must grieve deeply that the sovereign supremacy of this great King is not acknowledged, feared, or obeyed. David said in Psalm 36:2, "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes." Thus, a discerning believer must also say with sorrow: All the turmoil of men, all the conduct of the great and small, the entire life, even of the members of the church, with few exceptions, speaks in my heart: Jesus is not recognized nor acknowledged as King. It is as if there were on earth two kingdoms and two kings, who are constantly battling each other, namely, the Lord Jesus and the devil; but as if it were all one. Almost in outward appearance, it seems as if they were of the same nature, with the same intentions, under the same rule; it's as if the church were merely a society of one opinion, differing a little from the principles of the others. Who sees that the church has a King, such a great King, and that He actually governs and rules it Himself? While it may be conceded that Jesus is King, but as in a far-off land, where one has nothing to do with Him, but of whom one has only heard a bit of talk. One may say: Let Him be King, but let Him be so secretly

and invisibly in the hearts of these particular individuals. But who believes that the church is His kingdom, and that He actually reigns there Himself? Who sees Him there on the throne? It's as if it were a people over whom no one has oversight, without Shepherd, without Protector, without Ruler. There is no longer any fear of oppressing the church, of destroying it, of tormenting, torturing, and killing the confessors. There is now only a conspiracy on how to gain enough power to destroy and eradicate the church to the ground.

VIII. If only a few who bear the image, the clothing of this King, emerge, the nature of the devil, the enmity of the serpent and her seed against the seed of the woman, immediately reveals itself; one opposes them with all might; they are the objects of all kinds of mockery and nicknames: a speckled bird, a despised torch, a people whom one cannot harm, whom one may unjustly treat unavenged. Some do it out of ignorance, others out of recklessness, another out of malice, some for amusement, and yet others to please others.

IX. And even those who have a little more light, who stand afar off and look on, do not take it to heart because it is just Zion. If one sees that the royal glory of Jesus is suppressed, one shrugs; one may secretly complain to a friend, but one either lacks the light to come forward, or lacks the courage, and so it continues to go from bad to worse.

The Lord Jesus observes this from the high heavens, yet He restrains His splendor and ruling power; He does not deem it worthy of the inhabitants of the earth that He should reveal Himself more clearly as King over His church; whether it be to preserve His church as the apple of His eye, and to be a fiery wall around her, and to guard her so that the enemy does not visit her; or to reprove the enemies, as He once reproved kings for her sake, Psalm 105:14.

Mourn for this.

O you alone, who know and love this King, stand still and behold all this, let it wound your heart, let your soul bleed, and your eyes cry rivers of tears in sorrow because this glorious King is so despised and scorned over His church. Pray continually for Him, Psalm 72:15, and to Him, that He may reveal Himself to His church as King, before the eyes of the entire world. O, Shepherd of Israel, hear; You who lead Joseph like a flock, who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth. Stir up Your might before Ephraim, Psalm 80:2.

The King's enemies should tremble.

X. Let the enemies of God's church tremble, let them fear, those who are angry with Zion; for:

1. It is to contend against such a lofty King, seated at God's throne on His right hand in the high heavens, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords, who judges and wages war in righteousness, Revelation 19:11, 16.
2. It is to oppose the most beneficent King, who offers all His graces and blessings and lets His messengers in His name plead that they would be reconciled to God through Him. Surely that escalates to the pinnacle of malice, to scorn and oppose such a good and beneficent King.
3. And what will be the end for those who do not want Him as King? We see this: Luke 19:27 But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.

Acknowledge Jesus as the King.

XI. If Jesus is King, then He must be known and acknowledged by all and every one of His subjects. This necessitates considering Him in the description that Holy Scripture provides of Him. Namely,

- that He is the true God, 1 John 5:20. God over all, blessed forever, Romans 9:5. Being in the form of God, Philippians 2:6. The radiance of the Father's glory and the exact representation of His being, Hebrews 1:3.
- This one, in order to be a capable Savior, has taken on our human nature, being a man from men, from the fathers as far as the flesh is concerned, Romans 9:5. Born of a woman, Galatians 4:4. Like His brethren in every respect, Hebrews 2:17.
- This is the Branch, between whom and the Lord is the Council of Peace, Zechariah 6:12, 13, and the Covenant of Redemption, Psalm 89:29. By virtue of this, He is the Guarantor of the Covenant of Grace, Hebrews 7:22. And has given His soul as a ransom for many, Matthew 20:28. And with one sacrifice has made perfect forever those who are being sanctified, Hebrews 10:14.
- This one, after having achieved the purification of our sins by Himself, is seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the highest heavens, Hebrews 1:3.
- This one, although He is in heaven, still reigns as King in His church on earth, closely observes how things proceed there, what each one does, punishes the unruly, and comforts the obedient. Thus, everyone must know Him, acknowledge Him, and have such an impression of Him in the heart, causing such movements, as such characteristics require.

To honor.

XII. If Jesus is King, then as such He must be honored by each one: John 5:23, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. For He is the King of glory, Psalm 24:10. In heaven, all angels worship Him, Hebrews 1:6. So also must all subjects on earth honor Him.

- This involves the distinct contemplation of His attributes. To approve them with sweet pleasure, to rejoice that He is that King, and such a King; to lose oneself in holy wonder in that contemplation; to bow down in reverence before Him, Psalm 45:12. Because He is your Lord, bow down before Him.
- To kiss Him in submission, Psalm 2:12, and to fall before the throne, saying: To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be praise, and honor, and glory, and power, forever and ever. Revelation 5:13.

To love

XIII. If Jesus is King, then He must be loved as such by all and every one of His subjects. God has placed in the nature of the subjects to love their King for the sovereignty and excellence in Him. Thus, Jesus must also be loved by all His subjects; indeed, love lies in their reborn nature, Song of Solomon 1:3. Your name is as ointment poured forth; therefore, do the virgins love you. The word Beloved and my Beloved is almost breathless in the mouth of the Bride, as seen throughout the Song of Solomon. Jesus testifies this of His disciples: John 16:27, The Father Himself loves you because you have loved Me. Peter responded so definitively to Christ's question, Do you love Me? Yes, Lord, You know that I love You, John 21:16. Paul was so filled with love for the Lord Jesus that he seemed to act irrationally out of love's compulsion in the eyes of some. See this: 2 Corinthians 5:13, 14. If we are out of our mind, it is for God; if we are

of sound mind, it is for you; for Christ's love compels us. This love made him curse those who do not love Jesus. If anyone does not love the Lord, let that one be Anathema Maranatha! 1 Corinthians 16:22.

Where love for this King is present, there is a special light, a clarity, a delight in the soul. She looks to Him, beholds Him, meditates and ponders His glory and loveliness, rejoices that He is so highly exalted, that He is crowned with honor and glory; she wholeheartedly wishes it for Him, delights in seeing how all angels bow down and worship Him, and how all the godly with the rays of their love culminate in Him as the center, that demons tremble before Him, and that all is in His hand, and must serve Him. In this contemplation, the soul cannot satiate itself, and grieves that it is so dim and stands so far away; she would want to behold Him more clearly and closely, to be satisfied in the radiance of His glory. The soul exalts Him above all, and holds great regard for His sovereignty, which, while delightful to her, is also awe-inspiring, and evokes in her a special reverence; she falls down before Him and reverently kisses the ground. This love cannot bear separation or alienation, then the soul mourns. She hates all He hates, she loves all He loves, she abhors anything unlike Him, and takes pleasure in what resembles Him; a step of this King is blessed to her and draws her heart in love towards Him. His will is her will, her greatest delight is to do or refrain from doing whatever pleases Him. And oh, how the soul yearns for immediate communion with Him, to see Him face to face, and to sink into perfect mutual love for eternity! And while she is still on this side, Jesus remains written in her heart with golden letters. She would forsake her honor, her possessions, her friends, husband, wife, parents, children for Him. Her life is not too precious to be laid down for Him. Love is as strong as death; jealousy as relentless as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame of the Lord. Many waters cannot quench this love; nor can

rivers drown it; if one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned. Song of Solomon 8:6, 7.

To confess.

XIV. If Jesus is King, then one must confess Him as King and not be ashamed of Him: Matthew 10:32-33. Whoever acknowledges Me before men, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns Me before men, I will disown before My Father in heaven. This must be done with prudence, and at the same time with boldness, with willingness, clarity without equivocation, heartened relying on the Lord Jesus, and persevering unto death.

To obey.

XV. If the Lord Jesus is King, then one must obey Him: Matthew 17:5. Listen to Him. Exodus 23:21. Beware of Him and obey His voice. For He is the high and glorious one, Jeremiah 10:7. Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For this is your due. We are placed under Him, Psalm 116:16. Oh Lord, I am indeed your servant, I am Your servant.

Acknowledge Him in His glory, place yourself directly under Him, approve with pleasure the bond of being subject, offer yourself, inquire of His will, await His answer, be fervent in execution.

To trust.

XVI. If the Lord Jesus is King, then one must trust Him, and feel secure under His protection without looking for foreign safeguards. Psalm 91:1-2. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Psalm 2:12.

Blessed are all who take refuge in Him. In the Lord Jesus is everything that can bring rest; He is sufficient, almighty, kind, faithful, truthful. To trust in Him is to glorify Jesus in all His virtues. For such there are glorious promises: Psalm 125:1. Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but endures forever. Psalm 37:5. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will do this.

Believers are kings.

XVII. Having seen what we are to do concerning the Lord Jesus as King, let us proceed to the second point, namely, how we should present Christ as King for imitation in a manner befitting us, because He deigns to call us Christians after His name Christ, by virtue of the fellowship in His anointing. The Lord Jesus has made them kings through His merits and honors them with that title. Revelation 1:6. He has made us to be kings. Revelation 5:10. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth. 1 Peter 2:9. You are a royal priesthood. They are kings because they have a royal heart, a royal state, royal glory, royal possessions, royal dominion; all this they have in principle, and it is their duty to act earnestly as such and to show themselves.

Having a royal heart.

- They have a royal heart within them. In Daniel shone an excellent spirit, Daniel 5:12. They have a courageous heart, therefore they are compared to the horses of Pharaoh's chariots, Song of Solomon 1:9. And they are called: His Majesty's horse in battle, Zechariah 10:3. They have a princely, confident spirit, Psalm 51:14.
- They have an understanding heart: 1 John 5:20. He has given us understanding so that we know the True One. 1 Corinthians

10:15. I speak as to sensible people.

- They have a strong heart, Psalm 112:7. His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. They consider earthly things as mere trifles, yes, as rubbish, Philippians 3:7-8, and have great and lofty things in view, 2 Corinthians 4:18. For we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. Thus, they press through everything fearlessly, Psalm 27:3. Though an army besieges me, my heart will not fear. Let hell and the whole earth conspire, the least of this King would not flinch or submit to them, but in all things they would be more than conquerors, and always courageous, 2 Corinthians 5:6, 8. Show yourselves thus, Christians!

Freedom.

2. They are like kings, free. They are subject to no one regarding their spiritual state, only to the King of kings. They are of the free, Galatians 4:23. They are free, 1 Peter 2:16. They are the Lord's freedmen, 1 Corinthians 7:22. They have the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom, 2 Corinthians 3:17. They have been called to freedom, Galatians 5:13. The Son has set them free, John 8:36. The truth has set them free, verse 32. Thus, they are placed in the freedom of the glory of the children of God, Romans 8:21. Come now, Christians! Stand firm in the freedom with which Christ has made us free, Galatians 5:1. Do not become slaves of men, 1 Corinthians 7:23. Do not let yourselves be brought under anyone's power, 1 Corinthians 6:12. This is not to say that one would not want to be under the rule of those placed over us in home, state, and otherwise, not at all. A pagan says that true freedom is to obey the authorities and the laws. Every soul must be subject to the governing authorities, for all authority is from God, Romans 13:1. But not to be servants of men; not to let oneself be brought under anyone's power,

is neither to be swayed by their favor nor their disfavor, neither out of love for them nor out of fear of them, to let ourselves be drawn away from the obedience of our sovereign King, or to do or refrain from doing anything that would in any way go against the conscience, which would hinder our peace and communion with God, and thus our freedom of heart; it is not to be slavishly subject to them, but only because one sees and serves the Lord in them; it is not to be subject to them in the matter of religion, in teaching or life; but above all to live in peace and freedom with God.

Glory.

3. They have royal glory. There is a radiance on believers, when one looks at them closely, due to the Image of God, which they have the beginning of, which displays majesty and glory, 1 Chronicles 29:25. God says of His people: Ezekiel 16:14 And your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty, for it was perfect because of my splendor, which I had bestowed on you, says the Lord God. Peter says of them: 1 Peter 4:14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Because of that glory within them, they are recognizable and honored and desired by the godly, Psalm 16:3. As for the saints who are on the earth, "They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight." They are known by the unconverted as well and feared, by the excellence within them, Isaiah 61:9. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the Lord has blessed. From the conduct of Peter and John, the council knew them, that they had been with Jesus, Acts 4:13. The godly are formidable to the unconverted; it is remarkable what is stated: Acts 5:13 No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. Also, see Mark 6:26. Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and protected him. An ungodly lord

respects his godly maidservant more than ten dignitaries who are not converted.

One might think, how then are they despised in the eyes of the world, how does the world persecute them? I answer: they first overcome the respect and awe they have for them, and then they go against them; but usually, they have not seen them up close, and have false prejudices against them, which urges them to despise and persecute them. If there is such royal glory in you, children of God, then also show it by increasing in all holiness, humility, meekness, wisdom, and decorum; take care not to defile it with sins, by self-seeking, or by affectations, because the honor of King Jesus is at stake.

Goods.

4. They possess royal goods; all that is in the world is theirs by right, 1 Corinthians 3:21-22. All is yours... whether the world. The least of what they possess is worth more than a thousand worlds, Romans 14:17. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Therefore, let the earth belong to the people of this world, who choose the earthly as their portion, and, like swine, despise the unknown pearls of the Kingdom, and you, delight and rejoice in these spiritual goods, knowing that you are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, Romans 8:17.

Dominion.

5. The children of God, as spiritual kings, also have royal territory and dominion. They are exalted and soar above the world, having conquered it. 1 John 5:4. For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world. They triumph over the devil and his realm. 1 John 2:13,

You have overcome the wicked one. Revelation 12:11, And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. They rule over their spirits, Proverbs 16:32. Sin shall not have dominion over them, Romans 6:14. But they have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires, Galatians 5:24. True, they still have to struggle, but that does not take away their dominion; a king at war still reigns; the enemies shall not prevail, but these kings will surely gain the upper hand. Come then, children of God, if you all have these things in principle, as you do, some less and some more, stir up that principle, employ the royal nobility, freedom, glory, and dominion, and display all to the honor of the Lord Jesus, and to the adornment of the Church.

Chapter 7

On the State of Christ's Humiliation to Atone for the Sins of the Elect

Having spoken of the offices of the Lord Jesus Christ, we move on to the states in which the Lord Jesus administered His offices, particularly the High Priestly office, in the state of humiliation by offering and thereby acquiring, and in the state of exaltation by interceding and thereby applying. There are two states, the state of humiliation, and the state of exaltation. Both are joined together:

- in the OLD TESTAMENT Psalm 110:7. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head. Isaiah 53:10. When His soul shall make an offering for sin, He shall see

His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

- In the New Testament: Luke 24:26. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? Philippians 2:7,9. He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name.

II. The humiliation is an act of the Person, not of either nature. The Lord Jesus, being a Divine Person, all His suffering was an act of Divine power and dignity. The Person of the God-Man did not actually humble Himself according to His Divine nature, for He cannot; for that nature is immutable, incorruptible. But He concealed His Divine glory beneath His assumed humanity, so that people did not recognize Him as God, as He was, and therefore had the audacity to kill Him. Thus, the assumption of human nature is not an actual stated humiliation, but a qualification of the Person to be able to be a Mediator. That Christ the God-Man was born in poverty, having no form nor comeliness but the likeness of a servant, of the most lowly of men, yes, by the reason that all men are sinful, was also considered as a sinner, and likened unto them, that was indeed a degree of humiliation of Christ the God-Man; but the mere taking on of human nature, without those humbled circumstances, was not, nor can be an actual humiliation; for:

(a) Christ, before the incarnation, was not yet the God-Man; therefore, He could not be humbled as such, and actual stated humiliation had no place in His Divine nature.

(b) Besides, the union of the Divine nature with the human continues in the state of His glorification, yes, into eternity; consequently, the incarnation, considered by itself, apart from those humbled

circumstances which must here be wholly abstracted, is not a humiliation, but a qualification of the Person to be able to be a Mediator. The text 2 Corinthians 8:9, "For your sakes, he became poor, though he was rich," does not speak of the assumption of human nature by itself and considered in abstraction, but of the humbled circumstance, poverty, Galatians 4:4.

Objection 1

Born of a woman, born under the law. Answer. There is no mention of humiliation here, although being made under the law is humiliation; but from this, it does not follow that then being born of a woman is humiliation, Philippians 2:7.

Objection 2

He made Himself of no reputation, taking on the form of a servant. Answer. Here the humiliation is placed, not in the assumption of human nature, but in the humbled circumstances, the form of a servant, being obedient to the Father even unto death on the cross.

The state of humiliation consists in suffering and in being made under the law.

III. The humiliation of Christ has two parts, namely suffering for atonement, and being made under the law to acquire salvation for His elect. Suffering can be divided into suffering according to the soul, and suffering according to the body, yet including the soul; according to His Divine nature, He cannot and has not suffered. Christ suffered not only according to the body but particularly according to the soul, and that as rational, and not merely by conjoining and compassion or sympathy with the suffering of the body. He who knows no soul suffering but through compassion with

the suffering of the body is exceedingly ignorant. The feeling of the wrath of God according to the soul, even when the body does not suffer, is the essence of suffering.

IV. That Christ had to suffer, and indeed suffered in soul, is evident for the following reasons:

1. From the example. The sacrifices foreshadowed the suffering that was to come upon Christ; the blood of the beasts had to be offered in the sacrifices, and why blood? Because blood is the life of the beasts; depicting that the souls of men could not be reconciled except through the soul suffering of the Surety. See this: Deuteronomy 12:23, "The blood is the life." Leviticus 17:11, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul by reason of the life."
2. From the prophecies. See: Isaiah 53:10-12, "When His soul makes an offering for guilt... Out of the anguish of His soul He shall see... He has poured out His soul to death."
3. From the justice of God. The soul of man commits sin, therefore the soul must be punished; such a sin requires such a punishment, Romans 1:27. Ezekiel 18:4, "The soul that sins shall die." The curse, the separation from God, the wrath of God, was threatened against man and comes upon sin, Romans 2:8-9, "...wrath and fury, tribulation and distress upon every soul of man who does evil." This suffering has the soul as its subject. If that were to be taken away, then the Surety had to be punished in soul and bear soul anguish.
4. From clear scriptural texts.

- See Matthew 26:37-38, He began to be sorrowful and troubled. Verse 38: "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death."
 - Mark 14:33-34, He began to be greatly distressed and troubled.
 - Luke 22:44, And being in agony.
 - John 12:27, "Now is my soul troubled."
 - Hebrews 5:7, And heard for His godly fear. Just as our Dutch words express the greatest sorrow one can say, so do the Greek words have a special force to present sorrow in the greatest degree of intensity.
5. Consequences. V. To further understand this soul suffering, consider, along with those harrowing expressions, the consequences of this grief.

(a) "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death." Human nature could not endure a higher degree of soul sorrow, or it would have collapsed and as if died; although His human nature was extraordinarily strengthened to endure inconceivably much; not only could the body not bear this soul grief any higher, but the soul could also not bear more, or would have, so to speak, collapsed and become annihilated if it could.

(b) Luke 22:44, "And His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." There is no malady or weakness of nature in that perfect body, nor physical labor beyond the strength; but the agonies of the soul clenched and pressed the heart so that the blood was forced out to the sweat glands, and not just bloody sweat, but large droplets of blood ran off His body to the ground.

