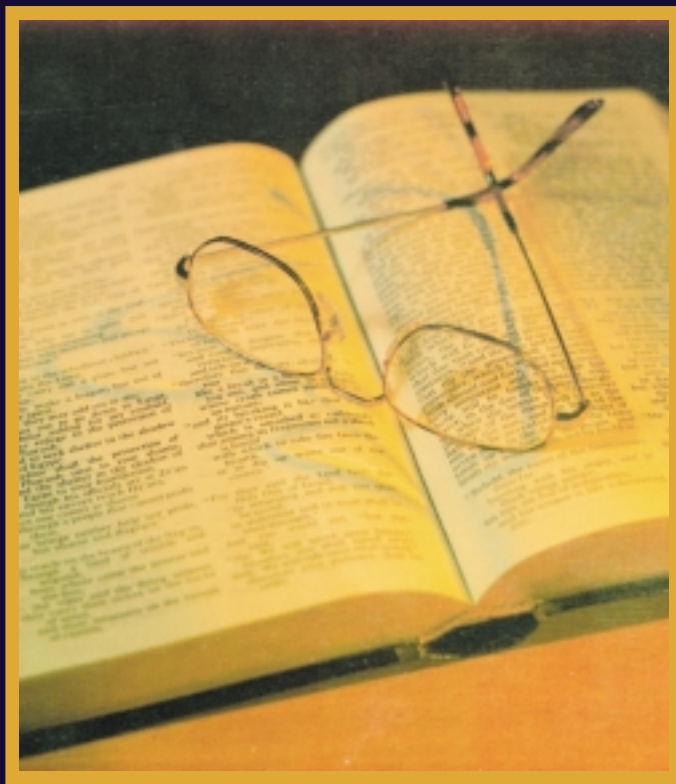

THE WORLD'S GREATEST TRUTHS

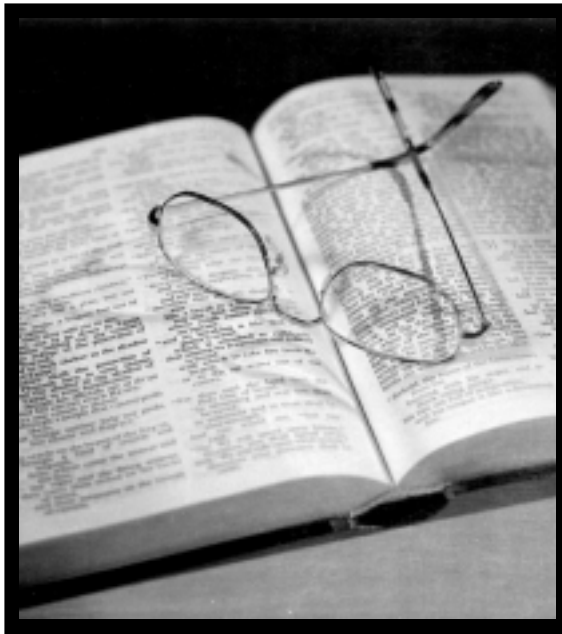
VOLUME ONE



LYNN GRAY GORDON

THE WORLD'S GREATEST TRUTHS

VOLUME ONE



LYNN GRAY GORDON, A.B.,B.D., M.DIV., D.D.

**Former General Secretary, President Emeritus,
The Independent Board For Presbyterian Foreign Missions**

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the memory of the Reverend Clyde J. Kennedy, D.D.

In 1940, Reverend Kennedy, a recent graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, stopped, with his wife, Dorothy, in the town of Gainesville, Texas, on their way to the West Coast. Since the local Presbyterian Church, USA, was without a pastor, he was persuaded to stay, “for a short while”, and minister to the people. He was such a dynamic speaker that the church persuaded him to remain in Gainesville, as the “Pulpit Supply” pastor. Before long, things began to happen. The young people’s group was re-vitalized, the church people were awakened to the truths of God’s Word, and even some of the deacons and elders were brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ! This writer had been made a deacon, and he was one of the ones who was brought to Christ! When these events began to happen, a small minority of the congregation took a formal complaint, objecting to what was happening, to the Fort Worth Presbytery. After a stormy session the Presbytery voted to remove Reverend Kennedy as pastor, because “he was causing too much confusion in the church”! This happened, in spite of the strong desire of the great majority of the congregation that he remain! He was urged to “go along” with the desires of the Presbytery, but his answer was, “I would rather preach from a soap box on the town square than to compromise my Biblical beliefs”!

The Kennedys then went to Glendale, California, where they developed a youth ministry. This later became the Glendale Bible Presbyterian Church, and it developed into one of the strongest

churches in that area. Dr. Kennedy organized a Christian school, the “Westminster Academy”, in connection with the church’s ministry, and this writer’s wife, Maurine Gordon, was asked to become the Principal, where she served for five years. Dr. Kennedy also led in the formation of Highland College, which functioned for a number of years, and trained many young men and women who later became leaders in churches and in the mission fields of the world. This writer was President of Highland College for two years, before moving on to Seattle, Washington, where he established the Bible Presbyterian Church.

Dr. Kennedy was called to the pastorate of the Tacoma, Washington, Bible Presbyterian Church, where he served for six years. He then was invited to become President of Shelton College, located in Ringwood, New Jersey, where he served, in an outstanding manner until the fall of 1962. Dr. Kennedy suddenly contracted a severe brain tumor, and went home to be with the Lord in September, 1962.

Clyde J. Kennedy was an outstanding Christian leader. His fervent love for the Word of God, his strong determination to win souls for Christ, his refusal to compromise his Biblical position just for human gain, his ability to preach “The Whole Counsel of God”, — all these traits identified him as truly one of God’s great servants!

This writer is convinced that whatever success has been his in this world is due in large part to the uncompromising, faithful leadership Clyde Kennedy manifested to him. To a very large degree, he owes whatever success he has had, whether it be in the pastoral ministry, as an Army chaplain, as the President of Highland College, as the General Secretary of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Home Missions, and then, from 1968 to 1987 as General Secretary and President of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, — in a very large part he owes to the training and example given him by this outstanding Christian leader. “*He, being dead, yet speaketh*” (Heb.11:4).

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FOREWORD

Dr. Lynn Gray Gordon is my good friend for the last fifty years. I first came to know him when we were students at Faith Theological Seminary in 1948. He was one year my senior. During the years, we have crossed each other's paths many a time in the testimony of the 20th Century Reformation under the banner of the International Council of Christian Churches.

Recently, when he asked if I could publish this his *magnum opus*, I counted it a great honour to be able to do so. For here is a hidden gem of great price which truly contains "The World's Greatest Truths." And it is written in such clear, graduated fashion, as a workbook, that any individual self-studying this "*shall not err therein*" (Isaiah 35:8).

I heartily agree with the author that this book be used for training new members of the Church (through the Sunday School), for missionaries (to brush up their theology), and I would add that this be a compendium for every pastor and student of theology. Above all I would make this a textbook for Far Eastern Bible College.

The World's Greatest Truths has come for such a time as this for the teaching of the whole Church World. All glory to His name. Amen.

Timothy Tow

PREFACE

This course, “The World’s Greatest Truths”, was originally prepared and used by the writer, who, as an Army Chaplain during the Korean War, taught the Bible to soldiers who were seeking a deeper insight into the Scriptures. The notes have been used in various situations: They have been the basis for Bible courses in a Christian college, in a number of new churches organized by the writer, and as a continuing series of messages on several radio stations.

In this Twentieth Century, where there is an alarming scarcity in the teaching of the Word of God, it is a rich blessing to see the joyous reception of those who enter into these studies. Christians are hungry for Biblical studies which approach the Scriptures with the conviction that the Bible is true in every respect; that there are no mistakes in the Bible; that an omnipotent God directed and guided the human writers so that that which was written down, both in the Old and New Testaments, was totally free from error in thought, fact and doctrine; and that *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* (2 Timothy 3:16,17)

This course has been revised in its format. It is now in the form of a teaching manual/personal workbook in order to meet the varying needs of Christians in different parts of the world:

(1) It can be used in individualized, personalized study.

- (2) It can be the basis of a church-wide training program for new members.
- (3) It is especially designed to be a classroom course for young people of high school and college age, with each student having his own workbook, because **this is the age group which will determine where the church stands, doctrinally, in future years.** Proverbs 22:6 verifies this: *“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* (See also Deuteronomy 6:7-9).
- (4) It can be used as the basis for a classroom course for Sunday Schools for people of all ages.
- (5) It can also be used as a correspondence course for missionaries on mission fields, both in the United States and throughout the world.

Extensive use is made of several historic documents which have been of great blessing to Christians down through the years. These documents, all based upon the Holy Scriptures, include: (1) The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms; (2) Commentaries on the Holy Scriptures and on various documents of the Reformed Faith by recognized scholars who hold the Scriptures to be infallible, inerrant and totally sufficient to meet every need of the human heart. The student should note that each document mentioned during this course is listed in the Bibliography, located in the back of this book, with information given as to where it may be secured. Wherever possible, it is strongly urged that all these books be made a part of every student's library.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH

It is well to give a brief history of the Westminster Confession of Faith, since we will be studying the Scriptures by means of this amazing document. This is the doctrinal standard of the Reformed

Faith and was the product of the combined efforts of great spiritual leaders who met in Westminster, England. The British Parliament called the Assembly, against the will of King Charles I. The members were representatives of the Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Independent parties, and the first session was held on July 1, 1643. They met for a total of one thousand one hundred and sixty-three sessions, covering a period of five years, six months and twenty-two days, ending on February 22, 1649. This document has since been acclaimed far and wide as the finest doctrinal presentation of the Reformed Faith ever formulated of the Biblical truths taught in the Holy Scriptures!

The Westminster Confession of Faith became the doctrinal standard of all Presbyterian bodies throughout the world. It has been used to establish many churches in North America, South America, Europe, Australia, the Middle East, India and in all of the Orient. The doctrinal soundness of the Korean Presbyterian Church, for example, stems directly from the determination by early missionaries to teach all the great Biblical truths by means of the Westminster Confession of Faith. One of those early missionaries, Dr. J. Gordon Holdcroft, who later became General Secretary of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, introduced the Summer Bible School Curriculum, a twelve year system of Summer Bible School teaching developed by Dr. A. L. Latham, of Chester, Pennsylvania, and which covered all parts of the Westminster Confession. In 1912, Dr. Holdcroft had this curriculum translated in its entirety into the Korean language. It became the standard for teaching the youth and adults of Korean Presbyterians for many years. And this writer is convinced that this is the main reason the Korean Presbyterian Church became such a strong, biblically-centered church.

The Westminster Assembly was characterized by three main factors. First, the various individuals were the spiritual leaders of the British Isles. Every member was carefully selected on the basis of learning and intellectual gifts. Second, they possessed deep and genuine spirituality. They were spiritual giants, who set aside one

entire day of each month for prayer and fasting. Third, their one primary objective was to think Biblically and to express the mind of the Holy Scriptures. The success of this work is evidenced by the fact that the Confession of Faith has needed no significant changes for over three hundred years since the publication of the work!

It is safe to say that any church which makes a serious effort to apply the teachings of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms to its children, youth, adults and officers, will not turn away from the truths of the Holy Scriptures but will continue to be a beacon of spiritual light in this dark and dying world. Its truths, as expressed in its Shorter and Larger Catechisms, plus certain verses of Scripture, should be memorized by all, and the various chapters of the Confession itself should be the subject of an ongoing program of study by all age groups. The Westminster Assembly had as its goal, *“giving to the accepted Bible system of truth a complete, impregnable statement, to serve as a bulwark against error, as a basis of ecclesiastical fellowship and cooperation, and as a safe and effective instrument for the religious instruction of the people of God and their children”*. This goal was accomplished, and we now have a veritable treasure of Biblical teaching which serves as a solid foundation for all who enter into its study!

Assignment

Write a one-page summary of the history and importance of the Westminster Confession of Faith.



From time to time, you will be asked to memorize certain Biblical verses, as well as the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. The following plan has been tried and proven over many years. And the plan works! It is the method known as “The 3 R System”.

THE 3 R SYSTEM OF MEMORIZATION

1. **READ** the verse or passage 5 times, aloud. Keep your eyes trained on the words. Do not look away!
2. **RECITE**. Look away, and recite the passage 5 times aloud.
3. **REVIEW** the passage aloud, 5 times a day for 5 days. Success is assured if this method is faithfully followed. When learning Scripture, always include the reference.

INTRODUCTION: IMPORTANCE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

As we begin this course it is most fitting that we start by surveying the one document upon which all bodies of truth must be founded — The Holy Scriptures. These sixty-six volumes of the Old and New Testaments have stood the test of time! They have been attacked more severely than any other document which has ever been written. The attack began in the Garden of Eden when Satan spoke to Eve, and said, “*Yea, hath God said?*” The attacks have continued until this very hour, and we feel certain they will continue until Satan has been destroyed, and when time is no more!

One of the greatest Biblical expositors of all time was Matthew Henry, of the British Isles. He was born in 1663, and died in 1714. At the beginning of his six-volume commentary on the entire Bible he wrote the following:

We have now before us the holy Bible, or ‘book’, for so ‘bible’ signifies. We call it ‘the book’, by the way of eminency; for it is incomparably the best book that ever was written, the book of books, shining like the sun in the firmament of learning, other valuable and useful books, like the moon and stars, borrowing their light from it. We call it the holy book, because it was written by holy men, and indited by the Holy Ghost; it is perfectly pure from all falsehood and corrupt intention; and the manifest tendency of it is to promote holiness among men. The great things of God’s law and gospel are here written to us, that they might be reduced to a greater certainty, might spread further, remain longer, and be transmitted to distant places and ages more pure and entire than possibly could be by

report and tradition: and we shall have a great deal to answer for if these things which belong to our peace, being thus committed to us in black and white, be neglected by us as a strange and foreign thing, (Hosea viii 12). The Scriptures, or writings of the several inspired penmen, from Moses down to St. John, in which divine light, like that of the morning, shone gradually (the sacred canon being now completed), are all put together in this blessed Bible, which, thanks be to God, we have in our hands, and they make as perfect a day as we are to expect on this side heaven. Every part was good, but all together very good. This is the *light that shines in a dark place* (2 Peter 1:19), and a dark place indeed the world would be without the Bible. (Matthew Henry's Commentary, Volume 1, p.1)

The Old Testament begins with the account of the creation of the world. Since God by His word calls all things into being, in the Scriptures He is placed above the beginning of all time as the one eternal and absolutely independent One. The naturalist Cuvier stated, concerning the first words of Genesis:

A sublimer passage than this from the first word to the last never can or will come from a human pen: '*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*'

In the meaning of the introductory chapter of Genesis, without which the whole history of revelation would hang in the air without a beginning, J. G. Stalb wrote, in 1852:

Whence do these chapters come? I do not know. There they stand, and ever continue to stand, often as it hath been attempted to explain them away; and there, doubtless, will they remain until the end of the world, until the conclusion of God's kingdom on earth joins hands with the beginning, and the light of the beginning will again be recognized in the light of the end, and the light of the end in the light of the beginning, that God may be all in all. (Theology of the Old Testament, Oehler p.51)

The great Old Testament scholar, Dr. Robert Dick Wilson, of Princeton Theological Seminary, was thoroughly conversant in over 40 Semitic languages. He was a staunch defender of the doctrine of the infallible, inerrant, verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. During an address entitled, “What Is An Expert?” he said,

The prophets of Israel declared that their teaching came from God. The modern critical school is antagonistic to this claim. They say that the prophets gave utterance to ideas of their own time, and that they were limited by their environment. But if this is so, how does it come about that neither from the oracles of Thebes and Memphis, nor from Delphi and Rome, nor from Babylon, nor from the deserts of Media, but from the sheepfolds and humble houses of Israel, yes, from the captive by the river of an alien land, came forth those great messages of hope and salvation? One of the mighty phrases of Scripture is that of ‘*God with us*’; this is the key which unlocks the mysterious chambers of the Old Testament, and opens to us their rich and enduring treasure.

Note: It is very important to understand the necessity of maintaining and defending the truth of the Scriptures, because Satan is always actively seeking to implant doubt and false teaching. We cite, for an example, the tragic developments which have occurred within the Presbyterian Church, USA. In 1892, at Union Theological Seminary, in New York City, there was a popular professor by the name of Charles Augustus Briggs. He published a book in which he stated,

There can be no doubt that recent criticisms have considerably weakened the evidences from miracles and predictive prophecy. To many minds it would be easier to believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures and the divinity of Jesus Christ if there were no such things as Miracles and Predictions in the sacred Scriptures.

Because of this teaching the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church excommunicated Professor Briggs from the church. But the Seminary retained him on its faculty, withdrew from

the denomination and became an independent seminary! Professor Briggs continued to teach his subtle unbelief. The students were thus exposed to much false teaching, and then, upon being graduated, went into the churches across the land and across the world, teaching what they had been taught!

Because of these developments, the General Assembly in 1910 drew up a doctrinal statement, know as “The Five Points of Fundamentalism”. This statement was reaffirmed in 1926 due to the attacks that were being made upon them by the liberals and those who had succumbed to the higher critical assaults upon the Bible and the Christian faith. The statement reads as follows:

1. It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards that the Holy Spirit did so inspire, guide and move the writers of the Holy Scripture as to keep them from error.
2. It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary.
3. It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards that Christ offered Himself up a sacrifice to satisfy Divine justice, and to reconcile us to God.
4. It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, that on the third day He rose again from the dead with the same body with which He suffered, with which also He ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of His Father, making intercession.
5. It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God as the supreme standard of our faith that our Lord Jesus Christ showed His power and love by working mighty miracles. This working was not contrary to nature, but superior to it.

This is a clear, Biblically-centered statement, and it should have settled the matter. However, the false doctrinal teaching of Professor Briggs had taken root in the minds of too many individuals. In 1923,

a small group of Presbyterian ministers met in Auburn, New York, and drew up a statement, now known as “The Auburn Affirmation”, and proceeded to circulate it throughout the church. Within one year, 1293 Presbyterian ministers had signed it! The Affirmation called these five points of doctrine “theories”, and stated they were “not the only theories”. This Affirmation stated:

Some of us regard the particular theories contained in the deliverance of the General Assembly of 1923 as satisfactory explanations of these facts and doctrines. But we are united in believing that these are not the only theories allowed by the Scriptures and our standards as explanations of these facts and doctrines of our religion, and that all who hold to these facts and doctrines, whatever theories they may employ to explain them, are worthy of all confidence and fellowship.

The Auburn Affirmation rejected the doctrine of the inerrancy of the Scriptures. It said,

The doctrine of inerrancy, intended to enhance the authority of the Scriptures, in fact impairs their supreme authority for faith and life, and weakens the testimony of the church to the power of God unto salvation through Jesus Christ.

And the final change from the doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith came about, in 1967, when this same Presbyterian Church, USA drew up the “Confession of 1967. In discussing its planned adoption, “Christianity and Crisis”, May 17, 1965, edited by the leadership of Union Theological Seminary, described it as follows:

It will be observed at once that the new confession, which does aspire to constitutional status, does not specify any of the five fundamentals. It does not explicitly deny them, but the treatment of the Bible will not give comfort to those who hold for literal inerrancy. One might say in fact that the new confession goes down the line of the doctrinal paragraphs of the famous Auburn Affirmation of 1924, which opposed the exclusive assertion of fundamentalist tenets. What was a

barely tolerated minority opinion 40 years ago is now being proposed as the official doctrine of the church.

Moral:

Resist the beginnings! “*A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump!*”



Note

For the sake of brevity, during this course of study the following abbreviations will be used:

- Westminster Confession of Faith — WCF
- Westminster Larger Catechism — WLC
- Westminster Shorter Catechism — WSC

Also, all Biblical quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible.

PART ONE

WHAT WE ARE TO BELIEVE CONCERNING THE BIBLE

LESSON ONE

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, THE SOLID ROCK OF TRUTH

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 1, Section 1: Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation; therefore, it pleased the Lord, at sundry times and in diverse manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church; and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

Rom.2:14,15; 1:19,20; Ps.19:1-3; Rom.1:32; 2:1; 1 Cor.1:21; 1 Cor.2:13,14; Heb.1:1; Prov.22:19-21; Luke 1:3,4; Rom.15:4; Matt.4:4,7,10; Isa.8:19,20; 2 Tim.3:15; 2 Pet.1:19; Heb.1:1,2.

WLC Question #1: “What is the chief and highest end of man?”

Answer: “Man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever.” (See Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 10:31)

WLC Question #2: “How doth it appear that there is a God?”

Answer: “The very light of nature in man, and the works of God, declare plainly that there is a God; but his word and Spirit only do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation.” (See Rom.1:19,20; Psa.19:1-4; 1 Cor.1:21; 2:9,10)

WSC Question #1: “What is the chief end of man?”

Answer: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.” (See 1 Cor. 10:31; Psa. 73:24-26)

Assignments

Memorize WSC #1;
Memorize WLC #1 and #2;
Memorize Psa.73:24-26.

APPLICATION

This first section teaches four important facts.



Note

(Where lines are provided, fill in the blanks with the proper answer.)

I. There is a God.

That which man sees in the light of nature and the works of creation and providence clearly demonstrate this fact. This serves many useful purposes.

