

To the Candid Reader

SERMONS ON THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE CANDID READER

Johannes VanderKemp (1664-1718)

CANDID READER,

BEFORE I inform thee of the purport of this my book, I must briefly discourse with thee on two momentous matters, which are of the greatest concern to thee and every other person. And in the first place, that it behooves thee to inquire whether thou art in the true church, in which God, with whom we have to do, is sought, worshipped and glorified in a pure and acceptable manner, to salvation. It is a dictate of human nature, that man ought not only to worship and glorify God, but that he ought also to do this in connection with others. But man having sinned, and come short of the glory of God, knows not in what manner he ought to worship and glorify him; and nevertheless, as the idea, that he ought to worship God, abides with him, he will, according to his confused and singular conceptions, endeavour to worship him in an erroneous manner. And since being puffed up by his fleshly understanding, he delights in himself, and in his peculiar opinions, he therefore seeks to render them agreeable to others also, and thus to create a party, even in religion. But the Lord God, having appointed for himself an everlasting people, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that they might shew forth his praise, hath made his will known to them, and thus also the proper method of glorifying him. This hath produced two kinds of churches and religions, a false, and a true or pure one. The false is that of the heathens, the modern Jews, the Mahometans, and the erroneous Christians.

The heathens have ordered their religion according to the twilight of nature, which they have exceedingly darkened by numerous fables, tricked up from certain obscure traditions of the fathers. For as the apostle of the heathens saith, Rom. 1.21-23. "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools: and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."

The modern Jews, who have apostatized from the faith of their fathers, make use of the scriptures of the Old Testament, but disguise and obscure them exceedingly by the

traditions of the elders, which they dress up with a number of profane and old wives fables: whereby "their minds are blinded; for until this day there remaineth a vail on their hearts in the reading of the Old Testament, 2 Cor. 3.14,15.

The Mahometans regulate themselves by their Alcoran, as they call it, a book patched up of heathenish, Jewish, and Nestorian errors.

The Christians are either Romanists or Pelagians, (to whom the Socinians, the Jesuits, Arminians, and certain Mennonites join themselves more or less) or Enthusiasts, or Protestants, to wit, the Reformed and those who embrace the Augsburg confession.

All these cannot be each the true church, nor have the true form of religious worship. For there is but "one body, and one spirit, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all." Eph. 4.5,6. The doctrines of so many societies must clash with one another, must undermine and overthrow each other: such a Babel and confusion of articles of faith and ceremonies must loosen the bond of union, the essential qualification of the church, must scatter the members and displease God; "For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace." 1 Cor. 14.33. "This surely is not the wisdom that is from above, but it is earthly, sensual and devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work," James 3.15-17.

Therefore it concerns thee greatly, worthy reader, to know with what people the true church of God and the pure religion is. The true church alone is the household of God, his city, the holy Jerusalem, mount Zion, the Daughter of God, the darling, spouse, and body of Jesus, his dove, his fair one and undefiled: she alone is the object and end of all the blessed favours of God:" The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost is with her," 2 Cor. 13.13. God elected her from eternity, and gives her his Son and Spirit. He enters into an everlasting covenant of grace with her, and gives her all the sure mercies of that covenant: he regenerates, calls, justifies, sanctifies, seals, preserves, leads, comforts and saves her. We may see what glorious things are spoken of this city of God, Psalm 46. & 48. & 87. & 122. & 133. and in the Song of Solomon. We must join ourselves to the true church, if we will be saved, Acts 2.47. All who are called Christians confess one holy, catholic, Christian church: we must therefore inquire where the true church is to be found. So the spouse did, when she said to her bridegroom, Song 1.7. "Tell me where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?"

It is therefore a soul ruining madness to hold with the atheists, that all the glorious things which are spoken of the church of God are trifles; or, from self-will, or because we are offended at the multitude of differences, to remain in a state of separation from others,

as if we could serve God alone and apart from others, as well as with and in society: for "he who is not with Jesus" and his people, "is against him; and he who gathereth not with him scattereth abroad," Math. 12.30. It is also folly to run after every leader, and to think that we can serve God sincerely, and so be saved in every denomination; for there is neither holiness nor salvation out of the true church of God, and he who is out of the church of God must be considered as "a heathen man, and a publican," Math. 18.16. We must disapprove also of the conduct of those, who only suppose, without inquiry, and without an actual persuasion of their minds, that they are in the true church and have the pure doctrine of faith. The common people among the papists act thus by the advice of their teachers, when they assent to the doctrine of the Romish church with an implicit faith, and do not examine the matter itself; they may not indeed read the divine revelation, the priest becomes surety for the souls of his people, and he swears that he teaches the truth. But the papists are not the only persons who act thus, but I conceive that many, who recede from the papists do also conduct in this manner, when they say that religion consists only in two articles, to wit, a belief of the promises, and obedience to the commands, to which others for decency's sake, add a becoming reverence for the holy scriptures: and they can therefore tolerate every error: when a person only holds that Jesus is the Messiah, and is no idolater, they will salute him as their brother.

But the Reformed teach altogether differently from this: they require that all men should, like the Bereans, search the scripture daily, whether the things, which their pastors teach them, be agreeable to the word of God; they enjoin upon every one to live by his own faith, and not by the faith of his teachers; and therefore certain marks, which are taken only from the Bible, are proposed to him by our people, that he may see for himself, whether he be in that church, which is described in the book of God, as his beloved people. But what a listlessness hath seized even upon many of God's people, that they do not so much as inquire, but suppose in a careless manner; that they are in the true church: this matter, they think, is too high for them; they conceive that their parents, who procured their incorporation into this church and educated them in it, knew what they were about, and they think that their ministers are too wise, and too pious to mislead them. Is this thy conduct also, reader: hast thou then a better proof and ground for thy faith than a heathen, Jew, Turk or Papist, and wouldest thou not be one of them, as thou art now one of us, if thou wert only educated among them? and if a persecution should arise against us, and thou shouldest be obliged to suffer reproach, pain, and shame for the doctrine of our church, wouldest thou then indeed have a single reason, why thou wouldest not forsake us, and join thyself to our adversaries?