(c) Note also Christ's prayer: Matthew 26:39 "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." One should not wonder as if Christ

desired to be released from the office of Mediator and wished not to die for the elect, oh no! He had no regret for entering into the covenant of redemption with the Father; He would rather have suffered it a thousand times than He suffered; His will also did not struggle against the will of the Father, not at all: He aligned His will with His Father's will. We humans can indeed take no pleasure in suffering, because it is painful, and may have a desire not to suffer, the suffering considered in itself, yet be willing to suffer, even with tears in the eyes, because it is the will of God; much more then also the perfect human nature of Christ. He knew beforehand not how bitter this cup was; now He felt it, His natural inclination could take no pleasure, but nothing but aversion from suffering as suffering. This holy inclination He showed to the Father and prayed for deliverance if it was possible. He knew well that He had to suffer, He did not refuse that, He was willing, He did not pray that away; but He did not know to His human nature how high it had to go, therefore He prayed, if it was possible that sin could be atoned for with less suffering, by making this distress He suffered a little less to be or to have an end, and that He would not die in such darkness, desertion, feeling of wrath and anger, for that would be the heaviest that could be; that He might then be delivered in that respect, but if not, He was content that the will of God be done.

(d) The greatness of His distress also appears from the appearance and consolation of an angel, Luke 22:43. The Divine nature supported, but secretly. The Father withdrew all sense of light and favor, and poured out His wrath fully upon Him, thus finding Him alone in the utmost sorrow. An angel comes not to help Him bear the suffering; for he did not suffer with Him, but to encourage Him, by perhaps presenting to Him the examples

of Him, the prophets, the glory He would receive thereafter, the redemption of so many souls He loved, and the Father's glory in all those, to comfort and strengthen Him in this way. How has it come to pass that an angel comes to comfort Him!

(e) The magnitude of His soul suffering also appears from His complaint on the cross: Matthew 27:46 "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" He was not forsaken by the Divine nature, that personal bond could not be broken. He was also not forsaken by the Father's love, which remained unchanging. He was not forsaken by the Holy Spirit, with whom He was abundantly anointed. He does not complain of being forsaken in the hands of men; but He complains of the withholding of all manifestation of light, love, help, comfort, and that at the time and in the time when the distress was greatest, and He needed it most. When Christ says why? That is not asking for the cause, but an expressive statement of grief. It was not a despair, for He said: My God, Father, but an expression that indicates the most desolate, helpless, and sorrowful state.

VI. One might wonder, what then was the cause of Christ's extreme sorrow? I respond: The suffering in Gethsemane, of which we have just spoken, was not due to the sins of the Jews, nor their rejection, nor compassion for all the godless who are lost, nor the betrayal by Judas, nor the offense and contempt for Him that would arise from His suffering; for He foresaw all this as well as now. It was also not the fear of the impending violent and shameful death; for then He would have been weaker than many martyrs, who approached it with joy and endured it with courage.

1. The cause was that He felt in full force what sin was. He felt in full force what sin was, what it was to be a sinner. He Himself

had committed no sin nor knew any, He was holy, untainted, separated from sinners; but He had taken upon Himself all the sins of the elect, as if He had committed them Himself, standing in their place. Now He felt what it was to break the bond and covenant with God, to forsake God, to disobey God, to oppose God, and to sin against His law and will, to have a conscience of sins. To see and feel sin as sin is unbearable, even if no punishment were added: this caused David to say: Psalm 51:4 "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight." Sin as sin was felt by the Lord Jesus, who was made sin for us, 2 Corinthians 5:21. This was an unbearable state in Him, who loved God perfectly.

2. The separation from God; and His wrath. Christ felt in full force the separation from God because of sin. It is unthinkable and indescribable what terror, what unrest, what darkness, what distress, what sorrowful state it is when God in indignation completely separates Himself from a sinner, withdraws all favor, grace, light; leaves him, casts him off, and leaves him alone, where a man cannot live without having some consolation. To have a soul that cannot satisfy itself, that can only continuously desire to be filled with something from outside, and then to have nothing with which it can be filled, and to miss God, who alone is the satisfaction of a rational creature, to stand hollow and howling, in complete separation from God, it is unbearable and intolerable. This will be the eternal punishment of the ungodly: 2 Thessalonians 1:9 "They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might." This the elect deserved, this the Lord Jesus bears in their place; this was a greater agony of the soul than we can comprehend.

3. The curse. Christ felt in full force the curse, the execution of being accursed, Galatians 3:10-13, the wrath of God, the Lord's anger, righteously expressed upon a sinner, Nahum 1:2. The terror of falling into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10:31. For God to be someone to terrorize, Jeremiah 17:17. Just as it cannot be understood by someone who has not felt it, so it can only be slightly known by someone who has only felt it in the beginning or approximately, and by no one can it be fully comprehended and expressed. Let us just take the greatest conception of it that one can gather from all the expressions of Holy Scripture, and then think that it is almost nothing compared to all that the Lord Jesus felt concerning this. Christ was the Son of Love, and in that respect, God did not rage at Him, but God raged at sin, and made Him feel that wrath, as He had taken it upon Himself, in His righteousness as Judge duly judging, feel.

4. Assault of the devil. Christ felt in full force the assault of the devil. Luke 22:53. Man was owned by the devil because of sin, 2 Timothy 2:26. Therefore, the Surety must also withstand all the assaults of the devil for His own; the tempter tempted Him cunningly, Matthew 4; withdrew for a time, Luke 4:13; but made his utmost power and greatest attacks at the last when it was his time, hour, and power. Imagine feeling the sin in its horror, being utterly forsaken of God's favor, feeling God's wrath and anger as a Judge in righteousness in the highest degree, and then being attacked and assaulted in the most cunning and most horrific way by the power of hell at that time. What a situation it was! What a distressing state it was! Thus, Christ suffered according to the soul.

VII. Let us now also consider the suffering of Christ's body; yet so, that we see that it all came upon Him in the righteous wrath of God, and that it was at the same time a suffering of the soul, not only through compassion, but directly, and that the suffering of the body was added to further burden His soul. The elect had set their members to be instruments of unrighteousness, and carried out sin through the body; therefore, they deserved to suffer all torments in the body for eternity. In this suffering, one can discern various degrees.

Before the Baptism

1. The first degree is what He suffered before His baptism and the commencement of His public ministry. He was born into poverty and contempt, endured the painful circumcision on the eighth day, had to flee from His homeland, and hide as an exile and stranger in Egypt; He fulfilled the sentence: "By the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread," likely by working, probably as a carpenter, as mentioned in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3, earning His bread.

From Baptism to Gethsemane

2. The second degree is from His baptism to Gethsemane. He was tempted and battled by the devil, the chief enemy, who did not cease to stir up everything he could against Him. He was in the hatred and contempt of the Pharisees, the Scribes, and the rulers of the people; they sought to ensnare Him in His words, to find something against Him; they forbid anyone to shelter Him, that anyone who knew where He was should bring Him in. Everywhere, He was scornfully despised, contradicted, reviled, cursed; then they wanted to cast Him down from a cliff, then they took up stones to stone Him to death. He walked in poverty, in hunger and thirst; He had nowhere to lay His head.

In the Four Particular Places

3. The third degree was His final suffering in Gethsemane, the hall of Caiaphas, the judgment hall of Pilate, before Herod, on the way, and at Golgotha.

- In Gethsemane, He was in the soul suffering described above: He falls on His face, prays, sweats blood, is betrayed by His own disciple, an unbearable shame and disgrace! Abandoned by all His disciples, captured by His enemies and officers of the law, strictly bound, led to the judge like a murderer.
- In the hall of Caiaphas, before the ecclesiastical council, He is treated as a criminal, burdened with false witnesses, struck on the mouth by a servant, condemned to death as a blasphemer, mocked by the wicked servants, spit upon and struck in the face.
- Delivered to the Gentile Pontius Pilate, fiercely accused, sent to Herod, clad in a mockingly splendid garment, led through the streets of Jerusalem like a fool, and given back to Pilate. He was paired with a murderer, demanded by the people for execution, miserably flogged, crowned with a crown of thorns, handed over to be crucified. He is led out as a condemned man, bearing His cross.
- On Golgotha, the place of the skull, He is nailed to a cross, and raised as a curse between heaven and earth in the midst of two murderers for thousands to see. In His thirst, He is given vinegar and gall to drink; He is mocked in His misery, and pierced to the heart with piercing words; even the light of the sun is denied Him, He hangs three hours in darkness, and dies feeling the oppressive wrath of God. Behold a Man of Sorrows! What kind of sorrow, contempt, and mockery can be conceived

that has not been inflicted on the Lord Jesus? Thus, the Prince of Life is slain, and the Lord of Glory crucified.

Burial

4. The fourth degree is His burial. After the Lord Jesus had given up His spirit, a servant pierced His side and thrust a spear into His heart so that blood and water flowed from the wound. Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy, good, righteous man, an honorable councilor, and Nicodemus, having requested and obtained permission from Pilate, took the body of Jesus, and having wrapped it in fine linen with a hundred pounds of spices, they laid it in a new tomb hewn out of rock and closed it with a large stone. He who before was a mockery and a scorn of men is now removed from the sight of men, as if no longer fit to be in the view of humanity.

What "Descended into Hell" Means

VIII. In the articles of faith, it states: buried, descended into hell. Although the Articles of Faith coincide with the Word of God in all parts and are true, they are, however, not found in the Bible in that sequence but have been compiled by people and thus accepted by the Church: so we do not have to be so concerned about the words as if they were inspired by the Holy Spirit. The consideration is: Whether these words should be taken as the same thing, or if they, speaking of different matters, should be taken separately. We consider them to be the same: (a) because historically, these two words were not found together in the Articles of Faith, but some used one, and some the other: In the Council of Nicaea, held in the year 325, only: buried or laid in the tomb is stated. In the Articles of Faith of Athanasius, written in the year 333, only descended into hell is stated. (b) Because the words mean the same thing; for the Hebrew sheol and the Greek hades mean deep places under the earth, the grave, the

state of the dead, because one places them under the earth in a pit or grave. And because the place of the damned and of the devils is below, just as the place of the glorified is above, it is also expressed by those words, just as the word hell in our language originally means as much as a hollow or pit, and for the same reason mentioned above, we call the place of the damned: hell, as it is still called hell, in the Frisian language hol. So although the place of the damned is called sheol, hades, it nonetheless in its first meaning signifies a pit, a grave, a hollow. For these reasons, we consider that buried and descended into hell are the same. Although originally only one of those words was used, they were subsequently put together; and if one is to understand each in a different sense, then it is fitting to understand by buried the lying in the grave, and by descended into hell the soul suffering of Christ.

Is Not a Degree of Christ's Exaltation

It is a palpable error of the Roman Catholics to take the descent into hell as a degree of Christ's exaltation, and also if one wishes to understand by it that Christ, having died, went to the place of the damned, or to a fabricated abode for the souls of the deceased righteous of the Old Testament, and released the souls from there; for Christ's soul immediately went to heaven, He commended it into His Father's hands. Luke 23:46. He said to the thief: Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise. Luke 23:43. The texts that might be brought forward for that error provide no proof.

- Acts 2:31, His soul was not left in hell, nor His flesh did see corruption. The word sheol, which stands in Psalm 16:10, and hades, which is here, mean in their first sense the grave, as also here, which appears from the addition; not to see corruption is not to rot, as happens to the body in the grave; that here soul is

called, is a figure of speech, it means the person, and further the person according to that part, which is proper to rot, namely, the body; for the soul does not come into the grave; and by hell one understands the place of the damned, the souls of the patriarchs were not there, they were in heaven, and according to their own saying not in the place of the damned, but in a suburb.

- Nor does the place 1 Peter 3:19 provide proof. By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison. Those words by which, refer to what precedes: quickened by the Spirit. The Spirit is not the soul of Christ; for He was not raised by His soul; so this place does not serve as evidence. The Spirit, in which He went or came, is His Divine nature, through which He made Himself alive. By that He came and spoke with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, and the other prophets, as 1 Peter 1:11 says, the Spirit of Christ was in them. Through the prophets, He admonished, rebuked, and warned men, so that He preached through those prophets, who spoke by His Spirit. This speaks of Noah and the Flood, and of the men who were disobedient then, and who did not convert themselves by Noah's preaching by the Spirit of Christ, verse 20. These dying ungodly were cast into prison, that is, into hell, the place of the damned, not according to the body, but according to the soul or spirit which is a spirit. The soul being the spirit of man, the rational, is an object of preaching, it is the first and closest subject of sins and disobedience, which not being able to die, is corrupted in hell, Matthew 10:28. The meaning of the place is that Christ by His Spirit preached through Noah to men, then disobedient, and according to the body killed by the Flood, and according to the soul or spirit thrown into hell, where they are now still in prison.

All Suffering is Sufficient, Not Only the Three-Hour Suffering on the Cross IX. All the suffering mentioned above had to be endured by

Christ to fulfill the ceremonies and prophecies. All of it was sufficient for the sins of the elect, and not only the three-hour suffering in darkness on the cross. The stipulation is outside God's Word: this appears herefrom:

1. When Scripture speaks of Christ's satisfaction, it brings all suffering in general without the exclusion of anything, and without determining time or part. 1 Peter 3:18. Christ has also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Who then is so bold as to make a choice and determination?
2. Christ suffered not only in the three-hour darkness but also beforehand, both according to the soul in Gethsemane and according to the body, and that was also satisfying: by His stripes we are healed, Isaiah 53:5. He also hung on the cross before the darkness; is it not sufficient that the Lord of glory is crucified? 1 Corinthians 2:8. Also the poverty, 2 Corinthians 8:9. For your sakes, He became poor... that ye through His poverty might be rich. If then His suffering before the darkness is sufficient, then not only the three-hour suffering.
3. Christ was from the beginning the Christ of the Lord, Luke 2:26. High priest, King, Isaiah 9:5. The Savior, Luke 2:11. Being twelve years old, He was busy with His Father's business, Luke 2:42, 49. He was from the beginning the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, John 1:29. Despised and the unworthiest among men, a man of sorrows, and experienced in sickness, Isaiah 53:3. All this He was for His own. Hence it appears then, that He did not only satisfy in His three-hour suffering, but all the time of His life.

Objection 1.

1. One might say: There stands, Zechariah 3:9, I will remove the iniquity of this land in one day. I answer: (a) Thus, at the very least, one must include everything Christ suffered on that final day, and not limit it to the three hours. (b) In one day, He completed all that was necessary to remove sin; all had to be accomplished before He had made full satisfaction and paid the last penny of debt.

Objection 2. One might say: Christ's crucifixion is often spoken of alone. I answer:

(a) often also of the other parts of His suffering.

(b) Christ's crucifixion is often mentioned because it was the greatest, the last, the most public act.

(c) On the cross, He suffered before and after the darkness, so it cannot be limited to the three hours.

X. Three aspects of this suffering are particularly noteworthy.

1. That this suffering is truly sufficient.
2. That it is perfectly sufficient.
3. That this suffering is sufficient for all the elect, and only for them.

The first is: That Christ by His suffering has actually and truly satisfied the justice of God in place of God's children for their sins. The Socinians deny it. We say that Christ is a Savior, not only because He reveals the truth and the way of salvation, which He confirmed with miracles and His death, and has been an example in His holy life, etc., and thus suffered and died for the benefit of mankind; but we say that Christ, as a Surety, placed Himself in the

stead of His own, took upon Himself all their sins, both original and actual, committed before baptism and conversion as well as after, to the last moment of their lives; that He in their place bore the punishments they deserved, and by doing so completely satisfied the justice of God, without any overlooking, or accepting a part for the whole, but actually, truly, completely, and that by that satisfaction and merits He has redeemed them from all punishments, both temporal and eternal. This is the point and hallmark of Christianity; he who errs here and denies this cannot be saved. This truth is evident from the following proofs:

1. From the Necessity of Satisfaction. If God, because of His majesty, holiness, justice, and truth, cannot leave sin unpunished, and cannot accept the sinner into grace nor grant him salvation without complete satisfaction to His justice, by bearing the deserved punishment, and man cannot satisfy; and if it can be consistent with the justice of God that it is done by a suitable Surety, and the Lord Jesus is that Surety, then Christ has truly, actually, completely satisfied by His suffering and dying. The first is true, as proven in chapter 17; so then the second also remains firm and true.

2. From the Suretyship of the Lord Jesus.

- (a) That the Lord Jesus is a Surety has been previously proven, and it is evident from: Hebrews 7:22, Jesus has become a surety of a much better covenant. Isaiah 53:6-7, The Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. When He was afflicted, He was oppressed. It is well known that a surety stands in for another, whether he is a fidejussor, who is obliged to pay when a debtor cannot, as no one in this case can; or as an expromissor, who first takes over the debt as his own, pays it as his own, and

renders the debtor unanswerable; to such a surety Paul appointed himself for Onesimus to Philemon, Philemon 1:18-19. Now Jesus being a Surety, has placed Himself in their stead and paid the debt in their place.

(b) This is evident from such texts where the Greek word *anti* and *huper* in this matter are used. • Matthew 20:28, The Son of man has come to give His life a ransom (*anti*) for many. 1 Timothy 2:6, Who gave Himself a ransom (*antilutron*) for all. It is indisputable that the word *anti* means in someone's place: Matthew 2:22, Archelaus was reigning in Judea in the place of his father. Matthew 5:38, Eye for (*anti*) eye. 1 Corinthians 11:15, Because the long hair is given her for (*anti*) a covering. Luke 11:11, Will he for a fish give him a serpent instead?

• So, the Greek word *huper* also means for, in place of someone: Romans 5:7, For scarcely for (that is, in place of) a righteous man will one die. Thus Christ died for, in the place of the sinner. Romans 8:32, But gave Him up for us all. Titus 2:14, Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity. Hebrews 2:9, That He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. 1 Peter 3:18, For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust. In these texts, the word *huper* stands. Here it is clear that Christ as a Surety, has suffered in the place of the sinner, and satisfied for their sins. This is also served by Isaiah 53:4, Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows (*sebalaam*); the word means to bear, to carry as a burden on His shoulders.

3. As High Priest. From the High Priestly office of the Lord Jesus. This was discussed in chapter 20. That Christ is a High Priest, the Scripture says, Hebrews 2:17; 4:14-16, and 5:10. The work of

a priest was to offer sacrifices; so also Christ as Priest offered, even Himself, Ephesians 5:2 and Hebrews 9:14, 26, 28. The offerings, the beasts that were offered, were killed in the place of the sinner: Leviticus 17:11, The life of the flesh is in the blood; therefore I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls. Genesis 22:13, Abraham took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. The death of that sacrificial beast was credited to the sinner, who laid his hand on the head of the offering, and by doing so was declared free, as if he had himself atoned for his sins. See this, Leviticus 4:4, 15, 20. This foreshadowed that likewise the Messiah would place Himself in the sinner's stead and offer Himself in their place, and that His suffering and death would be accounted for all believers, as if they themselves had paid for their sins. See this: 2 Corinthians 5:21. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Christ was made sin for us by the imputation of all the sins of the elect to Him as a Surety, as a sacrifice for sin; thus the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all, Isaiah 53:6. Christ, thus made sin for us, we become the righteousness of God in Him by the power of His merits. This is also evident from: 1 Peter 2:24, Who His own self bore our sins in His body on the tree. See also: 1 John 2:1, He is the propitiation, (the atoning sacrifice), for our sins. Since then the Lord Jesus as High Priest and Offering has offered Himself for the sins of the elect to make atonement, He has then actually, truly on behalf of the sinner by His suffering and dying satisfied.

4. From the Price.

- The suffering of Christ is called a ransom: Matthew 20:28, to give His life as a ransom for many. 1 Timothy 2:6, Who gave

Himself a ransom for all.

- He is called redemption, a redeeming sacrifice: Ephesians 1:7, In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.
- It is called atonement or propitiatory sacrifice: Romans 3:25, Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. 1 John 2:1, He is the propitiation for our sins. These words carry great weight and signify a redemption, an atonement, not just any how, but one that occurs through the payment of the price required for one's redemption. If Christ's suffering is such a price, a ransom, then it is truly satisfying. Indeed, it is so, then it is satisfying. Add to the mentioned texts, which have particular emphasis in Greek, also those which plainly state that human redemption occurs through the blood of Christ as a price, 1 Peter 1:19, Knowing that you were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. 1 Corinthians 6:20, You were bought at a price. Revelation 5:9, You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood. Thus, we are redeemed, not by mere release, as a master grants freedom to his slave, or as prisoners of war are exchanged one for another, or even released without exchange; but by purchasing, where the true value is paid, and that is Christ's suffering.