A. The Scriptures clearly proclaim this fact:

Psalm 19:1-3: _____

B. Acts 14:17 testifies four things:

1. He left not _____
2. He gave _____
3. He gave us _____
4. He fills our hearts _____

C. Romans 1:18-20 states that the invisible things declare him!:

What 4 facts do we learn from Romans 1:18-20?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Assignment

Memorize Romans 1:18-20

John Calvin wrote:

We lay it down as a position not to be controverted, that the human mind, even by natural instinct, possesses some sense of a Deity. For that no man might shelter himself under the pretext of ignorance, God hath given to all some apprehension of his existence, (Romans 1:20), the memory of which he frequently and insensibly renews; so that, as men universally know that there is a God, and that he is their Maker, they must be condemned by their own

testimony, for not having worshipped him and consecrated their lives to his service. ... There is no nation so barbarous, no race so savage, as not to be firmly persuaded of the being of a God. Even those who in other respects appear to differ but little from brutes, always retain some sense of religion; so fully are the minds of men possessed with this common principle, which is closely interwoven with their original composition. (Calvin's Institutes, Vol. I, p.54)

II. But this light of nature is not sufficient to give fallen man that knowledge of God which is necessary for salvation.

A. 1 Corinthians 1:21 gives us two facts about this knowledge of God:

1. The world by wisdom _____
 2. By the foolishness of preaching God saves _____
-

On this passage, John Calvin wrote:

What (Paul) denominates the wisdom of God is this magnificent theater of heaven and earth, which is replete with innumerable miracles, and from the contemplation of which we ought wisely to acquire the knowledge of God. But because we have made so little improvement in this way, he recalls us to the faith of Christ, which is despised by unbelievers on account of its apparent folly. Wherefore, though the preaching of the cross is not agreeable to human wisdom, we ought, nevertheless, to embrace it with all humility, if we desire to return to God our Creator, from whom we have been alienated, and to have him reassume the character of our Father. Since the fall of the first man, no knowledge of God, without the Mediator, has been available to salvation. (Calvin's Institutes of The Christian Religion, Book II, Chapter VI)

B. In Acts 4:12 we are told that there is only one name which provides salvation. What is that name? _____

Assignment

Memorize Acts 4:12.

III. Through the ages, God gave a gradual, supernatural revelation of His will.

A. Hebrews 1:1,2 describes 2 ways this was accomplished:

1. By _____

2. By _____

B. The Holy Scriptures have been miraculously preserved down through the ages.



Note

Thomas Watson wrote,

The devil and his agents have been blowing at scripture light, but could never blow it out; clear sign that it was lighted from heaven. ... The letter of Scripture has been preserved, without any corruption, in the original tongue. The Scriptures were not corrupted before Christ's time, for then Christ would not have sent the Jews to them. He said, '*Search the Scriptures.*' He knew these sacred springs were not muddied with human fancies. (Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, p.27)

For over two thousand six hundred years before Moses wrote the Pentateuch, no part of the Word of God was written. It was handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth through the patriarchs. Robert Shaw commented,

Two persons might have conveyed it down from Adam to Abraham; for Methuselah lived above three hundred years while Adam was still alive, and Shem lived almost a hundred years with Methuselah, and above one hundred years with Abraham. (Shaw, *The Reformed Faith*, p.6)

IV. God caused this revelation to be written down in a very special way.

2 Peter 1:21 _____

It was impossible for the Old Testament writers to make a mistake! Why? God, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, guided them as they wrote. And God cannot lie! (*“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness.”* 2 Tim.3:16)

ADDITIONAL FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. The doctrine of total inspiration of the Scriptures means that God inspired the writers in such a way that the original manuscripts were totally without error. Although the King James version is free from error in thought, fact and doctrine, that is not to say this version is the “inspired version”. All of the original manuscripts of both the Old and the New Testaments have long since disappeared. However, since there are thousands of ancient portions of early translations still in existence, and since literally hundreds upon hundreds of so-called “scholars” have spent years attempting to disprove the Bible, without success, they are the basis for providing us with a document which is free from error in thought, fact and doctrine!
2. Now that the Holy Scriptures have been completed, all former ways for God to reveal His will have ceased, and the written Word is the only infallible guide for the lives of men.
3. There are now no new revelations from God, because He has caused everything for the needs of mankind to be written in His Holy Word. Therefore, all “new revelations” and speaking in unknown tongues are contrary to the will of God. (Examine Isaiah 8:20).

4. The Old and New Testaments are the foundation of all true religion. These Scriptures are sacred, and could come only from God, because neither angels nor men could write so much that they did not understand!

QUESTIONS

1. How do you know that the Scriptures are inspired?

2. Why isn't the light of nature sufficient to lead us to salvation?

3. Examine the four basic truths discussed in this lesson, and write your own summary.

4. Describe what Robert Shaw said about the Scriptures, and apply this to your own personal faith.

5. Recite, from memory, the answer to WSC #1.
6. Recite, from memory, the answer to WLC #1.
7. Recite, from memory, Psalm 73:24-26.

LESSON TWO

THE INFALLIBLE RULE OF TRUTH

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 1, Section 2: Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these: (herein are listed the 39 Old Testament books and the 27 New Testament books) — All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.

Luke 16:29,31; Eph.2:20; Rev.22:18,19; 2 Tim.3:16;

WCF, Chapter 1, Section 3: The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.

Luke 24:27,44; Rom.3:2; 2 Pet.1:21.

WLC Question #3 : “What is the word of God?”

Answer: “The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, the only rule of faith and practice.” (See Gal.1:8,9; 2 Tim.3:16,17)

WSC Question #2: “What rule hath God given to direct how we may glorify and enjoy Him?”

Answer: “The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.” (See Luke 16:29-31)

Assignment

- Memorize WSC, Question #2
- Memorize WLC, Question #3
- Memorize 2 Tim.3:16,17

APPLICATION

There are five important truths found in this section.

I. The sacred Scriptures. These are now collected into one volume containing 66 different books, written by different human writers in different ages.

A. Luke 16:29-31: _____

B. In Luke 24:44, what is the main truth the Lord teaches?

II. The books called the Apocrypha (meaning, “anything hidden”) were never admitted into the canon by the early fathers.

The Roman Catholic Church made the Apocrypha an article of their faith at the Council of Trent in 1546 AD. However, none of them were ever quoted by Christ or His apostles; none of them make any claim to inspiration; some of them teach childish fables, and some even promote bad morals!

III. The Scriptures themselves testify to only one kind of inspiration. extended to all parts of Scripture.

A. 2 Timothy 3:16,17 _____

B. 2 Peter 1:21 _____

IV. The very words of the Original Scriptures were inspired, not just the ideas.

A. The Old Testament writers claimed to be inspired.

2 Samuel 23:2 _____

See also Deuteronomy 18:22.

B. The New Testament writers claimed inspiration.

Hebrews 3:7 _____

Acts 2:17; Acts 4:25; Heb.4:7.

C. The Lord Jesus Christ placed His seal of approval upon the Old Testament.

Matthew 5:17,18: *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”*

John 10:35: *“.... the Scripture cannot be broken.”*

V. The Holy Scriptures are to be believed because God is the Author.

A. The authority of the Scriptures is not to be derived from any church, but the true Church of Christ is derived from the Scriptures!

Examine Ephesians 2:10-22. Note the progression:

- First — *“strangers and foreigners”*
- Second — *“fellow citizens with the saints”*
- Third — *“of the household of God”*
- Fourth — *“built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets”,* (that is, they are founded upon the doctrines of the Scriptures)
- Fifth — *“Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone”*
- Sixth — *“all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple of the Lord”*
- Seventh — *“Ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit”*



Note

The faith of the church must be founded upon the Bible alone. The Bible proclaims that Jesus Christ is the Rock. He alone supports the entire church. He alone is the rule and

standard of faith. He alone is the actual foundation upon which the church is built. This is all accomplished by the preaching and the study of the whole counsel of God: the Bible!

B. The authority of the Holy Scriptures depends entirely upon God, Who is the author thereof. His authority is proved:

1. By the many revealed truths which could not be answered by nature or by reason.

Example: Examine Isaiah 44:28-45:25. Cyrus is actually named here, over 175 years before he was born! How could this amazing fact possibly be explained in any other way?

John Calvin wrote on this portion of Scripture:

This is a remarkable passage, in which we not only may see the wonderful providence of God, but which likewise contains a striking proof of the truth and certainty of the prophecies. Here Cyrus was named long before he was born, for between the death of Manasseh, by whom Isaiah was slain, and the birth of Cyrus, more than a century intervened! Besides, even though he had been born, who would have conjectured that he should come from the most distant mountains of Persia to Babylon? These things therefore ought to be carefully observed, for they show clearly that it was not by human spirit that Isaiah spoke. No one would ever have thought that there would be a person named 'Cyrus' who should fly from the most distant and barbarous countries to deliver the people of God. (Calvin, Commentary on Isaiah, Vol.3, p.390)

2. By the entire harmony of all parts of the Bible, although written by many human authors over a period of more than 1500 years! There are no mistakes in the Bible!
 - a. Examine 2 Peter 3:15,16. Here the Apostle Peter endorsed the writings of the Apostle Paul as being on a level with the Old Testament Scriptures.
 - b. The Lord Jesus and His apostles frequently quote the Old Testament as being infallible, and that which must be fulfilled.

Example: In Luke 24:44-46, Christ takes the Old Testament and teaches two precious truths:

- (1) A suffering Christ was foretold;
- (2) A risen Christ would gain the victory over death on the third day.

- c. Since God is the divine author of the Holy Scriptures, then every believer has a clear responsibility:

- (1) To study the Scriptures. It is God's plan for our lives.

Examine John 5:39. Jesus said, "*Search the Scriptures*". He then made two points: [1]. "*They*"

_____ ."
 [2]. "*In them ye* _____ ."

- (2) To believe the Scriptures. There are many who do not believe the Word now, but will be convinced after they go through the door of death, and then it will be too late! There will be no "second chance"!

- (3) To defend the Scriptures. The Scriptures demand it!

Gal.1:8,9: *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”*

2 Cor.6:14-7:1: *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them: and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you, And I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”*

1 Tim.4:1-6: *“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which*

believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God, and prayer. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.”



Note

The Scriptures have been under attack from the time in the Garden of Eden, when Satan said, “*Yea, hath God said?*” (Gen.3:1). And they will continue to be an intense center of attack until the Lord comes and establishes His perfect kingdom!

- (4) To proclaim the Scriptures. 2 Tim.3:15,16; etc.
- (5) To win the lost to Christ by means of the Scriptures.



Note

The last message the risen Saviour gave to his disciples, and to all subsequent believers, throughout the ages until He comes again, was the Great Commission: “*But ye shall receive power; after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*” (Acts 1:8)

See also Mt.28:18-20.



There is no greater joy for the Christian, than to win a lost soul to the saving knowledge of Christ! The last word our Lord said, just before He ascended into heaven was, “*Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*” (Acts 1:8). This is a command! Every Christian should be obedient to his Lord and endeavor to win souls for Christ. Every church should obey this command by making personal evangelism, home and foreign missions primary goals in its everyday program! A church that expects to grow in membership can find no better means to bring this goal to pass than to train every member to be a soul winner!

(6) To support Biblically centered public causes.

If a public cause is Biblically centered, it is every true believer’s responsibility to defend it and proclaim it. History is replete with the records of Christians who willingly took an active role in the cause, even at the expense of their lives.

Did not David say, “*Is there not a cause?*” (1 Sam. 17:29). He then told Goliath, the Philistine giant, “*Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: But I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.*” (1 Sam.17:45). And, as a direct result of David’s determination to honor God’s people, with one

small pebble he overcame a seemingly invincible giant!

See Jude 3: “... *ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*”

- (7) To be thankful for the grace of God, as described in the Word, especially if you have experienced the saving power of the truth presented in the Scriptures.

See Eph. 4:7, “*But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*”



Note

Meditate on this verse! It is one of the most precious verses in all the Bible. The GIFT of Christ — how valuable was it? It cost Him His life! Then, how much GRACE do we have? It is as measureless as the gift of Christ’s life!

ADDITIONAL FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Thomas Watson wrote:

If the Scripture be of divine origin, then be exhorted,

- (1) To study the Scripture. It is a copy of God’s will. Be Scripture-men, Bible-Christians. ‘I adore the fulness of Scripture,’ says Tertullian. In the Book of God are scattered many truths as so many pearls. John 5:39, ‘Search the Scriptures.’ Search as for a vein of silver. This blessed book will fill your head with knowledge, and your heart with grace. God wrote the two tables with his own fingers; and if he took pains to write, well may we take pains to read ... The Word is our Magna Charta for Heaven; shall we be ignorant of our charter?

- (2) Be exhorted to prize the written Word. Job 23:12. David valued the Word more than gold. What would the martyrs have given for a leaf of the Bible! The Word is the field where Christ the pearl of price is hid. In this sacred mine we dig, not for a wedge of gold, but for a weight of glory.... (Watson, Body of Divinity, pp.34,35)

DAILY PLAN FOR PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY

In John 5:39, our Lord said: “*Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*” This should be a **daily** search. Here is an excellent plan to use in obeying our Lord’s command:

1. Starting with Genesis, read 2 chapters a day. When you complete Genesis, continue on through Exodus, then Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, etc.
2. Read the Book of Psalms every month. If you read 5 Psalms per day, you will read all 150 Psalms each month. Divide them up by the date, that is, on the first day of the month read Psalms 1-5; the second day, Psalms 6-10, etc. On the 31-day months, save Psalm 119 for the 31st day.
3. Read 1 chapter of Proverbs each day based upon the calendar. That is, on the first day of the month, read Proverbs 1. The second day, read Proverbs 2. the third day, Proverbs 3, etc. Hence, you will cover all 31 chapters each month. Of course, on each 30-day month you will read chapters 30 and 31 the last day. This book contains the wisdom of Solomon!
4. Beginning with Matthew, read 2 chapters each day in the New Testament, continuing on through the rest of the New Testament in this fashion.
5. By following such a program, reading at least 10 chapters per day, you will read the Old Testament at least once a year and the New Testament more than twice a year!

COLLATERAL READING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Calvin's Institutes, Vol.1, Chapter 6, "The Guidance and The Teaching of Scripture Necessary to Lead to the Knowledge of God the Creator." (5 pages)
2. Calvin's Institutes, Vol.1, Chapter 7, "The Testimony of the Spirit Necessary to Confirm the Scripture, _____".

QUESTIONS

1. How can you prove that the Scriptures are inspired?

2. What is the Old Testament?

3. How many books are in the Old Testament? _____

4. What is the New Testament?

5. How many books are there in the New Testament? _____

6. Describe the Apocrypha.

7. Why should Christians support Biblically-based public causes?

8. Why should every Christian endeavor to win souls to Christ?

9. Recite, from memory, WSC #2.

10. Recite, from memory, WLC #3.

11. Recite, from memory, 2 Timothy 3:16,17.

LESSON THREE

THE SOLE AUTHORITY OF TRUTH

(Question: Why Should The Scriptures Be Believed?)

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 1, Section 4: The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, depends not upon the testimony of any man or Church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

2 Peter 1:19,21: *“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day stars arise in your hearts ... For the _____ came not in old time by the will of man; but _____ men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”*

2 Timothy 3:16,17: *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for _____, for _____, for _____, for _____ in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished in good works.”*

I John 5:9; 1 Thess. 2:13

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 1, Section 5: We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverend esteem of the Holy Scripture and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

1 Tim.3:15; 1 John 2:20,27; John 16:13,14; 1 Cor.2:10-12; Isa.59:21.

John 16:13,14: *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of _____ is come, he will guide you into all ____: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come, He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”*

1 Cor. 2:10: *“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”*

Isa.59:21: *“As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of my mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and forever.”*

APPLICATION

There are three main truths dealt with in these two sections:

I. The authority of the Scriptures does not depend upon the approval or authority of any church or man, but entirely upon God, and Him alone.

- A. This is a clear refutation of the historic position of the Roman Catholic Church heresy, which holds that the Scriptures are authentic because the church has endorsed it!

In contrast, Eph. 2:20 clearly indicates that “*the household of God*” is built upon the Gospel of Christ as preached by the “*apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone*”. Thus, Jesus Christ, Himself, is the chief cornerstone, not the Roman Catholic Church, nor any church!

II. There is overwhelming evidence that the Scriptures are from God, and not from man.

- A. External evidence:.

1. The Apostle Paul wrote, “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...*” (2 Tim.3:16).

John Calvin commented on this verse by writing,

In order to uphold the authority of the Scripture, he (Paul) declares that it is divinely inspired; for, if it be so, it is beyond all controversy that men ought to receive it with reverence. ... We know that God hath spoken to us, and are fully convinced that the prophets did not speak at their own suggestion, but that, being organs of the Holy Spirit, they only uttered what they had been commissioned from heaven to declare. (Pastoral Epistles, pp.248-9)

2. The writings themselves clearly manifest that a Holy God used the writers to author the infallible Word.

- a. The miracles performed by them manifested their divine inspiration and calling.

Examples:

- Transformation of Moses' rod into a serpent, Ex.4:3,4,30; 7:10,12;
- Passage through the Red Sea, Ex.14:22;
- Sun and moon stand still, Josh.10:12-14;
- Peter cures the sick, Acts 5:15,16;
- Paul strikes Elymas with blindness, Acts 13:11.

B. Internal evidence.

1. Fulfilled prophecy is infallible proof that the Scriptures are totally inspired of God.

- a. The greatest example of fulfilled prophecy concerns the Messiah!

Gen.12:3; 18:18; 22:18 — is quoted in Acts 3:25;
Gal.3:8

Gen. 17:7,19; 22:16,17 — is quoted in Luke 1:55,
72-74

Deut. 18:15,18 — is quoted in Acts 3:22,23

Psa. 2:1,2 — is quoted in Acts 4:25,26

Psa. 22:1 — is quoted in Matt.27:46; Mark 15:24

Psa. 22:18 — is quoted in Matt.27:35; Mark 15:24;
Luke 23:34; John 19:24.



(There are at least 46 more Old Testament prophecies which have their exact fulfillment in the New Testament!)

III. However, the ultimate proof that the Scriptures are from God and completely inspired by the Holy Spirit is the miraculous effect they have upon the heart of man, effectually bringing light and salvation to the lost sinner! “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Psa.119:130)



Untold millions can testify to the fact that the Scriptures have had a miraculous effect upon their lives! Are you one of them?

The Lord Jesus Christ declared:

- *“I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” (John 14:6)*
- *“I am the door: by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” (John 10:9)*
- *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” (John 10:27, 28)*

And Peter, speaking of the risen Saviour to the rulers of the people, and the elders of Israel, said: *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)*

Assignment

Assume that you are writing to a friend who is an unbeliever. Write a statement detailing why you believe the Scriptures are from God, fully inspired, what effect this has had upon you, and why that friend must also believe the Scriptures. Be sure to quote the appropriate Scriptural passages to prove your points.

LESSON FOUR

THE SUPREME VALUE OF TRUTH

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 1, Section 6: The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word; and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

2 Tim.3:15-17; Gal.1:8,9; 2 Thess.2:2; John 6:45;

1 Cor.2:9-12; 1 Cor.11:13,14; 1 Cor.14:26,40

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 1, Section 7: All things in the Scriptures are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

2 Pet.3:15,16; Psa.119:105,130

WSC Question #3: “What do the Scriptures principally teach?”

Answer: “The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.”

Assignment

Memorize WSC #3.
Memorize 2 Pet.3:15,16.

APPLICATION

There are four main facts taught in these sections.

- I. The sixty-six books of the Bible are a complete rule of faith and practice. Everything necessary for man’s salvation, his daily activity, and his instruction in righteousness, is contained herein.**

See 2 Peter 3:16, where Peter speaks of the writings of the apostle Paul: “*As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*”

Here, Peter strongly endorses Paul’s teaching on the great doctrine of Justification by Faith, which so many people found to be “hard to be understood” because of the hardness of their own hearts. Those who approach all the books of the Bible, and are guided by the Holy Spirit, will find that there are no contradictions, and that all their spiritual needs will be met. This is the infallible guide to lead us to God.



Note

2 Tim.3:16 states, “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God.*” The word “inspired” literally means, “God breathed”. It is the English translation of the Greek word, “*theopneustos*”, meaning “God breathed”. Paul is saying that ALL of the Old Testament writers were guided by the Holy Spirit — God speaking to men — so that there could be no mistakes! And, he goes on to say that they are all profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness!

II. Nothing is to be added to these sixty-six books, because they are completely sufficient for all our spiritual needs.

See Gal.1:8,9: “*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*”

These are very strong words! Here Paul states that the gospel of salvation by Christ is the true gospel; any other “gospel” must be totally rejected, even if it is supposedly proclaimed by an angel from heaven or, we might add, by the head of any church!

III. Although the Scriptures are complete, with nothing to be added, it is totally necessary that the Holy Spirit illuminate that which is written if man is to understand what the Scriptures are saying.

Natural man is dead in trespasses and sins, and cannot properly understand the things of God unless they are revealed by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who enlightens the mind. It is the Holy Spirit who lays the groundwork for the conviction of conscience, by enabling the sinner to see the true import and meaning of the Scriptures. Without the work of the Holy Spirit, the Bible is a closed book!

All Christians are promised that the Holy Spirit would guide them to properly understand the Scriptures: Jesus said, *“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”* (John 14:26).

IV. Not all details concerning the proper form of worship are explicitly itemized in the Word, but all forms of worship must be performed according to the doctrinal standards taught in the Holy Scriptures.

1 Cor.14:40: *“Let all things be done decently, and in order.”*

On this passage, John Calvin writes,

This statement shows that he (The Apostle Paul) did not wish to bind consciences by the foregoing precepts, as if they were in themselves necessary, but only insofar as they were subservient to propriety and peace ... The Lord has left external rites in our choice with this view — that we may not think that his worship consists wholly in these things. (Commentary on 1 Corinthians, p.474)

QUESTIONS

1. Can we expect new revelations of the Spirit in the age in which we live? Prove your answer.

2. Recite, from memory, WSC #3.
3. Recite, from memory, 2 Peter 3:15,16.

LESSON FIVE

THE PROPER INTERPRETATION OF TRUTH

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 1, Section 8: The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.

