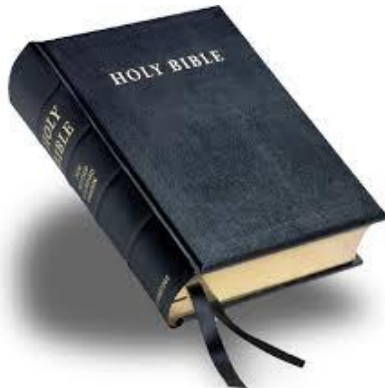


THE COMPLETE GOSPEL

BIBLICAL FAITH AS
SUMMARIZED IN THE
CREEDS OF THE EARLY CHURCH
AND THE
HEIDELBERG CATECHISM.



Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet.

As you will see, this is not a typical tract about the Gospel. There are not just a few basic truths to be believed. Christianity is all-encompassing. It's not a question of how little we need to believe, but how much. We will show you how the essential truths of the Gospel are linked together, and what it means to truly believe. We will show you the content of the Gospel and then examine whether those beliefs have impacted your life as they ought.

To be clear, our starting point is that the Holy Bible is the only inspired, authoritative and infallible Word of God. It alone is God's revelation, given and preserved for our benefit. It conveys what we need to know about God, ourselves and the world in which we live. It makes clear that God is the Almighty Creator and worthy to be praised. Although we were made in His image to know and worship Him, we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

The Scriptures teach that God sent His Son into the world to redeem His people from their lost and sinful condition. This story begins with God and the creation of all things. It speaks of humanity's fall into sin and the promise of redemption. This promise is fulfilled with the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It will culminate when He comes again in glory to judge the living and the dead.

While you may have heard some of these things before, this booklet encourages you to compare what you believe with how faithful believers and churches throughout history have understood and confessed the Bible's message. We encourage you to examine "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

May the Lord bless your consideration of these things!

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This booklet was prepared by the Reformed Church in the United States. All persons and denominations are welcome to make use of this booklet. Our goal is to propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ by discipling believers in the historic teachings of the Christian Faith.

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INTRODUCTION

Instead of explaining why you should believe, or the bare minimum of what you must believe to be saved, this presentation of the Gospel seeks to summarize what it means to believe the Gospel as a whole. It looks at faith from the Bible's point of view. The Complete Gospel provides the context in which the Gospel of Jesus Christ makes sense.

The Christian Church has been around for hundreds and even thousands of years. God's redemptive plan began long ago and is recorded in the pages of the Old and New Testaments. God's purpose from the beginning was to send His Son in the fullness of time to become the Redeemer of people. This booklet is a summary of the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). What the gospel is and what it means is set forth with clarity on the pages before you.

GOD AND THE GOSPEL REVEALED IN SCRIPTURE

The Gospel is what God has revealed in His Word. The Good-news is that sinful human beings are being forgiven and redeemed through the completed work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In addition to the Gospel, we learn in Scripture the nature and works of God Himself.

Our goal is to simply teach what the Bible reveals as its key or essential doctrines. Unlike most cults and false religions, we believe the historic teachings of the Church are the best place to begin. And what are these teachings? In short, they are the basic tenants of the Christian faith. While there are many different denominations and types of churches, it is important to remember that most churches agree on the fundamental teachings and truths of the Holy Bible. While there are some differences and variations in how these things are understood, all

faithful Christian churches will acknowledge that the Scriptures are the only inspired and authoritative Word of God.

Subsequently, all faithful Christian churches affirm the eternal existence of GOD and regard Him as the Almighty, All-Wise Creator of the heavens and the earth. They believe God made man male and female as a special creation in His image. Soon after their creation our first parents sinned and brought spiritual death upon themselves and their descendants. They yielded to the temptation of Satan and ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Without God's intervention, Adam and Eve and their descendants would have remained spiritually dead. But thankfully, the next thing we read is God's promise to redeem them through the Seed of the woman and overcome their sin and Satan's power. This is the underlying story of the Old Testament that concludes with the coming of Christ in the New.

GOD AND GOSPEL CONFESSED BY THE CHURCH

In other words, from the first chapter of Genesis to the end of the Book of Revelation, we believe all that is revealed in God's Word. More than this, we believe what the Christian church has always believed. In particular, we hold to the ancient creeds that were written and adopted by the early church councils. These councils met to settle important doctrinal issues like the Trinity, that the One True God has revealed Himself in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Other church councils ironed out how the Lord Jesus came as both true God and true man, having two natures in one person. Some of this is quite complicated, but the Church clearly stated what we must confess and deny to avoid pitfalls and errors.

During the Protestant Reformation (the great spiritual revival in the 16th and 17th Centuries) confessions and instructional catechisms were written to clarify and summarize what the Protestant Churches believed and were teaching. Throughout history, there has only been one Christian Faith. These basic teachings have been embraced by

most Protestant denominations (Reformed, Presbyterian, Anglican, Lutheran, Baptist, etc.). True believers from all Christian Churches and denominations have agreed with these gospel truths. This is what Ephesians 4:4ff says: **"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."**

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM EXPLAINS THE GOSPEL

The teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism is representative of Protestant Christianity. It was written in 1561 and has been embraced by churches and believers around the world. It captures the essential truths of Christianity in a pastoral way and applies them to the hearts and lives of believers. The Heidelberg Catechism identifies the key elements of what we as believers need to know. For the last 450 years, churches and parents have been using it to teach their children what they need to know about the Christian Faith. This has enabled them to faithfully serve the Lord through many generations. Those who have learned these truths can give clear and concise reasons for the hope that is within them.

THE UNCHANGING CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Since there is "no variation or shadow of turning" with God and Jesus says, "heaven and earth will pass away, but my words shall by no means pass away," we can be sure that God and the truths of the Bible will NOT change. The Bible emphatically warns that nothing may be added to or taken from the Word of God. In the last verses of the Bible, the severest of warnings are given to those who would do so.

Since the Word of God doesn't change, we can be confident that the truth of the Gospel will not change. This was the Apostle Paul's conviction as well. In Galatians 1:8, 9, he makes a profound statement:

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach **any other gospel** to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we

have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches **any other gospel** to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Think about this for a moment. Paul and other apostles testified of the truths they had learned and been taught by Christ and the Holy Spirit. This was the message they preached and the Galatian churches heard. Additionally, this was what the Holy Spirit inspired them to write and record in the books and letters of the New Testament. In short, “any other gospel” would be any teaching or preaching that didn’t agree with what the apostles taught. Notice, what he says, **“Even if we [he and the other apostles] or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.”** Oh, that false teachers and the founders of cults and religions had embraced these verses and not gone beyond what was written.

WHAT DOES TRUE FAITH BELIEVE?

So far we’ve written about the objective truths that are taught in the Word of God. This is what we as believers and all Christian churches believe. As you read these paragraphs you might be wondering how your beliefs compare with what is recorded here. We hope that everyone will be challenged to read and reread the Scriptures to see whether or not they teach what is written here. The following two questions and answers from the Heidelberg Catechism address the subject of true faith and what it means.

QA 20. ARE ALL MEN, THEN, SAVED BY CHRIST AS THEY HAVE PERISHED IN ADAM?

“No, only those who by true faith are engrafted into Him and receive all His benefits.”

QA 21. WHAT IS TRUE FAITH?

True faith is not only a sure knowledge whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word, but also a hearty trust, which the Holy Spirit works in me by the Gospel, that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness,

and salvation are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits.

Notice these points:

- 1.) Those without real or true faith are not truly connected to Christ and will perish in their sins.
- 2.) Those with true faith come to believe all that God has revealed in His Word. This is a pretty exhaustive statement and witnesses to the Holy Spirit's presence and work in our lives. Believers come to accept the miracles, signs, and wonders as real, and God's promises and commands as trust-worthy and embrace them.
- 3.) In addition to believing what is objectively revealed or stated in Scripture, **true faith** believes something more. It rests on a settled conviction that apart from earning or deserving, they have been brought into a state of grace or favor with God. By the Spirit of God, they are graciously called and received into fellowship with the Living God. They confidently trust that their salvation was fully paid by the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

TRUE FAITH LEADS TO TRUE COMFORT

Through Christ and His completed work, believers receive all that they need to be reconciled with God. Here is a summary of the comfort enjoyed by believers:

1. WHAT IS YOUR ONLY COMFORT IN LIFE AND IN DEATH?

That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy

Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live unto Him.

Genuine Christianity is not hard to understand or overly complicated. It teaches believers to put their trust completely in the grace of God, in the words and promise of the Gospel. This is the focus: that God for the sake of Christ's completed work grants forgiveness of sins and everlasting life to all who come to Him through faith. The Lord Jesus through the ministry of His Spirit and Word, gathers, defends, and preserves for himself a chosen people, from every tribe, language, nation, and people, in the unity of the true faith. There may be a few cultural differences, but believers of every language, race, and nation will believe in the same Gospel and serve the Lord in the same way.

THE REMAINING QUESTIONS

Do you genuinely believe these things? Has your life been transformed by the power of the Gospel? These are pretty serious questions. Knowing the right answers or knowing what we should say is not the same thing as really believing or experiencing the things being described. As believers, we are to diligently seek from God what He has freely given.

This is where the Church's creeds and confessions are helpful. As we read through them, we will either agree with them or we won't. We will share the convictions and experience grace in the way it is described, or we won't. As you read through these creeds and the Heidelberg Catechism, ask yourself whether they describe your faith. Is this what you believe and are you serving the Lord as you should?

