

**MARTIN LUTHER, JOSEPH STUMP**

**AN EXPLANATION  
OF LUTHER'S  
SMALL  
CATECHISM**

Martin Luther

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# Martin Luther

## An Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism

### PREFACE

This book aims to present both an analysis of Luther's Small Catechism and a clear, concise, yet reasonably full explanation of its contents. It is an attempt, upon the basis of twenty years' experience and a study of the literature of the subject, to meet the peculiar wants of the catechetical class in our Lutheran Church in America. The object of the book is twofold: first, to furnish an outline of teaching which the pastor may use as a guide in his oral explanation and questioning; and secondly, to furnish a sufficiently complete summary by means of which the catechumens may review the lesson and fix its salient points in their minds. No text-book can, of course, adequately supply the parenetical side of the catechetical instruction or take the place of the living exposition by the pastor. But it can and should support his work, so that what he explains at one meeting may not be forgotten before the next meeting, but may be fixed in the minds of the catechumens by study at home.

Since the task of the pastor in catechization is not only to impart religious instruction, but to impart it on the basis of that priceless heritage of our Church, Luther's Small Catechism, the explanation here offered follows the catechism closely. The words of the catechism are printed in heavy-faced type and are used as headings wherever possible; and thus the words of the catechism may be traced as a thread running through the entire explanation.

Wherever he deemed it necessary, the author has added a fuller explanation of the text of the catechism than that which Luther gives, and has supplemented its contents with such additional matter as the needs of our catechumens require. He does not agree with those catechetical writers who maintain that the pastor, in his catechization, must confine himself to an explanation of *Luther's explanation*. Such a principle would exclude from the catechetical class much which our catechumens should be taught. But all such additional matters are introduced under an appropriate head as an organic part of the whole explanation, thus preserving its unity.

This book is written in the thetical form instead of the traditional form of questions and answers. There is nothing in the nature of catechization which would require the use of the interrogative form in such a text-book, and accordingly the thetical form has for years been employed by numerous writers of text-books for the catechetical class in Germany. While questions have an important place in catechetical instruction, the matter and not the form is the vital thing. Catechization is *not a method* of instruction by means of questions and answers. Neither the original meaning of the word nor the history of catechization justifies such a definition. (See my article, "A Brief History of Catechization," in the Lutheran Church Review, January, 1902; comp. v. Zezschwitz: System der christl.-kirchl. Katechetik, vol. i. pp. 17 seq., and vol. ii., 2. 1., pp. 3 seq.) And since Christian truth is not something to be brought forth from the mind of the child by means of questions, but something divinely revealed and hence *to be communicated* to the child, the most natural form in which to set it before him in a text-book is the thetical. Luther's catechism itself is, indeed, in the form of questions and answers. But his catechism is confessional as well as didactic, and its words, memorized by the catechumen, are to become a personal confession of faith. The explanations of a text-book, on the other hand, are not to be memorized, but are meant to aid the catechumen in grasping the *thoughts* of the catechism. For this purpose, the thetical form is better than the interrogative, because the explanation is not continually broken by questions, and is thus better adapted to give the catechumens a connected idea of the doctrines taught.

Each chapter of this explanation is followed by a number of questions. After the pastor has explained a lesson at one meeting, the catechumens should prepare themselves to give an answer to the

printed questions *in their own words* at the next meeting. The pastor may, of course, substitute other questions, assign additional ones, or eliminate some. The proof passages for the teachings set forth are cited in the margin. The more important passages, particularly those which the catechumens may be expected to memorize, are specially indicated by a dagger (+), and are printed in full at the end of the chapter. The use of a Scripture lesson is, of course, optional with the pastor. One is indicated, however, for each chapter, and may be read in class or be assigned to the catechumens to be read at home. The Scriptural illustrations are cited for the convenience of the pastor in his oral exposition. The division into chapters has been regulated by the subject-matter, and will, it is hoped, aid in the survey of the contents of the book as a whole. It is not intended that each chapter shall necessarily constitute one lesson. Some lessons will doubtless include only a part of a chapter, while others will include several chapters, as the pastor may determine.

While the author, in the preparation of this explanation of Luther's catechism, has gone his own way, careful consideration has been given to the voice of those whose study of the problems involved entitled them to be heard. Luther's other catechetical writings, the standard theoretical works on Catechetics, and numerous monographs have been constantly at hand. Explanations of the catechism for the use of pastors and teachers have been freely consulted,—among others, those of Schuetze, Fricke, Mehliß, Kahle, Zuck, Kaftan, v. Zezschwitz, Palmer, Harnack, Nissen, Hempel, Schultze, Th. Hardeland, O. Hardeland, Nebe, Buchrucker, and Cremer. Acknowledgment is due also to the authors of numerous American and German text-books and helps for the catechetical class, whose works have been carefully scanned, in order that the fruits of past experience and the best results of former labors in this field might, if possible, be embodied in this work.

May the Lord bless this explanation of Luther's Small Catechism to the upbuilding of His kingdom and the glory of His name.

**JOSEPH STUMP**

**PHILLIPBURG, N. J.,**

**REFORMATION DAY, 1907**

## LUTHER'S PREFACE

*Martin Luther to all faithful and godly Pastors and Preachers: Grace, Mercy and Peace, in Jesus Christ, our Lord!*

The deplorable condition in which I found religious affairs during a recent visitation of the congregations, has impelled me to publish this Catechism, or statement of the Christian doctrine, after having prepared it in very brief and simple terms. Alas! what misery I beheld! The people, especially those who live in the villages, seem to have no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine, and many of the pastors are ignorant and incompetent teachers. And, nevertheless, they all maintain that they are Christians, that they have been baptized, and that they have received the Lord's Supper. Yet they cannot recite the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments; they live as if they were irrational creatures, and now that the Gospel has come to them, they grossly abuse their Christian liberty.

Ye bishops! what answer will ye give to Christ for having so shamefully neglected the people, and paid no attention to the duties of your office? I invoke no evil on your heads. But you withhold the cup in the Lord's Supper, insist on the observance of your human laws, and yet, at the same time, do not take the least interest in teaching the people the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, or any other part of the word of God. Woe unto you!

