

# DAILY MEDITATIONS ON THE BELGIC CONFESSION

by pastors of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America

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SEP  
Articles 26-27

## Article 26: Christ's Intercession.

*We believe that we have no access unto God but alone through the only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous, who therefore became man, having united in one person the divine and human natures, that we men might have access to the divine Majesty, which access would otherwise be barred against us. But this Mediator, whom the Father has appointed between Him and us, ought in no wise to affright us by His majesty, or cause us to seek another according to our fancy. For there is no creature either in heaven or on earth who loveth us more than Jesus Christ; who, though He was in the form of God, yet made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a man and of a servant for us, and was made like unto His brethren in all things. If, then, we should seek for another mediator, who would be well affected towards us, whom could we find who loved us more than He who laid down His life for us, even when we were his enemies? And if we seek for one who hath power and majesty, who is there that hath so much of both as He who sits at the right hand of His Father, and who hath all power in heaven and on earth? And who will sooner be heard than the own well beloved Son of God?*

*Therefore it was only through distrust that this practice of dishonoring, instead of honouring, the saints was introduced, doing that which they never have done nor required, but have on the contrary, steadfastly rejected, according to their bounden duty, as appears by their writings. Neither must we plead here our unworthiness; for the meaning is not that we should offer our prayers to God on the ground of our own worthiness, but only on the ground of the excellency and worthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose righteousness is become ours by faith.*

*Therefore the apostle, to remove this foolish fear, or rather mistrust, from us, justly saith, that Jesus Christ was made like unto His brethren in all things, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted. And further to encourage us, he adds: Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. The same apostle saith: Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, etc. Likewise, Christ hath an unchangeable priesthood, wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

*What more can be required, since Christ Himself saith, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me? To what purpose should we then seek another advocate, since it hath pleased God to give us His own Son as an advocate? Let us not forsake Him to take another, or rather to seek after another, without ever being able to find him; for God well knew, when He gave Him to us, that we were sinners.*

*Therefore, according to the command of Christ, we call upon the heavenly Father through Jesus Christ our only Mediator, as we are taught in the Lord's Prayer; being assured that whatever we ask of the Father in His name will be granted us.*

**September 4 – No Access to God.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

I Timothy 6:16, “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto ...”

We have all seen “No access” signs blocking doorways and entrances. To get beyond that point you need a special pass. Perhaps you need an ID-badge or you must key in a specific code. Ever since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden there has been no access *to God* for sinful man. A flaming sword barred the way back into Eden (Gen. 3:24). At Mount Sinai, when God’s glory descended in a cloud, the people had to stay behind the fence. No man could come near on pain of death. In the tabernacle and temple a thick curtain blocked the entrance to the Holy of Holies. The message was clear: stay away, keep back, no access! And we read of terrifying examples in the Bible of men who tried to push past the “No access” sign and meet with God without the proper Mediator: Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:2); Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Numb.16:32); the men of Bethshemesh (I Sam. 6:19).

Before Art. 26 introduces us to the Mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ, it reminds us that we *need* Him: “we have no access unto God but alone through the only Mediator...” “...access [to the divine Majesty] would otherwise be barred against us.”

We have no access to God because God is holy. God dwells in the light which no man can approach unto. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all (I Tim. 6:16; I John 1:5). No man has ever seen God; and no man can ever see God. Even the angels must shield their faces in the awesome, glorious, majestic presence of God. In our age of irreverence, we have lost sight of that. We think we can “buddy” up to God. We imagine God on our level. But when God appears in the fullness of His glory, no man will be able to stand. If the angels cannot look upon the Majesty of God, how can we, who are sinful dust? Any sinner standing in the presence of God Almighty will be consumed by God’s holy wrath which burns like a fire against sin and sinners. Our God is a consuming fire (Deut. 4:24, Heb. 12:29). Can we dwell with everlasting burning? (Isa. 33:14). An unholy, guilty, depraved sinner cannot meet with God or have access to His Majesty. That is why we need a Mediator, one who will bring us into the very presence of God.

Such a Mediator was promised and anticipated in the Old Testament and has been revealed in the Gospel. The Old Testament believer had a typical and incomplete access to God. God dwelled among His people, but access to Him was restricted to one man (the high priest) who represented God’s people. Complete access could be enjoyed only when sin was dealt with. And so God’s people longed for the coming of the promised Messiah who would bring them to God.

**September 5 – The Only Mediator.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

I Timothy 2:5, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;”

Have you ever offended someone? Have you ever been offended? Has there been a time in your life when such offence caused a friendship or a harmonious relationship to break down? Have you, children, ever been playing happily with your friend when one friend said something or did something hurtful to another friend so that the fun and games ended? Have husband and wife argued so much that they were no longer on speaking terms? In such situations, *reconciliation* is needed. Reconciliation means the restoration of fellowship. To have reconciliation, we need a mediator.

The word “mediator” means one who stands between or in the middle. The most common earthly example is a marriage counsellor. Such a person brings estranged spouses together. But the Mediator of Art. 26 is the Mediator who stands between us *and God*. He brings sinners, who have been estranged from God by their sins, and who are under the wrath of God, back into fellowship with God. This is only possible when the barrier which prevents fellowship is removed. That barrier is our sin: “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God...” (Isa. 59:2).

It is important to remember that this Mediator, who is Jesus Christ, is the one *given by God*. Art. 26 says that several times: “whom the Father has *appointed*,” “it hath pleased God to *give* us His own Son” and “God well knew, when He *gave* Him to us, that we were sinners.” We are not at liberty to seek another Mediator. There is no other Mediator acceptable to God who qualifies! Thus Paul writes, “there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5). If there were more than one God, there might conceivably be more than one Mediator, but there is one God, and the only way of access to Him is through the one Mediator He approves of and has provided. We should notice, too, that, whereas with human cases of mediation (such as marriage counselling) there are almost always two parties at fault, here *only man* is at fault. God is in every sense the Innocent Offended Party. We have offended God by our sins. God therefore dictates the terms according to which we will be reconciled to Him. We do not reconcile ourselves to God. God reconciles us to Himself. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself ...” (II Cor. 5:19).

This Mediator, Jesus Christ, comes from God, acts in God’s interests, displays God’s glory, vindicates God’s justice and represents us before the Father. The Mediator comes to us in the grace, love and mercy of God. He is our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us come to God by Him, *only* by Him.

**September 6 – The Only Advocate.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

I John 2:1, "...And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous."

You and I have a court date before the Judge. To stand on the Judgment Day we need an advocate. The word advocate ought to be familiar to us from human law. Usually, when a man stands accused of a crime before a judge, he needs someone to defend and represent him, before the law. That person is an advocate, a defence attorney, a lawyer. The advocate is the person who comes alongside of the accused man to help him; and that is what the word "advocate" in Scripture means: *one called alongside*. The advocate visits the accused man in his cell, discusses with him his legal possibilities, advises him on court procedures, prepares a defence, and seeks, to the best of his ability, to obtain for his client the best possible outcome.

Who is *our* Advocate? When we stand before God, what will our plea be? Many do not like to think about that Day of Judgment. They die unprepared and without an advocate. Or they imagine that they can defend themselves. They vainly hope that they can find a legal loophole by which they will escape God's judgment. Others trust in unauthorised advocates. Some flee to the Virgin Mary, or to one of the saints; others hope that their loved-ones, who have died, will put in a "good word" for them. Others imagine that God will have pity on them because they were sincere or made some effort to be good, or because they are not as bad, they think, as other "serious sinners."

All such defences are vain. The Judge before whom we stand on the Last Day is no fool; He is not blind; He is not corrupt; He will not be moved by excuses; there are no legal loopholes.

But the Judge, our heavenly Father, is merciful to His people. Thus, says Art. 26, He has given our poor defenceless souls "His own Son as an advocate." The Apostle John says, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1). Jesus' defence of us is simple and beautiful: "Father, these are my people. *They plead guilty*. They have broken all thy commandments and kept none of them. Their very nature is corrupt. And, although they have a small beginning of the new obedience, even that cannot stand the scrutiny of thy holiness. My people deserve everlasting damnation in hell." Thus, Christ makes no excuses for us; and He upholds God's justice.

But that is not the end of Christ's defence. If it were, it would be a hopeless defence, and would secure only our condemnation.

