

# **Evangelical Fundamentals**

**PART TWO**

## **Evangelical Belief and Doctrine**

**The Evangelical Catechism Explained**

**for use in Catechetical Instruction, The Sunday School  
and the Home**

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## PREFACE

Next to the Bible the Evangelical Catechism is the most important element in the Evangelical scheme of Christian education. In it there have been laid down the fundamentals of Christian teaching as gathered from the Bible in accordance with the principle expressed in the Evangelical doctrinal statement. Because familiarity with these teachings is essential to true Christian life and conduct, the study of the Catechism has been made a part of the regular confirmation instruction, and the importance of a thoro study of its contents cannot easily be exaggerated.

In most Evangelical churches conditions are such that it is difficult if not impossible to secure sufficient study of the Catechism in the confirmation class alone. The help of the Sunday-school has therefore been enlisted in order to relieve the pastor of a large amount of memory drill work, and to help the pupil to a better understanding of the pastor's teaching. The introduction of the Catechism as supplementary material for the Junior and early Intermediate grades will give the pupil an orderly and connected idea of the teachings of the Bible and prepare him for a better appreciation of confirmation instruction.

Hitherto Sunday-school teachers have been handicapped in making the best use of the Catechism by the absence of a suitable explanation and guide. The little volume presented herewith is a somewhat abridged translation of Dr. D. Irion's "*Er-klaerung des Evangelischen Katechismus*," which has been of such great service to Evangelical pastors in the teaching of the

Catechism. The writer undertook the translation in the hope that the work might perform a similar service not only to the constantly growing number of pastors who must use the English language in their confirmation classes, but also to Sunday-school teachers in their supplementary work, and thus prove a help in the development of the Evangelical idea of Christian education and in the training of Christian character.

Since the book has been designed for use in connection with the English Catechism, only the Bible passages used in that edition are quoted in full.

St. Louis, Missouri, August, 1916

J. H. H.

# Evangelical Belief and Doctrine

## The Introduction

### **1. What should be the chief concern of man?**

*Man's chief concern should be the eternal salvation of his soul.*

The answer to this question invites us to think of the *one thing that is needful*, Luke 10:42. Martha thought the one thing that needed her care and attention most was to provide her Guest with the best that she could afford. But Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and *listened to His word*, had chosen the good part. Martha was concerned about outward, earthly things, while Mary thought most of her immortal soul.

Of course the body must be fed, clothed and sheltered and provided for in many ways. But all these things are not of first importance. The body and all the things that minister to it are perishable and temporary. The soul, however, *is a part of God's being* and exists for eternity. It is therefore by far the more important and valuable of the two.

**Matthew 16:26.** For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?

Our *souls* need to be saved because they are in danger of being lost thru sin. Sin is to the soul what disease is to the body. God has provided a way in which our souls may be saved from sin. The Catechism aims to tell us what *God has done* for the salvation of our souls, and also what *we can do* to get the benefit of what God has done for us. *Nothing can ever be as important as the salvation of our immortal soul.*

**Matthew 6:33.** Seek ye first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

### **2. How can you secure the salvation of your immortal soul?**

*We secure the salvation of our immortal soul thru faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Faith means confidence. Faith in Jesus Christ is the simple and sincere confidence that Jesus Christ can and will save from sin and give eternal life. We find examples of this faith in the paralytic, Matthew 9:2; the centurion, 8:5; the Canaanitish woman, 15:21, and in Martha, John 11:27. Such a faith receives the assurance “Thy sins are forgiven thee” and the strength to begin a new and better life.

### **3. Where is that which is essential to faith revealed unto us?**

*All that is essential to faith God has revealed to us in His Word, the Holy Scriptures, which were written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.*

By means of his intelligence man has learned and discovered many valuable truths, but he could never have learned or discovered the way of salvation if God had not made it known in the Holy Scriptures, in which there has been written down for us, by men of God especially fitted for that work, what God has done for our salvation and what we must do to secure it.

**2 Timothy 3:15-17.** That from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation thru faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

We call the Holy Scriptures *inspired*, because the men who wrote their contents did not bring them forth out of their own thought or imagination, but were enlightened by the Spirit of God.

**2 Peter 1:21.** For no prophecy ever came by the will of man but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost.

And God has not only seen to it that His truth was revealed to mankind once, but also that it should be *gathered together and preserved* for all time. Because the Scriptures are composed of many books (Greek *biblia*) combined into one, we call the volume containing them the *Bible*, i.e., *the Book*. Whoever reads the Bible earnestly and prayerfully will find in it *just what he needs* to make his life better and happier. John 5:39; Acts 8:28; 17:11; 18:24. See also Joshua 1:7-9.

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

The Bible has two divisions, the Old and the New Testaments. Testament means covenant, i.e., an agreement or a promise on the part of God. The Old Testament contains thirty-nine books written by twenty-seven authors during the period from 1500-400 B.C. It is divided into Historical (seventeen books), Doctrinal (five books), and Prophetic (seventeen books) sections, the latter consisting of the five major prophets and twelve minor prophets. Besides these there are fourteen *apocryphal* (meaning hidden, secret, i.e., of doubtful authority) books, not usually found in English Bibles.

The New Testament contains twenty-seven books written by nine authors during the period from 40-100 A.D. It is also divided into Historical (five books), Doctrinal (twenty-one books), and Prophetic (one book) sections.

The names of all these books should be committed to memory by the scholars.

#### **4. What are the contents of the Holy Scriptures?**

*The contents of the Holy Scriptures are the Law and the Gospel.*

In the law there is revealed to us the will of God. Any passage of the Bible, whether it be the Old Testament or the New, that tells what God requires of men is Law. The Gospel (derived from the Anglo-Saxon *god*=good, and *spel*=story) tells of God's gift, i.e., of the salvation from sin thru Jesus Christ. All the promises and institutions of God in the Old Testament which deal with salvation are included in the term Gospel.

#### **5. Where do we find the Law of God in a concise form?**

*We find the Law of God concisely expressed in the Ten Commandments.*

The Ten Commandments are the divine source of all human law and every Christian ought to know them by heart. Jesus recognizes the Law in Matthew 5:17, hence we must regard it as binding upon us.

In the Evangelical Catechism the Ten Commandments are found in the *exact words of the Bible*. The Roman Catholic and

the Lutheran Catechisms omit the second commandment entirely (as not differing essentially in substance from the first) and, in order to preserve the number ten divide the Tenth Commandment. This causes the difference in the numeration of the Ten Commandments often met with. The Roman Catholic version of the fourth Commandment, “Thou shalt sanctify the holy-day,” instead of the biblical text, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,” etc., is also retained by the Lutheran churches. The Ten Commandments are also called the decalog (from the Greek words *deka*=ten, and *logos*=word).



## PART I

## The Ten Commandments

## The First Table. Our Duties toward God

**6. Rehearse the first Commandment.**

*I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.*

The first sentence is the introduction and declares God's right to require obedience from Israel. Pharaoh did not want to acknowledge God's lordship over him, Ex, 5:2, until the ten plagues forced him into submission, Exodus 12:31ff God is still the Lord of lords and the King of kings. Our lives and all we possess are in His hands and He has every right to require perfect obedience of us. Psalm 96 and 97; Hebrews 10:31. Gratitude for the deliverance from Egypt was to be another inducement to obedience for the children of Israel, Exodus 19:4-6. We too have experienced His love and mercy in many ways, Job 10:12; John 3:16; 8:34-36. God thus deserves our best love and obedience.

**7. What does God require in the first Commandment?**

*God requires that we fear and love Him, and trust in Him above all things.*

**Ecclesiastes 12:13. This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.**

We should fear God in the way Joseph did when he met the wicked suggestion of Potiphar's wife with the courageous reply, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Genesis 39:9, not in the fear of punishment with which Adam hid himself from the face of God in the Garden of Eden. Aaron feared the people more than God, Exodus 32, but Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego (Daniel 3), Daniel himself (Daniel 6), and the apostles (Acts 5:17ff), *feared God more than men*. Romans 8:15; Psalm 42:2 and 73:25-28 tell of us the very great desire of the soul for God, a love so great that it unhesitatingly placed Him above all else; Jesus forgot the needs of His body because of His loving desire to do God's will, John 4:34. God loved us first, 1 John 3:1; 4:19,

and we *show* our love for Him by keeping His commandments, 1 John 5:3. See also the example of Abraham, Genesis 22, and of Job, Job 1.

**1 John 5:3.** This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.

We are also to *trust* God above all things, as David did in his encounter with Goliath, who relied upon his weapons and his military prowess, 1 Samuel 17. In poverty, sickness or in times of sorrow and trouble we are to show our trust in God by our conduct.

**Psalms 37:5.** Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.

**Proverbs 3:5.** Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding.

## **8. What does God forbid in this Commandment?**

*God forbids all idolatry.*

**Matthew 4:10.** Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.

**Isaiah 42:8.** I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise unto graven images.

What is commonly called idolatry and its evil effect is described in Psalm 115:4-8 and Romans 1:19-25. Heathenism began with the confusion of tongues, Genesis 11:1ff, and God let the heathen go their own way as an awful example to all who might be tempted to ignore God. Isaiah 42:8; Matthew 4:10. See also Isaiah 44:6-20. The great problem of foreign missions is the destruction of heathenism and idolatry and the establishment of Christian faith and worship in its place.

**1 John 2:15.** Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

**Matthew 10:37.** He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

But there are many false gods even in Christian lands, even if no idols are worshipped or heathen temples reared. Anything that *takes God's place in our hearts* is idolatry. It may be *money* or worldly possessions, Matthew 6:34; Acts 5:1-11; or the *lusts of the flesh*, Philippians 3:18-19; Luke 16:19ff; or *human beings* Matthew 10:37; 1 Samuel 2:27ff, or the *world* with its pleasures

and honor, 1 John 2:15, or *self* or other persons, Jeremiah 17:5; 2 Kings 16:1-10.

**Jeremiah 17:5.** Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.

### **9. Rehearse the second Commandment.**

*Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or 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.*

In Exodus 32 we are told how the children of Israel sought to make an image of God. This was forbidden, because it would lead to idolatry.

The second portion of the Commandment is of a general character and applies equally to all the commandments. God does not and will not ignore man's disobedience toward His will. *Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap*, and God's penalties follow naturally wherever His commandments have been transgressed. Perhaps not always immediately, perhaps not even visibly, but they are *absolutely certain*. Even children suffer for the sins of their parents. But God's mercy unto those that love Him and keep His commandments is *just as certain*, and He is anxious to forgive and bless just as soon as the sinner repents of and confesses his guilt. God will not show mercy without these conditions because man could not appreciate nor enjoy forgiveness without them.

### **10. What does God say in the second Commandment?**

*God says that we shall not worship Him in any image, but as He has taught in His Word and revealed Himself unto us in His Son, Jesus Christ.*

**Isaiah 40:18.** To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?

No true image of God can be made, because God is a Spirit

and as such is invisible. Jesus Christ has revealed the Father to mankind. John 14:6; 16:23.

**John 1:18.** No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.

The Commandment does not prohibit pictures of Christ made for the sake of their beauty and inspiration. The worship of the Virgin Mary and the “saints” as practiced in the Roman Catholic Church is forbidden by the Commandment, because it is practical idolatry, even though this is denied in theory.

### **11. Rehearse the third Commandment.**

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

God’s name is sacred and deserves the highest honor and respect. The names God, Lord, Jehovah, Father, Jesus Christ are all sacred to God, and must not be lightly used. To take any one of these names in vain, i.e., to use them for any other purpose than honoring God, is sinful. God does not lose by our disrespect, nor does He gain when we honor Him; it is our own life and character that is injured when we do not give to God the honor that is due Him. Those who take God’s name in vain punish themselves, Psalm 109:17, by exposing themselves to God’s penalties.

### **12. What does God forbid in this Commandment?**

*God says that we shall not by His name curse swear, use witchcraft, lie or deceive, neither maliciously nor thoughtlessly.*

A curse is a *prayer to God for injury* to someone or something. Whether God’s name is mentioned or not makes little difference; the sin is in the *hatred and evil spirit* that finds expression in the curse, and in the *dishonor shown* to God by expecting Him to become a partner to our wickedness. Whether a curse is uttered maliciously or thoughtlessly, the sin is the same. No matter what the provocation, a Christian should always have control enough over his thoughts, feelings and words to keep him from dishonoring God. Even men of the world regard habitual and thoughtless cursing for almost any cause as a sign of a vulgar character and an offense against common decency. In the

Old Testament blasphemy, i.e., the *willful abuse of God's name or being*, was punished by death, Leviticus 24:16.

To swear is to *affirm something with a solemn appeal to God for the truth of the declaration*. It is one of the most common forms of taking God's name in vain and is not only sinful but also useless. Persons who are known to speak only the truth have no need of swearing, Matthew 5:37, and even an oath will not make the words of a liar more trustworthy.

The *government requires an oath* from those who enter upon its offices as a bond of the faithful performance of their duty, and also in court to establish truth and promote the administration of justice. Jesus submitted to such an oath, Matthew 26:63-64, which is not forbidden by this Commandment, because it is not taking God's name in vain, but for a purpose in line with the will of Him who ordained the powers that be as ministers of His service. To swear falsely (perjury), i.e., to knowingly call upon God as a witness to an untruth, is justly regarded as a most grievous sin. It is also subject to severe punishment by law. Leviticus 19:12.

**James 3:10. Out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.**

**Leviticus 19:12. And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, so that thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord.**

Witchcraft is the practice of *sorcery, enchantment or intercourse* with evil spirits. Ancient forms of witchcraft are mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:10-12. In our own day the names have changed, but the things are the same. Clairvoyancy, palmistry, fortune-telling, spiritualism or any other scheme to learn what God has hidden from our view is sinful. Usually persons practicing these arts *deceive and defraud* those who come to them, and they are therefore forbidden to practice in many communities. All these things belong to heathenism, where ignorance and superstition have always gone hand in hand. For those pretending to be Christians to have recourse to them is disrespect and unfaithfulness toward God, to whose wisdom and goodness we can always safely trust ourselves.

To lie and deceive, i.e., to *pretend* to be godly for the sake of gaining some advantage, is another all too common way of taking

God's name in vain. To hold a form of godliness but to deny the power thereof, 2 Timothy 3:5, is *hypocrisy*, one of the most contemptible sins, because it drags God's holy name and cause down into the mire of falsehood. Acts 5:1-11.

**Psalm 50:16-17.** But unto the wicked God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, and that thou hast taken my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.

### **13. What does God require in this Commandment?**

*God requires that we call upon His holy name in all our needs, and worship Him with prayer, praise and thanksgiving.*

God has revealed His name to us that we may be able to *call upon Him in all our needs*, large or small, spiritual or material. Matthew 15:21ff; Luke 17:11ff; 2 Kings 19:20; Romans 10:13; Psalm 50:15. Every Christian should lead a life of prayer, 1 Thessalonians 5:17; not only in times of especial trouble, but at *all times* we are to commune with God about *everything* that concerns our happiness or welfare. Where prayer has thus become second nature, so to speak, it will be impossible to take God's name in vain.

**Romans 10:13.** Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

**Psalm 50:15.** Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

For all goodness which surrounds us from day to day He deserves our *gratitude*. To forget to be grateful is to prove unworthy of God's goodness. Psalm 92:1. Real gratitude, however, does not consist merely in words, but in deeds; our whole life and conduct must show that we appreciate God's goodness, even under difficult circumstances. Matthew 10:32-33.

**Matthew 10:32-33.** Everyone who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

**Psalm 92:1.** It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High.

### **14. Rehearse the fourth 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, nor thy man-servant nor thy maid-*

*servant, nor thy cattle, nor the 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 on the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

The Sabbath has already existed since the creation, Genesis 2:2-3; and God had observed it by omitting the supply of manna on that day, Exodus 16:22ff. The commandment only affirms and establishes what had already been made a part of God's order. Laws for observing the Sabbath were also prescribed, and breaking the Sabbath was punished by death.

**Ezekiel 20:20. Hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.**

The *Christian Sunday*, however, is a different institution governed by a different spirit. There is no command in the New Testament to keep the first day in the week or any other day of the week; the Christians worshipped as best they could wherever and whenever they could meet together. The first day of the week was naturally observed as the day of Christ's resurrection, Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2. The law enforcing Sunday observance (313 A.D.) permitted work where rest would have caused loss or hardship. Christians are to observe the day not because the law of God or man requires them to do so, but because they *feel the need of withdrawing from worldly employments to worship God and nurture their spiritual life.*

Therefore real Christians will not need special Sunday laws or ordinances, nor will they need to care whether the last or the first day of the week is observed.

### **15. How is the Lord's day hallowed?**

*We hallow the Lord's day by resting from worldly employment, by devoutly using God's word at church and at home, and by devoting the whole day to our own and our neighbor's salvation, and thereby to the glory of God.*

Worldly employment, though very necessary, and even commanded by God, Genesis 3:19, still tends to hinder man's communion with God and makes spiritual life impossible. Rest one day in seven is also a *physical necessity*. Constant effort dulls the mind and weakens the body. Ezekiel 20:20,

**Colossians 3:16-17.** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God. And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father thru Him.