Matt.5:18; Isa.8:20; Acts 15:15; John 5:39,46;
1 Cor.14:6,9,11,12,24,27,28; Col.3:16; Rom.15:4.

WCF, Chapter 1, Section 9: The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.

WCF, Chapter 1, Section 10: The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

2 Pet.1:20,21; Acts 15:15,16; Matt.22:29,31; Eph.2:20; Acts 28:25.

APPLICATION

These sections teach four important truths:

- I. The original texts of both the Old and the New Testaments were written in the common languages of that time, they were uncorrupted, and are the absolute rule of faith and doctrine.**

Isaiah 8:20: *“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no truth in them.”*

John 5:39,46: *“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me ... For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.”*

- II. The Scriptures are to be translated into the common languages of all people and made available to all who can read.**

The history and the written record of world missions provides abundant evidence that the greatest tool the missionary has at his disposal is the Word of God, written in the language of those to whom he is witnessing. It is the “hammer” that breaks open the hardest heart and turns it into a loving member of the family of God!

The Sixteenth Century Reformation was ultimately successful due to the selfless efforts of many scholars, in various nations, who made it possible for the Scriptures to be available to the common man, written in their own language.

In Rom.15:4, Paul states that the facts recorded in all of the Scriptures are designed for our instruction: *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”*

III. The infallible and only true rule for the interpretation of Scripture is Scripture itself.

2 Peter 1:20,21: *“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”*

On this passage, Calvin comments:

The Papists are doubly foolish when they conclude from this passage, that no interpretation of a private man ought to be deemed authoritative. For they pervert what Peter says, that they may claim for their own councils the chief right of interpreting Scripture; but in this they act indeed childishly; for Peter calls interpretation ‘private’, not that of every individual, in order to prohibit each one to interpret; but he shows that whatever men bring of their own is profane. Were, then, the whole world unanimous, and were the minds of all men united together, still what would proceed from them, would be private or their own; for the word is here set in opposition to divine revelation; so that the faithful,

inwardly illuminated by the Holy Spirit, acknowledge nothing but what God says in his word! (Calvin's Commentary on Second Peter, p.390).

IV. The Scriptures are the supreme judge of all religious truth, speaking to us through the Holy Spirit.

Eph.2:19,20: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the corner stone."

Paul states that the Ephesians were formerly strangers from the covenants of promise (see verse 12), but their condition is now changed; they were foreigners, but God has made them citizens of His church, and all this has taken place because they have believed what the apostles and prophets proclaimed concerning Jesus Christ!

Assignment

Memorize Ephesians 2:19,20.

QUESTIONS

1. Why should the Scriptures be believed?
2. How can you prove that the Scriptures are different from all the rests of the books in the world?
3. Recite, from memory, Ephesians 2:19,20.

PART TWO

WHAT WE ARE TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

LESSON SIX

THE TRIUNE GOD OF TRUTH

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 2, Section 1: There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

Deut.6:4; 1 Cor.8:4,6; 1 Thess.1:9; Jer.10:10; Job 11:7-9; Job 26:14; John 4:24; 1 Tim.1:17; Deut.4:15,16; Luke 24:39; Acts 14:11,15; James 1:17; Mal.3:6; 1 King 8:27; Jer.33:23,24; Ps.90:2; 1 Tim.1:17; Ps.145:3; Gen.17:1; Rev.4:8 Rom.16:27; Isa.6:3; Rev.4:8; Ps.115:3; Ex.3:14; Eph.1:11; Prov.16:4; Rom.11:35; 1 John 4:8,16; Ex.34:6,7; Heb.11:6; Nah.9:32,33; Ps.5:5,6; Nah.1:2,3; Ex.34:7;

WCF, Chapter 2, Section 2: God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, not deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory, in, by, unto, and upon them: he is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, he is pleased to require of them.

John 5:26; Acts 7:2 Ps.119:68; 1 Tim.6:15; Rom.9:5; Acts 17:24,25; Job 22:2,3; Rom.11:36; Rev.4:11; 1 Tim.6:15; Dan.4:25,35; Heb.4:13. Rom.11:33,34; Ps.147:5; Acts 15:18; Ezek.11:5; Ps.145:17; Rom.7:12; Rev.5:12-14.

WSC Question #4: “What is God?”

Answer: “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.”

See: John 4:24; Psa.90:2; James 1:17

WSC Question #5: “Are there more Gods than one?”

Answer: “There is but one only, the living and true God.”

Assignments

Memorize WSC #4.

Memorize WSC #5.

Memorize John 4:24.

Thomas Watson, in his book, *A Body of Divinity*, states

The notion of a Deity is engraven on man's heart; it is demonstrable by the light of nature. I think it hard for a man to be a natural atheist; he may wish there were no God, he may dispute against a Deity, but he cannot in his judgment believe there is no God, unless by accumulated sin his conscience be seared, and he has such a lethargy upon him, that he has sinned away his very sense and reason. (p.39)

APPLICATION

There are at least four main truths in the above statements:

1. There is only one true, living God;
 2. God is a pure Spirit, without bodily parts or passions;
 3. God possesses all possible perfections;
 4. God is totally independent, and in complete control over all His creatures.
- 1. The Scriptures clearly state that there is only one true, living God.**



Note

“The assertion that there is but one God, does not mean that there is but one divine person, for it is afterwards stated, ‘in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons’; but it means that the Divine Being is numerically one in nature or essence.” (Shaw, *The Reformed Faith*, p.24)

This truth is clearly stated, over and over again in both the Old and New Testaments.

- (1) 1 Cor. 8:4, “... *we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.*”
- (2) Habakkuk 2:18 states that idols are “*teachers of lies*”.

- (3) Isaiah 40:22-31: God is described in a magnificent manner: *“It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth... That bringeth the princes to nothing ... Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things...”*
- (4) Deut. 6:4: God speaks, *“Hear, O Israel; the LORD our God is one Lord.”*
- (5) Jeremiah 10:10 describes God: *“But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, and an everlasting king; at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.”*

QUESTION

Having read all the above descriptions of God, how would you describe Him?

Recommended Reading: Calvin’s Institutes. Book I, Chapters II and III: “The Nature and Tendency of the Knowledge of God”; and “The Human Mind Naturally endued with the Knowledge of God.”



Note

What do the unbelievers teach?

In San Antonio, Texas, May 22-June 1, 1989, the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism, (WCME) of the World Council of Churches, (WCC) totally rejected the Biblical teaching that Jesus is God, and that He is the only way to heaven! Dr. Eugene Stockwell, the Chairman of the WCC’s WCME, stated,

Jesus is not the only way, if that is taken to mean that all who do not name the name of Jesus have lost the way, have no passport to heaven ... We can share our treasured faith in Jesus Christ with sensitivity and conviction while opening ourselves also to God's gifts of grace so evident in the faith worlds of many religions on earth.

This is a clear example of the false teaching by those individuals who occupy positions of leadership in many of the large churches and denominations in the world! Many of the once great denominations have adopted this and similar false teachings concerning the uniqueness of the way of salvation.

If the above statement by Dr. Stockwell were true, there would be no need for missionaries, anywhere in the world, because every tribe and nation has at least one god, and many have thousands of gods whom they worship!

Within the last 100 years, the vast majority of the once great seminaries of America have been infected with the type of false teaching as described above. As a consequence, many fine, intellectually bright young men and women have had their faith destroyed! Many churches and whole denominations in America have been captured with such false teaching; and, because of the worldwide reputation these seminaries had developed, many fine, intellectually bright foreign students have come to America, been filled with such false teaching, and then returned to their home countries where they taught their own countrymen what they had learned in these American seminaries! Such is the tragedy of false teaching! "*A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump!*" (1 Cor.5:6)

The Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, warned, "*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*" (Matt.7:15)

And the Apostle Peter warned, (2 Peter 2:1,2) "*But there were false prophets 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. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”



Note

Since there is a God, we should worship and serve him as God.

See Matt.8:23-27. All creatures obey him; the winds and the sea obey him, — why shouldn't man, whom God has blessed in so many ways? He is God, and he has a sovereign rite over us. As we have received life from him, even so should we receive a law from him, and submit to his will in all things.

QUESTION

What can you do to obey God?

2. God is a most pure Spirit, without bodily parts or passions.

John 4:24: “God is _____; and they that worship him must _____.”

QUESTION: Since God is a Spirit, how does he differ from other spirits? ANSWER: The angels are created; God is eternal. Heb.1:14 tells us that the angels are ministering spirits. But they are servants of the supreme Spirit, the Father of spirits!

See Heb.12:9: “... shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the _____, _____?”

3. God is Possessed of All Possible Perfections. These are referred to as “God’s Attributes”. They are many:

a. God is Infinite. He is unbounded and unlimited in his being. He is infinite in his: (1)Wisdom; (2) Power; and (3) Holiness.

(1) Wisdom. Psalm 147:5 “*Great is our Lord and _____; his understanding is _____.*”

(2) Power. Rev. 4:11 “*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive _____ and _____ and _____; for thou hast created _____ and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*”

(3) Holiness. Rev. 15:4 “*Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for _____: for all nations shall come and _____; for thy judgments are _____.*”

b. God is Eternal. Psalm 90:2 “*Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from _____, thou art God.*”

There are two common uses for the word, “eternal”:

1. The Bible teaches that angels, and the souls of men are eternal; i.e., they had a beginning but will have no end.
2. The other signifies a duration without a beginning, without ending, and without succession. The latter is the sense in which the word “eternal” is peculiar to God only.

Paul has an excellent description of the eternal God in 1 Tim.1:17, “*Now unto the king _____, _____, _____, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.*”

c. God is everywhere present. at all times. 1 Kings 8:27, “*But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.*”



Note

If God is everywhere, then it is **possible** to walk with God! Also, if God is everywhere, it is **impossible** to hide from God!

God is not only in heaven but he is on earth also!

See Isaiah 66:1: “*Thus saith the Lord, the heaven _____, and _____; where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?*”

- d. God is unchangeable James 1:17: “*With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*”

God is unchangeable:

- (1) In his glory. John 17:5,22,24;
- (2) In his covenant. Isaiah 54:10;
- (3) In his love. 2 Thess. 2:13,14;
- (4) In his promises to his people. 1 Peter 1:2

- e. God is infinitely holy. Psalm 145:17; “*The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*”

See Isaiah 6:3,4: “*And one cried to another, and said, holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory; And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him who cried, and the house was filled with smoke.*”

John Calvin comments on these verses:

Why did God manifest his presence by this sign rather than by any other? Answer: Two ways. First, it was always the will of God to repress the insolence of men, pushing their inquiries about his majesty beyond what is proper; for on this point almost all men are too rash and daring. ... When men allow themselves to adopt any

false notions about God, there is nothing which they will not venture to attempt against him. ... Secondly, this smoke ought to strike terror, ... for he pronounces a dreadful judgment, namely, the blinding of the Jews.” (Calvin, Commentary on Isaiah, Vol.I, pp.206,207)



Note

“God himself puts peculiar honor on his holiness, for he singles it out as that attribute by which he swears he will accomplish whatever he speaketh.” (Shaw, The Reformed Faith, p.32)

It is because of his holiness that God demonstrates such awful displeasure at sin!

- f. God is infinitely just. Deut. 32:4: “*He is the Rock; his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a god of truth and without iniquity; just and right is he.*”

God is just to himself, by acting in all things according to his nature, and by maintaining his own rights. He is just to his creatures, by governing them in a way agreeably to their nature, according to a law which he has given them.

This is the reason every sinner must receive the punishment due his sins!

Romans 6:23

This is also the reason every Christian should rejoice in God’s grace; wherein Jesus Christ paid for all our sins! (John 3:16). When our guilt was transferred to Christ, God’s own Son, he did not spare him! (Romans 3:26).

WSC Question #6: “How many persons are there in the Godhead?”

Answer: “There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.”

See 1 John 5:7

Assignments

Memorize WSC #6

Memorize 1 John 5:7

4. God is totally independent, and is in complete control over all His creatures.

Romans 11:33-36: “*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.*”

God’s final message to Job (Ch.38 to 40:2) gives us a magnificent summary from the God of all creation, of his total and independent control over all his creation and all his creatures! In this passage God proclaims his total power and independent control over all his creation by declaring that he, alone:

1. Founded the earth, vv 38:4-7
2. Set the bounds of the seas, vv 38:8-11,
3. Established the course of the sun, vv.38:12-15,
4. Measured the dark recesses of the sea and earth, 38:16-21,
5. Controls the weather, 38:22-38,

6. Directs the stars and their work, 38:31-33,
7. Provides food for the lion and the raven, 38:39-41
8. Controls the birth and development of the animals in the wild and the fowls of the air, 39:1-30.

Assignment

Write a brief summary of God's independent control over:

1. His creation;
2. His creatures.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite from memory: WSC #4; WSC #6; 1 John 5:7

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS TO PONDER

1. Examine Hebrews 9:7-28. A study of this wonderful passage will greatly bless the student, because it is a comparison of Christ and the ancient High Priest.
 - a. The High Priest went alone into the sanctuary once a year, with blood, "*which he offered for himself and for the errors of his people*" (v.7). But Christ is the Great High Priest, for he alone possesses the real qualifications of a high priest; he differs from the ancient High Priest in that he brings with him eternal blessings, because "*by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*". (v.12)
 - b. The ancient high priest entered into the holy of holies through the sanctuary; but Christ alone entered into heaven through the temple of his own body!
 - c. The offering of blood was common to both, but there was a great difference concerning the blood; for Christ offered not

the blood of beasts, but his own precious, spotless, pure and undefiled blood!

2. In the light of this passage the reader should ask himself this question: “Am I truly born again? If I were to die tonight, am I absolutely certain I would immediately go to heaven?” If there is any doubt whatsoever, make it certain by consciously and prayerfully turning to the Lord Jesus in prayer, in this manner: “Lord Jesus, I recognize I am a sinner, deserving eternal punishment from a holy and a just God. I believe that you came for the express purpose of paying for my personal sins. I here and now take you as my personal Saviour, and I thank you for saving my soul.”

John 1:12: *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”*

John 14:6: *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*

QUESTIONS

1. Name the personal attributes of God.

2. Discuss any two of them.

a.

b.

LESSON SEVEN

THE UNITY OF THE TRIUNE GODHEAD

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 2, Section 3: In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

1 John 5:7; Matt.3:16,17; 28:19; 2 Cor.13:14; John 1:14,18; John 15:26; Gal.4:6.

APPLICATION

There are three important truths taught in this section.

1. The three Persons in the Godhead are equally the one God.

God is one, in three. He is one in being and nature, but He is three in the manner of His being. In this one nature, God has a threefold personal distinction. This is a deep mystery which no man can understand, but it is clearly established as truth in the Scriptures, which He, Himself wrote!

1 John 5:7: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, The _____, the _____, and the _____, and these three are one.”

The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the greatest mysteries of all time. For centuries the question has been debated as to how the one God could exist in three persons. Thomas Watson, in his book, *A Body of Divinity*, pp.108-9, states:

There are three distinct persons subsisting in one Godhead. This is a sacred mystery, which the light within man could never have discovered. As the two natures in Christ, yet but one person, is a mystery; so three persons, yet but one Godhead. Here is a great deep; the Father God, the Son God, the Holy Ghost God; yet not three Gods, but one God. The three persons in the blessed Trinity are distinguished, but not divided; three substances, but one essence. This is a divine riddle, where one makes three, and three make one. Our narrow thoughts can no more comprehend the Trinity in Unity, than a nutshell will hold all the water in the sea. Let me shadow it out by a similitude. In the body of the sun, there are the substance of the sun, the beams, and the heat; the beams are begotten of the sun, the heat proceeds both from the sun and the beams; but these three, though different are not divided; they all three make but one sun; so the blessed Trinity, the Son is begotten of the Father, the Holy Ghost proceeds from both; yet though they are three distinct persons, they are but one God.

WLC Question #10: “What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead?”

Answer: “It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son, from all eternity.”

Heb.1:5,6; John 1:14; John 15:26.

WLC Question #11: “How doth it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father?”

Answer: “The Scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father, ascribing unto them such names, attributes, works and worship, as are proper to God only.”

Jer.23:5,6; 1 John 5:20; John 1:1; Col.1:16

The personal properties of the Godhead:

- (a) It is the personal property of the Father to beget the Son. Psalm 2:7 “... *the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*”
- (b) It is the personal property of the Son to be eternally begotten of the Father. John 1:14: “*And the WORD was made flesh, and dwelt among us; (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*”
- (c) It is the personal property of the Holy Ghost to proceed eternally from the Father and the Son. John 15:26. “*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto _____ even the _____ of _____, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.*”

Reading Assignment

Calvin’s Institutes, Book I, Chapter XIII,
“One Divine Essence, Containing Three Persons,
Taught in the Scriptures from the Beginning”

2. Concerning the Son, the Scriptures teach:

- a. He existed before he was born of the Virgin.

John 8:58: “*Verily, verily I say unto you, before _____ was, _____.*”

John 17:5; Heb.1:8

- b. Names and titles of God are constantly applied to the Son.

Isaiah 9:6: “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, _____, _____, the _____, _____.*”

Jer.23:6

- c. All the attributes of God are applied to Christ.

Some of His attributes are:

(1) He is the proper subject of worship.

Rev.1:5,6: “*And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*”

Heb.1:6: “*And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.*”

(2) Omnipotence

Heb.1:3: “*Who, being the brightness of his glory; and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*”

(3) Eternity

John 17:5: “*And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*”

(4) Omniscience

Matthew 11:27: “*All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*”

(5) Immutability

Heb.1:10,11: “*Thou, Lord, hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment.*”

d. Divine works are attributed to Christ.

(1) Creation

Col.1:16,17: “*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*”

See John 1:1-10

(2) Source of Eternal Life

John 10:27,28: “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I _____; and they shall _____, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*”

3. Concerning the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures teach:

a. He is called God.

Acts 5:3,4: “... *But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? ... thou hast not lied to men, but unto God.*”

Isa.6:8,9 cf. Acts 25,26

b. Divine characteristics are attributed to Him.

(1) Omnipotence

Romans 8:11: “*But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.*”

(2) Omniscience

1 Cor. 2:10: “*But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit _____, yea, the _____.*”

c. Divine Works are His

(1) Creation. Psalm 104:30.

(2) Miracles. 1 Cor. 12:9-11.

(3) Regeneration. John 3:6: “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*”

d. Divine Worship is to be paid to Him.

Matt.12:31,32; 28:19

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS TO PONDER

1. The Nicene Creed, formulated in 325 A.D., expounded the doctrine of the Trinity, and it is still accepted. It reads, in part,

I believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost on the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate ... And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified...

2. It is not enough for you to stand in awe and amazement when you begin to realize the awful solemnity and holiness of the triune God! There are many aspects of this subject which cannot be grasped by the mind of man. However, one can grasp it sufficiently to see that God is personal, and that he did execute all his decrees for an over-all purpose. Mankind can recognize that God has graciously accomplished every aspect of his plan of redemption, so that any sinful man is freely offered God's salvation through the person and work of his Son.
3. Salvation can come only to the individual; it does not come through church membership, family relationship, or any form of religious ordinance, such as baptism or the Lord's Supper. Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.*" (John 14:6)
4. To you who are born again, a careful examination of this section should result in an overwhelming desire to put God first in every aspect of your life. Our Lord said, in Matthew 6:33, "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*" This is the natural position for you

to occupy, if you are growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. This growth will include the following:

- a. Regular, daily Bible reading. 1 Peter 2:2.
- b. Daily time of prayer. Col. 4:2
- c. Personal witnessing. Matt. 28:19,20
- d. Fellowship with other true believers. This means:
 - (1) That Christians should seek out a good, Bible-believing church and support it with their presence and their substance.
 - (2) It also means that no believer should be a member of a church which cooperates with any organization which denies the fundamentals of the faith.
 - (3) It means that no believer should be a member of any church which is associated with apostate religious organizations. (2 Cor. 6:14-18)

QUESTIONS

1. In your own words, describe the unity of the Godhead.

2. Name three attributes of Christ.

3. What three facts do the Scriptures teach about the Holy Spirit?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

LESSON EIGHT

THE UNCONDITIONAL DECREES OF GOD

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 3, Section 1: God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

Eph.1:11; Rom.11:33; Heb.6:17; Rom.9:15,18; James 1:13,17; 1 John 1:5; Acts 2:23; Matt.17:12; Acts 4:27,28; John 19:11;

WCF, Chapter 3, Section 2: Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

Prov.16:33; Acts 15:18; 1 Sam.23:11,12; Matt.11:21,23; Rom.9:11,13,16,18.

WSC Question #7: “What are the decrees of God”?

Answer. “The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.”

Compare with WLC #12. “God’s decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men.”

Memory Assignments

Memorize WSC #7.
Memorize Romans 11:33.

This subject, “The Unconditional Decrees of God” is one of the most difficult of all Biblical subjects to comprehend, even though it is plainly portrayed in the Holy Scriptures! The Scriptures speak of God’s foreknowledge, His purpose, His will, His predestination, His government, and His control over all creatures and all events. Unfortunately, this doctrine, being difficult to understand, has resulted in many controversies in the Christian Church.

The Apostle Paul speaks of, “the mystery of his will”, and then points to the heart of what is meant by the decrees of God when he goes on to say, “*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*” (Eph.1:9,11).

APPLICATION

The above sections teach three important truths.