Wherefore I beseech you in the Name of God, my beloved brethren, who are pastors or preachers, to engage heartily in the discharge of the duties of your office, to have mercy on the people who are entrusted to your care, and to assist us in introducing the Catechism among them, and especially among the young. And if any of you do not possess the necessary qualifications, I beseech you to take at least the following forms, and read them, word for word, to the people, on this wise:—

In the first place; let the preacher take the utmost care to avoid all changes or variations in the text and wording of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Sacraments, etc. Let him, on the contrary, take each of the forms respectively, adhere to it, and repeat it anew, year after year. For young and inexperienced people cannot be successfully instructed, unless we adhere to the same text or the same forms of expression. They easily become confused, when the teacher at one time employs a certain form of words and expressions, and, at another, apparently with a view to make improvements, adopts a different form. The result of such a course will be, that all the time and labor which we have expended will be lost.

This point was well understood by our venerable fathers, who were accustomed to use the same words in teaching the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. We, too, should follow this plan when we teach these things, particularly in the case of the young and ignorant, not changing a single syllable, nor introducing any variations when, year after year, we recur to these forms and recite them anew before our hearers.

Choose, therefore, the form of words which best pleases you, and adhere to it perpetually. When you preach in the presence of intelligent and learned men, you are at liberty to exhibit your knowledge and skill, and may present and discuss these subjects in all the varied modes which are at your command. But when you are teaching the young, retain the same form and manner without change; teach them, first of all, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, etc., always presenting the same words of the text, so that those who learn can repeat them after you, and retain them in the memory.

But if any refuse to receive your instructions, tell them plainly that they deny Christ and are not Christians; such persons shall not be admitted to the Lord's Table, nor present a child for baptism, nor enjoy any of our Christian privileges, but are to be sent back to the pope and his agents, and, indeed, to Satan himself. Their parents and employers should, besides, refuse to furnish them with

food and drink, and notify them that the government was disposed to banish from the country all persons of such a rude and intractable character.

For although we cannot, and should not, compel them to exercise faith, we ought, nevertheless, to instruct the great mass with all diligence, so that they may know how to distinguish between right and wrong in their conduct towards those with whom they live, or among whom they desire to earn their living. For whoever desires to reside in a city, and enjoy the rights and privileges which its laws confer, is also bound to know and obey those laws. God grant that such persons may become sincere believers! But if they remain dishonest and vicious, let them at least withhold from public view the vices of their hearts.

In the second place; when those whom you are instructing have become familiar with the words of the text, it is time to teach them to understand the meaning of those words, so that they may become acquainted with the object and purport of the lesson. Then proceed to another of the following forms, or, at your pleasure, choose any other which is brief, and adhere strictly to the same words and forms of expression in the text, without altering a single syllable; besides, allow yourself ample time for the lessons. For it is not necessary that you should, on the same occasion, proceed from the beginning to the end of the several parts; it will be more profitable if you present them separately, in regular succession. When the people have, for instance, at length correctly understood the First Commandment, you may proceed to the Second, and so continue. By neglecting to observe this mode, the people will be overburdened, and be prevented from understanding and retaining in memory any considerable part of the matter communicated to them.

In the third place; when you have thus reached the end of this Short Catechism, begin anew with the Large Catechism, and by means of it furnish the people with fuller and more comprehensive explanations. Explain here at large every Commandment, every Petition, and, indeed, every part, showing the duties which they severally impose, and both the advantages which follow the performance of those duties, and also the dangers and losses which result from the neglect of them. Insist in an especial manner on such Commandments or other parts as seem to be most of all misunderstood or neglected by your people. It will, for example, be necessary that you should enforce with the utmost earnestness the Seventh Commandment, which treats of stealing, when you are teaching workmen, dealers and even farmers and servants, inasmuch as many of these are guilty of various dishonest and thievish practices. So, too, it will be your duty to explain and apply the Fourth Commandment with great diligence, when you are teaching children and uneducated adults, and to urge them to observe order, to be faithful, obedient and peaceable, as well as to adduce numerous instances mentioned in the Scriptures, which show that God punished such as were guilty in these things, and blessed the obedient.

Here, too, let it be your great aim to urge magistrates and parents to rule wisely, and to educate the children, admonishing them, at the same time, that such duties are imposed on them, and showing them how grievously they sin if they neglect them. For in such a case they overthrow and lay waste alike the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world, acting as if they were the worst enemies both of God and man. And show them very plainly the shocking evils of which they are the authors, when they refuse their aid in training up children to be pastors, preachers, writers, etc., and set forth that on account of such sins God will inflict an awful punishment upon them. It is, indeed, necessary to preach on these things; for parents and magistrates are guilty of sins in this respect, which are so great that there are no terms in which they can be described. And truly, Satan has a cruel design in fostering these evils.

Finally; inasmuch as the people are now relieved from the tyranny of the pope, they refuse to come to the Lord's Table, and treat it with contempt. On this point, also, it is very necessary that you should give them instructions, while, at the same time, you are to be guided by the following principles: That we are to compel no one to believe, or to receive the Lord's Supper; that we are not to establish any laws on this point, or appoint the time and place; but that we should so preach as

to influence the people, without any law adopted, by us, to urge, and, as it were, to compel us who are pastors, to administer the Lord's Supper to them. Now this object may be attained, if we address them in the following manner; It is to be feared that he who does not desire to receive the Lord's Supper at least three or four times during the year, despises the Sacrament, and is no Christian. So, too, he is no Christian, who neither believes nor obeys the Gospel; for Christ did not say: "Omit or despise this," but "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it," etc. He commands that this should be done, and by no means be neglected and despised. He says: "This do."