"Father, in order to uphold the justice of the Law, I have accomplished all the obedience that they would not and could not accomplish; and I have borne the punishment that they cannot bear. Since I have met all the legal obligations for my people, I move to dismiss the case against them."

And, the Judge shall say: "Case dismissed! I declare this people innocent and worthy of eternal life."

What a privilege to have Jesus Christ as our Advocate!

**September 7 – The Mediator Qualified by Two Natures.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

I Tim 3:16, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh...”

Art. 26 teaches us about our “only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous.” His work is to bring us back into fellowship with God. He does that by taking upon Himself our legal obligations (what we owe God), and by suffering and dying in our place. But who is He and how does He do that?

This section of Art. 26 gets to the heart of why Jesus Christ is, and can be, the only Mediator. Jesus is altogether unique. No other has “united in one person the divine and human natures.” That is the great mystery of godliness: “God was manifest in the flesh” (I Tim. 3:16); “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:1-2,14). That is the wonder of our salvation. Whom did God give to be our Mediator and Advocate? Was it an angel, one of the archangels perhaps; the best specimen of humanity that He could find, the wisest, the noblest, the worthiest of all men? No, He gave us His own Son. This Son of God, which is in the bosom of the Father; He was rich, rich with all the riches of the Godhead; He was blessed; He was in the form of God (John 1:18; II Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:6).

First, our Mediator must be God.

Salvation is a divine work: it requires almighty power, perfect wisdom and infinite goodness. Only if the Mediator is God will His work be of value before God. Only if the Mediator is God will He be able to perform the difficult work of perfect obedience and suffering which is necessary to reconcile us to God.

Second, our Mediator must be man.

The Son of God could not be the Mediator by remaining in the bosom of the Father. He became a man by taking to Himself a human nature (body and soul). He became a man to represent poor sinners before God; to stand between poor sinners and God; to bring poor sinners into fellowship with God. We, the poor, guilty sinners, have sinned. We must be punished. Jesus was punished in our place in a true human nature which could suffer. God’s justice demanded it.

But, third, our Mediator must unite in one person the divine and human natures.

That is a deep mystery. But we understand it this way. We do not have two mediators, a human mediator and a divine mediator. We have only one Mediator, who is both God and man. We do not have a Mediator who is a mixture of God and man, a kind of superman. Then, we have neither God nor man, but a third species. We have as our Mediator the Son of God who combines the human and divine natures so that, on the one hand, He performs mighty miracles; and on the other hand, He becomes hungry and tired, He sleeps and He weeps, He experiences real pain, and He dies.

One Mediator, in one person, and two distinct natures, forever!

**September 8 – Access to Divine Majesty.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Romans 5:2, “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand...”

Our first examination of this beautiful article concentrated on the negative: We have no access to God. But, says Peter, “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, *that He might bring us to God...*” (1 Pet. 3:18). With our only Mediator and Advocate, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, uniting the two natures in one person, we have access to the very presence of God. Thus the Son of God became man “that we men might have access to the divine Majesty.”

Access to the divine Majesty means, firstly, that we can stand in God’s presence without fear. We do not need to be terrified to approach God as if He would destroy us if we come too close. We have access. We have the right and ability to approach God. In fact, and here is the wonder of it all, we have a greater, freer and richer access to God than have even the angels. We have the same access to God as Christ Himself does. Perhaps you would like to meet someone very important. What you need is someone who will introduce you, who will recommend you. But, we have the very Son of God who introduces us to the Father. By His work as Mediator (His perfect life and atoning death, as well as His resurrection, ascension, rule at God’s right hand and continual intercession), He gains us access to God.

Access to the divine Majesty means, secondly, that we have fellowship with God. Think of a mighty king. His servants have access to him: They may approach him to serve him. The common citizens do not have that access. But our access is more than that of servants. *That* is the access which angels have. Our access is the access of *children* to a father. That is a sweeter, closer, more intimate access. The children sit on the father’s lap, whisper in his ear, sit at his table and share his life. That, to speak reverently, is the kind of access we have through our Mediator. We enjoy the Father’s love; He draws us into His fellowship and communion; He calls us to pray to Him; He speaks to us in the Word; He lives in our hearts by His Spirit; He showers us with blessings; and He has promised that we shall dwell with Him. “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever” (Psa. 23:6).

This access is ours because Christ has purchased it for us. We, who are poor, guilty sinners, Christ has justified, and the Father has adopted. The adoption papers are signed in the blood of Christ, our Elder Brother, who brought us into the Father’s house. And we enjoy that access by faith in Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate!

**September 9 – Not Affrighted by His Majesty.  
by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Revelation 1:17-18, “And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore...”

The *Belgic Confession* is a Reformation creed. It was written just as the church was emerging from the darkness of the Middle Ages. It might be difficult for us as Evangelical and Reformed Christians to imagine, but one of the reasons sinners were reluctant to believe in Jesus Christ, the only Mediator and Advocate, was that they were *afraid of Him*. The picture of Jesus common in the Middle Ages was one of a stern judge. When the church of the Middle Ages taught “He shall come to judge the quick [the living] and the dead,” the average member quaked in terror. Judge Jesus would come in all the fury and vengeance of God and cast poor sinners into hell. Therefore, many concluded, we cannot, we dare not, come to *Him*.

Affrighted by His Majesty! That was the common experience of many.

This fear was encouraged by the church because the church wanted the people to seek help and salvation through the church itself. The church promoted penances, works of charity, religious devotions and pilgrimages. Salvation would come through a faithful use of the sacraments and other ceremonies of the Church. This fear was understandable, too, because few had a Bible of their own. Did not Scripture teach that Judge Jesus would send some away “into everlasting punishment” (Matt. 25:46)? Are there not terrifying scenes in the book of Revelation? “And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from ... the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:16-17). Is not Judge Jesus *God*? Will He not condemn poor, defenceless sinners?

But, says Art. 26, although it is true that Jesus possesses all the Majesty of God, ought not to “affright us by His majesty.” His Majesty is not against us, but *for* us. His Majesty makes Him the only suitable Mediator for us. His Majesty gives His work of mediation infinite worth. His Majesty makes His work effectual, so that He really does save us. Instead of being affrighted by the Majesty of Christ, we rejoice in it.

Perhaps you are affrighted of Jesus’ Majesty. Perhaps you say that you are not worthy to come to God through such a majestic Jesus. But, how then shall you come? Will you wait until you have made yourself worthy? When would that be? Jesus is the *only* Mediator, the only one God has appointed, the only one qualified. To refuse to come to Jesus because you are affrighted by His Majesty is really a twisted form of pride. And besides, God gives poor sinners every reason, every encouragement, to come. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). Poor, contrite sinners need not be affrighted by His Majesty.

**September 10 – Not Seeking Another According to Our Fancy.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Colossians 2:18--19, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head..."

Because many are affrighted by the Majesty of the one Mediator and Advocate Jesus Christ, they seek another. But, warns Art. 26, to seek another is to act "according to our fancy." Our fancy is our imagination. Men have always been attracted to fanciful religion, to a religion of their own imagination. Some men fancy a god who is not holy, whose standards are not so high as to require that we come through this Mediator. Other men fancy a god who will accept our best efforts. Other men fancy a god whose mercy will somehow outweigh His justice. But we must never worship a god of our own imagination. We must always follow what God has *revealed* to us in His Word.

The fact is that human fancies could never have conceived of *this* Mediator. None of the pagans, worshipping the gods of their own imagination, ever imagined Jesus Christ. None of the wisest of philosophers ever conceived of God sending His own Son in our flesh to be our Mediator. When Christ came, few were able to understand it. We see the first man who tried to worship God by seeking another mediator according to his fancy. He was Cain. He refused to come to God in the way of the revealed and promised Mediator by refusing to bring a lamb; he brought the works of his own hands, the fruit of the ground. And God rejected Cain's offering, and Cain perished. But Abel, rejecting his own fancies, clinging to the Lamb of God who should come, offered a lamb, and Abel was saved.

Everything in the Old Testament pointed to this Mediator. Every detail of Old Testament worship was necessary to teach the people about the Mediator who would come. No wonder, then, that God was so strict, and so terrible in His just judgment against those who, *according to their fancy*, tampered with the details of God's worship. Every "fanciful" change in worship obscured Christ.