5. From the Fruit of Christ's Suffering and Death. By the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, an actual reconciliation and satisfaction between God, whose justice has been satisfied, and the sinner, have been brought about. This is stated clearly and plainly in the Scripture:

- Romans 5:10, When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.

- 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, Who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.
- Ephesians 2:16, And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. Not only has Christ made the two, Jews and Gentiles, one, thus reconciling them with each other, but He has reconciled them both with God:
- Colossians 1:20-21, 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. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled. He has reconciled all His own, who were in heaven and on earth, not only with each other but also to Himself; they all have peace with God through Christ's blood. There was enmity between God and man. God hates the sinner, Psalm 5:6. People are children of wrath, Ephesians 2:3. Christ removes the enmity, Ephesians 2:15. He delivers people from God's wrath, 1 Thessalonians 1:10. He reconciles them with God, Romans 5:10. He brings them to God, 1 Peter 3:18. He does not do this by merely showing them the way to repentance, but through His blood, as the ransom. Thus, Christ has actually, truly, in the place of the sinner, by His suffering and death, satisfied the justice of God for them.

XI. Although the aforementioned proofs are convincingly persuasive, so that nothing remains to even slightly detain the mind from embracing the truth, let us dispel some counterarguments.

Objection 1.

God was not angry with humanity but loved them, John 3:16; Titus 3:4. It is also not said that God is reconciled, but that man is reconciled, and this reconciliation occurs through man's repentance towards God, through gracious forgiveness, through the mediation of the Intercessor, and not by bearing punishment, satisfying God's justice, and removing wrath. I answer:

(a) It is plainly contrary to God's Word to claim He was not wrathful over sin. Consider Psalm 5:5-7, You are not a God who delights in wickedness; You hate all workers of iniquity. Psalm 7:12, God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day. Romans 1:18, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Ephesians 2:3, We were by nature children of wrath.

(b) God is benevolent, not with a love of complacency, for in humanity there is nothing but sin; they are enemies of God, Romans 5:10, but with a love of benevolence, which He showed in giving the Mediator. His elect were children of wrath as sinners, but as chosen ones, God loved them with benevolence.

(c) It is also against God's Word to say that not God, but man has become reconciled. Has man received anything from God to be reconciled with Him? Is the man satisfied? God was wrathful, and man had given cause for it; God's wrath is appeased, God receives the ransom, and the appeasement of God's wrath was for the benefit of the elect, who are reconciled through the paid ransom.

(d) Reconciliation does not occur through repentance; that is nowhere in the Bible, and nature teaches that repentance is not satisfaction; the Scripture attributes reconciliation everywhere to Christ's suffering, as has been abundantly shown above. Forgiveness does not occur without satisfaction to God's justice, but out of the

satisfaction's efficacy; and the forgiveness and grace occur on man's side, who has done nothing towards satisfaction.

(e) Reconciliation does not occur through mere advocacy and intercession, but the advocacy has the satisfaction through bearing of punishment as its foundation. Christ had to enter the holy place by His own blood, Hebrews 9:12. John therefore joins the two together, 1 John 2:1-2, We have an Advocate with the Father; and He is the propitiation for our sins.

Objection 2.

XII. The word "satisfaction" is not found in the Bible, therefore one cannot prove that satisfaction has been made.

I answer: even if the letters of that word are not present, it is sufficient for a rational creature that the matter itself is clearly and distinctly expressed there. Scripture says that Christ restored what He had not stolen, Psalm 69:5. That He gave His life as a ransom for many, Matthew 20:28. For all, 1 Timothy 2:6. That we have redemption in Him, or an offering for redemption, Ephesians 1:7. That He is an atonement for our sins, 1 John 2:2, etc. Is that not the same as satisfying? It makes no difference whether one uses those words or the word satisfaction.

Objection 3.

If Christ has satisfied for us, then He has satisfied Himself, which is absurd.

I answer: while to pay oneself does not truly have a place in commutative justice, it can very well occur in retributive justice. Why can a judge, having offended himself, not sentence and punish

himself? Was it against all law and reason for a judge, whose son had forfeited both eyes due to a crime, to have one eye taken from his son, and the other from himself? I say this according to the law among men; but here it is clear and without obscurity, because God has stated it, that Christ through His suffering and death has removed the enmity between God and man and reconciled man to God, Romans 5:10. Made peace, Colossians 1:20. Brings man to God, 1 Peter 3:18. Thus, all quibbling is without foundation. If one desires to see it clearly, know that Christ as the God-man, as Surety, did not satisfy Himself but satisfied the Father, yet considered as one with the Father, as God essentially, so He did indeed pay to God, and in that respect to Himself as God-man as Surety. Distinguish between Essence and Person, and that one Person is the Father, and another Person the Son, and the obscurity will clear.

Objection 4.

XIII. If Christ was to satisfy, He had to suffer everything that the sinner had deserved. Namely, He had to suffer eternal damnation, He had to be in hell eternally, He had to have been in despair; but Christ suffered none of these, so He has not satisfied.

I answer:

(a) Christ indeed suffered eternal damnation: for eternal damnation, death, and pain consist in the complete separation from God, in the complete pouring out of God's wrath, and that for as long as everything is fully borne, and sufficient for the punishment of sin. Now, Christ suffered this in its full force, see this above, paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 6. He suffered this so long and to such a degree until He could say: It is finished, John 19:30. I have finished the work that You have given Me to do, John 17:4.

(b) Christ did not need to be in hell in a physical location; that is not essential to the nature of eternal damnation.

(c) He also did not need to suffer endlessly or eternally in duration; because that is subject to man as a consequence of his inability to bear at once enough and to restore himself to a state of perfection; thus, he remains under it until he overcomes everything, which can never happen in eternity; but because the Surety has suffered everything in the most perfect degree and intensity at once, as much as necessary to satisfy God's justice, and by His perfect obedience the demand of the law was fulfilled, it was not possible for the suffering to be extended, and for Him to be kept from death.

Objection 1.

One might think that Christ's human nature, by which He alone suffered, was finite, and therefore could not bear the infinite, and so the suffering was not sufficient to pay for sin, which deserves eternal punishment. Answer. How far Christ's human nature was strengthened is not for us to determine, but it remained always finite; Christ bore according to that nature the complete loss, and the perfect wrath of the infinite God, against whom the elect had sinned. Yet it should be noted that it was not the human nature that suffered, but the Person according to that nature and because the Person was infinite, so was of infinite strength and worth all that He suffered.

Objection 2.

If it is said that the suffering of Christ was of infinite power because He who suffered was infinite, it was by an imputation and assumption of the Person, and this has no place with God, Romans 2:11; and so the satisfaction was sufficient by an acceptance, or taking something for the whole, in consideration of the Person, but

not because the punishment in its nature could match the deserts of the sins. I answer: to accept a person is to be moved by some external circumstances or qualities to show favor to someone; but in that case, person does not mean the man himself to whom something is done. This has no place here because the Person Himself, and not qualities to move, is here. Acceptance is also not applicable here because there is a punishment that sufficiently matches the sin. It is not out of respect and consideration of the Person that His suffering is taken for sufficient, but by the internal and true strength and value was the suffering of the infinite Person of sufficient and infinite power. As the highness of the person against whom one offends truly and actually in itself aggravates the crime and the punishment: for why does it deserve death when one strikes the king in the face, and not death when he strikes a beggar, but because of the highness and worthiness of the person? So the suffering of punishment for a crime in a king is of great worth and satisfaction, though he suffers less, than in a beggar for the same crime, who bears heavier pain and shame in dust. Thus it is here because the Person against whom one sins is infinite, so the sin indeed deserves infinite punishment; and because the Person who bears the punishment is infinite, so also is the satisfaction indeed infinite, that is, fully sufficient.

(d) Christ also does not need to suffer despair. He could not because it is sin; for despair is not the essence of eternal punishment but arises both from the unbearable nature of suffering in a wretched creature and because it is devoid of all means of ever being delivered, which had no place in Christ because He could both bear and overcome the suffering.

Objection 5.

XIV. If Christ had atoned, He could only have done so for one, not for all. Answer. The Scripture says that the one Christ has atoned for all, Romans 5:18; 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 2:9. A rich man can redeem many slaves. A king can stand in place of many prisoners and thereby redeem them. An infinite one can atone for multitudes.

Objection 6.

If Christ has atoned for us, (a) then we owe Christ more for salvation than God the Father. Answer. That does not follow, for it is all from the Father, who has ordained and given up the Son.

Concern 1. (b) Then we need not beware of sin and need not practice virtues; for all sins are already paid for, and salvation has already been earned. Answer. This thought reveals complete ignorance of the nature of redemption and grace. 1 John 3:3. Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies themselves, just as He is pure. Sin is impurity, so the purified hate and flee from it; for it is against their reborn nature. Holiness is their life and joy, so they pursue it; they do not exercise virtues to earn heaven, but to thank, serve, and glorify the Lord, and to walk through that delightful and smooth path to the possession of the earned salvation.

Concern 2. (c) Establishing Christ's Atonement does injustice to God's mercy and power; for either God did not want to save the sinner without atonement, which is against His mercy, or He could not, which is against His power. Answer. If God could save the sinner without Christ's atonement, then it would have been an inconceivable cruelty to make the holy Christ suffer so much and so severely. Nevertheless, if God does not save the most abominable, the most stubborn, and those dying without the slightest repentance in their sins, it is either because He does not want to, which is then against His infinite mercy, or because He cannot, which is then

against His omnipotence; but as to the matter itself, here power is not applicable, but righteousness, holiness, which cannot allow sin to go unpunished. And because God's righteousness does not allow it, so He did not want to; for His will is in accordance with His nature, it is not mercy to violate righteousness, His power and mercy are specially glorified in saving the sinner through Christ's atonement. Ephesians 1:6. To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. Luke 1:51. He has done a mighty deed with His arm. This is about the truth of the Atonement.

Secondly. Is perfectly atoning.

XV. The second thing to consider about the suffering and death of Christ is the perfection of Christ's Atonement; against Roman Catholics and Socinians. There are four things to note here; namely:

1. That Christ's Atonement is so perfect that there can be no acceptance or overlooking here.
2. That no other atonement comes with it or can be added.
3. That atonement has been made not only for sins committed before baptism but also for all other great and small.
4. That atonement has been made not only for all guilt but also for all punishment. All these things taken together are clear from what we have said about the truth of the Atonement, so no further proof is needed. However, so that no stone is left unturned, we will consider each point separately.

2. No acceptance, gracious estimation, takes place here.

XVI. Christ's suffering in itself, considered in its own nature, is so perfectly atoning that there is no place for gracious estimation, taking a part for the whole. This is evident thus:

(1) Purity of God's righteousness. If the avenging justice of God the Judge is so pure that it cannot be satisfied except by the utmost deserved punishment; and if the Lord Jesus has satisfied that most pure justice, then His atonement is so perfect that not the slightest penny has been left unpaid, and there can be no overlooking or gracious estimation for full, in any way. The first is true and proven, Chapter 18, par. 6-10; and above in this chapter, par. 12. Thus, the second also remains unshakable.

(2) Infinity. The Surety, who has satisfied, is infinite in essence, majesty, holiness, and righteousness. Would such a Person place Himself as Surety and leave anything unpaid that He could not or would not pay? And being infinite, all His suffering is, in its nature itself considered, of infinite, that is, completely sufficient strength as we showed a little above at (c).

(3) Power of His offering. It is evident from Hebrews 10:14. By one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. What then is left? What would now need to be overlooked? Nothing.

3. No other atonement comes with this.

XVII. The suffering of Christ is so perfectly atoning that no atonement of man by suffering, in this life or after this life, in an imagined purgatory, is needed or can or may be felt here. For:

(1) Either man's atonement through his suffering is necessary or not; if necessary, then Christ is not a complete Savior, which He surely is. Hebrews 7:25. Therefore He is also able to save completely those who come to God through Him. If not necessary, then it is not atoning. And it is not necessary, nor at all atoning; for

(a) Scripture speaks not a word of it.

(b) And Christ has satisfied everything with one offering, Hebrews 10:14. So it cannot be added.

(2) Christ's suffering is so powerful that it is for the complete removal of all sins, for complete forgiveness, for complete perfection.

(a) It is for the complete removal of all sins: Hebrews 1:3.... after He had provided purification for our sins by Himself. Hebrews 9:14. How much more will the blood of Christ... cleanse our consciences from dead works.

(b) It is for complete forgiveness: Ephesians 1:7. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. Acts 10:43.... that whoever believes in Him shall receive forgiveness of sins through His name. Jeremiah 31:34.... for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

(c) It is for the complete perfection of His own: Romans 5:19 ... so through the obedience of One shall many be made righteous. 2 Corinthians 5:21. That we might become the righteousness of God in Him. If Christ's suffering is so perfect, what then remains? What can be added?

Objection. It is said that through our suffering Christ's suffering is applied to us, it is necessary for application. Answer.

(1) Then our suffering is not atoning.

(2) That is nowhere stated.

(3) Application is through faith, Romans 5:1. If one says: Christ has merited that we might merit, let it be known:

(a) that there is neither word nor letter of this in Scripture, and it is a fiction and human invention.

(b) And what would man merit if Christ has merited all there is to merit? To merit that again is to annihilate the first merit, or to accuse God of injustice, that He demands and punishes a debt twice.

3. For original sin and all actual sins. XVIII. Christ's suffering is so perfect that He has atoned not only for the sins committed before Baptism but also for all other original and actual sins, both great and small, from the most to the least, from the beginning to the end of life. This is evident:

- 1 John 1:7.... the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.
- Psalm 103:3. Who forgives all your iniquity.
- Colossians 2:13. Having forgiven you all your trespasses. What sin then remains? For which sin then must man pay? All sins include all.

4. For all guilt and all punishments. XIX. Christ's suffering is so perfect that He has satisfied, not only for eternal guilt and punishment but also for temporal ones; so that He has removed not just the temporal guilt, but also the temporal punishments. Because:

6. It is against all law and reason that punishment should remain when guilt is removed. *Sublata causa tollitur effectus*: The cause away, the effect away; these two go inseparably together. And what benefit would it give to be freed from guilt if the punishment remained? If a commander forgave a soldier's guilt, yet hanged him, what good would forgiveness do? Indeed, it would mock Christ's Atonement; for then He would have atoned for the guilt to no avail.

7. Then Christ would not be a complete Savior; for He would have left something unsatisfied.

It is against justice and God's mercy to punish when guilt is gone, and it would be as much as punishing a perfect one who had not deserved punishment.

8. Scripture clearly states that punishment ceases when guilt is forgiven: Matthew 9:2, Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven. verse 5, Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? verse 6, But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins," (then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home"). Behold the inseparability of these two; to forgive sins is to say: get up. Sin away, punishment away. Matthew 6:14. For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. Ephesians 4:32. Forgiving each other. Is it really forgiveness if one pardons the debt yet meanwhile takes revenge and repays evil? Who would not despise such forgiveness? Therefore, if God forgives the guilt, He also removes the punishment. Christ having satisfied for the guilt has also satisfied for the punishment. If one thinks: a murderer, having repented in prison, receives forgiveness of sins, yet he is still punished with death; thus, the punishment remains when guilt is forgiven. Answer. That is not a punishment with respect to God, to satisfy for sins, but with respect to men, who must act according to the law given.

XX. Various objections have been raised against the established truth which need to be answered.

Objection 1. a. Psalm 99:8, "You answered them; You were to them a forgiving God, though You took vengeance on their practices." Here there was forgiveness, yet still retribution for the actions of Moses

and Aaron. Answer. This verse does not discuss the forgiveness and punishment of Moses and Aaron; instead, by "them," the people of Israel are meant; for Moses and Aaron appear in this Psalm as priests and intercessors, v. 6. They are testified by God to have kept His testimonies, v. 7. They did not pray for the forgiveness of their own sins; but here the power of their intercession for Israel is shown, which God, on several occasions, threatened to exterminate due to their wickedness; see this in Exodus 30:10. Being heard was a fruit of their prayer. To forgive is not to destroy Israel, as God had threatened, but to preserve them as His people. Yet to take vengeance is to still visit them with plagues, and not to hold them entirely guiltless, but to reveal His righteousness by sending many adversities to that people, in whose majority God took no pleasure. So here the speech is not of forgiving guilt and retaining punishment, but of more or less punishing. b. 2 Samuel 12:11, "I will raise up evil against you." verse 13, "The Lord has also taken away your sin." There is forgiveness of guilt, yet evil is raised.

Answer. The evil was not a punishment, but a chastisement.

Objection 2. XXI. Colossians 1:24, "I am filling up in my flesh what is lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions." See, there are remnants, remnants of Christ's afflictions, then Christ has not satisfied all, but left for others, and Paul suffered and fulfilled this for the church.

Answer.

(a) That Christ left nothing incomplete but accomplished all is evident from John 17:4 and John 19:30.

(b) The afflictions of Christ are not the suffering that Christ endured, but those that came about due to the preaching and confession of Christ, which are called Christ's cross, Philippians 3:18. For Paul never refers to Christ's sufferings as afflictions.

(c) The remnants of the afflictions are not of the same kind of suffering; they are not atoning, but are the afflictions that Christ had foretold would come upon them for His name's sake, and would remain for the Church; these he fulfilled, that is, he bore them, and that for the congregation, not satisfying in their place; for had there been something left to satisfy, he would have had to bear it himself, and each member of the congregation for themselves. Psalm 49:8, "No man can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him"; yet in that regard, nothing is left over. But Paul suffered for the church, to further confirm it in the truth by the steadfastness of his suffering and to inspire imitation to also endure all suffering for Christ's sake, as in Philippians 1:14, "Most of the brothers... have become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, much more bold to speak the word without fear."

Objection 3.

XXII. Daniel 4:27 advises, "Break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed." Answer.

(a) This text does not speak of suffering, and therefore does not apply here.

(b) It speaks of an unbelieving heathen, and the difference concerns temporal punishments of the faithful.

(c) Here it is about ceasing from sin, that is, stopping and performing the opposite virtues, so it is a call to repentance, not a way to pay for sins or to atone for them. Thus, it remains certain that Christ's suffering is effective, not only to pay the debt but also to remove both eternal and temporal punishments.

Clarification on Various Misconceptions by Different Groups. XXIII. Now we come to the third aspect to consider in the suffering of Christ, namely: The limitation of Christ's Atonement to the elect only. Here we have to contend with Catholics, Arminians, and Amyraldians. The question is not whether all people will be saved. Nor is it whether Christ's death could have been sufficient for all, had He willed it; nor whether Christ placed Himself in place of all people, took upon Himself all their original and actual sins, and satisfied God's justice for all, putting everyone immediately into a reconciled state, and in the right and possession of eternal salvation?

(a) But whether Christ by His suffering and death has atoned for original sin and in that respect has put the whole human race into a reconciled state?

(b) Or whether Christ has atoned both for original sin and for all actual sins committed before baptism? This is the view of Catholics.

(c) Or can it not be said that Christ had no intention of making men partakers of salvation; but only aimed to satisfy God's justice, and to enable God to deal with man about their salvation in whatever way He pleases, either by a new covenant of works or by grace, setting faith in place of the law, so that Christ would achieve His end even if not one person were saved. And that Christ thus acquired for everyone, that is for the whole human race, restoration to a state of grace, thus freeing them from guilt and punishment due to original sin; so that Christ's death was not only internally sufficient for this, but has also occurred sufficiently, and that Christ thus acquired salvation, but does not apply all salvation. Since God has now set faith, repentance, and good works as a cause of man's salvation, which, man having this in his own power to accomplish, not all men

fulfill, so salvation is not applied to all. This is the opinion of the Arminians.

(d) Or that Christ died for all on the condition of faith and repentance, and that, man being powerless to do so, God by another decree has determined to give some faith and repentance, and thus to save them through Christ? This is the view of the Amyraldians. Thus, the opinions vary among themselves; therefore, we have presented each one separately.

Christ, as the Surety, paid only for the elect.