By resting from all worldly employment we are enabled to *open our hearts* to God and His word, to cultivate what is best and highest in our lives by means of *common, private or family worship*, reading of *Christian literature* and engaging in any form of *Christian service* for which opportunity may offer. To prescribe special conduct for Sunday is opposed to the true spirit of Christianity. "The Sabbath was made *for man* and not man for the Sabbath." Mark 2:27-28. Wherever the Word of God and the Spirit of God hallow the entire day, the spirit of the day will hallow the entire week and thus the entire life.

**Psalm 26:6-8.** So will I compass thine altar, O Lord: that I may make the voice of thanksgiving to be heard, and tell of all thy wondrous works. Lord, I love the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy glory dwelleth.

## **16. How is the Sabbath profaned?**

*The Sabbath is profaned by worldly employment, spiritual indolence and sinful pleasures.*

Worldly employment is any kind of work performed in a worldly spirit and for a worldly purpose. Works of necessity and of love cannot be called worldly employment. Isaiah 56:2.

To spend the day in *aimless idleness* is just as wrong as spending it in worldly employment. To neglect the services of worship, to crowd out thoughts of God, righteousness and service by vain, selfish thoughts, trashy, sensational literature, meaningless gossip or worthless conversation is spiritual indolence and works against God's loving purpose. *Careless and inattentive conduct* in church or Sunday School is only another form of spiritual indolence. Hosea 4:6; Eccl. 4:17.

**Hebrew 10:25.** Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is.

**Ecclesiastes 5:1.** Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God; for to draw nigh to hear is better than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they know not that they do evil.

Excursions, parties, dances, picnics, theaters or any exciting



or sensational amusements do not permit the rest which body and mind should have and *make impossible the proper attention to the one thing that is needful*. Hebrews 10:25.

**Luke 11:28. Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.**

The first four Commandments tell us the duties we owe to God and may be summarized briefly in the words of Deuteronomy 6:5, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might.”

The teacher should drill the scholars on the Commandments and the Scripture passages and make every effort to have the meaning well fixed in their minds.

### **The Second Table. Our Duties toward Man**

#### **17. Rehearse the fifth Commandment.**

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

By placing this Commandment where He did God bestows upon father and mother the highest human authority and requires for them higher honor and respect than for any other human beings. To their children they are the *human representatives of God*, and not to honor them is to dishonor God.

In the Old Testament a long life was looked upon as the surest evidence of God’s blessing. The fullness of divine blessing rests upon all who enter into the spirit of the Commandment. Children who honor their parents are also respectful and obliging in their intercourse with others and all delight to see them prosper.

#### **18. What does God require in this Commandment?**

*God requires that I always honor father and mother by truly loving, cheerfully obeying and filially serving them, and that I likewise honor all who by God’s order are my superiors.*

We are to honor our parents always, i.e., not only as long as they live, or as long as they exercise authority over us, but as long as we live. After death their memory is to be cherished and honored in every way.

**Proverbs 1:8. My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.**

**Ephesians 6:1-3. Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.**

**Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that is may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.**

While father and mother live we are to honor them by *true love*. This is natural, for none are closer to us by the ties of blood, and all we have comes from them. We are to remember this and make every effort to show our appreciation and gratitude for what they have done to us, and to please them by a conduct that will be an honor to them in the eyes of others.

Children can best show their love thru *obedience* to their parents, Proverbs 1:8; 13:1; 23:22. Jesus is the best example of this, Luke 2:51. His obedience was not prompted merely by natural love, much less by fear of their authority; it was a *voluntary and perfect surrendering of self*. Such an obedience will be exercised whether the parents are present or not and its influence extends thruout the entire life.

**Proverbs 19:26. He that doth violence to his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame and bringeth reproach.**

**Proverbs 30:17. The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagle shall eat it.**

Filial service is obedience to the unexpressed wishes of the parents and is the most perfect fruit of true love and cheerful obedience.

It is a noteworthy fact that most criminals began their downward career by dishonoring and disobeying their parents. Proverbs 19:26; 30:17.

Grandparents, step-parents, foster parents, guardians and the aged generally, Leviticus 19:32, naturally share the honor due to parents, as do also teachers in school, the pastor in church, Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, employers and government officers in every-day life. Ephesians 6:5-7; Romans 13:1. If parents or any others in authority ever require obedience in wickedness, Acts 5:29 applies, "We must obey God rather than men.

**Hebrews 13:17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you.**

**Romans 13:1. Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God.**

**Ephesians 6:5-7.** Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

**Acts 5:29.** We must obey God rather than men.

### **19. Rehearse the sixth Commandment.**

*Thou shalt not kill.*

By the very manner in which God created man He gave to human life a higher value than to that of animals. Man was created *in the image of God*: with His own hands, as it were, He formed him out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life that made him a living soul. Human life is thus sacred in the eyes of God, Genesis 4:9-15.

The sixth Commandment protects human life by making its destruction a sin. To take human life is to destroy something that cannot be replaced, to ruin the image of God, to shorten the period of preparation for eternity, and to rob an immortal soul of the opportunity for further development Godward. Whether the life destroyed is that of a friend or an enemy makes no difference. Animals may be killed for food, Genesis 9:3-4, or for man's protection, but their wanton or cruel destruction is also a sin.

**Genesis 9:6.** Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

**Romans 12:19.** Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord.

The government may punish crime with *death*, Genesis 9:6; Romans 13:4, and the execution of such criminals is therefore no murder, neither are *soldiers* who take human life in open battle to be so regarded. To kill another in *self-defense* is not murder, in most cases, however, it is probably rarely necessary to kill outright.

Unnecessary or foolhardy *risk* of life or limb is always wrong, while risking life for others is always a duty as long as there is chance of success.

In the literal observation of this Commandment the Quakers and Mennonites forbid their members to enter military service.

*Lynching* is murder by mob, and every one participating is guilty of murder under every law of God or man.

## **20. What does God forbid in this Commandment?**

*God forbids murder, also every deed, word and thought whereby my own life or that of my neighbor is shortened or embittered.*

Murder is the *deliberate and intentional* destruction of human life, and the one who *planned* the deed is the real murderer, whether he commits the crime or not. 2 Samuel 11:14-21. It is God's will that every murderer should be punished, Genesis 9:6. Many murderers escape punishment here, but they cannot escape God's penalties, Revelation 21:8.

**Matthew 5:21-22. Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one that is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.**

God makes a distinction between a murderer and a "man-slayer." Under the primitive ideas of justice prevailing when Israel took possession of the Holy Land, the nearest kin of a murdered man became his *avenger*, i.e., it was his duty to slay the murderer. In order to provide a means of escape for those who had *unintentionally* taken human life, certain cities were by God's direction appointed *cities of refuge*, where one who had unwittingly killed another, was safe from the avenger's wrath. He was, however, obliged to remain in the city of refuge as an exile until the death of the high priest. Accordingly courts of law also recognize different degrees of guilt and in some cases do not punish at all.

The careless use or handling of dangerous materials (poisons, weapons, firearms, etc.) carries with it a much greater degree of guilt in the eyes of God than before human law. The *intention* to kill, even though the attempt be unsuccessful, is just as great a crime as though the act had been committed.

Where people are oppressed by hard labor, poor wages, high interest, unsanitary or dangerous living or working conditions, their lives *are embittered* and may be *shortened* by the worry, overexertion or disease or accident thus brought on; those responsible for the oppression thus become *murderers*, Isaiah 58:6.

Carelessness in play and in games as well as rough sports are also directly responsible for many needless deaths.

**1 John 3:15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.**

*Revenge* is the inflicting of harm in return for an injury or insult. The desire for revenge has made many murderers, and even where it does not lead to a wrong or criminal act, it is a moral and spiritual *poison*, Romans 12:19. Love for the enemy is the only proper antidote, Matthew 5:44-45, Luke 23:34; Acts 7:59; 1 Peter 2:23.

**Matthew 5:44-45. Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute You; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.**

In Matthew 5:21-22 Jesus points out how the Commandment is violated in spirit and in thought, and attaches the same penalty to mere anger that in olden times was placed upon the act of murder, because *anger is the root* of hatred, malice and finally of murder, 1 Samuel 18:29; Genesis 37:4; 1 John 3:15.

*Suicide*, which is just as much murder as the taking of any other life, is usually an act of despair or of temporary derangement. Worldly, irreligious people easily lose hope in the face of trouble and choose the *coward's way out*, leaving their families and friends to bear alone the burden of shame or sorrow which they themselves refused to carry. It is not for us to judge harshly, however, for it is only the grace of God that protects us from temptation and gives us the power to overcome.

An intemperate indulgence of the appetite shortens life by weakening the body and bringing on disease. The habitual use of liquor, no matter how moderate, poisons the system and weakens its power of resistance against injury and disease. Only the total Abstainer is not in danger of becoming a drunkard or a narcotic. Proverbs 23:29-30.

**Luke 21:34-35. But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare: for so shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth.**

## **21. Whereby is this Commandment furthermore seriously transgressed?**

*This Commandment is furthermore seriously transgressed when we injure our own soul or that of our neighbor thru enticement or negligence.*

**Matthew 18:6-7.** But whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea! Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man thru whom the occasion cometh!

Besides the physical man has also a *spiritual* life, the life of the soul. Physical life is destroyed by murder, spiritual life thru sin. To lead another into sin is to injure his immortal soul and help to bring on spiritual death, Matthew 18:6-7. Offense may be given by word or deed, often unconsciously. Our example is imitated by many of whom we do not even know, and its influence may work great injury, hence *we cannot be too careful of what we say or do. To knowingly and intentionally* lead others into sin is satanic. 2 Timothy 3:13; Proverbs 24:1-2; 2 Corinthians 6:14-15. Parents, teachers and pastors are especially responsible for the children or young people entrusted to their care. Anything less than their best efforts to educate and train their minds and hearts to the very best of which they are capable is a neglect of duty and tends to strengthen and encourage the evil influences in their hearts and in the world around them. 2 Samuel 2:12; Ezekiel 3:17-21.

**Proverbs 24:1-2.** Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them: for their heart studieth oppression, and their lips talk of mischief.

**2 Corinthians 6:14-15.** Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?

## **22. What does God require in this Commandment?**

*God requires that we assist our neighbor in every need and aid him in his temporal and eternal welfare on all occasions.*

**Isaiah 58:7.** Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

**Hebs. 13:16. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.**

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:30-37, Jesus shows His idea of *service*. Whether the one who needs our help is an acquaintance or a stranger, a friend or an enemy, makes no difference; it is our duty to help and that in *every need*. Nor does it matter whether the trouble is *large or small*, or whether he himself is to blame; it is our business as Christians to help in any way we can. Isaiah 58:7; Hebrews 13:16; Isaiah 1:17; 1 Peter 4:10.

In cases where the need is greater than one man can alone relieve, *organizations* and *institutions* created for the purpose can best render assistance. Orphanages, deaconess homes, hospitals, homes for the aged and the infirm, asylums for the feeble-minded and the crippled, and societies for charitable work of all kinds, rescue homes and missions and every effort that aims to relieve distress and bring help and hope to those who need it, *deserve constant and liberal help* from all who are mindful of their Christian obligations..

**1 Peter 4:10. According as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**

**Ephesians 4:32. Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.**

**Isaiah 1:17. Learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.**

**Matthew 5:7. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.**

A man's temporal welfare consists in the enjoyment of health and happiness and the common blessings of life, and it is our Christian duty to aid in this in every way possible. It is also just as much our duty to help others conquer *sin* as it is to help them conquer any other enemy of their happiness; to help them see Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord as it is to help them win material wealth. Matthew 5:7; Ephesians 4:31-32.

### **23. Rehearse the seventh Commandment.**

*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

Because it was not good for man to be alone, God made the woman and gave her to man for a helpmeet, thus instituting married life. It is *the foundation of the family* and of all human society, and its sacredness and purity must be guarded under all

conditions if the greatest righteousness and happiness for mankind is to result. Husband and wife are *one flesh*, says Jesus, and no man has a right to put asunder what God has joined together. Dissensions and quarrels between husband and wife are sinful because they destroy the unity and beauty of the divine order. Where husband and wife cannot live happily together the remedy is not divorce or separation, but a *turning from wickedness*.

**1 Corinthians 3:17.** If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

**Ephesians 5:3-4.** But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting; but rather giving of thanks.

**1 Corinthians 15:33.** Evil company doth corrupt good manners.

Since matrimony is the foundation of the family and therefore also of the State, a government that does not protect the family and the home invites its own destruction. Children can be trained well only where family life is held sacred and pure. Being a divine institution matrimony should not be consummated without the divine blessing. A mere civil marriage tends to lower the Christian standard of wedded and family life.

### **24 What does God forbid in this Commandment?**

*God forbids adultery and fornication, likewise all unchaste thoughts, words and deeds.*

King Herod was an adulterer because he divorced his own wife and married the wife of his brother, thus causing a second divorce, Mark 6:17-18. Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph to commit adultery, Genesis 39:8-9. David committed adultery when he cast his eyes upon Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11:2ff; Matthew 5:28.

*Fornication* is unlawful sexual intercourse of unmarried persons. It is a most grievous sin against the purity of both mind and body, destroys health and strength and lays the foundations for some of the most terrible diseases known. 1 Corinthians 6:18-19. Impurity of any kind desecrates the body and makes it unfit for its purpose of being a temple of the Holy Spirit. The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were sins of unchastity, hence their awful punishment, Genesis 19. Many a young man or woman have lost their health



and their minds and even life itself thru sins of this kind. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

The roots of impurity are unchaste thoughts. They arise easily, especially in youth, and are a source of great danger to body and soul. To dwell upon them in imagination is very wicked, and they should be driven out at once by *prayer*, useful *employment* and *regular living*. Bad company, lewd pictures and reading matter, careless language, conduct and clothing, all help to encourage impurity until it finally becomes the master, 1 Corinthians 15:33; Ephesians 5:3-4; Genesis 39:9. Could you let others read your thoughts at all times without the blush of shame coming to your cheeks? Many boys and girls lose their health and mind and body and are even driven to suicide thru secret vice. Only the *pure in heart*, i.e., those who earnestly *want* to keep their hearts pure shall inherit the kingdom of God. In our own strength we cannot gain the victory. Christ will surely help those who give their lives to Him. John 8:36.

## **25. What does God require in this Commandment?**

*God requires that we lead a chaste and discreet life in body and soul, and that in wedlock husband and wife should faithfully love and honor each other.*

**Proverbs 4:23. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.**

Joseph was chaste and discreet, Genesis 39:9ff Persons who *enjoy* impure thoughts are not chaste and pure. Not even “in fun” should impurity of any kind be tolerated; it is *dangerous*. Matthew 12:35-37; Ephesians 4:29. Satan seeks to poison mind and heart with evil thoughts, but Jesus says, Matthew 5:28-30. If it is better to lose an eye or a hand than that the whole body should go into hell, how much sooner should we give up a friend or other associations rather than lose a pure and innocent mind. Proverbs 4:23; Psalm 51:12; Matthew 5:8. Pure boys and girls *resist* all thoughts and desires of which they could not tell their fathers and mothers.

**Psalm 51:12. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation: and uphold me with a free spirit.**

**Matthew 5:8. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.**

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20.** Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body.

A faithful love and mutual honor should constantly exist between husband and wife. When love or respect is lost, misunderstandings, quarrels and indifference results, and happiness becomes impossible. Psalm 128; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 14:4.

The Roman Catholic Church has made matrimony a sacrament and in theory permits no divorce. Nevertheless its priests are not permitted to marry, ostensibly because more holy than others, in reality, however, because the Church then has a firmer hold on them than if they married.

Divorce is always a sin, no matter for what reason it may have been obtained. The biblical grounds for *separation* (not divorce) are adultery and fornication, Matthew 5:32, and willful desertion. 1 Corinthians 7:15; in these cases the guilty party assumes the responsibility. The State permits divorce for many other reasons which a Christian cannot recognize. Persons closely related to each other should not marry, Leviticus 18.

The teacher should study and pray for wisdom in using the material here given and inform himself thoroughly on the best ways of dealing with the subject. From the religious point of view Stall's books, which have been widely advertised, are probably the best. Make the pupil understand that God is holy and omniscient. Do not ask many questions, but say, simply and seriously whatever must be said to the children in their various ages. Write to the International Sunday School Association, Purity Department, 1416 Mallory Bldg., Chicago, for counsel and help.

## **26. Rehearse the eighth Commandment.**

*Thou shalt not steal.*

Property is necessary in order to sustain life, and God protects man in this natural right. The mere possession of property, therefore, cannot be wrong. What makes wealth wrong is the *attitude* of most people toward it. Persons who think of their property like the rich fool, Luke 12:16-21, or the rich man, Luke 16:9ff, *naturally drift* into wrong-doing because of their wrong

thinking. Those who place wealth above everything else, even above God and righteousness, will seek to get it by any means. If God himself is our greatest possession, we shall seek to please Him by all means.

This Commandment makes all possessions sacred, whether material or intellectual. Disregard of the right of property is a sin against God, against the owner and against ourselves, since it weakens and lowers the moral standard.