Perhaps thou art amazed at these expressions, and thinkest, ought I then to doubt whether I am in the true church, and whether thou teachest me the truth? what will I then do with this book of thine? But hold, my friend, compose thyself a little. Art thou persuaded in thy mind, and assured upon good grounds, that the doctrine of our church is the pure doctrine of God's word, far be it from me, that I should lend my tongue and pen to the devil, to rob thee of thy sure foundation, and

cause thee to stagger in thy faith. But dost thou barely suppose this by an implicit faith, I would then only convince thee of thy vanity and carelessness with respect to this matter, which is of so great consequence, that thou mayest be earnestly desirous to seek for solid grounds and certain evidences for thyself, upon which thou mayest settle thy soul in peace. The righteous only is of the household of God, and he must live by his own faith. The lame and the blind are hated by the soul of the true David; the lame and the blind shall not come into his house. We wish not that thou shouldest suspect our church and doctrine of falsehood and impurity; for we are perfectly persuaded of her truth and purity; but we only condemn thine implicit faith, by which thou simply supposest, without evidence, that thou art in the true church: and we endeavour to urge thee to seek a well grounded faith; for an implicit faith is no faith, but only a vague and idle supposition, which hath no influence at all upon the mind.

But what proof can there be offered, by which we may learn what people are the church of God, and profess his truth, and worship him in a manner that is acceptable to him? We judge in the first place that the heathens manifest that God doth not acknowledge them to be his people. Their erroneous opinions concerning the God-head, their inventing of abominable gods, who were the offspring of whoredom, and practiced the most shameful lewdness, envy, and revenge; yea, even such to whom the most vicious, filthy and hateful passions were dedicated: the inhuman barbarities, unnatural practices, and other wicked works of the heathens, (see Rom. 1.22,23.) evidence that they suppress the truth in unrighteousness, that they extinguish the light of nature, and have forsaken the pure tradition of their father Noah. It was thus with the heathens of old, and it is thus still with those, who have either never heard of the gospel, or reject it.

Are not the heathens the people of God, some may perhaps think that the Jews are. It is true, the Lord God formerly established his covenant with Abraham and his seed, and promised that he would be a God to them, and that they should be his people, Gen. 17.7,8. "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, then Judah became his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion." Psalm 114.1,2. see Exod. 19. and 20. But we inquire not concerning the ancient Jews, but the modern. For although they are Abraham's seed after the flesh, they are nevertheless not after the promise; for they have rejected and corrupted the oracles of God, which were committed to them. It is true, the modern Jews are very attentive to letters, they have preserved the ancient book of God faithfully, and have transmitted it to us entire: but they gnaw only the outward shell of it, and they reject the kernel, the pith, the marrow, and true sense of it. They have darkened the sense of the divine word by their oral law, the traditions of the elders, the commandments and fables of men, see Isaiah 29.10-13. The promised Messiah, the expectation of their fathers, they have rejected and slain: they have set up their own righteousness in opposition to the righteousness of God, see Rom. 9.31-33. & 10.2,3. And how do they perform their religious service? is it not only a profane and idle bawling? we perceive not the least reverence, attention, or devotion among them in their synagogues. Their eyes declare their blindness, and hardness, they

are famous throughout the world for their injustice, their griping usury and deceit, and yet they will not return. They deceive themselves with vain imaginations, thinking and resting on it, that Abraham is their father; but as they have apostatized from his faith, and do not perform his works, they manifest that they are born after the flesh, and that they are children of the servile covenant of works, and have therefore been cast out of the family of Abraham, like children of Hagar and Ishmael. See Gal. 4.21-30. compared with Gen. 21.9,10. It is therefore evident, that the present Jews are not the people of God, but are rejected by the God of their fathers: "Ye are not my people, neither will I be your God," thus the Lord spake of old to this people, Hoses. 1.9. "He hath cut his staff beauty asunder, that he might break his covenant, which he had made with all this people," Zech. 11.10. And they will remain in their forsaken condition, until the Lord fulfill his good word, which he hath spoken concerning them, and receive them again. See Hosea. 3.4,5. Rom. 11.25,32. They cannot endure that the heathen should inherit their promises. Hear what Paul saith of them with truth, 1 Thess. 2.15,16. "They have killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins away; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."

Are not the Jews the people of God, much less are the Mahometans; for their Alcoran. (or religious and canonical book) composed by Mahomet, assisted by a Nestorian monk, with others of his party, and certain Jews, was carelessly compiled from certain doctrines of the Bible, inserted without order and method, and from certain heathenish traditions, and many trifles, invented by the compilers. Many of their doctrines are ridiculous; their ceremonies are superstitious; many of those among them, whom they call spiritual, live like beasts; and the whole is calculated to flatter the lusts of the flesh: and they have but few things that can satisfy the reasonable soul. The nations were compelled by violence to accept of their religion, it is propagated by cruelty, and maintained by the sword. How can this people be the people of God? They are also selfcondemned; for they will not be questioned concerning their doctrines; whoever disputes about them must be put to death: "For every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh he to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd," John 3.20.

Doth not the church of God exist among the heathens, nor among the Jews, nor Mahometans, we must then seek her among the Christians, with whom we shall also find her. In order to prove this, it would be necessary to demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion, especially with respect to those common doctrines, which are received, by all who are called Christians: for instance, this one article, to wit, that Jesus, the son of Mary, is the true Messiah. We might demonstrate this either *a priori*, from Moses and the prophets, to whom Jesus and the apostles appealed; or *a posteriori*, from Jesus and his apostles, who confirmed the doctrine of Moses and of the prophets. We could prove this abundantly from the resurrection of Jesus, as we have shewn on the seventeenth Lord's Day. After we had thus established the truth of the Christian

religion, we might also demonstrate the divinity of it by many arguments, but especially by the numerous prophecies, which have been fulfilled in all their circumstances, and by the many miracles, with which the Lord hath sealed and confirmed the word, as his own. But it will not be proper to enlarge much on these particulars, lest we should extend our address to too great a length. We may find these things sufficiently treated of by many of our divines.