Do you worship God according to your own fancy, or according to the revealed will of God? Have you embraced Jesus Christ by faith, or do you cling to your own works, or to some other mediator, as a passport into heaven? Be not deceived. All other mediators are according to our fancy. And our fancies will not take us to heaven. Col. 2 speaks of this "fanciful worship" as "will worship" (vs 23). It led some in Paul's day to worship angels (they "fancied" that they could communicate with God via angels, vs 18) and a "voluntary humility" (they claimed to be unworthy to come to Christ and sought a different, *fanciful* route to God, vs 18).

Art. 26 calls Jesus Christ the Mediator "whom the Father has appointed." The Father knows the Mediator we need; and the Father has provided the uniquely qualified Mediator. Since the Father appointed Him, it would be to insult His wisdom to seek another Mediator *not appointed* by the Father, but according to our fancy. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Come to God through Him, *only* through Him!

**September 11 – No Creature Loves Us More Than Jesus Christ.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Ephesians 3:18-19, “May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.”

This beautiful Art. 26 answers the objection of some who are afraid to come to God through Jesus Christ, the only Mediator and Advocate. They are affrighted by His Majesty. Such fright drives them into the arms of other, supposedly less frightening and more merciful, mediators. This was especially (and still is) the case with many Roman Catholics. But, says Art. 26, there is no reason for the believer to be frightened of Jesus Christ. Instead, we must have firm confidence. The reason is Christ’s love. “There is no creature either in heaven or on earth who loveth us more than Jesus Christ.”

Compare the love of mere creatures to the love of Jesus Christ. Look up into heaven for a moment! Do the angels love us? We might suppose that they do. They certainly love God, and they live to serve God. They are “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14). The angels are keenly interested in our salvation (I Pet. 1:12). We might be tempted, then, to seek them as our mediators, since they seem less frightening than Jesus. But, do not! John, the Apostle, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was tempted and fell down to worship before the feet of an angel, but the angel said, “See thou do it not” (Rev. 22:9). What about the departed saints, all the believers who have gone before us in to heaven (Abel, Noah, Abraham, John, Peter, Mary)? Do they even know our names? But, do any of those, who are mere creatures, love us *more* than Jesus Christ? Would you dare say that any creature in heaven loves us more than Jesus Christ? Would not such a thought be absurd, even a blasphemy, that no child of God could utter?

If heaven contains no creature who loves us more than Christ, will we find such a creature upon the earth, where our best love is tainted by sin, selfishness and envy? Believer, do your pastor, elders and deacons, spouse, children or parents; does *anyone* on earth love you more than Jesus Christ?

O, the love of Christ! Who can measure it? Christ is “well affected” toward us, says Art. 26. But, surely, “well affected” is too weak an expression. What is it to be loved by Jesus Christ? It means that Jesus Christ ardently and passionately breathes after us in holy zeal. It means that Christ takes pleasure in, treasures and prizes us as His chief desire. It means that Christ cleaves to, clings to us, and reaches out to us to embrace us with the love of God. It means that Christ will not rest until we saved from all our sins, washed and free, and enjoying everlasting blessedness with Him where He is. Will we be affrighted by *His* Majesty? Surely not!

**September 12 – Christ’s Humiliating Love.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Galatians 2:20, “...the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

Art. 26 urges us to seek the one Mediator, Jesus Christ, by appealing to the love which He has for us, a love which surpasses understanding, cannot be measured, and to which the love of all creatures in heaven and earth cannot be compared. Instead of being affrighted by His Majesty, let us embrace Him in confident faith.

How do we know that Christ loves us? Surely not in word only? He demonstrated it. Christ showed that love in an act of self-giving. He made Himself of no reputation. He assumed the position of a lowly slave before His Father. He humbled Himself to the death of the cross. Compare what Christ had and what Christ became for us, we who belong to Him! He was in the very form of God. Jesus is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15); Jesus is the “brightness of [the Father’s] glory and the express image of His person” (Heb. 1:3); in Christ dwells “all the fullness of the Godhead” (Col. 2:9). Paul writes that Christ Jesus did not think it “robbery” to be equal with God, yet “made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:6,7). That means, He did not think that His position of glory and honour in heaven, equal with God, was something to be held on to, to be grasped on to, so that He would never let go of this glorious privilege.

Unfathomable! Mysterious! Jesus was rich; He became poor: cringingly, beggarly poor; Jesus willingly took our human nature in all of its weakness; Jesus adopted the position of the lowest slave; Jesus humbled, lowered, humiliated Himself as none else has ever done. And why? Because He loved us!

He did all that for our salvation. God had said, “You must love me perfectly or you perish. You must keep all my commandments or you incur my wrath.” And Jesus said, “Father, I will pay what they owe. And I will bear the consequences of what they have done.” And the Father said, “In that case, you must live a perfect life before me, and suffer your whole life, and then at the end of your life, you must die under my curse. And all the time you must love me with your whole heart, soul, mind and strength, even when I am pouring out my just wrath on you against the sins of my people.” Jesus did that especially on the cross.

Christ did that, willingly, joyfully, obediently out of love for us.

And He did that, mind you, while we were His enemies, while we hated Him, while we wanted nothing of His love, nothing of His salvation; and He still loves us, even though we continue to sin against Him in the weakness of our flesh. Will one die for a righteous man? Perhaps a heroic person could be found to do that. Will one die for a good man? The possibility might just exist. But Christ surpassed all such possibilities: “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

**September 13 – The Mediator With Power And Majesty.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Ephesians 1:20-22, "...and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church."

In the previous meditations we have looked at the love which our Mediator has for us, which should give us every reason to trust in Him, and not to be affrighted by His Majesty. Now, we return to the Majesty of our Mediator, because both love and Majesty are needed in the Mediator who will represent us before the Father.

Art. 26 asks "If we seek for one who hath power and majesty, who is there that hath so much of both as [Jesus Christ] ...?" Jesus has power to save; power to bless; power to obtain for us all of the blessings of salvation from His Father.

The love of Christ is not sickly sentimentalism, but almighty, majestic love. He has power and Majesty because He is the Son of God. As the Son of God, He is equal in power and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit. That's His power and Majesty within the Godhead. As the Mediator, the man Jesus Christ, He has power and Majesty, because God has "highly exalted Him" (Phil. 2:9). How highly has God exalted Him? "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:21).

Jesus, the Son of God in our human nature, then, is infinitely exalted above all men, kings, mighty rulers, unions of nations; and above all angels, archangels, and certainly, above all devils. He is exalted above all the saints. He is the Head of the whole church. He sits at the Right Hand of the Father, which is not a physical place, but a position of honour. He has all power and authority (the ability and the right to rule) in heaven and in earth. He, and He alone, directs the history of this world, so that all things, great and small, serve the one great purpose of glorifying the Triune God through the salvation of the church. If all things are in His hands, because the Father has committed them such; and if the one in whose hands are all things is our Saviour, our Lord, our Mediator, our Advocate, what have we to fear? Nothing!

Do you see how Jesus combines in one person the power and Majesty of God, and the tenderhearted love of a heavenly Bridegroom? Do you see that God has provided us with the Mediator who meets our every need? What foolishness to seek another! Let us not be affrighted by His Majesty; but rejoice in it, draw confidence from it, and let us come to Him, the one who loved us so!

**September 14 – The Mediator Who Has the Father’s Ear.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

John 11:41-42, “...Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always...”

We have seen how Art. 26 piles up reasons why we should flee from all other would-be mediators and find refuge alone in Jesus Christ. He is qualified as the Son of God made flesh; He is authorised and appointed by God Himself, so that all other mediators are fanciful; He is powerful and majestic, and His Majesty must not frighten us away from Him, because He loves us more than all creatures in heaven and earth do. And now Art. 26 adds a further reason: Jesus, as the Son of God, has the Father’s ear: “Who will sooner be heard than the well beloved Son of God?”