We're not trying to exclude anyone from the Kingdom of God or diminish their resolve to faithfully serve the Lord. Rather, we want all believers everywhere to be more aware of what they believe and how they should live. If there is a disparity between these teachings and how you believe or live, use it as an opportunity to grow in grace. Be

like the Bereans, as the Apostle Paul described in Acts 17, **“who searched the Scriptures daily to see if these things are so.”**

THE COMPLETE GOSPEL?

In a sense, this booklet challenges each of us to examine the content of our faith and measure our experience as believers. The 129 questions and answers accurately and extensively describe what the Gospel is and what it means to genuinely believe. In the pages that follow we will look at the creeds of the early church and the Heidelberg Catechism’s explanation of what true faith believes.

Since the Bible doesn’t change, the gospel doesn’t change. For this reason, the experience of believers throughout history should be consistent and have the same effect. Take, for example, Question and Answer 2:

2. HOW MANY THINGS ARE NECESSARY FOR YOU TO KNOW, THAT IN THIS COMFORT YOU MAY LIVE AND DIE HAPPILY?

Three things: First, the greatness of my sin and misery. Second, how I am redeemed from all my sins and misery. Third, how I am to be thankful to God for such redemption.

Every true Christian will answer this in the same way: Repentance for the GUILT of sin, trusting in God’s GRACE through Christ, and living a life GRATITUDE. This is the true comfort that satisfies our deepest longing and endures.

The creeds and catechism that follow will test your convictions and lead you to a clearer understanding of the Christian faith.

May God bless you!

THE CREEDS OF THE THE EARLY CHURCH



THE APOSTLES' CREED

“What, then, is necessary for a Christian to believe?” asks the Heidelberg Catechism. “All that is promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our catholic, undoubted Christian faith teach us in summary,” is the reply. Though this creed was not penned by the Apostles, it summarizes the Bible’s teaching with simplicity, brevity, and beauty. Originally used as a baptismal formula in the second century, it reached its present form in the sixth. It gives a concise expression of the fundamentals of historic Christianity.

I believe in God THE FATHER Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.

And in JESUS CHRIST,
His only-begotten Son, our Lord:
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
He descended into hell;
the third day He rose from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of
God the Father Almighty;
from there He shall come to judge
the living and the dead.

I believe in the HOLY SPIRIT,
the holy, catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Amen.

THE NICENE CREED

This creed is an accurate and majestic formulation of the historic faith of orthodox Christianity. Originating at the Council of Nicea (AD 325) and revised at the Council of Constantinople (AD 381), it affirmed the biblical doctrine of the Trinity and the Person of Christ in opposition to various heresies, especially Arianism. The Western Church added the article on the procession of the Holy Spirit from Christ, “and the Son” (Latin: *filioque*) when it was adopted at the Council of Toledo (AD 589).

I believe in one GOD, THE FATHER Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one LORD JESUS CHRIST, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the HOLY SPIRIT, the Lord and Giver of life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. AMEN.

THE ATHANASIAN CREED

This creed has been named after Athanasius (AD 293–373), the champion of orthodoxy against the Arian heresy. Although he did not write it, the name persists because it was commonly ascribed to him by the Medieval Church. Being of Western origin, the creed first appeared in the early sixth century. Although the author is unknown, it embodies the teaching of Augustine (AD 354–430) in his book *De Trinitate*, as well as the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon on the Person of Christ (AD 451). Using precise language the creed declares the doctrine of the Trinity that God is one, in essence, existing in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It affirms the mystery of the incarnation, that the Lord Jesus Christ is one person, with two natures, human and divine. So essential are these doctrines to the Christian faith, that if they are not believed, one cannot be a Christian.

THE TRINITY

[1] Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith; [2] Which faith unless every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

[3] And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; [4] Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance. [5] For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit. [6] But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.

[7] Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit. [8] The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated. [9] The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible. [10] The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. [11] And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal. [12] As also there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensibles, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible. [13] So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty; [14] And yet they are not three almighties, but one almighty.

[15] So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; [16] And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. [17] So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord; [18] And yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord. [19] For like as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; [20]

So are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say: There are three Gods or three Lords.

[21] The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. [22] The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten. [23] The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. [24] So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. [25] And in this Trinity none is before, or after another; none is greater, or less than another. [26] But the whole three persons are co-eternal, and co-equal. [27] So that in all things, as said before, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. [28] He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

[29] Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. [30] For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man. [31] God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man of the substance of His mother, born in the world. [32] Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. [33] Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood.

[34] Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ. [35] One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God. [36] One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. [37] For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ; [38] Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead; [39] He ascended into heaven, He sits on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; [40] From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead. [41] At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies; [42] And shall give account of their own works. [43] And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.

[44] This is the catholic faith, which unless a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved. AMEN.

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM



Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism

THIS CATECHISM, or instruction in the Christian faith, received its name from the place of its origin, Heidelberg, Germany, the capital of the Electorate of the Palatinate. That the Reformed faith might be taught and maintained in his domain, the godly elector Frederick III commissioned Zacharias Ursinus, professor at the Heidelberg University, and Caspar Olevianus, court preacher, to prepare a manual for instructing the youth and guiding pastors and teachers in the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. Prepared with the advice and cooperation of the entire theological faculty, heartily approved by the Elector himself, and sanctioned by the Synodical gathering of prominent Reformed preachers and theologians, it was first published in Heidelberg with a preface dated January 19, 1563.

The Great Synod of Dort (1618–1619) declared that the Heidelberg Catechism was in all respects in harmony with the Word of God and it required office-bearers to subscribe to it. It was called “an admirably composed compendium of the orthodox Christian doctrine, wisely adapted to the comprehension of tender youths, and also to the more elaborate instruction of adults.” The Synod issued directives for it to be used by parents in teaching their children, by instructors in the schools, and by pastors on each Lord’s Day.

It has been, deservedly, the most widely used and influential catechism of the Reformation period. The Reformed Churches of Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary, Transylvania, and Poland adopted it. Among the thirty languages into which the catechism has been translated are Dutch, English, French, Polish, Hungarian, Greek, Lithuanian, Hebrew, Italian, Bohemian, Javanese, Arabic, Singalese, and Malay. In North America it was adopted as a standard of the Reformed Church in the United States from the very beginning of its history.

In 1820 the first English version of the Catechism appeared in the United States. In 1863 a new English translation was made, called the Tercentenary (300 Year) Version. The Reformed Church in the U.S. further revised this edition in 1950, and 1986. Bible references (marked with an asterisk *) were later added and various refinements until it reached its present form in 2011. More recently Scripture references were updated to the *New King James Version* of the Bible.

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

Introduction

LORD'S DAY 1

1. What is your only comfort in life and in death?

That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death,¹ am not my own,² but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ,³ who with His precious blood⁴ has fully satisfied for all my sins,⁵ and redeemed me from all the power of the devil;⁶ and so preserves me⁷ that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head;⁸ indeed, that all things must work together for my salvation.⁹ Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life,¹⁰ and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live unto Him.¹¹

[1] Rom. 14:7–8. [2] 1 Cor. 6:19. [3] 1 Cor. 3:23. [4] 1 Pet. 1:18–19. [5] 1 Jn. 1:7; 2:2. [6] 1 Jn. 3:8. [7] Jn. 6:39. [8] Matt. 10:29–30; Lk. 21:18. [9] Rom. 8:28. [10] 2 Cor. 1:21–22; Eph. 1:13–14; Rom. 8:16. [11] Rom. 8:1.

2. How many things are necessary for you to know, that in this comfort you may live and die happily?

Three things:¹ First, the greatness of my sin and misery.² Second, how I am redeemed from all my sins and misery.³ Third, how I am to be thankful to God for such redemption.⁴

[1] Lk. 24:46–47; 1 Cor. 6:11; Tit. 3:3–7. [2] Jn. 9:41; 15:22. [3] Jn. 17:3. [4] Eph. 5:8–11; 1 Pet. 2:9–12; Rom. 6:11–14; *Rom. 7:24–25; *Gal. 3:13; *Col. 3:17.

FIRST PART: MAN'S MISERY

LORD'S DAY 2

3. From where do you know your misery?

From the Law of God.¹

[1] Rom. 3:20; *Rom. 7:7.

4. What does the Law of God require of us?

Christ teaches us in sum, Matthew 22, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."¹

[1] Matt. 22:37–40; Lk. 10:27. *Deut. 6:5. *Gal. 5:14.

5. Can you keep all this perfectly?

No,¹ for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor.²

[1] Rom. 3:10–12, 23; 1 Jn. 1:8, 10. [2] Rom. 8:7; Eph. 2:3.

LORD'S DAY 3

6. Did God create man thus, wicked and perverse?

No,¹ but God created man good and after His own image,² that is, in righteousness and true holiness, that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him, and live with Him in eternal blessedness, to praise and glorify Him.³

[1] Gen. 1:31. [2] Gen. 1:26–27. [3] 2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24.

7. From where, then, does this depraved nature of man come?

From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise,¹ whereby our nature became so corrupt that we are all conceived and born in sin.²

[1] Gen. 3 (The whole chapter). Rom. 5:12, 18–19. [2] Ps. 51:5; *Ps. 14:2–3.

8. But are we so depraved that we are completely incapable of any good and prone to all evil?

Yes,¹ unless we are born again by the Spirit of God.²

[1] Jn. 3:6; Gen. 6:5; Job 14:4; Isa. 53:6. [2] Jn. 3:5; *Gen. 8:21; *2 Cor. 3:5; *Rom. 7:18; *Jer. 17:9.