Although this general acknowledgement of the Messiahship of Jesus is true and divine, nevertheless the Christian world is divided into so many churches and different denominations, that they cannot all and each of them in particular be the true church of God. For all the members of the true church must, with respect to the fundamental points of the faith, "avoid schisms, and they must be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; they must be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind," 1 Cor. 1.10. Philip. 2.2. But the Christian world is at present so divided, as it was also anciently, with respect to the fundamental points of doctrine and practice, that what is denied and condemned by one, is affirmed by another: what one thinks he ought to confess, another will oppose and overthrow with much bitterness and passion: yea, if it were in the power of some, who will also be called Christians, they would destroy others with fire and sword, with the rack and gibbet, although they should unpeople and devastate the greatest part of the world: for one endeavours to persuade another to embrace his opinion, and when he cannot succeed, he will not maintain any fellowship with him. The apostles, and the Jewish or Pharisaical Christians opposed each other vehemently in the primitive church. John would have that "if any did not bring his doctrine with him, they should not receive him into their house, nor bid him God speed," 2 John, verses 10,11. Jesus himself, commends the Ephesians, because "they hated the works of the Nicolaitans, and saith that he hated them also," Rev. 2.6. It is sufficiently known from ecclesiastical history, how the Arians, Pelagians, Nestorians, Eutychians, and others were condemned and rejected by those who taught a different doctrine, and how these were in their turn reprobated by their opponents. Matters are conducted in the same manner even now. The Quakers or enthusiasts, the Socinians, Arminians, Mennonites, Papists, Lutherans and Reformed cannot endure each other. It is true, the Arminians and Socinians pretend that they could exercise brotherly fellowship with all, they tolerate also one another; nevertheless they will not maintain fellowship with the idolatrous papists: they say that they would unite with the reformed if they would receive them into fellowship with them. But if these men should once prevail, we should then see how moderate and tolerant they would be toward us. Their forerunners, the Arians, Pelagians and Semipelagians showed sufficiently what bitter enemies they were of the orthodox. The Remonstrants bestirred themselves vigorously against us in the last century, when they saw their help in the gates. Since then there are so many different opinions, which overthrow each other, it follows that all these denominations cannot be the true church and peculiar people of God; there is then only one among all these, which hath the true nature of the church.

But how shall we find the pure and true church of God among all these different denominations? Every one thinks that we must seek and find her among his people, with whom he converses. Surely there must be a possibility of knowing the true church, if we must join ourselves to her, that we may partake of her privileges and saving benefits; she is indeed "a city upon a hill, which cannot be hid." Matt. 5.14, But what is the mark whereby we may know her? Shall we ask the church of Rome which is the true church and the right mark, by which she may be known? She weens indeed that she hath a better right to this than all besides. She pretends that she hath the highest claim, and the oldest title: she saith that her high priest, the pope, is the supreme judge in disputes, to whom we must submit our faith in this great controversy. But others, who belong to the Romish society, think that the pope is not the supreme judge in disputes, but the council, to whom the pope must submit himself. How then shall we get right in the church of Rome? cannot she decide her own controversies, how will she then those which she hath with others? and although she should be of one mind, and say that she hath a supreme right to pronounce sentence, those who are not of her communion will dispute that right, and assert that she hath no such right at all, and that she can not prove it, which we may justly demand of her. The Romish church is party concerned, every one will condemn her: shall she now be both party and judge, and pronounce sentence in her own case? who would not condemn this, as a most unfair and most unreasonable proceeding? and who would submit to such a sentence? It will therefore be most proper to consult the mouth and the word of the Lord: so the spouse acted Song 1.7. The Son of God is indeed the Head, the Shepherd, the Prophet, the Priest and King of his church; he is the word and the wisdom of his Father: the word of God was written by the inspiration of the infallible Spirit, and the Lord speaks to every one in his word: "The scripture saith," Rom. 3.4. & 9.17. & 10.11. To that the Saviour appealed in his disputes with the Jews, John 5.39, so also the apostles, Rom. 3.19. & 4.3. & 11.4. Gal. 4.21,22,27,30. God commands every one to conduct himself according to his word, and to speak according to it, and denounceth a severe threatening against those who do not. Isaiah 8.20. Therefore soundness of doctrine according to the written word of God is the right mark of the true church. Jesus himself gives us this mark, John 8.31,32,47. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God." See this also, John 10.27. & 14.21,23. They who abide not by this word are condemned and accursed, how great soever their authority may be, yea, though they were angels from heaven, Gal. 1.8,9. The word is also that by which a person is called to the church, and is born in the church. 2 Thess. 2.14. James 1.18. 1 Peter 1.23. The doctrine according to the word of God is also the privilege of the church only, to the exclusion of all others. Psalm 147.19,20. The priests of the Old Testament, who were ordained by God himself, might judge only "according to the sentence of the law," Deut. 17.8-10. And truly every one must and will admit, either wittingly and willingly, or unwittingly and unwillingly, that the pure doctrine of the church is the right mark of the true church. For what person is there of all the different denominations, who, when he is urged to prove

his opinion, will not forthwith alledge one or other passage of scripture? Doth he not show thereby, that his faith must be tried by the word of God, as the proper touchstone.

Say not worthy reader, that the matter which we would explain, remains thus as obscure as ever, and that we cannot know by the agreement of any person's doctrine with the word of God, with what people we may find the church of God; because every one makes use of this word to answer his purpose, and saith that his opinion agreeth with the word of God; yea, that he will submit himself to the word only. For when this matter is properly considered, we shall perceive clearly and presently, that all who are without the Reformed, or permit me to say, the Protestant church, avoid the decision of the holy scripture, and set up another judge above, and in opposition to the holy book of God, because they perceive that they are condemned by that book.

In order to illustrate and confirm this assertion, thou must, reader, allow, and thou wilt do it, if thou wilt examine this matter thoroughly, and without prejudice, that he who foundeth all, at least all his capital doctrines upon a principle different from the word of God, and who models and fashions the whole word of God according to that principle, I say, thou must allow that such a person doth not submit himself to the word of God and that he doth not regulate his opinion according to it, but subjects himself to a different judge whom he sets up, to wit, that principle of his; yea, that he subjects even the word of the Lord of hosts to that principle. If thou, reader, wilt now duly attend to the conduct of those who oppose us, thou wilt perceive that they build and suspend all their doctrinal tenets either upon enthusiasm, as those who are called Quakers do; or upon natural reason and free will, as the Pelagians and Semipelagians, who were condemned of old, did, and as those still do, who extol their reason so much, as sound, though somewhat weakened, and their indifferent free will, to wit, the Socinians, Jesuits, Remonstrants, and many Mennonites, who collude with them; or upon lordship, which is introduced by the Papists.