XXIV. We affirm that Christ, according to the Father's and His own intention, placed Himself only in the stead of certain individuals, namely, the elect, and not for others, and immediately took upon Himself all their sins, both original and actual, committed from the beginning to the end of their lives, as a Surety for them, satisfying both guilt and punishment, temporal and eternal, through His suffering, and thus completely freeing all and only the elect from the same, and placing them immediately and completely in the right and ownership of eternal salvation, as if they themselves had fully satisfied God's justice for their sins and had perfectly fulfilled all righteousness. So that Christ also certainly applies salvation to them alone, which He had acquired only for them.

XXV. We reject the first propositions, presented in paragraph 23, as errors that overturn the entire nature of the work of redemption. But we embrace the last, included in paragraph 24, as the Divine truth, full of consolation and glorification of God. This is evident:

1. Christ suffered as a Surety. Christ suffered as a Surety, placing Himself in the position of those for whom He suffered, having taken off all their sins, original and actual, committed from the

beginning to the end of their life, upon Himself, and by His suffering and death in their place satisfied the justice of God, and removed all guilt and punishment, temporal and eternal, acquired eternal life for them, and made them heirs of eternal salvation. The others do not understand it this way; they would otherwise not promote universal grace but understand Christ's suffering in an entirely different sense, one way by one group and another way by another, as we have expressed in the presentation of the question. If Christ's suffering is to be understood as we have stated there, the others will easily concede that Christ did not satisfy and die for all people. Now, then, it is a Divine truth that Christ's satisfaction is such. We have shown this clearly and distinctly a little above in this chapter, paragraphs 12 and 13. This being infallible, it follows naturally that Christ has not satisfied and died for all people; for all people, as they have never been in such a state, so they do not all come into it. Not all are saved; many suffer and will suffer eternal destruction, which could not be if all guilt and punishment, temporal and eternal, had been satisfied, and if they had been set as heirs of eternal salvation by the atoning suffering of Christ; for God is just, and does not punish where there is no guilt, and does not withhold that which was earned.

2. As High Priest. Christ's High Priestly office consists of offering and praying; these two are inseparable. In offering, the High Priest could not stop but had to proceed further into the sanctuary, and he could not enter the sanctuary without the blood of the offering. This is evident from the entire Priestly ministry of the OLD TESTAMENT and also clearly seen in Christ's High Priestly ministry. See Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25, 27; 9:12; 1 John 2:1, 2. See this in chapter 21. We thus conclude: for whom Christ is High Priest, for them He completes both

parts of His High Priestly office, which is offering and praying. It is now evident that Christ excludes many, indeed most, from His intercession and limits it to certain individuals only. See this: John 17:9. I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given Me. So, His offering, His suffering and dying, is not for all people, but limited to those given to Him by the Father, excluding others, the world.

Excuse There are two kinds of intercession by Christ: a general one and a special one. The general intercession is for all people and is based on the general satisfaction, through which Christ also prays for the transgressors and for those who have crucified Him. Isaiah 53:12 ... and He interceded for the transgressors. Luke 23:34. Father! Forgive them, for they know not what they do. And the special intercession is only for the believers.

Answer.

1. It is untrue that there is a twofold intercession; otherwise, there would also have to be a twofold offering, one for all and another for those given by the Father. But now there is only one offering, Hebrews 10:14; and because there is only one offering, so also only one intercession.
2. Christ's prayer is always heard and cannot be refused: John 11:42. Yet I knew that You always hear Me. The praying for the transgressors is for those who were transgressors, as all the elect are, but that does not say for all who are transgressors. He prayed for those who crucified Him, to whom He gave salvation, like the thief; for He is always heard. So it remains firm that, because Christ limits His intercession, for those not, and for those yes, then His suffering and death are also so limited, for those not, and for those yes.

Merits and application are inseparable. It also appears from the inseparability of Christ's merits and the application of those merits. It is impossible that Christ would not make partakers of salvation those for whom He has earned it; for:

(1) The whole purpose, both of the Father and of Christ, was to bring theirs to salvation:

- Hebrews 2:10 ... that He, leading many children to glory, the Captain of their salvation ... would sanctify through suffering.
- John 6:39. This is the will of the Father, that all that He has given Me, I should lose nothing.
- John 17:19. I sanctify Myself for them, so they also might be sanctified in truth.
- Titus 2:14. Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us.
- 1 Peter 3:18. Christ also once suffered for sins, ... that He might bring us to God. There clearly is the purpose; now, God and Christ cannot be deprived of their purpose, so it is certain that salvation is also applied, for whom it is acquired,

(2) The application and acquisition go together:

- John 10:15, 28 ... I lay down My life for the sheep, and I give them eternal life.
- 2 Corinthians 5:19. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their sins to them.
- Romans 5:10. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. There it is shown how inseparably acquisition and application go together.

Excuse 1.

Christ merely intended to remove the obstruction on the side of God, to be able to deal with man.

Answer.

(a) This is absolutely denied, the opposite is shown above in paragraphs 12, 13.

(b) Removing obstruction on the side of God is not the acquisition of salvation for man, nor the application and participation in salvation.

Excuse 2. All the aforementioned texts speak of the application of the acquired under the condition of faith.

Answer.

That is not true; the faithful do not obtain it because they believe, but because Christ has acquired it for them. He applies it to them through faith; faith is a fruit of Christ's suffering, and not the cause of Christ's suffering for them. Christ is the cause of all blessings, Ephesians 1:3. And also of faith. Hebrews 11:2, The Author and Finisher of our faith. Since the benefits of Christ are not applied to all people, indeed are not even offered to most, but are only applied to those for whom He has acquired them, Christ did not die for all people, but only for His own, who were given to Him.

4. Scripture specifies Christ's satisfaction. Scripture does explicitly limit the death and merits of Christ to certain individuals. See

(a) Matthew 1:21, He shall save His people from their sins. Now, all people are not Christ's people. 2 Timothy 2:19, The Lord knows those who are His. John 10:14, I know My sheep and am known by My own. Revelation 5:9, You have redeemed us to

God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. So then not kindreds, peoples, and nations.

(b) John 10:15, I lay down My life for the sheep. Now, not all people are Christ's sheep. verse 26, You do not believe because you are not of My sheep.

(c) John 11:51, 52, That Jesus should die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Now, all people are not children of God, many are children of Belial, children of the curse.

(d) Ephesians 5:25, ... Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it. Not all people now are the church. Acts 2:47, The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

(e) John 17:9, I pray for them... for those You have given Me. Now, not all are given to Christ; for these given ones are opposed to the world, not for the world, but for the given ones.

Excuse 1.

These texts speak of application, and it is true that it does not occur for all, but they do not speak of acquisition.

Answer.

(a) Scripture does not know such a distinction, as we have shown above.

(b) The texts do clearly also speak of acquisition; they speak of laying down His life, dying, giving Himself up.

Excuse 2.

It does not say only for those; it includes them but does not exclude others.

Answer.

They do exclude others, as we have shown in the opposition at each place.

Objection 1.

XXVI. Scripture says that Christ died for all, such as:

(a) Romans 5:18, Just as through one offense condemnation came upon all men; likewise through one act of righteousness grace comes upon all men unto justification of life. Answer. The limitation here is quite clear, to all who partake in the justification of life. Now, not all partake in the justification of life, but only the elect; thus by all, not all men are understood, but only the elect. Adam is placed as the source of misery for all who are in him, as all men were in him and have fallen; Christ is set against this as the cause of grace for all who are in Him, and those all, and only those, are in Him, all those who receive the justification of life.

(b) 2 Corinthians 5:15, He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and was raised again. Answer. It does not say all men; the word all means those all of whom it speaks here; here it clearly speaks of those all who have died to sin and who live by regeneration. Now, not all men have died to sin and do not have spiritual life, so Christ has not died for all men, but for all those who through Christ's death have died to

sin, and by His resurrection have received spiritual life; these are raised to demonstrate that death and life to the honor of Christ.

(c) 1 Corinthians 15:22, For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. Answer.

(a) The text says the opposite of what is intended; for it is certain that not all men are made alive in Christ, or will be. And here it speaks of all who are made alive in Christ, so all others are excluded; yet the text does not speak of Christ's Atonement, but of the enlivening of the elect. Here two heads are presented, with their consequences: Adam bringing death to all who are in him, Christ life to all who are in Him.

(b) He speaks of those all to whom he wrote, and whom he generally presents under the words we, us; these are: The Church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia, 2 Corinthians 1:1. So this all is not extended to all men in the world, but limited to the aforementioned.

(d) Rom. 11:32. God has concluded them all in disobedience, that He might have mercy on them all. Response. Here, it speaks of the hardening and conversion of the Jews, as the entire chapter indicates. Therefore, this text does not speak of the satisfaction of Christ, nor of all people on the earth.

(e) 1 Tim. 2:4-6, Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself as a ransom for all. Response. The text itself suggests that by "all," it does not mean every individual person, but only the chosen ones from various nations and states. This is evident because:

(1) One cannot pray for all people, head by head, as there is no need to pray for those who have committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, as God will not show them mercy. Christ did not pray for everyone (John 17:9), nor did Paul (2 Tim. 4:14; Gal. 5:12).

(2) The mention of kings and those in high positions signifies that "all" here means various types of people, as is often the case in other passages (Matthew 4:23; Luke 11:42; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Corinthians 10:25). The apostle wants us not to be prejudiced against anyone regarding their salvation.

(3) The text says that God desires all men to be saved. If "all men" were understood to mean every individual person, then all must be saved because no one can resist God's will; He always accomplishes His will, and no one can thwart His purpose. If one argues that He desires when people also desire, that is not stated in the text. Salvation does not begin with human will; God knew that even the least would desire, so He could not will it for all.

(4) The apostle links being saved with coming to the knowledge of the truth. Experience shows that God does not will that all people come to the knowledge of the truth because it is not revealed to everyone.

(5) Christ gave Himself as a ransom, antilutron, which means substituting Himself in place of another, paying the debt, bearing the punishment, thereby setting others free and making them partakers of freedom. Now, Christ does not do this for all people but only for those who believe in Him. It is evident, therefore, that the word "all" does not mean every individual person but only all believers from various nations and states.

Objection 2.

XXVII. Against the aforementioned truth, certain texts are presented in which it is said that Christ suffered for the world. Such as:

(a) John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Response. Here, it does not state that Christ died for the world, nor that God loved all people in the world. Rather, it says that He loved the world, and love for the world implies love for people, as seen in Titus 3:4. God did not show His love to the angels who sinned but to the human race. Therefore, the love for the world does not mean love for everyone individually but generally for mankind. God demonstrated this love by giving His Son, but not for the benefit of all. A condition is set for the believers, not so that the Son would remove the hindrance on God's part and place the entire human race in a state of reconciliation without granting them salvation. Instead, it is to deliver the believers from destruction and grant them eternal life (verse 17). "To save the world" means not only to obtain salvation, as those who use this passage contend, but to apply and make it available. This is not done for everyone individually, as is beyond dispute, but only for the believers, as the text states. So, "the world" signifies mankind in general, not each individual person. Moreover, this passage does not speak of acquisition but of applying and making eternal salvation accessible, which belongs only to the believers and no one else.

(b) John 6:51, "I will give my flesh for the life of the world." Response. I repeat, the world represents humanity, contrasting it with fallen angels, as Holy Scripture makes this distinction, albeit in a different context (Hebrews 2:16). What is said about the world in general cannot be applied to every individual. The first world perished in the flood, as seen in Luke 17:27. This cannot be said of every individual, as Noah and his family survived. Similar

distinctions are found in other passages of Scripture. This is evident in this passage as well: Christ gives life to the world (see verse 33). However, He does not grant spiritual life to everyone individually, only to His chosen ones. It is clear that this passage does not refer to the acquisition but the application of Christ's merits, and no one asserts that this is for all people, as experience shows otherwise.

(c) 2 Corinthians 5:19, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them." Response. The world represents the human race. One cannot draw universal conclusions from the general to the particular. The first world perished in the flood, and the flood wiped them all away, including Noah and his family. Thus, it cannot be applied to every individual. Similar statements can be found in other passages. It is evident that what is said about the world in general cannot apply to every individual. Sometimes, the world is associated with evil, which only pertains to those who are in such a state. Other times, it is associated with good, which applies to a different group. Therefore, when the word "world" is used, it should not be assumed that it pertains to every individual, but one should consider the context to determine who it refers to. Now, this text indicates that those referred to as "the world" are those reconciled with God, whose sins are not counted against them. It is clear that the wrath of God remains on the disobedient (John 3:36), indicating that it was never removed from them. Not all people are in a state of having their sins forgiven and not counted against them, which is a blessed state (Psalm 32:1, 2). Thus, it is evident that the word "world" here does not encompass all individuals without exception but only denotes those whose sins are not counted against them. This text also shows that reconciliation and not counting sins are equally extensive, and since they are not applied to all, neither is reconciliation.

(d) 1 John 2:2, "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Response.

(a) Just as little can one draw a conclusion for each individual person from the phrase "the whole world" as one can from the word "world." It is stated about the first world that the flood destroyed them all (Luke 17:27). It is said that the devil deceived the whole world (Revelation 12:9). It is mentioned that the whole world lies in wickedness (1 John 5:19).

(b) The words "not for ours only, but also" indicate a contrast between Jews, like John himself, and believers from that nation, and the Gentiles, who are called "the world" in contrast. This terminology is found not only here but also in Romans 11:12, 15. Just as one should not draw a universal conclusion for every individual person from the word "world," which generally signifies the human race, one should not do so in this contrast either. Sometimes it refers to the wicked, and sometimes to the godly from various nations, as is evident from Romans 11:12. "If their fall is the riches of the world," and verse 15, "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world." Not every Gentile obtains the spiritual riches of Christ through the fall of the Jews, nor does every individual Gentile, without exception, receive reconciliation. Instead, it is only the converted, the believers among the Gentiles, and everyone must acknowledge this. So, when it says here that Christ is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, it cannot be understood to mean every individual person but only the believers among the Gentiles.

(c) John combines the two aspects of Christ's High Priestly office here, namely, being an advocate and a propitiation. Above, we have shown that these two cannot be completely separated from each other, and that He is the one for whom He is the other. And since

Christ does not intercede for the rejected world (John 17:9), He is also not the propitiation for them but only for the chosen world, which receives propitiation due to the occasion of the fall of the Jews. Thus, it becomes evident that Christ did not die for every individual person, head by head, in the world.

Objection 3.

XXVIII. Against the above-stated truth, certain texts are presented in which it is said that Christ also sanctified and purchased the wicked. Such as:

(a) Hebrews 10:29, "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" Response. This text does not speak of Christ's death for all people, for not all people reach the state described here. Even if Christ had died for some wicked individuals, which is not the case, it still would not follow that Christ died for all the wicked. Moreover, this passage does not speak of reconciliation through Christ's death. Being sanctified here refers to a certain state, so this is about application, not acquisition, which is where the difference lies. Being sanctified here does not mean a change of heart through regeneration but rather a separation from the common mass through the call to the communion of the Church. The word "sanctify" often means to set apart for a holy purpose, as is said about ceremonial objects and the people of Israel in Deuteronomy 7:6: "For thou art an holy people... The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." Similarly, "sanctify" means to set apart in Acts 21:26: "Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them

entered into the temple." We strongly deny that "sanctify" here means a holy disposition of the heart and affirm that it means being separated from the mass of people for the communion of the Church. True sanctified individuals can never fall away, as we will demonstrate in its proper place. If one argues that this separation is accomplished by the power of Christ's death, I reply: By the power of Christ's death, He has received authority over all things in heaven and on earth to use them for the execution of the salvation of the elect. Thus, Christ's death has ends other than reconciliation.

(b) 2 Peter 2:1, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." Response.

(a) This text does not speak of all people, for not all reach this state. The word "bought" does not provide evidence for a universal reconciliation through Christ's death because people buy things for various purposes. One buys vessels for a despised use and also for adornment; one buys slaves to set them free and also to use them for the lowest work; one buys donkeys to carry loads. Similarly, those bought by the Lord, who is called "despotes" (householder) here, were purchased for His housework, for service in His Church as teachers, an office they abused, becoming false prophets. By His death, the Lord Jesus obtained authority over everything; He was appointed heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2). The Lord has subjected all things under His feet (1 Corinthians 15:28). At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow (Philippians 2:10). These teachers were also under His jurisdiction; He had bought them to use them for His service, for the benefit of the elect, as slaves, as donkeys, but not as His children.

Objection 4.

XXIX. To undermine the above-stated truth, people also use this syllogism: everything one must believe is truth. Now, everyone must believe that Christ died for them; therefore, this is truth. Response. The first proposition is correct because faith has nothing but truth as its object. However, the second proposition is purely untrue because:

(a) The Gospel is not proclaimed to the majority of people, nor have they ever heard a word of Christ, so it is not their sin not to believe in Christ.

(b) Not all those who are called must believe that Christ died for them; on the contrary, they must believe that as long as they remain unconverted, they are still outside of Christ.

(c) It is true that all the called must receive Christ through faith, and if they do not, it will increase their damnation. It is an entirely different matter to believe in Christ, that is, to accept Christ for justification and sanctification. To believe that Christ is their Savior, that He died for them, one must first demonstrate that they have truly received Christ and have been genuinely converted.

Christ, by subjecting Himself to the Law, acquired righteousness for His own.

XXX. So far, we have spoken of the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect Atonement for the sins of the elect, being the first part of Christ's Humiliation. The second part of the Humiliation is His subjection to the Law. Regarding this, a question arises: Is Christ's active, actual obedience, that is, His subjection to the Law and the perfect fulfillment thereof, credited to the elect for justification and salvation? We answer: yes. Christ's actual

obedience, in submitting to the Law and fulfilling it completely, is not merely a quality required in Him as the Mediator, which He indeed possessed and perfectly fulfilled. This actual righteousness of Christ is part of Christ's Atonement for His own. Just as through His suffering, He redeemed them from all guilt and punishment, so through His active obedience, by fulfilling the Law in their place, He acquired for them the right to eternal life. These two aspects are inseparable in Christ, and they cannot and should not be separated from each other. Christ both merited satisfaction for guilt and punishment and earned the right to eternal life. However, satisfying guilt and punishment and earning eternal life are not one and the same thing but are distinct in nature and application. Christ's obedience benefits the elect just as much as His suffering does. This is evident from:

1. The necessity for the Surety to place Himself in the sinner's stead under the Law to fulfill it perfectly. This has already been demonstrated: if the Surety had to do it, and if Christ, being the Surety, has perfectly carried out His office of Surety, then He did that as well.
2. Romans 5:19 states, "For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." The Law demands perfect conformity to itself. When that is violated, a person is not in conformity with the Law, even if he is freed from guilt by bearing the punishment. The Law requires both punishment and holiness; it binds to both. Therefore, Christ, the Surety, by removing the guilt, does not make anyone righteous but must also fulfill the Law. 1 John 3:7 says, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous." Since Christ sets His own as righteous, He must then put Himself under the Law, fulfill it, and thus, through His obedience, make them righteous.

3. Romans 8:3-4 says, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." The Law was weak, not in itself, because it remained a perfect rule, but because of sin. The Law was weak, not in condemning the transgressor to punishment, for it retains that right forever, but in justifying the sinner and declaring him an heir of eternal life, as promised on the condition of perfect obedience (Romans 10:5). Man who does these things shall live by them. The Law does not require either punishment or holiness but binds to both. Therefore, the Surety, by removing the guilt, does not make anyone righteous; the Law must also be fulfilled. Christ, the Surety, placed Himself under the Law and fulfilled it in their place. This is what the apostle shows in Galatians 4:4: "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law."
4. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, and we are clothed with it, becoming perfect and the righteousness of God in Him. See Romans 3:21, Philippians 3:9, Colossians 2:10, and 2 Corinthians 5:21. However, suffering is not righteousness. Christ's suffering was not His righteousness when considered as suffering but rather His perfect fulfillment and keeping of the Law. If Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, and we are in Him the righteousness of God, then His subjection to and fulfillment of the Law are also imputed to us.

Objection 1.

XXXI. It is argued that Christ was obligated to be subject to the Law and fulfill it for Himself because, according to His human nature, He was a rational creature. If someone is guilty for himself, he cannot do

it in place of another. Therefore, Christ's righteousness cannot be our righteousness. Response.