### **27. What does God forbid in this Commandment?**

*God forbids robbery and theft, likewise trickery and fraud in business and conduct, also covetousness, avarice, envy, extravagance, idleness, etc.*

**Habakkuk 2:9.** Woe to him that getteth an evil gain for his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the hand of evil!

Robbery is the taking of another man's property *by force or intimidation*, while theft is committed by stealth. Robbery is often accomplished with the aid of the law, 1 Kings 21, and many acts of so-called legitimate business practice are little more than *legalized robbery* or theft. The sin remains the same whether little or much is unrighteously taken from another, Habakkuk 2:6; Deuteronomy 25:13-15; 1 Thessalonians 4:6. The adulteration of articles of food or clothing, loaning money at usurious rates of interest, the passing of counterfeit money, receiving of stolen goods, pilfering, in short, any unrighteous manner of getting or taking what belongs to others is a violation of this Commandment. Little thefts are usually the beginning of larger ones.

**Deuteronomy 25:13-15.** Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. A perfect and just weight shalt thou have; a perfect and just measure shalt thou have.

**1 Thessalonians 4:6.** That no man transgress, and wrong his brother in the matter: because the Lord is an avenger in all these things.

*Covetousness* or avarice is the strong or inordinate desire, in a bad sense, for riches or money, which hardens the heart against the rights and needs of others, ignores God and His kingdom and makes wealth, no matter how obtained, its god. The miser calls himself economical, but economy is a virtue, while avarice is a vice and the root of all evil, 1 Timothy 6:10; Deuteronomy 27:17; Jeremiah 22:

13; James 5:3; Psalm 37:21. The laborer who demands unreasonable wages for his work, or gives inefficient labor in return for fair wages, is just as much guilty of avarice and of fraud as the employer who pays poor wages for long hours of hard work.

**Deuteronomy 27:17.** Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark.

**Psalm 37:21.** The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again.

*Envy* is discontent at the sight of another's excellency or good fortune. It is usually combined with hatred and is the *root* of avarice and covetousness.

*Extravagance* is excess, especially in money; vain and superfluous expense. Extravagant persons *rob themselves* and are often tempted to take what does not belong to them, or to make loans which they cannot repay. To spend more money on clothes or pleasures *than one can afford* also comes under this head.

**Jerem. 22:13.** Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by injustice; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not his hire.

**James 5:4.** Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

**Proverbs 10:4.** He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

*Idleness* is a wasting of the time God has given us for fruitful effort. The idler not only robs himself of the earnings of his labor, but also *encourages evil thoughts* and desires, especially *gambling* and other forms of getting money without effort or giving anything in return. Rich persons do wrong when they become mere idlers. Their wealth and leisure give them *many exceptional opportunities* for real service which it is their sacred duty to use. Proverbs 10:4. Children should learn to work while young, so as to become useful men and women and guard against temptation and sin.

## **28. What does God require in this Commandment?**

*God requires that we assist in protecting and improving our neighbor's possessions and livelihood, and that we be content with that which He gives us.*

**2 Corinthians 9:7.** God loveth a cheerful giver.

**Ephesians 4:28.** Let him that stole steal no more: 'but rather let him

labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need.

When Abraham heard of Lot's fate at Sodom, Genesis 14:13ff, he immediately hurried to his assistance. David and his men took such good care of Nabal's sheep that the shepherds said, "They were a wall unto us both by night and by day," 1 Samuel 25:14ff. We can protect our neighbor's property not only by personal effort, but also by good and timely *advice and warning*. Ephesians 4:28. The poor, who have little property and few friends, especially need our assistance. 2 Corinthians 9:7; Acts 11:27-30.

As for ourselves we are to be *content* with what we have. Contentment is the opposite of avarice, 1 Timothy 6:6-10. Whatever we have is only for the needs of this life, and while we are to make good use of our possessions, they *must not become our master*. *Industry* and *frugality* are great aids to contentment, and we should always remember that an *account* will one day be required of us. Matthew 6:19-24; Luke 16:9-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

**1 Thessalonians 4:11-12. That ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, even as we charged you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and may have need of nothing.**

**1 Timothy 6:6-10. But godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having feed and covering we shall be therewith content. But they that desire to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves thru with many sorrows.**

The poor will never cease out of the land, Deuteronomy 15:11; Mark 13:7, but the law sought to prevent *pauperism* by the provision that at the end of every seven years creditors were to release their debtors.

Today class hatred between rich and poor has become acute because of the control of wealth in the hands of the few. Ruthless exploitation of labor by many capitalists, and the unreasonable demands of many labor leaders, together with the high cost of living have brought on a class war which has been made still more intense by political and anti-Christian agitation. A satis-

factory solution will be found only when the Gospel of Jesus Christ becomes the controlling influence on both sides.

**1 Timothy 6:17-19.** Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed.

### **29. Rehearse the ninth Commandment.**

*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

“A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches,” Proverbs 22:1. To protect one’s good name and to prevent as much as possible the sins of the tongue, that restless evil full of deadly poison, which no man can tame, is the aim of this Commandment.

### **30. What does God forbid in this Commandment?**

*God forbids perjury and all manner of falsehood in speech and action likewise treachery, slander and deceit of every kind.*

1 Kings 21:1-16 tells how Naboth lost both his vineyard and his life thru false witnesses; false witnesses also stood up against Jesus, Mark 14:55-59; the same means were also used against Stephen, Acts 6:12-14. This most grievous sin against another is also a sin against God because *committed on oath*, Proverbs 19:5. Judges must always be thoroughly *impartial*, ready to punish the rich as well as the poor, Proverbs 17:15; Deuteronomy 1:17.

**Proverbs 19:5.** A false witness shall not be unpunished; and he that uttereth lies shall not escape.

Falsehood is an invention of the devil, John 8:44. Men utter falsehood from fear of punishment, for the sake of gain, ostentation, from malice and from “necessity.” *But every lie is a sin*, because it poisons character. No untruthful person can draw near to God in prayer, Psalm 5:7. Jesus says, “I am the truth”; only sincerity and truthfulness can become like Him.

**John 8:44.** Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.

Lies may be acted as well as spoken, and any sign or action

*intended to deceive*, or even the *lack* of a sign or action that would betray the truth that should be known is a falsehood.

**Ephesians 4:25.** Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye the truth each one with his neighbor for we are members one of another.

**Psalms 5:6.** Thou shalt destroy them that speak lies: the Lord abhorreth the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

*Treachery* is any violation of faith or confidence. Luke 23:3-6; 1 Samuel 22:9; Proverbs 11:13. The betrayal of others becomes a duty, however, when concealment means serious harm or public offense. The “tattle-tale” *enjoys* telling of mischief or evil deeds; to tell the truth when it becomes necessary is *brave*.

*Slander* is a false tale or report maliciously uttered for the purpose of injuring another. 2 Samuel 15:2-6; Ezra 4:15-16; Genesis 39:13-18; Leviticus 19:16.

*Backbiting* is spiteful or mean gossip about *absent persons*, whether done maliciously or carelessly. It is a weakness found in some form among almost all classes and ages. It is unfair and un-Christlike and inevitably leads to trouble and quarrels, Isaiah 5:29; Luke 6:37. We should deal with others in charity and patience, remembering our own weaknesses and shortcomings, Proverbs 25:8; Matthew 12:36-37.

**Proverbs 11:13.** He that goeth about is a talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

**Leviticus 19:16.** Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people.

**Luke 6:37.** And judge not, and ye shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: release, and ye shall be released.

*Hypocrisy* is one of the worst forms of falsehood because it assumes the false appearance of virtue or religion for the purpose of winning approbation or favor. Matthew 22:15ff; Psalm 15:1-5.

**Isaiah 5:20.** Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.

### **31. What does God require in this Commandment?**

*God requires that we promote and maintain the honor and good name of our neighbor, also to be true and sincere thruout all our life.*

A man’s reputation shows the respect in which he is held by

those who know him. Luke 7:4-5; Acts 10:22; 16:2. Only the righteous and honorable deserve a good reputation, and it is our duty to help them secure and retain it by influence and example. We do this by speaking well of those we know whenever we can truthfully do so. So many persons are ready to speak ill of others at the slightest provocation that Christians must make it their business to seek out and spread whatever good they can, not only of their friends, 1 Samuel 19:4-5, but of all others whom they know. Nor should we be ready to believe, much less to repeat evil reports about others. Even where people thru their own fault have lost their reputation, we can excuse their faults and weaknesses and seek to influence them in such a manner that they will strive after a better reputation. Righteousness, industry, faithfulness and modesty will help us keep our own good name; nothing in the world injures God's cause and kingdom so much as the reproach caused by the weakness and sinfulness of Christians.

**Psalm 34:13-14.** Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

A *clear conscience* is the only basis of a good reputation. Those who are sincere and true in word and deed may lose their reputation among men, but God will know and in due time prove their innocence. Matthew 5:12. *Thruout our life* means that sincerity and truth must be shown not only in our words, but also in our deeds, not only towards friends, but also towards enemies, not only when there is an advantage to be gained but also when it means a loss. Half truths, unkept promises, or indefinite promises that are not expected to mean anything, polite lies, ambiguous language, etc., all come under this head. Psalm 34:14-15.

**Philippians 4:8.** Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

### **32. Rehearse the tenth Commandment.**

*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.*



### **33. What does God forbid in this Commandment?**

*God forbids all evil lusts and desires, which cause a longing for unrighteous acquisition or enjoyment.*

**James 1:14-15.** Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death.

**Romans 6:12.** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof.

Lust is an eager desire to possess or enjoy forbidden things. Such a desire was that of Ahab after Naboth's vineyard, 1 Kings 21:1-16, or that of the prodigal son after freedom, Luke 15:11ff. Usually lust itself is not considered sinful, but is nevertheless the germ and seed of all wickedness, Romans 7:7-8, and shows the iniquity of the human heart, Mark 7:21-22. The tree growing from such a root of wickedness must bring forth evil fruit, James 1:14-15; Romans 6:12. The pleasure caused by the evil desire creates the temptation, and if the temptation is not resisted, the inward iniquity becomes an outward sin. Solomon sinned against the first Commandment because he obeyed his love for foreign women, 1 Kings 11:1-8. The desire to see their God, like heathen, made Israel transgress the second Commandment, Exodus 32. Shimei's hatred of David caused him to transgress the third, 2 Samuel 16:5-8; love of gain, indolence and wordliness usually cause sin against the fourth Commandment, Exodus 16:27; the desire for power led Absalom to dishonor his father, 2 Samuel 15:6, while Cain's jealousy caused him to disobey the sixth Commandment, Genesis 4. David became an adulterer because of his sinful passion, 2 Samuel 11. The lust for gain made a thief of Achan, Joshua 7:20-21. Their hatred of Jesus made His enemies bear false witness against Him, Luke 23:2. Conclusive proof, all this, that evil desires cause disobedience to every Commandment. Romans 7:7-25.

**1 John 2:15-17.** Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

### **34. What does God require in this Commandment?**

*God requires that we delight in Him and in His holy providence.*

**Psalm 37:4.** Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

**Romans 7:22.** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

Luke 2:49 and John 4:34 tells us what delight in God means.

Evil desire draws away from God, righteous desire brings us nearer to Him. Psalm 37; 42:2; Romans 7:22. Such a desire becomes possible when the old natural heart has been replaced with a new one born of God, Proverbs 23:26. Luke 19:1-10. The way in which God leads us and makes everything work together for good is His providence. It is not always easy to delight in His providence, but we can learn, as did Joseph, Genesis 50:20, and David, Psalm 73; 118:21; 119:71.

**Proverbs 23:26.** My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes delight in my ways.

### **35. What is the summary of the Ten Commandments?**

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Deuteronomy 6:5. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Leviticus 19:18. On these two Commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Matthew 22:40.*

When Jesus was asked concerning the great commandment of the law, Matthew 22:36-40, He answered as above. The first part gathers together all our *duties toward God*, as they are laid down in the first four Commandments; if we have real love toward God, we shall naturally and earnestly seek to keep all these Commandments.

In the latter part the other six Commandments are condensed into one. The dishonoring of father or mother, murder, adultery, theft, false witnessing and lust after forbidden things is impossible to those who love their neighbor as themselves. The two together represent the whole law in its deepest and fullest sense.

### **36. What does God declare concerning these Commanments?**

*God says: "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them," Deuteronomy 27:26 (Galatians 3:10). "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord." Leviticus 18:5 (Luke 10:28).*

God is very much in earnest about the keeping of His Com-

mandments and is determined to visit severe punishment upon those who do not obey His will, James 2:10.

The second portion promises God's blessings. If any one could keep God's Commandments perfectly he would be able to earn God's blessings and eternal life.

### **37. What is meant by this declaration?**

*God threatens to punish all who transgress these Commandments; therefore we should fear His wrath and not act contrary to His will. But He promises abundant grace and every blessing to all who keep His Commandments. We should therefore love Him, trust in Him, and cheerfully obey His Commandments according to His will.*

God does not always punish immediately, but His punishment *never fails* and it is *always just*. We cannot always see His penalties, but they are nevertheless enforced, if not fully in this life, then certainly in that which is to come. Often the consequences of sin are the beginning of the punishment, as in the drunkard.

If godly men were perfect they would experience the blessings of God at all times and under all conditions. But because of their weaknesses and shortcomings they must be purified by sufferings and visitations of many kinds, so that they may be able to share His eternal heavenly happiness. Psalm 1.

### **38. Have you or has any one ever perfectly kept the law of God?**

*No man has ever perfectly kept the law of God. By nature we are evil and have in manifold ways transgressed God's Commandments and well deserve the curse of the law.*

**Psalm 130:3.** If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

We may keep within the letter of God's Commandment, but no man has ever been able to keep it in spirit and in truth. Those who would be able to do this would have to be without sinful thoughts and desires. Because none can reach this state of perfection all mankind is under the curse of the law. Romans 3:19-20. Our own every-day experience shows how easily we forget God and how frequently evil desires arise, even against our will. Our own will power is not strong enough to conquer sin, because it is

itself paralyzed by sin. Psalm 13:3; 143:2. This tendency toward evil we call original sin.

**Psalm 143:2.** Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

“Thru the law comes knowledge of sin,” Romans 3:20, and it is this that makes the law a “tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith,” Galatians 3:24.

### **39. Can we in any way escape the curse of the law and be saved?**

*We can escape the curse and be saved thru the grace of God by which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is given to us and faith in the same worked in us.*

Because salvation cannot be earned by works of the law on account of man’s inherent sinfulness, they who desire to be saved must be willing to accept it as something bestowed thru the *grace and mercy* of God. When a certain lawyer asked Jesus, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? he was given the answer he needed thru the parable of the Good Samaritan. The good Samaritan of the parable is a symbol of Jesus himself, who took pity upon the miserable condition of sinful humanity and in the divine fullness of His love gave even His life as a ransom for many. Ezekiel 16:6. Jesus fulfilled the law of God in our stead and accomplished our redemption by His sufferings and death, in which He endured, in our stead, the wrath of God against sin, thereby redeeming us from sin, Satan and death. This is the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ.

To take advantage of this Gospel of salvation we must have *faith* in Jesus as our Savior, Redeemer and Lord. Even this God helps us to do, Luke 7:48-50.

This is the new and only way of salvation. *By grace we are saved*; by the grace of God we have the Gospel of salvation, and God’s grace helps us to believe in this Gospel. Romans 5:1-11.

## PART II

### The Christian Faith

#### THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

Ever since man had been created God had been making Himself and His will known. He spoke to Adam and Eve, to Noah, and most frequently to Abraham. From what He had said these men, and thru them all who wanted to know, learned all they could understand of God's being and of His will.

All thru the centuries of which the Bible tells us God continued to tell men about Himself. In Jesus Christ "the Word became flesh and dwelt among men," John 1:14, and since His day *all that men can understand concerning God's being and purpose* is fully known. The Christian Faith, of which Part II of the Catechism treats, explains the being and the attributes of God. To believe in God does not merely mean to *accept as true* what the Bible tells us about God, but especially to *trust Him with all our hearts*. To believe the teachings of the Bible without accepting God as Father thru Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior is a *dead and worthless faith*.

#### **40. What do the Holy Scriptures teach concerning God?**

*The Scriptures teach us that God is one God, Spirit; i.e., He is Life, Light and Love, and therefore eternal, unchangeable, omnipresent; true, omniscient, all-wise, holy, omnipotent, just; blessed, good, gracious and merciful.*

That there is but *one* God is a fundamental teaching of the Bible, Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 42:8; Mark 12:29; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 Timothy 2:5. God is a Spirit, i.e., *a personal, invisible being, possessing the perfect fullness of every power*, John 4:24. The words *Light, Life and Love* describe the being of God as far as it is possible for human language to do so.

**Deuteronomy 6:4.** Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord.

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

God is **Life**, i.e., He is a *living* God, the source of all life in heaven and on earth, John 5:26. It is this that makes a resurrection of the dead possible, Matthew 22:31-32. Men *have* life, but

God *is* Life. God is also the source of *spiritual* life. The more we walk and live with God, i.e., obey Him, the more godly our thoughts, purposes and conduct become, 1 John 5:11-12. Because God is a living God, He is *eternal, unchangeable, omnipresent*.

