

Ps 57:4,5
 Hy 1
 Ps 139:7,8,9
 Ps 56:3,4
 Hy 64:1,2
 Colossians 3:1-17
 Lord's Day 1

Yarrow, April 17, 2011

Beloved Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Top of pg 519 *Book of Praise* gives a brief history of development of *Heidelberg Catechism*. Mentions government commissioned writing of *Heidelberg Catechism* with view to “instructing the youth.”

- Raises critical Q: why is Catechism necessary for YP? They have plenty of other exciting things to do, and sitting still to learn surely isn't their forte.... Isn't it better for young to make most of life while you can, enjoy every day, and get serious about religion when get old...? *Why Heidelberg Catechism prepared for YP?*
 - That's because the Christian faith is not limited to getting into heaven when you die. The Creator wants His people to enjoy life now – and that's why He prepared a gospel that encourages in the cut & thrust of daily living. God Himself wants the YP/children to know His good news, as well as old. ∴ train also the young to know Word/promises of God.

ALMIGHTY GOD GIVES COMFORT IN LIFE'S BROKENNESS.

1. Who is your Owner?
2. How does He care?
3. What Assurance does He give.

1. Who is your Owner

Your thought: who owns you?

- Answer of today's western world: you own yourself. We hear it around us: you are your own boss, you decide your own future, you make yourself who you want to be. So: dream your dream, then pursue it; only *you* stand in way of becoming who/what you want to be.
 - ∴ Q for you: you ever feel like you're a loser, a no-gooder, feel vastly inferior to others? Dare say: every one of us feels that way from time to time..., so that don't like ourselves.
 - Eg, we're determined to do well on a game, but we stuff up, and we feel everybody's laughing at us. Somebody has a smart remark for us and we can't find a good comeback, and feel just so foolish. We fight against temptation/sin, be it pornography or masturbation, be it binge eating/drinking, be it harbouring bitterness/anger, be it procrastination/ sloppiness and we just can't get on top of the struggle, no matter how hard we try. Result: we're convinced we're losers.... Get thoroughly discouraged/disgusted with ourselves.
 - Result: we're convinced we'll never achieve our dreams, coz we're just not good enough.... Confirms our conviction we're losers.... Life sucks, and I'm the worst sucker....

- Result in turn: affects how we function, what we decide to do, etc. Can try to hide feeling rotten re self by putting on brave/happy face, but inside the fun is out of things..., and so's the drive.... Build own future?....?
 - That raises the big Q: how do you cope with those feelings?? Listen here to gospel
- Almighty Creator fashioned a world in beginning. Ie, created human race, Adam/Eve – dust.
 - Then did most remarkable: laid claim to Adam/Eve: you Mine; I love you. Ie, covenant. So supplied for all needs in Garden. Contentment....
 - Q: who owned Adam? Eve? Own boss?? Put Q differently: how much time Adam/Eve spend thinking re selves, ie, I'm pretty good *or* I'm a loser...?
 - Clear to us: their focus not on selves, but on Creator.... They *His*. Ie, He *valued* them. Precious. *His!* Coloured their perception of life....
 - Then fall into sin. Result: broke bond with God, rejected His love, care for them. Instead, aligned selves with Satan, ie, became his slaves....
 - Result: focus is on selves. Ie, sense of contentment is gone, life sucks, disappointments everywhere. Experience reality of Lord's Day 52.127: devil, world, own flesh forever attack..., and can't overcome.
 - Result: attitudes of Colossians 3:5,8 take over. Yet in midst of loose living, anger, etc, is no happiness, contentment. Is instead inner restlessness.... And sense of: I need to improve my lot.... End up in front of mirror, either admiring guy you see (in youthful enthusiasm: I can fix my future) *or* in loathing guy you see (because you mess up every effort to fix up your future).
 - Despite outward display of self-contentment, is deep unsettledness in heart. Result: bury ache under
 - Either way: focused on self....
- What Lord do? Send only Son to earth, with mandate to deliver God's own from Satan's bondage. This He did on cross of Calvary, ie, paid price of our redemption – own blood.
 - Result: you back on God's side, ie, you again His possession!
 - How know that?? See Genesis 17:7 – true for Abraham, Isaac, etc. Sign was circumcision.
 - Ibid New Testament: cf Acts 2:38 ∴ baptism, ie, Christ's form of circumcision. ∴: wealth of baptism form, pg 587.
 - So: who owns you??
 - Lord says: you're Mine, cf Colossians 3:3. So: your future in My hands. ∴: need not focus on self, on making yourself whatever you might wish (and ∴: being open to being a failure, feel like loser); you Mine, and I care for you, supply needs.
 - Here a liberating thought: I need not spend time evaluating myself, ie, can I do it, am I good enough, have I tried hard enough, etc. What I think of me is *not* important; important is what *God my Redeemer* thinks of me – and He says I'm His, even gave Son for my sin!!
 - This the reason why Paul tells Colossians to “set your minds on things above, not on earthly things” (3:2). Self is on earth, but there's no need to spend time on self (be it: I'm pretty good *or* I'm a loser). Eye to be focused on Master in heaven.