Now he who does not highly value the Sacrament, shows thereby that he has no sin, no flesh, no devil, no world, no death, no danger, no hell; that is to say, he does not believe that such evils exist, although he may be deeply immersed in them, and completely belong to the devil. On the other hand, he needs no grace, no life, no Paradise, no heaven, no Christ, no God, no good thing. For if he believed that he was involved in such evils, and that he was in need of such blessings, he could not refrain from receiving the Sacrament, wherein aid is afforded against such evils, and, again, such blessings are bestowed. It will not be necessary to compel him by the force of any law to approach the Lord's Table; he will hasten to it of his own accord, will compel himself to come, and indeed urge you to administer the Sacrament to him.

Hence, you are by no means to adopt any compulsory law in this case, as the Pope has done. Let it simply be your aim to set forth distinctly the advantages and losses, the wants and the benefits, the dangers and the blessings, which are to be considered in connection with the Sacrament; the people will, doubtless, then seek it without urgent demands on your part. If they still refuse to come forward, let them choose their own ways, and tell them that those who do not regard their own spiritual misery, and do not desire the gracious help of God, belong to Satan. But if you do not give such solemn admonitions, or if you adopt odious compulsory laws on the subject, it is your own fault if the people treat the Sacrament with contempt. Will they not necessarily be slothful, if you are silent and sleep? Therefore consider the subject seriously, ye Pastors and Preachers! Our office has now assumed a very different character from that which it bore under the Pope; it is now of a very grave nature, and is very salutary in its influence. It consequently subjects us to far greater burdens and labors, dangers and temptations, while it brings with it an inconsiderable reward, and very little gratitude in the world. But Christ himself will be our reward, if we labor with fidelity. May He grant such mercy unto us who is the Father of all grace, to whom be given thanks and praises through Christ, our Lord, for ever! Amen.

**WITTENBERG, A.D. 1529**

# THE SMALL CATECHISM

## PART I

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

*In the plain form in which they are to be taught by the head of a family.*

#### THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

[Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or 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; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep my commandments.]

*What is meant by this Commandment?*

*Answer.* We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

#### THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain.

*What is meant by this Commandment?*

*Ans.* We should so fear and love God as not to curse, swear, conjure, lie, or deceive, by His Name, but call upon Him in every time of need, and worship Him with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.

#### THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy.

[Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.]

*What is meant by this Commandment?*

*Ans.* We should so fear and love God as not to despise His Word and the preaching of the Gospel, but deem it holy, and willing to hear and learn it.

#### THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

*What is meant by this Commandment?*

*Ans.* We should so fear and love God as not to despise nor displease our parents and superiors, but honor, serve, obey, love, and esteem them.

### **THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT**

Thou shalt not kill.

*What is meant by this Commandment?*

*Ans.* We should so fear and love God as not to do our neighbor any bodily harm or injury, but rather assist and comfort him in danger and want.

### **THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT**

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

*What is meant by this Commandment?*

*Ans.* We should so fear and love God as to be chaste and pure in our words and deeds, each one also loving and honoring his wife or her husband.

### **THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT**

Thou shalt not steal.

*What is meant by this Commandment?*

*Ans.* We should so fear and love God as not to rob our neighbor of his money or property, nor bring it into our possession by unfair dealing or fraudulent means, but rather assist him to improve and protect it.

### **THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT**

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

*What is meant by this Commandment?*

*Ans.* We should so fear and love God as not deceitfully to belie, betray, slander, nor raise injurious reports against our neighbor, but apologize for him, speak well of him, and put the most charitable construction on all his actions.

### **THE NINTH COMMANDMENT**

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

*What is meant by this Commandment?*

*Ans.* We should so fear and love God as not to desire by craftiness to gain possession of our neighbor's inheritance or home, or to obtain it under the pretext of a legal right, but be ready to assist and serve him in the preservation of his own.

### **THE TENTH COMMANDMENT**

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

*What is meant by this Commandment?*

*Ans.* We should so fear and love God as not to alienate our neighbor's wife from him, entice away his servants, nor let loose his cattle, but use our endeavors that they may remain and discharge their duty to him.

*What does God declare concerning all these Commandments?*

*Ans.* He says: I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep my commandments.

*What is meant by this declaration?*

*Ans.* God threatens to punish all those who transgress these commandments. We should, therefore, dread His displeasure, and not act contrarily to these commandments. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep them. We should, therefore, love and trust in Him, and cheerfully do what He has commanded us.

## PART II

### THE CREED

*In the plain form in which it is to be taught by the head of a family.*

FIRST ARTICLE.—OF CREATION.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

*What is meant by this Article?*

*Ans.* I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul with all my limbs and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my mind, together with my raiment, food, home, and family, and all my property; that He daily provides me abundantly with all the necessaries of life, protects me from all danger, and preserves me and guards me against all evil; all which He does out of pure, paternal, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all which I am in duty bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

SECOND ARTICLE.—OF REDEMPTION.

And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

*What is meant by this Article?*

*Ans.* I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, secured and delivered me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold, but with His holy and precious blood, and with His innocent sufferings and death; in order that I might be His, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness; even as He is risen from the dead, and lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

THIRD ARTICLE.—OF SANCTIFICATION.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; the Resurrection of the body; and the Life everlasting. Amen.

*What is meant by this Article?*

*Ans.* I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me by His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the true faith; in which Christian Church He daily forgives abundantly all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and will raise up me and all the dead at the last day, and will grant everlasting life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true.

## **PART III**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*In the plain form in which it is to be taught by the head of a family.*

**INTRODUCTION.**

Our Father Who art in heaven.

*What is meant by this Introduction?*

*Ans.* God would thereby affectionately encourage us to believe that He is truly our Father, and that we are His children indeed, so that we may call upon Him with all cheerfulness and confidence, even as beloved children entreat their affectionate parent.

### **FIRST PETITION**

Hallowed be Thy Name.

*What is meant by this Petition?*

*Ans.* The Name of God is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may be hallowed also by us.

*How is this effected?*

*Ans.* When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, lead holy lives, in accordance with it; to this may our blessed Father in heaven help us! But whoever teaches and lives otherwise than as God's Word prescribes, profanes the Name of God among us; from this preserve us, Heavenly Father!

### **SECOND PETITION**

Thy kingdom come.