LORD'S DAY 4

9. Does not God, then, do injustice to man by requiring of him in His Law that which he cannot perform?

No, for God so made man that he could perform it;¹ but man, through the instigation of the devil, by willful disobedience deprived himself and all his descendants of those divine gifts.²

[1] Eph. 4:24. [2] Rom. 5:12.

10. Will God allow such disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished?

Certainly not,¹ but He is terribly displeased with our inborn as well as our actual sins, and will punish them in just judgment in time and eternity, as He has declared, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."²

[1] Heb. 9:27. [2] Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10; *Rom. 1:18; *Matt. 25:41.

11. But is not God also merciful?

God is indeed merciful,¹ but He is likewise just;² His justice therefore requires that sin which is committed against the most high majesty of God, be punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment both of body and soul.

[1] Ex. 34:6–7. [2] Ex. 20:5; Ps. 5:5–6; 2 Cor. 6:14–16; *Rev. 14:11.

SECOND PART: MAN'S REDEMPTION

LORD'S DAY 5

12. Since, then, by the righteous judgment of God we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, how may we escape this punishment and be again received into favor?

God wills that His justice be satisfied;¹ therefore, we must make full satisfaction to that justice, either by ourselves or by another.²

[1] Ex. 20:5; 23:7. [2] Rom. 8:3–4.

13. Can we ourselves make this satisfaction?

Certainly not; on the contrary, we daily increase our guilt.¹

[1] Job 9:2–3; 15:15–16; Matt. 6:12; *16:26.

14. Can any mere creature make satisfaction for us?

None; for first, God will not punish any other creature for the sin which man committed;¹ and further, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin² and redeem others from it.

[1] Heb. 2:14–18. [2] Ps. 130:3.

15. What kind of mediator and redeemer, then, must we seek?

One who is a true¹ and righteous man,² and yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is also true God.³

[1] 1 Cor. 15:21–22, 25–26. [2] Jer. 13:16; Isa. 53:11; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:15–16.

[3] Isa. 7:14; Heb. 7:26.

LORD'S DAY 6

16. Why must He be a true and righteous man?

Because the justice of God requires¹ that the same human nature which has sinned should make satisfaction for sin; but one who is himself a sinner cannot satisfy for others.²

[1] Rom. 5:15. [2] Isa. 53:3–5.

17. Why must He also be true God?

That by the power of His Godhead He might bear in His manhood the burden of God's wrath,¹ and so obtain for² and restore to us righteousness and life.³

[1] Isa. 53:8; Acts 2:24. [2] Jn. 3:16; Acts 20:28. [3] 1 Jn. 1:2.

18. But who now is that Mediator, who in one person is true God and also a true and righteous man?

Our Lord Jesus Christ,¹ who is freely given unto us for complete redemption and righteousness.²

[1] Matt. 1:23; 1 Tim. 3:16; Lk. 2:11. [2] 1 Cor. 1:30; *Acts 4:12.

19. From where do you know this?

From the Holy Gospel, which God Himself first revealed in Paradise,¹ afterwards proclaimed by the holy patriarchs² and prophets, and foreshadowed by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law,³ and finally fulfilled by His well-beloved Son.⁴

[1] Gen. 3:15. [2] Gen. 22:18; 49:10–11; Rom. 1:2; Heb. 1:1; Acts 3:22–24; 10:43.

[3] Jn. 5:46. Heb. 10:7. [4] Rom. 10:4; Gal. 4:4–5; *Heb. 10:1.

LORD'S DAY 7

20. Are all men, then, saved by Christ as they have perished in Adam?

No, only those who by true faith are engrafted into Him and receive all His benefits.¹

[1] Jn. 1:12–13; 1 Cor. 15:22; Ps. 2:12; Rom. 11:20; Heb. 4:2–3; 10:39.

21. What is true faith?

True faith is not only a sure knowledge whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word,¹ but also a hearty trust,² which the Holy Spirit³ works in me by the Gospel,⁴ that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation are freely given by God,⁵ merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits.⁶

[1] Jas. 1:6. [2] Rom. 4:16–18; 5:1. [3] 2 Cor. 4:13; Phil. 1:19, 29. [4] Rom. 1:16; 10:17. [5] Heb. 11:1–2; Rom. 1:17. [6] Eph. 2:7–9; Rom. 3:24–25; Gal. 2:16; *Acts 10:43.

22. What, then, is necessary for a Christian to believe?

All that is promised us in the Gospel,¹ which the articles of our catholic, undoubted Christian faith teach us in summary.

[1] Jn. 20:31; Matt. 28:20. *2 Pet. 1:21; *2 Tim. 3:15.

23. What are these articles?

I believe in **GOD THE FATHER** Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in **JESUS CHRIST**, His only-begotten Son, our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the **HOLY SPIRIT**, the holy, catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

LORD'S DAY 8

24. How are these articles divided?

Into three parts: the first is of God the Father and our creation; the second, of God the Son and our redemption; the third, of God the Holy Spirit and our sanctification.¹

[1] 1 Pet. 1:2; *1 Jn. 5:7.

25. Since there is but one Divine Being,¹ why do you speak of three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Because God has so revealed Himself in His Word,² that these three distinct persons are the one, true, eternal God.

[1] Deut. 6:4. [2] Isa. 61:1; Ps. 110:1; Matt. 3:16–17; 28:19; 1 Jn. 5:7; *2 Cor. 13:14.

God the Father

LORD’S DAY 9

26. What do you believe when you say, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth”?

That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of nothing made heaven and earth with all that is in them,¹ who likewise upholds, and governs them by His eternal counsel and providence,² is for the sake of Christ, His Son, my God and my Father,³ in whom I so trust as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul;⁴ and further, that whatever evil He sends upon me in this valley of tears, He will turn to my good;⁵ for He is able to do it, being Almighty God,⁶ and willing also, being a faithful Father.⁷

[1] Gen. 1:31; Ps. 33:6; *Col. 1:16; *Heb. 11:3. [2] Ps. 104:2–5; Matt. 10:30; Heb. 1:3; Ps. 115:3; *Acts 17:24–25. [3] Jn. 1:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5–7; Eph. 1:5; *Eph. 3:14–16; *Matt. 6:8. [4] Ps. 55:22; Matt. 6:25–26; Lk. 12:22–24; Ps. 90:1–2. [5] Rom. 8:28; *Acts 17:27–28. [6] Rom. 10:12. [7] Matt. 7:9–11; *Num. 23:19.

LORD’S DAY 10

27. What do you understand by the providence of God?

The almighty, everywhere-present power of God,¹ whereby, as it were by His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth with all creatures,² and so governs them that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink,³ health and sickness,⁴ riches and poverty,⁵ indeed, all things come not by chance, but by His fatherly hand.

[1] Acts 17:25–26. [2] Heb. 1:3. [3] Jer. 5:24; *Acts 14:17. [4] Jn. 9:3. [5] Prov. 22:2; *Ps. 103:19; Rom. 5:3–5a.

28. What does it profit us to know that God created, and by His providence upholds, all things?

That we may be patient in adversity,¹ thankful in prosperity,² and for what is future have good confidence in our faithful God and Father, that no creature shall separate us from His love,³ since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move.⁴

[1] Rom. 5:3; Jas. 1:3; Job 1:21. [2] Deut. 8:10; 1 Thess. 5:18. [3] Rom. 8:35, 38–39. [4] Job 1:12; Acts 17:25–28; Prov. 21:1; *Ps. 71:7; *2 Cor. 1:10.

God the Son

LORD’S DAY 11

29. Why is the Son of God called “Jesus,” that is, Savior?

Because He saves us from all our sins,¹ and because salvation is not to be sought or found in any other.²

[1] Matt. 1:21; Heb. 7:25. [2] Acts 4:12; *Lk. 2:10–11.

30. Do those also believe in the only Savior Jesus, who seek their salvation and welfare from “saints,” themselves, or anywhere else?

No; although they make their boast of Him, yet in their deeds they deny the only Savior Jesus;¹ for either Jesus is not a complete Savior, or they who by true faith receive this Savior, must have in Him all that is necessary to their salvation.²

[1] 1 Cor. 1:13, 30–31; Gal. 5:4. [2] Isa. 9:7; Col. 1:20; 2:10; Jn. 1:16; *Matt. 23:28.

LORD’S DAY 12

31. Why is He called “Christ,” that is, Anointed?

Because He is ordained of God the Father and anointed with the Holy Spirit¹ to be our chief Prophet and Teacher,² who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption;³ and our only High Priest,⁴ who by the one sacrifice of His body, has redeemed us, and ever lives to make intercession for us with the Father;⁵ and our eternal King, who governs us by His Word and Spirit, and defends and preserves us in the redemption obtained for us.⁶

[1] Heb. 1:9. [2] Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22. [3] Jn. 1:18; 15:15. [4] Ps. 110:4; Heb. 7:21. [5] Rom. 5:9–10. [6] Ps. 2:6; Lk. 1:33; Matt. 28:18; *Isa. 61:1–2; *1 Pet. 2:24; *Rev. 19:16.