We say the Quakers build and suspend the articles of their faith upon enthusiasm; for they will not receive any part of the word of God, but what is suggested to them by an immediate revelation of the Spirit of God, whereby they are then, as they pretend, in a manner deified, imagining that they are above the holy word of God, which they subject to their accidental notions; and therefore they utter the most absurd and fantastical doctrines of faith, and use unseemly and offensive gestures. What thinkest thou, candid reader, can this people appeal to the word of God, as the only judge, and the perfect standard of faith; do they not reject, yea, do they not reproach this judge, when they decry the written word of God, as "a mere paper word, a book for children, milk for babes, an ambiguous scripture, which hath neither meaning nor force, unless it be inspired and animated by an inward word?"

The Socinians establish their doctrine upon a different principle, to wit, natural reason and free will. Natural reason, they think, is still sound and unimpaired; men can perceive all things clearly by reason; "We do not by any means assent to things, which we clearly perceive to be

impossible," saith Socinus *de Servatore, part. 3. cap. 6. page 282*. They think therefore that reason is the rule and expositor of the scripture, and that all the controversies, that relate to the scripture, ought and can be determined by the voice of reason. They deny for the sake of their sound reason the simplicity of God, his essential omnipresence, his foreknowledge, his free and unchangeable decrees, the divine Trinity, the personal union of the two natures in Christ, and his satisfaction to the justice of God, &c. They cannot comprehend these things, nor reconcile them to their reason, and therefore they reject them, though they are plainly set forth in the word of God. Ostorod saith that he would not believe the incarnation, (that is, Christ's taking upon himself the human nature, or the personal union of a divine and human nature in Christ,) although it should seem to be clearly asserted in the scripture, because it is contrary to reason, which judgeth it to be false. Another champion of the Socinians, namely, Samalcius saith, "There is not the least tittle of the Christian religion, which doth not agree with reason; and if any opinion agree not with reason, it is not admissible in theology; and it must necessarily be exceedingly pernicious and false. *In refut. thes. Franc. page 137. et in pr?fat.* Socinus himself saith, *de Servatore, part. 3. cap. 6. pag. 282*. "With respect to myself, although the scripture said not once, but often," (to wit, that Christ hath satisfied God for our sins) "I should nevertheless not believe that it was altogether so. It cannot by any means be so," according to the judgment of his reason. What thinkest thou, reader, can we believe that these men receive the scripture only for their judge and rule, and that they submit themselves to it, and prove from it that they have the right mark of the church and people of God? I judge not. In the same manner do they make free will a foundation, upon which they build many other opinions. They think that free will is indifferent, and not so exceedingly corrupt, as the Reformed pretend, and therefore they do not believe the inability of the sinner to do good, they deny the necessity of a heart changing regeneration, God's effectual grace in working faith and conversion, &c. And why, because these things agree not with the word of God? no, but because they can not be reconciled to their indifferent free will. Doth it not then plainly appear, that the word of God is not the foundation of their faith, but their own vain glorious free will?

The Jesuits and Remonstrants will not indeed speak so harshly, nevertheless free will is the hinge upon which most of their doctrines, which they hold in common with each other, turn. They believe that man is not so good as Adam was before the fall: he hath lost the image of God, his supernatural grace, his golden bridle; the inbred lusts of his flesh have bewildered him, and he is thus become weak; but he is not therefore so dead, so dark, corrupt and incapable of doing good; but he can still by the help of grace discern the things of God, desire and dispose himself for conversion. He would otherwise be deprived of his free and indifferent will, and they think that this is impossible, unless he should cease to be man. And therefore we must not hold an absolutely free, and eternally unchangeable decree, but a conditional one, that is a decree suspended upon the condition of foreseen faith, good works and perseverance. And on this account they believe that Christ died for all men, that God hath entered into a general covenant of grace with all men, that he bestows a general and sufficient, but not a particular, effectual, and irresistible grace upon

all men, and that the saints may apostatize from the faith. If this were not so, free will would be forced, and God could not with any equity demand of man what he was unable to perform. Do we not then see that these men make free will, by them considered as indifferent, and not the word of God, the foundation of their doctrine of faith? How dare they then pretend that they make the word of God their foundation?

The Papists exalt their sovereign lordship to the throne, that they may subject the word of God, its mysteries, and all that is sacred and profane to themselves. They have therefore introduced the ruling power of a pope, of cardinals, bishops and other lords. They teach that their church is superior to the scripture, that we cannot derive the authority and sense of scripture from the scripture itself, but we must derive it from the Romish sovereignty. They introduce traditions, many articles of faith, and ceremonies without, above, yea, contrary to the word of God: they say, the church of Rome hath a right to do this, and men ought to obey her implicitly. The common people must depend only upon the words of their teachers; they may not read the word of God, nor search it, they would become too conceited, and contradict their superiors: whoever attempts to do this is a heretic, and deserves the stake: therefore they choose not that the scripture should be translated into the vulgar language of the people, and they enjoin that the public service of the church should be performed only in a foreign language: the people have enough to do with hearing masses, counting and muttering a great number of prayers to God, abstaining from particular meats during certain seasons, shriving all their sins, and performing well and carefully the penances imposed upon them by the priest to whom they have shriven: men must by all means establish their own righteousness, and merit heaven by their good works in that Romish communion: they make indeed a great noise and ado about the name Jesus, they must bow themselves when they hear it mentioned, they must mention it often, it must be engraven by all means in churches, in houses, upon walls, yea, upon dishes; but what doth Jesus do for all this honour? he obtains for them that their good works can merit. In this manner do they keep the people who know little or nothing, in bondage and slavery, so that they submit themselves readily to those Romish lords, without even muttering against them. But this sovereign authority and power cannot be maintained without money. What do they do? They introduce shriving to the priest, they sell spiritual offices, indulgences, masses for souls, and require satisfaction of men in their own persons in and after this life, which can be considerably moderated with money: indeed, all things are saleable at Rome, even whoredom; by which means those great merchants become exceedingly rich, and maintain themselves. Must thou not therefore, observing reader, judge that the Romish lordship and not the word of God is the principle from which all the Popish doctrines and institutions are derived? If the Romish synagogue could find herself in the word of God, would she sport in this manner with the souls, with the bodies, with the goods of men, with the faith and with the word of God? We may see how little these men regard the book of God as their rule by the reproaches, which they belch out against it; for they say that it is an imperfect, dark, and double meaning book. I have no inclination to repeat all the reproachful expressions which many of the leaders of the Romanists