**1 John 5:20. This is the true God, and eternal life.**

God is also **Light**. As the light of the sun illumines the natural world and enables us to see things as they actually are, so God is the *source of all truth*, intellectual as well as spiritual, James 1:17. Whatever truths men have discovered and understood have come to them thru the light of reason and wisdom, a mere ray from the fullness of God's Light, 1 John 1:5. Because Jesus was the Son of God, He could say, "I am the light of the world." John 8:12.

**1 John 1:5. God is light and in him is no darkness at all.**

The opposite of light is darkness. They who turn away and separate themselves from God go into spiritual darkness, where Satan, the prince of darkness, rules, John 3:19-21; Acts 26:18. Because God is Light He is *true, omniscient, all-wise, holy, omnipotent, just*.

Finally, God is **Love**, i.e., the source and beginning of all that deserves to be called by that name. The love of lover and sweetheart, of husband and wife, of parents and children, of brothers and sisters, of comrades and of friends, admiration and adoration as well as pity and mercy, are all divine in their origin. The Love of God is the *perfect model* of every kind of human love. He loved the entire world, John 3:16, even though it was a sinful world; see also Luke 15. He never ceases to love the sinner; His wrath over him is but another manifestation of His eternal and boundless love, 1 John 4:8. Because God is Love He is *blessed, good, gracious and merciful*.

**1 John 4:8. God is love.**

The Bible does not seek to prove the existence of God, but presupposes it. Those who deny God are called fools, Psalm 14:1; Romans 1:18ff, makes clear that men could have known God from His works, but nevertheless neglected to praise Him as God. The conviction that *there must be a God* is planted deeply

and firmly into the hearts of even the most depraved and ignorant savages, all of whom have some idea of God. Acts 17:27-28; Psalm 19:2-4.

#### **41. What is the meaning of: God is eternal?**

*God is independent of everything, therefore He had no beginning and will have no end.*

**Psalm 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.

The world and all that exists upon it had a beginning, but God's life is *infinite, endless, immeasurable*. He was before anything was created, and when all that was created has perished, He alone will remain. We measure our lives by time, but with God one day is as "a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"; see also Psalm 90:4. When the things of earth perish and death ends even our life we can trust in God, Psalm 90:2.

**Revelation 1:8.** I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty.

**Isaiah 26:4.** Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is an everlasting rock.

#### **42. What is the meaning of: God is unchangeable?**

*In His being and in His will He is always the same.*

All things created pass thru periods of development; they *grow* in age, in size, in usefulness, in strength, and in due time begin to decline and pass away. God alone *never changes*, in His being He is the same today that He was ages ago, Psalm 102:25-28.

**Psalm 102:24-27.** Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

The will and desires of men change with their development or with circumstances, 1 Corinthians 13:11. A few minutes sometimes change the aspect of an entire life. *God's purpose and will never change*, James 1:17. From the very beginning His purpose was to make men happy and blessed, and today it is still the same. From the very beginning He was the enemy of every form of wicked-

ness and a just judge of all iniquity, and the passing of the ages has not caused Him to change one whit. We can therefore *absolutely depend upon* His good and gracious purposes in our lives, as well as upon His certain punishment of our sins. Psalm 73:23-28.

**James 1:17.** Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.

When Genesis 6:6 tells us that “it repented Jehovah that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him in His heart,” it must be remembered that the Bible can only speak of God in *human terms*. It was not God that had changed but man, and the change had made a *different treatment* necessary.

### **43. What is the meaning of: God is omnipresent?**

*God fills heaven and earth and works everywhere at the same time.*

In the same way as the life which we possess dwells in and works thru every part of our bodies, so God *dwells in and works thru every part of the universe*, just as no part of the body is without blood, so no part of God’s universe is without God. We can be only in one place at one time, but God being a Spirit, unfettered by time and space, is everywhere at the same time, Psalm 139:7-10.

**Jeremiah 23:23-24.** Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill the heaven and earth? saith the Lord.

**Acts 17:27-28.** He is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being.

Although God is present everywhere, His presence is not *felt alike* by all His creatures. Human beings can perceive it better than animals, and godly men feel more of it than the ungodly, Psalm 145:18-19. On all our ways we are to remember that God is near, as a Friend and Protector and Guide, *if we want it so*, but nevertheless near, whether we want it or not, Jeremiah 23:23-24; Acts 17:27-28. Jonah thought he could flee from God, and Adam tried to hide himself from the presence of God. In times of danger we are to remember Matthew 28:20, and with David we say, Psalm 23:4.



**Psalm 139:7-10.** Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

If one should say, "If God is everywhere, why should I seek Him in church to worship Him?" the Bible answers, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." God is indeed everywhere, but they who desire blessing and comfort will *find it easiest by seeking His presence and communion*. Where God is worshipped in spirit and truth there His presence becomes most evident. Matthew 18:20.

**Psalm 23:4.** Yea, tho I walk thru the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou are with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

#### **44. What is the meaning of God is true?**

*God is truth itself, and certainly does fulfill all His promises and threats.*

**Numb. 23:19.** God is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said and shall He not do it? or hath spoken, and shall He not make it good?

God is truth itself, because He is Light. Being the perfect Light, He is light without a shadow and without a change, i.e., the one *absolute, dependable source of truth*.

Hence it cannot be otherwise than that His promises and threats are *always certainly fulfilled*. We may *intend* to always speak truly, and to fulfill all our promises, but we are not always able to do so, because of our ignorance or inability. With God all this is different, and He is always able to keep His promises, (Abraham, Solomon), and especially the greatest of all, that of sending His Son to be the Redeemer of the world. Numbers 23:19. His threats, too, have always come true, (Paradise, the Flood). Psalm 33:4; 119:89-90.

**1 John 5:10.** He that believeth not God hath made him a liar: because he hath not believeth in the witness that God hath borne concerning His Son.

**Psalm 119:89-90.** Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations.

Being the source of all truth those who are not of the truth

are naturally opposed to God. In order to become godly, we must therefore *turn away from falsehood and deception of every kind*, and under all circumstances be true to ourselves and to others. To believe God and trust Him, especially His Son, who has said, "I am the truth," will help us do this. 1 John 5:10.

#### **45. What is the meaning of: God is omniscient?**

*God sees all, hears all, knows all, - the past, the present and the future; He discerns everything just as it is.*

**Psalm 139:1-3.** O Lord thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

We know only the things we can perceive with our senses, beyond that we must depend on others. All that we do know is subject to error, ignorance, misunderstanding. All these limitations do not exist for God, *His knowledge is unlimited*. He knew what Adam and Eve had done, even before they realized it; Cain's sin was known to Him the instant it happened; no one had seen Achan take a share of the spoils, but God knew before any one even suspected it. Psalm 139:1-4.

**Hebs. 4:13.** And there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

God does not need to *learn*, neither can He *forget*. The past, the present, the future, all is alike open to Him, as the page of a book is open to us.

**Psalm 139:16.** Thine eyes did see mine unperfect substance, and in thy book were all my members written, which day by day were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

Nor can God be *deceived*, 1 Samuel 16:7. David might deceive his people as to the death of Uriah, but God knew; Judas Iscariot could deceive the other disciples, but Jesus read what was in his heart.

**1 Samuel 16:7.** For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

**Psalm 94:9.** He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?

**Matthew 6:8.** Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of.

Even though men may misjudge and even persecute us, God

knows when our hearts are sincere and our purpose right. He knows our every *need*, our *difficulties*, our *pain*, our *sorrow*; He, too, *knows how to help*, Matthew 8:8.

#### **46. What is the meaning of: God is all-wise?**

*God ordains and directs all things to His own glory and to the salvation of men.*

**Romans 11:33-34.** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?

**Isaiah 55:8-9.** For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

No plainer and grander evidence of God's wisdom can be found than the works of nature. The whole earth, the arrangement of land and water, the passing of the seasons, the adaptation of the products of the earth and sea to the needs of men and animals, the laws of nature working together in perfect harmony, all point unerringly to the one great and all-wise Creator who called them into being and keeps them in perfect working order. Every plant and animal, most of all those so small that they cannot be seen with the naked eye, are perfect wonders, and to those who understand it best the body of man is a wonderful masterpiece of divine wisdom.

**Psalms 104:24.** O, Lord how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

Still more wonderful is God's wisdom as it appears in the *lives of men and the history of nations*, e.g., in the story of Joseph, Moses, David and Daniel, the history of the Chosen People, especially the divine plan of salvation thru the suffering and death of Christ. Slowly, but none the less steadily He has been guiding the destinies of the nations and using them for His own purposes as long as they were *fit instruments*, selecting new ones wherever they were needed; using even the *sins and passions of men* for the highest and noblest purposes. God never needs to change His mind or abandon His plans; He always chooses the *proper time and the right means* for bringing about what He

aims to accomplish, and He *never makes a mistake*. Isaiah 28:29; Romans 11:33-34.

**Romans 8:28.** And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good.

To us, of course, God's infinite wisdom is not always apparent. We cannot see farther than our own lives and their immediate needs, and we see even these with a blurred and limited vision. We forget that God has *higher principles and purposes* that we can conceive, and that He has not only our own little lives in view, but also those of *countless other individuals*, together with the *welfare of the nations*. Isaiah 55:8-9. We can therefore confidently depend upon God's wisdom, even though we do not understand it. He is our Father in Christ Jesus and will most certainly *care for us better* than we can care for ourselves. Psalm 39:10; Romans 8:28; 1 Peter 5:7; James 1:5. Read Proverbs 5:1-26.

**1 Peter 5:7.** Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He careth for you.

**James 1:5.** But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not.

#### **47. What is the meaning of: God is holy?**

*In His being and in His will God is good and pure, but judges and condemns that which is evil.*

**Matthew 19:17.** One there is who is good.

Being perfect in every way, God is without any weakness or shortcomings. And He has been thus from all eternity, Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 19:17. His sympathy is therefore naturally with those who seek to be good and pure like Him, (Abel, the publican). If we would have Him well pleased with our lives we must seek to make and keep them *clean and pure and righteous*. 1 Peter 1:15-16. Those who do not must experience His wrath and punishment, (Cain, the deluge, Sodom and Gomorrah, Pharaoh, Saul Ahab, Herod, etc.), Psalm 5:5; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6.

**Isaiah 6:3.** Holy, holy, holy, is the lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.

**1 Peter 1:15-16.** But like as He which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living, because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.

God loved the world, even though it is sinful; He *loves the sin-*

ner, but *hates the sin*. He condemns the sinner only when he has rejected God and His love and becomes a willful sinner.

#### **48. What is the meaning of: God is omnipotent?**

*All things are made and sustained by God; He can do and create whatsoever He will.*

**Isaiah 40:26.** Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by name; by the greatness of His might, and for that He is strong in power, not one is lacking.

God's power is unlimited. Thru it He created the world and still preserves it. He does not *overlook or forget* even the smallest item. He humbles Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, sends Elijah to the widow at Zarephath, and not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His will. Matthew 10:29-30.

**Psalms 115:3.** But our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He pleased.

**Luke 1:37.** For no word from God shall be void of power.

God is never arbitrary. His purposes are *always good*, even though we may not see or appreciate the goodness. As a rule God's omnipotence works thru the *laws of nature*; when necessary, however, He reveals His power in extraordinary ways, which we call *miracles*, Exodus 14:15-31; Joshua 6:12-21; Matthew 9:23-27.

**Psalms 33:8-9.** Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spake and it was done: He commanded and it stood fast.

**Genesis 17:1.** I am God Almighty: walk before me, and be thou perfect.

God's omnipotence *does not destroy man's free will*. Joseph's brethren followed their own inclination when they sold their brother into slavery, but God's wisdom and omnipotence used their evil designs for the good of all. The lives of David, St. Paul, of Jesus, and the story of Israel furnish examples of this. Because God is omnipotent we should, on the one hand, *fear Him*, and may, on the other, *trust Him fully*. 2 Kings 6:8; Matthew 6:25-34; Acts 12:3ff.

#### **49. What is the meaning of God is just?**

*God is just in all His ways; He deals with every one according to His needs; He rewards the good and punishes the evil,*

**Psalm 145:17.** The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and gracious in all His works.

**Romans 2:6-8.** God will render to every man according to his works; to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honors, and incorruption, eternal life: but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation.

**Psalm 103:6.** The Lord executeth righteous acts, and judgments for all that are oppressed.

**Isaiah 41:10.** Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

God's justice is the practical expression of His holiness, Deuteronomy 32:4. Being perfectly good in His will and being it is natural for Him to be perfectly impartial toward all His creatures, Psalm 145:17. As the Creator of every human being He knows the strength and the weakness of each, and gives to each one his place and his work, Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27; Acts 17:26, and judges each one according. God educates people for their work by means of sorrow, sufferings or trials. Psalm 73. God can be depended upon to be perfectly just in rewarding the good and punishing the evil, even if His justice is not always apparent to our limited understanding. The absolute justice of His judgment will be shown, in the final award on the day of judgment, Psalm 5:5; 37:25; 103:6; Isaiah 41:10; Matthew 5:1; Romans 2:6-8. To know that God is just is a great comfort to His children. Jesus Christ alone can help us become righteous so that we can stand before God's justice.

**Psalm 37:25.** I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.

**Matthew 5:12.** Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.

**Psalm 5:4.** For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: evil shall not sojourn with thee.

**1 John 2:29.** If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one also that doth righteousness is begotten of Him.

## **50. What is the meaning of: God is blessed?**

*God has complete peace in Himself and is eternally self sufficient.*

**1 Timothy 6:15-16.** God is blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unap-

proachable; whom not man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honor and power eternal. Amen.

The word “blessed” denotes a condition of perfect happiness. Only a being perfectly good can be perfectly happy. The imperfect and sinful condition of the world and of mankind is the cause of unhappiness; wealth and pleasure cannot give happiness; this can only come from *peace with God*. Psalm 55:23; Revelation 14:13; 19:9. *God needs nothing to make Him happy*. Nothing that any one can do increases or decreases His happiness. Acts 17:24-25. Piety or godlessness affects only man for good or evil. God created men in order to *share with them* the fulness of His happiness. Thru Jesus Christ we may draw nearer and nearer to God and secure all the real happiness and blessedness to be had this side of eternity.

**Acts 17:24-25.** The God that made the world and all things therein. He, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is He served by men’s hands as tho He needed anything, seeing He himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.

### **51. What is the meaning of: God is good?**

*God does only good to all His creatures.*

**Psalm 145:9.** The Lord is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all his works.

**Psalm 107:1.** O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever.

God’s work is that of *doing good to all His creatures*, and, in the perfection of His being He succeeds fully, where we frequently fail in spite of our best intentions. Even His *judgments and visitations* work out for good. He does not weary of doing good even to the ungodly, that they may be led to repentance. We should *appreciate* God’s goodness more and seek to *help God do good* to all who touch our lives. Job 5:8-27.

**Psalm 36:5.** Thy loving kindness, O Lord, is in the heavens; thy faithfulness reacheth unto the skies.

### **52. What is the meaning of: God is gracious and merciful?**

*God in His mercy and compassion condescends to forgive us all our sins for Jesus’ sake; to bear with us in patience and long-suffering, although we daily sin greatly, and He is always willing to hear us when we come to Him with a believing heart.*

**Psalm 103:8-10.** The Lord is full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide; neither will He keep His anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us after our iniquities.

**Psalm 103:17-18.** But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; to such that keep His covenant, and to those that remember His precepts to do them.

**Lament. 3:22-23.** It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.

Grace is the *voluntary condescension of the greater to the less*. God exemplified this in the sending of Jesus Christ, Philippians 2:7-8; Psalm 103:8-10, 17-18. Toward the sinner God's grace becomes *mercy*, which, instead of punishing, is willing to forgive, Psalm 103:13; Lam. 3:22-23; Matthew 9:36. God does not punish immediately, in order to give the sinner *room for repentance*; He is patient and long-suffering, because His desire is *to save*. 2 Peter 3:9, 15. He bears not only with the sins of the ungodly, but also with the *weaknesses and shortcomings* of the godly, Luke 13:8-9.

**Psalm 103:13.** Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.

**2 Peter 3:9.** The Lord is long-suffering, to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

**2 Peter 3:15.** And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation.

God never tires of the *prayers* of His children, Luke 18:1-8, if only they come with a *believing heart*, Matthew 21:22; John 16:23. We call this the *faithfulness* of God. 2 Thessalonians 3:3. We must remember, however, that to sin in the hope of God's grace forgiving it, is an abuse of His grace and mercy, Romans 2:4; Galatians 6:7; Exodus 34:6-10.

**Romans 2:4.** Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

### **53. What mystery concerning the divine Being do the Holy Scriptures especially reveal to us?**

*They teach us that in the one God there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and that these three are one,*



The Bible *reveals* the mystery of the Trinity, but does not *explain* it, Numbers 6:24-26; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14.

We cannot fully understand our own nature and being, how much less that of the Being in whose image we have been created?

