Rev. H. Hofman Sr.

## THE SPIRITUAL SOLDIER

(Lord’s Day 52, Question 127)

Psalter 69:1-5 • 71 • 96 • 83

Scripture: James 1

Apostles’ creed

Canons of Dort II:1-2

**1. The weakness of this soldier**

* Fifth petition(justification) is basis for sixth petition (sanctification).
* God’s children must fight a spiritual warfare.
* Satan is the fountain of all evil; always trying to destroy the work of God and to disturb the peace in the heart of God’s children.
* The soldier is weak in himself.
  + His only hope is in Jesus Christ.
  + Has a praying heart.
* What is temptation?
  + Can be a trial, to learn our weakness and to strengthen faith (James 1:12).
  + Can be an attraction (normally called ‘temptation’) to evil and to commit sin (James 1:13-14).
* For God’s children, the trial of faith is at the same time a temptation for their sinful nature (because depravity always cleaves to us).
* If the Lord would give us over to our own strength and our own wisdom, we would fall (e.g. Peter).
* We are weak in ourselves, but not in Christ.
* Trial always presents the truth, but temptation is always a lie.

**2. The enemies of this soldier**

* The meaning of the petition is that we might know our strength, that our eyes might be upon the Lord only, and that we may know that we are living on a battlefield with many enemies surrounding us.
* Mortal enemies —the world, the devil, and our flesh.
  + Their goal: destroying the church of God and the work of faith in the heart of God’s children.
* Two great dangers: the world in the church, and the church in the world.
* Devil:literally “the opponent.”
  + Tries to keep us from praying.
  + All doubt and unbelief is the work of Satan in the heart of sinners.
* Our own flesh (“the tempter within the gates”).
  + Works together with the devil and the world.

**3. The victory of this soldier**

* The spiritual soldier:
  + Knows of his weakness, the strength of the Lord and a hope for the future.
  + Sees above the battlefield the power, the glory, and the victory of the King.
  + Needs the entire armour to stand in the spiritual warfare, i.e. the strength of the Holy Spirit.
  + Looks forward to the time that he can take oﬀ his armour because the battle is over.
* The final victory and rest will be when they are delivered from all evil and from the evil one.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Read Mat. 4:1-11. How was the Lord Jesus tempted? How did He react? What can we learn from it?
2. The Catechism mentions three enemies. When you consider your own life, do you recognise these three enemies? Do you also know something about the warfare with these enemies? How?
3. How can we remain standing in the warfare against our spiritual enemies?
4. The Lord’s Prayer ends with a doxology and a confession that our prayer will certainly be heard of God (Amen). How does the word ‘Amen’ function in your own prayers?
5. On pages 172-173 in the back of the Psalter you will find prayers for use before and after the explanation of the Heidelberg Catechism. Read these prayers prayerfully and answer the following questions:
   1. What are the key elements of the prayer before the HC?
   2. Why would the prayer after the HC begin with mentioning the covenant? What is the connection between the covenant and the HC sermons?
   3. What are the main petitions of the prayer after the HC? How does that function in your own life?