(a) Whatever Christ was, He was for His own. If it were not for His own, He would not have become a human. Isaiah 9:5 says, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given." Therefore, everything He was, suffered, and did is for the benefit of His children.

(b) Every human person is, by nature, under the Law for themselves and obligated to fulfill it. However, Christ is not a mere human person; He is a Divine Person. He was not under the Law for Himself, but as a Divine Person, He was above the Law. As the Mediator, He voluntarily subjected the Divine Person, who was above the Law, to the Law according to His human nature. Therefore, His righteousness becomes ours.

Objection 2. Salvation is obtained through Christ's suffering, as stated in 1 Peter 3:18. Thus, through His actual obedience, He did not acquire for His own the right to eternal life. Response.

(a) We have previously mentioned that these two aspects cannot be separated. When one is mentioned, the other is implied. They were both necessary; therefore, when one is spoken of, the other is not excluded.

(b) To reconcile is to bring near to God.

Objection 3. If Christ fulfilled the Law for His own, they are no longer bound to obey the Law, just as they are no longer bound to suffer the penalty for their transgressions, and thus, their sins are no longer sins. Response.

(a) It is true that they are not bound to obey the Law as a condition of the Covenant of Works to obtain a right to eternal life. However, there are other bonds and ends that bind them to obedience to the Law of love. Obedience to the Law is their life, joy, and happiness. Even if they were not bound to it, their desire and whole heart would be directed towards keeping it because the requirement of the Law is perfect love.

(b) Their transgressions are indeed still sins by nature and deserve eternal death, but they have already been atoned for by Christ. Thus, we have considered Christ's Humiliation from all angles.

One must contemplate the suffering of Christ.

XXXII. As essential as it is to know the truth, perfection, and the designation for the children of God alone in Christ's atonement during His state of humiliation, so advantageous and soul-stirring it is to contemplate this with an applying faith. Engaging in holy reflections, maintaining a continuous disposition of the heart through meditation, and growing from that disposition is an exercise that remains hidden to many, even believers. Truly, if we had more faith to clearly present these truths to ourselves, if we engaged more in silent and sweet contemplation of the suffering of Christ, we would esteem the severity of that suffering more; we would gain a deeper understanding of the horridness of sins, the purity of God's righteousness, rejoice in the truth and perfection of the Atonement through that suffering, acquire Christ's presence more fervently, hate sin more, have a more steadfast heart in godliness, and walk our journey with greater comfort and peace. Therefore, immerse yourself more in this contemplation, for:

(a) This is the work of the angels, who were stationed in the temple with their faces turned toward the mercy seat. Concerning this, Peter

says in 1 Peter 1:12, "In these things, angels desire to look into." If angels do it and find blessedness in it, how much more should we.

(b) This contemplation was typified by the raising of the bronze serpent in the wilderness, by looking at which the bitten were healed. It was also prophesied that it would be so in Zechariah 12:10, "...and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him." Our hearts should soon be aroused and encouraged to this work by examples and prophecies that have preceded us.

(c) This was the practice of the godly. The bride of Christ said in Song of Solomon 1:13, "A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me, he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts." What was that bundle of myrrh if not the bitter, salutary, life-preserving, refreshing, strengthening, and sweetly fragrant suffering of Christ? She not only carried it on her breast during the day, and it was like a bouquet of adornment to her, but it also lay on her heart at night. She went to sleep with these reflections, and when she woke up, she was still engrossed in them. The prophets were also engrossed in this, searching what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories, as stated in 1 Peter 1:11. Paul was frequently occupied with this, as he stated, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" in Philippians 3:10. Not only the God-fearing individuals in the early days of the NEW TESTAMENT were engaged in this, but also, since the Reformation, their writings testify to it. If they found such delight in it, a delight that grew sweeter and more cherished over time, it should encourage us to engage in this exercise, whose sweetness is not tasted except through activity.

(d) It is a highly advantageous exercise. Through hearing and reading, one may quickly understand and remember the history. However, the power and warmth of it will not be attained except through much meditation and the application of that meditation. Through such practice, one will develop:

In this, the most glorious teachings emerge. XXXIII. 1. For:

(a) In this, you will first come to understand the dreadfulness of sin properly. You will not merely focus on the actions or view sin as nature dictates, but in each sin, you will discern its horridness, filthiness, and repulsiveness—all the abominations inherent in every sin, a denial of God, a contempt for God, an abandonment of God. So that because of his sinfulness, a person will abhor and be ashamed of himself, finding himself so detestable, hateful, and intolerable.

(b) In this, you will perceive the righteousness of God in His nature and holiness, which cannot forgive sin except by fully punishing it in the Redeemer. You will realize that you cannot sustain yourself with a quiet hope when seeking forgiveness, as if God might easily grant it, thereby deceiving thousands who, being deluded, are lost. Out of love for God's righteousness, you will not desire to be saved unless through the satisfaction of God's justice.

(c) In this, you will behold the boundlessness and unfathomableness of God's love, mercy, wisdom, and power. Through Christ's Atonement, you will discover much more than just the remission of guilt and punishment. The soul will delight wonderfully in God's perfections and be sweetly elevated in love, praise, and thanksgiving.

2. Powerful Consolations. In contemplating Christ's suffering, you will experience powerful consolations. Here you will see:

(a) The complete satisfaction of God's righteousness and how perfectly a sinner stands before God in Christ, despite being so sinful in himself.

(b) Here you will witness how certain and true salvation is and how assuredly a sharer in that suffering is placed as an heir of eternal life and how infallibly he will partake of it.

(c) You will discover the peace of conscience in God and free access to the Father.

(d) All the suffering of life becomes light here, and you will realize that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 4:17), so that the soul finds eternal consolation in everything.

3. Heavenly Instructions. In the contemplation of Christ's suffering, heavenly instructions and guidance are found.

(a) Here, you witness an example of how to die to the world and to sin: Romans 6:4. We were buried with Him through baptism into death so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

(b) Here, you encounter the most powerful motives for mortifying sins and leading a holy life. Seeing that Jesus endured such bitter suffering out of love for us, it arouses our love for Him, prompting us to detest and forsake sin and to live in a way that pleases Him.

(c) You will perceive that contemplating His suffering infuses a potent and strengthening force for putting sins to death. Thus, it becomes the wellspring of true spiritual life, of pure progress, and

the practice of virtues that are the genuine form and nature of spirituality.

(d) Through this, you will be wonderfully strengthened when Christ calls us to suffer and martyrdom for His Name and cause. So, all of you who bear the name of Christians, those who truly desire to be genuine Christians, engage much in the contemplation of Christ's Humiliation; there is more to it than you realize.

XXXIV. Come then, children of God, behold the suffering Jesus, not as a mere historical account, not as the suffering of a martyr, but as the suffering of your Redeemer, standing in your place and paying for your sins.

1. The Person Who Suffered. Carefully consider the Person who suffers; He is not a vile, lowly, and despised man. He is not just a martyr whose death is cherished by God and greatly esteemed by the godly. But:

(a) This Person is God and man, God to be praised above all in eternity, the true God, the Lord of glory. He, to be able to suffer and die, assumes our human nature from a man in the unity of His Person, becoming like us in all things except sin. This is the greatest miracle, surpassing the creation of heaven and earth. Pause here a while until the greatness and glory of this Person are revealed to your hearts, and you acknowledge Him with reverence. Then wonder will carry your soul away, making you say, "Such a Person suffers? Pays?"

(b) Also, consider Him in the relationship and connection He has with you, and you have with Him. Do you not know Him, believers? He is the One who came to you when you were dead,

blind, buried in sin and darkness. He illuminated you with His light, made you alive, continues to draw you to Him, making you look, long, cry, and wait for Him. He is the One who secretly supports, encourages, strengthens, and gives hope to you in your troubles and crosses. He is the One who once revealed Himself to you, who has kissed you with the kiss of His mouth, and made you feel His love, who indeed said to you, "Your sins are forgiven." He is the object of all your desires and aspirations, your Lord, your Head, your Bridegroom. This Person, out of love—I repeat, out of love—for you, willingly takes your place as your Redeemer, removing all your sins from you and placing them on Himself, on His account. He receives the blows you deserved; the punishment that brings peace was upon Him. Dwell here a while, let your love be stirred by acknowledging His love for you. Hear your Beloved say to you, "My beloved, I love you dearly. Behold here is evidence of My love: this suffering is the payment for your sins. This, which is so bitter, so burdensome, which leaves Me so bloody from head to foot, and so inwardly distressed by God's crushing wrath, I endure willingly. I would endure it a thousand and a thousand times over before I would see you lost and endure that you would not be with Me in eternal glory!" Will this not soften your heart into reciprocal love, melting in tears of love? To recognize that Jesus is such a exalted Person and that He is so near to you, doing everything out of love for you, stirs the heart, giving strength and vigor to the contemplation of Christ's suffering. Do not linger in unbelief; do not give in to it, for it renders contemplation fruitless. Lift yourself up in faith and look upon the suffering Jesus in this way, and surely it will make you joyful and warm your heart with love.

2. For Whom.

XXXV. And who are you, for whom Christ suffers? In yourself, both outwardly and inwardly, there is nothing but sin, and therefore in your nature, you are so detestable, repugnant, intolerable, and damnable. There is a vast disparity between Jesus and you. Reflect on your own wretchedness until you find yourself just as we described, and then come to the Lord Jesus through faith. Become humble, but not unbelieving when faced with the sight that surpasses all understanding that you would be loved, and loved so dearly by Jesus that He would suffer and die out of love for you. Believe that it is still so and say, "It is from the Lord, though it is wondrous in my eyes."

Moreover, go a step further and consider the small number of people for whom the Lord Jesus has become their Redeemer, in contrast to the vast multitude of people whom He does not love and has not even chosen to look upon, for whom He refused to be their Redeemer. Then ponder why, why me, why me more than another? I, who am the filthiest, the proudest, the most foolish, the most unbearable of them all? Why does the Lord love me, one among so many thousands? Why am I among the few, among the elect? Jesus, my Redeemer, Jesus loves me with an eternal love while so many millions are heading for hell. I, I am among the chosen few who will be led to heaven. This is too much for me, this is too high for me; I must pause here until a perfected state makes me capable of comprehending more, of marveling more, of loving more, and being more grateful.

Take heed that the greatness of the matter and your smallness do not lead you into unbelief, especially when you have evidence of the beginnings of grace. Doing so would shortchange God's love and elevate humanity too high, as if His lovableness were the primary source of God's love. That would reverse the entire work of grace and

prevent the praise of His greater grace from being given to Him. Therefore, hold fast to your faith.

3. Reflect on What Was Suffered from the Cradle to the Cross.

XXXVI. Progress from the manger to the cross, considering each point of suffering individually and lingering in your thoughts at each one. It is not described in such detail for us in vain, so it should not bore us to contemplate it point by point. Each little detail contains something unique; each reveals a particular sin and a corresponding punishment for that sin, as well as its removal. This will show you the extent of His suffering and that your sins are the cause of that suffering, that you have caused Him this suffering with your sins. Jesus would not have needed to suffer if you had not sinned. Oh, how sweet it is to be deeply ashamed of our sins as the cause of Christ's suffering and to say, "My dear Jesus, though it pains me, I have caused You this suffering. Why did I not suffer instead? If it were possible and I could overcome it, I would not allow You to suffer for me; I would bear it myself. But now I cannot bear it or overcome it, and I would have been eternally crushed beneath it. Therefore, I acknowledge Your love and value Your pain. I am deeply grateful that You stand in my place, atone for my sins, and secure eternal life for me. I will acknowledge, love, and thank You for eternity."

Causes of Immutability.

XXXVII. It is astonishing how little one is moved, how few emotions are stirred by the suffering of Christ. Each person is conscious of this within themselves and laments the hardness of their heart. You may ask, what is the cause of this?

I answer:

(a) In some, it is ignorance; they only have a vague notion that Christ died for sin. They do not truly understand the dreadfulness of sin or the severity of God's wrath, which is why they cannot fully appreciate it.

(b) In some, it is mere familiarity; they have heard it so often that the emotions have faded.

(c) In some, it is unfamiliarity; they have not accustomed themselves to gaze upon that suffering.

(d) In some, it is unbelief, not necessarily historical unbelief, but unbelief in its application. "It is not for me," they say. Consequently, they have no desire or taste for contemplating it and allowing it to permeate their thoughts.

(e) It is a lack of spirituality, laziness, and contempt. Therefore, strive and work in this regard, for the more you do so, the easier and sweeter it will become.

4. Consolations Against Guilt and Suffering.

XXXVIII. While remaining in this state, contemplate the suffering of Christ with a view to consolation, both against guilt and shared suffering.

(1) Against guilt.

When the soul finds itself surrounded by sins, whether great or small, sins against God, against its neighbor, against every commandment, and they weigh heavily upon it like a burden too great to bear, when it becomes aware of God hiding His face, closing the way to approach Him, His wrath, the dread of the conscience, and the fear of being lost forever, the soul must not yield to this

dreadful state, for it will only cause harm. Instead, turn your thoughts to the contemplation of Christ's suffering. Deliberately reflect on the truth of Christ's atonement in the place of sinners, the perfection of that atonement, for great, small, numerous, all hereditary and actual sins committed from the beginning until death. Dwell upon it until you see from God's Word that it is true, and let the truth in God's Word also become truth in your heart. Let yourself be fully convinced that yes, Christ as the Redeemer has fully satisfied, and a person for whom Christ has satisfied is unimaginably happy. There is no sin in them that has not been atoned for; God is a reconciled Father to them, and they are assuredly heirs of eternal life. They will obtain it even if they are led along a dark and unappetizing path.

Now, considering all these things together, it should not only lead you to conclude that Christ is your Redeemer because these graces are only worked in those who have a share in Christ's suffering and death, but it should also lead you to Christ's suffering. My aim now is to consider it as truth, as sufficient, as applied to your soul, as suffered in your place, and that your sins are now fully paid for, God is reconciled with you, and you are established as a child and heir of God. This is where the struggle of faith comes into play, the actual acceptance, the immediate belief, until the soul can say in faith: "He loved me and gave Himself for me." Then you will truly value Christ's suffering, glorify the Father and the Son. Be occupied with this, and do not rest until you can rejoice in it.

(2) Against Similar Suffering.

XXXIX. Contemplate the suffering of Christ for comfort against similar suffering. I need not assure you that such suffering, both of soul and body, will befall you in this world. You are well aware of this

through experience, and you may even be tasting it now. You will often experience the bitterness of sin, God's displeasure over it, the hiding of God's face, the burden and terror of your conscience, the fear of death, the dread of condemnation, the attacks of Satan, poverty, contempt, and scorn, both due to your own fault and for the sake of Christ's godliness and name, persecutions for the sake of the Word, although you may not perceive it as such. Perhaps you will be called to martyrdom, to seal the truth with your blood, as well as bodily pains and sufferings of all kinds, some more, some less. But believers, you should not regard this suffering as God's wrath against you because Christ has atoned for all guilt and punishment. God is just; He does not demand and punish sins twice. Since the Redeemer has satisfied, you are free. These are not actual punishments or wrath against your person; the sting, the curse, has been removed. They are fatherly chastisements, born out of love, for your own good. It is the path the Lord has ordained to lead His children to heaven.

Therefore, in all your adversities, fix your gaze on the suffering of Jesus Christ, and apply it to yourself through active faith until you are vividly assured that He has removed guilt and the curse from you, and that these sorrows come to you in love. Stay close to the suffering Jesus, and let it be sufficient for you to become like your Lord. Take up your cross and follow Him. He has compassion on you; He will support you and provide deliverance time and again. Keep your eyes constantly on salvation, turn away from the world; this land is not your rest. Rejoice in the hope of glory. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time (1 Peter 5:6). Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord (Psalm 27:14).

5. Emulating Behavior in Suffering.

XL. Contemplate the suffering of Christ for emulation, to learn how to behave in suffering as Christ behaved and to use Christ's suffering as an example to deal with the old man as Christ dealt with your sins.

(1) Behave in suffering as Christ did.

(a) Christ was not insensitive; likewise, feel even the slightest discomfort.

(b) Christ complained about His anguish, both from within and from without, to God and people, and He stayed with them. So also, complain to God and people; complaining and groaning in pain is not impatience or sin. Do not withdraw from the company of people; woe to the one who is alone! Christ engaged in prayer; so should you: Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray (James 5:13).

(c) Christ attributed all suffering to God. "Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?" (John 18:11). Likewise, exercise faith in God's providence, and always see it as God's doing. Be assured that there is work attached to it.

(d) Christ remained in faith, practicing it even in His darkest moments and abandonment, saying, "My Father, my God." So you, do not cast away your faith and boldness; for everything good in bearing the cross must come from it. If you faint in faith, you bear a double burden.

(e) Christ endured suffering patiently and did not withdraw until everything was accomplished. Similarly, let patience have its perfect work. Just as you should not demand reasons from God for His dealings with you or judge whether God's dealings are right, you must be content with God's will. Do not set limits or determine the duration of your suffering.

(f) Christ consoled Himself with the promise of a good outcome, keeping His eyes on the glory and the joy set before Him, despising the shame, and enduring the cross. Likewise, look at the promises, which are "Yes" and "Amen," and be invigorated by them. Consider the glory, eternal joy, and salvation. Then the afflictions will be easier to bear, you will carry yourself more sanctified in them, and it will be found that these are but light afflictions that soon pass away.

2. Crucifying the Old Self.

Consider Christ in His suffering as an example for putting to death the old self and killing sin. Look upon the world and all its sins now with contempt and abhorrence, as if they were hanging on a cross. Crucify the flesh with its desires. How can you continue to do what Christ had to pay such a high price for? Shouldn't love for Christ and respect for His suffering arouse a holy vengeance in you to inflict pain and death on what caused Christ so much pain and death? Presenting Christ as an example and a powerful motive for putting sin to death, through union with the suffering Jesus by faith, His strength and power will also go forth to help you continue in crucifying and killing, and to grow in strength in this work. Therefore, consider yourselves to be truly dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:11). Judge that if one died for all, then all died... that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Terror for the Godless.

XLI. Unconverted ones! Come and carefully contemplate the suffering of Christ, as if looking into a mirror to see what will befall you, both temporally and eternally, if you do not repent. Perhaps it may serve as a means for your conversion and faith.

(a) You, who do not yet know the hideousness and bitterness of sin, who do not see or feel your wretchedness, who still delight in sin and think that as long as it's enjoyable, it can't be wrong, and are not concerned whether it is indeed a sin.

(b) You, who burrow in the earth like moles, one seeking sustenance, another wealth, and yet another honor, status, as if that were the goal and the only thing worth thinking about, where all your worries and desires lie, where your eyes gaze, where your hands work, and where your feet take you.

(c) You, who do not yet realize or know what a dreadful state it is to be without God, to live in separation and godlessness, and how blessed it is to live in reconciliation and communion with God, and therefore have no fear for the former and no desire for the latter.

(d) You, who do not yet understand the necessity of satisfying God's justice, but believe that if you repent of gross sins and pray for forgiveness, all will be well.

(e) You, who do not yet know Christ as the Redeemer, atoning for the sins of those who will be saved, who do not know how to receive Christ by faith, and have not experienced the struggles and exercises of faith.

(f) You, who lead a decent life, attend church frequently, are baptized, partake in the Lord's Supper, and live in such a way that no one can accuse you of wrongdoing, and you have confidence in your goodness for salvation. Poor soul! You are still dead in sins and trespasses; you are still blind; you are still without Christ and incapable of being saved.

Come and contemplate Christ's suffering step by step; investigate the cause for which Christ endured all this and realize that it was only for the converted, for the believers. Be deeply convinced that you have no part in it, but that you will suffer the same in all eternity if you remain as you are and die in your current state. For if the righteousness of God is so severe against the Substitute for the sins of the elect, whom He has loved from eternity, what do you think will happen to you? Oh no! If this happens to the green tree, what will happen to the dry one? Therefore, conclude with a vivid application that you have no share in Christ and His merits, but that you, found in yourself, will eternally lie in a state of separation from God, under His dreadful and unbearable wrath.