have vomited out against this book. It will suffice us to see, that the Papists perceive that they are condemned by the word, and that they therefore hate it as adversaries of the light.

Hath the Lord now a true church on the earth, as he certainly hath, and as every one steadfastly believes, and is she not to be found among those who are without us, she must then surely be found with us. Nor is our boasting vain; for why do we teach the abominable and guilty depravity and impotency of the sinner? why do we believe in the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier? why do we hold that the only begotten and proper Son of God took upon himself a true human nature, continuing one person, and that he truly and fully satisfied the justice of God by his sufferings? whence is it, that we confess a divine, effectual and heart changing grace, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, is not the word of God the only book that prescribes and enforceth these things? the book of God is our only principle; from that alone have we derived all our doctrines; by that we will be tried, and to that book alone do we submit our whole doctrine. If we err, we must err, because we exalt the holy book of God too high, and humble the sinner too low by it, that we commend the grace of God too much, and thus comfort the delivered sinner too much, and excite him too powerfully to holiness and to glorify God. O happy and blessed error! by which, sinking down in our own sinful nothingness, and swallowed up in the sea of God's all sufficient grace, we lose ourselves altogether in his honour, that we may be nothing at all, and he alone may be all in all to eternity.

If we will not be enthusiasts, who teach indifferently whatever occurs to their minds, (as they pretend) through the Spirit, without above and contrary to the word of God, we need not, however, be natural men, who have not the Spirit, as if we would banish the Spirit out of the church. For we know very well from the word of God that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; that they are foolishness to him, and that he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. 2.14. We teach a saving, effectual enlightening, regeneration, repentance, faith, sanctification, consolation, leading and preservation by the Holy Spirit. But we deny that the Holy Spirit takes the word out of our hands, when he leads us: for he influenceth the minds of those whom he favours, with, and according to his word: with, by, and in subservience to the word he enlightens and persuades the understanding, so that it contemplates the mysteries of God with a persuasion of mind: "we see the light in God's light," Psalm 36.9. "He shines into the heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. 4.6. and thus "the gospel comes not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," 1 Thess. 1.5. so that "we receive the word preached, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, as the word of God; which effectually worketh in them that believe," 1 Thess. 2.13. Whereby the will is also sweetly and heartily persuaded, and thus powerfully moved by the Spirit to cleave to the Lord, and to fulfill his will, in obedience to him. See Ezek. 36.26,27. Yea, the believer "is changed by the Spirit after the glory of Christ," which is exhibited by the word, 2 Cor. 3.18. And he is "made free by knowing the truth," John 8.32.

When we will not allow reason a higher authority than the word, or an equal authority with the word, nor say that free will consists in indifference, but that it is in bondage to sin, and a servant of it, do we then deny our reason and will, and declare our reason and will to be useless? By no means. We think that we cannot apprehend the divine mysteries, except by, and with our reason, and that we cannot be converted and wrought upon, unless with our will. But we say that reason hath not an equal authority with the word of God, much less a higher authority than the word, obliging us to believe it: yea, that reason, as it exists at present in every sinner without the actual enlightening of the Holy Spirit, is dark, foolish, and confused: see 1 Cor. 2.14, and that the will is "a will of the flesh, and of the mind," Eph. 2.3. yea, that it neither can, nor will, nor can be willing to love that which is good in a saving manner, nor convert itself: although the sinner, in consequence of his reasonable nature, always remains capable of conversion, and when God converts him, is wrought upon in a reasonable manner, his understanding and reason are enlightened, and he thereby becomes capable of apprehending spiritual things with his reason, according to the measure of their revelation; and he thus becomes willing, when he was before unwilling, and cries of his own accord, uncompelled, and willingly to the Lord, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned," Jer. 31.18. for "God takes the stony heart from him and gives him a heart of flesh," Ezek. 36.26.

As we do not deny the efficacious working of the Holy Spirit, although we are not enthusiasts; nor that men possess reason and a will, though we are not Pelagians; so also we will not deny that the Lord hath given a certain power to his church, and ordered that she should be governed by overseers, although we will not submit to the Popish yoke, because it is too Antichristian. We know that we ought to "acknowledge them who labour in the church, are over her in the Lord, and admonish her; and that we ought to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake," 1 Thess. 5.12,13. See also Matt. 16.19. & 18.17,18, 2 Cor. 10.8. & 13.10. Heb. 13.17. and what we have said on the thirty-first Lords day. But this power is only ministerial, and not superior to the word, much less contrary to it, taking it from the members of the church, and rendering it useless to them. This power must be merely subservient to the word, subduing, and rendering the mind of every person obedient to it. See 2 Cor. 10.4-6. But we ought not, in matters of faith, to "call any man our master or father, because Christ only is a master, and God only a father" in this respect, Matt. 23.8-10.

And therefore we think that we may, without any offence, esteem the Reformed or Protestant church to be the true church, and her doctrine to be pure, according to, and on account of the word of God.