God loves His Son. The relationship between the Mediator and the Triune God is not a cold, detached, official relationship like the relationship between a judge and a defence attorney, but the warm, intimate, loving relationship of a father with his son. Everything the Son does pleases the Father. And the heart of the Father is toward the Son. Since the Son brings those people whom He represents in His heart before the Father, we can be sure that the Father hears whatever the Son asks on behalf of His people. Remember the Old Testament high priest: he wore an ephod on which were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. In the tabernacle, there were loaves called shewbread which represented the same twelve tribes (Lev. 24:5-9). The whole system of priests, tabernacle and offerings reminded the people that God loved Israel and dwelled among them. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all that. Now there are no longer loaves of shewbread or engraved stones. Now, Christ Himself enters into the presence of God with our names written on His heart. And the Father, who loves us in Jesus Christ, loves the Son, and hears Him always. That was His own confession, “I knew that Thou hearest Me always” (John 11:42).

But we must not misunderstand. Christ does not *make* the Father love us. The Father already loves us, and He loves the Son, and He loves what the Son has done for our salvation.

And the Father has good reason, a compelling reason, to hear what the Son asks for us. Christ has died for us, and on that basis alone He intercedes for us, and obtains for us, again on that basis alone, all the blessings of salvation.

Do not tremble, therefore, believer in Jesus Christ. It is true that God heareth not sinners (John 9:31), but He hears His only begotten, dearly beloved Son; and because He hears Him, who died for us and now represents us at the Father’s right hand, He hears us, who come to God through Him.

**September 15 – The Intercession of Saints Forbidden.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Isaiah 63:16, “Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not...”

If we are wrongly affrighted by the Majesty of the one Mediator and Advocate Jesus Christ, we will be tempted to seek a mediator according to our fancy. This, according to Art. 26, is the reason why many had (and still have) recourse to saints.

A saint is a holy one. In the Bible, *all* of God’s children are called saints: every member of the church on earth (as well as in heaven) is a saint (I Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1, etc). But the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches have a very different understanding of saints. Only a select few of very faithful church members are saints, and usually only after death. To be a saint, a person must be an especially holy person whose holiness has been recognised by the church. There is a definite process by which a person is recognised as a saint: miracles must be attributed to that person; the person will be declared “Blessed” and finally a person is beatified. These saints, ancient and modern, are objects of veneration. Statues and pictures of these saints are used in worship. And, most importantly, ordinary church members pray to these saints. Since these saints are supposedly closer to God than we are, they can supposedly obtain favour for us on the earth. The most popular and exalted saint of all is the Virgin Mary, who is called the Holy Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven and the Mediatrix (the female version of mediator) of all graces.

This practice of praying to, venerating and seeking help from saints is condemned in our *Belgic Confession*. It is nothing but idolatry. It dishonours true saints who steadfastly rejected such veneration (e.g. Peter in Acts 10:26 refused Cornelius). Believers in the Bible never had recourse to departed saints, and certainly never required others to pray to them. Where, for example, do we ever read of a man like David praying to Abraham; or a man like Paul praying to Daniel? When Stephen was dying, he committed his spirit to Jesus, not one of the departed saints (Acts 7:59). In fact, in the Bible, all contact with the dead is strictly forbidden, as ungodly king Saul found out to his cost (I Sam. 28:15-16). If Asaph had recourse to a whole host of departed saints, why does he ask rhetorically, “Whom have I in heaven but Thee [Jehovah]?” (Pss. 73:25).

Besides, it is impossible for a saint to be a mediator.

Consider that countless millions of Roman Catholics are offering up prayers to the Virgin Mary and to other saints. Think of the common prayer, the Rosary (“Hail Mary”) being offered all over the world, in many different languages. How could Mary, a mere creature, and therefore not omniscient, hear and answer all those petitions? Moreover, none of the saints has a ground or basis to be petitioned to. Remember that Jesus Christ intercedes for us on the basis of His perfect work on the cross. *On what basis* could Mary, Monica or Mother Teresa intercede for us? We can never separate the intercessory work of Christ from His atonement on the cross. “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: And He is the propitiation for our sins ...” (I John 2:1-2); “It is Christ that died ... who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:34).

Only one who does not understand the glory of the only Mediator and Advocate Jesus Christ could possibly be tempted to pray to saints.

**September 16 – Our Unworthiness No Excuse.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Matthew 11:28, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Some justify seeking other mediators by a kind of feigned humility. We are unworthy to come to Christ, they say. That is why we come through the Virgin Mary, St. Monica or some other saint. Art. 26 anticipates this objection also: “Neither must we plead here our unworthiness ...” Let us review the reasons Art. 26 has already given: only Jesus Christ is qualified by His two natures united in one person to be the Mediator; only Jesus Christ is appointed by the Father to be the Mediator; we have no reason, as poor sinners, to be affrighted by His Majesty because He does not destroy us by His Majesty but saves us; no creature in heaven or in earth loves us more than Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ has demonstrated that love by His self-humiliation at Calvary; and this Mediator alone has the Father’s ear.

Despite all those reasons, there remain some who refuse to come to God by Jesus Christ.

The excuse, “I am unworthy,” may sound pious but is really the expression of foolish pride. Art. 26 exposes the pride when it counters the objection: “for the meaning is not that we should offer our prayers to God *on the ground of our own worthiness ...*” One who refuses to come to Jesus Christ really harbours the notion that he can make himself worthy in some other way. Perhaps he is unworthy *now*, but with a little bit more effort he can make himself worthy of being heard by God. But Jesus says that those who try to come another way are thieves and robbers (John 10:1)! Jesus consistently calls people to come directly to Him. He will bring us to the Father. Never does He even hint that we should come to Him through others.

This is the fundamental sin of those who have recourse to saints. They believe that by praying to the saints they can obtain enough spiritual virtue to stand approved one day before God. By thinking that way, they have never relinquished the notion that they can somehow *become worthy* of God’s salvation. That is pride; deadly, devilish, God-insulting, damning pride!

Away with any idea that we are worthy, or, to put it more subtly, that we can somehow (perhaps with the help of others) make ourselves worthy! We will never be worthy! Those who are saved will always be debtors, saved by grace. Our worthiness is in Jesus Christ. Our worthiness is always and only in Jesus Christ!” That is the beautiful argument of Art. 26, “only on the ground of the excellency and worthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose righteousness is become ours by faith.”

Do not seek to make yourself worthy. Come as you are. Embrace Christ, the worthy one, the excellent one, by faith!

**September 17– Our Foolish Fear or Mistrust Removed.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Philippians 3:8, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord...”

The subject of the perfect Intercession of Jesus Christ is so important to our salvation and to our daily comfort that Art. 26 leaves no stone unturned in answering all the foolish objections of our sinful hearts. We have seen that Art. 26 has medieval Roman Catholicism in mind (which, by the way, has not improved doctrinally since that time) with its idolatrous doctrine and practice of the veneration of saints.

There are two ways to convince a child to relinquish an object which he holds dear. One method is to scold the child and tell the child to stop doing what he is doing. We explain what is wrong with the object to which the child is clinging. Often, however, the more we scold a child, the more stubbornly the child clings to the object of his trust. Another approach is to describe to the child how much better another object is so that the child sees the beauty of that object and willingly gives up what he has so that he can have this new thing. Often the child becomes so enamoured with the new thing that he forgets about the old thing.

This is what we must imagine as we try to convince a Roman Catholic friend to give up venerating Mary or the saints and to find recourse in the only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ. But, Art. 26 does not only have Roman Catholics in view here. We, too, are prone to foolish fear and sinful pride. We, too, are prone to doubt God’s love and Christ’s salvation.

We should explain that Mary and the saints do not have the powers that our friend believes that they have; we can point out the terrible sinfulness of trusting in saints and the wickedness of self-trust. Such calls to repentance certainly have an important place in preaching. But the other approach is to explain the excellency of Jesus Christ as Mediator, Advocate and Intercessor that we are so captivated by *Him* that we never think of anyone else.

In a way, Art. 26 adopts both approaches. On the one hand, it warns us against false mediators; but mainly it sets before us in glowing, heartwarming words the glories of Jesus Christ. Of course, only the Holy Spirit can truly convince us of these things, but the preaching of the Gospel which the Spirit uses, sets forth Jesus Christ in a captivating way. That is how Paul described his preaching. When he preached, he could say that “Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you” (Gal. 3:1). Paul himself testifies to the effect of Christ on him: “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ... and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness ...” (Phil. 3:8-9).