**Matthew 28:19.** Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Numb. 6:24-26.** The Lord bless thee and keep thee: The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

**2 Corinthians 13:14.** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Walking one day by the seashore Augustine was meditating upon the mystery of the Trinity. He happened to see a boy filling water from the sea into a little well he had made in the sand. "What are you doing?" he asked. "I am trying to empty the sea," said the child. As the great teacher contemplated the child, the thought came to him, is not that just what you are trying to do, when you undertake to fathom the mysteries of God's being with your human, finite understanding? If it is impossible to empty the ocean into a well, is it not just as impossible for a creature to penetrate the being of the Creator?"

To deny the Trinity means to deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, and therefore *the supreme and central truth of the Christian religion*. Jesus himself said, "*I and the Father am One.*" The redemption thru Jesus Christ is accepted by the individual thru the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, and according to Bible teachings *all three persons of the Trinity are of equal rank and enjoy the same attributes.*

## THE APOSTOLIC CREED

### **54. What is the Creed with which the whole Christian Church professes its faith in the Triune God?**

*The whole Christian Church professes its faith in the triune God in the Apostolic Creed, which is as follows:*

- I. I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.*
- II. 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 arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

*III. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the one holy universal Christian Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*

The Apostolic Creed owes its name to an early legend that it had been compiled by the twelve Apostles. Although the Creed contains the substance of the Apostles' teachings, they are not its authors, nor is the Creed as such found in the Bible. It does, however, contain all the essential teachings of the Bible. *To give up any one of its teachings is to depart from the Bible doctrine.*

### The First Article

#### **55. Of what does the first Article of the Christian faith treat?**

*The first Article of the Christian faith treats of God the Father and the work of creation.*

God is the beginning of all things, especially of all forms of life, and *Jesus taught us to call Him Father*. The work of creation is the special work of the Father, although not His alone. Compare Genesis 1:2 with John 1:1-4 and 14.

#### **56. What is the meaning of: God is the almighty Maker?**

*God created heaven and earth by the power of His almighty word.*

**Genesis 1:1.** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

**Psalms 33:6.** By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

**Hebrews 11:3.** By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear.

The Bible tells us that only God is eternal and that all else was created, i.e., called into being by Him, Romans 4:17b; Hebrews 11:3b. Man merely works with material already at hand; *God alone creates*. For that reason we call Him almighty. The words "heaven and earth" stand for the things invisible as well as

visible. Every act of creation was accompanied by a word of God, “And God said”; All things were made thru God’s word, Psalm 33:6. We are to *believe* this, even though we cannot understand it, Hebrews 11:3. The whole creation reveals *God’s almighty and unlimited power, wisdom and love*, hence

**Revelation 4:11.** Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created.

**John 1:1-3.** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made.

### **57. Whereby does God continually prove himself to be the Creator?**

*God continually proves himself to be the Creator by His fatherly providence, whereby He preserves and governs all things.*

**Genesis 8:22.** While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

**Job 10:12.** Thou hast granted me life and favour, and Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

The world is not a mere machine which God has built and put in motion and which requires no further attention from Him. God is still active in preserving and governing the things He has created. We call this part of God’s work His *providence*, a word which means to both see and provide beforehand.

That God made plants to grow from seeds, buds and shoots; that animals bring forth their young; that both plants and animals have the kind of nourishment best suited to their needs and purpose, and are adapted to certain climates, shows God’s *wise and orderly provision for preserving His creatures*. All the laws of nature, the change of the seasons, of day and night, the sunshine and the rain, as well as countless others, are only some of God’s ways of keeping the world in order.

**Psalms 145:15-16.** The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

It is impossible to recount all God’s blessings. Some enjoy one gift, some another, but none are without His kindly care and forethought. John 10:12. What we have and enjoy is no less a

gift of God because we are obliged to earn it with our labor. We should not be able to do this if God had not supplied the strength of mind and body, opportunity and skill for our work, and the ability to learn and to develop our powers, as well as the protection amid the many dangers which surround us on every hand.

**Psalm 121:3-4.** He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

**Psalm 33:13-15.** The Lord looketh from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men; from the place of His habitation He looketh forth upon all the inhabitants of the earth; He that fashioned the hearts of them all, that considereth all their works.

Even where men seek to do evil God can guide events in a way that good will result from them, Genesis 50:20. While men are free to do as they please they are *not independent* of God, who still controls not only individuals, but peoples and nations as well so that *in the end* His purposes are carried out, Psalm 33:13-15; Proverbs 16:9; Psalm 111:2. Because God rules His children can always *trust* Him for everything they need, Matthew 6:25; 10:29-31; because God's love, wisdom and power guides and governs, protects and provides, we owe Him our heartfelt *gratitude*, Deuteronomy 8:10.

**Genesis 50:20.** And as for you; ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

**Proverbs 16:9.** A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his stePsalm

**Psalm 111:2.** The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

**Deuteronomy 8:10.** And thou shalt eat and be full, and thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He hath given thee.

**Matthew 6:25.** Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for our body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more that the food, and the body than the raiment.

**Matthew 10:29-31.** Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.

## **58. What is the substance of your faith in God the Almighty Maker?**

*The answer to this question is most easily understood and*

committed to memory when separated into its four natural divisions:

1) What has God done?

*I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me and still preserves my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses;-*

2) What does God still do?

*also food and raiment, home and family, and all my possessions: that He daily and abundantly provides me with all the necessaries of life, protects and preserves me from all danger;*

3) Why does God do this?

*and all this He does purely out of paternal and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness on my part.*

4) What, therefore, do we owe to God?

*For all this I am in duty bound to thank, praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.*

### **59. Which are the principal creatures in heaven?**

*The principal creatures in heaven are the angels.*

Like man the angels are God's creatures; Genesis 3:27 and Job 38:47 indicate that they existed before human beings were created.

### **60. What are the angels?**

*The angels are holy and blessed spirits, who always do the will of the Father in heaven.*

**Hebrews 1:14.** Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?

**Luke 15:10.** Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth,

The angels are *spirits*, i.e., personal beings unfettered by an earthly body, and therefore invisible. They are holy and blessed because they share God's glory. Very probably they withstood the temptation to sin and are now perfect, i.e., unable to do wrong. The angels are the *servants* of God, Psalm 103:20; Hebrews 1:14, as is proved by many Bible incidents; they are also especially interested in the *salvation* of men, Luke 15:10; Matthew 18:10.

**Psalm 103:20.** Bless the Lord, ye angels of His: ye mighty in strength, that fulfill His word.

**Psalm 34:7.** The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them.

**Psalm 91:11-12.** For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

### **61. Did all angels remain as they were created?**

*No; many angels sinned against God and are banished to hell as enemies of God and man. Their chief is called devil, or Satan.*

**Ephesians 6:12.** For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

**1 Peter 5:8.** Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

It is believed that large numbers of angels did not withstand the temptation to sin, Jude 6, but rebelled against God, and, as a result, became perfect in sin, i. e., their aim is to act *contrary to God's will*. They cannot dwell in the presence of God and are therefore eternally separated from Him, 2 Peter 2:4. Being enemies of God, they are also enemies of man, Genesis 3; Matthew 4:1-11; John 8:44; 1 Peter 5:8, and their chief, Satan, uses every means in his power to lead men into disobedience against God's will. Jesus conquered the devil, and *in His strength* we too can conquer, 1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 6:12; James 4:7.

**James 4:7.** Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

**2 Peter 2:4.** God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.

### **62. Which is the principal creature on earth?**

*The principal creature on earth is man, created in the image of God, so that he might know God and live in blessed communion with Him.*

**Genesis 1:27.** And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him.

Genesis 2:7 tells us that God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; from Genesis 1:26-27 we learn that man was made in the image and likeness of God. This manner of creation made man the lord of

the earth. After the likeness of God man has an *immortal soul, reason, free will, consciousness of self or personality; language* and an *erect position* also distinguish him from the animals.

When the work of creation was completed everything, including man, was very good, Genesis 1:31; it was God's purpose that man should grow in goodness until it should become impossible for him to do wrong. Then it would have been possible for him to understand God perfectly and to enjoy perpetual happy communion with Him on earth. That all mankind traces its origin to *one pair of ancestors* is an essential teaching of the Bible and of vital importance to the Bible doctrines of sin, guilt and redemption. Acts 17:26; Romans 5:12; 1 Timothy 2:5.

**Genesis 1:31.** And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.

### **63. Did man remain in this blessed state?**

*No; our first parents were by Satan led astray from God.*

**Romans 5:12.** Therefore, as thru one man sin entered into the world, and death thru sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.

**1 John 3:8.** He that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

**Genesis 2:17.** In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

This is the meaning of the story of the Fall, told in Genesis 3. Adam and Eve had been forbidden to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because they were not yet able to know evil without at the same time wanting to do it; God desired to protect them from evil. Though the devil is not mentioned by name, Revelation 12:9 indicates that the serpent was his instrument. In his effort to thwart God's plans Satan approaches woman as the weaker of the two. His first move was to create *distrust* of God's will: "Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?" The suggestion was not without effect, for the woman betrays that the limitation is irksome by adding to God's command the words "neither shall ye touch it," which God had not said. Growing bolder the tempter now openly contradicts God and represents Him as *jealous* of man, "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing

good and evil.” The woman *began to lust* after the fruit, because it was a delight to the eyes, and “the tree was to be desired to make one wise”; the desire soon *became an act*, and sin, as disobedience against God, was born. The manner of temptation is essentially the same to-day. Thru the subtlety of Satan the evil desire begins to work in the heart and grows stronger and stronger as one listens to the tempting voice, and almost before we realize what has happened, the deed is done.

**Romans 7:14.** For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

**Genesis 3:17-19.** Because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee saying, thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat bread, till thou return unto the ground for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

#### **64. What were the sad consequences of this fall of man?**

*Man lost the image of God, came under the power of Satan, - sin and death, and this corruption is transmitted from Adam upon all mankind.*

Outwardly the man and the woman remained unchanged after the fall; apparently they still had the gifts with which God had endowed them in His image. But like the inscription on a worn or tarnished coin, the image was almost unrecognizable. Reason was dimmed, because they saw things in a wrong light; free will was gone, because they had yielded to Satan; consciousness of self was defiled by guilt, and the immortal soul had lost its desire for the presence of God and communion with Him; they were *afraid of God* and hid themselves from His sight. Thus man came under the power of Satan. Having yielded to him once, they turned away from God and it was easy for them to stray farther and farther into wrong and wickedness of every kind, 1 John 3:8, as is illustrated by many stories of the Bible (Cain and Abel; the Deluge; David and Uriah; Judas Iscariot) and countless experiences of every-day life. Wherever man follows his natural inclinations alone he is led away from God, into selfishness and wickedness.

The man and the woman did not die on the spot, but death had begun its destruction and they had become *mortal*. From



that day the human body is the victim of weakness, pain, disease and death, and of all the misery and sorrow which these bring. Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:12; Genesis 3:17-19.

With the fall the nature and disposition of man became sinful, "sold under sin," Romans 7:14. Many who would like to give up their sin cannot do so, because they are slaves. All are under the dominion of sin, i.e., their desires are corrupted by sinful thoughts and inclinations which make them love sin and yield to it.

That we have a conscience shows that there is still something in the human heart that protests against sin and seeks to turn toward God. It is the voice of God in the human heart which proves that the image of God, though lost, is not destroyed. Jesus distinguishes between persons who are *of the truth*, i.e., who realize their sinfulness and long for salvation, and those who are *not of the truth*, i.e., who will not admit their guilt nor turn away from it to God.

This sinful corruption has been transmitted from Adam to all their posterity. Even the best men and most faithful servants of God of which the Bible tells, were infected with sin as with a disease and could not attain sinlessness. No human being has ever been born without sin. Imagine what would become of a child that was allowed to grow up without any kind of right teaching or example. Jesus alone was born without sin because He was the Son of God.

### **65. What is now the natural state of man?**

*Since the fall man is corrupt, therefore unfit for anything good, but prepared for and inclined to evil. This inherited corruption is called original sin.*

**Genesis 8:21. The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.**

Thru the fall man's nature became sinful. Since Adam and Eve had turned away from God it was only natural that their children should have the same inclination. Sin has thus *polluted the life of the entire race*; even children carefully kept from evil influence and example cannot be kept from wrong. Selfishness, ungodliness and wickedness grow up *naturally* from the seed

which original sin plants into every human heart, Psalm 51:5; John 3:6; Genesis 8:21.

**John 3:6.** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Original sin may become the beginning for every kind of wickedness. The grace of God and the influence of Christian training, education and custom may counteract its growth, but the disposition remains and must always be guarded against. 1 John 1:8.

**1 John 1:8.** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

### **66. What grows out of original sin?**

*Out of original sin grows actual sin, i.e., all thoughts and desires, words and deeds, whereby evil is done or good is neglected. The most grievous sins are those committed with malice afore-thought.*

**Matthew 15:18.** But that things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart and they defile the man.

Original sin is the source of actual sin, of sinful thoughts, words and acts; the *first stage*, as it were, of wrong that is actually committed. There are sins of *commission* and sins of *omission*, and one is as real and actual as the other. 1 Samuel 3:13; James 4:17; Luke 12:47; Matthew 11:21-22. Evil thoughts and desires are the seeds from which wrong words and acts develop, Matthew 9:4; 15:8 (Ahab seeking Naboth's vineyard; the prodigal son); 1 Timothy 5:22 (see Exodus 32; 2 Samuel 11:14-17; 1 Kings 11:4-13). With a sinful heart within us and sinful men and conditions all around us, we often sin greatly even without knowing it.

**Psalm 19:12.** Who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults.

**James 4:17.** To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

There are different *degrees* of sin. Most sins are caused by weakness, almost unconsciously; sin has become a kind of natural law for mankind. Those committed *intentionally* are much worse, while the most awful are those springing from *hatred against God*; that is devilish. *Every sin committed makes*

*another and a greater one easier; small, unnoticed wrong may be the beginning of vice and crime.*

**Luke 12:47.** And the servant which knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

**1 Timothy 5:22.** Neither be partaker of other men's sins.

A fuller and more definite practical treatment will be found under *Ten Commandments*, pages 6-32.

### **67. What is the punishment of sin?**

*The punishment of sin is death, as it is written Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death."*

Death is the *wages* with which Satan rewards his servants. Because men, who were created in God's image, have turned away from Him and are living without Him and in disobedience against His will, they have become *guilty* and deserve punishment. Sin brings guilt, and death is the payment of the penalty.

There are different degrees of guilt, but not even the least could be atoned for with less than death, for God made death a necessary punishment of sin. "Death passed unto all men for that all sinned," Romans 5:12, the separation from God which sin brings about is the underlying cause of death.

### **68. How manifold is this death?**

*This death is threefold: physical, spiritual and eternal.*

Physical death is the separation of *body and soul*, made necessary because the *body has become a dwelling-place of sin*; the sinfulness of even the best of men deserves punishment with death.

**Psalms 90:7-8.** For we are consumed in thine anger, and in thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

But death also opens the *way out* of the slavery of sin; with endless life on this earth there would be no way out. Death thus becomes an instrument in the hand of God to make perfect redemption from sin *possible*.

Spiritual death is the separation of *man from God*; the godless are spiritually dead. Luke 15:24; Ephesians 2:1. For that reason those who desire to be free from sin must be *born again*. Because most persons do not seek to turn away from sin toward God they are spiritually dead, Romans 3:16-17; Isaiah 57:21.

The spiritually dead may enjoy vigorous health and engage in energetic activity. But they live without God and only for this world, even though they are apparently religious, Luke 18:9.

Eternal death is *eternal separation from God*. It is the lot of Satan and his angels and of all who intentionally and consciously persist in a godless life. It is eternal because those who suffer it have reached the end of their sinful development, and *there is no way back*.

**Revelation 21:8.** But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

### **69. Did God leave mankind to perish in this state of sin and misery?**

*No; God in His mercy resolved from all eternity to redeem fallen man by His only begotten Son.*

It was not God's will that mankind, even if under the power of Satan, sin and death, *should perish in its misery*. His loving-kindness and pity for His fallen creatures sought to free them from the power of sin. The announcement that the head of the serpent, the tempter, should be bruised went hand in hand with the announcement of the penalty for sin. Because all mankind were in the bondage of sin, however, none could accomplish the redemption except God himself. He did this thru His only begotten Son, the only Mediator between a just and holy God and His sinful children. In the Old Testament the Angel of the Lord was the mediator; in the New it is the Son of God.

**2 Timothy 1:9.** God saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal.

### **70. How did God prepare mankind for the redemption?**

*God prepared mankind for redemption by the promise given in Paradise; by the preaching of the prophets, and by various typical institutions in the old covenant.*

**Genesis 3:15.** And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

**Genesis 22:18.** And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

In order to get men to understand that sin was a *real thing* that stood between themselves and their God, and also to show them the *need* of salvation, God began to prepare men for the redemption from the slavery of sin. The first step in this direction was the *promise in Paradise*, Genesis 3:15; in the struggle that had begun between Satan as represented by the serpent, and the seed of the woman, the latter shall gain the *final* victory, even though Satan had gained the *first*. This promise was to be the star of hope for mankind until the next step in the preparation for redemption could be taken.