32. But why are you called a Christian?

Because by faith I am a member of Christ¹ and thus a partaker of His anointing,² in order that I also may confess His Name,³ may present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him,⁴ and with a free conscience may fight against sin and the devil in this life,⁵ and hereafter in eternity reign with Him over all creatures.⁶

[1] Acts 11:26; 1 Jn. 2:27; *1 Jn. 2:20. [2] Acts 2:17. [3] Mk. 8:38. [4] Rom. 12:1; Rev. 5:8, 10; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6. [5] 1 Tim. 1:18–19. [6] 2 Tim. 2:12; *Eph. 6:12; *Rev. 3:21.

LORD’S DAY 13

33. Why is He called God’s “only begotten Son,” since we also are the children of God?

Because Christ alone is the eternal, natural Son of God,¹ but we are children of God by adoption, through grace, for His sake.²

[1] Jn. 1:14, 18. [2] Rom. 8:15–17; Eph. 1:5–6; *1 Jn. 3:1.

34. Why do you call Him “our Lord”?

Because not with silver or gold, but with His precious blood, He has redeemed and purchased us, body and soul, from sin and from all the power of the devil, to be His own.¹

[1] 1 Pet. 1:18–19; 2:9; 1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; *Acts 2:36; *Tit. 2:14; *Col. 1:14.

LORD’S DAY 14

35. What is the meaning of “conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary?”

That the eternal Son of God, who is¹ and continues true and eternal God,² took upon Himself the very nature of man, of the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary,³ by the operation of the Holy Spirit,⁴ so that He might also be the true seed of David,⁵ like unto His brethren in all things,⁶ except for sin.⁷

[1] Jn. 1:1; Rom. 1:3–4. [2] Rom. 9:5. [3] Gal. 4:4; Jn. 1:14. [4] Matt. 1:18–20; Lk. 1:35. [5] Ps. 132:11. [6] Phil. 2:7. [7] Heb. 4:15; *1 Jn. 5:20.

36. What benefit do you receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ?

That He is our Mediator,¹ and with His innocence and perfect holiness covers, in the sight of God, my sin, wherein I was conceived.²

[1] Heb. 2:16–17. [2] Ps. 32:1; *1 Jn. 1:9.

LORD'S DAY 15

37. What do you understand by the word “suffered”?

That all the time He lived on earth, but especially at the end of His life, He bore, in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race;¹ in order that by His suffering, as the only atoning sacrifice,² He might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life.

[1] 1 Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:12. [2] 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10; Rom. 3:25–26; *Ps. 22:14–16; *Matt. 26:38; *Rom. 5:6.

38. Why did He suffer “under Pontius Pilate” as judge?

That He, being innocent, might be condemned by the temporal judge,¹ and thereby deliver us from the severe judgment of God, to which we were exposed.²

[1] Acts 4:27–28; Lk. 23:13–15; Jn. 19:4. [2] Ps. 69:4; 2 Cor. 5:21; *Matt. 27:24.

39. Is there anything more in His having been “crucified” than if He had suffered some other death?

Yes, for thereby I am assured that He took upon Himself the curse which lay upon me,¹ because the death of the cross was accursed of God.²

[1] Gal. 3:13–14. [2] Deut. 21:22–23; *Phil. 2:8.

LORD'S DAY 16

40. Why was it necessary for Christ to suffer “death”?

Because the justice and truth¹ of God required that satisfaction for our sins could be made in no other way than by the death of the Son of God.²

[1] Gen. 2:17. [2] Heb. 2:9; *Rom. 6:23.

41. Why was He “buried”?

To show thereby that He was really dead.¹

[1] Matt. 27:59–60; Jn. 19:38–42; Acts 13:29.

42. Since, then, Christ died for us, why must we also die?

Our death is not a satisfaction for our sin, but only a dying to sin and an entering into eternal life.¹

[1] Jn. 5:24; Phil. 1:23; Rom. 7:24–25.

43. What further benefit do we receive from the sacrifice and death of Christ on the cross?

That by His power our old man is with Him crucified, slain, and buried;¹ so that the evil lusts of the flesh may no more reign in us,² but that we may offer ourselves unto Him a sacrifice of thanksgiving.³

[1] Rom. 6:6–8; Col. 2:12. [2] Rom. 6:12. [3] Rom. 12:1; *2 Cor. 5:15.

44. Why is it added: “He descended into hell”?

That in my greatest temptations I may be assured that Christ my Lord, by His inexpressible anguish, pains, and terrors, which He suffered in His soul on the cross and before, has redeemed me from the anguish and torment of hell.¹

[1] Isa. 53:10; Matt. 27:46; *Ps. 18:5; 116:3.

LORD’S DAY 17

45. What benefit do we receive from the “resurrection” of Christ?

First, by His resurrection He has overcome death, that He might make us partakers of the righteousness which He has obtained for us by His death.¹ Second, by His power we are also now raised up to a new life.² Third, the resurrection of Christ is to us a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection.³

[1] 1 Cor. 15:15,17, 54–55. Rom. 4:25; 1 Pet. 1:3–4, 21. [2] Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1–4; Eph. 2:5. [3] 1 Cor. 15:12; Rom. 8:11; *1 Cor. 15:20–21.

46. What do you understand by the words “He ascended into heaven”?

That Christ, in the sight of His disciples, was taken up from the earth into heaven,¹ and continues there in our behalf ²until He shall come again to judge the living and the dead.³

[1] Acts 1:9; Matt. 26:64; Mk. 16:19; Lk. 24:51. [2] Heb. 4:14; 7:24–25; 9:11; Rom. 8:34. Eph. 4:10. [3] Acts 1:11; Matt. 24:30; *Acts 3:20–21.

47. But is not Christ with us even unto the end of the world, as He has promised?¹

Christ is true man and true God. According to His human nature He is now not on earth,² but according to His Godhead, majesty, grace, and Spirit, He is at no time absent from us.³

[1] Matt. 28:20. [2] Matt. 26:11; Jn. 16:28; 17:11. [3] Jn. 14:17–18; 16:13; Eph. 4:8; Matt. 18:20; *Heb. 8:4.

48. But are not, in this way, the two natures in Christ separated

from one another, if the manhood is not wherever the Godhead is?

Not at all, for since the Godhead is incomprehensible and everywhere present,¹ it must follow that the same is not limited with the human nature He assumed, and yet remains personally united to it.²

[1] Acts 7:49; Jer. 23:24. [2] Col. 2:9; Jn. 3:13; 11:15; Matt. 28:6; *Jn. 1:48.

LORD'S DAY 18

49. What benefit do we receive from Christ's ascension into heaven?

First, that He is our Advocate in the presence of His Father in heaven.¹ Second, that we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge, that He as the Head, will also take us, His members, up to Himself.² Third, that He sends us His Spirit as an earnest,³ by whose power we seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, and not things on the earth.⁴

[1] 1 Jn. 2:1; Rom. 8:34. [2] Jn. 14:2; 20:17; Eph. 2:6. [3] Jn. 14:16; Acts 2:33; 2 Cor. 5:5. [4] Col. 3:1; *Jn. 14:3; *Heb. 9:24.

50. Why is it added: "And sits at the right hand of God"?

Because Christ ascended into heaven for this end, that He might there appear as the Head of His Church,¹ by whom the Father governs all things.²

[1] Eph. 1:20–23; Col. 1:18. [2] Jn. 5:22; *1 Pet. 3:22; *Ps. 110:1.

LORD'S DAY 19

51. What does this glory of Christ, our Head, profit us?

First, that by His Holy Spirit He pours out heavenly gifts upon us, His members;¹ then, that by His power He defends and preserves us against all enemies.²

[1] Eph. 4:10–12. [2] Ps. 2:9; Jn. 10:28–30; *1 Cor. 15:25–26; *Acts 2:33.

52. What comfort is it to you that Christ "shall come to judge the living and the dead"?

That in all my sorrows and persecutions, I, with uplifted head, look for the very One who offered Himself for me to the judgment of God, and removed all curse from me, to come as Judge from heaven,¹ who shall cast all His and my enemies into everlasting condemnation,² but shall take me with all His chosen ones to Himself into heavenly joy and glory.³

[1] Lk. 21:28; Rom. 8:23–24; Phil. 3:20–21; Tit. 2:13. [2] 2 Thess. 1:6, 10; 1 Thess. 4:16–18; Matt. 25:41. [3] *Acts 1:10–11; *Heb. 9:28.

God the Holy Spirit

LORD’S DAY 20

53. What do you believe concerning the “Holy Spirit”?

First, that He is co-eternal God with the Father and the Son.¹ Second, that He is also given unto me:² by true faith makes me a partaker of Christ and all His benefits,³ comforts me,⁴ and shall abide with me forever.⁵

[1] Gen. 1:2; Isa. 48:16; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Acts 5:3–4. [2] Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 1:21–22. [3] 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Cor. 6:17. [4] Acts 9:31. [5] Jn. 14:16; 1 Pet. 4:14; *1 Jn. 4:13; *Rom. 15:13.

LORD’S DAY 21

54. What do you believe concerning the “holy, catholic Church”?

That out of the whole human race,¹ from the beginning to the end of the world,² the Son of God,³ by His Spirit and Word,⁴ gathers, defends, and preserves for Himself unto everlasting life a chosen communion⁵ in the unity of the true faith;⁶ and that I am and forever shall remain a living member of this communion.⁷

[1] Gen. 26:4. [2] Jn. 10:10. [3] Eph. 1:10–13. [4] Rom. 1:16; Isa. 59:21; Rom. 10:14–17; Eph. 5:26. [5] Rom. 8:29–30; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:3–6. [6] Acts 2:46; Ps. 71:18; 1 Cor. 11:26; Jn. 10:28–30; 1 Cor. 1:8–9. [7] 1 Jn. 3:21; 1 Jn. 2:19; *Gal. 3:28.