What foolish fear, or rather mistrust, prevents you from coming to Christ? Is it your sin, some bitter experience or grudge? Is it pride, pleasure, religion? Does anyone, can anyone, give richer salvation than does Jesus Christ? Has anyone done more for poor sinners than has Christ?

**September 18 – Our Merciful High Priest.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Hebrews 5:2, “Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.”

Jesus Christ is our only Mediator and Advocate, and Art. 26 has given us many reasons why we must come to God through Him, and why we must not come to God through any other. In addition, as we shall notice in the next few meditations, Jesus Christ is our High Priest.

The name Christ is our Mediator’s official name, and it refers to the work He is authorised by the Triune God to perform: He has one office (official position), that of prophet, priest and king. We are interested especially in His priestly office.

In the Old Testament God instituted a class of priests. It was by these priests that the sinful, impure people of Israel were brought into fellowship with the spotlessly holy God. To put it very simply, a priest is holy and brings God’s people to God. The holiness of the Old Testament priests was typical and ceremonial. It consisted in holy garments, sacred ceremonies, special washings and various kinds of purifications (Heb. 9:10). But the sprinkling of pure water, of blood, of the ashes of a heifer and other ordinances could never purify the conscience. There was always a remembrance of sin. Even the highest and most solemn ceremony which the high priest performed once a year on the great Day of Atonement had to be repeated year after year. The people of God looked for something better.

The priests’ work had three main parts: first, they offered sacrifices on the altar of burnt offering; second, they mixed burning coals from that altar with carefully prepared incense on the altar of incense. This was a picture of intercession, an offering up of prayers for the people. This was what Zacharias the priest was doing when the angel Gabriel announced the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:9). Third, they obtained and bestowed the blessing of God upon the people (Num. 6:23-27). These three things Jesus Christ has done: He died on the cross to purchase our salvation; on the basis of that sacrifice He intercedes for us; and He obtains and bestows all the blessings of God upon us.

Heb. 4-5 concentrate on the mercifulness of our High Priest. One who is merciful is one filled with pity or compassion, one who sees our misery and is touched by the feeling of our infirmities; one who desires to remove our misery from us; and one who has not only the desire, but also the power, to make us blessed.

In order to be our merciful High Priest, Jesus Christ was made like us in all things. We do not have an aloof, distant, uncaring High Priest, but one “taken from among men” (Heb. 5:1), one “who can have compassion on the ignorant” (vs 2), one who “also is compassed with infirmity” (vs 2). Christ became a man and entered the misery of our human condition, to lift us out of misery and to make us blessed.

Jesus Christ, the merciful High Priest for poor, miserable sinners! Let us not be afraid to come to Him!

**September 19 – A High Priest Who Was Made Like Us.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Hebrews 2:17, “Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”

Have you ever been in a severe affliction and found that a well-meaning fellow believer could not help you? Did you impatiently push him or her aside with the words, “You could not possibly know how I feel!” We can never say that about our High Priest, Jesus Christ. Quoting Heb. 2:17-18, Art. 26 reminds us that Christ became just like us (sin excepted) in order to be able to sympathise with us.

Before the Incarnation the Son of God did not experience suffering. On earth He experienced it in abundance. No man ever suffered as Christ did. Christ’s calling was to suffer and remain fully obedient to His Heavenly Father. He was called to love God with all His heart, soul, mind and strength and His neighbour as Himself even while He suffered. And he did so! He did this perfectly.

We cannot fathom what it was like for the perfectly spotless and sinless Son of God to come into this sin-cursed world. How must He have felt to have opened His eyes in Bethlehem as a helpless baby, born into poverty? What humiliation for the Son of God! How His sinless soul must have been vexed to be surrounded by sinners! He experienced the full range of human suffering: poverty, physical pain, emotional pain, hunger, physical exhaustion, shame, fear and sorrow. He was despised and rejected, scorned and mocked. He was rejected by His friends who thought He was mad (Mark 3:21; John 7:5). He was forsaken by His closest disciples on the day of His arrest. He suffered agonising physical pain at the hands of the Roman soldiers and was crucified, which was the most cruel and painful death of that day. Worst of all, He was forsaken by God on the cross so that He no longer experienced that blessed covenant fellowship and love which He had always known (Matt. 27:46).

All of this He did for His people so that He would be a sympathetic High Priest to them. All of this prepared Him for His role as benevolent intercessor. Do you feel weary? He knows what that is like. Are you poor? He knows what that is like too. Do you suffer from a crippling and painful disease? He hung on a cross in unspeakable agony and knows what suffering is like. Are you misunderstood, scorned and mocked? No man was so held in derision as Jesus Christ! In no situation can we ever say, “Jesus Christ, my merciful and faithful High Priest, does not understand what I am going through.” Let us therefore come to Him in all our times of need.

**September 20 – A High Priest Who Knows Our Temptations.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Hebrews 4:15, “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

Part of our suffering as Christians is *temptation*.

In the Bible there are two meanings to the word “temptation.” Sometimes, the word refers to a *trial*, which means a test. When God tries us, He tests us with the purpose of revealing the genuineness of our faith. An illustration might make this clearer. A certain rich man has a nugget of gold. He knows that it is gold, but he also knows that there is some impurity in that gold which needs to be purged out to make the gold even purer. He places the gold in a hot fire which melts the gold and burns up the dross. Thus the gold comes out approved, tried, having passed the test and stronger for it. That is God’s purpose in trying our faith. God knows that we have faith. Of course He does! He gave us that faith! But He also knows the infirmities of our flesh, so He tries us, often with much suffering (sickness, disappointment, sorrow, etc). Through the trial our faith is purified and strengthened (I Pet. 1:7).

But the devil has an altogether different purpose when *he tempts*. He will use the trial which God sends as an occasion to tempt us to doubt God’s love and faithfulness. Satan’s hope is that we will curse God to His face, as he hoped with Job (Job 1:11; 2:5). The devil’s purpose in temptation, then, is our failure, that our faith be exposed as counterfeit, that we come out weakened and disapproved. Thus the devil entices us to sin, encourages us to doubt, and lures us away from the way of obedience and faith.

What should we do when we are tempted? What should we do when sin becomes so attractive to us that it becomes practically irresistible? We should go to Christ. Perhaps we object: but what does *He* know about temptation? Would He understand?

Art. 26, echoing the book of Hebrews, says that He does! “For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb. 2:18); “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).

Temptation for Christ was real suffering. Sin was something peculiarly vexing to Jesus, something abhorrent to His sinless soul. And the devil reserved his most subtle temptations for the Son of God. When the devil tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread, Jesus was genuinely and agonisingly hungry. He was not attracted to disobedience (He abhorred *that*) but He was attracted to bread. When the devil tempted Him in Gethsemane to refuse to take the cup of suffering, Christ struggled to submit His will to the Father’s. He cried out “with strong crying and tears” (Heb. 5:7). These were real, difficult, dreadful temptations.

And Jesus came victoriously through all the temptations. And then as the sinless, victorious Son of God, He went to the cross to pay for our sins. When we are tempted, we must flee to Him to obtain mercy and grace for help; and when we fall into sin, we must flee to Him for forgiveness. And to none other!

**September 21 – Entering the Holiest.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Hebrews 9:7, “But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood...”

The epistle to the Hebrews teaches the superiority of Christ over all the ordinances of Old Testament Judaism. This does not mean that the worship of Old Testament Israel was bad. How could it be when God Himself gave it in detail to Moses? But it means that New Testament Christianity is the fulfillment of the Old Testament, and therefore superior, or better. Christ is *better* than the angels (Heb. 1:4); Christ is *worthy of more glory* than Moses (3:3); Christ is *better* than Abraham (7:7); Christ is the Mediator of a *better* testament (7:22); Christ has a *more excellent* ministry and serves a *better covenant* established upon *better promises* (8:6); Christ has offered a *better sacrifice* (9:23); the blood of Christ speaks *better* things than that of Abel (12:24).

The Old Testament saints had something good, something excellent, something blessed; but the coming of Christ in the New Testament age brought something better. This means that in the New Testament, we have a better and clearer knowledge of Christ; we have closer fellowship with God; we have a richer experience of grace; we have a greater understanding of the plan of salvation; we have freer access to God without the need of priests, sacrifices and cleansing rituals. In short, we have the same salvation but administered in a higher, richer, fuller way. They had the shadow; we have the reality or the substance.