This was the *preaching of the prophets*, i.e., messages of God to men telling them what they needed to know about the coming redemption. The first of these was to Abraham, Genesis 22:18. The seed of Abraham was Israel, divided into twelve tribes, from one of which, Judah, the Savior was to come, Genesis 49:10. The family that was to bring forth the Redeemer was that of David, Psalm 39:4-5; Jeremiah 33:15-16. Even the place where He was to be born was made known, Micah 5:1, while the character of His work, *salvation thru sacrifice and suffering in the place of others*, was explained in Isaiah 61:1-2; 9:6; 53; Psalm 22.

**Genesis 49:10.** The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.

**Jeremiah 33:15-16.** In those days, and at that time, will I cause a Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord is our righteousness.

**Micah 5:2.** But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from old, from ever-lasting.

**Isaiah 9:6.** For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

The typical institutions of the old covenant that helped to prepare the way for the coming Redeemer included the Law, or Ten Commandments, the *revelation of God's will* to men, thru which was to come knowledge of sin and a longing for salvation,

and also the whole system of offerings and sacrifices, the priesthood and the temple, with their temporary forgiveness of sins as a foreshadowing of *Christ's perfect sacrifice once for all*. All of these institutions were to teach that sin separates man from God and that a Mediator, or Redeemer, is needed to open the way for a return to Him. The delivery from the bondage of Egypt, the many judgments visited upon the people for their sins, and finally the Babylonian captivity were all a part of the training that was to help the nation recognize and appreciate the Savior when the time for His coming should be at hand.

**Isaiah 53:7**. He was oppressed, yet He humbled Himself and opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb; yea, He opened not His mouth.

**Acts 10:43**. To Him (Jesus) bear all the prophets witness, that thru His name, everyone that believeth on His name shall receive remission of sins.

### **71. How did God accomplish man's redemption?**

*"God so loved the world that He gave His on begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* John 3:16.

*"But when the fullness of time came God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."* Galatians 4:45.

When, in God's own time, the hour had come for the consumation of the work that He had planned "before times eternal," He acted in a manner that made freedom from the slavery of sin possible for all who longed for it.

The redemption of man from sin is therefore *God's* work. No human being could have accomplished it, because all human beings were themselves under the power of sin. God loved the world *so intensely* that not even the sending of His only begotten Son into the world was too great a sacrifice for Him. *How* Jesus Christ, the Son of God, made the redemption of man a reality according to the will of God is made plain in the treatment of the Second Article of the Apostolic Creed.

## The Second Article

### **72. Of what does the second article of the Christian faith treat?**

*The second article of the Christian faith treats of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and of the work of redemption.*

Two things are here made prominent, (1) the personality of the Redeemer, and (2) the work of redemption. The name of our Redeemer is Jesus Christ. Jesus, His *family* name, is derived from the Old Testament name Joshua, meaning “*the help Of God.*” Matthew 1:21 gives the reason why this name was to be given to Jesus: “For it is He that shall save His people from their sins.” Joshua led Israel into the land of Promise; Jesus has opened the gates of heaven for mankind. The meaning of the name Jesus is well interpreted by the word *Savior*, i. e., one who saves.

Christ is the *official* name of Jesus and is derived from the word *Christos*, the Greek rendering of the Old Testament name Messiah, which means the Anointed One. In the old dispensation the highpriest and the king was anointed as a sign of consecration to their exalted office. Jesus is the *Anointed* of God, the *Highpriest* of all mankind and the King of kings, anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power, Acts 10:38. He is the only true Redeemer, because God himself has sent Him, and because all the promises of the old covenant have been fulfilled in Him and thru Him.

### **73. Who is Jesus Christ?**

*He is true God and true man in one person, my Savior, Redeemer and Lord.*

Jesus Christ is *both* God and man. According to His divine nature He is the Son of God, begotten of the Father from eternity; on the human side He is also true man, born of the Virgin Mary. The *manner* in which the divine and the human are thus combined in Him will always remain a mystery to human understanding, but the *fact* is not unthinkable. In the beginning God created man in His own image, i. e., He imparted something of His own nature and character to the being He had fashioned out

of the dust of the ground. Jesus Christ is the *perfect* image of God in human form.

In His nature and being Jesus was both wholly divine and wholly human. Not as though He had ceased being God in order to become human, or vice versa. He was and still is Immanuel, that is, God is with us, Isaiah 7:14.

The Redeemer of the world must needs be a *divine* personality, 1) because no mere human being could have brought an offering fitting for such a task, Psalm 49:7-8; Hebrews 7:26-27. 2). because the redemption was to have permanent value and to establish the eternal kingdom of God, Hebrews 8:1-2; 9:11-12. 3) because the Redeemer was to be the beginning of a new race, created anew thru the life from above, 2 Corinthians 5:19; Hebrews 8:10. 4) because divine strength was needed to conquer the power of Satan, not only for himself but also for all mankind. 1 John 3:8; Hos. 13:14.

It was just as necessary that the Redeemer of the world should be a *true man*, for 1) only a human being could have suffered and died as an offering for sin, Hebrews 2:14. 2) it was necessary that He should experience the whole weakness and temptation to which man is subject, Hebrews 2:17-18. 3) Only as a man could He become subject to the Law and fulfill it in our stead, Galatians 4:4-5. 4) Only as a man could He become the first-born of the children of God. Romans 5:21.

Both the divinity and the humanity of Jesus Christ are of *fundamental importance to Christian faith and life*, 1 John 1:1-3; 4:3; 2 John 7.

Jesus has come into the world for *my* salvation. If I do not make Him *my* Savior, He cannot help me. He can only help me by healing *me*, by taking away *my* sins. I can remain healed only by yielding *myself* to Him and obeying His Will. Thus He becomes *my* Savior, Redeemer and Lord.

#### **74. How do the Holy Scriptures expressly testify that Jesus Christ is true God?**

*In the Holy Scriptures Jesus Christ is expressly called God; furthermore divine attributes and works are ascribed to Him, and divine honor is demanded for Him.*

**John 1:1-3.** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All



things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made.

**John 10:30.** I and the Father are one.

**John 20:28.** Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God,  
**John 17:5.** And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory, which I had with thee before the world was.

**John 8:58.** Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

The divinity of Jesus Christ is one of the fundamental claims of the New Testament. At the baptism in the Jordan, Matthew 3:17, the voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Jesus himself says, "I and the Father are one," John 10:30; and at the transfiguration Matthew 17:5, the voice out of the cloud again declares, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him," and before the Sanhedrin Jesus laid claim under oath to being the Christ, the Son of God, Matthew 26:63-64. His disciples, in the most emphatic terms, bear witness to the same truth. John 20:28; 1:1-3; 6:69; Matthew 16:16-17; Romans 9:5.

In substantiation of these claims Jesus exercises divine attributes and performs divine works. He declares His *eternity* in John 8:58 and 17:5 and His *omnipotence* in Matthew 11:27 and John 5:21-26, and proves the latter by numerous works, notably by raising the dead, Luke 7:11-17; 8:54-55; John 11:43-44 and forgiving sins, Matthew 9:2; Luke 7:38. His *omniscience* appears in John 4:29; Matthew 16:21; 24:2.

For these reasons divine honor is due to Jesus. On the day of judgment He will preside, Matthew 25:31ff, John 5:22-23, and decide the fate of the living and the dead. His followers are to petition the Father in His name, John 14:13, and finally all knees shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father, Philippians 2:11, because in Him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Colossians 2:9.

**Matthew 11:27.** All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.

**John 5:21-26.** For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom He will. For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in himself,

**Matthew 9:6.** But that ye may know that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then said He to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.

**John 5:22-23.** For neither doth the Father judge any man, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which sent Him.

**Colossians 2:9.** For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

### **75. How do we know that Jesus Christ became true man?**

*Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary; He thereby entered into human nature and became in all things as we are, yet without sin.*

**Luke 1:35.** And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God.

**John 1:14.** And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth

The whole story of Christ's natural birth is told in Luke 1:26ff, Matthew 1:18ff, and Luke 2:1-14. Though the Son of God and therefore without sin, He is none the less in every way human. The Word became flesh, John 1:14, means not only the adoption of a human form and body, *but a human being in every essential particular*. His is not merely an appearance in the form of a man, but a real, actual incarnation. As He was born in the natural way, so His physical, intellectual and spiritual development was also entirely natural, Luke 2:52. His needs were those of other men: He was *hungry*, Matthew 4:2; *thirsty*, John 19:28; *weary*, John 4:6; Matthew 8:24. He *grieved*, Luke 19:21; John 11:35, and finally *died*, John 19:30.

**Luke 2:52.** And Jesus advanced in wisdom and sature, and in favor with God and men.

**Matthew 4:2.** And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He afterward hungered.

**John 19:28.** After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the Scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst.

**John 4:6.** Jesus, therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus by the well.

**Matthew 8:24.** He was asleep.

**Luke 19:41.** And when He drew nigh, He saw the city and wept over it.

**John 11:35,** Jesus wept

**John 19:30.** And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.

The only particular in which Jesus was not like other men is that He was *without sin*, John 8:46; Hebrews 4:15. Though tempted to sin, He yet became perfect in obedience to the will of God, Hebrews 2:10; 5:8.

**Hebrews 4:15.** But one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin

## **76. Whereby did Christ reveal Himself as the Redeemer even before His death?**

*Christ revealed Himself as the Redeemer even before His death, by His holy life in which He perfectly fulfilled the law of God in our stead; by His preaching the forgiveness of sins thru faith in His name, and by His miracles, which are all works of life to abolish misery and death.*

**John 4:34.** Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to accomplish His work.

**John 8:46.** Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?

Even the very best of men have their faults and weaknesses, but thruout the whole life of Jesus Christ not even the smallest sin, fault or weakness can be found. No temptation, whether great or small, found Him unguarded, and not even His bitterest enemies could point to any wrong deed or word, John 8:46. Not all the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof could make Him even consider such a thing as disobeying God. Matthew 4:9-10. Obedience to God was just as natural a necessity with Him as eating is with us, John 4:34.

By such a holy life Jesus *fulfilled the law of God perfectly* in our stead. As the Son of God He would not have needed to observe it, but as a man He did observe it. He was able to do what would have been impossible for any human being, because no evil thought ever entered His soul (The tenth Commandment and James 1:14:15). Romans 8:3-4. Because He was sinless even unto the last breath, and needed no redemption for himself, His holy life could be offered as a ransom for sinful. humanity.

**Mark 1:15.** Jesus saith, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the Gospel.

**John 3:17-18.** For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved thru Him. He that believeth on Him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.

**Luke 19:10.** For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Since Jesus had come to establish the kingdom of God on earth, and since human sin was the greatest obstacle to that work, the chief content of His preaching was the forgiveness of sin thru faith in His name, as the only way for men to become children of God. He was emphatic in the declaration of God's grace and mercy toward sinners who repented, Luke 15, and took advantage of every opportunity to show himself as the Savior of sinners, Luke 19:10; John 3:17-18.

The manner in which Jesus proved His divine power by many miracles made a deep impression on the people of His day, Acts 10:38. All of His miracles were miracles of redemption and healing and made it plain to all who cared to know that He was the Savior and Redeemer of men, John 5:36.

**Acts 10:38.** Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.

**John 5:36.** The very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

## **77. Whereby did Christ accomplish our redemption?**

*Christ accomplished our redemption by His sufferings and death, in which He endured, in our stead, the wrath of God against sin, thereby redeeming us from sin, Satan and death.*

**Isaiah 53:4-6.** Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

**2 Corinthians 5:19-21.** God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation. We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as tho God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God. Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**1 John 2:2.** And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.

Christ has accomplished the redemption, i.e., He has made it possible for human beings, who cannot keep God's law because they are evil, and who therefore deserve the curse of God, to get away from the power of sin and Satan (See answer to questions No. 66 and 67). 1 John 2:2; 1 Peter 2:24.

**1 John 1:7.** But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

**Hebrews 9:14.** How much more shall the blood of Christ, who thru the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

**1 Peter 2:24.** Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed

Jesus has redeemed mankind, because He has paid the *ransom price*, the truth He taught, the life He lived, His labors and struggles, the suffering He endured, yea, the very death that ended His life, were part of the great price He paid for the salvation of the world, Isaiah 53:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Hebrews 9:14; Colossians 1:13-14.

**1 Peter 1:18-19.** Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life, handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ.

**Titus 2:14.** Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works.

Real redemption means not only the end of a sinful life, but also the beginning of a new and better life. The life and the death of Jesus has brought a new force into the world, which helps men to conquer sin in their hearts and lives and brings peace and happiness, 1 John 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Titus 2:14; 2 Timothy 1:10.

**2 Timothy 1:10.** Jesus Christ abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light.

**Colossians 1:13-14.** God delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.

## **78. Why is the death of Christ the most important fact in redemption?**

*The death of Christ is the most important fact in redemption, because we, lost sinners, could be redeemed neither by precept*

*nor example, but only by the all-sufficient offering in the suffering and dying of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**1 Corinthians 2:2.** For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

**1 Corinthians 1:23-24.** But ye preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The story of the death of Christ on the cross is often called “the word of the cross,” from 1 Corinthians 1:18. St. Paul, the greatest teacher of Christianity, calls it “the power of God,” 1 Corinthians 1:24, because it is the *real nerve and backbone* of Christ’s work of salvation. If Jesus had been merely a *great teacher* and nothing else, His work would not be of much value to sinful men unable to live according to His teachings. If Jesus had been merely *an example* to us, He could not have helped those who had no power to follow the example, no matter how perfect it might have been. What made Jesus the Savior of the world was the fact that He did something *for* mankind; that He *paid the debt* which no one else could have paid; that He *suffered the penalty* which would have annihilated any one else; that He *conquered the enemy* which would otherwise have gained a complete victory over mankind, An uncrucified Christ would be a hopeless and helpless Christ. It was the life and death of Christ as a *sacrifice for mankind* that gave it its unique value. 1 Corinthians 2:2; John 1:29; Hebrews 7:26-27.

**John 1:29.** On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

**Hebrews 7:26-27.** For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needed not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this He did once for all, when He offered up Himself.

## **79. Of what importance is Christ’s burial?**

*Christ’s burial is a testimony that He had really died.*

Jesus was buried by His *friends*, hence He must have been really dead, or they would not have buried Him. How they buried Him is told in Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-55; John 19:38-42.

The burial of Jesus has sanctified the graves of all His followers and made them a resting place until the day of resurrection.

### **80. Why did Christ descend into hell?**

*Christ descended into hell to triumph over the dominion of darkness, and there to reveal Himself as the Redeemer of mankind.*

**1 Peter 3:18-20.** Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit; in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved thru water.

The descending into hell, i.e., into the place of the dead, marks the beginning of Christ's exaltation after the humiliation thru which He had passed ever since His birth, for He there revealed himself as conqueror of death, Colossians 2:15. Those who had died before His death had no way of knowing what He had done; therefore He preached salvation to them also, 1 Peter 3:18-20.

### **81. Of what importance is the resurrection of Christ?**

*The resurrection of Christ clearly establishes the redemption as all-sufficient for all eternity. It is therefore the foundation of all faith, the source of all new life, and a positive pledge of our future resurrection and perfection.*

**Romans 1:4.** Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead.

**Romans 4:25.** Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.

**1 Corinthians 15:17-18.** If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

Christ's resurrection is the divine seal upon the work of salvation accomplished by Him. All the Gospels tell us that Jesus came out of the grave alive on the third day after His death. No one witnessed the resurrection; the watchers became as dead men, Matthew 28:4, when the angel of the Lord descended and rolled away the stone. But *the risen Lord himself* appeared to many of His disciples, as recorded in Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:4-8.

The first ones to cast a doubt on the reality of the resurrection were the enemies of Jesus when they heard the story of the guards, Matthew 28:11-15, and only *enemies of Jesus* have ever

tried to follow their example. The resurrection of Jesus is well attested and six facts prove this beyond a doubt: 1) The disciples *never expected* Jesus to die, least of all on the cross. 2) They also *never even thought of a resurrection*, Luke 24:21. 3) Not even the empty tomb awakened the *thought that He could have risen*, John 20; Luke 24:11. 4) They were *reluctantly convinced* of the reality of His resurrection by physical demonstration. 5) Thomas is first convinced by the Master's *second* appearance. 6) With the aid of the Roman guard at the tomb it should have been an easy matter for the Jews to show where the body of Jesus had been placed *if He was not risen*.

Jesus appeared only to His friends after His resurrection, because His enemies, though they could have been *terrified* by such an appearance, could not have been brought *to believe in Him* after what had happened in the Sanhedrin, Mark 14:61-65; Acts 10:40-41.

**Romans 6:4.** That like as Christ was raised from the dead thru the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

**2 Corinthians 5:15.** And He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again.

**John 11:25-26.** I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, tho he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.

The resurrection of Jesus is a special act of God ratifying all that Jesus had claimed to be and to do. An impostor could never have risen from the grave, Acts 2:24; Romans 1:4. The redemption from sin which Jesus had accomplished is therefore fully confirmed and established *once for all and for all eternity*. No other Redeemer and no other sacrifice will ever be needed. Jesus has atoned for the sins of every human being for all time, Romans 4:25.