55. What do you understand by the “communion of saints”?

First, that believers, one and all, as members of the Lord Jesus Christ, are partakers with Him in all His treasures and gifts;¹ second, that each one must feel himself bound to use his gifts readily and cheerfully for the advantage and welfare of other members.²

[1] 1 Jn. 1:3. [2] 1 Cor. 12:12–13, 21; 13:5–6; Phil. 2:4–6; *Heb. 3:14.

56. What do you believe concerning the “forgiveness of sins”?

That God, for the sake of Christ’s satisfaction,¹ will no more remember my sins, nor the sinful nature with which I have to struggle all my life long;² but graciously imputes to me the righteousness of Christ, that I may nevermore come into condemnation.³

[1] 1 Jn. 2:2. [2] 2 Cor. 5:19, 21; Rom. 7:24–25; Ps. 103:3, 10–12; Jer. 31:34; Rom. 8:1–4. [3] Jn. 3:18; *Eph. 1:7; *Rom. 4:7–8; 7:18.

LORD’S DAY 22

57. What comfort do you receive from the “resurrection of the body”?

That not only my soul after this life shall be immediately taken up to Christ its Head,¹ but also that this my body, raised by the power of Christ, shall be reunited with my soul, and made like the glorious body of Christ.²

[1] Lk. 23:43; Phil. 1:21–23. [2] 1 Cor. 15:53–54; Job 19:25–27; 1 Jn. 3:2.

58. What comfort do you receive from the article “life everlasting”?

That, inasmuch as I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy,¹ I shall after this life possess complete blessedness, such as eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man,² therein to praise God forever.³

[1] 2 Cor. 5:2–3. [2] 1 Cor. 2:9. [3] Jn. 17:3; *Rom. 8:23; *1 Pet. 1:8.

LORD’S DAY 23

59. What does it help you now, that you believe all this?

That I am righteous in Christ before God, and an heir of eternal life.¹

[1] Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Jn. 3:36; *Tit. 3:7; *Rom. 5:1; *Rom. 8:16.

60. How are you righteous before God?

Only by true faith in Jesus Christ:¹ that is, although my conscience accuses me, that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have never kept any of them,² and am still prone always to all evil;³ yet God, without any merit of mine,⁴ of mere grace,⁵ grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction,⁶ righteousness, and holiness of Christ,⁷ as if I had never committed nor had any sins, and had myself accomplished all the obedience which Christ has fulfilled for me;⁸ if only I accept such benefit with a believing heart.⁹

[1] Rom. 3:21–25; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8–9; Phil. 3:9. [2] Rom. 3:9–10. [3] Rom. 7:23. [4] Tit. 3:5. [5] Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8. [6] 1 Jn. 2:2. [7] 1 Jn. 2:1; Rom. 4:4–5; 2 Cor. 5:19. [8] 2 Cor. 5:21. [9] Jn. 3:18; *Rom. 3:28; *Rom. 10:10.

61. Why do you say that you are righteous by faith only?

Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith, but because only the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God;¹ and I can receive the same and make it my own in no other way than by faith only.²

[1] 1 Cor. 1:30; 2:2. [2] 1 Jn. 5:10. *Isa. 53:5; *Gal. 3:22; *Rom. 4:16.

LORD'S DAY 24

62. But why cannot our good works be the whole or part of our righteousness before God?

Because the righteousness which can stand before the judgment seat of God must be perfect throughout and entirely conformable to the divine law,¹ but even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.²

[1] Gal. 3:10; Deut. 27:26. [2] Isa. 64:6; *Jas. 2:10; *Phil. 3:12.

63. Do our good works merit nothing, even though it is God's will to reward them in this life and in that which is to come?

The reward comes not of merit, but of grace.¹

[1] Lk. 17:10; *Rom. 11:6.

64. But does not this doctrine make men careless and profane?

No, for it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by true faith, should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.¹

[1] Matt. 7:18; *Rom. 6:1–2; *Jn. 15:5.

The Sacraments

LORD'S DAY 25

65. Since, then, we are made partakers of Christ and all His benefits by faith only, where does this faith come from?

The Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts¹ by the preaching of the Holy Gospel, and confirms it by the use of the holy sacraments.²

[1] Jn. 3:5; *Rom. 10:17. [2] Rom. 4:11; *Acts 8:37.

66. What are the sacraments?

The sacraments are visible holy signs and seals appointed by God for

this end, that by their use He may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the Gospel, namely, that of free grace He grants us the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life for the sake of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross.¹

[1] Gen. 17:11; Rom. 4:11; Deut. 30:6; Heb. 9:8–9; Ezek. 20:12.

67. Are both the Word and the sacraments designed to direct our faith to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?

Yes, truly, for the Holy Spirit teaches in the Gospel and assures us by the holy sacraments, that our whole salvation stands in the one sacrifice of Christ made for us on the cross.¹

[1] Rom. 6:3; *Gal. 3:27; *Heb. 9:12; *Acts 2:41–42.

68. How many sacraments has Christ instituted in the New Testament?

Two: Holy Baptism and the Holy Supper.

Holy Baptism

LORD'S DAY 26

69. How is it signified and sealed to you in Holy Baptism that you have part in the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross?

Thus: that Christ instituted this outward washing with water¹ and joined to it this promise,² that I am washed with His blood and Spirit from the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as certainly as I am washed outwardly with water, whereby commonly the filthiness of the body is taken away.³

[1] Matt. 28:19–20; Acts 2:38. [2] Matt. 3:11; Mk. 16:16; Rom. 6:3–4. [3] Mk. 1:4.

70. What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?

It is to have the forgiveness of sins from God through grace, for the sake of Christ's blood, which He shed for us in His sacrifice on the cross;¹ and also to be renewed by the Holy Spirit and sanctified to be members of Christ, so that we may more and more die unto sin and lead holy and blameless lives.²

[1] Heb. 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:5; Zech. 13:1; Ezek. 36:25–27. [2] Jn. 1:33; 3:3; 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:13; *Heb. 9:14.

71. Where has Christ promised that we are as certainly washed with His blood and Spirit as with the water of Baptism?

In the institution of Baptism, which says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”¹ “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”² This promise is also repeated where Scripture calls Baptism the washing of regeneration³ and the washing away of sins.⁴

[1] Matt. 28:19 [2] Mk. 16:16. [3] Tit. 3:5. [4] Acts 22:16.

LORD’S DAY 27

72. Is, then, the outward washing with water itself the washing away of sins?

No,¹ for only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sin.²

[1] 1 Pet. 3:21; Eph. 5:26. [2] 1 Jn. 1:7; 1 Cor. 6:11.

73. Why then does the Holy Spirit call Baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins?

God speaks thus with great cause, namely, not only to teach us thereby that just as the filthiness of the body is taken away by water, so our sins are taken away by the blood and Spirit of Christ;¹ but much more, that by this divine pledge and token He may assure us that we are as really washed from our sins spiritually as our bodies are washed with water.²

[1] Rev. 7:14. [2] Mk. 16:16; *Acts 2:38.

74. Are infants also to be baptized?

Yes, for since they, as well as their parents, belong to the covenant and people of God,¹ and through the blood of Christ² both redemption from sin and the Holy Spirit, who works faith, are promised to them no less than to their parents,³ they are also by Baptism, as a sign of the covenant, to be engrafted into the Christian Church, and distinguished from the children of unbelievers,⁴ as was done in the Old Testament by circumcision,⁵ in place of which in the New Testament Baptism is appointed.⁶

[1] Gen. 17:7. [2] Matt. 19:14. [3] Lk. 1:14–15; Ps. 22:10; Acts 2:39. [4] Acts 10:47
[5] Gen. 17:14. [6] Col. 2:11–13.

The Holy Supper

LORD'S DAY 28

75. How is it signified and sealed to you in the Holy Supper that you partake of the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross and all His benefits?

Thus: that Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread and to drink of this cup in remembrance of Him, and has joined therewith these promises:¹ first, that His body was offered and broken on the cross for me and His blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup communicated to me; and further, that with His crucified body and shed blood He Himself feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, as certainly as I receive from the hand of the minister and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, which are given me as certain tokens of the body and blood of Christ.

[1] Matt. 26:26–28; Mk. 14:22–24; Lk. 22:19–20; 1 Cor. 10:16–17; 11:23–25; 12:13.

76. What does it mean to eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ?

It means not only to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ, and thereby to obtain the forgiveness of sins and life eternal;¹ but moreover, also, to be so united more and more to His sacred body by the Holy Spirit,² who dwells both in Christ and in us, that, although He is in heaven³ and we on earth, we are nevertheless flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone,⁴ and live and are governed forever by one Spirit, as members of the same body are governed by one soul.⁵

[1] Jn. 6:35, 40, 47–48, 50–54. [2] Jn. 6:55–56. [3] Acts 3:21; 1 Cor. 11:26. [4] Eph. 3:16–19; 5:29–30, 32; 1 Cor. 6:15, 17, 19; 1 Jn. 4:13. [5] Jn. 14:23; Jn. 6:56–58; Jn. 15:1–6; Eph. 4:15–16; Jn. 6:63.

77. Where has Christ promised that He will thus feed and nourish believers with His body and blood as certainly as they eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup?