May God impress this on your heart, make you tremble and fear, and come to this Jesus, seek Him, strive for faith in Him, in order to approach God through Him and thus be saved.

But if you regard all of this with indifference, considering it as mere terror, and turn your heart away from it, you who read or hear this... then go your way. But know that it has been said to you, and your condemnation will be all the heavier.

Chapter 8

The State of Christ's Exaltation.

Having seen the State of Christ's Humiliation in which He acquired salvation for the elect, we now move on to the State of Exaltation, in which He applies and imparts salvation to His chosen ones.

The Person in His human nature is exalted. I. This State is called Exaltation, as stated in Philippians 2:9: "Therefore God has highly exalted Him." It is also referred to as Glorification in Luke 24:26: "And entering into His glory." Just as Christ, being a Divine Person, suffered not according to His Divine nature but according to His human nature, He is also not truly exalted in His Divine nature, for He always remained the Most High, the Most Glorious, and the Unchanging One. However, His exaltation was clearly manifested, which He usually concealed during His humiliation. He is exalted in His human nature. Not that His human nature is exalted separately, but the Divine Person is exalted in relation to His human nature. Just as Christ, in His humiliation, did and suffered everything as the Mediator and Redeemer, so He is also exalted as the Mediator and Redeemer. Therefore, even though He had indeed earned glory for Himself according to the Covenant of Redemption, it was all for the benefit of His elect, and everything descended again to them.

This state is commonly distinguished in four stages, namely:

1. The resurrection from the dead;
2. The ascension into heaven;
3. Sitting at the right hand of God;
4. Coming to judge.

1: The Resurrection

II. The first step is the resurrection of Christ from the dead. This is the cornerstone of our Christian faith, and salvation hinges on believing and confessing it. 1 Corinthians 15:14 says, "And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless, and so is your faith." Romans 10:9 adds, "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Therefore, this point is abundantly and clearly presented in God's Word, both through terms like rising (Matthew 28:6), being raised (Romans 4:14), and coming to life (Revelation 2:8).

In this regard, we need to consider: • The truth, • The necessity, • And the benefit.

The Truth

The truth that Christ was raised from the dead is evident in several ways:

(1) From the historical accounts of the resurrection, described in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20.

(2) Through various testimonies:

(a) From the angels in Matthew 28:5-7 and Luke 24:7.

(b) From the enemies who guarded the tomb in Matthew 28:11.

(c) From the apostles in Acts 2:32, where it says, "This Jesus God raised up, and of that, we all are witnesses." Acts 4:33 also states that "with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."

(3) From Christ's appearances to believers after His resurrection, as mentioned in Acts 1:3, where it says, "To them [the apostles] He presented Himself alive after His suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God." Christ appeared to:

(a) Mary Magdalene (John 20:14, 18).

(b) The women who came from the tomb (Matthew 28:2, 10).

(c) Peter (Luke 24:34).

(d) The two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-31).

(e) The eleven apostles when Thomas was absent (John 20:19).

(f) Eight days later to the eleven apostles, with Thomas present.

(g) Seven disciples who went fishing (John 21:1).

(h) Eleven disciples in Galilee, where Christ had instructed them to go (Matthew 28:16).

(i) More than five hundred brothers at once (1 Corinthians 15:6).

(j) James (1 Corinthians 15:7).

(k) The apostles when He ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9).

(l) After His ascension, to Stephen (Acts 7:55).

(m) To Paul (Acts 9:17; 1 Corinthians 15:8).

(n) To John, to whom He gave revelations.

Thus, Christ revealed Himself to His own, but He did not deign to reveal Himself to the godless who had scorned Him.

The Circumstances

III. Several aspects are noteworthy in Christ's resurrection:

(a) Christ rose with an earthquake. Just as the earth trembled when He died, and the temple curtain was torn, now the earth quaked again. This not only served as proof of Christ's divinity but also had a symbolic meaning. It signified God's wrath against the Jews and their land, which would be devastated and abandoned, leading to the inhabitants' miserable end. The Jewish religion would be taken away and transferred to the Gentiles, marking the end of ceremonial practices and the introduction of an unchanging religion.

(b) Christ's resurrection was also glorified by the descent of an angel in heavenly glory. The angel's face was like lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow. He rolled the stone from the tomb's entrance in front of the guards, who were terrified and became as dead men. To the women, he said, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said." This message was later confirmed by two white-robed angels, not only signifying their holiness but also the joy and triumph of Christ's resurrection.

(c) Concerning the timing of Christ's resurrection, it occurred in the spring, around the time when day and night are of equal length. In terms of the day, it was on the third day after His death. He did not spend three full days in the tomb, as that would require His resurrection on the fourth day. Instead, Christ was in the grave for three days, a part counted as the whole. He was placed in the grave on Friday before sunset (as the Jewish day ended), then from sunset

on Friday to sunset on Saturday constituted the second day, and from sunset on Saturday to sunrise on Sunday marked the third day. Thus, Christ was raised on the third day, ensuring full assurance that He had truly died and had not risen too early to prevent decay, as Psalm 16:10 prophesied. Christ, who is the Morning Star (Revelation 22:16), the Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2), the Rising Sun from on high (Luke 1:78), the Light for revelation to the Gentiles (Luke 2:32), became alive again at daybreak. Christ did not rise earlier to ensure that His death was beyond doubt and that His body remained uncorrupted, in keeping with Psalm 16:10, and all parts of His body were able to receive the soul once more.

The Sabbath Not a Symbol of Christ's Burial

IV. Christ was in the grave on the Jewish Sabbath, but the Sabbath was not a symbol of Christ lying in the grave. Why? Because:

- (1) Nowhere in the Bible is this stated.
- (2) Christ was also in the grave on Friday and Sunday.
- (3) The Sabbath was a day of joy, while Christ's presence in the grave was the epitome of sorrow.
- (4) His burial was a step in Christ's humiliation, not exaltation. It was a suffering for Christ; His soul and body were separated, providing no rest for Him. When His flesh is said to rest in hope (Acts 2:26), it does not mean that Christ rested contentedly in that state but rather rested in the hope of resurrection, which He was assured of.
- (5) If the Sabbath had been a symbol of Christ's burial, it would have been abolished with all its ceremonies. Yet, the Sabbath is

an everlasting commandment, as will be demonstrated. Therefore, it was not a symbol. Christ rose on the first day of the week, and since all ceremonial worship ended on that day, it was necessary to transfer the observance of the Sabbath to the day of Christ's resurrection, referred to by the Apostle John as the Lord's Day in Revelation 1:10. This practice has continued from that time to the present day.

With Wise Counsel

(d) Christ arose with calmness and wise counsel. Just as someone waking from sleep takes off their nightclothes and dresses, Christ left the shroud in the grave. The sweatcloth that had been on His face was neatly rolled up and placed in a separate location (John 20:7).

Christ Raised Himself

V. The cause of His resurrection is Christ Himself. Human nature consists of soul and body. These were separated by death, but both parts remained united with the divine nature. It was and remained the soul, and it was and remained the body of the Son of God. In His resurrection, the divine Person sent His soul back from paradise, the third heaven, and reunited it with His body, thus making His assumed humanity alive again through His divine power. So, Christ was not raised by another's power, as other humans are, but actively and immediately by His own power, by Himself. The divine nature raised His own human nature. This is evident:

(1) In John 2:19, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The temple Christ spoke of was His body (verse 21). The Jews would break this temple, meaning kill Him, and then the Lord Jesus Himself, not another, would raise it up: "I will raise it."

(2) In John 10:17-18, "For this reason the Father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father." The same authority He had to lay it down, He had to take it up again. He did both according to that authority.

(3) In Romans 1:4, it is written that Christ "was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead." The apostle presents the resurrection of the dead as powerful evidence that Christ is truly God. Now, merely being raised to life and resurrected is not evidence of divinity since that happened to many others and will happen to all people. Thus, the resurrection that serves as proof of the Son of God's identity is a power that only He, the true God, possesses. This is also evident because the two natures of Christ in Romans 1:3-4 are contrasted and clearly distinguished. Christ is presented "according to the flesh" and "according to the Spirit of holiness." Just as He was put to death in His human nature, so He was made alive again by His eternal Spirit, His divinity (Hebrews 9:14). It is clear, therefore, that He raised Himself.

(4) There was a need for Him to raise Himself because the Mediator who took suffering upon Himself also had to overcome it. If another had raised Him, He would not have truly conquered death, would not have redeemed Himself, and consequently, would not have been able to redeem others.

If one argues that Scripture sometimes attributes Christ's resurrection to the Father, it does not mean He did not raise Himself.

I answer: Since the Father and the Son are one and the same God, their power is also one and the same. What the Father does, the Son

does likewise (John 5:19). When Christ's resurrection is attributed to the Father, it signifies that He was satisfied with it and pleased in the resurrection of the Mediator.

With the Same Body

VI. Just as Christ truly rose, with extraordinary glorifying circumstances and by His own power, He rose with the very same body that had been crucified on the cross. It was entirely the same, retaining all the qualities of a body; it remained visible, tangible, and localized. Indeed, it still bore the scars of the nails in His hands and feet, and the spear in His side, as is evident from Luke 24:39, "See my hands and my feet; it is I myself. Touch me..." and John 20:27, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side." This was in accordance with Thomas's conditions, as stated in verse 25.

Yet Immortal

That very same body, having and retaining all physical attributes, became immortal after His resurrection, as stated in Acts 13:34, "he will not return to corruption," Romans 6:9, "knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again," and Revelation 1:18, "I am the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore." It is also glorified, as mentioned in Philippians 3:21, "He will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body." However, the extent to which He obtained greater glorification of the body inwardly during His ascension than He had during the previous forty days is unknown because it is not described. He could have concealed the utmost glory while He was with His disciples. He ate with His disciples, as recorded in Luke 24:43, to further assure them of His resurrection, but not because He needed food; His stomach

did not digest the food, which is inconsistent with a glorified body, but through His omnipotence, He caused the food to vanish.

This is the Truth.

2. The Necessity

VII. The second aspect to consider in Christ's resurrection is the necessity, for the following reasons:

1. Fulfillment of Prophecies

To fulfill the prophecies, as Christ Himself says in Luke 24:26-27, "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Also, Paul affirms in 1 Corinthians 15:4, "that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures." There are certainly more prophecies in the Old Testament than we perceive, and those we do see are not infallibly interpreted. Among them, these are clear: Psalm 16:10, "For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption." The apostle Peter affirms that these words foretold Christ's resurrection in Acts 2:31. Likewise, Psalm 110:7, "He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head." This pertains to Christ's exaltation, as confirmed by Hebrews 1:13. Isaiah 53:8-12 distinguishes His humiliation in expressions like "affliction," "judgment," "crushed," "make his soul an offering for guilt," and "pouring out his soul to death." His resurrection is conveyed through phrases like "prolong his days," "he shall see his offspring," "he shall prolong his days," "he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul," "he shall be satisfied," and "he shall divide the spoil with the strong." That this chapter

speaks of Christ is evident in Acts 8:32, 35, and consistently in the New Testament.

2. Examples

The examples had to be fulfilled. Many things can be depicted that bear some resemblance to the resurrection of Christ and can be applied to it, such as:

(a) Isaac, of whom Paul says in Hebrews 11:19 that he figuratively received him back from the dead.

(b) Joseph, who was delivered from the pit and later from prison, exalted to high rank, Genesis 41.

(c) Samson, who carried away the gates of Gaza and freed himself from the hands of his enemies, Judges 16.

(d) The scapegoat Azazel, Leviticus 16.

(e) The two birds, one of which was killed over running water, while the other, dipped in the blood of the slain bird, flew away alive, Leviticus 14:4-7.

(f) Daniel, who emerged unharmed from the lion's den, and his companions who came out unscathed from the fiery furnace, Daniel 6:24 and 3:26. In all of these, one can find some resemblance and apply them to the resurrection of Christ, but whether they are truly examples of Christ's resurrection is not so certain.

These two are the most probable but still not certain.

- The first one is Aaron's staff, Numbers 17. It withered and lifeless was placed in the tent of the testimony, out of sight of

people. And it happened the next day, behold, Aaron's staff had budded and produced blossoms and bore ripe almonds, verse 8. Undoubtedly, Aaron and the Levitical priesthood were a type of the High Priest Jesus Christ, as repeatedly mentioned in the letter to the Hebrews. As the High Priest, Christ died, was laid in the earth and hidden from the sight of men, and as such, He comes forth alive again, bringing forth glorious fruits. However, Aaron's staff was not laid in the ground.

- The second, if not a direct analogy, is Jonah, presented by the Lord Jesus Himself in Matthew 12:39. His being in the belly of the whale would symbolize Christ lying in the grave. The specific time frame, three days and not longer, and His coming ashore, symbolize that Christ would rise from the dead on the third day.

3. Mediatorial Office

The necessity is also evident from the Mediatorial Office. The Mediator had to:

(a) Overcome death, Hosea 13:14.

(b) Be an eternal King, Psalm 45:7.

(c) Enter the Holy of Holies as a High Priest, Hebrews 9:24.

(d) Send the Holy Spirit from heaven to His chosen ones, John 16:7. All of this He could not do unless He had risen from the dead.

This is the necessity.

3. The Utility

VIII. The third aspect to contemplate in the resurrection of Christ is its power and utility, which is exceptionally great. This is why Paul was so eager and continuously focused on contemplating the resurrection of Christ in Philippians 3:10: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection."

1. Justification

The first fruit is justification. Consider this in Romans 4:24-25: "But also for us, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." As long as the Redeemer remained under suffering, and death still held power over Him, the final payment had not been made. But when He also conquered the last enemy, death, and triumphantly emerged alive, it was proof that sin had been completely atoned for, the ransom paid, God's justice satisfied, and the Redeemer justified (1 Timothy 3:16). Thus, all children of God are reconciled in Him. No sin, not even the smallest part of it, remains unpaid. Therefore, they are free from all guilt and punishment. So, if anyone feels the dread of guilt and punishment, perceives God as being angry because of sin, and experiences nothing but fear in their conscience (such a person finds justification most desirable), they should turn to this and look upon the resurrected Redeemer as evidence of complete satisfaction. They should accept Him, who calls them and offers all His fullness freely. Then, they should approach God and ask the Lord, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead (1 Peter 3:21), "Have my sins not been punished? Is my guilt not satisfied? Has my Redeemer not risen from the dead and thereby reconciled You? Do I not have peace with You now?" Strive thus to apply all this on the basis of the promises made to all who receive Christ until you feel the power of Christ's resurrection for your justification and peace with God.

2. Sanctification

IX. The second fruit is sanctification, as shown by the apostle in Romans 6:4-5: "Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." The apostle also emphasizes this in Colossians 2:13: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." See also Colossians 3:1. Although believers are justified, they cannot be content with that alone. Their delight and life consist in finding the image of God within themselves, being like God, and thus being united with Him and living in Him. This is their blessedness. They cannot help but desire to know God, love Him, fear Him, be subject to Him, and be wholly united with His will in the soul's disposition, thoughts, words, and deeds. Therefore, they hate sin and consider themselves vile. They are ashamed before God, grieved with themselves, and troubled by their deeds. If they could only be freed from the sorrows of sin, it would mean life to them. This longing leads them to desire heaven because they know they will see God's face in righteousness there and be satisfied with His image when they wake up (Psalm 17:15). Therefore, follow this heartfelt desire and let it motivate you. It is the Lord's way to make His children grow in sanctification through struggle and to continue in happiness.

X. Setting Christ's Resurrection as an Example

(a) Set Christ's resurrection as an example and pattern. Christ rose in the morning; get into the habit of awakening with thoughts of Christ's resurrection, and let each awakening and rising from your

bed give you a stimulus to also rise with Christ. Christ rose on the first day of the week; thus, on every Sabbath, remember Christ's resurrection, uniting yourself with Him in the resurrection, and let it be a new awakening for your spiritual life. Christ left the grave, the place of the dead; likewise, as much as your vocation allows, avoid the company of the worldly and the godless, for they are dead and corrupt, and their corruption is contagious. Christ left His grave clothes in the tomb; therefore, despise the garment tainted by the flesh. Leave all sinful attire behind, whether it relates to honor, wealth, pleasure, or anything that the world seeks. Leave it in the tomb, in Sodom, in Egypt. Christ revealed Himself as alive; likewise, let your light shine. Let everyone see that there is a great difference between you and sinners. Demonstrate real denial of everything that the world clings to. Show your love, humility, and elevated life in the love and fear of God, the image of God, and the character of Christ in you. Not to be seen as yourself, but for the glorification of Christ, the conviction of the world, and the awakening of the godly. Christ's presence among people was only to convince His own of His true resurrection, strengthen them, and benefit His Church until the end of the world. That lasted only forty days, and then He ascended to heaven. Therefore, let your life be such that it leaves a godly trace on the earth, to convict and arouse those who have known you. Let it be only a preparation for going to heaven.

(b) XI. Consider Christ's resurrection as a motivation to live a holy life. This is what the apostle teaches us in Romans 6:11, 5: "Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Since the Lord Jesus, as my Substitute, has removed all my sins through His death and has risen from the dead as evidence of this, should I continue to live in sin? Should I not also rise with Him from the death of sin and live in all holiness?

(c) XII. In Christ's resurrection, there is power for our spiritual resurrection. 1 Peter 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Philippians 3:10: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection." Every believer is a member of the Lord Jesus. The same Spirit that is in Christ is also in them. They live through the same Spirit. Thus, what happens to the Head must also happen to the members. So, when Christ, the Head, rises, the life-giving power flows into all His members. Believers are grafted into Him like a branch into a vine. Just as a branch shares in the sap and life-giving power of the vine, so it must be that all believers receive the life-giving power of Christ. Therefore, when you unite with the risen Christ through faith, you will also experience the power of Christ's resurrection in your soul to give you new life.

3. Blessed Resurrection

XIII. The third fruit of Christ's resurrection is the blessed resurrection of believers. It is God's way to lead His children to heaven through many trials, including temporary death. While physical death is not a direct punishment for sin, it is still a difficult and painful path that, like all humans, they must traverse. Yet their death is without sting, without curse, because of Christ's death, and it is simply a peaceful departure. Through Christ's resurrection, they will be raised to salvation: Romans 8:11 states, "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He (the Father) that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Here, the resurrection is attributed to the Father, but why is Christ's resurrection mentioned alongside ours? It is to demonstrate that His

resurrection is the meritorious cause of ours. As 2 Timothy 2:11 says, "If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him." Christ is the Firstfruit (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23), the firstborn from the dead (Colossians 1:18). Therefore, the same will happen to the entire harvest and all subsequent believers. Since the church is the fulfillment of Him who fills everything, that is, Christ (Ephesians 1:23), the entire body of Christ, as members of His body, must also rise so that the entire hidden body of Christ may live.

Believers should apply this to themselves and rejoice in the hope of glory, saying, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1). Like Job, they may declare: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:25-27).

This concludes the discussion of the first stage of Christ's exaltation, namely, His resurrection.

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

XIV. The second step of Christ's exaltation is His ascension. In this, just like in His resurrection, we must consider:

1. The truth,
2. The necessity, and
3. The usefulness.

1. The first is the truth.

At times, it is presented with active words, as the work of Christ Himself, such as:

- Ascend: John 20:17. "I ascend unto My Father."
- Depart: John 14:3. "I will come again and receive you unto Myself."
- Go away: John 16:7. "It is expedient for you that I go away."
- Enter: Hebrews 6:20. "Whither the Forerunner is for us entered."
- Passed through the heavens: Hebrews 4:14. "Jesus, the Son of God, who has passed through the heavens."

At other times, it is expressed with passive words, indicating the Father's work in Him, such as:

- Taken up: Luke 24:51. "He was carried up into heaven." Acts 1:11. "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven."
- Exalted: Acts 2:33. "Being by the right hand of God exalted." This signifies the Father's pleasure, bestowing upon Him the promised glory: Philippians 2:9. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him."

Here, we have something to say about:

(1) The Person, (2) The act, (3) The time, (4) The place, and (5) The manner.

(1) The Person.