The resurrection proclaims Jesus as the *living Lord*, who has actually conquered sin, death and the power of darkness, and who is therefore worthy of our fullest faith and confidence as Savior and Redeemer. It is therefore the unshakable *foundation* on which our faith may firmly and fearlessly stand. 1 Corinthians 15:17-18.

Being thus a firm foundation for our faith the resurrection cannot help, but become also the *source of a new life*. Those who have received and accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior (because



their faith in Him is based on His death and resurrection) can no longer live sinful lives. The natural inclination to sin is forced into the background by the desire to live for Him who has died for them, and the love for sin is gradually replaced by a growing desire for righteousness. Thus the new life takes possession of the soul and in the course of time renews and sanctifies the whole being, Romans 6:4; 2 Corinthians 5:15.

The spiritual life thus awakened and developed culminates in the blessedness of eternal life and salvation in heaven. Jesus Christ died and was raised from the dead that we might be His own and live under Him in His kingdom, even as He himself arose from the dead, John 11:25-26. A pledge is a *positive guarantee and security*. Just as surely as Jesus has risen from the dead, we too shall arise out of the grave. It is for this reason that Jesus is called the “first fruits of them that are asleep,” 1 Corinthians 15:20-22; 6:14; Romans 8:11.

**1 Corinthians 15:20-22.** But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

**Romans 8:11.** But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead, shall quicken also your mortal bodies thru His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

All the dead will be raised up, including the ungodly; but only the godly in whom the Spirit of Jesus dwelt, shall rise to *eternal life*. They attain the resurrection of life, John 5:29, because they had already attained a spiritual resurrection. Those who are united with Christ need have no fear, but can find comfort in His words, Revelation 1:17-18.

This assurance *robs death of its sting* and the grave of its victory. 1 Corinthians 15:53-57.

## **82. What is the meaning of the words, “He ascended into heaven?”**

*Forty days after His resurrection Christ was visibly taken up into heaven. All gifts of faith are thereby declared celestial and eternal, and our faith and hope directed heavenward.*

Jesus could have ascended into heaven immediately after His resurrection, but during the forty days He appeared to His disciples *at intervals* so as to accustom them to the spiritual manner

in which He was to be with them always even unto the end of the world, and that they might learn to believe in an *invisible* Savior. From the Mount of Olives He ascended into heaven, Mark 16:19; Luke 24:30-31; Acts 1:9-11.

**John 14:2-3.** For I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself: that were I am, there ye may be also.

**John 16:7.** Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you.

The ascension of Jesus reminds us that our home is not in this world with its fleeting joys and possessions, its selfishness, sin and death, but *in the Father's house*, where there are many mansions, and where He has gone to prepare a place for us, John 14:2-3. The world is to be won for the kingdom of God, but the Kingdom's final perfection and glory will appear in the spiritual, heavenly world, where the imperfections of the flesh and of the world will have been done away with, John 17:24.

In order to foster and to increase the spiritual life and direct its growth toward its heavenly destiny, Jesus sent *the Comforter* to His disciples, John 16:7. In His power they were to live lives of faith and love and purity; thru Him they were to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit and win their victories over the flesh and the world, to establish the royal rule of God thruout the earth and achieve the final perfection and glory in heaven. The faith and hope directed heavenward will also make life on earth happy and contented.

**John 17:24.** Father, that which thou hast given me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with me; that they may behold my glory, which thou has given me.

### **83. What do you mean by the words, "He sitteth at the right hand of God, the Almighty Father?"**

*Christ is in heaven in the perfection of His divine nature, and to Him, as the glorified son of Man, the Almighty Father in heaven has given all power in heaven and on earth, and as eternal Prophet, eternal Priest and eternal King He enlightens, intercedes for and governs His Church.*

**Psalms 110:1.** The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool.

**Ephesians 1:20-23.** God raised Christ from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

To sit at the right hand of a sovereign or ruler is to be regarded as his equal and to enjoy intimate relations with him. Thus Jesus Christ was exalted by His ascension, Mark 16:19; Philippians 2:9-11; His human nature was transfigured and glorified. Not only the eternal Son of God, but *Jesus the Man, our Elder Brother*, now partakes of divine majesty and honor and has been given all authority in heaven and on earth, Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-23. It is comforting to remember this in the midst of the many difficulties, trials and temptations of the earthly life. The prayer of God's children to Christ as their Savior and Lord are never in vain.

**Ephesians 5:14.** Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.

**Romans 8:33-34.** Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Three offices are performed by the exalted Christ, that of *Prophet, Priest* and *King*. The prophets of the Old Testament were the teachers of righteousness. During His life on earth Jesus performed this work more perfectly than any one before Him and from His exalted position He still continues, thru His Spirit, to *enlighten* all who believe in Him, John 14:16-17, 26; 16:13-14; Ephesians 5:14. The highpriest of the Old Testament *represented his people* in their dealings with God, and his sacrifice and prayer atoned for their sins. Jesus is the true *Highpriest* of God's people, who thru the perfect sacrifice of His holy life has taken away the sins of the world and become the *Intercessor* and *Advocate* of sinners, 1 John 2:21; Hebrews 5:9-10; Romans 8:33-34. Saul, David, Solomon were anointed of God as kings to rule over their people in the place of God. Jesus is the divine Head of the kingdom of God, that invisible spiritual realm in which His love and His righteousness is the supreme law. Thru His Spirit in the

hearts of men He governs the individual believers as well as His entire Church. In time of distress and trouble He has always preserved her, and in her periods of corruption and error He has cleansed and revived her. Luke 1:33.

As Prophet Jesus possesses the highest *Wisdom*; as Priest, the greatest *holiness*, and as King He has absolute *righteousness*, which makes Him the *perfect Redeemer*, 1 Corinthians 1:30.

**84. What do we confess with the words, “From thence He will come to judge the quick and the dead?”**

*Christ will come again on the last day with great power and glory to take the righteous into eternal glory, and to deliver the wicked over to eternal punishment.*

**Acts. 1:11.** This Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven.

**Matthew 25:31-32.** But when the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him. then shall He sit on the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all the nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats.

The person, the life and the work of Jesus Christ compel all who come into contact with Him to decide *for or against Him*. Sooner or later every one thus decides his own fate, but what it will be is *judged and determined* by Jesus Christ. For that purpose He will certainly come again when His time is come. Acts 1:11; Matthew 16:27; 25:31-32; Luke 21:25-36; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 1:7; 22:12.

**2 Corinthians 5:10.** For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what He hath done, whether it be good or bad.

**Luke 21:27-28.** And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh.

The righteous, whom He will take into eternal glory, are those who have become *His own*, because He has redeemed, purchased and delivered them, and they have accepted Him as their Savior and Lord. After the day of judgment they are to live under Him in His eternal kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns in all eternity.

The wicked, i.e., those who have refused the salvation He has

offered to all, and have lived and died without Him, have no alternative but eternal punishment. There can be no blessedness without Christ, and having rejected Him they must *reap what they have sown*.

**85. In which passage of the Holy Scripture do we find the humiliation and exaltation of Christ briefly described?**

*We find the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ briefly described in the passage Philippians 2:5-11, which is as follows: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

The life of Jesus Christ, since His coming to earth, may be divided into two *states*, as we say, the state of *humiliation*, and the state of *exaltation*. To the state of humiliation belongs His *birth*, His *^*, His *suffering*, *death*, and *burial*. To the state of exaltation belong His *descent into hell*, His *resurrection*, *ascension* and His *sitting at the right hand of God*.

**86. What is the substance of your faith in Jesus Christ?**

The substance of our faith in Jesus Christ, as given in the answer to question 86 of the Catechism, is best understood and committed to memory when studied under five sub-questions as follows:

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

*I believe that Jesus Christ - true God, begotten of the Father from all eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary - is my Lord.*

WHAT HAS HE DONE FOR YOU?

*Who has redeemed, purchased and delivered me, a lost and condemned creature.*

WHEREFROM HAS HE REDEEMED YOU?

*From all sins, from death and from the power of Satan.*

## WHEREWITH HAS HE REDEEMED YOU?

*Not with silver or gold, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.*

## TO WHAT END HAS HE REDEEMED YOU?

*That I might be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness and blessedness; even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns in all eternity.*

**The Third Article****87. Of what does the third article of the Christian faith treat?**

*The third article of the Christian faith treats of God the Holy Spirit, and of the work of sanctification.*

The work of the Holy Spirit is an essential part of God's work of redemption and salvation. It is the Holy Spirit who sanctifies redeemed sinners, i.e., who transforms them into actual children of God by teaching and helping them to live a holy life. The article therefore deals with the *means of grace* thru which the Holy Spirit works (see answers to questions 88-90); with the *order of salvation* (see questions 91-100); with the *agency of salvation*, i.e.; the Church (see questions 101-109), and with the *purpose of salvation*, the resurrection of the body and the everlasting life (see questions 110-112).

**88: What do we believe concerning the Holy Spirit?**

*We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Holy Trinity, with the Father and the son true and eternal God, a Lord and distributor of all gifts, who enables us to come to Christ, our Lord, and to remain with Him forever.*

Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as a *personality*, John 15:26. The qualities attributed to the Holy Spirit here and in Acts 2:1-11 can only have reference to a personality. Acts 5:3, 1 Corinthians 2:10 and 2 Peter 1:21 also definitely imply the personality of the Holy Spirit.

That the Holy Spirit is true and eternal God appears from Psalm 139:7; Matthew 28:19; John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10; Titus 3:5. His unity with the Father and the Son is implied in John 15:26.

The gifts which the Holy Spirit distributes are those which Jesus has won for us, the forgiveness of sin, the sonship of God,

enlightenment of heart and mind, witnessing for Christ and devotion to His cause. The gifts of grace revealed themselves in the lives of the apostles after Pentecost, Acts 2, and in the home of Cornelius, Acts 10. Paul speaks of them at length in 1 Corinthians 12:1-11. These spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit also stimulate the Christian's intellectual abilities to greater activity and consecration.

Since original sin prepares us for and inclines us toward evil, we cannot by our own reason or strength believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and come to Him. This is accomplished thru the Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 3:3. As long as Paul followed his own heart and mind, he was an enemy of Christ and was in darkness as to the true way. But when the Holy Spirit came to him he saw the error of his way. Acts 9:1-20.

Those bidden to the great supper, Luke 14:16ff, did not come because they followed their own reason; the rich young man could not come of his own strength, Matthew 19:16. Peter trusted in his own strength and denied his Master. The Pharisees relied upon the letter of the law and drifted into hatred of Christ.

To believe in Jesus Christ and come to Him means to get into the most intimate relationship with Him, John 15:1-9; 26-16:15.

### **89. What offices are ascribed to the Holy Spirit?**

*Three offices are ascribed to the Holy Spirit: the office of punishment in which He reproveth man for his sins; the office of comforting, in which He assures the sinner of the grace of God; the office of teaching, in which He guides believers into all truths, and impels them to do all that is good.*

These offices of punishing, comforting and teaching are exercised by the Holy Spirit in conformity with the order of salvation according to whether men are *unconverted, repentant or converted*.

Thru Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost thousands of Jews were awakened and enlightened, so that they were pricked in their hearts and said, Brethren, what shall we do? The same happened to the jailer at Philippi, Acts 16:27-30, and to Felix, Acts 24:25, though with a different result. John 16:8. When we are *made to realize our faults, shortcomings and sinfulness*, we are experiencing the efforts of the Holy Spirit to lead us to Christ.

**John 14:16-17.** And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world can not receive, for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: ye know Him; for He abideth with you, and shall be in you.

But the convicting work of the Holy Spirit is only for the purpose of *helping us to believe* in Jesus and find His salvation, hence it is followed by the comforting work of the Holy Spirit, in accordance with Isaiah 1:18; Ezekiel 33:11; Matthew 10:28, and similar passages. To quiet the voice of conscience *without* seeking forgiveness and salvation is to war against the Spirit and leads to the sin against Him, which cannot be pardoned either in this world or in the one to come. Luke 12:10. John 14:16-26.

**John 14:26.** But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.

Coming to Jesus for salvation is valuable only when we *remain with Him*. The Holy Spirit seeks to accomplish this thru His work of teaching, John 16:13-14. Those who follow the leading of the Spirit are gradually sanctified, i.e. brought to a higher and higher degree of holiness. Acts 2:42. They learn to appreciate the fullness of the glory of God's salvation and are led into broader avenues of service for Christ and His kingdom. John 14:16-17, 26; 16:8, 13-14.

**John 16:13-14.** Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you in all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me; for He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you.

## **90. By what means does the Holy Spirit accomplish this work?**

*The Holy Spirit works by the Word of God and the Holy Sacraments, which are the means of grace instituted by God.*

In the same manner as food is necessary for the preservation of our physical life, the means of grace are necessary to the spiritual life. They are called means of grace because *God's grace has given them*, and because they help us to *find the grace of God for ourselves*.

We have the Word of God in the Bible, in the preaching of the law and the Gospel, in religious instruction, in our songs and hymns and in Christian literature, Acts 8:26; 10:22, 33-34.



Luke 16:27 the rich man is told that his five brothers must hear Moses and the prophets if they would be saved. Acts 2:37; 10:44; Galatians 3:2. Unbelievers and the indifferent and all professing Christians who neglect the Word of God cannot receive salvation.

**James 1:21.** Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

The holy sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are means of grace by which the Holy Spirit seeks to influence the individual. In holy baptism *He plants the beginnings of the new life* and receives the person into membership with the Church. To receive baptism is therefore the natural request of all unbaptized who desire to come to Christ. Acts 2:31; 19:1-7. The Lord's Supper is the *nourishment of the new life* in the body and the blood of Christ. Those who would strengthen and develop their spiritual life should not neglect to partake of it.

**Acts 2:38.** Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 10:16.** The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?

## **91. In what order and in what manner does the Holy Spirit impart salvation to the individual?**

*The order and manner observed by the Holy Spirit in imparting salvation to the individual is as follows: calling and enlightenment, repentance and faith, justification and sanctification.*

Though Jesus is the Savior of all men, His salvation, in order to be effective *must be imparted to every individual*. Jesus has redeemed all mankind, but the individual man, woman or child must perish unless they *personally accept Him* as their Savior.

The order of salvation is not fixed arbitrarily, but is required by the peculiar nature of man. Its different stages are separate only in theory; in reality they overlap each other in such a way that it is impossible to say where one ends and the other begins.

## **92. What is meant by the calling of the Holy Spirit?**

*We distinguish between a general and a special calling. In the general calling the Holy Spirit invites all mankind to enter*

*into the kingdom of God. In the special calling the Holy Spirit brings the general calling so effectively to the individual person that he is compelled to either accept or reject it.*

**2 Peter 3:9.** The Lord is not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

**1 Timothy 2:4.** God willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.

The call of John the Baptist, “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” Matthew 3:2, was a *general call* to the entire people of Israel. The Jews were called first, Luke 14:16-24, but since they rejected their salvation by the crucifixion of Christ, the apostles were sent out to *all the nations of the earth*, many of whom followed the general call and became Christians. In every sermon that preaches the Gospel of Christ the Holy Spirit speaks thru the mouth of the preacher: “God wants to save you; come and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.” God does not discriminate; the invitation goes out absolutely to all. 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4; Matthew 11:28-30; Isaiah 55:1; John 6:45. Adam would not have sought God; God sought him. Paul would not have become an apostle if Jesus had not called him.

**John 6:44.** No man can come to me except the Father which sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day.

**Matthew 11:28-30.** Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

**Isaiah 55:1.** Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Many, many of those who hear this general call do not heed it. Those who do heed it must decide whether they will *obey or reject* the call. Matthew 20:16; Revelation 3:20. The call comes to us in many different ways. Sometimes like a star whose beautiful light rises gradually above the horizon; sometimes like an arrow that pierces the heart; sometimes like a refreshing shower that softens the hardened soil; sometimes like a hammer that breaketh the rock to pieces. The preaching of the Word and the voice of conscience, happiness or misfortune, joy or sorrow, suffering,

disease of death, and many events of our everyday lives are messengers of God to call us to repentance.

The call comes again and again, but no one can know whether he will hear it again. *The longer one waits with heeding and obeying the more difficult it becomes to do so.* No one has ever regretted becoming a Christian, but uncounted thousands have regretted not doing so. Those who finally reject the call are beyond the hope of salvation.

**Revelation 3:20.** Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

### **93. What is meant by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit?**

*Enlightenment is that work of the Holy Spirit by which He convinces the sinner of his lost state, and shows him how he can be saved.*

For Simon Peter the wonderful draught of fishes was a special call which *enlightened* him concerning his spiritual condition, so that he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," Luke 5:8. He passed thru a similar experience when he heard the cock crow after he had denied his Master; Judas saw the awful meaning of his deed, but he did not repent, Matthew 27:3.

Many a sinner lives on for years without realizing his lost state. Suddenly a light bursts in upon his soul and he not only sees, but feels and knows with great inward pains that he is lost unless the mercy of God comes to his aid. This is the *special call* of the Holy Spirit for leading him to repentance and into the way of salvation.