The other matter, reader, which so greatly concerns thee and every other person, is, that it behoves thee to inquire whether thou art in a state of grace, a child of God, the property of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, and so a true member of the church of God. It will not suffice to render thee eternally happy here and hereafter, that thou conversest in the true church, as an outward member, and that thy name is enrolled in the register of the church: many such "children

of the kingdom shall be cast into utter darkness," Matt. 8.12. We may be in the true church, and be without grace. See Matt. 22.11,14. There is chaff as well as wheat in the threshingfloor of the church. There are vessels of dishonour, as well as of honour in the house Of God. There are more evil than good hearers of the word. There were many in the church of Sardis, who were dead, while they had the name, that they were alive, and there were but few, who had not defiled their garments. In the family of Noah there was also a wicked Ham, and in that of Abraham there was an Ishmael: Esau was a son of Isaac and Rebekah, as well as Jacob. The carnal Israelites ate and drank also of the spiritual meat and drink, 1 Cor. 10.1,5. Among the companions of Jesus there were some who forsook him, and Judas, one of the apostles, was a devil, John 6.66,70 71. It is no sign that a person is in a good state, when he enjoys the outward privileges of the church. See Luke 13.24,27. Although thou wert a teacher of the church, thine office would not make thee a christian inwardly, nor preserve thee from perdition. See Matt. 7.22,23. A person may "be enlightened, taste the heavenly gift, be made a partaker of the Holy Ghost, taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," and nevertheless be destitute of those "better things which accompany salvation, and so fall away," Heb. 4.4,9. Therefore inquire with concern how it is with thee in this respect, whether thou be a christian in the letter, or in the spirit: whether thy work be in appearance only, or in truth; whether the root of the matter be in thee, or not. God desireth truth in the inward parts: thou hast the greatest concern in this affair; it is a matter, upon which thy salvation and damnation depends. Therefore "examine thyself" again and again, "whether thou be in the faith, prove thine own self," 2 Cor. 13.5. Zeph. 2.1,2. Dost thou obtain the Spirit, who causeth thee to know the things which are freely given thee of God, rejoice, thank him, and conduct thyself worthy of his wonderful and free grace, and endeavour to render others partakers of it, and to allure them to communion with God, and comfort his people with the consolation, wherewith God hath comforted thee. Dost thou perceive that thou art yet destitute of the essentials of Christianity, give thyself no rest, but earnestly endeavour to partake of the Redeemer Christ entirely, and to become his property.

These two important matters are also seriously urged by the Heidelberg catechism. For in the first place it forbids us to teach and believe any thing, which the gospel doth not teach us, and which God hath not revealed to us in his word. See questions 19,21,22. It instructs us in the great mystery of the divine Trinity, and the blessed dispensation of the Triune God, only because God hath revealed himself thus in his word, questions 24,25. When it treats of the nature, kind, and efficacy of the sacraments, it appeals only to the word of God, Questions 71,77, and it humbleth the sinner to the lowest degree according to that word: it exalts the grace of God to the highest, in order to comfort and quiet the humbled sinner in a clear and effectual manner, and upon certain grounds: and it urges in the most forcible manner the delivered sinner to a holy gratitude, and to glorify the infinitely gracious God. On the other hand it shows for examination how a person, who becomes the entire property of Christ, and therefore a partaker of the only comfort and the supreme good, is led and influenced by God, and how one, who is destitute of this, may attain to it

by humiliation, a true faith in the only and perfect Saviour, and an evangelical holiness, and gratitude. We have endeavoured to follow our instructor in this path, when we have frequently shown from the doctrines which we have explained according to the word of God, both the falsehood of the doctrine of our adversaries, and the purity and truth of the doctrine of our reformed church. After treating of an important benefit, we have shown by certain marks, which are found in every believer, and in believers only, who are the real partakers of such a great benefit. We conceive indeed that no man can improve a benefit to his spiritual advantage and comfort, unless he be conscious, that he hath an indisputable right to that benefit: and that even the favourites of God are often exceedingly uncertain, perplexed, and doubtful whether they have truth in their inward parts. It was necessary then, in order that we might speak comfortably to the children of God, that we should exhibit the work of God, which he had wrought in their souls, plainly by evidences, that they might behold it on every side, and as it were near at hand, and thus obtain assurance of heart before the Lord. We thought also that it was our duty to separate the vile from the precious, and that we ought therefore to show by evidences who also deceived themselves with false imaginations, that they might recover themselves out of the snare of the devil in which they are taken captive at his will, and might thus flee from the wrath to come. We are the less scrupulous about treating souls in this detecting manner, because we observe that the word of God precedes us in this method; for it calleth the sinner again and again to himself, and admonisheth him seriously to examine and prove himself: the holy prophets and apostles often proposed to the people, and earnestly insisted upon certain evidences of a person's good and evil condition. See only at present the eighth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans, and the epistles of John, which contain many evidences of this kind. We are not apprehensive that sinners will be driven by this method of instruction to an irrecoverable despair, like Cain and Judas, who after all did not arrive to that phrensy through a particular discovery of their graceless condition by evidences, but through their own enormous abominations, which rendered their consciences outrageous. Hast thou, reader, ever observed that any person was brought to such a total despair through a serious discovery of his condition to him. I ask not, whether thou hast ever seen any persons who attained to a conviction, that he was yet graceless, and was exceedingly troubled on account of this; for such trouble is salutary, and renders the sinner susceptible of the divine grace. See Matt. 5.3,6, & 9.12,13. It is also produced by the Holy Spirit, John 16.8,9. and it rendered Peter's sermon profitable, Acts 2.37. But I ask whether thou hast ever seen any person, who was reduced to an irrecoverable despair of the grace of God by such a serious discovery, and by exhibiting certain evidences to him? I have not: I have indeed seen only one person in all my life, who truly and entirely despaired of the grace of God, and that out of my congregation: which person did not arrive to that despair by a serious and soul alarming sermon, and by an exhibition of evidences, but by his own willful ungodliness. Truly we need not be afraid that we will render any person too uneasy by a frequent proposing of evidences, and by a particular address to him, in the second person; our people are indeed too insensible, they are not so easily influenced to repentance. The prophets and apostles did not speak so generally to the people, and inform them that there were such and such wicked persons

in the world, and in the church: but they used to address the guilty in a direct manner, and say, "Thou art the man." 1 Sam. 12.7. "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter," Acts 8.21. "Thou child of the devil." &c. Acts 13.10,11. "O foolish Galatians," &c. Gal. 3.1,3,4. & 5.2,7. This is also required by the national synod of Wesel, holden in the year 1568, when it saith, "They shall direct all that they say to these two principal points of the gospel, to wit, faith and conversion: and the preachers, in doing this, shall aim at, as their only mark, and inculcate the true mortification and quickening of man: they shall endeavour to penetrate with their sermons, as much as possible, through all the secret veils, and into all the hiding places of the souls of their hearers; and not only dwell upon gross acts of iniquity, and public sins, but also expose the hidden hypocrisy of the heart, and bring forth thence to light, and remove in the most convenient manner, that seed-plot and sink of all manner of ungodliness, pride, unthankfulness." &c. In this manner have we also endeavoured not only to lop off certain unfruitful branches, which bear gall and wormwood, but also to penetrate, as much as we were able to the bottom of the heart, and so to the root of iniquity, and to lay it bare, that this evil tree might fall and die of its own accord.