XV. Concerning the Person: the same Person, who is both God and man, who suffered as the Mediator, died, and rose from the dead, is the very same Person who ascended to heaven as the Mediator. This work does not pertain to His divine nature, for according to His

divinity, He was already in heaven beforehand (John 6:62) and had glory with the Father before the world was (John 17:5). But just as He concealed His divine nature behind His humanity during His descent, He revealed it more clearly in His ascension. However, because His divinity is boundless without spatial magnitude, it cannot change location, descend or ascend properly. Rather, this work is attributed to the Person according to His human nature, the same nature in which He suffered. It was not a work of His human nature because that nature was not a Person, but it was a work of the Person according to one of His natures, namely, His human nature (Ephesians 4:9-10). Now, when it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that He also descended into the lower regions of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens. The Person is named, and the work is attributed to that which is characteristic of Him according to one nature or the other.

(2) The act.

XVI. Concerning the act, it is His ascension. This word implies a change of place. When a body changes its place, it leaves where it was, traverses through space or locations, and arrives at a place where it was not previously. Similarly, Christ, ascending in His physical body, left the lowest place on Earth, where He had been for so long. He passed through the air and the expanse until He reached the third heaven, the paradise of God, the Father's house.

(3) The time.

XVII. The time was forty days after His resurrection. The number forty often appears in God's Word:

- Moses was with God on the mountain for forty days (Exodus 34:28).

- Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years (Deuteronomy 8:2).
- Elijah fasted for forty days until he reached the mountain of God, Horeb (1 Kings 19:5-8).
- After forty days, a servant had to be presented to the Lord (Leviticus 12:2-4).
- On the fortieth day, the infant Jesus was brought into the temple and presented before the Lord (Luke 2:22).
- After forty days of fasting in the wilderness, the Lord Jesus began His public ministry (Matthew 4).
- After forty days of interacting with His disciples following His resurrection, He ascended to heaven (Acts 1). Not earlier, so His disciples would be fully assured of His resurrection, and they could be taught about the things of the kingdom of heaven, which they could not bear earlier due to their weakness (John 16:12). Not later, to prevent them from clinging too much to His physical presence and to free them from the misconception of the restoration of the kingdom of Israel at that time.

(4) The place from where.

XVIII. The place from where was generally the Earth (John 16:28), specifically the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12), Bethany, a location on that mountain (Luke 24:50). The place through which included the visible heavens, the air, and the expanse (Hebrews 4:14), "who has passed through the heavens." The place where to was the third heaven, the abode of the holy angels and the elect, now enjoying eternal blessedness. Heaven is not God, nor the intimate fellowship with God, nor heavenly bliss; it is a place higher than the visible heavens (Hebrews 7:26), "far above all the heavens." Hebrews 4:14, "the third heaven, the paradise of God," 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4, "my Father's house," John 14:2. Therefore, Christ's ascension was not

metaphorical, as if it were actually a disappearance or becoming invisible of the body, a glorification, a physical omnipresence. It was a change of state and not of place; no, Christ's ascension was an actual, local change.

(5) The manner.

XIX. The manner of Christ's ascension is remarkable:

(a) Christ ascended to heaven while blessing. Luke 24:50. He spoke with them, took a friendly and familiar leave of them, pronounced blessings upon them, which He immediately confirmed, for they returned to Jerusalem with great joy (verse 52).

(b) He ascended to heaven visibly. The apostles were with Him; they spoke with Him, and He with them. He was taken up, and they saw it happen (Acts 1:9). Just as Elisha saw Elijah ascending to heaven, the apostles also saw Jesus ascending, until a cloud intervened between the ascending Jesus and the standing apostles, taking Him out of their sight. It is not that the cloud rose straight up to heaven like a chariot carrying Christ, for that was not necessary for Christ's glorified body, and it contradicts the text, which says that the cloud took Him out of their sight, so they could no longer see Him.

(c) He ascended to heaven triumphantly, having conquered death, the devil, and hell, accompanied by multitudes of holy angels. Thus, He made His entrance into the third heaven, to the throne of God (Psalm 47:6). "God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet."

(XX) From all of these, it becomes clear that Christ actually, truly, locally, and visibly ascended to heaven, which we will demonstrate in more detail to the Lutherans from the following reasons:

Proof 1: Christ was not omnipresent before His ascension and was not on Earth after it. Just as Christ was not present everywhere before His ascension, He was also not present everywhere afterward. Consider this: John 9:15, "I am glad that I was not there." Thus, after His ascension, He is clearly said, in terms of His physical body, not to be on Earth or in the world. John 16:28, "...I leave the world again." Matthew 26:11, "You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

If someone claims that these texts refer to His visible presence but not His physical presence, the answer is unfounded and without basis. Such a distinction is not found in God's Word, and it goes against nature because all bodies are visible. Elijah, speaking with Christ on the mountain, was seen even though he had a glorified body.

Proof 2: He did not become omnipresent in His ascension. The angels confirm this in Acts 1:9, 11. "He was taken up, and they saw it." That they could no longer see Christ was not because He became invisible but because a cloud came between them and took Him out of their sight. Therefore, the angels say (verse 11), "This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven." He ascended visibly into heaven, and in the day of judgment, He will come from heaven on the clouds and will be seen by all people (Matthew 24:30). The words "taken up" or "ascended" always imply a local change when referring to bodies. The apostles bear abundant witness to this (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50, 51; 1 Timothy 3:16). If someone were to use such words as "ascended," "departed," "left the world," or "was taken up" to describe any real person, and then argue that he was still in the same place where he had just been seen, even children and fools would rightly laugh at such a claim. Since these expressions indicate a local change for all

people, the same applies to Christ because He is both a true human and possesses a real body like others.

Proof 3: He was seen in the place of heaven. This is evident from the passages where Christ is said to be seen in heaven, such as Acts 7:56, "Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God," and 1 Corinthians 15:8, "Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared also to me." Thus, Christ remained visible and was in heaven.

Proof 4: He is above where the elect are. Just as the Earth is a place below, so heaven is a place above. Enoch and Elijah are in heaven as in a place, and the souls of the believers, along with those who are in the body, are in heaven as in a place. All the elect after the resurrection will be in heaven as in a place. Therefore, heaven is a place. Christ calls heaven "paradise" (Luke 23:43), Paul calls it the "third heaven" (2 Corinthians 12:2), and Christ calls it His Father's house (John 14:2, 3), where Christ prepares a place for His own and will take them to Himself, so that they may be where He is, where they will always be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17). It is certain that Christ entered this place in His ascension (Hebrews 6:20). Therefore, Christ actually, truly, visibly, locally ascended to heaven, and His ascension is not a disappearance or omnipresence.

Proof 5: It contradicts the nature of a real body. This is explained in detail in "The Papal Mass," Chapter 40.

Objection 1:

(XXI) Christ's human nature is united with His divine nature, so His human nature is wherever His divine nature is, that is, omnipresent.

Answer:

1. This argument contradicts itself because it is akin to saying that the sun is united with the firmament, so the sun is wherever the firmament is, that is, in the same place at the same time, constantly surrounding the air and the Earth.
2. If this were the case, Christ's human nature would have been omnipresent even before His birth. That body lying in the manger would not have been only there but also everywhere in heaven and on Earth. This reasoning contradicts both Scripture and nature, which demonstrate that one body cannot be in the same place as another. It would mean that all humanity existed within Christ's body, and all bodies would occupy the same place where His body is.

Objection 2:

(XXI) From the same perspective, it is argued that Christ sits at the right hand of God; the right hand of God is everywhere, so Christ's body is also everywhere.

Answer:

(1) Nowhere does it say that Christ's body is at the right hand of God. (2) Even if it were so, though it is said of the Person according to the human nature, sitting at the right hand is not a matter of place; for God is a Spirit, has nothing local or physical, but it means to be exalted in honor and glory. (3) If Christ's body were omnipresent because He is at the right hand of the Almighty, then all believers will also be omnipresent on the Day of Judgment. They will stand at the right hand of Christ, who is omnipresent according to His Deity, and so, if the conclusion from this reasoning were valid, they would also be omnipresent according to their bodies because they are at His right hand. Now, this latter proposition is clearly false, so the former is also false. (4) The syllogism is false in form.

Objection 3:

Ephesians 4:10 says, "He ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things." Since there is no place above all the heavens, including the third heaven, Christ's ascension is not a local change but a becoming omnipresent, and since He fills all things, He is everywhere.

Answer:

1. All heavens refer to the visible heavens, the sky, and the firmament, including all their spheres or heavens. Above them is the third heaven. Christ, having passed through the heavens (Hebrews 4:14), entered the third heaven, where the Word often says He is and where His children will be with Him.
2. Filling all things does not mean filling places physically, for then several bodies would have to occupy the same places. Also, "things" does not mean locations, neither in Scripture nor in secular writings. Filling all things means the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which He poured out upon His Church by virtue of His ascension (John 16:7), as indicated in the following verse (Ephesians 4:11): "And He gave the apostles, and so on."
3. This passage speaks of the Person of Christ and what is proper to Him according to His divine nature. He did not descend according to His human nature but according to His Deity. Now, if something is said to have descended according to His divine nature, it is not in terms of place but of action. In the same way, it is figurative regarding His divine nature when He is said to ascend. However, one cannot conclude from His Deity to His human nature and His body, for a body can truly descend and ascend.

Objection 4:

Descending to hell is not properly understood, so also His ascending to heaven is not properly understood.

Answer:

1. It does not follow that if something is said figuratively about Christ, then everything said about Him is figurative, even if He is the judge Himself.
2. Descending to hell, in the articles of faith, is said properly because it means being placed in the grave, being buried.
3. When Christ is said to have descended according to His divine nature from heaven, the figurative aspect is not in place but in the action, just as it is figurative according to His divine nature when He is said to ascend. However, from the Deity, one cannot infer anything regarding His human nature and His body because a body can truly descend and ascend.

Objection 5:

Christ is with His people on earth while He is in heaven, so He is everywhere. See: Matthew 28:20, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

Answer:

Christ is both God and man; therefore, whatever can be said of one nature cannot be said of the other. Also, whatever can be said of the Person cannot be said of both natures. For example: Christ is eternal; Christ died. Likewise: Christ is infinite; Christ is located in heaven. Christ is always with His people, and He is not always with His people (Matthew 16:11). So when Christ promises His presence with His people, that is said of the Person according to His divine nature

and not according to His human nature. However, these passages do not primarily speak of the presence of the Person but of Christ's support, help, comfort, blessings for all who seek Him, and of His power accompanying His Word. This is the truth.

Necessity. Prophesied and Prefigured.

(XXII) There is also a necessity for Christ to ascend to heaven: Luke 24:26, "Did the Christ not have to enter into His glory?"

1. So that the prophecies and types might be fulfilled.

- (a) It was prophesied: Psalm 24:9, "Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in." Psalm 68:19, "You have ascended on high," which the apostle clearly applies to Christ's ascension in Ephesians 4:8.

- (b) It was also prefigured; one can compare this with the ascension of Enoch (Genesis 5:24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11). The ascent of the Ark of the Covenant on Mount Zion, of which David says, "God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet" (Psalm 47:6), also points to Christ's ascension. But Christ's ascension was especially prefigured by the high priest entering the Most Holy Place (Leviticus 16), which the apostle applies to Christ's ascension in Hebrews 9:24 and 6:19-20.

2. Christ's High Priestly office also required His ascension. It was not enough for the high priest in the Old Testament to slaughter the animals; his office required him to enter the Most Holy Place with that blood. In the same way, it was not enough for Christ to suffer and be killed outside the gate to atone for the people's sins; He had to enter the very heaven itself with His blood, that

is, with the power of His suffering, to appear in God's presence for us (Hebrews 9:24). These two aspects of His High Priestly ministry cannot be separated. Indeed, if Christ had not ascended, if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all (Hebrews 8:4).

Benefits.

(XXIII) The benefits of Christ's ascension are exceedingly great and numerous.

Joy over Christ's glory.

1. It is a special source of joy for believers regarding Christ. He, who for our sake was poor, a Man of sorrows, and despised by men, has overcome all and triumphantly ascended to heaven. It was a day of great joy for all Israel when David, accompanied by all his people, brought up the Ark of the Lord from the house of Obed-Edom to Mount Zion. All Israel rejoiced, and David, filled with the Holy Spirit, danced before the Ark of the Lord (1 Chronicles 15). The psalmist sings about this: "The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the maidens playing timbrels. Bless God in the congregations, the Lord, from the fountain of Israel!" (Psalm 68:25-27). When Solomon was anointed king and seated on the throne of Israel, all the people went up after Solomon, playing flutes and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth shook and split (1 Kings 1:40).

With how much glory and joy did the Lord Jesus make His entrance into heaven! With what rejoicing did the heavenly hosts accompany Him on His entry! How gladly did the glorified ones behold Him! With what delight did the Father receive Him!

It is fitting for us, therefore, to follow Him and exclaim in joy: "The Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing" (Revelation 5:12).

The Benefit for Believers.

(XXIV) 2. Christ's ascension is also of great benefit to believers concerning themselves because through it everything He had earned for them by His suffering and death is applied to them. In particular, David (Psalm 68:19) and Paul (Ephesians 4:8) link these two aspects to Christ's ascension: He has taken captivity captive and has given gifts to men.

(a) Captivity Captured. The elect, and also you who read or hear this, were by nature under the power of the devil and subsequently under the world and sinful desires of the flesh. But Christ, having conquered these enemies through His death, triumphs openly over them in His ascension. The Romans, when they had conquered their enemies, would make a triumphant entry into Rome, during which they paraded the captives. Likewise, in His ascension, Christ did this by capturing those who had held His children captive. Look at the devil, the world, and the flesh as imprisoned and bound enemies, and yourselves as delivered from their power and dominion. Rejoice in this through faith and exclaim: "O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? They shall no longer have power over you. It is true that they often fiercely oppose you, inflict many wounds, and cause you much sorrow. But they cannot go further than the Conqueror allows; He knows how far it can be done without danger. He wants to show His children from what terrible lions and bears He has delivered them so that they may be all the more thankful. He wants to train them in the battle and make them

victorious over their enemies so that they may triumph with Him. Therefore, be encouraged in the fight, knowing that the enemies will not snatch even one of Christ's lambs away. Even the weakest among them will conquer and be crowned as victors.

(b) Distribution of Gifts. From Christ's ascension also flows the distribution of gifts. Those who love Christ are eager to honor their Lord and bring others to Christ. For this, they need various gifts such as knowledge, wisdom, boldness, teaching abilities, and other gifts. These gifts were acquired for them by the Lord Jesus through His death, and in His ascension, He received the authority to distribute them to His own. He gives them to each one according to their need for His work and as their desires for these gifts are directed towards Him. Therefore, if anyone among you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him (James 1:5).

Distribution of the Holy Spirit.

(XXV) The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is also a fruit of Christ's ascension. Even before Christ's ascension, believers received the Holy Spirit based on the promise of His upcoming ascension; otherwise, they would not have belonged to Christ, would not have been born again, believed, or prayed. They prayed for the Spirit:

- Psalm 51:13, "Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me."
- Psalm 143:10, "Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground."
- 1 Peter 1:11, "The Spirit of Christ who was in them."

But the Holy Spirit was not poured out as abundantly and visibly at that time in terms of individuals. After Christ's glorification, He abundantly poured out the Holy Spirit, as prophesied:

- Isaiah 44:3, "I will pour My Spirit on your descendants."
- Ezekiel 39:29, "When I have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel."
- Joel 2:28, "It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh."

We see the fulfillment of this in Acts 2:16-18. The Lord Jesus promised this multiple times, as seen in John 7:39, "But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified." Also, in John 16:7, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you."

Believers know that all good movements of the Holy Spirit in them must be worked, and they are eager for the communion of the Spirit and His indwelling in them. They continually pray for this and are saddened when they do not experience it or feel His effective working. However, they must always hold on to the assurance that He remains in them and will remain in them forever. Just as they know that Christ ascended into heaven, they can be equally sure of the fruit of it, namely, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, always take Christ's ascension as a ground to persist in prayer for an increase in the operation of the indwelling Spirit.

4. Intercession.

(XXVI) A fourth fruit of Christ's ascension is that He now fulfills the second part of His High Priestly office, namely, intercession, as we discussed in the previous chapter. Through this, He prepares a place for them (John 14:3). He is there as their Head, and they are thus seated with and in Christ in heaven (Ephesians 2:6). He acts as a Forerunner (Hebrews 6:20), having paved the way for believers to

continually approach the throne of God. The apostle strongly encourages us to do so (Hebrews 10:19-22): "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."

So, exercise your faith, go through Christ's ascension to the throne, find and behold your Jesus there. Desire what your soul longs for as if it were near. Rejoice that Jesus is there and is there for you, preparing a place and will ultimately receive you to be with Him for eternity.

Sanctification.

(XXVII) Christ's ascension also has the power to sanctify. For if the Head is already in heaven, His members will become heavenly-minded, continually being stirred towards holiness of life through His ascension. The apostle emphasizes this in Colossians 3:1-2: "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."

What is there on earth, children of God, that would hold you here? Because: (a) Christ is not here; He has left the earth and ascended to heaven. (b) Moreover, you know from long experience that everything on earth is vanity and cannot satisfy. Either you do not obtain what you desire, and it slips away as quickly as you pursue it, leaving you weary and exhausted in vain pursuit. Or if you obtain it, you often find it to be not what you expected, and it often turns out to be a thornbush or a thorn that embraced you to your own harm, even filth that contaminated you. How many times have you experienced that it troubled your soul, disturbed your peace of

conscience, hindered communion with God, and kept you in constant restlessness and torment? How earthly things intoxicate the soul, how sluggish, restless, and unfree you become in prayer, how they hinder the familiar expansion and perseverance in prayer, and how empty you feel afterward! (c) Furthermore, desire for visible things gains strength quickly, causing harm to your spiritual life. It takes a long time to break free from these snares and get your head above water. (d) And also, because, like Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees and Israel from Egypt, you have been called out of the world, do not stay there any longer, do not return to it, and do not look back at Sodom like Lot's wife.

Walk in Heaven.

(XXVIII) Instead, elevate yourselves above visible things, and let your conduct henceforth be in heaven, as Paul said of himself and believers in Philippians 3:20: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

(a) There is Christ; will not the heart be where the treasure is? Christ is your Treasure, your delight, your life, your love. He is in heaven, and the comfort of believers in this world is that they will be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17, 18). Therefore, engage your thoughts, conversation, and love there, where your citizenship is and where Jesus is.

(b) Heaven is your homeland. Consider yourselves as guests and strangers on earth, seek this homeland, and expect that city whose Builder and Maker is God (Hebrews 11:10, 13-16). You were born there (Galatians 4:26). It is your Father's house (John 14:2). It is your home (2 Corinthians 5:1). There are your brothers and sisters, and the angels with whom you share fellowship (Hebrews 12:22, 23). It is your inheritance, an incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading

inheritance, reserved in heaven for you (1 Peter 1:4). If all these things draw the thoughts, desires, and affections of the human heart toward them, how much more should heavenly things do so?

(c) Heaven is the only source of true delight. Enjoying even the small glimpses of heaven on earth brings unspeakable joy to the soul. How delighted Jacob was when something of heaven was revealed to him! He said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it. This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Genesis 28:16, 17). Moses' desire was to see the Lord's glory (Exodus 33:18). David's comfort was, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness" (Psalm 17:15). Asaph's pleasure was, "It is good for me to draw near to God" (Psalm 73:28). Since we are allowed to not only seek but also enjoy these blessings to a certain extent and degree, and since they are our delight and pleasure, let us continually strive for this joy and seek to enjoy it.

(d) Keeping our walk with Christ in heaven will cause our souls to shine even without our knowledge, just as Moses' face shone after spending forty days with God on the mountain. "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

(e) Pay attention to the drawing of the Lord Jesus. He is now in heaven, and it was His promise that when He was lifted up from the earth, He would draw all peoples to Himself (John 12:32). Believers, feel this drawing whenever you lift your hearts upward to heaven, look for light, life, and communion, and pray, "Draw me, we will run after You" (Song of Solomon 1:4). So, let Christ's drawing be not in vain; feel that draw quickly and follow it willingly, and you will find that it becomes easier to walk in heaven.