- 1. God, from all eternity has had an unchangeable plan concerning creation; a plan which includes all creatures and all events.**

As an infinitely intelligent Creator and providential Ruler, God must have had a definite purpose with reference to the being and destination of all that he has created, comprehending in one all-perfect system his chief end

therein, and all subordinate ends and means in reference to that chief end. (Hodge, The Confession of Faith, p.64)

Rom.9:14-18: *“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharoah, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.”*

On this passage, Hodge writes,

The doctrine of the preceding verses is, that God is perfectly sovereign in the distribution of His favours, that the ground of his selecting one and rejecting another is not their work, but his own good pleasure. To this doctrine there are two plausible objections: first, it is not consistent with divine justice, ver.14; second, it is incompatible with human responsibility, ver.19. To the former the apostle answers, first, God claims distinctly in his word this prerogative, ver.15; and secondly, he obviously exercises it, as is seen in the dispensations of his providence, ver.17. Here again the sense is so plain that commentators of all classes agree in their interpretations. (Commentary on Romans, p.312)

2. God’s eternal purpose is not, under any circumstances, conditional upon His foresight or foreknowledge.

Eph. 1:11, *“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”*

Phil.2:13: *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”*

John Calvin has a very interesting comment on this verse:

This is the true engine for bringing down all haughtiness — this the sword for putting an end to all pride, when we are taught that we are utterly nothing, and can do nothing, except through the grace of God alone. I mean supernatural grace, which comes forth from the spirit of regeneration. (Commentary on Epistle to Philippians, p.65.)

3. God's decree includes the means and conditions upon which all events depend.

One of the greatest examples of this marvelous fact is described in Acts 2:22,23: *“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; 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; Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”* These wicked men meant it for evil, but God meant to use these very means, planned from before the creation of the world to provide for our salvation!

The decrees of God relate to all future things, without exception; whatever is done in time was foreordained before the beginning of time. His purpose was concerned with everything, whether great or small, whether good or evil; although, in reference to the latter, it may be necessary to distinguish between appointment and permission. It was concerned with things necessary, free, and contingent; with the movements of matter, which are necessary; with the volitions and actions of intelligent creatures, which are free; and with such things as we call accidents, because they take place undesignedly on our part, and without any cause which we could discover. It was concerned about our life and our death; about our state in time and our state in eternity. In short, the decrees of God are incomprehensible as his government, which extends to all creatures, and to all events. (Shaw, The Reformed Faith, p.44)

A study of the life of Joseph, in Genesis 37-50, reveals the manner in which an omnipotent God worked out His overall decrees in the life of the Hebrew people, even though many, many sins were committed by many people. In dreams, God revealed His plan for Joseph (Ch.37); his brethren rejected him and sold him as a slave into Egypt; Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce him, and because he resisted her advances, this landed Joseph in prison (Ch.39). Pharaoh dreamed a dream which no one could interpret (Ch.41). Joseph interpreted the dream about a coming seven-year famine. Pharaoh appointed Joseph Prime Minister of Egypt (Ch.41). The Hebrew people came to Egypt because of the famine. Upon the death of Jacob, Joseph's brothers feared, "*Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.*" (50:15). But Joseph answered them, (and here is where it is stated that an omnipotent God used the sinful acts of men in the accomplishment of His purpose): "*But as for you, ye thought evil for me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*" (50:20,21)

On verse 20, Matthew Henry comments:

God often brings good out of evil, and promotes the designs of his providence even by the sins of men; not that he is the author of sin, far be it for us to think so; but his infinite wisdom so overrules events, and directs the chain of them, that, in the issue, that ends in his praise which in its own nature had a direct tendency to his dishonor; as the putting of Christ to death, Acts 2:23. This does not make sin the less sinful, nor the sinners the less punishable, but it redounds greatly to the glory of God's wisdom. (Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol. I, p.268)

QUESTIONS

1. Recite, from memory, WSC #7.
2. Recite, from memory, Romans 11:33.

LESSON NINE

GOD'S OVERALL PLAN FOR HIS ELECT

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 3, Section 3: By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto eternal life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

WCF, Chapter 3, Section 4: These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

WCF, Chapter 3, Section 5: Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

WCF, Chapter 3, Section 6: As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ;

are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved, but the elect only.

1 Tim.5:21; Matt.25:41; Rom.9:22,23; Eph.1:5,6; Prov.16:4; 2 Tim.2:19; John 13:18; Eph.1:4,9,11; Rom.8:30; 2 Tim.1:9; 1 Thess.5:9; Rom.9:11,13,16; Eph.1:4,9; Eph.1:6,12; 1 Pet.1:2; Eph.1:4,5;2:10; 2 Thess.2:13; 1 Thess.5:9,10; Tit.2:14; Rom.8:30; Eph.1:5; 2 Thess.2:13; 1 Pet.1:5; John 17:9; Rom.8:28; John 6:64,65; 10:26; 8:47; 1 John 2:19.

WSC Question #8: “How doth God execute his decrees?”

Answer: “God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.”

WSC Question #9: “What is the work of creation?”

Answer: “The work of creation is, God’s making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.”

Memory Assignments

Memorize WSC #8; WSC #9; Hebrews 1:3.

APPLICATION

There are two key words in the above sections: “Predestination” and “Foreordination”. Although there is much confusion and misunderstanding concerning these two concepts, an examination of certain passages of Scripture should help to clarify them.

1. Romans 8:29,30: “*For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*”
2. Rom.11:2: “*God hath not cast away his people, whom he foreknew.*”
3. 1 Pet.1:18-20: “*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.*”
4. 1 Peter 1:2: “*Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.*”
5. John 6:64: “*But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.*”

The basic truth seen here is that the Scriptures speak uniformly of an omnipotent God, who works all things after the counsel of His own will. John 6:64 states that “*Jesus knew from the beginning...*”; 1 Peter 1:2 addresses the “*strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*”, as those who were “*elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*”; and Paul indicates very clearly in Rom.8:29,30, that God’s foreknowledge and His predestination are all encompassed in the entire idea of God’s election, for he speaks of those chosen ones who were to be “*conformed to the image of His Son*”!

And Charles Hodge, in his *Commentary on Romans*, p.284, adds:

The predestination follows, and is grounded on the foreknowledge. The foreknowledge therefore expresses the act of cognition or recognition, the fixing, so to speak, the mind upon, which involves the idea of selection. If we look over a number of objects with the view of selecting some of them for a definite purpose, the first act is to fix the mind on some to the neglect of the others, and the second is to destine them to the proposed end. So God is represented as looking on the fallen mass of men, and fixing on some whom he predestines to salvation. This is the “*prognosis*” (Greek), the foreknowledge, of which the apostle here speaks. It is the knowing, fixing upon, or selecting those who are to be predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son of God.

Recommended Supplemental Reading: Calvin’s Institutes, Book III, Chapters XXI, XXII, XXIII: “Eternal Election,etc.” pp.170-216.

In his introductory remarks on this subject, Calvin states:

The discussion of predestination — a subject of itself rather intricate — is made very perplexed, and therefore dangerous, by human curiosity, which no barriers can restrain from wandering into forbidden labyrinths, and soaring beyond its sphere, as if determined to leave none of the Divine secrets unscrutinized or unexplored ... The secrets of his will which he determined to reveal to us, he discovers in his word; and these are all that he foresaw would concern us or conduce to our advantage.

LESSON TEN

THE REPROBATION OF THE WICKED

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 3, Section 7: The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

Matt.11:25,26; Rom.9:17,18,21,22; 2 Tim.2:19,20; Jude 4; 1 Pet.2:8.

WCF, Chapter 3, Section 8: The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

Rom.9:20; Deut.29:29; 2 Pet.1:10; Eph.1:6; Rom.11:33; Rom.11:5,6,20; 2 Pet.1:10; Rom.8:33; Luke 10:20.

WLC Question #13: “What hath God decreed concerning angels and men?”

Answer: “God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory; and in Christ, hath chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof; and also, according to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will, (whereby he extendeth or withholdeth favour as he pleaseth), hath passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonour and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice.”

APPLICATION

These sections are concerned with the age-old questions:

- (1) “Was Christ’s death sufficient and effective to pay for the sins of all mankind, or was it just for certain ones?”
- (2) “Did Christ die for just the elect, or did he die for all men alike?”

The answer to these questions brings into focus the difference between the terms Calvinism and Arminianism. Calvinists teach that Christ’s death was sufficient for all people, but efficient only for his people — his “elect”. Arminians hold that he died for all people. The Apostle Paul deals with this subject rather exhaustively, in Romans 9. He discusses the historical condition of the Israelites, and then states,

(For the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion, So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God

that sheweth mercy. Thou wilt say unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"

Clearly, the choice belongs to the God of creation — the God Who made us!

Lorraine Boettner, in his book, *Studies in Theology*, p.317, states:

The Scriptures teach that Christ died specifically for His people; and nowhere do they teach either directly, or by good and necessary inference that He died for all men alike. Those for whom He died are referred to as “His people”, “my people”, “the sheep”, “the church”, “many”, or other terms which mean less than the entire human race: e.g., “*Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins,*” Matt.1:21. “*He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due*”, Is.53:8. “*I lay down my life for the sheep.*” John 10:15. “*The Good Shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep*” John 10:11. To the unbelieving Jews Jesus said, “*Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep*” John 10:26. It was “*the church of the Lord, which He purchased with His own blood,*” Acts 20:28. “*Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it,*” Eph.5:25. “*He bare the sins of many*”, Isa.53:12. Christ was “*once offered to bear the sins of many*,” Heb.9:28. “*I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine*” John 17:9. The high priest of Israel offered sacrifice, not for the whole world, but only for the penitent children of Israel. And under the symbolism of the bride and the Lamb the book of Revelation portrays Christ’s peculiar and electing and discriminating love for His people. (Rev.1:9.)

John Calvin wrote:

This great subject is not, as many imagine, a mere thorny and noisy disputation, nor a speculation which wearies the minds

of men without profit; but a solid discussion eminently adapted to the service of the godly, because it builds us up solidly in the faith, trains us to humility, and lifts us up into an admiration of the unbounded goodness of God towards us, while it elevates us to praise this goodness in the highest strains. For there is not a more effectual means of building up faith than the giving our open ears to the election of God, which the Holy Spirit seals upon our heart while we hear, shewing us that it stands in the eternal and immutable goodwill of God toward us, and that, therefore, it cannot be moved or altered by any storms of the world, by any assaults of Satan, by any changes, or by any fluctuations or weaknesses of the flesh. For our salvation is then sure to us, when we find the cause of it in the breast of God. (Calvin's Calvinism, p.29)

QUESTIONS

1. Recite, from memory, WSC #8.
2. Recite, from memory, WSC #9.
3. Recite, from memory, Hebrews 1:3.

PART THREE

GOD'S MARVELOUS WORK OF CREATION

LESSON ELEVEN

WHERE DID THE UNIVERSE COME FROM?

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 4, Section 1: It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

Heb.1:2; John 1:2,3; Gen.1: All; Job 26:13; 33:4; Rom.1:20; Jer.10:12; Ps.104:24; 33:5,6; Heb.11:3; Col.1:16; Acts 17:24;

APPLICATION

Section One teaches three vitally important truths.

I. God made the universe without any pre-existent matter.

This is a fundamental principle of Christian Theism.

- A. Today, there is a large body of pseudo-scientific teaching being conducted in practically all the public primary and secondary schools, plus the schools of higher education, which has as its basic position, that the “science” of evolution is the correct explanation concerning the establishment of the world. They deny that man was created

immediately by God. They teach that the higher and more complex organisms were developed gradually, in successive stages, from the lower and more simple forms, as the physical condition of the world gradually became favourable to their existence; and that man, at the proper time, came last of all from the last link in the order of being immediately below him.

But the Christian is immediately faced with a problem: “Should I accept the teachings of the majority of scientists, who hold to this position, or should I reject it and accept what God has said in His Word?” The answer, of course, should be based upon, not what the Ph.D.’s of the world teach, but what God says in His Word! Genesis 1:26,27, for example, has never been successfully refuted by those who teach Evolution: “*And God said, let us make man in our own image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*”

The opening words of the Bible read, “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*” (Gen.1:1). The Hebrew word translated “created” is “*bara*”, which literally means, “to create out of nothing”. Therefore, the meaning is that the world was made out of nothing”! This has never been successfully refuted! And, we might add, it never will be!

The study of God’s creation is very rewarding, and enriching. Thomas Watson, in his book, *A Body of Divinity*, p.113, writes,

The creation is glorious to behold, and it is a pleasant and profitable study. Some think that when Isaac went abroad into the fields to meditate, it was in the book of the creatures. The creation is the heathen man’s Bible,

the plowman's primer, and the traveler's perspective glass, through which he receives a representation of the infinite excellencies which are in God. The creation is a large volume, in which God's works are bound up; and this volume has three great leaves in it, heaven, earth, and sea.

WSC Question #7: "What are the decrees of God?"

Answer: "The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his own will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

See Eph.1:11; Psa.33:11; Acts 4:26,27

Memory Assignment

1. Memorize WSC #7;
2. Ephesians 1:11

WSC Question #8: "How doth God execute his decrees?"

Answer: "God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence."

See Eph.1:11; Gen.1:31

Memory Assignment

Memorize WSC #8

WSC Question #9: "What is the work of creation?"

Answer: "The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good."

See Gen.1:1-31; Heb.11:3

Assignments

1. Memorize WSC #9;
2. Memorize Hebrews 11:3

B. God made the world with a word.

Psalm 33:6-9: “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.”

Countless volumes have been written by scientists and pseudo-scientists on the subject of creation. One of the latest and most widely held theories is that the world and the universe are the result of a “Big Bang”, which supposedly took place “millions of years ago”(!). The scientist who rejects the existence of the God of the Scriptures appears to be much more comfortable in believing in something he can attempt to explain rather than being willing to believe in an omnipotent God! Some months ago an unbelieving scientist told this writer that he rejected the idea of the person of God. He said, “No, I don’t believe in God. There may have been a god at one time, but the big bang killed him!”

II. God made the universe and everything contained in it within the space of six days.

Exodus 20:11: “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore, the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

He made the sea and the earth, he decked the earth with flowers and fruit. He made the light that we might see his glory. He

placed the sun, moon and stars in the sky. He made all living creatures that are in the ground. in the sea, and in the air.

III. God himself pronounced all the work of his hands, when completed, very good.

All things in this world were at that time excellent. (Gen. 1:31)

- A. The human souls were morally excellent.
- B. The world and all manner of life were excellent according to their several natures and relations.

LESSON TWELVE

WHERE DID MAN COME FROM?

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 4, Section 2: After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it; and yet under the possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Besides this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which, while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.

Gen.1:27; Gen.2:7; Eccles.12:7; Luke 23:43; Matt.10:28; Gen. 1:26; Col. 3:10; Eph.4:24; Rom.2:14,15; Gen.3:6; Eccles. 7:29; Gen.2:17; Gen.3:8-11, 23; Gen. 1:26,28.

EXPOSITION

Section Two teaches four main truths.

- I. Man was created immediately by God,** and was the last of the creatures. Genesis 1:26,27. (See discussion above)

WSC Question #10: “How did God create man?”

Answer: “God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.”

Gen.1:27-8: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”

Memory Assignment

Memorize WSC #10

Memorize Gen.1:28

- A. The “theory” of evolution is just that — a theory. And it is entirely false! There is not one shred of evidence to support the theory that an organized being ever passed in transition from a lower to a higher being! This is especially important to note because of the flood of evolutionary teaching in public schools, in colleges and universities, and in the media, especially on television, where commentators glibly talk about “Twenty million years ago, when the earth was young, and dinosaurs roamed the earth”.
- B. The Scriptures expressly affirm the fact of man’s immediate creation.

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

II. God created one human pair from whom the entire human race in all its varieties has descended by generation.

A. The human family forms one, and not many different species.

(1) The races freely intermix and produce perfectly fertile offspring.

(2) Their mental, moral and spiritual natures are identical.

B. The Scriptures clearly state this fact.

Acts 17:26: “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.”

C. The scriptural doctrines of original sin and redemption are based upon this fact.

1 Cor.15:21,22: “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Romans 5:12-14, 18: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned; (For until the law, sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come....) Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

III. God created man in his own image.

Man was created like God as to the perfection and integrity of his nature. This includes:

A. Knowledge

Col.3:10: “And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”

B. Righteousness and True Holiness.

Eph.4:24: “*And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*”

IV. Adam was created holy and capable of obedience.

See Genesis 2:16,17

This appears to have been the moral condition in which both angels and men were created. It evidently was never intended to be the permanent condition of any creature. (Hodge, The Confession of Faith, p.33)

Man is the most exquisite piece of the creation. He is a microcosm, or little world. Man was made with deliberation and counsel. ‘*Let us make man*’ ... Gen.1:26 ... Man was to be the masterpiece of this visible world, therefore God consulted about making so rare a piece. A solemn counsel of the sacred persons of the Trinity was called On the king’s coin his own image or effigy is stamped; so God stamped his image on man, and made him a partaker of many divine qualities. (Watson, A Body of Divinity, p.114)

Reading Assignment

Calvin’s Institutes, Book 1, Chapter XV,
“The State of Man at His Creation, The Faculties of the Soul, The Divine Image, Free Will, and The Original Purity of His Nature”

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

1. John Calvin’s *Commentary on Genesis*, page 64 reads:

... Though Moses begins, in this Book, with the Creation of the World, he nevertheless does not confine us to this subject. For these things ought to be connected together, that the world was founded by God, and that man, after he had been endued with the light of intelligence, and adorned with so many privileges, fell by his own fault, and was deprived of all the benefits he had obtained; afterwards, by the compassion of God, he was

restored to the life he had forfeited, and this through the loving kindness of Christ; so that there should always be some assembly on earth, which being adopted into the hope of celestial life, might in this confidence worship God. The end to which the whole scope of the history tends is to this point, that the human race has been preserved by God in such a manner as to manifest his special care for his Church. For this is the argument of the Book: After the world had been created, man was placed in it as in a theatre, that he, beholding above him and beneath the wonderful works of God, might reverently adore their Author. Secondly, that all things were ordained for the use of man, that he, being under deeper obligation, might devote and dedicate himself entirely to obedience towards God. Thirdly, that he was endued with understanding and reason, that being distinguished from brute animals he might meditate on a better life, and might even tend directly towards God, whose image he bore engraven on his own person.

2. A.A. Hodge comments, *The Confession of Faith*, p.89:

God, angels, and saints in glory are free, but with natures certainly and infallibly prompting them to holiness. Devils and fallen men are free, with natures infallibly prompting them to evil. The imperfectly sanctified Christian is the subject of two conflicting inherent tendencies, the law in the members, and the law of the Spirit; and his only security is that he is 'kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation'.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite, from memory, WSC #10.
2. Recite, from memory, Genesis 1:28.

LESSON THIRTEEN

THE WISE ACTS OF

AN OMNIPOTENT GOD

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 5, Section 1: God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

Heb.1:3; Dan.4:34,35; Ps.135:6; Acts 17:25,26,28; Job 38,39,40,41; Matt.10:29-31; Prov.15:3; Ps.104:24; 145:17; Acts 15:18; Ps. 94:8-11; Eph.1:11; Ps.33:10,11; Isa.63:14; Eph.3:10; Rom.9:17; Gen.45:7; Ps.145:7.

WCF, Chapter 5, Section 2: Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

Acts 2:23; Gen.8:22; Jer.31:35; Ex.21:13; Deut.19:5; 1 Kings 22:28,34; Isa.10:6,7.

WCF, Chapter 5, Section 3: God in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.

Acts 27:31,44; Isa.45:10,11; Hos.2:21,22; Hos.1:7; Matt.4:4; Job 34:10; Rom.4:19-21; 2 Kings 6:6; Dan.3:27.

EXPOSITION

There are three important truths taught in these sections.

1. The God who made all things, controls all things.
 2. This complete and total control was planned from before the beginning of time!
 3. God uses natural means, but is free to work “without, above, and against them”, at his pleasure.
- 1. The God who made all things controls all things.**

Psalm 103:19: “*The LORD hath prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all.*”

WSC Question #11: “What are God’s works of providence?”

Answer: “God’s works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.”

Memory Assignments

Memorize WSC #11.
Memorize Psalm 103:19.

Examine Daniel 4. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which only Daniel could interpret. The dream came to pass, and Nebuchadnezzar went totally mad, spending seven years away from all society! God then restored his sanity to him and he was a changed man. He had learned his lesson! But examine verses

25 to 33, and see what the cost was to this king and his kingdom! He then testifies to the complete providence of God: in verses 34 and 35 he exclaims: “*I, Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*”

The prophet Nehemiah emphasized this same truth when he said, “*Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.*” (9:6)

This is the great truth the Apostle Paul speaks about when he writes, (Heb.1:3), “*Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholdeth all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sin, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*”

2. This complete and total control was planned from before the beginning of time

Eph.1:3-6: “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us acceptable in the beloved.”*

On this passage Matthew Henry comments:

He (God) acts in pursuance of his eternal purpose in bestowing spiritual blessings upon his people. ‘He hath blessed us — according as he hath chosen us in him’, in Christ the great head of the election, who is emphatically called <God’s elect, his chosen>; and in the chosen Redeemer an eye of favour was cast upon them. Observe here one great end and design of this choice: chosen — that we should be holy : not because he foresaw they would be holy, but because he determined to make them so. All who are chosen to happiness as the end are chosen to holiness as the means. (Matthew Henry’s Commentary, Vol. 6, p.687)

3. God uses natural means, but is free to work “without, above, and against them”, at His pleasure.

Examine the book of Jonah. God told Jonah, (1:2), “*Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come before me.*” Jonah arose, but went the other way! This was, definitely, a “rising against God”. God let him go, but he worked against stubborn Jonah by letting him “enjoy” a three-day tour in the belly of a large fish! Jonah prayed “out of the fish’s belly”! It must have been a very intense, sincere, prayer meeting! When the fish was through with him, Jonah was more than glad to do what God had told him to do in the first place!