- ∴ here the Q for you: where in fact is your eye? I.e., spend a lot of time thinking about yourself (be it: I'm pretty good or I'm no good)? Or is your focus on your Lord: *He* says I'm His, so that's how it is despite how I feel? That's Lord's Day 1: I repeat after God what I have heard Lord say to me in Scripture, i.e., I'm not my own, but belong in life and death to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ; He paid for all my sins with His precious blood and has set me free from all the power of the devil.... I'm His – exciting!!

2. How does He care?

Does it have any concrete real-life value that I belong to Jesus Christ?

- This God is Creator, i.e., by Word called world into existence. More, this God upholds world He made so that nothing exists/moves without Him. Means too: I can't trip over soccer ball unless God permit, can't fumble on a good comeback unless God permit, can't forget to return phone call unless.... Means too: I can't score goal unless God permit, can't come up with good reply unless God permit, etc. In words of Lord's Day 1: not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my heavenly Father. I.e., every circumstance of "life and death" in His hands
- Implication: I do not control my day/future.
 - See Ps 139:13f: who I am, how I'm put together, what gifts I have – not fluke of nature, but work of the very God who today says: I love you, you Mine. So: if He loves His handiwork, i.e., *Me*, am I allowed to get upset re my weaknesses?? *He* made me, and He makes no mistakes.... Fault Him for doing a poor job in distributing gifts?? He made me as I am because He wants to use a tool of *my* shape in His kingdom. ∴ no complaints, but praise.
 - More, this God, my Father in Jesus Christ, directs my life in perfect wisdom.
 - He could take me out of this world of brokenness and crown me with perfection (as He promises to do one day). But doesn't do it yet. Instead, He uses the brokenness to make me grow in Him. See Prov 3:11f. ∴ Romans 8:28.
 - I wish I could understand how it all works. Can't. Need not either. Cf 3 year old – has to go to bed, protests. But mother insists. Why?? Because she knows what's good for the child. Child doesn't have to understand, but does have to submit. In own best interest not to get upset, angry....
 - Ibid us. Our limited minds can't understand way Father leads our lives, and that's OK. Believe He makes no mistake. So entrust selves to His care.
 - More: obey Him always, no matter what. Trust that His instructions are good, though make no sense to us.... For He leading us, planning our futures, through circumstances/commands He puts on our path.
 - How could it be otherwise? If gave Son for sin to make us *own*, will He short-change us???? Cf Romans 8:32. So: relax, focus on Him....
- This a message only for old people? Obviously not!! Why should YP bump nose time and again on own deficiencies, and go through life feeling like a loser – until gospel (maybe) gets alive for them in old age?
 - Lord created people to *enjoy* life, so would take away bitter effects of fall from lives of young as well!
 - ∴ YP: don't leave this good news sitting on shelf, but work with this material in crunch of daily living! I.e., when life hurts (and daily it does), repeat in mind words

of Lord's Day 1: I belong..., not a hair..., for my salvation. And 'salvation' ≠ entering heaven; = lifted today out of morass of discouragement.

3. What Assurance does He give?

Result: pressure off re what my future holds. For:

- Assured of eternal life, ie, shall receive crown of glory in presence of heavenly Father in due time. More, all I need on road to that goal my faithful Father will supply whenever I need it. This a conviction Holy Spirit works in my heart on basis of God's promises.
 - Result: lifestyle not revolve around me and what I think keeps me happy. Instead, lifestyle revolves around my God and His service. So embrace His leadership in my life, including His commands, and enjoy feeling safe with Him. Talk about *comfort!!* ∴ Colossians 3:15 re peace of Christ. Ibid 3:17 re giving thanks....
- How about the fight against weaknesses/sins? Progress?? Overcome feeling down on self because of failures?
 - Struggle is real, and will continue. Will not overcome sin, cf Paul: Romans 7:18....
 - And yes, keep striving to live Christian life.... Cf Colossians 3:5ff. No place for works of flesh.
 - But: don't keep staring at your failures! Why not? Eye on wrong place, ie, on self! See Romans 7:25a; Colossians 3:2. Fix eye on Lord who loves you, adopted you. *That's* the force of Lord's Day 1 → here believer is responding to instruction of Colossians 3:2 and so repeating after God what Lord has revealed/promised.
 - Ibid: if triumph, don't boast, ie, get full of self – for same reason. Rather, thank Him. It *He* who makes you eager to live for Him now and always. See 3:17.
- Recall: happiness lies not in food or sex or being best. Happiness lies in belonging to Saviour who delights in you. ∴ eye on him!