One startling difference (at least for a Jewish reader of the book of Hebrews) is a *boldness to enter the Holiest*. That was impossible, inconceivable in the Old Testament. The Holiest (or “the Most Holy Place”) was a small room in the centre of the tabernacle or temple in which the Ark of the Covenant was found. Above the Ark between the two golden cherubim on top of the Mercy Seat was the cloud of God’s holy presence, His “Shekinah glory.” No one, upon pain of death, could enter into that place. There was only one exception, and only one occasion, when one person, carefully prepared, could enter that place.

*No non-Israelite* could enter there. *No woman* could enter there. No person with any kind of physical defect could enter there. Of the twelve tribes of Israel, *only a man of the tribe of Levi* could enter there. Thus, eleven tribes were barred, including even the kings and prophets. Of the Levites, *only the priests* could come anywhere near there, for they alone were permitted to enter the Holy (but not the Most Holy) Place. Of the priests, *only the high priest* could enter there. And, the high priest (he alone) could enter the Holiest *only once a year*. And *he had to bring blood* to sprinkle on the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy Place.

Now, with the coming of Christ, *all believers* can enter the truly Most Holy Place, which is not found in an earthly tabernacle or temple, but in Heaven itself. Christ has torn down the barrier by His death on the cross (Matt. 27:51).

And now we come boldly; not timidly, not reluctantly, not fearfully; but boldly, confidently, joyfully, because we know that we are received through Christ. What a privilege is ours! Let us never forget what it cost our Lord Jesus, and let us never neglect it.

**September 22 – Entering With Boldness.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Hebrews 10:19, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.”

Yesterday, we noted that we, unlike the vast majority of the Old Testament saints, may come into the very presence of God through our one Mediator, Advocate and High Priest, Jesus Christ. We may do so with boldness. It is one thing to be able to come into the presence of God, and even more significant that we can do that *boldly*.

Boldness is not presumption or recklessness. There is an expression, “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.” We do not rush into the presence of God without thinking about what we will say, without being properly awestruck by the Majesty and the holiness of our Father in heaven. When we enter God’s presence, we are coming to the Holiest! It would be presumption to enter God’s presence if we were not called to do so. But we must enter through the right way, the only way, through Jesus Christ. The Old Testament high priest knew when he entered on the appointed day, with the appointed preparations, that he and the people he represented would be received. We have “boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh” (Heb. 10:19-20).

The way by which we draw near to God is a way sprinkled with the blood of our Saviour. The thick veil which blocked the way into the Holiest has been torn down with the tearing of the flesh of Christ, the suffering and death of the Son of God. On the cross, Christ made satisfaction to the Father for all our sins. Now we must not doubt that God will receive us.

Presumption would be to imagine that we could come to God another way, as if the blood of Christ were not necessary, or insufficient to pay for our sins. Presumption would be to expect God to accept us on our own merits, on the basis of our worthiness, our works, our prayers or our religious observances. But we are not presumptuous; we are bold, we are assured, we are confident.

To be bold means, negatively, not to be timid. We do not stand afar off and bemoan our unworthiness. We *are* unworthy, but Christ is our worthiness. To be bold means that we are not fearful or reluctant; that we do not think that God will refuse us; that we are not afraid that God will destroy us if we come too close; that we do not feel the need to cover our faces in horror at the idea of approaching God. Boldness is, positively, a freedom of access, a confidence that we will be received, a fearless approach, not to stand before a terrifying Judge, but to come into close fellowship with a loving Father.

Do you know such boldness? Do you come in that *manner* to God? Believer, you can and you must, through Jesus Christ! Only through Jesus Christ!

**September 23 – Christ’s Unchangeable Priesthood.**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

Hebrews 7:24, “But this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.”

Art. 26 has given compelling reasons for us to trust in our only Mediator, Advocate and High Priest, Jesus Christ. He is the High Priest who brings us into the very presence of God.

Another way in which Christ’s priesthood is superior to that of all other priests is its unchangeableness.

In Scripture there were many priests and high priests. Perhaps you can name some: in the Old Testament, Aaron, Eli, Abiathar; and in the New Testament, during the time of Christ and the Apostles, Annas, Caiaphas, Ananias. Some of these men were godly high priests; some were ungodly. But none of them had an unchangeable, permanent, everlasting priesthood. They died, their priestly office ended, and was passed to successors. In addition, even the godliest of high priests were sinners. And the sacrifices which they offered could never take away sin. For that reason, the same sacrifices had to be offered repeatedly and they could never cleanse the conscience (Heb. 9:9, 10:11).

What an excellent High Priest we have in Jesus Christ! Where the priests of Israel failed, Christ excels. Christ is the eternal, ever-living, holy Son of God. Christ died but not even His death interrupted His priesthood, for in dying He was *exercising* His priesthood. The Old Testament priests had to cleanse themselves and cleanse the altar; then, they offered sacrifices for their own sins; and finally, they offered sacrifices for the people’s sins. Christ had no sins of His own. His sacrifice is perfect because He offered Himself, a sacrifice of infinite worth and value in the sight of God. The sacrifices of the Old Testament could never cleanse a sinner and give him assurance in his conscience that he was forgiven. God was simply passing over his sins until the true Sin-bearer would come (Rom. 3:25). Christ’s sacrifice actually saves all those for whom it was offered.

Given all these beautiful truths, how could we look for another high priest? How could Christ’s priesthood pass to a successor? Christ will never die! Christ’s sacrifice will never be repeated by a future priest! Christ’s sacrifice will never lose its value or its power to save! And Christ continues His priestly work in heaven, not by sacrificing (*that* aspect of His work is finished) but by His continual intercession and His applying, by the Holy Spirit, all the blessings purchased by His sacrifice. Right now, Jesus is in Heaven presenting before the Father our names, we who believe in Him, and His prayer is the same as it was when He uttered it in John 17:24, “Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they might behold my glory, which Thou hast given me, for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” All for the sake of Calvary, *only* for the sake of Calvary.

**September 24 – What More Can Be Required?**  
**by Rev Martyn McGeown**

John 6:68, "...Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Only one who clings stubbornly to his sinful pride and who refuses to submit to the clear Word of God can fail to see the glory, excellency and unique suitability of the one, only, true Mediator, Advocate, Intercessor and High Priest, Jesus Christ. But, alas, we are blind, foolish, stubborn, proud and unbelieving by nature!

And so Art. 26 ends its treatment of Christ's Intercession with rhetorical questions and urgent admonitions: "What more can be required?" "To what purpose should we then seek another advocate?" "Let us not forsake Him to take another, or rather to seek after another, without ever being able to find Him ..."

We have seen all conceivable objections answered. We have seen that Christ is the only possible Mediator. Only He, combining the human and divine in one divine person, is qualified; of Him alone can it be said, "it hath pleased God to give us His own Son." We have seen that He possesses power and Majesty unlike any other, and yet, with that Majesty, He is filled with love and tenderhearted mercy for miserable sinners. Therefore, we have been admonished not to be affrighted by His Majesty, nor to doubt His love, which is so great that He humbled Himself even to the cross. We have seen the solid basis for His intercession, mediation and advocacy: His perfect work of atonement on the cross, by which He has blotted out all our sins, answered the demands of the law and the accusations of Satan, and restored us to blessed fellowship with the Triune God, into whose presence we have free and open access.

"What more can be required?" Who could possibly compare with Jesus Christ? Whose person is more perfect; whose work is more complete; whose love is deeper; whose access to the Father is closer; who else meets all our needs as sinners? Shall we go to Mary, when the Son calls us to go to *Him*; shall we flee to one of the saints, who themselves were sinners, and needed Christ to cleanse *them*; shall we seek the advocacy of angels when the Father has appointed only Christ?

Surely, to refuse Christ is the greatest depravity and the deepest folly! Shall we cling to our own self righteousness, and conceal it under a false humility? Do not say, "But we are sinners. Surely we could never come to Him." Did God design a Mediator for sinners without taking into account our sinfulness, our unworthiness, our utter hopelessness? Do not charge the only wise God with folly, as if He did not know what kind of Mediator we needed. As Art. 26 so eloquently explains it: "God well knew, when He gave Him to us, that we were sinners."

Let no niggling doubts remain! Let us not think that the Father left something undone; that the Father overlooked something, when He made Jesus Christ our Mediator.