Yes, God uses natural means, but He is perfectly free to work “without, above and against them, as He sees fit!”

QUESTIONS

1. Recite, from memory, WSC #11
2. Recite, from memory, Psalm 103:19

LESSON FOURTEEN

THE MYSTERIOUS MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 5, Section 4: The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

Rom.11:32-34; 2 Sam.24:1; 1 Chron.21:1; 1 Kings 22:22,23; 1 Chron.10:4,13,14; 2 Sam.16:10; Acts 2:23; 4:27,28; 14:16; Ps.76:10; 2 Kings 19:28; Gen.50:10; Isa.10:6,7,12; James 1:13,14,17; 1 John 2:16; Ps.50:21.

WCF, Chapter 5, Section 5: The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption, and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to

raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

2 Chron.32:25,26,31; 2 Sam.24:1; 2 Cor.12:7-9; Ps.73; Ps.77:1,10,12; Mark 14:66 to end; John 21:15-17.

WCF, Chapter 5, Section 6: As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God, as a righteous judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan; whereby it comes to pass, that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.

Rom.1:24,26,28; 11:7,8; Deut.29:4; Matt.13:12; 25:29; Deut.2:30; 2 Kings 8:12,13; Ps.81:11,12; 2 Thess.2:10-12; Ex.7:3; 8:15,32; 2 Cor.2:15,16; Isa.8:14; 1 Pet.2:7,8; Isa.6:9,10; Acts 28:26,27.

WCF, Chapter 5, Section 7: As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures; so, after a most special manner, it taketh care of his Church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.

1 Tim.4:10; Amos 9:8,9; Rom.8:28; Isa.43:3-5,14.

WSC Question #12: “What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?”

Answer: “When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.”

Memory Assignment

Genesis 2:16,17

EXPOSITION

These sections emphasize three important truths.

1. The providence of God permits and uses the sinful acts of men for His own glory.
 2. God cannot be the author or approver of sin.
 3. The providential acts of God may be either special, or general.
- 1. The providence of God permits and uses the sinful acts of men for His own glory.**

One of the classic illustrations of this mysterious truth is found in the record of Joseph and his brethren, Genesis 37-50. Through the sinful acts of men, including Joseph’s own brothers, Joseph, through no fault of his own, finally found himself in prison in Egypt. Pharaoh dreamed dreams which no one could interpret. But Joseph interpreted the dreams, and became prime minister of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh! He inaugurated a seven-year plan which saved Egypt from the famine, and which brought Joseph’s father and his entire family to Egypt, where they lived and prospered for over 400 years. When Jacob died, Joseph’s brothers, fearing their brother’s wrath, came and fell down before him. But Joseph answered them by saying, “*Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against*

me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people.” (Gen.50:19,20).

But the greatest example of all time of how God uses the awful, sinful acts of mankind to work out His eternal purposes, is found in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ! Forty days after the death, burial and ascension of Christ, the Apostle Peter preached a sermon to a mixed crowd of Jews, who were “*devout men, out of every nation under heaven.*” (Acts 2:5). He reminded them that the prophet Joel had prophesied the things which had come to pass (Acts 2:16-21). And then Peter made this amazing statement: “*Ye men of Israel, hear these words; 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; Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*” (Acts 2:22-25).

2. God cannot be the author or approver of sin.

The sinful act always proceeds from the sinner.

As to the manner in which the providence of God is concerned about the sinful actions of creatures, it is usually stated, that God permits them, that he limits them, and that he overrules them for the accomplishment of his own holy ends. But the full elucidation of this abstruse subject, so as to remove every difficulty, surpasses the human faculties. We are certain that God is concerned in all the actions of his creatures; we are equally certain that God cannot be the author of sin; and here we ought to rest. (Shaw, The Reformed Faith, p.70)

3. The providential acts of God may be either special, or general.

This is clearly and wonderfully portrayed by the Apostle Paul, in Romans 9:20-21, where he declares, “*Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?*” And then Paul goes on to say, v.25, “*As he saith also in Hosea, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.*” Clearly, God manifests both His special and general providence in such passages as the above.

Robert Shaw writes in *The Reformed Faith*, p.72:

His general providence is exercised about all his creatures; his special providence is exercised, in a particular manner, about his Church and people. ‘*The eyes of the Lord run to and fro, throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him*’ — 2 Chron.16:9. God has the interests of his own people ever in view; he knows what is most conducive to their happiness; and he will make all things, whether prosperous or adverse, to co-operate in promoting their good. — Rom.8:28. In all past ages God has watched over his church with peculiar and unremitting care; he has sometimes permitted her to be reduced to a very low condition, but he has also wrought surprising deliverances in her behalf. The very means which her enemies intended for her destruction and ruin, have by an overruling Providence, been rendered subservient to her edification and enlargement. — Acts 8:4. The preservation of the Church, in spite of the craft and malice of hell, and of all the pernicious errors and bloody persecutions which have threatened her ruin, is no less wonderful than the spectacle which Moses beheld, — a bush burning but not consumed. And let us still confide and rejoice in the promise of Christ, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against his Church.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite, from memory, WSC #12.
2. Recite, from memory, Genesis 2:16,17

PART FOUR

THE FALL OF MAN

LESSON FIFTEEN

THE FALL OF MAN

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 6, Section 1: Our first parents being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

Gen.3:6-8,13; 2 Cor.11:3; Rom.11:32; Eccles.7:29; Rom.3:23;

WCF, Chapter 6, Section 2: By this sin they fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

Gen.2:17; Eph.2:1; Tit.1:15; Gen.6:5; Jer.17:9; Rom.3:10-18.

WSC Question #13: “Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?”

Answer: “Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.”

WSC Question #14: “What is sin?”

Answer: “Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.”

WSC Question #15: “What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?”

Answer: “The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.”

WSC Question #16: “Did all mankind fall in Adam’s first transgression?”

Answer: “The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.”

Memory Assignments

Memorize WSC #13; #14; #15; #16.

APPLICATION

What was the sin which our first parents committed? The Bible makes it very clear that the original sin was the **sin of disobedience** against God’s clear command. Gen.2:16,17 reads, “*And the LORD commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*”

A. THE ENTRANCE OF SIN

Since man was created holy, undefiled, and totally free from sin, then the natural question must be asked, “What happened?”

The Bible is very clear concerning what happened!

First, Genesis 3:4,5: Satan tempts Eve: *“And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die, For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”*

Next, v.6: Eve sins, then Adam sins: *“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”*

Clearly, the original sin was a sin of disobedience!

The Word of God has a lot to say on the subject of the sinfulness of man!

Jeremiah 17:9: *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”*

Romans 3:23: *“For all have sinned; and come short of the glory of God.”*

Romans 5:12: *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”*

Romans 6:23: *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

The above Biblical statements teach at least four main truths which we must consider.

I. Our first parents sinned by eating the forbidden fruit.

Genesis 3:6: *“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”*

A. The Bible does not tell us what kind of fruit this was, but there is no indication that it was an apple!

B. This was a sin of:

1. Unbelief. They doubted God's promise of judgment.
2. Disobedience. They set their will in opposition to God's will.

II. They were seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan.

Genesis 3:4,5: *“And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”*



Note

John Calvin has an interesting comment on these verses:

Satan now springs boldly forward; and because he sees a breach before him, he breaks through in direct assault, for he is never wont to engage in open war until we voluntarily expose ourselves to him, naked and unarmed. ... when he has stolen in upon us, he dares to exalt himself petulantly and with proud confidence against God; just as he now, seizing upon Eve's doubt, penetrates further, that he may turn it into a direct negative. It behoves us to be instructed, by such examples, to beware of his snares, and by making timely resistance, to keep him far from us that nearer access may not be permitted to him ... He now, therefore, openly accuses God of falsehood, for he asserts that the word by which death was denounced is false and delusive. Fatal temptation! when, while God is threatening us with death, we not only securely sleep, but hold God himself in derision! (Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, Vol. 1, pp.149-150)

III. All mankind, descending from Adam by ordinary generation, sinned in Adam, and fell with him in his first transgression.

This is known as “original sin”.

See Romans 5:12: “... *death passed upon ALL men, for that all (have) sinned.*”

A. Adam’s sin became the sin of all mankind:

1. By Imputation. Romans 5:18: “*Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.*”
2. By Propagation. Psalm 51:5: “*Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*”



The depravity and corruption of Adam’s nature is transmitted to us, as poison is carried from the fountain to the stream!

B. Adam’s sin affected us:

1. By depriving us of that original righteousness which would have been ours.

Jeremiah 17:9: “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it.*”

2. By giving us a nature which cannot keep from sinning.

2 Peter 2:12-15: “*But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are, and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls; an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:*”

Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Besor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.”

IV. The Scope of original sin is universal and total.

- A. By the universality of it. Its poison is diffused into all parts and powers of the soul.

Isaiah 1:5,6: “... *the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the soul of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it...*”

- B. By the defiling of the heart.

In the heart are legions of lusts, obduracy, filth, infidelity, hypocrisy; it boils as the sea with passion and revenge ... The heart is ‘the devil’s shop or workhouse’, where all mischief is framed. (Watson, Body of Divinity p.144)

Additional Thoughts to Ponder

1. “Original sin, though latent in the soul, and as a spring which runs under ground, often breaks forth unexpectedly. Christian, thou canst not believe that evil which is in thy heart, and which will break forth suddenly, if God should leave thee ... If one had come to Peter and said, ‘Peter, within a few hours thou wilt deny Christ’, he would have said, ‘Is thy servant a dog?’ But alas! Peter did not know his own heart, nor how far that corruption within would prevail upon him.” (Watson, Body of Divinity, p.145)
2. The Consequences of Adam’s Sin:
 - a. Physical death: Gen.2:17: “*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*”

- b. Spiritual death: Gen.3:6-8: *“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden”*.

B. Section II contains three main truths.

- 1. By this one sin they immediately lost their original righteousness!**

Gen.1:24: *“So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”*

- 2. They immediately became dead in sin and totally unrighteous.**

Gen.2:17: *“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”*



Note

On this passage, Matthew Henry commented:

God is saying: ‘*In the day thou eatest, thou shalt die*’, that is, “Thou shalt become mortal and capable of dying; the grant of immortality shall be recalled, and that defence shall depart from thee. Thou shalt become obnoxious to death, like a condemned malefactor that is dead in law” (only, because Adam was to be the root of mankind, he was

retrieved); “nay, the harbingers and forerunners of death shall immediately seize thee, and thy life, thenceforward, shall be a dying life: and this, surely; it is a settled rule, ‘The soul that sinneth, it shall die’.” (Commentary on Genesis, Vol. 1, p.18).

3. Their entire soul and body were defiled.

Titus 1:15: “*Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.*”



Thomas Watson commented:

All the troubles incident to man’s life are the bitter fruits of original sin. The sin of Adam has ‘subjected the creature to vanity.’ Rom.8:20. ... Solomon put all the creatures into a crucible; and when he came to extract the spirit and quintessence, there was nothing but froth, ‘all was vanity.’ Ecc1.1:2. Nay, it is vexing vanity; not only emptiness, but bitterness, our life is labour and sorrow: we come into this world with a cry, and go out with a groan. Ps-90:10. (Watson, Body of Divinity, pp.151,152)

QUESTION

1. Recite, from memory, WSC #13; #14; #15; #16.

LESSON SIXTEEN

THE EXTENT OF SIN

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 6, Section 3: They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation.

WCF, Chapter 6, Section 4: From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, proceed all actual transgressions.

Gen.1:27,28; 2:16,17; Acts 17:26; 1 Cor.15:21,22,45,49;
Rom.5:12,15-19; Ps.51:5; Gen.5:3; Job 14:4;15:14; Rom.5:6;
Rom.8:7;7:18; Col.1:21; Gen.6:5; Gen.8:21; Rom.3:10-12;
James 1:14,15; Eph.2:2,3; Matt.15:19.

WSC Question #17: “Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?”

Answer: “The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.”

Memory Assignments

1. WSC #17
2. Romans 5:12

APPLICATION

These sections teach two very important truths.

- 1. All mankind, being descendents of Adam, have inherited sinful natures from Adam and suffer all the consequences of that sinful nature.**



Note

All biblical students should engage in a careful study of Romans 5:12-21 in order to fully understand this profound fact. The Apostle Paul draws a continuing parallel between the communication of sin and death from the first Adam, and of righteousness and eternal life from the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

- a. By one man, Adam, sin and death passed upon all men;
By one man, Christ the second Adam, eternal life to all who believe!
- b. By the offense of Adam, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; by the obedience of the second Adam, Christ brings the free gift of righteousness to all who believe.

- 2. This original corruption of the souls of men is complete, and it results in all evil acts.**

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

Eph.2:2,3: “*Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the*

air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”



1. Unregenerate souls are dead in trespasses and sins.
2. Unregenerate souls are by nature bond-slaves to sin and Satan.
3. Unregenerate souls are by nature the children of wrath.

QUESTION

1. Recite, from memory: WSC #17; Romans 5:12

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 6, Section 5: This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.

John 1:8,10; Rom.7:14,17,18,23; James 3:2; Prov.20:9; Eccles.7:20; Rom.7:5,7,8,25; Gal.5:17; 1 John 3:4; Rom.2:15; 3:9,10; Eph.2:3; Gal.3:10; Rom.6:23;

WCF, Chapter 6, Section 6: Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

Eph.4:18; Rom.8:20; Lam.3:39; Matt.25:41; 2 Thess.1:9

WSC Question #18: “Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?”

Answer: “The sinfulness of that estate, whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam’s first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.”

WSC Question #19: “What is the misery of that estate wherein man fell?”

Answer: “All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

Memory Assignment

1. WSC #18;
2. WSC #19;
3. Ephesians 2:1-3

APPLICATION

These sections speak of the continuing effects of sin.

1. Original sin remains in the believer as long as he lives.

1 John 1:8,10: *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ... If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”*

Rom.7:14,18-20: *“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin ... For I know that in me (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin dwelleth in me.”*

Thomas Watson comments:

It (Original Sin) is not perfectly cured in this life. Though grace does subdue sin, yet it does not wholly remove it. Though we are like Christ, having the first fruits of the Spirit, yet we are unlike him, having the remainders of the flesh. ... Original sin is like that tree, in Daniel 4:23, though the branches of it were hewn down, and the main body of it, yet the stumps and root of the tree were left. Though the Spirit be still weakening and hewing down sin in the godly, yet the stump of original sin is left. It is a sea that will not, in this life, be dried up. (Body of Divinity, pp.146-7.)

2. Every sin, original and actual brings guilt, misery and judgment to the sinner, and places him under the wrath of an omnipotent God.

Eph.2:2,3: *“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”*



Until the sinner is regenerated by the Spirit of God through Christ, he is enslaved to sin and Satan. Satan rules the understanding. Satan rules the will. John 8:44 states, *“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.”*

Let us labour to get out of this deplorable condition into which sin has plunged us, and get free from the power of Satan. If any of your children were slaves, you would give great sums of money to purchase their freedom; and when your souls are enslaved, will ye not labour for their freedom? Improve the gospel. The gospel proclaims a jubilee to captives. Sin binds men, but the gospel looses them. Paul’s preaching was *‘to turn men from the power of Satan to God’* (Acts 26:18). The gospel

star leads you to Christ; and if you get Christ, then you are made free, though not from the being of sin, yet from Satan's tyranny. *'If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed.'* (John 8:36). You hope to be kings to reign in heaven, and will you let Satan reign in you now? Never think to be kings when you die, and slaves while you live. The crown of glory is for conquerors, not for captives. Oh get out of Satan's jurisdiction; get your fetters of sin filed off by repentance. (Watson, Body of Divinity, p.150)

Assignment

Recite, from memory, WSC #18; #19; Ephesians 2:1-3.

PART FIVE

GOD'S COVENANT WITH MAN

LESSON SEVENTEEN

THE COVENANT OF WORKS

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 7, Section 1: The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.

WCF, Chapter 7, Section 2: The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

Isa.40:13-17; Job 9:32,33; 1 Sam.2:25; Ps.93:5,6; 100:2,3; Job 22:2,3; 35:7,8; Luke 17:10; Acts 17:24,25; Gal,3:12; Rom.10:5; Rom.5:12-20; Gen.2:17; Gal.3:10.

Genesis 2:16,17: *“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”*

APPLICATION



Note

The WLC #20 throws considerable light on man's original condition:

WLC Question #20: “What was the providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created?”

Answer: “The providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created, was the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth; putting the creatures under his dominion, and ordaining marriage for his help; affording him communion with himself; instituting the sabbath; entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience, of which the tree of life was a pledge; and forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.”



Note

This was the first covenant God made with Adam, and thus with all mankind. Adam represented himself and the whole world.

The WSC, questions 11 & 12 apply directly to our present subject.

WSC Question #11: “What are God’s works of providence?”

Answer: “God’s works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.”

WSC Question #12: “What special act of providence did God exercise toward man, in the estate wherein he was created?”

Answer: “When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience;

forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death”.

These statements teach the following truths.

- I. Adam was the first man and was representative of all future mankind; therefore, the covenant was made with Adam for all mankind.** Since God was the great Monarch of heaven and earth, he had a perfect right to impose upon us the terms of the covenant.
- II. The promise of this covenant was life; the condition of it was perfect and personal obedience.**

Question: What is the covenant? God gave Adam knowledge, and “put upon him the garment of original righteousness” (Watson). He was not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, for this would give him omniscience. Furthermore, Adam had the power to keep the law.

So, the covenant of works contained a promise and a threat Genesis 2:16,17 states: “*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt no eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.*”

- A. The promise: “Do this and live.” It is probable that Adam would have lived forever!
- B. The threat: “Disobey, and thou shalt die.”
1. This meant physical death.
 2. This meant eternal death, unless something could be worked out for man’s restoration.

See what a glorious condition man was in, when God entered into a covenant with him. He was placed in the garden of God, which for the pleasure of it was called paradise. (Gen.2:8) He had his choice of all the trees, one only excepted; he had all kinds of precious stones, pure metals, rich cedars; he was a king upon the throne, and all the creation did obeisance to him,

as in Joseph's dream all his brethren's sheaves bowed to his sheaf. Man, in innocence, had all kinds of pleasure that might ravish his senses with delight, and be as baits to allure him to serve and worship his Maker. He was full of holiness. Paradise was not more adorned with fruit than Adam's soul with grace. He was the coin on which God had stamped his lively image. Light sparkled in his understanding, so that he was like an earthly angel; and his will and affections were full of order, tuning harmoniously to the will of God. Adam was a perfect pattern of sanctity. Adam had intimacy of communion with God and conversed with him, as a favorite with his prince. He knew God's mind, and had his heart. He not only enjoyed the light of the sun in paradise, but the light of God's countenance. This was Adam's condition when God entered into a covenant with him.... (Watson, A Body of Divinity, pp.130-131).

LESSON EIGHTEEN

THE COVENANT OF GRACE

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 7, Section 3: Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the Covenant of Grace: whereby he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.

WCF, Chapter 7, Section 4: This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in the Scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.

Gal.3:21; Rom.8:3;3:20,21; Gen.3:15; Isa.42:6; Mark 16:15,16;
John 3:16; Rom. 10:6,9; Gal.3:11; Ezek.36:26,27; John 6:44,45;
Heb.9:15-17; Heb.7:22; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor.11:25.

Just as there was a covenant of works, established between God and man, even so there is a covenant of grace, established between God and the Man, God's Son.

WSC Question #20: “Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?”

Answer: “God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.”

Memory Assignment

Memorize WSC #20;
Memorize Romans 10:9,10

APPLICATION

There are two main truths taught here:

1. God Entered into a Covenant of Grace.
2. Christ is the Mediator of this Covenant.
- 1. God Entered into a Covenant of Grace.**

- a. This is taught in the Old Testament.

See Isaiah 55:3: “*I will make an everlasting covenant with you.*”

In Ezekiel 37:26 it is called a “covenant of peace”: “*Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.*”

- b. This is taught in the New Testament.

See Ephesians 1:4: “*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.*”

In his commentary on this passage, John Calvin made the following enlightening statement:

If the reason is asked, why God has called us to enjoy the gospel, why he daily bestows upon us so many blessings, why he opens to us the gates to heaven, — the answer will be constantly found in this principle, that *he hath chosen us before the foundation of the world*. The very time when election took place proves it to be free; for what could we have deserved, or what merit did we possess, before the world was made? ... We were all lost in Adam; and therefore, had not God, through his own election, rescued us from perishing, there was nothing to be foreseen. (Commentary on Ephesians, p.198).

- c. In contrast to the covenant of works, the new covenant is a covenant of grace, which is a solemn compact and agreement between God the Father and God the Son, to provide a way for sinful man to become the child of a holy God.

All mankind, through our forefather Adam, forfeited the covenant of works there in the Garden of Eden. But God had entered into a new covenant after we had cast ourselves away.

- d. The covenant of grace differs from the covenant of works.

The terms of the first covenant were stricter and more severe. Adam's first act of disobedience immediately made the covenant null and void.

- (1) In contrast, many failings do not make the covenant of grace null and void, because the terms were different.
- (2) The first covenant depended upon works; the second covenant depends upon faith.

Romans 4:5: “*But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*”

e. Works are included in the covenant of grace.