*What is meant by this Petition?*

*Ans.* The kingdom of God comes indeed of itself, without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may come unto us also.

*When is this effected?*

*Ans.* When our Heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word, and live a godly life here on earth, and in heaven for ever.

### **THIRD PETITION**

Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

*What is meant by this Petition?*

*Ans.* The good and gracious will of God is done indeed without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done by us also.

*When is this effected?*

*Ans.* When God frustrates and brings to naught every evil counsel and purpose, which would hinder us from hallowing the Name of God, and prevent His kingdom from coming to us, such as the will of the devil, of the world, and of our own flesh; and when He strengthens us, and keeps us steadfast in His Word, and in the faith, even unto our end. This is His gracious and good will.

## FOURTH PETITION

Give us this day our daily bread.

*What is meant by this Petition?*

*Ans.* God gives indeed without our prayer even to the wicked also their daily bread; but we pray in this petition that He would make us sensible of His benefits, and enable us to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

*What is implied in the words: "Our daily bread"?*

*Ans.* All things that pertain to the wants and the support of this present life; such as food, raiment, money, goods, house and land, and other property; a believing spouse and good children; trustworthy servants and faithful magistrates; favorable seasons, peace and health; education and honor; true friends, good neighbors, and the like.

## FIFTH PETITION

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

*What is meant by this Petition?*

*Ans.* We pray in this petition, that our Heavenly Father would not regard our sins, nor deny us our requests on account of them; for we are not worthy of anything for which we pray, and have not merited it; but that He would grant us all things through grace, although we daily commit much sin, and deserve chastisement alone. We will therefore, on our part, both heartily forgive, and also readily do good to those who may injure or offend us.

## SIXTH PETITION

And, lead us not into temptation.

*What is meant by this Petition?*

*Ans.* God indeed tempts no one to sin; but we pray in this petition that God would so guard and preserve us, that the devil, the world, and our own flesh, may not deceive us, nor lead us into error and unbelief, despair, and other great and shameful sins; and that, though we may be thus tempted, we may, nevertheless, finally prevail and gain the victory.

## SEVENTH PETITION

But deliver us from evil.

*What is meant by this Petition?*

*Ans.* We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that our Heavenly Father would deliver us from all manner of evil, whether it affect the body or soul, property or character, and, at last, when the hour of death shall arrive, grant us a happy end, and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

CONCLUSION.

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

*What is meant by the word "Amen"?*

*Ans.* That I should be assured that such petitions are acceptable to our Heavenly Father, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us to pray in this manner, and has promised that He will hear us. Amen, Amen, that is, Yea, yea, it shall be so.

## PART IV

### THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

*In the plain form in which it is to be taught by the head of a family.*

*I. What is Baptism?*

*Ans.* Baptism is not simply water, but it is the water comprehended in God's command, and connected with God's Word.

*What is that Word of God?*

*Ans.* It is that which our Lord Jesus Christ spoke, as it is recorded in the last chapter of Matthew, verse 19: "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

*II. What gifts or benefits does Baptism confer?*

*Ans.* It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and confers everlasting salvation on all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declare.

*What are such words and promises of God?*

*Ans.* Those which our Lord Jesus Christ spoke, as they are recorded in the last chapter of Mark, verse 16: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

*III. How can water produce such great effects?*

*Ans.* It is not the water indeed that produces these effects, but the Word of God which accompanies and is connected with the water, and our faith, which relies on the Word of God connected with the water. For the water, without the Word of God, is simply water and no baptism. But when connected with the Word of God, it is a baptism, that is, a gracious water of life, and a "washing of regeneration" in the Holy Ghost; as St. Paul says to Titus, in the third chapter, verses 5-8: "According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying."

*IV. What does such baptizing with water signify?*

*Ans.* It signifies that the old Adam in us is to be drowned, and destroyed by daily sorrow and repentance, together with all sins and evil lusts; and that again, the new man should daily come forth and rise, that shall live in the presence of God in righteousness and purity forever.

*Where is it so written?*

*Ans.* St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 6, verse 4, says: "We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death; that like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

#### OF CONFESSION

*What is Confession?*

*Ans.* Confession consists of two parts: the one is, that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution or forgiveness through the pastor as of God himself, in no wise doubting, but firmly believing that our sins are thus forgiven before God in heaven.

*What sins ought we to confess?*

*Ans.* In the presence of God we should acknowledge ourselves guilty of all manner of sins, even of those which we do not ourselves perceive; as we do in the Lord's Prayer. But in the presence of the pastor we should confess those sins alone of which we have knowledge, and which we feel in our hearts.

*Which are these?*

*Ans.* Here reflect on your condition, according to the Ten Commandments, namely: Whether you are a father or mother, a son or daughter, a master or mistress, a manservant or maidservant—whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, slothful—whether you have injured any one by words or actions-whether you have stolen, neglected, or wasted aught, or done other evil.

## **PART V**

### **THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR,**

#### **OR, THE LORD'S SUPPER**

*In the plain form in which it is to be taught by the head of a family.*

*What is the Sacrament of the Altar?*

*Ans.* It is the true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, given unto us Christians to eat and to drink, as it was instituted by Christ Himself.

*Where is it so written?*

*Ans.* The Holy Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, together with St. Paul, write thus:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my Body, which is given for you: this do, in remembrance of Me.

"After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: this cup is the new testament in my Blood, which is shed for you, for the remission of sins: this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."

*What benefits are derived from such eating and drinking?*

*Ans.* They are pointed out in these words; "given and shed for you, for the remission of sins." Namely, through these words, the remission of sins, life and salvation are granted unto us in the Sacrament. For where there is remission of sins, there are also life and salvation.

*How can the bodily eating and drinking produce such great effects?*

*Ans.* The eating and the drinking, indeed, do not produce them, but the words which stand here, namely: "given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins." These words are, besides the bodily eating and drinking, the chief things in the Sacrament; and he who believes these words, has that which they declare and set forth, namely, the remission of sins.