In the institution of the Supper, which says: “The Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new

covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”¹

And this promise is also repeated by the Apostle Paul, where he says, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, so we being many are one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.”²

[1] 1 Cor. 11:23-26. [2] 1 Cor. 10:16-17.

LORD’S DAY 29

78. Do, then, the bread and the wine become the real body and blood of Christ?

No, but as the water in Baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ, nor becomes the washing away of sins itself, being only the divine token and assurance thereof,¹ so also in the Lord’s Supper the sacred bread² does not become the body of Christ itself, though agreeably to the nature and usage of sacraments it is called the body of Christ.³

[1] Matt. 26:29. [2] 1 Cor. 11:26-28. [3] Ex. 12:26-27, 43, 48; 1 Cor. 10:1-4.

79. Why then does Christ call the bread His body, and the cup His blood, or the new testament in His blood; and the Apostle Paul, the communion of the body and the blood of Christ?

Christ speaks thus with great cause, namely, not only to teach us thereby, that like as the bread and wine sustain this temporal life, so also His crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink of our souls unto life eternal;¹ but much more, by this visible sign and pledge to assure us that we are as really partakers of His true body and blood by the working of the Holy Spirit, as we receive by the mouth of the body these holy tokens in remembrance of Him;² and that all His sufferings and obedience are as certainly our own, as if we ourselves had suffered and done all in our own person.

[1] Jn. 6:51-55 (See Question 76). [2] 1 Cor. 10:16-17 (See Question 78).

LORD’S DAY 30

80. What difference is there between the Lord’s Supper and the Pope’s Mass?

The Lord’s Supper testifies to us that we have full forgiveness of all our sins by the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which He Himself once

accomplished on the cross;¹ and that by the Holy Spirit we are engrafted into Christ,² who, with His true body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father,³ and is there to be worshiped.⁴ But the Mass teaches that the living and the dead do not have forgiveness of sins through the sufferings of Christ, unless Christ is still daily offered for them by the priests, and that Christ is bodily under the form of bread and wine, and is therefore to be worshiped in them. And thus the Mass at bottom is nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ,⁵ and an accursed idolatry.

[1] Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 25–28; 10:10, 12, 14; Jn. 19:30. [2] 1 Cor. 6:17. [3] Heb. 1:3; 8:1. [4] Jn. 4:21–24; 20:17; Lk. 24:52; Acts 7:55; Col. 3:1; Phil. 3:20–21; 1 Thess. 1:9–10. [5] See Hebrews chapters 9 and 10; *Matt. 4:10.

81. Who are to come to the table of the Lord?

Those who are displeased with themselves for their sins, yet trust that these are forgiven them, and that their remaining infirmity is covered by the suffering and death of Christ; who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and to amend their life. But the unrepentant and hypocrites eat and drink judgment to themselves.¹

[1] 1 Cor. 10:19–22; 11:28–29; *Ps. 51:3; *Jn. 7:37–38; Ps. 103:1–4; *Matt. 5:6.

82. Are they, then, also to be admitted to this Supper who show themselves by their confession and life to be unbelieving and ungodly?

No, for thereby the covenant of God is profaned and His wrath provoked against the whole congregation;¹ therefore, the Christian Church is bound, according to the order of Christ and His Apostles, to exclude such persons by the Office of the Keys until they amend their lives.

[1] 1 Cor. 11:20, 34a; Isa. 1:11–15; 66:3; Jer. 7:21–23; Ps. 50:16–17; *Matt. 7:6; *1 Cor. 11:30–32; *Tit. 3:10–11; *2 Thess. 3:6.

LORD'S DAY 31

83. What is the Office of the Keys?

The preaching of the Holy Gospel and Christian discipline; by these two the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and shut against unbelievers.¹

[1] Matt. 16:18–19; 18:18; *Jn. 20:23; *Lk. 24:46–47; *1 Cor. 1:23–24.

84. How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the Holy Gospel?

In this way: that, according to the command of Christ, it is proclaimed and openly witnessed to believers, one and all, that as often as they accept with true faith the promise of the Gospel, all their sins are really forgiven them of God for the sake of Christ's merits; and on the contrary, to all unbelievers and hypocrites, that the wrath of God and eternal condemnation abide on them so long as they are not converted.¹ According to this testimony of the Gospel, God will judge men both in this life and in that which is to come.

[1] Jn. 20:21–23; *Acts 10:43; *Isa. 58:1; *2 Cor. 2:15–16; *Jn. 8:24.

85. How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by Christian discipline?

In this way: that, according to the command of Christ, if any under the Christian name show themselves unsound either in doctrine or in life, and after several brotherly admonitions do not turn from their errors or evil ways, they are complained of to the Church or to its proper officers; and, if they neglect to hear them also, are by them denied the holy sacraments and thereby excluded from the Christian communion, and by God Himself from the kingdom of Christ; and if they promise and show real amendment, they are again received as members of Christ and His Church.¹

[1] Matt. 18:15–18; 1 Cor. 5:3–5, 11; 2 Thess. 3:14–15; 2 Jn. 1:10–11.

THIRD PART: THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 32

86. Since, then, we are redeemed from our misery by grace through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we do good works?

Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image, that with our whole life we show ourselves thankful to God for His blessing,¹ and that He be glorified through us;² then also, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by the fruits thereof;³ and by our godly walk win also others to Christ.⁴

[1] Rom. 6:13; 12:1–2; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9–10; 1 Cor. 6:20. [2] Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12. [3] Matt. 7:17–18; Gal. 5:6, 22–23. [4] Rom. 14:19; 1 Pet. 3:1–2; *2 Pet. 1:10.

87. Can they, then, not be saved who do not turn to God from their unthankful, unrepentant life?

By no means, for, as Scripture says, no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like shall inherit the kingdom of God.¹

[1] 1 Cor. 6:9–10; Eph. 5:5–6; 1 Jn. 3:14–15.

LORD’S DAY 33

88. In how many things does true repentance or conversion consist?

In two things: the dying of the old man,¹ and the making alive of the new.

[1] Rom. 6:4–6; Eph. 4:22–24; Col. 3:5–10; 1 Cor. 5:7.

89. What is the dying of the old man?

Heartfelt sorrow for sin, causing us to hate and turn from it always more and more.¹

[1] Rom. 8:13; Joel 2:13.

90. What is the making alive of the new man?

Heartfelt joy in God through Christ,¹ causing us to take delight in living according to the will of God in all good works.²

[1] Rom. 5:1; 14:17; Isa. 57:15. [2] Rom. 8:10–11; Gal. 2:20; *Rom. 7:22.

91. What are good works?

Those only which proceed from true faith,¹ and are done according to the law of God,² unto His glory,³ and not such as rest on our own opinion⁴ or the commandments of men.⁵

[1] Rom. 14:23. [2] 1 Sam. 15:22; Eph. 2:10. [3] 1 Cor. 10:31. [4] Deut. 12:32; Ezek. 20:18, 20; Isa. 29:13. [5] Matt. 15:9; *Num. 15:39.

The Law of God

92. What is the law of God?

“And God spoke all these words, saying:”

First Commandment

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.”

Second Commandment

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of

anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

Third Commandment

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”

Fourth Commandment

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

Fifth Commandment

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.”

Sixth Commandment

“You shall not murder.”

Seventh Commandment

“You shall not commit adultery.”

Eighth Commandment

“You shall not steal.”

Ninth Commandment

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

Tenth Commandment

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”¹

[1] Ex. 20; Deut. 5; *Matt. 5:17–19; *Rom. 10:5; *Rom. 3:31; *Ps. 119:9.

LORD'S DAY 34

93. How are these commandments divided?

Into two tables:¹ the first of which teaches, in four commandments, what duties we owe to God; the second, in six, what duties we owe to our neighbor.²

[1] Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13. [2] Matt. 22:37–40.

94. What does God require in the first commandment?

That, on peril of my soul's salvation, I avoid and flee all idolatry,¹ sorcery, enchantments,² invocation of saints or of other creatures;³ and that I rightly acknowledge the only true God,⁴ trust in Him alone,⁵ with all humility⁶ and patience⁷ expect all good from Him only,⁸ and love,⁹ fear,¹⁰ and honor¹¹ Him with my whole heart; so as rather to renounce all creatures than to do the least thing against His will.¹²

[1] 1 Cor. 10:7, 14. [2] Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:10–12. [3] Matt. 4:10; Rev. 19:10; 22:8–9. [4] Jn. 17:3. [5] Jer. 17:5. [6] 1 Pet. 5:5–6. [7] Heb. 10:36; Col. 1:10b–11; Rom. 5:3–4; 1 Cor. 10:10. [8] Ps. 104:27–30; Isa. 45:6b–7; Jas. 1:17. [9] Deut. 6:5. [10] Deut. 6:2; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 9:10; Matt. 10:28. [11] Deut. 10:20. [12] Matt. 5:29–30; 10:37; Acts 5:29.

95. What is idolatry?

Idolatry is to conceive or have something else in which to place our trust instead of, or besides, the one true God who has revealed Himself in His Word.¹

[1] Eph. 5:5; Phil. 3:19; Eph. 2:12; Jn. 2:23; 2 Jn. 1:9; Jn. 5:23; *Ps. 81:8–9; *Matt. 6:24; Ps. 62:5–7 *Ps. 73:25–26.