Suffer me, my worthy reader, to detain thee yet a little, while I say something to thee concerning our excellent Heidelberg catechism. When, being yet a young man, I entertained a desire, and being doubtful of myself, I had a serious disposition to work out my salvation with fear and trembling, I presently set a high value upon this little book, because I perceived that it would contribute to the attainment of my object, I observed that it proposed in a very perspicuous manner the method in which God conducted sinners to salvation by discovering to them their misery, deliverance and gratitude: it shewed me the true nature of the exercises of miserable souls, of those who were seeking to be saved, and of those who were thankful; and what seemed exceedingly striking and beautiful to me was, that the instructor introduced his pupil, as speaking concerning the exercises of a convinced, believing, and holy person, as his own, and not proposing the heads of doctrine only as positive truths. The more I saw these things in this little book, the more I was enamoured with it. I was exceedingly grieved, when I heard Papists, Socinians, and Remonstrants, with whom, I conversed much in my youth, speak reproachfully of it. But I do not regret it, it hath been of so much the more service to me. I was also induced thereby to publish this treatise of mine upon that little book, that I might, if possible, edify others by it, heartily wishing that they may derive the same, yea, greater advantage from it, than I have derived. Let no man nevertheless be so ill natured, as to think that I, or any other of our denomination, look upon the catechism as a little bible. We would rather see it and all other good books banished out of the world, than that it should be equalled with the word of God, which was immediately and infallibly inspired by him. We believe the doctrines of the catechism, not on account of the catechism, but only on account of the word of God, out of, and according to which the catechism was composed. Do we esteem this little book, we nevertheless love the word of God still more. We commend this treatise, only because it explains the book of God clearly to us, and recommends it to us. They who report of us that we consider the catechism as our little bible, know better; at least they would know better, if

they did not foster bitter envy and strife in their hearts. No man will speak disparagingly of the catechism, who knows how it was introduced into the world, for what purpose it was composed, in what manner it was received, combatted and established, and of how great advantage it hath been to the church.

It is known, that it was composed by Zacharias Ursinus and Casparus Olevianus, both exceedingly famous divines and professors in the university of Heidelberg, at the command of Frederick the third, prince Palatine, surnamed the pious. The occasion of composing it, was, that the Ubiquitists, a sect of Lutherans, who held that the body of Christ was omnipresent, being desirous of introducing their opinion in a violent and furious manner, opposed the orthodox by every method: "The schools," says that famous prince Palatine, in the preface to the catechism, "were fallen into contempt, the tender youth were neglected, there was no steady nor uniform method of teaching the doctrines of christianity. Hence it came to pass, that the unskillful youth were not rightly instructed, or according to any certain rule; but just as every teacher fancied; or they were not instructed at all, but remained entirely stupid and ignorant," &c. It was the design of that excellent prince to establish by this catechism a general form of harmonious doctrines for the churches and schools. Thus he speaks in his preface, "Therefore we ordered our divines, and the pastors of the churches in our electoral principality to compose a catechism, that is, a brief oral instruction in the principal doctrines of the christian religion, in German and Latin, from the word of God; that the preachers and schoolmasters might have a certain and fixed form, according to which they might instruct the tender youth in the churches and schools, to the end that they might not bring in new doctrines, according to their own fancies, or propose such as agreed not with the word of God." See also Melchior Adams in the life of Ursinus, pag. mihi, 534.

Thus was this catechism composed, revised, and, as agreeable to the word of God, approved by the principal divines of the Palatinate, assembled for that purpose. It was printed first at Heidelberg, in the year 1563, and recommended to the churches and schools of the Palatinate, that it might serve for the maintenance of an uniform method of instruction, in order to prevent divisions and schisms and to avert the reproaches, that were cast upon the doctrine of the Palatine churches. Moreover, the pious Prince Palatine sent this catechism to all the Reformed churches, in every part of Christendom, who approved of it, as appears from the answers of those churches, deposited in the archives of the Palatinate. See the ecclesiastical history of James Trigland, page 360. The light of evangelical truth, beaming forth with so much splendor in the Palatinate, shone too bright to remain within the limits of that country, it broke presently through to our dear Netherlands, where this catechism was also soon known, translated and printed, and, as agreeable to the word of God, adopted in the synod of Embden, in the year 1571 where it was also thought necessary, that we should use it in the churches of the Netherlands; this was further renewed, and enjoined in the national synod of Dordrecht in the year 1578. And once more in the national synod of Dordrecht, in the year 1618 and 1619, where it was revised, approved, and established, and highly

commended by the foreign divines, who were invited to the synod, and especially by the divines of Great Britain. Hear what Trigland saith of this in his history of the church, page 1145. "I well remember," saith that learned man, "what I have also frequently, and upon different occasions related, that the divines of Great Britain highly extolled that little book, and said that neither their churches, nor the French had such a suitable catechism: that the men who had composed it, had been unusually assisted by the Spirit of God at the time, that they had in sundry other matters excelled several divines, but in composing that catechism, they had excelled themselves."