*Who is it, then, that receives this Sacrament worthily?*

*Ans.* Fasting and bodily preparation are indeed a good external discipline; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who believes these words, "given and shed for you, for the remission of sins." But he who does not believe these words, or who doubts, is unworthy and unfit: for the words: "FOR YOU," require truly believing hearts.

### **MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER**

*In the plain form in which it is to be taught by the head of a family.*

#### **MORNING**

*In the Morning, when thou risest, thou shalt say:*

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

*Then, kneeling or standing, thou shalt say the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer.*

*Then mayest thou say this Prayer:*

I give thanks unto Thee, Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ Thy dear Son, that Thou hast protected me through the night from all danger and harm; and I beseech Thee to preserve and keep me this day also, from all sin and evil; that in all my thoughts, words, and deeds, I may serve and please Thee. Into Thy hands I commend my body and soul, and all that is mine. Let Thy holy angel have charge concerning me, that the wicked one may have no power over me. Amen.

*And then shouldst thou go with joy to thy work, after a Hymn, or the Ten Commandments, or whatever thy devotion may suggest.*

## **EVENING**

*In the Evening, when thou goest to bed, thou shall say:*

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Then, kneeling or standing, thou shalt say the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer.*

*Then mayest thou say this Prayer:*

I give thanks unto Thee, Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ Thy dear Son, that Thou hast this day so graciously protected me, and I beseech Thee to forgive me all my sins, and the wrong which I have done, and by Thy great mercy defend me from all the perils and dangers of this night. Into thy hands I commend my body and soul, and all that is mine. Let Thy holy angel have charge concerning me, that the wicked one may have no power over me. Amen.

*And then lie down, in peace, and sleep.*

## **BLESSING AND THANKSGIVING AT TABLE**

*In the plain form in which they are to be taught by the head of a family.*

### **BEFORE MEAT**

*Before meat, the members of the family surrounding the table reverently and with folded hands, there shall be said:*

The eyes of all wait upon Thee, O Lord: and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

*Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer, and after that this Prayer:*

O Lord God, Heavenly Father, bless unto us these Thy gifts, which of Thy tender kindness Thou hast bestowed upon us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*After meat, reverently and with folded hands, there shall be said:*

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever. He giveth food to all flesh; He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him; in those that hope in His mercy,

*Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer, and after that this Prayer:*

We give thanks, to Thee, O God. Our Father, for all Thy benefits, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who with Thee liveth and reigneth, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **TABLE OF DUTIES**

*Or, certain passages of the Scriptures, selected for various orders and conditions of men, wherein their respective duties are set forth.*

## **BISHOPS, PASTORS, AND PREACHERS**

A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre: but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; not a novice, but holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.—I Tim. 3:2-6; Tit. 1:9.

### **WHAT DUTIES HEARERS OWE THEIR BISHOPS**

Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.—[I Cor. 9:14.] Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things,—Gal. 6:6. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his reward.—I Tim. 5:17, 18. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.—Heb. 13:17.

## **MAGISTRATES**

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God; for rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shall have praise of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.—Rom. 13:1-4.

### **WHAT DUTIES SUBJECTS OWE MAGISTRATES**

Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.—Matt. 22:21. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, etc. Wherefore we must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.—Rom. 13:1, 5. I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.—I Tim. 2. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, etc.—Tit. 3:1. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors as unto them that are sent, etc.—I Pet. 2:13.

## **HUSBANDS**

Ye husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.—1 Pet. 3:7. And be not bitter against them.—Col. 3:19.

## **WIVES**

Wives submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord—even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.—Eph. 5:22; I Pet. 3:6.

## **PARENTS**

Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.—Eph. 6:4.

## **CHILDREN**

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and thy mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.—Eph. 6:1-3.

## **MALE AND FEMALE SERVANTS AND LABORERS**

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.—Eph. 6:5-8

## **MASTERS AND MISTRESSES**

Ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him.—Eph. 6:9

## **YOUNG PERSONS IN GENERAL**

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.—I Pet. 5:5, 6.

## **WIDOWS**

She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day; but she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.—I Tim. 5:5, 6.

## **CHRISTIANS IN GENERAL**

Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. Herein are comprehended all the commandments.—Rom. 13:9, 10. And persevere in prayer for all men.—I Tim. 2:1, 2.

# AN EXPLANATION OF LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

## CHAPTER I. THE BIBLE

THE BIBLE is the inspired and unerring record of what God has revealed to men concerning Himself and the Way of Salvation. [II Tim. 3:16+, Gal. 1:8] Hence, if we ask, "What must I do to be saved?" the answer to our question must be sought in the Bible. It tells us what to believe and what to do in order that we may belong to God's kingdom on earth and in heaven. [Matt. 6:33+, Acts 16:30+, John 5:39+] It is the only rule and standard of Christian faith and life.

WHY NEEDED. Even without the Bible, men know that there is a Higher Being. Their own conscience tells them that there is a God who will punish them if they do wrong; [Rom 2:14, 15] and the works of nature proclaim that there is an Almighty Being who created them. [Ps. 19:1+] But the knowledge of God which men gain from their own conscience and from nature is insufficient. Neither nature nor conscience can tell us anything about the Way of Salvation which God has prepared for us in Jesus Christ. It is only from the Bible that we can learn how we shall be saved.

ITS INSPIRATION. The Bible is the Word of God. It was written by holy men whom God inspired. [II Pet. 1:21+] It contains knowledge which no man could have discovered by his own power. It foretells events which no uninspired man could have foreseen. It contains teachings so exalted and holy that they could not have originated in the heart of man. It possesses a power such as no merely human book ever did or could possess. [Heb. 4:12]

ITS OBJECT is to make us wise unto salvation. [II Tim. 3:15+, Prov 9:10+] It is to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path [Ps. 119:105+] to guide us safely through this world to our heavenly home. It contains all that we need to know and all that we ever shall know in this world concerning God and His will. [Luke: 6:31] It is the final and absolute authority in all matters of religion. We should, therefore, pay most earnest heed to its teachings, believe them with all our heart, and apply them in our lives.

ITS CONTENTS. It consists of sixty-six "books," written between the years 1500 B.C. and 100 A.D., and contains the History and the Doctrines of the Kingdom of God.