The Father knows our every need. And in infinite grace and mercy, our Father has met our every need in Christ. *Only* in Christ. Thanks be to God for the gift of His Son!

### **Article 27: The Catholic Christian Church.**

*We believe and profess one catholic or universal church, which is a holy congregation of true Christian believers, all expecting their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by His blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Ghost. This church hath been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end thereof; which is evident from this, that Christ is an eternal King, which without subjects He cannot be. And this holy Church is preserved or supported by God against the rage of the whole world; though she sometimes (for a while) appears very small, and in the eyes of men to be reduced to nothing, as during the perilous reign of Ahab the Lord reserved unto Him seven thousand men, who had not bowed their knees to Baal.*

*Furthermore, this holy Church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed over the whole world; and yet is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same Spirit.*

**September 25 – Christ The Head Of The Church**  
**by Rev. Daniel Kleyn**

Read: Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-23, Philippians 2:9-11, Colossians 1:18

As believers, we are blessed to belong to the church. But what is that church to which we belong? Art. 27 provides the answer.

The church of which Art. 27 speaks is the church as the universal body of Christ. We are taught here concerning the church of the elect, chosen from all nations of the earth, and gathered during all the ages of history. We are privileged to belong to that church, and thus to be among the elect.

A consideration of the truth of the church must begin with this fundamental question: "Who is the church's head?" This has tremendous significance for us as regards our comfort of being members of that church.

Many men claim to themselves the position of head of the church. The pope does (in the church of Rome). Bishops do (in Episcopal churches). World rulers do (in the Erastian form of church government). And many ministers of the Word sinfully do (especially in Independentism).

But no man has this right, or may make this claim. The only Head of the church is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the church's "eternal King."

Christ has the right to be the Head of the church on account of Who He is. He is the Son of God. No man is His equal. No mere man is qualified to be head of the church. No mere man has any claim to this honorable position. Thus, if any man makes this claim, or else acts as though he is the church's head, he is guilty of the greatest pride, and of greatly dishonoring the Son of God.

Christ also has the right to be the church's Head because of all He has done for her. He is her Redeemer. He gave Himself for her. He submitted Himself to the wrath of God and the eternal torments of hell in order to save the church unto Himself. Who else has done so much for the church? Who else is even able to do such things for her? No one! Christ alone has the right to be Head.

As our Head, Christ has absolute authority in the church. He rules the church (and us, the members). He decides things in His church (and thus for us). His Word is the law in His church (and thus our law). He tells us (the members) what to believe, and how to live.

This confession gives comfort. Christ's Headship means we are His body. We are joined to Him. We can never be separated from Him, for He is sovereign, almighty, and wise. And He, our Head, loves us. Because of Him, we are now and will forever remain living members of His church. May we give thanks to God today and every day for Christ our Head!

"Jehovah reigns in majesty; Let all the nations quake. He dwells between the cherubim; Let earth's foundations shake. Supreme in Zion is the Lord, Exalted gloriously; Ye nations, praise His name with awe, The Holy One is He" (Psalm 99, Psalter #265).

**September 26 – The Church’s Oneness**  
**by Rev. Daniel Kleyn**

Read: John 17:20-21, Romans 12:3-10, I Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 4:1-7

Because Christ is the church’s Head, the church has certain characteristics. These things characterize the body of the elect because these things characterize Christ our Head. The first of these is that the church is ONE.

In Art. 27 we confess this oneness when we say: “We believe and profess one ... church!” Art. 27 also affirms this by speaking, not of “churches,” but of “church,” and by stating that the church is “joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same Spirit.”

What does it mean that the church is one? The basic idea is that there is only one church of Christ.

We may wonder, “Is this really true? Then why are there so many different congregations and denominations – literally thousands upon thousands?” There are many earthly reasons why the church’s oneness is not fully manifested. One is that God’s people are in many different nations around the world, and have many different languages. Another reason (to our shame) is sin – departure from the faith, the pride of man, the failure of God’s people to be united in the faith, etc.

But none of this takes away from the reality that there is only one church of Christ. Although Christ’s elect are scattered throughout the world, and although they are in many different congregations and denominations, there is only one church. Christ does not have two, or five, or fifty, or five thousand bodies, but only one.

And therefore we who are members of Christ’s one body are united to each other and have many things in common. We all “expect their salvation in Jesus Christ”, being “true Christian believers” who have all been “washed by His blood” and “sanctified and sealed by the Holy Ghost.” Regardless of all earthly differences, all believers have a common life in Christ, a common enemy, common struggles, common goals, common spiritual blessings, etc.

Sometimes, when we look at the church with earthly eyes, we do not see unity, but instead schism, division, and separation. We even find ourselves guilty of causing these things – by pitting ourselves against fellow believers, or congregation against congregation, or Christian school against Christian school. But this does not negate the reality of the church’s oneness. It is a matter of faith. We believe it is a reality, even if we cannot always see it.

Because we contribute to the lack of unity, there is an urgent need to strive with all our might to maintain and manifest the oneness of the church – within the congregation to which each of us belong, within our respective denominations, between sister churches, and through always seeking out others who are one with us in the truth of God’s Word.

Be thankful for what Christ has done in establishing unity in His body. And always strive, by His grace, to manifest it.

“How pleasant and how good it is When brethren in the Lord In one another’s joy delight And dwell in sweet accord” (Psalm 133, Psalter #369).

**September 27 – The Holiness Of Christ’s Church**  
**by Rev. Daniel Kleyn**

Read: Numbers 23:21, II Corinthians 6:14-18, Ephesians 2:21, I Peter 2:9

Because Christ the King and Head of the church is holy, the church is also holy. Christ’s body is “a holy congregation” (Art. 27). She is a church that hates and is separated from sin. She is devoted to Christ her Head. And she is made up of members who are holy – in and because of Christ their Head.

The holiness of the church does not mean that a particular congregation is perfect. You will never find a perfect congregation of Christ’s church in this world. Sin will always be present in every church, even in the most faithful on earth.

This is also true regarding the church’s members. None of them is personally perfect. The elect cannot be sinless in this life. We will all continue to manifest unholiness until the day we die. Even the holiest of men have, in this life, only a very small beginning of the new obedience.

Nevertheless the church, and we her elect members, are holy in the eyes of God. God sees the church as sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. God views the members of the church as saints – “holy ones.” For God sees the church and her members, not as we are in ourselves, but as we are in Christ our Head – “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; ... holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

What a wonder of grace. God says concerning the church, that “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel.” (Num. 23:21) God views you, an unholy sinner, as a saint.

This implies a calling for all members of Christ’s church. God says: “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (I Pet. 1:16). Since Christ our Head is holy, we His body must be holy, too. We must separate ourselves from all that is unholy. We must hate sin, and love what is good. In one word, the church and her members must be antithetical. Constantly we must say “No” to sin, and “Yes” to God.

Do this today, and every day. Say “No” to sin on the television and internet. Say “No” to sinful thoughts and desires. Say “No” to other gods. Say “No” to hatred, lying, adultery, and covetousness. And say “Yes” to God and the things of God. Say “Yes” to obedience to God and to all in authority over you (at home, work, and in the church). Say “Yes” to prayer and reading the Bible. Say “Yes” to loving your neighbor. Say “Yes” to loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

“Who, O Lord, with Thee abiding, In Thy house shall be Thy guest? Who, his feet to Zion turning, In Thy holy hill shall rest? He that ever walks uprightly, Does the right without a fear, When he speaks, he speaks not lightly, But with truth and love sincere.” (Psalm 15, Psalter #24).

**September 28 – The Catholicity Of Christ’s Church**  
**by Rev. Daniel Kleyn**

Read: Psalm 22:27, Psalm 87, Galatians 3:16, 28, Revelation 7:9

If you have ever had the privilege of meeting (or living among) the people of God from a different land, you will have experienced firsthand the wonder of the catholicity of the church. In spite of earthly differences, you sense within minutes the bond that unites in Christ, and the wonder of belonging to the same church – a church from every nation under heaven. For Christ’s “church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed over the whole world” (Art. 27).

Christ is a catholic King and Savior. He died on the cross to save His people from every nation, tribe and tongue. Thus, the church which is His body is also catholic.