To this end, continuously consider what God's Word says about heaven. Pay close attention to the accounts of those who have been admitted to the inner chambers and have enjoyed foretastes of heaven. Recall what the Lord has revealed to your own soul and how sweet those experiences were. Pray fervently, and in your prayers, contemplate Christ in heaven, the angels, and the souls of the glorified, how joyful they are, how they bow before the Lord Jesus, how they are radiant with light, how they behold Jesus with boundless love, and how they rejoice, saying, "To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever!" (Revelation 5:12).

Sitting at the Right Hand of God.

(XXIX) The third stage of Christ's exaltation is His sitting at the right hand of God. Herein, we shall present the truth and the usefulness.

The truth: Christ's sitting at the right hand of God is frequently affirmed in God's Word. In the OLD TESTAMENT, this was promised in Psalm 110:1, "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand.'" It is evident that this refers to Christ in Acts 2:34 and Hebrews 1:13. In the NEW TESTAMENT, it is stated that this has occurred in Mark 16:19, "So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God." Colossians 3:1 also declares, "Where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God." Hebrews 1:3 states, "He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

It is a figurative way of speaking because God is a Spirit and has nothing in common with a physical body or any likeness to it. Therefore, God does not have a right hand, but it is a manner of speaking borrowed from humans. Generally, people have the most strength in their right hand and primarily accomplish their actions

through it. Hence, God's right hand symbolizes strength and effective execution. This is evident in Psalm 80:16, "The stock which Your right hand has planted," and Matthew 26:64, "at the right hand of the Power of God." Additionally, since the right hand among humans is esteemed as the most honorable, they place those they wish to honor at their right hand. Solomon did this for his mother in 1 Kings 2:19. Therefore, Christ sitting at the right hand of God signifies His exaltation to the utmost glory, as is evident in Hebrews 1:3, "He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty," and Hebrews 8:1, "at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty." In this sense, Christ is said to be crowned with glory and honor in Hebrews 2:9.

XXX. Sitting at the Right Hand does not imply superiority or supremacy over the One at whose right hand someone is seated. For even the Bride, the Church of Christ, is depicted as standing at Christ's right hand in Psalm 45:10, "The queen stands at Your right hand." However, she remains lesser than Christ. Similarly, it does not suggest any comparison or gradation regarding the Father's glory. It is beyond dispute that God remains the Most High, and no one can be above Him. Thus, any attempt to establish distinctions like right, middle, or left hand is futile.

Sitting at the right hand does not carry a specific meaning, as sometimes Christ is said to stand at the right hand (Acts 7:55) and at other times, to be there (Romans 8:34).

Provokes Sweet Reflections. From the concept of sitting, we can draw sweet reflections, such as:

1. Signifying greater honor since servants typically stand.
2. Denoting the active exercise and execution of His Mediatorial office, as kings seated on their throne or judgment seat are engaged in the administration of their rule.

3. Representing the sweet rest of Christ after His labor.
4. Indicating His residence in glory. While these reflections hold true and are comforting, the word "sitting" itself may not fully encompass them.

XXXI. However, both sitting, standing, and being at God's right hand signify the highest glory attainable by a creature. In this regard, Christ, as Mediator according to His human nature, is elevated, and He alone is exalted far above all the holy angels. Regarding this, the apostle questions in Hebrews 1:13, "To which of the angels has He ever said: 'Sit at My right hand'?" It is distinct from God being said to be at someone's right hand, which implies His effective assistance, while being at God's right hand signifies the utmost honor and glory, a distinction that belongs solely to Christ. Believers are promised to sit with Christ on His throne (Revelation 3:21), which signifies the sharing of His blessings and glory that Christ acquired for them in His humiliation and exaltation. However, they are never said to sit at the right hand of God.

As Mediator. XXXII. The Lord Jesus is seated at the Father's right hand as the Mediator. In His divinity, He is of one essence with the Father, equal to Him from eternity, and, in that respect, cannot receive greater glory. But His seating at the right hand reveals that, as the Mediator, He alone possesses divine glory, which He mostly concealed during His humiliation as a human. This is what He refers to when He says in John 17:5, "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." In His humanity, He is glorified beyond our comprehension, receiving as much light, love, and enjoyment of God as a creature can grasp. His body also shines in glory above all those around Him, as Paul speaks of in Philippians 3:21, "Who will

transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body."

Relates to the Three Offices. XXXIII. Sitting at the right hand of God as Mediator relates to His three offices.

1. As High Priest: Sitting at the right hand affirms His role as the High Priest. The Priestly office forms the foundation for the execution of His Kingship and Prophetic office. He had been promised to be King and Prophet to protect and instruct His people after fulfilling the conditions required in His role as High Priest (Isaiah 53:10). That He sits at the right hand is evident in Hebrews 1:3, "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Purging of sin is a function of the Priestly office, and this work is combined with sitting at the right hand, thus associating it with the Priestly role. A similar connection is found in Hebrews 10:12, "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God." We also find a clear statement in Hebrews 8:1, "We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."
2. As Prophet: He also sits at the right hand of God in His role as Prophet since He is said to send His Holy Spirit from there for the instruction of His people (Acts 2:33, 34). It says, "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God... He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand.'""
3. As King: In His role as King, He is seated at the right hand of God. Ephesians 1:20-21 states, "Which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right

hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion." Similarly, 1 Peter 3:22 reads, "who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him."

Is a work of both Christ and the Father.

XXXIV. This sitting at the right hand is sometimes referred to as a work of Christ: Mark 16:19 ... is seated at the right hand of God. Hebrews 8:1. For He had already completed all the work on earth and still had much to do in heaven, albeit not in humility as on earth but in glory. After obtaining glory for Himself, for the benefit of His children, as per the Covenant established with Him, He entered into possession. It is often attributed to the Father: Acts 2:33. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God. Hebrews 2:7 ... You have crowned Him with glory and honor. The Father bestows upon Him that glory, in accordance with the Covenant and His righteousness because He fulfilled the conditions. Isaiah 53:12. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great ... because He poured out His soul unto death. When Philippians 2:9 says that the Father has given Him a Name (Gr. favor), this favor does not imply that Christ didn't deserve it but rather that the Father, having obtained His request in full favor and love, gave Him that Name above every name. It can also be noted in relation to the chosen ones, for whom Christ has been graciously given and for whom Christ has been given everything necessary for the accomplishment of their salvation. This is the truth.

Utility.

XXXV. The utility of Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, in general, lies in the powerful execution of His offices.

As High Priest, seated at the right hand of the throne of Majesty, how potent is His intercession! How could the Father deny Him anything,

as He Himself says, "Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance" (Psalm 2:8)? How mighty is His advocacy, standing at the right hand of the Father with a perfectly just case to plead!

As a Prophet seated at the Father's right hand, He will provide His Church and children with sufficient gifts and graces. Acts 2:33. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

As King seated at God's right hand, He will powerfully gather His own into one Church. Acts 5:31. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. He will also protect His Church powerfully, ensuring that none will be lost and the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). He will punish and defeat the enemies of the Church. Psalm 110:1, 5, 6. "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" He will strike down kings on the day of His wrath. He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth (Psalm 110:5, 6).

The Second Coming to Judgment.

XXXVI. The final step of Christ's exaltation is His return for judgment. While the previous stages of Christ's exaltation are invisible to the world, discerned only by believers through faith, this stage will be visible to all, without exception. That Christ will certainly come as Judge and that it is a stage of His glorification is evident from these verses: Matthew 24:30. "Then all the tribes of the earth ... will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 25:31. "When the Son of Man

comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory." John 5:27. "And He has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man." The word "because" points us to His suffering and death as the fulfillment of the conditions in the Covenant of Redemption, through which He obtained the right and authority to be the Judge. We will not say more about this here, as we will discuss it in the second part.

XXXVII. Just as we concluded the humiliation of Christ with a general application, we will also take the steps of Christ's exaltation together and apply them.

Reflection on the History.

Let faith represent to you the past events and frequently go with Mary Magdalene to the tomb, stand there in quiet contemplation, see Jesus dead in the grave, and witness how gloriously an angel descends and rolls away the stone from the door of the tomb. Join in the appearance of the angels and all the revelations of Christ. Listen to all the interactions with the women and the disciples. Quietly immerse yourself in the truth and glory of Christ's resurrection, realizing that everything is accomplished, and everything has been conquered by Him. Go with the disciples to the Mount of Olives, hear Christ's final blessings, see Him ascend to heaven, and take His seat at the right hand of God in unimaginable glory. Listen to the rejoicing of the heavenly inhabitants: "God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet" (Psalm 47:6). How the glorious angels must have rejoiced! They who shouted when the Lord laid the foundation of the earth (Job 38:7), they who praised the Lord when the Messiah was born, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14). How innumerable they must have been, arranged from earth to

heaven! What a multitude went before and followed after! How they rejoiced and bowed down before the King of glory, proclaiming His honor and glory with triumphant fanfare! How the glorified souls longed to see Him! How they rejoiced in seeing Him and welcomed Him, exclaiming with humility: Hallelujah!

Turn your eyes immediately to that King of glory, behold that King in His beauty. Truly, as He was a man and, in His human nature, tasted all bitterness, distress, and shame with great poignant sorrow, so did He genuinely rejoice. That day was a day of joy for His heart (Song of Solomon 3:11). How joyful He must have been about the glory of God, from His Father, who, upon receiving His Son, whom He had sent for such a great work and who had faithfully accomplished it, gloriously welcomed Him! How delighted He must have been about the redemption of His brethren and that He was now going to prepare a place for them! With what pleasure the Father received Him, seated Him at His right hand, and crowned Him with honor and glory! In one word, heaven is filled with joy, and they sing in turns: "Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in." Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates! Even lift them up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory" (Psalm 24:7-10).

Contemplation of Christ in Glory.

XXXVIII. Although we are not allowed to see the heavens opened in the extraordinary way that Stephen did, witnessing the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56), and we cannot, like Paul, enter into the third heaven to behold Him up close, which we

will do after death, we must, nonetheless, see Jesus crowned with honor and glory through faith (Hebrews 2:9). Let faith be for you a firm foundation and evidence of things not seen, and engage in the contemplation of the glorified Jesus. It is not enough to focus on the truths presented in Scripture and remain at the surface level but penetrate into the contemplation of the realities themselves. It is not enough to look to oneself, to surrender to God in Christ through faith, to combat and mortify sins, to deny oneself, to seek the peace and quiet of conscience through the blood of Christ. It is not enough just to think about Christ's humiliation and seek satisfaction and redemption in it. Staying in these aspects alone is the cause of much lethargy, unbelief, instability, and hinders spiritual growth and the proper glorification of Jesus. But by adding Christ's exaltation to His humiliation, we gain much growth, comfort, and strength. This is the beginning of heaven, where seeing Christ in glory will be our eternal joy and occupation, as Christ prayed: John 17:24. "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me."

So that we may be engaged in this work here on earth, He also reveals Himself here on earth to those who love Him according to His promise: John 14:22. "Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, 'Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?'" The promise stimulates our search, the revelation awakens love, love prompts thoughts of Him, and thinking about Him is answered by clearer and clearer revelations. Thus, one thing causes another. Therefore, accustom yourself to the contemplation of the glorified Jesus, and let your meditation on Him expand in various ways.

1. As the True God.

XXXIX. Contemplate the glorified Jesus as God. Jesus our Mediator is not only a glorious and excellent man but He is God Himself, to be praised above all forever (Romans 9:5). The true God (1 John 5:20). The brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person (Hebrews 1:3). In the form of God ... equal with God (Philippians 2:6). Here presents itself an infinity of contemplation. When the soul is allowed to see and contemplate Jesus as God, the one and eternal God, in His perfections, one by one, then His all-sufficiency, then His sovereign supremacy, then the omnipotence, righteousness, glory, love, and mercy, and in each of these, an infinity beyond the small comprehension of a creature, becomes apparent—not to mention that it is not only a contemplative understanding or hearsay but a experiential vision, now feeling and savoring the power and sweetness of those unfathomable perfections. And when all these are brought together in relation to Him as Mediator, that He presents Himself in such a way that in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, that is truly, manifestly, (Colossians 2:9), and when one beholds His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father (John 1:14), then, then, I say, the soul loses itself. Then, then, it is able and willing, from the heart, to bow down before Him, to give Him honor and glory, and to declare the glorious splendor of His majesty (Psalm 145:5).

2. As Mediator.

XL. Continue to contemplate Jesus, crowned with honor and glory, as the Mediator in His received glory. Concerning this, Paul speaks in Philippians 2:9-11: "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." See

also Hebrews 1:4: "Having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Peter, James, and John caught a glimpse of this glory on the holy mountain (Matthew 17:2-5). But how much greater glory has He now received, having conquered all and seated with His Father on His throne (Revelation 3:21)! There, He is the conqueror, there He has the honor of being the Savior of all the chosen ones; the honor of being the one through whom the Lord's manifold wisdom, grace, righteousness, truth, etc., is revealed to angels and humans. There, He is declared and appointed as the heir of everything (Hebrews 1:2). He is the heir of everything in heaven and on earth, leaving nothing out, even the sun, moon, and stars, rain, wind, hail, and snow, all the creatures on earth, from the greatest to the tiniest ant, and even the wicked and even the demons, to use according to His will, for the benefit of His fellow heirs and to the honor of the Father. He is not only the heir in title but in action: He is placed in possession, in use, and in control of this inheritance. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him (Matthew 28:18). Now, the heathen have been given to Him as His inheritance, and the ends of the earth as His possession (Psalm 2:8). Now, He reigns from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth (Psalm 72:8). Now, He must reign as King until God has put all enemies under His feet (1 Corinthians 15:25). Now, as the great High Priest, He is... at the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:14, 16). Now, as the one and only great Prophet, He has given some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11, 12). Recognize Him as such and give Him glory.

3. The Work of the Angels Toward Him.

XLI. Continue and see how everything behaves toward Him. All the angels of God worship Him (Hebrews 1:6). They heed His command, and He sends them to carry out His orders (Revelation 1:1), and receiving any command from Him, they go forth as flames of fire (Psalm 104:4). Observe how the demons tremble before His glory; they are subdued by Him, and He has crushed their heads, and in their resistance, they are so under His control that they cannot even enter into pigs without His permission.

Imagine how all the believers from around the world look to Him alone and converge in Him as the focal point, ending their gaze upon Him; how they all run to Him as their salvation and blessedness; how they trust under His wings and humbly bow before Him, proclaiming: "Glory, and honor, and thanksgiving, and power be to the Lamb forever and ever!" When a believer carefully considers all these things, they will often be inflamed with love, joy over Christ's glory, and as if hearing the praises of the angels, the glorified souls, and the believers on earth, they will find their hearts stirred and join the singing multitude, rejoicing with them: "Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with understanding!" (Psalm 47:7-9).

XLII. To further arouse our souls to this holy contemplation, consider the following motives:

1. The Most Glorious Object of Contemplation.

Your mind cannot be devoid of thoughts, and the more glorious an object it has, the more it delights and becomes perfect. Your mind cannot have a more glorious object than the glorified Jesus, in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden (Colossians 2:3). Everything in the world is too low, too coarse, too dirty for your mind to engage with. Why would you let your eyes wander to that

which is nothing, a mere shadow, a transient, soul-wounding, soul-pressing, soul-destroying vanity unless God is seen in it? The glorified Jesus is beyond the reach of a worldly child; that is why they stray to earthly objects to occupy their minds and provide some pleasure, for they have nothing else. But you, believers, who know Jesus and love Him, what else should the eye of your understanding be engaged with other than seeing the King in His beauty (Isaiah 33:17)? When you begin to see Him, everything in this world will naturally lose its splendor and glory, and it will be easy to withdraw your love and attachment from all earthly things. Be ashamed that you so often turn your eyes away from Jesus. You experience daily that this hinders the soul from living joyfully and exalted, causing much darkness and gradually leading the soul to worldly things. Often, it takes much time and effort to detach from the earthly and be alone with Jesus in solitude, gazing upon Him with dove's eyes.

2. The Most Delightful.

XLIII. There can be nothing more delightful for a child of God than to contemplate Jesus. God desires His children to be joyful; He often stirs them to it, and He promises to meet their joyful desires. Well then, let your meditations of Him be sweet. After the sweet negotiation that Moses had with the Lord, he boldly expressed the desire that lay in his soul, saying, "Show me Your glory" (Exodus 33:18). The Lord was too good to deny him completely; He told him that he was too weak to endure the radiance of His glory, but that He would still show him His goodness and proclaim His name before him, which He did (Exodus 34:6).

Imagine the matter and judge if there could be anything more desirable and delightful for you than this: That the Lord Jesus took you by the hand, led you into His inner chamber, showed you all the

heavenly mysteries in the work of redemption, and revealed Himself in His divine perfections and in all the glory He has received as Mediator; and that He assured you with love that all His glory and fullness were for you and for your good, and that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were working together to elevate you to an unimaginable and inexpressible blessedness, to satisfy and encompass you with His love, sufficiency, and other perfections, now in time and hereafter in eternity. What do you think, could there be anything more delightful than this? This was the promise with which the Lord Jesus comforted and rejoiced His disciples: "I will love him and manifest Myself to him. We will come to him and make Our home with him" (John 14:21, 23). Consider all the expressions you have read about this in God's Word, all the delightful accounts of the godly who have seen the Lord, and what you may have experienced yourself; and I am confident that your heart will long for it, that you will grieve for having turned your eyes away from this glorious sight, and that you will be awakened to continually seek Him and gaze upon Him in His glory until you see Him more clearly up close and find joy in that sight.

3. It Has a Sanctifying Power.

XLIV. It is not only glorious and delightful to see Jesus crowned with honor and glory, but that sight also has a sanctifying and soul-transforming power. 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." Just as Moses, after his forty-day communion with the Lord on the mountain, shone with radiance, so do those who behold the glory of Christ become radiant with holiness. Surely, this is what you desire, what you pray and sigh for. Now, this can be obtained by beholding the glory of Jesus. Because:

(a) The soul admitted to this sight is so filled with sanctification and joy that it desires no other delight and does not think of any other pleasure. Therefore, all the desirable things of the eyes, all earthly beauty, sweetness, and delight, have no hold on it, and all their glory, love, power, and sweetness are lost to the soul, and it finds satisfaction only in being with the Lord.

(b) Since the soul in this sight finds so much delight and blessedness, it would not willingly lose that sight. And because it knows that sin would bring a cloud over it, it is very cautious to guard against sin. And since it knows the promise, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8), it pays close attention to keeping the heart pure and undefiled, always ready to see God.

(c) When one sees Jesus in glory, they see in Him honor, service, worthiness of obedience, through which sight the soul is bound and inclined without much reasoning and deliberation to be willingly and readily all that it is for Him and to do all that is pleasing to Him.

(d) The soul sees in all the perfections of the glorified Jesus His holiness, not as on Mount Horeb with dread and cursing against transgressors, but in His nature, in His lovely beauty, which immediately stirs all the affections of a lover to be holy as well.

(e) When the soul beholds the glorified Jesus, it perceives His eternal and perfect love for it, and the lovableness of Jesus Himself. It cannot be otherwise; the soul will be inflamed with reciprocal love (1 John 4:19). Love is of such a nature that it exerts all its power to please the beloved, and it strives to become like the beloved. See, thus, a beholder of Jesus in His glory is set on fire with love, which is the source, soul, or true form of holiness.

(f) Through that beholding, the soul is more closely united with Jesus, and the closer the union with Jesus, the more strength comes from Him; and the more strength and influence of the Spirit the soul receives, the less power sin has over it, and the more fervent it becomes in seeking to please the Lord. From all these, it can be powerfully concluded that beholding the glorified Jesus has a sanctifying power. I know that it may not happen to every godly person to see Jesus transfigured on the mountain like the three disciples or to be caught up to the third heaven like Paul. I know that some, reading this, will feel overwhelmed and begin to sink into despondency, thinking, "I am so dark, I live so low, I never come to such a view of Jesus in His glory!" But know that knowing these things, gaining love, desire, and longing for them by hearing and reading, and being distressed and melancholic because one is still far from them, are signs of the beginnings of grace; and therefore, let these motions only spur us on to work towards them. If we persist in prayer, waiting, hoping, believing, we will find that the Lord will reveal Himself to such. Therefore, be strong, and He will strengthen your heart (Psalm 31:24).

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