Titus 3:8: *“This is a faithful saying ... that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.”*

But there is this difference:

- (1) In the first covenant, works were required as the condition of life. This covenant began and ended with Adam!
- (2) In the second covenant, works are required only as signs of life; as evidence of our love of God.

2. Christ is the Mediator of this Covenant of Grace.

Hebrews 9:13-15: *“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; 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 to serve the living God? And for this cause He is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”*

(See Lesson Eight.)



In Thomas Watson’s book, *A Body of Divinity*, p.161, there is found this marvelous statement:

God is your God in covenant; he has done more for you than if he had made you ride upon the high places of the earth, and given you crowns and scepters. Oh take the cup of salvation, and bless the Lord! (Ps.103:1) Eternity will be little enough to praise him. Musicians love to play on their music where there is the loudest sound; and God loves to bestow his mercies where he may have the loudest praises. You that have angels’ reward, do angels’ work. Begin that

work of praise here, which you hope to be always doing in heaven.

COLLATERAL READING

Calvin's Institutes, Vol.II, Book III, Chapter XV, "Boasting of the Merit of Works, Especially Subversive of God's Glory in the Gift of Righteousness, and of the Certainty of Salvation."

Assignment

Recite, from memory, WSC #20; Romans 10:9,10.

PART SIX

CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

LESSON NINETEEN

THE THREE MEDIATORIAL FUNCTIONS

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 8, Section 1: It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest and King; the Head and Saviour of his Church; the Heir of all things; and Judge of the world; unto whom He did, from all eternity give a people to be his seed; and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

Isa.42:1; 1 Pet.1:19,20; John 3:16; 1 Tim.2:5; Acts 3:22; Heb.5:5,6; Ps.2:6; Luke 1:33; Eph.5:23; Heb.1:2; Acts 17:31; John 17:6; Ps.22:30; Isa.53:10;

WCF, Chapter 8, Section 2: The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which Person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

1 Tim.2:6; Isa.55:4,5; 1 Cor.1:30.

WSC Question #20 : “Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?”

Answer: “God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.”

WSC Question #21: “Who is the Redeemer of God’s elect?”

Answer: “The only Redeemer of God’s elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.”

WSC Question #22: “How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?”

Answer: “Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.”

Assignment

Memorize WSC #20; #21; #22; 1 Thess. 4:13-18

APPLICATION

A mediator is one who interposes between two parties at variance, to procure a reconciliation. Before the fall, there was no need of a mediator between God and man; for, though there was an infinite distance in nature, yet, there was no variance between these parties. But upon the fall the case was altered; God was dishonoured, and highly offended; man was alienated from God, and subjected to his judicial displeasure; and as man was unable to satisfy the claims of the divine law which he had violated, if he was to be restored to the favour of his offended sovereign, the interposition of another was requisite,

to atone for his guilt, and lay the foundation of peace. This is the office and work assigned to Jesus Christ, the one mediator between God and man. (Shaw, The Reformed Faith, p.95)

There are two main truths to be considered in connection with this subject:

1. God entered into a Covenant of grace.
2. Christ is the Mediator of that covenant.

I. God entered into a Covenant of Grace.

In contrast to the covenant of works, the new covenant is a covenant of grace. It is a solemn compact between God the Father and God the Son, to provide a way for sinful man to become the child of a holy, righteous God. It is called a covenant of peace in Ezekiel 37:26: *“I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them...”*

Heb.8:6: *“But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.”*



Note

1. This is a covenant made by an omnipotent God, who is so powerful that He can create the heavens and the earth simply by a word, (Psa.33:6, *“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth”*) This same God is so powerful that His covenant of grace cannot be broken! Every born-again believer can rejoice that God will **never** permit him to lose his salvation! However, this does not mean that, since he is under such a covenant, he can continue to live a life of sin. The overwhelming proof of one’s conversion is a definite departure from that life of sin! He should manifest this new birth by performing good works. (James 1:22, *“But be ye*

doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving our own selves”).

2. This points up the amazing goodness of God! He had no reason to bring any person into such a covenant, since Adam and all his descendants have rejected God, and since there is nothing in man’s totally sinful nature which would merit any such act of grace. God did not enter into such a covenant with the angels when they fell! Yet He provided for man a covenant of grace even after man had broken the covenant of works!

Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

II. Christ is the mediator of the Covenant of Grace.

WLC Question #36: “Who is the Mediator of the covenant of grace?”

Answer: “The only Mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father, in the fulness of time became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and man, in two entire distinct natures, and one person, forever.”

1 Tim. 2:5: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

Phil.2:6-8: “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, and was made in the likeness of men; And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Heb.1:4: “And to Jesus, the author of the new covenant.”

John 14:6: “*Jesus saith unto him, I am way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*”

APPLICATION

There are four main lessons to be learned from this doctrine of the covenant of grace:

Lesson One:

Our Lord Jesus Christ willingly left heaven’s glory and came to this earth in order that he might shed His blood and pay for the sins of a people who had turned against him and hated him enough to crucify him!

This is an amazing development. Here is the Lord of Glory, the second Person of the Godhead, the One who created the heavens, the earth and all of mankind, who willingly left heaven’s glory and “*made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant*” in order to sacrifice himself to pay for our sins!

This will still more fully appear, if we consider, that it was no mean part which the Mediator had to perform; namely, to restore us to the Divine favour, so as, of children of men, to make us children of God; of heirs of hell, to make us heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Who could accomplish this, unless the Son of God should become also the Son of man, and thus to receive to himself what belongs to us, and transfer to us that which is his, and make that which is his by nature ours by grace? (Calvin’s Institutes, Book 2, Chapter 12, p.507)

Lesson Two:

There is no other saviour! Just as there was only one ark to save the world from death, so there is no other redeemer to save the world from eternal condemnation.

Noah spent over 100 years building the ark. All that time he preached about the coming judgment. Nobody but his immediate family believed him! They all placed their trust in the hills, the

rivers, sun, moon, idols, etc. When the flood came, it was too late — they could have accepted God’s plan, but they ridiculed it. It was the only avenue of escape, but they rejected it!

“Jesus saith ... no man cometh to the Father but by me.”

Lesson Three:

The grace given us by our Redeemer shows us how to live a life pleasing to God. Titus 2:11-13: *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”*



Note

By the grace given us by our Redeemer, we have the privilege of:

1. Living a life which is pleasing to God! How amazing it is to learn that we, who were born with sinful natures, (“heirs of hell”, as Calvin put it!) now have the privilege and ability of living in such a way that we can actually please Him! And we please Him by doing what He wants us to do, such as turning away from the sins of the flesh, cleaning up our lives, seeking out His desires for us by diligently searching the Scriptures. And something else: our Lord’s greatest desire, spoken just before He returned to heaven, was for all true believers to win the lost to the Lord, for He gave the Great Commission to us: *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the world.”* (Acts 1:8) There is no greater joy in all the world than that of leading a lost soul to a saving knowledge of Christ!
2. Looking, with eager anticipation, for that personal appearing of our wonderful Saviour when He comes in the air for us! The Christian’s greatest anticipation should be that which is

described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: *“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”*

Lesson Four:

The grace manifested by our Redeemer provides us with the joyous knowledge that, at His Second Coming, we shall see Him as He is. (1 John 3:2) and we shall be with Him forever! Acts 1:11: *“...This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.”* Yes, we shall certainly recognize Him, for He will still bear the nail prints in His hands and feet, and the mark of the sword which was thrust into His side. And we will have the privilege of living with Him in glory, for He said, *“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am there ye may be also.”* (John 14:2,3)



Note

The believer has at least four supreme expectations as he looks forward to the Lord’s coming:

1. The greatest joy will be that of seeing our beloved Saviour, face to face!
2. We will again see all of our loved ones, who, having believed in Christ, have gone on before us!
3. We will see all the individuals who have accepted Christ through our personal witness!

4. Not only that, but we shall also see all the saints of all the ages, from Adam on down through the ages. What a joyous gathering that will be!

Collateral Reading:

Calvin's Institutes, Book 2, Chapter 12, "The Necessity of Christ becoming Man in Order to Fulfill the Office of Mediator."

Assignment

1. Recite, from memory, WSC #21; #22;
2. Recite, from memory, 1 Thess.4:13-18.

LESSON TWENTY

THE WONDERFUL WORK OF CHRIST

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 8, Section 3: The Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united with the divine, was sanctified and anointed by the Holy Spirit above measure; having in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell; to the end, that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of Mediator and Surety. Which office he took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by his Father; who put all power and judgment into his hand, and gave commandment to execute the same.

WCF, Chapter 8, Section 4: This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; which that he might discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it; endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died; was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which he suffered; with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth on the right hand of his Father, making intercession; and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the age.

Ps. 45:7; John 3:34; Col.2:3; Col.1:19; Heb.7:26; John 1:14;
Acts 10:38; Heb.12:24;

Heb.7:22; Heb.5:4,5; John 5:22,27; Matt.28:18; Acts 2:36;
Ps.40.6-8; Heb.10:5-10;

John 10:18; Phil.2:8; Gal.4:4; Matt.3:15; 5:17; Mat.26:37,38;
Luke 22:44;

Matt.27:46; Matt.26; Matt.27; Phil.2:8; Acts 2:23,24,27; Acts
13:37; Rom.6:9;

1 Cor.15:3-5; John 20:25,27; Mark 16:19; Rom.8:34; Heb.9:24;
7:25; Rom.14:9.10;

Acts 1:11; 10:42; Matt.13:40-42; Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4.

EXPOSITION

One of the most amazing Old Testament prophecies concerning the sacrificial work of Christ is found in Psalm 40:6-8: *“Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”*

This passage is quoted by the Apostle in Hebrews 10:5-14, and applied directly to Christ.

One thousand years before its fulfillment, the Psalmist declares that:

1. The legal sacrifices to atone for our sins are utterly insufficient — there has to be something far more applicable to secure full peace with God.
2. Burnt offering and sin offering will no longer be required — all those ceremonial institutions will be abolished.
3. The apostle concludes by stating, *“For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”*

LESSON TWENTY-ONE

THE FULLNESS OF THE WORK OF CHRIST

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 8, Section 5: The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.

WCF, Chapter 8, Section 6: Although the work of redemption was not act wrought by Christ till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof, were communicated unto the elect in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types and sacrifices, wherein he was revealed and signified to be the Seed of the woman, which should bruise the serpent's head, and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, being yesterday and today the same, and for ever.

WCF, Chapter 8, Section 7: Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures; by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.

The companion Shorter Catechisms vividly portray the extent and meaning of these important statements.

WSC Question #23: “What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?”

Answer: “Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.”

WSC Question #24: “How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?”

Answer: “Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.”

WSC Question #25: “How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?”

Answer: “Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.”

WSC Question #26: “How doth Christ execute the office of a king?”

Answer: “Christ executeth the office of a king , in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.”

APPLICATION

This section is so important, we shall discuss each office separately.

I. CHRIST IS OUR REDEEMER

Webster’s New World Dictionary defines “redeem” thusly: “1. To buy back. 2. To get back; recover, as by paying a fee. 3. To pay off (a mortgage or note). 4. To convert (paper money) into coin. 5.(a)

to set free; ransom; rescue. (b) to deliver from sin and its penalties, as by a sacrifice made for the sinner. 6. To fulfill, as a promise. 7. To make amends for; atone or compensate for.”

Christ has accomplished all this for us:

1. He has bought us back, by paying for our redemption!
2. He got us back; He recovered us by paying a fee — His precious blood!
3. He paid off our “mortgage”.
4. He converted us into something precious.
5. He set us free from the family of Satan; He paid our ransom.
6. He rescued us from the everlasting pains of hell.
7. He delivered us out of bondage by shedding His precious blood for us on the cross, and bringing us into the glorious family of God.
8. He fulfilled His promise by coming to earth as a precious baby, and by going to the cross as the Crucified One.
9. And by doing all this our Lord “made amends” to God, the Righteous One, for our sins!

No wonder He was able to say, with such authority, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.*”! (John 14:6)

WSC Question #30: “How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?”

Answer: “The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.”

Assignment

Memorize WSC #30.

The thing implied is, that Jesus Christ is the glorious purchaser of our redemption. The doctrine of redemption by Jesus Christ is a glorious doctrine; it is the marrow and quintessence of the gospel, in which all a Christian's comfort lies. Great was the work of creation, but greater the work of redemption; it cost more to redeem us than to make us; in the one there was but the speaking of a word, in the other shedding of blood. (Watson, A Body of Divinity, p.209)

There are so many wonderful facts which could be discussed here, for, truly, here is the very heart of the Gospel of Christ! But we shall examine only two at this point:

1. Christ is the glorious purchaser of our redemption;
2. The Holy Spirit applies this purchased redemption to us by working faith in us.

1. Christ is the glorious Purchaser of our redemption.

Eph.1:7: *“In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”*

John 6:40: *“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

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

It is impossible for the mind of man to fully grasp the miracle of redemption through Christ. The price paid for our redemption was not silver or gold. We who are saved were bought back out of bondage to Satan by a ransom paid to the Father by the Son, on Calvary's cross, when our Lord Jesus Christ shed His precious blood for us. This act was prearranged from before the foundation of the world! It was not just a remedy for lost sinners

which had suddenly occurred to God after a few thousand years! Before God created man He foreknew that man would not remain in that sinless state in which he was created. All throughout the Old Testament there are to be found symbols and types, such as a lamb without spot or any blemish, which pointed those Old Testament believers to the coming of God's spotless Lamb. Moses wrote, in Leviticus 3:1: "*And if his oblation be a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offer it of the herd; whether it be a male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord.*" That pointed directly to Christ!

2. The Holy Spirit "Works Faith in us" to bring us to Christ!

In John 16:7,8, Jesus declared: "*Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*"

We are too apt, in modern times, to overlook the necessity, or to underrate the value of the Spirit's grace; we talk much of the Saviour, but little of the Sanctifier; yet a consideration of the words which Christ addressed to his disciples in the immediate prospect of leaving them, should teach us that the agency of the Spirit is so essential and so important, that his advent would more than compensate for the departure of the Saviour. (James Buchanan, The Office and Work of The Holy Spirit, p. 22)



Note

It is the fact of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer which distinguishes him from the world of the lost. The Holy Spirit is the one who opens the eyes of our understanding to the great truths of Scripture. David recognized that the Holy Spirit indwelt him, for he prayed, "*Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me*" (Psalm 51:11).

But the purpose and work of the Holy Spirit is always identified as that of glorifying Christ, not Himself. Jesus said, *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.”* (John 16:13,14) Therefore we must emphatically state that any teaching or preaching which exalts the Holy Spirit rather than the Lord Jesus Christ is unbiblical, and should be condemned.

It is the Spirit’s work which forms the link betwixt the purchase of salvation on the part of the Redeemer, and the enjoyment of salvation on the part of his people. (Buchanan, The Office and Work of The Holy Spirit, p.37)

Assignment

Recite, from memory, WSC #30.

II. CHRIST IS OUR PROPHET

This office of Christ was prophesied in the Old Testament. For example, in Deuteronomy 18:15, Moses wrote, *“The LORD thy God shall raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken.”*

WSC Question #24: “How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?”

Answer: “Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.”

Memory Assignment

Memorize WSC #24.

A prophet is a spokesman; one sent from God to man to make known the divine will. In this sense Moses and all inspired men were prophets. But Christ was the personal ‘Word of God’

incarnate, he who had eternally been ‘in the bosom of the Father’, and ‘known the Father’; and consequently as Mediatorial Prophet is that original fountain of revelation of which all other prophets are the streams. He is the Prophet of all prophets, the Teacher of all teachers. (Hodge, Confession of Faith, p.135)

Acts 3:22: “*For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.*”

Heb.1:1,2: “*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.*”

The Scriptures teach:

1. That He executed the office of a prophet before His incarnation.

Isa. 9:6: “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace.*”

Mal.3:1: “*Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.*”

2. That He executed the office of a prophet after His incarnation.

John 3:1,2: “*There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*”

Matt.11:27: “*All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*”

The Larger Catechism puts it very succinctly in answer #43: “He executeth the office of a prophet, in his revealing to the Church, in all ages, by his Spirit and Word, in divers ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.”

Watson writes:

How does Christ teach? (1) Externally, by his Word. ‘*Thy word is a lamp to my feet.*’ Psa.119:105. Such as pretend to have a light or revelation above the Word, or contrary to it, never had their teaching from Christ. Isa.8:20. (2) Christ teaches these sacred mysteries, inwardly, by the Spirit. John 16:13. The world knows not what it is. ‘*The natural man received not the things of God, neither can he know them.*’ 1 Cor.2:14. He knows not what it is to be transformed by the renewing of the mind, Rom.12:2, or what the inward workings of the Spirit mean; these are riddles and paradoxes to him. He may have more insight into the things of the world than a believer, but he does not see the deep things of God. A swine may see an acorn under a tree, but he cannot see a star. He who is taught of Christ sees the secrets of the kingdom of heaven. (A Body of Divinity, pp.166-7)

3. He guides us into the most important of all truths.

In His office as a prophet, then, Christ reveals to us the will of God for our salvation. Or, in other words, He proclaims to us the Gospel. That proclamation was indeed begun by Him in Old Testament times as He sent the Holy Spirit upon the prophets who testified beforehand of His coming and gave an elementary revelation of the way of salvation. But when we think of Christ as prophet we think primarily of the revelation that He gave after becoming man. All of His teaching during His earthly ministry is here included. But

His work as prophet did not end with His earthly career. Before leaving the disciples he gave them the promise that the Holy Spirit would be sent to continue His work. (Boettner, Studies in Theology, pp.242-3)



Note

Since Christ is our prophet, we have certain responsibilities. They include:

- A. Love. We should love our Saviour far more than life itself. If He loved us enough to die for us, then we should love Him more than life itself.
 - B. Service. Our daily desire should be that we may serve Him in such a way that His name may be glorified before men.
 - C. Anticipation. He promised that He would come again, and receive us unto Himself. Our daily lives should be lived in eager anticipation of that glorious, coming event!
 - D. Witnessing. He said, “*Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*” (Acts 1:8) There can be no greater joy for the Christian than that joy which comes when he leads another sinner to a saving knowledge of Christ! What about you? Are you actively seeking to win sinners to the Christ who saved you, and gave you the blessings you enjoy? Remember Jesus’ words, in John 15:16: “*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye should ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*”
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Assignment

Memorize John 15:6
Recite, from memory, WSC #24.

III. CHRIST IS OUR PRIEST

DOCTRINE

The WSC #25 tells us: “Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.”

Memory Assignment

Memorize WSC #25.

APPLICATION

This section teaches three main points:

1. He is our Great High Priest;
 2. He is the only Sacrifice which fully satisfies Divine Justice;
 3. Christ, as our High Priest, is our personal Advocate.
- 1. He is our great High Priest.**

Heb.9:11,12: “*But Christ, being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 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.*”

Heb.9:26: “*... now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*”



Note

On this passage, Calvin writes:

But the particulars of the comparison between Christ and the ancient high priest ought to be carefully noticed. He said that the high priest alone entered the sanctuary once a year with blood to expiate sins. Christ is in this life the ancient high priest; but he differs from him in this respect, that he brings with him eternal blessings which secure a perpetuity to his priesthood. Secondly, there is this likeness between the ancient high priest and ours, that both entered the holy of holies through the sanctuary; but they differ in this, that Christ alone entered into heaven through the temple of his own body. ...The offering of blood was common to both; but there was a great difference as to the blood; for Christ offered, not the blood of beasts, but his own blood. Expiation was common to both, ... but the expiation made by Christ is always effectual and is the cause of eternal salvation to us. (Commentary on Hebrews, p.201)

Question: Why did Christ have to shed His blood on the cross?

Answers:

- a. He, Himself, established the law which says, “*without shedding of blood is no remission.*” (Heb.9:22)
- b. He knew that, from the time of Adam’s sin, no man could possibly do anything that would be enough to pay his way back into the family of God.
- c. He planned, from before the foundation of the world, to come to earth for the express purpose of shedding His own precious, priceless blood for all the elect of all ages, knowing that there was no other good enough to pay the price of sin!



Note

This is the reason we can rejoice with exceeding gladness because of what Christ did for us! As Christians we can join in the joyful song described in Rev. 5:9,10: *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”*

2. He is The Only Sacrifice Which Fully Satisfies Divine Justice.

Heb.9:13,14: *“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, 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 to serve the living God?”*

We must always hold this truth, that when the Apostle speaks of the death of Christ, he regards not the external action, but the spiritual benefit. He suffered death as men do, but as a priest he atoned for the sins of the world in a divine manner; there was an external shedding of blood, but there was also an internal and spiritual purgation; in a word, he died on earth, but the virtue and efficacy of his death proceedeth from heaven. (Calvin, Commentary on Hebrews, p.152.)

3. Christ, as our High Priest, is our Personal Advocate.

a. He represents us as He stands before the Mercy Seat,

Romans 8:34: *“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”*

- b. By His finished act on the cross, He guarantees our forgiveness before our holy God.
- c. His argument: “I have already paid the price!”
See Philemon 18: “*If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account.*”
- d. The verdict is guaranteed: “Redeemed!” “Forgiven!”
- e. There is no need, nor justification, for any other intercessor!

Assignment

Recite, from memory, WSC #25

III. CHRIST IS OUR MEDIATORIAL KING

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 8, Section 8: To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them; and revealing unto them, in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey; and governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit; overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.

The WSC #26 states: “Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.”