LORD'S DAY 35

96. What does God require in the second commandment?

That we in no way make any image of God,¹ nor worship Him in any other way than He has commanded us in His Word.²

[1] Deut. 4:15–19; Isa. 40:18, 25. Rom. 1:22–24; Acts 17:29. [2] 1 Sam. 15:23; Deut. 12:30–32; Matt. 15:9; *Deut. 4:23–24; *Jn. 4:24.

97. May we not make any image at all?

God may not and cannot be imaged in any way; as for creatures, though they may indeed be imaged, yet God forbids the making or keeping of any likeness of them, either to worship them or to serve God by them.¹

[1] Ex. 23:24–25; 34:13–14; Deut. 7:5; 12:3; 16:22; 2 Kgs. 18:4; *Jn. 1:18.

98. But may not pictures be tolerated in churches as books for the people?

No, for we should not be wiser than God, who will not have His people taught by dumb idols,¹ but by the lively preaching of His Word.²

[1] Jer. 10:8; Hab. 2:18–19. [2] 2 Pet. 1:19; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Rom. 10:17.

LORD’S DAY 36

99. What is required in the third commandment?

That we must not by cursing,¹ or by false swearing,² nor yet by unnecessary oaths,³ profane or abuse the name of God; nor even by our silence and connivance be partakers of these horrible sins in others; and in summary, that we use the holy name of God in no other way than with fear and reverence,⁴ so that He may be rightly confessed⁵ and worshiped⁶ by us, and be glorified in all our words and works.⁷

[1] Lev. 24:10–16. [2] Lev. 19:12. [3] Matt. 5:37; Jas. 5:12. [4] Isa. 45:23. [5] Matt. 10:32. [6] 1 Tim. 2:8. [7] Rom. 2:24; 1 Tim. 6:1; Col. 3:16–17; *1 Pet. 3:15.

100. Is the profaning of God’s name, by swearing and cursing, so grievous a sin that His wrath is kindled against those also who do not help as much as they can to hinder and forbid it?

Yes, truly,¹ for no sin is greater and more provoking to God than the profaning of His name; wherefore He even commanded it to be punished with death.²

[1] Lev. 5:1 [2] Lev. 24:15–16; *Lev. 19:12; *Prov. 29:24–25.

LORD’S DAY 37

101. But may we swear reverently by the name of God?

Yes, when the magistrate requires it, or when it may be needful otherwise, to maintain and promote fidelity and truth to the glory of God and our neighbor’s good; for such an oath is grounded in God’s Word,¹ and therefore was rightly used by the saints in the Old and New Testaments.²

[1] Deut. 10:20; Isa. 48:1; Heb. 6:16. [2] Gen. 21:24; 31:53–54; Josh. 9:15, 19; 1 Sam. 24:22; 1 Kgs. 1:29; Rom. 1:9.

102. May we swear by “the saints” or by any other creatures?

No, for a lawful oath is a calling upon God, that He, as the only searcher of hearts, may bear witness to the truth, and punish me if I

swear falsely;¹ which honor is due to no creature.²

[1] 2 Cor. 1:23. [2] Matt. 5:34–36; *Jer. 5:7; *Isa. 65:16.

LORD’S DAY 38

103. What does God require in the fourth commandment?

In the first place, God wills that the ministry of the Gospel and schools be maintained,¹ and that I, especially on the day of rest, diligently attend church² to learn the Word of God,³ to use the holy sacraments,⁴ to call publicly upon the Lord,⁵ and to give Christian alms.⁶ In the second place, that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works, allow the Lord to work in me by His Spirit, and thus begin in this life the everlasting Sabbath.⁷

[1] Tit. 1:5; 1 Tim. 3:14–15; 4:13–14; 5:17; 1 Cor. 9:11, 13–14. [2] 2 Tim. 2:2, 15; Ps. 40:10–11; 68:26; Acts 2:42, 46. [3] 1 Cor. 14:19, 29, 31. [4] 1 Cor. 11:33. [5] 1 Tim. 2:1–2, 8–10; 1 Cor. 14:16. [6] 1 Cor. 16:2. [7] Isa. 66:23; *Gal. 6:6; *Acts 20:7; Heb. 4:9–10.

LORD’S DAY 39

104. What does God require in the fifth commandment?

That I show all honor, love, and faithfulness to my father and mother,¹ and to all in authority over me,² submit myself with due obedience to all their good instruction and correction, and also bear patiently with their infirmities, since it is God’s will to govern us by their hand.³

[1] Eph. 6:22; Eph. 6:1–6; Col. 3:18, 20–24; Prov. 1:8–9; 4:1; 15:20; 20:20; Ex. 21:17; Gen. 9:24–25. [2] Rom. 13:1; 1 Pet. 2:18; Rom. 13:2–7; Matt. 22:21. [3] Eph. 6:4, 9; Col. 3:19, 21; *Prov. 30:17; *Deut. 27:16; *Deut. 32:24; *Prov. 13:24; *1 Tim. 2:1–2; *1 Tim. 5:17; *Heb. 13:17–18.

LORD’S DAY 40

105. What does God require in the sixth commandment?

That I do not revile, hate, insult, or kill my neighbor either in thought, word, or gesture, much less in deed, whether by myself or by another,¹ but lay aside all desire of revenge;² moreover, that I do not harm myself, nor willfully run into any danger.³ Wherefore also to restrain murder the magistrate is armed with the sword.⁴

[1] Matt. 5:21–22; 26:52; Gen. 9:6. [2] Eph. 4:26; Rom. 1:19; Matt. 5:25; 18:35. [3] Matt. 4:7; Rom. 13:14; Col. 2:23. [4] Ex. 21:14; *Matt. 18:6–7.

106. Does this commandment speak only of killing?

No, but in forbidding murder God teaches us that He abhors its very root, namely, envy,¹ hatred,² anger,³ and desire of revenge; and that in His sight all these are hidden murder.⁴

[1] Rom. 1:28–32. [2] 1 Jn. 2:9–11. [3] Jas. 2:13; Gal. 5:19–21. [4] 1 Jn. 3:15 *Jas. 3:16; *1:19.

107. But is this all that is required: that we do not kill our neighbor?

No, for in condemning envy, hatred, and anger, God requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves,¹ to show patience, peace, meekness,² mercy,³ and kindness⁴ toward him, and to prevent his hurt as much as possible;⁵ also, to do good even unto our enemies.⁶

[1] Matt. 7:12; 22:39. [2] Eph. 4:2; Gal. 6:1–2; Rom. 12:18. [3] Matt. 5:7; Lk. 6:36. [4] Rom. 12:10. [5] Ex. 23:5. [6] Matt. 5:44–45; Rom. 12:20–21; *Col. 3:12–14; *Matt. 5:9.

LORD’S DAY 41

108. What does the seventh commandment teach us?

That all unchastity is accursed of God,¹ and that we should therefore loathe it with our whole heart,² and live chastely and modestly,³ whether in holy wedlock or single life.⁴

[1] Lev. 18:27–28. [2] Jud 1:22–23. [3] 1 Thes. 4:3–5. [4] Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 7:1–4.

109. Does God forbid nothing more in this commandment than adultery and such gross sins?

Since both our body and soul are temples of the Holy Spirit, it is His will that we keep both pure and holy; therefore, He forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words,¹ thoughts, desires,² and whatever may entice thereto.³

[1] Eph. 5:3–4; 1 Cor. 6:18–20. [2] Matt. 5:27–30. [3] Eph. 5:18–19; 1 Cor. 15:33.

LORD’S DAY 42

110. What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?

God forbids not only such theft¹ and robbery² as are punished by the government, but God views as theft also all wicked tricks and devices, whereby we seek to get our neighbor’s goods, whether by force or by deceit,³ such as unjust weights,⁴ lengths, measures,⁵ goods, coins, usury,⁶ or by any means forbidden of God; also all

covetousness⁷ and the misuse and waste of His gifts.⁸

[1] 1 Cor. 6:10. [2] 1 Cor. 5:10. [3] Lk. 3:14; 1 Thess. 4:6. [4] Prov. 11:1; 16:11. [5] Ezek. 45:9–10. Deut. 25:13–15. [6] Ps. 15:5; Lk. 6:35. [7] 1 Cor. 6:10. [8] Prov. 5:10; *1 Tim. 6:10; *Jn. 6:12.

111. But what does God require of you in this commandment?

That I further my neighbor's good where I can and may, deal with him as I would have others deal with me,¹ and labor faithfully, so that I may be able to help the poor in their need.²

[1] Matt. 7:12. [2] Eph. 4:28; *Phil. 2:4; *Gen. 3:19; *1 Tim. 6:6–7.

LORD'S DAY 43

112. What does the ninth commandment require?

That I bear false witness against no one,¹ twist no one's words,² be no backbiter or slanderer,³ join in condemning no one unheard or rashly;⁴ but that on pain of God's heavy wrath, I avoid all lying and deceit⁵ as the very works of the devil;⁶ and that in matters of judgment and justice and in all other affairs, I love, speak honestly, and confess the truth;⁷ also, insofar as I can, defend and promote my neighbor's good name.⁸

[1] Prov. 19:5, 9. [2] Ps. 15:3. [3] Rom. 1:28–30. [4] Matt. 7:1–2. Lk. 6:37. [5] Jn. 8:44. [6] Prov. 12:22; 13:5. [7] 1 Cor. 13:6; Eph. 4:25. [8] 1 Pet. 4:8; *Jn. 7:24, 51; *1 Pet. 2:21, 23; *Col. 4:6; *1 Pet 3:9.