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. The Bible consists of two parts: The Old Testament and the New Testament, The Old Testament reaches from Creation to about 400 B.C., and shows how God prepared the world for Christ's kingdom. The New Testament reaches from the birth of Christ to the end of the world, and shows how Christ came and established His kingdom.

LAW AND GOSPEL. The Bible contains Law, [Micah 6:8+] telling us what we must do, and Gospel, [John 3:16+] telling us how we are to be saved. The Old Testament contains principally Law, and the New Testament contains principally Gospel. But there are Law and Gospel in both. The Gospel in the Old Testament is prophetic. The Old Testament prepared the way for the New; the New Testament is the fulfilment of the Old. With the New Testament, God's revelation to men was completed; [Heb. 1:1, 2+, Heb. 2:1-3] no further revelation will be given.

## THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

*Historical.*

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

*Poetical.*

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.

*Prophetical.*

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The *historical* books of the Old Testament give an account of the creation of the world and of man, of the entrance of sin and death, of God's covenant with Israel to save them, and of the history of Israel as God's chosen people. The *poetical* books give the teachings of the Old Testament covenant in prayers, proverbs and hymns. The *prophetical* books contain many instructions, admonitions and prophecies (especially concerning Christ who should come to save men) which God sent to the Israelites through the prophets. The first four prophets are called the Major Prophets; and the last twelve, the Minor Prophets.

## THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

*Historical.*

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts.

*Didactical.*

Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, Jude

*Prophetical.*

Revelation.

The *historical* books of the New Testament give an account of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ and of some of His apostles. The *didactical* books (the epistles or letters) explain the Gospel of Christ more fully, and show how we are to believe in Him aright and live aright. The *prophetical* book tells in figurative language what shall take place in the Church of Christ up to the time when there shall be new heavens and a new earth.

**CANONICAL BOOKS.** The sixty-six books enumerated above are inspired, and are called the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments. The so-called Apocryphal Books, printed in some editions of the Bible, are not a part of the Bible: they are not inspired.

**OUR ENGLISH BIBLE.** The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek. Our English Bible is a translation from the Hebrew and the Greek. The English Bible which is in ordinary use is called the Authorized Version, or King James' Version. It is a translation made by a body of learned men and published in England in 1611, during the reign of James I. The Revised Version is an improved translation made by a body of learned men in England and America and published in 1881-1885. The Bible in whole or in part has been translated into more than three hundred languages.

**QUESTIONS.**—1. What is the Bible? 2. What does it tell us? 3. Why do we need it? 4. Why do we say that the Bible is the Word of God? 5. What is its object? 6. What does it contain? 7. Of what two parts does the Bible consist, and how far do they reach? 8. What do we mean by Law and Gospel, and where are they found? 9. What is the relation between the Old and New Testaments? 10. Name the books of the Old Testament. 11. What do the historical, poetical and prophetical books of the Old Testament contain. 12. Name the books of the New Testament. 13. What do the historical, didactical and prophetical books of the New Testament contain? 14. How many canonical books of the Bible are there? 15. In what languages was the Bible originally written? 16. Tell what you know about the English Bible? 17. Into how many languages has the Bible in whole or in part been translated?

SCRIPTURE VERSES.—II Tim. 3:16, 17. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Matt. 6:33. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Acts 16:30, 31. What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

John 5:39. Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Ps. 19:1. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork.

II Pet. 1:21. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

II Tim. 3:15. From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Prov. 9:10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Ps. 119:105. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Micah 6:8. He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

John 3:16. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Heb. 1:1, 2. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.

READING.—The Child Jesus in the Temple, Luke 2:41-52; or Mary sitting at Jesus' Feet, Luke 10:38-42.

ILLUSTRATIONS.—*Study of the Scriptures:* Jesus and the Apostles at home in them, Matt. 4:4-10, Acts 2: 14 *seq.* Timothy, II Tim. 3:15. The Bereans, Acts 17:10-12. *Variously received:* The Parable of the Sower, Luke 8:5-15.

## CHAPTER II. THE CATECHISM

The object of catechetical instruction is to fit us for communicant membership in the Church. Those who were baptized in infancy are members of the Church; but they are not admitted to the Lord's Supper, and hence do not become communicant members, until they have been instructed and confirmed.

Luther's Small Catechism is our text-book for catechetical instruction. It is not only the best book for this purpose, but is one of the Confessions of our Church, and should become our personal confession of faith, it is called Luther's *Small* Catechism, because Luther wrote a larger one also.

THE AUTHOR of our catechism was Dr. Martin Luther (b. 1483, d. 1546), the great Reformer, through whom God effected the Reformation of the Church, in the sixteenth century. He began the Reformation with his Ninety-five Theses against the sale of indulgences, contended against the many errors and abuses that had crept into the Church, and preached and taught the pure truth of the Gospel, until his death. (Ninety-five Theses, 1517; Translation of the Bible into German, 1522-34; Larger and Smaller Catechisms, 1529; Augsburg Confession adopted 1530.)

THE CATECHISM Contains the principal teachings of the Bible,—those things which we need to know in order to be saved and to lead a right Christian life. [Acts 16:30, Matt. 6:33] It is not meant to displace the Bible, but to fit us to read and study the Bible with greater profit. [John 5:39]

THE FIVE PRINCIPAL PARTS of the catechism are 1. The Ten Commandments. 2. The Creed. 3. The Lord's Prayer. 4. The Sacrament of Holy Baptism. 5. The Sacrament of the Altar<sup>1</sup>. To these are added Questions on Confession, Morning and Evening Prayers, Thanksgiving before and after Meat, and A Table of Duties.

QUESTIONS.—1. What is the object of catechetical instruction? 2. What is to be said about the relation of baptized children to the Church? 3. What is Luther's Small Catechism, and what should it become for us? 4. Who was the author of our Catechism? 5. What does our Catechism contain? 6. Name the five principal parts of the catechism, and the additions to them.

SCRIPTURE READING.—Paul confesses his Faith, Acts 26.