Memory Assignments

1. Memorize WSC #26;
2. Memorize John 6:37-39

APPLICATION

This section teaches two important truths:

1. Christ effectively applies redemption to all those for whom He died, thus executing the decree of election.

Our Lord stated, in John 6:37-9: “*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day.*”

On this passage, John Calvin, in his *Commentary On The Gospel of John*, Vol.1, p.252, comments:

(Jesus) means, that faith is not a thing which depends upon the will of men, so that this man and that man indiscriminately and at random believe, but that God elects those whom he hands over, as it were, to his Son ... Again, we infer, that God works in his elect by such an efficacy of the Holy Spirit, that none of them falls away; for the word ‘give’ has the same meaning as if Christ had said, ‘Those whom the Father hath chosen he regenerates, and gives to me, that they may obey the Gospel.’

2. Christ effectively applies redemption to the elect by:

- (a) Making intercession for them;
- (b) Revealing the message of salvation to them by the Scriptures;
- (c) Effectually persuading them by His Spirit to believe and obey;
- (d) Governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit;
- (e) Overcoming all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom.

The Apostle Paul, in Hebrews 12:1,2, makes a wonderful statement concerning the manner in which Christ set aside all His glory and exalted position in the Godhead, and, purely for the joy that was set before Him came to earth to endure all things, in order for the elect to be assured of eternal life and glory! He said, *“Wherefore, seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

Question: How do we know that Christ is King?

Answers:

- a. In the great Psalm, “The Psalm of the King”, Psalm 2, the Father states, v.6, *“Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.”* And Christ verifies the fact of His kingship in John 18:36-37, where He states, *“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. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.”*
- b. Proverbs 8:23 states, *“I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever (that is, before) the earth was.”*
- c. Psalm 110 clearly portrays the kingly position and actions our Lord manifests, and will manifest: v.2, *“The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.”* v.5, *“The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.”*

Assignment

Recite, from memory, WSC #26

PART SEVEN

MAN'S FREE WILL

LESSON TWENTY-TWO

MAN'S FOURFOLD ESTATE

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 9, Section 1: God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined, to good or evil.

Genesis 1:26: *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”*

Matt.17:12; James 1:14; Deut.30:19.

WCF, Chapter 9, Section 2: Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it.

Genesis 2:16,17: *“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.”*

Eccl. 7:29.

WCF, Chapter 9, Section 3: Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

Rom.3:10-12: *“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”*

Eph.2:1,5; Col.2:13; John 6:44,65; Eph.2:2-5; 1 Cor.2:14.

WCF, Chapter 9, Section 4: When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.

Col.1:12,13: *“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”*

Romans 6:18,20,22: *“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness; ... For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness ... But now being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”*

WCF, Chapter 9, Section 5: The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to do good alone in the state of glory only.

1 John 3:2: *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”*
Jude 24.

APPLICATION

These five sections clearly describe the spiritual history of the will of man: from the beginning when Adam and Eve had perfect wills, doing no wrong; through the entrance of sin and its consequences; and culminating in that yet-future moment, when the redeemed out of all the earth can do no wrong but will live in that perfect, sinless state in the Paradise of God!

- 1. Adam and Eve, in their state of innocency, had freedom and the ability to do the will of God perfectly, without sin. But they also had the ability to do that which was against the will of God. This original status of mankind, with all the blessings of living in a perfect environment, is absolutely unimaginable to the mind of present human beings, with our inherent, sinful natures!**

Matthew Henry has an interesting comment on the status of mankind prior to the entrance of sin. He states:

Man was not made in the likeness of any creature that went before him, but in the likeness of his Creator; yet still between God and man there is an infinite distance. Christ only is the *express* image of God’s person, as the Son of his Father, having the same nature. It is only some of God’s honour that is put upon man, who is God’s image only as the shadow in the glass, or the king’s impress on the coin. ... But it is the soul, the great soul, of man, that does especially bear God’s image. The soul is a spirit, an intelligent immortal spirit, an influencing, active spirit, herein resembling God, the Father of Spirits, and the soul of the

world. *The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.* The soul of man, considered in its three noble faculties, understanding, will, and active power, is perhaps the brightest clearest looking-glass in nature, wherein to see God. ... Man was made male and female, and blessed with the blessing of fruitfulness and increase. God said, *Let us make man*, and immediately it follows, *So God created man*; he performed what he resolved. With us, saying and doing are two things; but they are not so with God. He created him male and female, Adam and Eve — Adam first, out of earth, and Eve out of his side (ch.2). ... Our first father, Adam, was confined to one wife; and, if he had put her away, there was no other for him to marry, which plainly intimated that the bondage of marriage was not to be dissolved at pleasure. Angels were not made male and female, for they were not to propagate their kind (Luke 20:34-36); but man was made so, that the nature might be propagated and the race continued. (Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol.1, p.10)

Gen.1: 27,28: *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”*

Gen.2:16,17: *“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.”*

John Calvin has a precious comment on Genesis 1:27,28:

The reiterated mention of the image of God is not a vain repetition. For it is a remarkable instance of the Divine goodness which can never be sufficiently proclaimed. And at the same time he admonishes us from what excellence we have fallen, that he may excite in us the desire of its

recovery. When he soon afterwards adds, that God created them ‘*male and female,*’ he commends to us that conjugal bond by which the society of mankind is cherished. For this form of speaking, ‘*God created man, male and female created he them,*’ is of the same force as if he had said, that man himself was incomplete. Under these circumstances, the woman was added to him as a companion that they both might be one, as he more clearly expresses it in the second chapter. Malachi also means the same thing when he related, (2:15), that one man was created by God, whilst, nevertheless, he possessed the fulness of the Spirit. For he there treats of conjugal fidelity, which the Jews were violating by their polygamy. For the purpose of correcting this fault, he calls that pair, consisting of man and woman, which God in the beginning had joined together, *one man*, in order that every one might learn to be content with his own wife. (Calvin’s Commentaries, Genesis, Vol. I, p.96)

WSC Question #10: “How did God create man?”

Answer: “God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.”

WSC Question #12: “What special act of providence did God exercise towards man, in the estate wherein he was created?”

Answer: “When God created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.”

2. All mankind is under the bondage of sin.

When Adam and Eve sinned, the whole human race was plunged into a natural corrupt state, where mankind freely chooses evil, and is unable to choose any good which leads to salvation.

WSC Question #13: “Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?”

Answer: “Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.”

Romans 3:10-12: “*As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*”

Robert Haldane, in his commentary on *Romans* (Vol.1, p.115), states:

After having proceeded in his discussion, appealing to the natural sentiments of conscience and undeniable fact, Paul now employs the authority of Scripture, and alleges several passages drawn from the books of the Old Testament, written at different times, more clearly to establish the universal guilt both of Jews and Gentiles, in order that he might prove them all under condemnation before the tribunal of God.

WSC Question #14: “What is sin?”

Answer: “Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.”

1 John 3:4: “*Whosoever committeth sin transgresses also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.*”

Thomas Watson points out the awfulness of sin:

I shall show what a heinous and execrable thing sin is. It is *malorum colluvies*, the complication of all evil; it is the spirits of mischief distilled. The Scripture calls it the ‘*cursed thing*’ Josh.7:13 It is compared to the venom of serpents, the stench of sepulchres. The apostle uses this expression of sin, ‘*Out of measure sinful,*’ Rom.7:13, or as it is in the Greek, ‘*Hyperbolically sinful*’. The devil would paint sin with the

vermilion color of pleasure and profit, that he may make it look fair; but I shall pull off the paint that you may see its ugly face. We are apt to have slight thoughts of sin, and say to it, as Lot of Zoar, *'Is it not a little one?'* Gen.19:20. But that you may see how great an evil sin is, consider these four things:

I. *The origin of sin, from whence it comes.*

It fetches its pedigree from hell; sin is of the devil. *'He that committeth sin is of the devil.'* 1 John 3:8. Satan was the first actor of sin, and the first tempter to sin. Sin is the devil's first-born.

II. *Sin is evil in the nature of it.*

- (1) It is a defiling thing. Sin is not only a defection, but a pollution. It is to the soul as rust is to gold, as a stain to beauty. It makes the soul red with guilt, and black with filth. ... Sin stamps the devil's image on a man.
- (2) Sin is grieving God's spirit. *'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.'* Eph.4:30. To grieve is more than anger.
- (3) Sin is an act of contumacy against God; a walking antipodes to heaven. *'If ye walk contrary to me,'* Lev.26:27. A sinner tramples upon God's law, crosses his will, does all he can to affront, yea to spite God. The Hebrew word for sin, *Pasha*, signifies rebellion; there is the heart of rebellion in every sin. Sin strikes at the very Deity; sin is God's would-be murderer. Sin would not only unthrone God, but un-God him. If the sinner could help it, God would no longer be God.
- (4) Sin is an act of disingenuity and unkindness. God feeds the sinner, keeps off evils from him, bemoans him with mercy; but the sinner not only forgets God's mercies, but abuses them.

- (5) Sin is a disease. ‘*The whole head is sick;*’ Isa. 1:5. Some are sick of pride, others of lust, others of envy. Sin has distempered the intellectual part, it is a leprosy in the head, it has poisoned the vitals.
- (6) Sin is an irrational thing. It makes a man act not only wickedly, but foolishly. It is absurd and irrational to prefer the less before the greater; the pleasures of life before the rivers of pleasures at God’s right hand forevermore.
- (7) Sin is a painful thing. It costs men much labor to pursue their sins. How do they tire themselves in doing the devil’s drudgery! ‘*They weary themselves to commit iniquity.*’ Jer. 9:5. Many a man goes to hell in the sweat of his brow.
- (8) Sin is the only thing God has an antipathy against. God does not hate a man because he is poor, or despised in the world; as you do not hate your friend because he is sick; but that which draws forth the keenness of God’s hatred, is sin. ‘*Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate.*’ Jer 44:4. And sure, if the sinner dies under God’s hatred, he cannot be admitted in the celestial mansions.”

III. *See the evil of sin, and the price paid for it.*

It cost the blood of God to expiate it. ‘O man,’ says Augustine, ‘consider the greatness of thy sin, by the greatness of the price paid for sin.’ All the princes on earth, or angels in heaven, could not satisfy for sin; only Christ. Nay, Christ’s active obedience was not enough to make atonement for sin, but he must suffer upon the cross; for, without blood is no remission. Heb.9:22. Oh what a cursed thing is sin, that Christ should die for it! The evil of sin is not so much seen in that one thousand are damned for it, as that Christ died for it.

IV. *Sin is evil in its effects.*

- (1) Sin has degraded us of our honour. Reuben's incest lost his dignity; and though he was the first-born, he could not excel. Gen.49:4. God made us in his own image, a little lower than the angels; but sin has debased us. Before Adam sinned, he was like a herald that has his coat of arms upon him; all reverence him, because he carries the king's coat of arms; but let this coat be pulled off, and he is despised, no man regards him. Sin has done this, it has plucked off our coat of innocence, and now it has debased us, and turned our glory into shame.
- (2) Sin disquiets the peace of the soul. Whatever defiles, disturbs. As poison tortures the bowels, corrupts the blood, so sin does the soul. Isa.57:21. Sin breeds a trembling at the heart; it creates fears, and there is '*torment in fear.*' 1 John 4:18. Sin makes sad convulsions in the conscience.
- (3) Sin produces all temporal evil. '*Jerusalem has grievously sinned, therefore she is removed.*' Lam.1:8. It is the Trojan horse, that has sword and famine, and pestilence in its belly. Sin is a coal, that not only blacks, but burns. Sin creates all our troubles; it puts gravel into our bread, wormwood in our cup. Sin rots the name, consumes the estate, buries relations. Sin shoots the flying roll of God's curses into a family and kingdom.
- (4) Sin unrepentant of brings final damnation. The canker that breeds in the rose is the cause of its perishing; and corruptions that breed in men's souls are the cause of their damning. Sin brings the wrath of God, and what bucket or engines can quench that fire? 'Where the worm never dies, and the fire is not quenched.' Mark 9:44. (Watson, [A Body of Divinity](#), pp.132-135)

WSC Question #15: “What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?”

Answer: “The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.”

Gen.3:6,12: *“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat”... (12) “And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.”*

WSC Question #16: “Did all mankind fall in Adam’s first transgression?”

Answer: “The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.”

Rom.5:12: *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”*

WSC Question #19: “What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?”

Answer: “All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.”

Eph.2:2,3: *“Wherein in time passed past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and*

of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

John Calvin comments on this passage, “*And were by nature the children of wrath,*”:

All men, without exception, whether Jews or Gentiles, (Gal.2:15,16) are here pronounced to be guilty, until they are redeemed by Christ; so that out of Christ there is no righteousness, no salvation, and, in short, no excellence. *Children of wrath* are those who are lost, and who deserve eternal death. *Wrath* means the judgment of God; so that the children of wrath are those who are condemned before God. Such, the apostle tells us, had been the Jews, — such had been all the excellent men that were now in the Church; and they were so *by nature*, that is, from their very commencement, and from their mother’s womb. (Calvin’s Commentary on The Ephesians, pp.222-3)

3. Every sinner who is converted by God enters into a state of grace, wherein he has a free will partly to do good, and partly to do evil. His eternal salvation is secure, but he sometimes wills to do good, and sometimes wills to do evil.



Note

It must be made abundantly clear that the conversion of every sinner into a state of grace is a direct work of God, — not of man!

WSC Question #20: “Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?”

Answer: “God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.”

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

Eph.1:4: *“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”*

WSC Question #21: “Who is the Redeemer of God’s elect?”

Answer: *“The only Redeemer of God’s elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.”*

1 Tim.2:5,6: *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”*

John 1:14: *“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”*

Luke 1:35: *“And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.”*

Thomas Watson, in his wonderful book, *A Body of Divinity*, (pp.162,163) discusses the duality of Christ’s Person. Watson states:

Christ’s person in two natures.

- (1) Look upon his human nature as incarnate. The Valentinians deny his human nature; but John 1:14 says, *‘The Word was made flesh’*. It is spoken of Christ the promised Messiah. Christ took our flesh, that the same nature which sinned might suffer; and *‘The Word*

was made flesh, that through the glass of his human nature we might look upon God.

- (2) Look upon Christ's divine nature. Christ may be fitly compared to Jacob's ladder, which reacheth from earth to heaven. Gen. 28:12. Christ's human nature was the foot of the ladder, which stood upon earth; his divine nature the top of the ladder, which reaches to heaven.

Christ being God, his death is meritorious. Christ's blood is called *sanguis Dei*, the blood of God, in Acts 20:28, because the person who was offered in sacrifice was God as well as man. This is an invincible support to believers; it was God who was offended, and it was God who satisfied. Thus Christ's person is in two natures.

4. There is a future condition for every person who has entered into that state of grace, and that is the state of glory, where the will of man is made perfectly and immutably free, completely sin-free, and able to do good only!



The final consummation of this glorious condition will be when our Lord returns to this earth and takes all those who have been born again to the place He is preparing for us! For He stated: "*In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.*" (John 14:2,3)

The glorious future for every child of God far exceeds anything this present world has to offer! Our Lord, the Lord of Glory, has promised to come again and take us with Him to that wonderful place He is, even now, preparing for us! Yes, He sends privately for each faithful believer at death, and gathers them one by one, but there is a time coming when "*the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and*

with the trump of God.” (1 Thess. 4:15), and He will take us to our heavenly, permanent home, from which we will serve Him forever and ever!

Memory Assignments

Memorize WSC #10, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #19, #20, #21.

John 1:12,13; John 14:2,3

1 Thessalonians 4:15

PART EIGHT

EFFECTUAL CALLING

LESSON TWENTY-THREE

THE EXTERNAL AND THE INTERNAL CALL

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 10, Section 1: All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

Rom.8:30;11:7; Eph.1:10,11; 2 Thess.2:13,14; 2 Cor.3:3,6; Rom.8:2; Eph.2:1-5; 2 Tim.1:9,10; Acts 26:18; 1 Cor.2:10,12; Eph.1:17,18; Ezek.36:26; Ezek.11:19; Phil.2:13; Deut.30:6; Ezek.36:27; Eph.1:19; John 6:44,45; Cant.1:4; Ps.110:3; John 6:37; Rom.6:16-18.

WCF, Chapter 10, Section 2: This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not for anything at all foreseen in man; who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

2 Tim.1:9; Tit.3:4,5; Eph.2:4,5,8,9; Rom.9:11; 1 Cor.2:14; Rom.8:7; Eph.2:5; John 6:37; Ezek.36:27; John 5:25.

WSC Question #31: "What is Effectual Calling?"

Answer: "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel."

WSC Question #32: "What benefits do they that are effectively called partake of in this life?"

Answer: "They that are effectively called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, sanctification, and the several benefits which, in this life, do either accompany or flow from them."

APPLICATION

These two sections teach:

1. God, and God alone, selects the time, manner and method He uses to bring those who are predestined to eternal life out of that estate of sin and death in which they are by nature born; and.
2. This effectual call is all of God's grace alone, and man is completely passive until he is quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit so he can accept the call and experience the boundless grace offered therein.

1. God, and God alone selects the time, manner and method He uses to bring those to salvation whom He has predestined to eternal life. The Apostle Paul describes it very clearly when he states, Romans 8:29,30: *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”*

This is an internal call, totally distinct from the external call, and is given to, and responded to, only by the elect.

We discussed, in our last lesson on “Free Will”, that man lost his original condition of sinlessness when he partook of the forbidden fruit, and that the resultant condition found him totally unable to do anything that would be approved of by God. Mankind was, and continues to be, lost in trespasses in sin

QUESTION: WHAT IS SAVING FAITH?

This subject is one of the most important subjects any person could ever consider! One’s eternal destiny depends upon the answer to the question: “What must I do to be saved?” Untold millions of “religiously upright” individuals are in a Christless eternity today, suffering indescribable pain and torment for their sins because they could not, or would not answer this question correctly. The writer has raised this question with many hundreds of individuals.

Some typical answers to the question, “What must I do to be saved?”, are:

“Believe the Ten Commandments”;

“Follow the Golden Rule as best as you can”;

“Join the church”;

“Be baptized and join the church.”

“I was saved before I was born”;

“My mother (father) was a good Christian”;

“Do the best I can. God will do the rest”;

“Read the Bible and pray every day”;

“Love your neighbour”.

Of course, **none of the above** is correct! The Bible is the only place where the correct answer can be found!

What does the Bible say?

1. Biblical Examples of the proclamation of the faith:
 - a. See Acts, chapters 3 and 4. Beginning at Chapter 3:2, Peter preached his second sermon, and gained the wrath of the priests and the Sadducees! Why? He:
 - (1) *“Preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead”.*
 - (2) Declared the only way of salvation is through Jesus Christ. (4:12)
 - b. See Acts 10. Peter was sent to Caesarea to preach to Cornelius, a Roman soldier. He preached, telling him that salvation can come only through faith in Jesus Christ, who was crucified in Jerusalem. Peter said, *“We are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree; Him God raised up the third day ... And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”*
 - c. See Acts 16:25 ff. Paul and Silas were beaten and put in jail for preaching Jesus Christ. *“At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God; and prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the*

foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here”.

- d. But what does Jesus Christ, the Author and Purchaser of our salvation say?

John 3:16-18: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

John 5:24: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

John 5:39: “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.”

John 6:35: “And Jesus said unto them: I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

John 6:47,48: “Verily, verily I say unto you He that believeth on me hath everlasting life; I am that bread of life.”

John 10:9: “I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture.”

John 10:27-30: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. My Father, which gave them me, is

greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.”

John 14:6: “*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*”



Note

There are many other passages of Scripture which verify the fact that the new birth comes only through faith in Jesus Christ, and that it is the only way any individual can secure eternal salvation!

Memory Assignments

John 5:24; John 3:16-18; Acts 4:12

LESSON TWENTY-FOUR

THE ELECT AND THE NON-ELECT

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 10, Section 3: Elect Infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

Acts 2:38,39: *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”*

John 3:3,5; 1 John 5:12; Romans 8:9; John 3:8; 1 John 5:12; Acts 4:12

EXPOSITION

This section deals with a subject which could be very difficult to accept when we consider the passages dealing with salvation which place the emphasis upon the belief of the individual. However, there is another factor to be considered, and that is the sovereign act of a sovereign God, Who moves and acts according to His own will. The God who created all things according to his own will can certainly

deal with infants, dying in infancy, who would never hear the invitation for salvation that they may be saved. Certainly, the doctrine of election, designed by this same omnipotent God, can cover those individuals who die in infancy

A.A. Hodge, in his monumental work, *The Confession of Faith*, pp.174-5, writes:

If God could create Adam holy without means, and if he can new-create believers in righteousness and true holiness by the use of means which a large part of men use without profit, he can certainly make infants and others regenerate without means. Indeed, the natural depravity of infants lies before moral action, in the judicial deprivation of the Holy Ghost. The evil is rectified at that stage, therefore, by the gracious restoration of the soul to its moral relation to the Spirit of God. The phrase “elect infants” is precise and fit for its purpose. It is not intended to suggest that there are any infants not elect, but simply to point out the facts -

- (1) That all infants are born under righteous condemnation; and
- (2) That no infant has any claim in itself to salvation; and hence
- (3) The salvation of each infant, precisely as the salvation of every adult, must have its absolute ground in the sovereign election of God.

This would be just as true if all adults were elected, as it is now that only some adults are elected. It is, therefore, just as true, although we have good reason to believe that all infants are elected. The Confession adheres in this place accurately to the facts revealed. It is certainly revealed that none, either adult or infant, is saved except on the ground of sovereign election; that is, all salvation for the human race is pure grace. It is not positively revealed that all infants are elect, but we are left, for many reasons, to indulge a high probable hope that such is the fact. The Confession affirms what is certainly revealed, and leaves that which revelation has not decided to

remain, without the suggestion of a positive opinion one side or the other.