LORD'S DAY 44

113. What does the tenth commandment require?

That not even the least inclination or thought against any commandment of God ever enter our heart, but that with our whole heart we continually hate all sin and take pleasure in all righteousness.¹

[1] Rom. 7:7–8; *Prov. 4:23; *Jas. 1:14–15; *Matt. 15:11, 19–20.

114. Can those who are converted to God keep these commandments perfectly?

No, but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of such obedience,¹ yet so that with earnest purpose they begin to live not only according to some, but according to all the commandments of God.²

[1] 1 Jn. 1:8–10; Rom. 7:14–15; Eccl. 7:20. [2] Rom. 7:22; Jas. 2:10–11; *Job 9:2–3; *Ps. 19:13.

115. Why then does God so strictly enjoin the Ten Commandments upon us, since in this life no one can keep them?

First, that as long as we live we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature,¹ and so the more earnestly seek forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ;² second, that without ceasing we diligently ask God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we be renewed more and more after the image of God, until we attain the goal of perfection after this life.³

[1] 1 Jn. 1:9; Ps. 32:5. [2] Rom. 7:24–25. [3] 1 Cor. 9:24–25; Phil. 3:12–14; *Matt. 5:6; *Ps. 51:12.

Prayer

LORD’S DAY 45

116. Why is prayer necessary for Christians?

Because it is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us,¹ and because God will give His grace and Holy Spirit only to those who earnestly and without ceasing ask them of Him, and render thanks unto Him for them.²

[1] Ps. 50:14–15. [2] Matt. 7:7–8; Lk. 11:9–10, 13; Matt. 13:12; *Eph. 6:18.

117. What belongs to such prayer which is acceptable to God and which He will hear?

First, that with our whole heart¹ we call only upon the one true God, who has revealed Himself to us in His Word,² for all that He has commanded us to ask of Him;³ second, that we thoroughly know our need and misery,⁴ so as to humble ourselves in the presence of His divine majesty;⁵ third, that we be firmly assured⁶ that notwithstanding our unworthiness, He will, for the sake of Christ our Lord, certainly hear our prayer,⁷ as He has promised us in His Word.⁸

[1] Jn. 4:22–24. [2] Rom. 8:26; 1 Jn. 5:14. [3] Ps. 27:8. [4] 2 Chron. 20:12. [5] Ps. 2:10; 34:18; Isa. 66:2. [6] Rom. 10:14; Jas. 1:6. [7] Jn. 14:13–16; Dan. 9:17–18. [8] Matt. 7:8; Ps. 143:1; *Lk. 18:13.

118. What has God commanded us to ask of Him?

All things necessary for soul and body,¹ which Christ our Lord comprised in the prayer which He Himself taught us.

[1] Jas. 1:17. Matt. 6:33. *1 Pet. 5:7. *Phil. 4:6.

119. What is the Lord’s Prayer?

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.¹

[1] Matt. 6:9–13; Lk. 11:2–4.

LORD’S DAY 46

120. Why did Christ command us to address God thus: “Our Father”?

To awaken in us at the very beginning of our prayer that childlike reverence for and trust in God, which are to be the ground of our prayer, namely, that God has become our Father through Christ, and will much less deny us what we ask of Him in faith than our parents refuse us earthly things.¹

[1] Matt. 7:9–11; Lk. 11:11–13; *1 Pet. 1:17; *Isa. 63:16.

121. Why is it added, “in heaven”?

That we might have no earthly thought of the heavenly majesty of God,¹ and from His almighty power expect all things necessary for body and soul.²

[1] Jer. 23:23–24; Acts 17:24–25, 27. [2] Rom. 10:12; *1 Kgs. 8:28; *Ps. 115:3.

LORD’S DAY 47

122. What is the first petition?

“Hallowed be Your name;” that is, grant us, first, rightly to know You,¹ and to sanctify, magnify, and praise You in all Your works, in which Your power, goodness, justice, mercy, and truth shine forth;² and further, that we so order our whole life, our thoughts, words, and deeds, that Your Name may not be blasphemed, but honored and praised on our account.³

[1] Jn. 17:3; Matt. 16:17; Jas. 1:5; Ps. 119:105. [2] Ps. 119:137; Rom. 11:33–36.

[3] Ps. 71:8; *Ps. 100:3–4; *Ps. 92:1–2; *Eph. 1:16–17; *Ps. 71:16.

LORD’S DAY 48

123. What is the second petition?

“Your kingdom come;” that is, so govern us by Your Word and Spirit, that we submit ourselves to You always more and more;¹ preserve and increase Your Church;² destroy the works of the devil, every power that exalts itself against You, and all wicked devices

formed against Your Holy Word,³ until the fullness of Your kingdom come,⁴ wherein You shall be all in all.⁵

[1] Ps. 119:5; 143:10. [2] Ps. 51:18; 122:6–7. [3] 1 Jn. 3:8; Rom. 16:20. [4] Rev. 22:17, 20; Rom. 8:22–23. [5] 1 Cor. 15:28; *Ps. 102:12–13; *Heb. 12:28; *Rev. 11:15; *1 Cor. 15:24.

LORD’S DAY 49

124. What is the third petition?

“Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven;” that is, grant that we and all men renounce our own will,¹ and without disputing obey Your will, which alone is good;² so that every one may fulfill his office and calling as willingly and faithfully³ as the angels do in heaven.⁴

[1] Matt. 16:24. [2] Lk. 22:42; Tit. 2:12. [3] 1 Cor. 7:24. [4] Ps. 103:20–21; *Rom. 12:2; *Heb. 13:21.

LORD’S DAY 50

125. What is the fourth petition?

“Give us this day our daily bread;” that is, be pleased to provide for all our bodily need,¹ so that we may thereby acknowledge that You are the only fountain of all good,² and that without Your blessing neither our care and labor, nor Your gifts, can profit us;³ that we may therefore withdraw our trust from all creatures and place it in You alone.⁴

[1] Ps. 104:27–28; 145:15–16; Matt. 6:25–26. [2] Acts 14:17; 17:27–28. [3] 1 Cor. 15:58; Deut. 8:3; Ps. 37:3–7, 16–17. [4] Ps. 55:22; 62:10; *Ps. 127:1–2; *Jer. 17:5, 7; *Ps. 146:2–3.

LORD’S DAY 51

126. What is the fifth petition?

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;” that is, be pleased, for the sake of Christ’s blood, not to impute to us miserable sinners our manifold transgressions, nor the evil which always clings to us;¹ as we also find this witness of Your grace in us, that it is our full purpose heartily to forgive our neighbor.²

[1] Ps. 51:1–4; 143:2; 1 Jn. 2:1–2. [2] Matt. 6:14–15; Ps. 51:5–7; *Eph. 1:7.

LORD’S DAY 52

127. What is the sixth petition?

“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one;”

that is, since we are so weak in ourselves that we cannot stand a moment,¹ and besides, our deadly enemies, the devil,² the world,³ and our own flesh,⁴ assail us without ceasing, be pleased to preserve and strengthen us by the power of Your Holy Spirit, that we may make firm stand against them and not be overcome in this spiritual warfare,⁵ until finally complete victory is ours.⁶

[1] Jn. 15:5; Ps. 103:14–16. [2] 1 Pet. 5:8–9; Eph. 6:12–13. [3] Jn. 15:19. [4] Rom. 7:23; Gal. 5:17. [5] Matt. 26:41; Mk. 13:33. [6] 1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23–24; *2 Cor. 12:7.

128. How do you close this prayer?

“For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever;” that is, all this we ask of You, because as our King, having power over all things, You are willing and able to give us all good;¹ and that thereby not we, but Your holy name may be glorified for ever.²

[1] Rom. 10:11–12; 2 Pet. 2:9. [2] Jn. 14:13; Ps. 115:1.

129. What is the meaning of the word “Amen”?

“Amen” means: so shall it truly and surely be. For my prayer is much more certainly heard of God than I feel in my heart that I desire these things of Him.¹

[1] 2 Cor. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:13; *Ps. 145:18–19.

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” — Ephesians 3:20–21

WHY THE COMPLETE GOSPEL?

The Complete Gospel is a presentation of the breadth and depth of God's redeeming grace. A proper understanding of the gospel gives all the credit or glory to God. All we have has been received. This complete, God-centered gospel has been believed and taught by the Christian church throughout the centuries. The Lord Jesus is clear that we are saved only when God the Father draws us to the Son (John 6:44, 65). He does this by His Spirit and Word through the preaching and teaching of the gospel. We respond with faith and repentance.

EXPERIENCING THE COMPLETE GOSPEL

In addition to believing the essential truths about the gospel, believers experience the transforming power of God's grace. The Scriptures speak of Christ and His Spirit dwelling within His people. We go from being spiritually dead, to spiritually alive (Ephesians 2:1-10). This change is called regeneration. It means to be born again and to become a new creature in Christ. As we grow in grace all true believers will come to love the things that God loves and hate the things that God hates.

WHY SHOULD I EXAMINE WHAT I BELIEVE?

First because this is what 2 Corinthians 13:5 says we should do:

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

And second, there is a form of Christianity that is **counterfeit**. There are false teachers and fake Christians who **“have a form of godliness, but deny its power.”** While they may seem genuine, they fall short of Biblical Christianity. Peter describes those who aren't growing and maturing as **“short-sighted and blind.”** They might look, sound, and even think they are faithful Christians, when they're not.

Has your life been transformed by the power of the Gospel?

THE CHURCH HELPING YOU TO GROW IN GRACE IS:

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