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<sup>1</sup> Luther says that three things are necessary for every one who would be saved. Like a sick person, 1. He must know what his sickness is. 2. He must know where the medicine is which will cure him. 3. He must desire and seek the medicine, and have it brought to him. Our sickness (sin) is revealed to us by the Ten Commandments. The medicine (God's grace) is made known to us in the Creed. We seek and ask for it in the Lord's Prayer. It is brought to us in the Sacraments.

# PART I. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

## CHAPTER III. THE LAW

The Ten Commandments are called the *Moral Law*, or more briefly the *Law*, and sometimes the Decalogue or the Ten Words. They make known to us God's will, which is the law for all His creatures. Each commandment has a *negative* side, and *forbids* something; each has also a *positive* side, and *commands* or enjoins something.

The Giving Of The Law. The Law of God was originally written in man's heart at creation. [Rom. 2:15] We call that law in the heart, Conscience. After the fall into sin, the conscience became darkened, and men did not always know right from wrong, and fell into gross idolatry. [Rom. 1:21-23] God, therefore, through Moses at Mount Sinai, gave men His law anew, [Exod. 20:1] written on two Tables of stone. [Exod. 31:18] He also gave the Israelites national and ceremonial laws. These, being meant for a particular people and a certain era of the world, are no longer binding upon us. But the Moral Law has been expressly confirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ as valid for all time and binding upon all men. [Matt. 22:37-40+]

The substance of the law is, "Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind." and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The purpose of the law is, 1. To put a check upon wicked men, [I Tim. 1:9] 2. To convince us of our sinfulness [Rom. 3:20+] and our need of the Saviour, [Gal. 3:24+] and 3. To be our rule and guide for Christian conduct. [John. 14:15+, Matt. 7:12+] It is especially with respect to the second purpose here mentioned, that the Ten Commandments were assigned by Luther to the first and not to a later place in his catechism.

The Two Tables. The Ten Commandments may be divided into two parts, called the Two Tables of the Law. [Exod. 31:18] The First Table includes the first three commandments, and teaches us our Duty to God. The Second Table Includes the last seven commandments, and teaches us our Duty to our Fellow-men.<sup>2</sup>

Questions.—1. What other names are given to the Ten Commandments? 2. What do they make known to us? 3. What two sides are there to each commandment? 4. Where was the law of God originally written? 5. Why and when was the Law given anew? 6. Why is the Moral Law binding upon us, while the national and ceremonial laws of Israel are not? 7. What is the substance of the Law? 8. What is the threefold purpose of the Law? 9. Into how many Tables is the Law divided, and what does each Table teach? 10. How many commandments does each Table include?

SCRIPTURE VERSES.—Matt. 22:37-40. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

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<sup>2</sup>The Ten Commandments are not numbered in the Bible. A two-fold numbering is found among Christians. The first is that which is given in our Catechism, and which is accepted by the majority of Christians, The other numbering makes two commandments of our first (the second being the command not to make any images), and joins our ninth and tenth into one. This makes a difference in the numbering of all the commandments except the first.

Rom. 3:20. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Gal. 3:24. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

John 14:15. If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Matt. 7:12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Reading.—The Giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai, Exod. 19 and 20.

## CHAPTER IV. THE LAWGIVER

I am the Lord thy God.

These introductory words show who is the Lawgiver. [Jas. 4:12] As earthly kings place their names at the beginning of their decrees to give them authority, so God places His name at the beginning of the commandments in order to make known who gives them, and whose displeasure we shall incur if we disobey them. These introductory words belong not only to the first but to all the commandments.

**I AM.** By these words God reminds us that He is a Person. He speaks to us. He is not an impersonal God who pervades and is a part of nature. He is above nature and has created it. [Gen 1:1]

**THE LORD.** The word here translated "Lord" means in the original Hebrew "I AM THAT I AM." [Exod 8:14+] God thereby declares that He is the One and Only Self-existent, [Isa 44:6+] Eternal, [Ps 90:1, 2+] and Unchangeable Being. [Mal 3:6+] He is the true and living God in contradistinction from all so-called gods. [Jer 10:10] The name Jehovah or "LORD" is used in the Old Testament Scriptures to designate God as the covenant God of Israel. It signified that He stood in a specially near relation to them as His chosen people. The name has the same comforting meaning for Christians; for they are the New Testament people of God. [Tit 2:14+, I Pet 2-9]

**THY GOD.** These words express God's good-will toward us. He is *our God* who loves [Jer 31:3+] us and cares for us. [I Pet 5:7] He said to Israel, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." He has delivered *us* from the still greater bondage of sin, death, and the devil through His Son Jesus Christ, [Col 1:13+] and has a right to expect our gratitude and love.

**THE LORD THY GOD.** He who gives us these commandments is a Spirit [John 4:24+] of infinite majesty and goodness. He is:

1. *Eternal*; He always was and always will be. [Ps 90:2]
2. *Unchangeable*; He always was and always will be the same. [Mal 3:6]
3. *Omnipresent*; He is present everywhere at the same time and all the time. [Ps 139:7-11]
4. *Omniscient*; He knows all the past, present, and future, and is acquainted with every thought, desire, and purpose of our hearts. [Ps 139:2]
5. *Omnipotent*, or Almighty; He is able to do all things which He wills to do. [Luke 1:37]
6. *Holy*; He is perfectly pure, and separate from all that is evil. [Isa. 6:3]
7. *Just*; He will bless those who keep His law, and punish those who break it. [Rom. 2:6]
8. *All-wise*; He always knows what is the best thing to do, and the best way to do it. [Col. 2:3]
9. *Good*; He is Love itself. [I John 4:8] He is kind even to the unthankful, [Matt. 5:45] merciful to the penitent soul for Jesus' sake, [John 3:16] and longsuffering toward the impenitent in order to lead them to repentance by His goodness. [II Pet. 3:9, Rom. 2:4]
10. *Faithful and True*; He can be absolutely relied upon to do all that He has promised or threatened. [Numb. 23:19]

Because of the Majesty and Goodness of the Lord our God, we should FEAR and LOVE HIM, and KEEP His commandments.