OTHERS NOT ELECTED

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 10, Section 4: Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved; much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested.

WLC Question #60: “Can they who have never heard the gospel, and so know not Jesus Christ, nor believe in Him, be saved by their living according to the light of nature?”

Answer: “They who, having never heard the gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in Him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the laws of that religion which they profess; neither is there salvation in any other, but in Christ alone, who is the Saviour only of his body the church.”

Matt.22:14: *“For many are called, but few are chosen”*.

Matt.7:22,23: *“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*

John 14:6: *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”*

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

Eph.2:12: *“That at that time ye 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.”*

John 6:64-66; John 4:22; 17:3; 2 John 9-11; 1 Cor. 16:22; Gal.1:6-8

EXPOSITION

This section stresses a very solemn fact: That is, that no normal human being, regardless of his human accomplishments, his graduate degrees, or his station in life, can possibly be saved unless he personally accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour!

Romans 3:23 states, *“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”* Among other things, this means that every person was born with a sinful nature, and that his salvation, through Christ, is absolutely necessary, if he is ever to be redeemed.

But some might say, *“But what about the heathen, there in those distant lands, where the message of salvation has never penetrated?”* The answer is the same! But an additional part of that answer should be that our Lord covered that area when He gave the Great Commission, in Matt. 28:18-20: *“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”*

This also means that every Christian should have a burden for lost souls, both in his own homeland, and in foreign lands. Missions, both domestic and foreign, should be a major part of every

Christian's daily prayer list. Every Christian should seriously consider whether the Lord would have him in the ministry of missions, either at home or abroad. Every Christian church should have a strong emphasis on the work of missions.

Memory Assignments

Matt.28:18-20; John 14:6; Acts 4:12

PART NINE

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

LESSON TWENTY-FIVE JUSTIFICATION, THE FOUNDATION STONE

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 11, Section 1: Those whom God effectually calleth he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous: not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience, to them as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ upon them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith: which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God.

WCF, Chapter 11, Section 2: Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

Rom.8:30: *“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”*

2 Cor.5:19,21; Rom.3:22,24-8; Tit.3:5,7; Eph.1:7; Jer.23:6; 1 Cor.1:30,31; Rom.5:17-19; Acts 10:44; Gal.2:16; Phil.3:9; Acts 13:38,39; Eph.2:7,8; John 1:12; Rom.3:28; Rom.5:1; James 2:17,22,26; Gal.5:6

WSC Question #33: “What is justification?”

Answer: “Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.”

WLC Question #31: “How is justification an act of God’s free grace?”

Answer: “Although Christ, by his obedience and death, did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God’s justice in the behalf of them that are justified; yet inasmuch as God accepteth the satisfaction from a surety, which he might have demanded of them, and did provide this surety, his own only Son, imputing his righteousness to them, and requiring nothing of them.”

EXPOSITION

We come now to one of the most important doctrines to be found in the entire study of the Westminster Confession of Faith. The doctrine of justification by faith is the foundation stone upon which the entire scope of salvation rests. A righteous God has, in His divine wisdom, chosen this method of providing an amazing way for unrighteous human beings to stand before a holy God, completely cleansed from all their filthy sins, and to be pronounced totally righteous and fit for heaven!

It must be stated that this doctrine, justification by faith, was once lost. Prior to the Sixteenth Century Reformation, the once great Church had become a church full of the doctrine of “justification by works”. However, there was not complete darkness, because great

men such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Knox, to name a few, began to lead the church out of darkness into light. As noted earlier, the Westminster Divines produced this remarkable work, “The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms”, and thus the true Reformed Doctrines were re-established. Martin Luther said that this doctrine, “Justification By Faith”, is the test of a standing or falling church! (It is our prayer that, the present day church will not again fall back into those false doctrines which caused such havoc for over 400 years. However, we must state that there are many disturbing signs in this day and time that we may be moving in that direction! God forbid!)

Webster’s New World Dictionary defines justification: “In *theology*, the act by which a sinner is freed through faith from the penalty of his sin and is accepted by God as righteous or worthy of being saved.”

John Calvin describes justification thusly:

Justification, therefore, is no other than an acquittal from guilt of him who was accused, as though his innocence had been proved. Since God, therefore, justifies us through the mediation of Christ, he acquits us, not by an admission of our personal innocence, but by an imputation of righteousness; so that we, who are unrighteous in ourselves, are considered as righteous in Christ. This is the doctrine preached by Paul in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts: *‘Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.’* We see that after remission of sins, this justification is mentioned, as if by way of explanation: we see clearly that it means an acquittal; that it is separated from the works of the law; that it is a mere favour of Christ; that it is apprehended by faith: we see, finally, the interposition of a satisfaction, when he says that we are justified from sins by Christ. (Calvin’s Institutes, Vol.1, p.795)

These sections teach five very important facts:

- (1) Those whom God effectually calls, and only those whom He calls, He freely justifies, and accepts their persons as totally righteous for Christ's sake alone.
- (2) This is done, not by imputing faith itself to the individual, but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them.
- (3) Those who receive this justifying faith receive it not by any work of their own, but it is a gift of God.
- (4) This faith is the sole instrument of justification.
- (5) This saving faith is not a dead faith, but is accompanied by all other graces, and is a work of love.

1. Those whom God effectually calls, and only those whom He calls, He freely justifies, and accepts their persons as totally righteous for Christ's sake alone.

Romans 3:20-24: *“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”*

On this passage John Calvin makes a very strong statement. Calvin says,

There is, perhaps, no passage in the whole Scripture which illustrates in a more striking manner the efficacy of his righteousness; for it shows that God's mercy is the efficient cause, that Christ with his blood is the meritorious cause, that the formal or instrumental cause is faith in the word, and that, moreover, the final cause is the glory of the divine justice and goodness. (Commentary on Romans, p.141)

It is most important to emphasize that the act of justification is a legal act, just as if the sinner were to stand before a judge, and

have a legal act pronounced upon him which frees him from all condemnation, — he is pronounced justified. But in this situation, there is a difference: the sinner who accepts Jesus Christ as his saviour is pronounced justified only because some one else, — namely Jesus Christ, has **paid for all his sins at the Cross**. This is the only way a person who has been born in trespasses and sins can be pronounced justified by an omnipotent and totally righteous sovereign God!



Note

The most victorious cry which can ever be found in Scripture is recorded in John 19:30. Only three words: “IT IS FINISHED!” Here our Lord marks the completion of all the plans for man’s redemption which had been laid out from all eternity! **It is finished!** What wonderful words these are! Jesus came to this earth for this express purpose, — to pay for all the sins of all sinners who would ever be justified through faith in Him! G. Campbell Morgan writes:

When he (Jesus) had received the vinegar He said, ‘*It is finished*’. But He knew it was finished, before He said, ‘*I thirst*’. Finally He said, ‘*It is finished*’. John does not tell us, but others who do not record the words, say that He cried with a loud voice. From them then we know that this thing was said with a loud voice. It was not the voice of One defeated. It was the voice of the Victor. ‘*It is finished.*’ The Greek word means far more than that something was over. Whatever He went to the Cross to do was accomplished.

He had finished; it was over, it was done. The pains of hell gat hold upon Him. All the waves and billows had swept across Him. He had breasted the storm, and accomplished God’s purpose. When He knew all things were finished He said, ‘*I thirst*’; and then He announced His victory, ‘*It is finished*’. Whatever the ‘it’ stands for, that which brought Him there, the purpose of His going was

fulfilled, completed, rounded out. (The Gospel According to John, p.297)

Thomas Watson, in his wonderful exposition of the Shorter Catechism, entitled *A Body Of Divinity*, p.229, writes,

Justification is a fixed permanent thing, it can never be lost. The Arminians hold an apostasy from justification; today justified, tomorrow unjustified; today a Peter, tomorrow a Judas; today a member of Christ, tomorrow a limb of Satan. This is a most uncomfortable doctrine. Justified persons may fall from degrees of grace, they may leave their first love, they may lose God's favor for a time, but not lose their justification. If they are justified, they are elected; and they can no more fall from their justification than from their election. If they are justified they have union with Christ; and can a member of Christ be broken off? If one justified person may fall away from Christ, all may; and so Christ would be a head without a body.

2. This justification by God is done, not by imputing faith itself in the individual, but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them.

We can only be justified on the ground of a perfect righteousness, and our righteousness is imperfect. 1 Kings 8:46 states it: "*There is no man that sinneth not.*"

When Christ was finishing His work on the cross, He knew He was providing the essential ingredient for every sinner who would ever be acceptable to an omnipotent and holy God, and that essential ingredient was full and complete atonement for sins! It was His suffering, His blood, His awful death which made it possible for every believing sinner to be justified to stand before God and know that his sins were forgiven, because he had accepted Jesus Christ as his Saviour! This is the message given us by the Apostle Paul, in Eph.2:7-10: "*That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his*

kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” And this is the reason our Lord said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me”* (John 14:6)

3. Those who receive this justifying faith receive it not by any work of their own, but it is a gift of God.

Again, this is the message of the Scriptures. As Paul states, *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* (Eph.2:8,9)

4. This faith is the sole instrument of justification.

Romans 5:1 states: *“Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* We are not justified by our “good works”, for, in the sight of God all of our “good works”, without Christ, are entirely unacceptable. And again, in the very next verse, it is made abundantly clear that all the graces of God are opened unto us by this same faith: *“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”*

The wonderful 11th chapter of the Book of Hebrews has well been named “The Faith Chapter”. In the scope of 39 verses, the word “faith” occurs 22 times. It was the instrument by which the events, described in this chapter, came to pass. But the final culmination of this work of faith is concluded in Chapter 12:1,2: *“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him*

endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

5. This saving faith is not a dead faith but is accompanied by all other graces, and is a work of love.

The outworking of this saving faith is always manifested by a complete change in the life and thought of the believer. The testimony of the Apostle Paul, as recorded in Acts 22:1-16, and Acts 26:1-18, is a striking illustration of what attitudes of heart are changed when saving faith comes to an individual! All graces, once so foreign to the unbeliever, now becomes an integral part of the believer!

Dr. J. Gresham Machen, in his book, *What Is Faith?* wrote:

How is it that Christ touched our lives? The answer which the Word of God gives to that question is perfectly specific and perfectly plain. Christ touches our lives, according to the New Testament, through the Cross. We deserved eternal death, in accordance with the curse of God’s law; but the Lord Jesus, because He loved us, took upon Himself the guilt of our sins and died instead of us on Calvary. And faith consists simply in our acceptance of that wondrous gift. When we accept that gift, we are clothed, entirely without merit of our own, by the righteousness of Christ; when God looks upon us He sees not our impurity but the spotless purity of Christ, and accepts us “as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone. (Machen, What is Faith?, p.143)

LESSON TWENTY-SIX

GOD'S EXACT JUSTICE AND RICH GRACE

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 11, Section 3: Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction, to his Father's justice on their behalf. Yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

Heb.10:9-14: "Then, said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Rom.5:8-10,19; 1 Tim.2:5,6; Dan.9:24,26; Isa.53:4-6,10-13; Rom.8:32; 2.Cor.5:21; Matt.3:17; Eph.5:2; Rom.3:24; Eph.1:7; Rom.3:26; Eph.2:7

EXPOSITION

This section stresses two main points:

- (1) The action by Christ, by His obedience and His death on the cross, completely and finally paid the debt for all those who are actually justified;
- (2) Their justification is only of free grace, because:
 - (a) Christ was given by the Father for them;
 - (b) His obedience and sacrifice was freely accepted by the Father for them and thus their justification is entirely of free grace;
 - (c) Hence the exact justice and free grace of God is glorified.

1. **This action of Christ, His obedience and His death on the cross, completely paid the debt for all those who are justified.**

Such a statement as this can find no parallel in all the annals of human law and punishment! It is humanly impossible and totally irrational for anyone to state that “this one man, either willingly or unwillingly paid for another person’s sins by dying for him!” But we must remember, — we are not dealing with a human being who has all the frailties and difficulties that every human being is born with, — but we are facing an amazing fact, — that the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, willingly came to earth for the **express purpose** of shedding His precious blood to **fully** pay for all the sins of all those who are justified! Humanly speaking, we simply could not believe that such a thing could possibly happen. However, we are assured, over and over again, in the pages of an infallible book, God’s Word, the Bible, that truly, such was and is the case! For example, Romans 5:8 states, “*But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” And Romans 5:19 goes on to state, “... *by the obedience of one*” (that is, Jesus Christ) “*shall many be made righteous.*”! Among other truths, this verse tells

us that God shows His love for us by giving His Son to pay for all our sins, and **making us righteous!**

2. Their justification is only of free grace.

Robert Shaw states,

The justification of sinners through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, instead of excluding or obscuring, serves rather to illustrate the glory of the *grace* displayed in it. Grace shines in God's condescending to accept of the righteousness of a surety; still more in his providing the surety; above all in giving his only begotten Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Besides, that faith by which we receive the righteousness of Christ is the gift of God. Eph.2:8. (Shaw, The Reformed Faith, p.134)

And A.A. Hodge, in his book, *The Confession of Faith*, makes a strong statement on this subject. He writes,

The cross of Christ is the focus in which the most intense rays alike of divine grace and justice meet together, in which they are perfectly reconciled. This is the highest reach of justice, and at the same time and for the same reason the highest reach of grace the universe can ever see. (Hodge, The Confession of Faith, p.186)

LESSON TWENTY-SEVEN

THE ETERNAL PLAN OF JUSTIFICATION

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 11, Section 4: God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect; and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification. Nevertheless, they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time actually apply Christ unto them.

Gal.3:8: *“And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed.”*

Rom.8:29,30: *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”*

1 Pet.1:2,19,20; Gal.4:4; 1 Tim.2:6; Rom.4:25; Col.1:21,22; Gal.2:16; Tit.3:4-7

EXPOSITION

It must be made abundantly clear that no one is justified until that moment when God, the Holy Spirit, gives him faith to believe. Until that moment the sinner is lost in trespasses and sins, and he is

no different from all other lost souls. And, since it is also clear that The Great Commission is vital in getting the Gospel out to all the heathen, both at home and abroad, it is the responsibility of Christians to do everything possible to see that this wonderful message is given the greatest possible emphasis.

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 11, Section 5: God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified; and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may by their sins fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, and renew their faith and repentance.

John 10:27,28: *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”*

Heb.10:14: *“For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”*

Ps.89: 31-33; 32:5; Matt.26:75; 1 Cor. 11:30,32; Luke 1:20.

EXPOSITION

Psalm 89:30-34: *“If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments: If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.”*

Justification is an act of an omnipotent God. Although elect sinners can never fall into eternal condemnation, yet their sins may

cause them to fall into God’s fatherly displeasure, and suffer Godly chastisement. In Luke 15:11-32, our Lord tells the story of the father who had two sons, and one of them goes off into sin. After realizing his condition, he returns to his father, expecting to be treated as one of the hired servants. However, when he confessed his sins to his father, his father welcomed him with open arms, and killed the fatted calf. Through it all, he had remained a son, and was not condemned, but was a member of the family. Through it all, he remained justified. Rom.8:1 states, *“There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”*

JUSTIFICATION OF OLD TESTAMENT BELIEVERS

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 11, Section 6: The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament.

Gal.3:9,13,14: *“So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham; Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”*

Rom.4:22-25: *“And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, 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.”*

Heb.13:8: *“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.”*

EXPOSITION

Robert Shaw has a wonderful statement concerning this most important doctrine:

Though the everlasting righteousness was not actually brought in until Christ ‘became obedient unto death’, yet the efficacy of his death extended to believers under the former as well as under the present dispensation.

What an invaluable and transcendently glorious privilege is justification! How unspeakably blessed is the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works! Delivered from the awful curse of the broken law, and introduced into a state of acceptance and favour with God, all penal evil is extracted out of the cup of his affliction, death itself is divested of its sting, and all things shall work together for his good. Adorned with the glorious robe of the Redeemer’s righteousness, he shall stand before the judgement-seat undismayed, while the exalted Saviour and Judge shall bid him welcome to that state of final and everlasting blessedness which God hath prepared for him, saying, *‘Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’* (Shaw, The Reformed Faith, p.136)

We conclude our study of this wonderful doctrine by calling your attention to a very timely and to-the-point statement by one of the great Eighteenth Century divines, Thomas Watson. On the subject of justification, Thomas wrote:

Labour for this high privilege of justification. There is balm in Gilead; Christ has laid down his blood as the price of our justification; and he offers himself and all his merits, to justify; he invites us to come to him; he has promised to give his Spirit, to enable us to do what is required. Why then, sinners, will ye not look after this great privilege of justification? Why starve in the midst of plenty? Why perish when there is a remedy to save you? Would not he be thought to be distracted, who having a pardon offered him, only upon the

acknowledgement of his fault, and promising amendment, should bid the prince to keep his pardon to himself; for his part, he was in love with his chains and fetters, and would die? Thou who neglectest justification offered thee freely by Christ in the Gospel art this infatuated person. Is the love of Christ to be slighted? Is thy soul, is heaven worth nothing? Oh then look after justification through Christ's blood! (Watson, A Body of Divinity, p.230)

Memory Assignment

Memorize WSC #33

Memorize WLC #71

PART TEN

ADOPTION

LESSON TWENTY-EIGHT GOD'S GRACE OF ADOPTION

DOCTRINE

WCF, Chapter 12, Section 1: All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption; by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God; have his name put upon them; receive the Spirit of adoption; have access to the throne of grace with boldness; are enabled to cry, Abba, Father; are pitied, protected, provided for; and chastened by him as by a Father; yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption; and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.

Gal.4:4,5: *“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”*

Rom.8:17; John 1:12; Jer.14:9; 2 Cor.6:18; Rev.3:12; Rom.8:15; Eph.3:12; Rom. 5:2; Gal.4:6; Ps.103:13; Prov.14:26; Matt. 6:30,32; 1 Pet.5:7; Heb.12:6; Lam.3:31; Eph.4:30; Heb. 6:12; 1 Pet.1:3,4; Heb.1:14

WSC Question #34: “What is Adoption?”

Answer: “Adoption is an act of God’s free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.”

WLC Question #74: “What is Adoption?”

Answer: “Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son, Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of his Son given to them, are under his fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory.”

EXPOSITION

The Funk and Wagnalls “New Desk Standard Dictionary” defines “adopt” as follows: “1. To accept, receive or choose as one’s own, especially as one’s own child (when not naturally so), 2. To take and use, as if one’s own, as a phrase, creed, practice, etc.” It defines “adoption” as: “1. The act of adopting, or the condition of being adopted; 2. The legal act whereby an adult person takes a minor into the relation of a child. 3. The receiving into a clan or tribe of one from outside, and treating him as one of the same blood.” We are all familiar with this process, because many, many children, who either have lost their parents or have been discarded by their parent, or parents, have been taken into a new home, been given a new name, and all the privileges and responsibilities of that new home.

However, spiritual adoption has a far greater meaning than the above definitions.

This subject is one in which there is a vast difference between how God carries it out and how man does it. When an individual is adopted by a family, he is granted by law all the privileges and responsibilities of the adopting family, but his nature is not changed.

He carries with him all the natural attributes, including a sinful, unregenerate heart. Unless he accepts Jesus Christ as his saviour, he will go through the rest of his life in the same condition, and, at the end of life, will go to a Christless eternity. The legal adoption ends at the point of death! But when God adopts an individual He precedes the act of adoption by one vital process, — that process is justification. Having been justified and adopted, this individual can know all the joys of eternal salvation. He need not fear death; he can look forward to the time he will see his blessed Saviour. He can know that all those who have been saved will be with him throughout the ages to come! He is just as much an heir of salvation as though he had been born with all the royal blood lines of royalty The Apostle Peter described it very well when he wrote, “*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, To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*” (1 Peter 1:3-5).

The Apostle Paul emphasized the “predestination” aspect of this doctrine when he wrote, in Ephesians 1:4,5, “*According as he hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.*” John Calvin has a very interesting comment on this passage:

In the word *predestinate* we must again attend unto the order. We were not then in existence, and therefore there was no merit of ours. The cause of our salvation did not proceed from us, but from God alone. Yet Paul, not satisfied with these statements, adds *to himself* ... By this he means that God did not seek a cause out of himself, but predestinated us, because such was his will. (Calvin, Commentary on Ephesians, p.200)

SUMMARY

So, what does adoption into the family of God provide for the believer?

1. We become sons and daughters of God, according to 2 Cor.6:28, *“Ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”*
2. The Holy Spirit indwells us, and never leaves us!
3. The Holy Spirit himself, *“beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.”* (Romans 8:16)
4. We have the assurance that we have immediate access to the throne of grace, and that we are heard. 1 John 5:14,15: *“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us, And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”*
5. We have the joy of knowing that we can never be lost out of the family of God!
6. We have the assurance that we have a home in heaven where we will have the privilege, joy, and honor to be in the very presence of our precious Lord, and to serve Him forever!
7. We can expect that, when the occasion demands, our Father will apply heavenly wisdom in chastising us, thus enabling us to grow spiritually.

Assignment

Memorize WSC #34; WLC #74; 1 Peter 1:4,5

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RECOMMENDED LIST FOR FURTHER STUDY

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2. The Lord's Prayer

3. The Ten Commandments

Matthew Henry: Commentary On The Whole Bible - 6 Volumes

Calvin's Commentaries on The Whole Bible

Calvin's Institutes - 2 Volumes

Charles Hodge: Systematic Theology

Charles Bridges: 1. An Exposition of The 119th Psalm

2. An Exposition of The Book of Proverbs

Steele & Thomas: The Five Points of Calvinism

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2. What is Faith?

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