This means the church is universal. It is not limited or restricted by anything earthly – not race, language, skin color, social status, intellect, age, etc. The church is made up of whites and blacks, Europeans and Asians, and believers who speak French or English or Chinese or some other language. The church has in it both young and old, male and female, rich and poor, employer and employee, great and small.

The catholicity of the church also means that the church is made up of God’s people from every age of history. We confess in Art. 27 that “this Church hath been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end thereof.” All God’s people, from every age, belong to the same church. You and I belong to the same church as Adam, Abraham, Moses and David.

The reason the church is catholic is because God’s election crosses all barriers. God does not choose His people on the basis of physical or earthly characteristics. His gracious choice and the saving work of Christ on the cross, break down all walls between races. The church is made up of people from every nation, language and status under heaven. It transcends all national boundaries and distinctions.

The fact of the church’s catholicity condemns racism and prejudice in the church. We must resist the temptation to reject or look down upon others because of their nationality, skin color, language, or customs. Instead, we must view all these differences as adding to the church’s beauty. Each race has something to contribute to the church of Christ. If we were all the same, the church would be bland and colorless. But each race of God’s people can be thought of as a different color of the rainbow. When all these colors are placed next to each other, the glory and beauty of the church as the body of Christ shines brightly to the praise of Christ our Head.

“The ends of all the earth shall hear And turn unto the Lord in fear; All kindreds of the earth shall own And worship Him as God alone. All earth to Him her homage brings, The Lord of lords, the King of kings” (Psalm 22, Psalter #49).

**September 29 – The Apostolicity Of Christ’s Church  
by Rev. Daniel Kleyn**

Read: Matthew 16:16-18, John 8:32, Ephesians 2:19-22

What is the church’s foundation? On what is the church built? What is it that gives the members of the church a solid rock on which to stand, and keeps them from being led astray and away from their sure and only comfort? The answer lies in understanding the truth of the church’s apostolicity.

We confess that the church is apostolic. This is implied in Art. 27 when it states that the church is made up of “true Christian believers,” and that they are united “by the power of faith, in one and the same Spirit.”

What is apostolicity? It refers to the fact that the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

Apostolicity does not mean that the church is built on the apostles themselves (as Rome claims). But it means that the church confesses the doctrines and truths that were taught by the apostles and prophets. And what are those truths? They are the truths written down in the Scriptures. The solid rock on which the church is built is the inspired Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

However, since the central truth of the Scriptures is Christ, an apostolic church is built upon Christ Himself. The church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord. He is the chief Cornerstone of the church. Everything in a truly apostolic church centers around Christ. He is the content of the preaching. In every sermon, and in every Bible study, the gospel of salvation in Him is set forth. The church and her members are determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

An apostolic church is therefore one that is thoroughly biblical. The truths of the Bible are preached. The members know the truth, love the truth, believe the truth, confess the truth, and live the truth. Such a church is also confessional. The Reformed creeds are an integral part of the church’s confession and life. The Heidelberg Catechism is preached. And the other creeds do not die from disuse, but are regularly referred to and studied.

If by God’s grace the church to which you belong is truly apostolic, give God thanks. For then you are receiving the preaching that powerfully saves. Then you are being fed by the truth that sets you free from the bondage and punishment of sin. Then you are being nourished and fed unto life eternal. Then you are being comforted by Christ Himself. And then you are spiritually safe, for the church to which you belong has a foundation against which not even the gates of hell will prevail. Thanks be to God for membership in such a church.

“The precepts of the Lord are right; With joy they fill the heart; The Lord’s commandments all are pure, And clearest light impart. Oh how love I Thy law! ... It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 19, Psalter #42).

**September 30 – The Church Gathered By Christ**  
**by Rev. Daniel Kleyn**

Read: John 10:16, Acts 13:48, Romans 9:24, Romans 10:14-15

Why are you a saved child of God? Why are you in the church? How did you become a member?

This did not happen because of a work of man. We do not add ourselves to the church. Preachers do not save the church, no matter how powerful or persuasive their preaching. “Not human strength or mighty hosts, Not charging steeds or warlike boasts Can save from overthrow” (Psalm 33, Psalter #87). The salvation of the church is exclusively the work of Christ. He and His work are the only reason anyone of us is a member of His body. He did it all.

This saving work of Christ is part of His care for His body. The elect are scattered throughout the world. Unless Christ gathers them, they are not and will not be saved. Unless Christ saves them, the elect will never know that they are elect, and will never know that they belong to Christ and His church.

And so King Jesus Christ sends out the preaching of His Word, and His mighty Spirit. Those He has washed by His blood, He sanctifies and seals by His Holy Spirit. He brings us to conscious faith in Himself. He gives us all the benefits of salvation He purchased by His death. He causes us to know His love. He assures us of forgiveness and life eternal. He works in us the confident assurance that we are members of His church.

This is not to deny that Christ uses men. He uses ministers and missionaries who faithfully declare His gospel. He uses believers and the witness they give by their life and confession. He uses parents as they carry out their calling to teach their children the works and ways of Jehovah. He uses Christian schools and Christian school teachers. But the truth is that Christ does not need any of these. He does not need you, or me, or anyone. He does not need our work, abilities, zeal, wisdom, insights, money and tireless efforts. His work is not dependent on us. The only reason the church or any member of her is saved is because of Christ.

That’s how it needs to be. For Christ alone knows who the elect are. Christ alone knows where the elect are in this world. And Christ alone is able to save them. If it were not His work, heaven would forever remain empty. But because it is His work, not one of His elect will be overlooked, forgotten, or lost. And because it is His work, you can be confident that you and your elect children will be saved.

“O sing ye Hallelujah! ‘Tis good our God to praise; ‘Tis pleasant and becoming To Him our songs to raise; He builds the walls of Zion, He seeks her wand’ring sons, He binds their wounds and comforts The broken hearted ones” (Psalm 147, Psalter #402).

**October 1 – The Church Preserved by Christ  
by Rev. Daniel Kleyn**

Read: Matthew 16:18, Luke 12:32, John 10:28-29, Philippians 1:6

The church of Christ is constantly under attack. The devil and world do not leave her alone. The elect are always objects of their hatred and persecution. They make our way in this world very narrow. They tempt us on every side. And none of us can deny that the temptations appeal to us. Frequently, therefore, it appears that the church and cause of Christ in this world will be destroyed and disappear.

But that will never happen. For “this holy church is preserved or supported by God, against the rage of the whole world; [and] though she sometimes (for a while) appears very small, and in the eyes of men to be reduced to nothing: as during the perilous reign of Ahab the Lord reserved unto him seven thousand men, who had not bowed their knees to Baal” (Art. 27). That was the confident confession of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century church while she was in the very middle of severe persecution. It may be our confident confession, too.

Christ loves His church. She is most precious to Him. He cares for His beloved body and bride. Therefore His church will always exist in the world – it “hath been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end thereof” (Art. 27).

The church needs Christ’s protection because of her many enemies. Consider the devil. Sometimes he rages against the church and severely persecutes her members. Other times, he attacks by appearing as an angel of light. He introduces tares among the wheat. He causes the ungodly to mingle closely with the elect so as to weaken them and lead them astray. He introduces false doctrine. He tempts believers with the world and all its lusts.

Without Christ, the church would not exist. Without Him, none of the elect would survive. But with Him and because of Him, the church is safe. Our enemies cannot so much as touch us, except that Christ wills it. Not one elect will ever be snatched out of the church of Christ. Not one elect will go lost. Every child of God will be preserved unto the end.

Christ also preserves the members of the church in their salvation. We sometimes doubt. On account of sin or great sufferings, we wonder, “Am I really one of the elect?” But Christ does not leave us to fend for ourselves. By means of His Word and Spirit, He strengthens our faith and removes the doubts. When we sin, He lifts us up again by His almighty grace. He forgives, He restores, He comforts.

May we praise God for Christ’s protection and preservation. Because of Him, the gates of hell will not prevail against us. Because of Him, you will never perish, but will forever remain a member of His church.

“Thou wilt stretch forth Thy mighty arm To save me when my foes alarm; The work Thou hast for me begun Shall by Thy grace be fully done; Forever mercy dwells with Thee; O Lord, my Maker, think on me” (Psalm 138, Psalter #381).

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