**QUESTIONS**—1. What do the introductory words show? 2. Of what do the words "I am" remind us? 3. What is the meaning of the Hebrew word translated "Lord"? 4. What do the words "thy God" express? 5. From what bondage has God delivered us? 6. Name and define God's attributes? 7. Why should we fear and love God?

**SCRIPTURE VERSES.**—Exod. 3:14. And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM.

Isa. 44:6. Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

Ps. 90:1, 2. LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Mal. 3:6. For I am the LORD. I change not.

Tit. 2:14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Jer. 31:3. I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

Col. 1:13, 14. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

John 4:24. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

READING.—Ps. 14: Ps. 121.

## **THE FIRST TABLE OF THE LAW**

### **OUR DUTY TO GOD**

*"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul." [Matt. 22:37]*

## CHAPTER V. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

### GOD

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

*What is meant by this commandment?*

We should fear, love and trust in God above all things.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT. This is the great commandment of the Law, because it includes all the rest. [Matt. 22:37,38] Obedience to all the commandments must proceed from the love of God which the first commandment requires. [Rom. 13:9,10] Hence the explanation of the other nine begins with the words, "We should so fear and love God."

This Commandment *forbids* us to worship false gods, and *commands* us to worship the true God by fearing, loving and trusting in Him above all things.

### I. WHAT IS FORBIDDEN

1. ALL IDOLATRY. "Thou shalt have no other gods." Idolatry is committed by all who put anything in God's place, the highest place in the heart. "Whatever we set our heart upon is our god."

*Open Idolatry* [Exod. 32:1-9, Ps. 135:15-17, Isa. 42:8, Rom. 1:22-23] is committed by those who worship imaginary beings, the sun, moon, or stars, animals, dead ancestors, idols made with hands, images,<sup>3</sup> pictures, the Virgin Mary, saints, angels, the devil, or any other creature.

*Secret Idolatry* is committed by all who put (a) Self, [Prov. 3:6, 6+, Jer. 9:23, 24] (b) Fellow-men [Acts 5:29+, Matt. 10:28+, Matt. 10:37+, Ps. 146:3-5] or (c) Objects of this world [I John 2:15-17+] (money, fame, business, pleasure, etc.) above God, by fearing, loving, or trusting in them more than in God.

2. Godlessness. [Sam. 2:30, Ps. 10:4] Neglect to worship the true God, unbelief, scepticism, superstition, Infidelity, and atheism are a transgression of this commandment.

3. Double service. [Matt. 6:24+] God forbids us to have other gods before or besides Him, He demands our whole heart.

### II. WHAT IS COMMANDED

We should give God the highest place in our hearts, and "fear, love and trust in. Him above all things." [Matt. 4:10+]

1. WE SHOULD FEAR GOD ABOVE ALL THINGS. We should be more afraid of His anger than of anything else in the whole world. [Gen. 39:9+, Ps. 33:8, 9.] Rather than disobey Him, we should be willing to suffer ridicule, persecution, loss of money, property, position, or friends, and even death itself. [Matt. 10:28+, Acts 5:29]

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<sup>3</sup> When God gave the commandments to Israel, He forbade them to make any graven images or likenesses. God being a Spirit, the making of an image of God would at that period necessarily have resulted in idolatry. But since Christ has come in the flesh and was visible among men, we are permitted to make pictures and images of Him. Luther preached very forcibly against those persons who, during his absence from Wittenberg, destroyed the pictures and images in the churches. He said that we make a picture of Christ in our heart whenever we think of Him, and put pictures of Him in the Bible and other books; and that therefore it is not wrong to place pictures or images of Him in our churches, so long as we do not worship them.

*Why.* We should fear God above all things, 1. Because He is omniscient, and we cannot hide anything from Him, not even our thoughts. [Ps. 139:1, 2+] 2. Because He is holy, and hates everything that is evil. [Lev. 19:2] 3. Because He is just, and will punish every sin. [Ps. 5:4]

*How.* As Christians, our fear of God should be a child-like and not a slavish fear. Child-like fear is fear mingled with love. We should refrain from evil not simply from fear of punishment, but from fear of offending the God whom we love. [Rom. 8:15+] "Slavish fear is afraid God will come; child-like fear is afraid He will go away."

2. WE SHOULD LOVE GOD ABOVE ALL THINGS, "with all our heart, and with all our mind and with all our soul." [Matt. 22:37] Our first aim and our highest delight should always be to do God's will. [I John 5:3+] We should be far more anxious to please Him than to please ourselves or any of our fellow-men. We should love Him far more than we love any one else [Matt. 10:37+] (parents, brothers, sisters, friends, etc.), or any earthly objects [I John 2:15+] (money, pleasure, business and the like).

*Why.* We should love God above all things 1. Because He is most worthy of our love. [Ps. 73:25, 26+] 2. Because He first loved us, [I John 4:19+, I John 4:9+] and gave His Son to die for us. 3. Because our highest happiness is found in loving Him.

*How we should show our Love.* We should show that we love God above all things 1. By leading a godly life. [II John 6] 2. By loving the things of God, especially the Church and the Gospel. [John 8:47] 3. By loving our fellow-men for His sake. [I John 4:20+]

3. WE SHOULD TRUST IN GOD ABOVE ALL THINGS. We should rely with all our heart upon His love and care, [Prov. 3:5+] placing our chief dependence on Him, and not on our own wisdom, skill, or strength, or upon men, money etc.

*Why.* We should trust in God with all our heart because 1. He loves us. [Rom. 8:32] 2. He knows all our wants. [Matt. 6:32] 3. He knows what is best for us. 4. He is able to do all things. 5. He has promised to care for us. [Heb. 13:5, Isa. 54:10, Isa. 41:10]

*How we should show our Trust.* If we trust in God above all things we will show that trust, 1. By freedom from unbelieving care and worry. [Matt. 6:25, I Pet. 5:7+] 2. By reliance upon God's help and protection at all times. [Ps. 33:18, 19] 3. By committing the entire ordering of our lives to Him. [Ps. 37:5+]

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