He who doth evil hateth the light: that which is opposed by none but evil men must be good: and we ought to have a higher opinion of this catechism as orthodox, because so many men of a corrupt mind have withstood and combatted it with all their might, that they might, if possible, banish it out of the church, as though it were erroneous. This book was no sooner published, than it was fiercely attacked by the Ubiquitists: see what Melchior Adams relates concerning this matter in the life of Zacharias Ursinus, page 534,535, and not by those only, but also by the Papists. These stirred up the emperour against it, so that he ordered the pious Prince Palatine, without hearing him, to suppress his catechism, and threatened that if he refused, he should not be acknowledged an evangelical prince but should be excluded from the religious peace and from the empire. But this gallant hero, laying his catechism beside his bible, declared that he would defend that little book against any one, who would dispute with him, which so affected the emperour, that he said to him, "Frederick, thou art the most pious of us all;" upon which he suspended, and annulled his decree, and tolerated the catechism: yea, some of the states, who were present, also subscribed it: and this opposition added new lustre to the catechism. The Papists, thwarted in this manner, ceased not however to attack the catechism again and again, in order to extirpate it. A certain John Andrews Koppenstein, a Dominican monk and parish priest at Heidelberg, laboured in particular more than any of his party, to alienate the church of Heidelberg from her catechism, and seduce her unawares to follow the beast, and to worship him: he showed for this purpose horns like those of the Lamb, but he spoke like the dragon, when he wrote against this catechism his "Uncalvinized calvinistic Heidelberg catechism." He was wonderfully skillful in showing the horns of the Lamb, while he spoke like the dragon, and in changing the language of the church in our catechism into the language of the whore of Rome, almost in every question; observe for instance our fifth question; "Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?" He answers, "*maxime*, certainly, or exceedingly, or "very well with God." For I am by nature, although corrupt, "inclined with the help of grace, to love" God and my neighbour:" And in this manner doth he sport with almost every question of our catechism. But he hath been completely answered by many, and particularly by Theodorus Strakkus.

The Remonstrants opposed the catechism no less than these. When they proposed to introduce a new doctrine into the church, they fell presently upon this book; for they saw that they were condemned in it. They lay hid, and concealed themselves with secrecy: when they were

asked what fault they found with the doctrine of the church, they would not declare it, except in a national synod, and they laboured in the mean while by every contrivance in their power to hinder the calling of a free synod. If a synod should be called, it ought, as they fancied, to revise the Netherland confession, and the Heidelberg catechism, and we ought to discharge the members of the synod from their obligation to that catechism and confession. What artifices! their design was soon detected by the orthodox, which was only to beget a suspicion, that these formulas agreed not in every respect with the word of God. Truly with no other design but to expose the reformed church to contempt, as though she had adopted them without having carefully examined them, or without having deliberately considered them, and as if she were not sufficiently established and assured of her own faith expressed in those writings. And about what things in those books were they scrupulous? they did not allege aught but trifles; if they had any thing that was weighty, they durst not mention it, lest they should expose themselves too much, and afford more reason to suspect that they colluded with the Socinians, as the event hath also sufficiently shown. See what they alleged in Tringland's history of the church, page 373, 378. See also how Henry Alting hath defended the catechism against all their cavils, and against the Socinian heresies, *Explic. et vindic. catech. Pal.*

But the catechism was never more shamefully abused than by Pontian Van Hattem, with his party, for a cloak of his shame, in order to conceal his Spinosism and atheism, and introduce them covertly into the church. He thought that Spinos had a good cause, but that he would have succeeded better, if he had disguised his intentions with the catechism. Is it matter of wonder, that this man, and those of his party sport so with this book? he sports in the same manner with the bible also: these men conceal all their profane phrases with the language of the word of God, and of his church: therefore they speak highly of regeneration, of the old and new man, of the flesh and Spirit, &c. See what Mr. John Van der Waaijen hath observed on this subject in his letter to Pontian Van Hattem, and how Mr. Charles Tuinman hath exposed those men in his writings against them.

The great advantage, that the churches, in which this catechism hath been used, have reaped from it, ought also to uphold its credit among us. For it hath not only afforded a great knowledge of the divine mysteries to those, who have used it diligently, and have exercised themselves well in it, but it hath also induced preachers, who might otherwise have become backward to cultivate the divine truths, to persevere in their labours, and it hath repeatedly animated them to exercise themselves more and more in these mysteries, since they are obliged to pursue the thread of this catechism weekly in their sermons. We may also ascribe it in some measure to the catechism, as a mean, that the Netherlands have cleaved so long to the pure doctrine of the truth, since it restrains such as have itching ears within a certain bond, out of which they cannot easily break loose, without being speedily detected. I will adopt here the words of Peter De Wit, in his dedication, prefixed to his explanation of the catechism, "Blessed be that divine work, the catechism; blessed be the

hearts that first conceived it, the mouths that first contained it, the hands and pens that laboured at it, and brought it to such a desirable issue. The churches have reaped the wished for benefits from it by the blessing of God. The catechism hath been the deathwound of those who were given to change." The Lord, who hath so long preserved his church in the Netherlands in his truth, set forth in the catechism, agreeably to his written word, grant that this truth may be more and more illustrated, and confirmed, and that every one, delivered from his misapprehension, may cleave to the truth in love, may be made free by it, sanctified in it, and changed according to it!

I will add only one word more, before I conclude. As it doth not befit me highly to extol this work of mine on the catechism, that "I may not become a fool in glorying," so it would also be unseemly in me to ask pardon of my reader for many things, and thus cry, before I am beaten. Dost thou find aught in it that deserves censure, I trust that thou wilt also find something in it that will edify thee. Dost thou observe here and there a grammatical or rhetorical error, remember that there hath never been a book printed yet, without some error of this kind.

To conclude, I exhort thee, my worthy reader, that thou endeavour to contemplate the truth in its efficacy, to obtain an assurance of it, through the word and Spirit of the Lord, and to penetrate through it to the things which it proposeth to thee, to wit, God and Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the grace of the Lord, that, irradiated with the light of God, thou mayest contemplate the efficacy and splendid lustre of them, to the end that thou mayest be enlightened, warmed, and enlivened by the truth, and changed by it from glory to glory. If thou derive such advantage from this work of mine, thou wilt not regret that thou hast made use of it, I will obtain mine end, and God will be glorified by it. This is the sincere desire and prayer of

Thine affectionate and loving friend and servant in the work of the Lord,

JOHN VANDERKEMP

Dirksland, August 2, 1717

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