In His work of comforting the Holy Spirit seeks to assure the sinner that Jesus has died for his sins and that He is ready to forgive if he will only believe. Like Judas, or Felix, Acts 24-25, many never get farther than a knowledge of their sins, because they neglect or refuse to turn to Jesus. In those who turn toward Christ the *light grows clearer and stronger*, Ephesians 5:8; 1:17-18, thru the aid of the Father, Matthew 16:17.

**Ephesians 5:8.** Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord.

**Ephesians 1:17-18.** God may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened,

that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

While the call is addressed to the *will*, enlightenment appeals to *reason* and to *consciousness*.

#### **94. What is repentance?**

*True repentance consists in conviction of sin, contrition for sin, confession and renunciation of sin, and longing for grace.*

**Matthew 9:13.** I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

**Psalms 38:4.** For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are to heavy for me.

**1 John 1:8-9.** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Repentance means *a change of mind and of heart*. The men of Niniveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, Jonah 3, and David repented when Nathan reproved him for his sins, 2 Samuel 12:13-17. Since God will not endure sin, men must *turn away from it* if they would be saved. Matthew 9:13.

The first step in repentance is that knowledge and conviction of sin which takes place as a consequence of enlightenment, Jeremiah 3:12-13; Psalm 38:5. If the conviction of sin is real, sincere persons are led naturally to the *confession* of their sins. This step is very hard for the mind of the natural man, and his pride submits only when the burden becomes too great to bear, Psalm 32:3-5; Luke 15:18-19; 18:13; 1 John 8-9. To *conceal or deny guilt* leads to a hardening of the heart and the loss of salvation, Proverbs 28:13; James 5:16. Confession of sin should be made not only to God, but *to those who have been wronged*; if the sin was public the confession should also be made publicly.

**Proverbs 28:13.** He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy.

**Luke 15:18-19.** I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

**Luke 18:13.** God, be merciful to me a sinner.

**Psalms 32:5.** I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

**James 5:16.** Confess therefore your sins one to another.

*Contrition* for sin always accompanies a sincere confession. This is much more than mere regret or remorse, which consists

largely of disappointment or chagrin at displeasing or unfortunate consequences. Peter wept bitterly when he realized what he had done, not because of the consequences of his act, but because *his relationship to Jesus had been injured* by his denial. Judas, on the other hand, regretted only the unexpected consequences and sought to make his sin good by restitution only, not by seeking forgiveness from Jesus. 2 Corinthians 7:10; Matthew 5:4; Luke 7:36ff, James 4:8-9; Psalm 51:17.

**2 Corinthians 7:10.** For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

**Matthew 5:4.** Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

**Psalm 51:17.** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

*Renunciation* of sin is the proof of sincere repentance. Saul continued his persecution of David, even though he recognized the injustice he was doing, 1 Samuel 24:18. Zaccheus, however, was ready to renounce the sins he had committed at any cost, Luke 19:8.

**Isaiah 55:7.** Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

**Romans 12:9.** Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

**Luke 19:8.** And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold

*A longing for grace* is the natural outcome of true repentance, Psalm 119:81-82; 42:2-3; Matthew 5:6. A sinner may despair of his own strength, but never of God's ability to help and to forgive, for God is always ready to pardon and to forgive as long as men come to Him for it, Matthew 5:6. The longing for grace *leads over to faith*. Repentance alone can never bring the new birth.

**Psalm 42:1-2.** As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

**Matthew 5:6.** Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

## **95. What is faith?**

*Faith is the firm confidence with which the sinner accepts and retains the grace of God in Christ.*

Faith is a *firm trust and a hearty devotion to the invisible God and Savior*, Hebrews 11:1; Romans 4:20-21. Though Abraham saw nothing of what God had promised and had to wait twenty-five years before the promise was realized, he nevertheless trusted in the Word of God with all his heart.

**Hebrews 11:1.** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen.

**Hebrews 11:6.** Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him.

**Romans 4:20-21.** Abraham was looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not thru unbelief, but waxed strong thru faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform.

The disciples left all they had for Jesus' and His kingdom's sake, and their faith was firmest when He himself was no longer with them.

The invisible thing for which we are to trust God is *His grace in Christ Jesus*, i.e., the fact that He has sent Jesus to be our Redeemer and that we may be saved and become children of God thru Him. The absolute certainty of this fact is of vastly greater value than all the wealth of the world can ever be, 1 Timothy 1:15. Only faith in Jesus *as the Son of God* is real faith; none other can save, Acts 16:31.

**1 Timothy 1:15.** Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world so save sinners; of whom I am chief.

**John 6:40.** For this is the will of my Father, that every one that be holdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have eternal life.

**John 6:68-69.** Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God.

In true repentance the sinner turns *away from his sin*; in faith he turns *toward God*. This is the greatest thing that can happen in the life of any man, but *it is God that does it*. Faith is an act of the Holy Spirit, not of human reason. The true believer *yields himself to Christ* and is governed by Him, which is the *beginning of a new life* with its fruitage of a godly life in the love toward God and man.

**Acts 16:31.** Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house.

**Galatians 2:20.** That life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me.

If we are not true to our faith we are in danger of losing its blessings. Judas believed in Jesus at first, and yet he fell. Paul mourns the loss of Demas, who forsook him, having loved this present world, 2 Timothy 4:10.

To believe in the way of merely regarding as true, is to have only the outward form of a faith that is *dead in itself*, James 2:17. True faith makes the believer better; a dead faith leaves him as he is.

### **96. What is justification?**

*Justification is the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake, the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, and the adoption as children of God, and all this purely by paternal grace.*

Justification is God's answer to our faith.

**Isaiah 43:24-25.** Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake; and I will not remember thy sins.

**Psalm 32:1-2.** Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

A man charged with a crime is considered justified when he is able to prove his innocence. We cannot prove our innocence before God, because we *are* sinners. But *Jesus has taken our guilt upon himself*, and those who place their trust in Him are declared right with God. That is justification.

The man sick of the palsy, Matthew 9:2ff, and the sinful woman, Luke 7:48ff, were assured of the forgiveness of sin, and the way to happiness and salvation was thus opened to them. Since we are all lost and condemned sinners in the sight of God, forgiveness of sins is *the most precious thing held out to our spiritual life*. Only those who have felt the pangs of unforgiven sin can appreciate what it means to be forgiven. Luther spent many Years in the severest agony of mind and soul before he found the way to forgiveness and peace in Christ Jesus. Psalm 32:1-2.

God forgives sin *for Christ's sake*, not for the sake of deeds of penance, good works, charity, pure doctrine, or anything that

we can do. To try this leads to endless agony and despair, or to hypocrisy and an outward sham of religion. Isaiah 43:24-25; Micah. 7:18.

**Philippians 3:8-9.** Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is thru faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

**Galatians 3:26.** For ye are all sons of God, thru faith, in Christ Jesus.

Not by any effort of our own are we made right with God, but *only because the righteousness of Jesus Christ is counted to our credit* because of our faith in Him. If a friend pays a debt for us which we never could pay, we become free from the burden. In the same way we need not fear the wrath of God, because Jesus has borne our guilt; Jeremiah 53:4-6; Philippians 3:8-9. This righteousness imputed to us for Christ's sake *must find expression in a life of righteousness* for His sake.

**1 John 3:1.** Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God: and such we are.

**Romans 3:28.** We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the words of the law.

Because of the intimate relationship established between Christ and His believers He is not ashamed to call them brethren, Hebrews 2:11. The debt toward God has been canceled, the sin that separates from Him forgiven and He can recognize and adopt us as His children, 1 John 3:1. True children of God have not only their father's name, but also resemble Him in character. We dare not be content with the *name* of God's children; we must also seek to *think, live and speak* like Him. Galatians 3:26.

All this can come about in no other way than *thru the grace of God*; the good we may be able to do is the *effect*, not the cause of our right relationship with God. As the unmerciful servant was utterly unable to pay the debt he owed, we shall never be able by our own efforts to cancel the debt we owe God. If we are justified in the sight of God it is not on our merit, but on His *mercy*. The malefactor crucified with Jesus, Luke 23:43; the prodigal son, Luke 15:22, and the sinful woman, Luke 7:48,



received forgiveness only thru God's mercy, and this is the only way.

**Romans 3:22-23.** There is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace thru the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

**Ephesians 2:8-9.** For by grace have ye been saved thru faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory.

If our salvation depended on our own efforts we could never be *sure* of our salvation. By faith in Christ we may be absolutely sure of our salvation.

Those trusting in Christ are also comforted in the many troubles and trials that may come to them. God *tests and proves His children* in order to purify them and prepare them for the heavenly life.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone is *the heart and center of the Protestant Reformation*. Although the Roman Catholic Church will not accept this doctrine, many of her best men have in deed and word expressed their practical acceptance of the teaching in a godly life and in a peaceful death.

### **97. What other terms are used to denote this state of justification?**

*The terms regeneration and conversion are often used to denote the state of justification.*

The stages of the order of salvation which have been discussed inevitably have a *transforming and uplifting influence* on the lives of those who experience them. The change that takes place is expressed by the Scriptural terms "regeneration" and "conversion."

### **98. What is regeneration?**

*Regeneration is the beginning of the new life in man, as wrought by the triune God thru baptism of water and the Spirit.*

The new life is born in the heart of man from the seed planted there by God. In his natural state man is not capable of entering the kingdom of God, John 3:3-5. In the physical birth we receive the body with its seed of original sin; in the new spiritual birth, as expressed in holy baptism, we receive the seed of the new heavenly life which is to overcome the natural sin-

ful tendency we inherit with our body. The less opportunity is given to sin to develop in our hearts, the greater chance is there for the seed of the new life to grow and achieve its purpose.

**John 3:5. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

The mere baptism with water cannot bring regeneration. Baptism alone cannot bring salvation. The baptism with water must be followed by the baptism of the Spirit, because it alone can bring forth the new life.

**Galatians 3:27. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.**

To be content with a mere formal baptism is therefore altogether wrong. God does indeed give the new life, but if we do not give it a chance to grow and develop, it will not be of any use to us. Conversion is the *conscious acceptance and development* of the new life.

**1 Peter 1:23. Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, thru the word of God, which liveth and abideth.**

Are children who die unbaptized lost?

They are not. Although *we* are bound to follow the order of salvation, we cannot think that God is. He who has said, Theirs is the kingdom of heaven, is well able to replace what children who die unbaptized have lost thru no fault of theirs, or what in the nature of the case could not be performed.

## **99. What is conversion?**

*Conversion is the faithful acceptance of the new life wrought by God, hence a turning from the broad way and the entrance upon the straitened way.*

**Ezekiel 33:11. As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways**

It is impossible to make the new life planted in us by baptism our own personal profession without conversion. Ezekiel 18:21; 33:11. The *manner* of conversion depends upon the nature of the past life and upon the temperament of the individual. Note the difference between the conversion of Saul, Acts 9:1-20, and that of the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts 8:26-39. The conver-

sion of a heathen or of an utterly godless person necessarily differs from that of one who has always led an outwardly blameless life. *The reality of conversion does not depend upon excitement, tears or shouting, but upon the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit and the yielding of the sinner's will to His influence.*

Conversion is the *conscious acceptance* of the new God-given life. In the unbaptized conversion is preceded by an *awakening* and completed by baptism. The change that takes place in conversion is compared with the turning away from the broad way and entering upon the straitened way, Matthew 7:13-14.

To live with the world and follow the inclinations and desires of the natural, godless heart is indeed easy and pleasant, but it leads to unhappiness and destruction. When one realizes the danger of the worldly life he should not hesitate to turn away from it and follow Jesus to safety, life happiness and salvation. The unconverted live without aim or purpose; conversion puts a *definite goal and purpose* into life.

**Ezekiel 18:21.** But if the wicked turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

**1 Peter 2:25.** For ye were going astray like sheep, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

In the last analysis conversion is the act of God, who thru the work of the Holy Spirit inclines the will of man to yield itself to the will of God, Philippians 2:13. But man can harden his heart and hinder the work of the Holy Spirit by postponing or evading conversion until it is too late.

### **100. Whereby are we assured of our justification?**

*We are assured of this state of grace by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, Romans 3:15-16: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."*

The testimony of a witness makes a statement sure and certain. Our faith in our saved condition is strengthened by the witness of the Holy Spirit, Galatians 3:26, which brings a joy into the heart which neither the fear of death nor of judgment can take away. This consciousness of being a child of God is most evident

in prayer, when we can pour out our hearts before God with perfect childlike confidence.

Naturally this confidence is not always equally strong, since we are subject to many human weaknesses and limitations. In times of trial and suffering the temptation to doubt is strongest, and we need to rely most firmly upon the promises of God's Word.

### **101. What is sanctification?**

*Sanctification is that work of the Holy spirit, by which the whole man is transformed and daily renewed in all his actions, and made acceptable to God.*

Regeneration and conversion do not make a perfect Christian. After God has given the new life and man has accepted it, it must be *developed and strengthened*. Getting out of danger after a severe illness does not make one well. There is always the danger of a relapse, while the whole system must gain strength and vigor before complete recovery can take place. When the Holy Spirit has helped us to recognize and overcome the danger of our natural sinfulness, His work must be *carried to completion* by the process of sanctification.

**1 John 5:4.** For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith.

**2 Corinthians 5:17.** Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.

Like all that has gone before sanctification is a work of God carried on thru the Holy Spirit. God's grace has begun the work of salvation and only the grace of God can complete it. To stand still at conversion would mean to drift back into the natural sinfulness. Like every other form of life the new life of the Spirit must either *grow and increase* or *grow weaker and die*.

**2 Peter 3:18.** But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Sanctification transforms and renews the *entire being*, is not merely a matter of conduct but a matter of *character*. There must be a *new spirit and a new will* back of every thought, deed and word, so that the whole personality is renewed and controlled by the Holy Spirit. Sanctification does not consist in merely not doing certain things, but in *not wanting to do* anything not in

harmony with the will of God, 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:1-2; Ephesians 4:22-24.

Sanctification therefore means constant struggle against and victory over evil. The power of sin is still strong in the hearts of the converted and they need to be ever watchful and in earnest in their efforts to overcome. The unconverted do not struggle against sin, but obey its impulses; it is only *after conversion* that the real fight against Satan's sin begins, because Satan seeks to regain control with all the resources at his command. He finds a fiendish delight in inducing repentant sinners to return to their sinful ways.

**Ephesians 4:22-24. That ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness and truth.**

**Philippians 3:12. Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus.**

But certain victory in this struggle awaits those who *rely upon the Lord Jesus for strength* and earnestly and ceaselessly strive to be faithful until death, 1 John 5:4; Hebrews 12:14.

As long as we dwell in the mortal body with its evil inclinations and desires, we shall not be able to attain sinfulness. Sanctification is essentially the *striving* after perfection, but before it can be attained the sinful body must be cast off. Even so earnest and devoted a Christian as Paul does not claim perfection, Philippians 3:12.

**Hebrews 12:14. Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord.**

**1 Thessalonians 5:23. And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Only a life of unremitting vigilance and prayer and faithful use of the Word of God and the sacraments can succeed in the struggle for sanctification.

Thus far we have considered the personality of the Author of our salvation and His work of redemption, the means of grace and the order of salvation, i.e., the manner in which the Holy Spirit brings the individual sinner to His Lord and Savior. The

following lessons deal with the Christian Church, or the human agency to which Christ has entrusted the Gospel of His salvation.

### **102. What name is given in the Apostolic creed to the entire body of Christians?**

*The entire body of Christians is called the One, Holy, Universal (Catholic), Christian Church.*

The word “church” is used in different ways. We say, there are five churches in this town, meaning the *buildings* in which Christians assemble to worship God. Again we say, church begins at ten o’clock, meaning the *service of worship*. We speak of St. John’s Church, or St. Paul’s Church in a certain place, when we mean a certain congregation or *organization of Christian men and women*. We refer to the Evangelical Church, when we speak of the *denomination* that puts the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ above every kind of human interpretation or order. In the Apostolic creed the word “Church” refers to *all who believe in Jesus Christ* as the Son of God and the Savior of men.

The word church is derived from the Greek word *kurios* - master, lord, and its adjective, *kuriake*, i.e., belonging to the master, with the other Greek word *ecclesia* assembly, understood. Its original meaning is, therefore, the assembly of *those belonging to the Master*, i.e., to Christ. The source of the word is plainly evident in the German word “*Kirche*,” and also in the Scotch “*kirk*.”

### **103. Why do we speak of the Christian Church as being one Church?**

*The Christian Church is called one Church, because it has one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, as it is written, Ephesians 4:3-6: “Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and thru all, and in all.”*

Although we see the believers in Jesus Christ divided into many denominations, there is nevertheless one Church, insofar as all of them have the essential things in common. Out of all these divisions and factions the Holy Spirit will in due time bring

forth such a measure of unity and harmony that they will all make up in fact as well as in name, one body and one Spirit. This underlying unity of Christ's believers is not even destroyed by present differences and antagonisms. The day of closer union is fast approaching, and when everything is ready there will be "one flock, one Shepherd."

The Evangelical Church stands for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as it is laid down in the Augsburg Confession. This does not mean that there must be *uniformity of doctrine or order of worship*, but that all Christians stand together in their emphasis of the essential teachings above referred to. To insist on outward uniformity as a sign of union involves a forced and therefore a false union.

#### **104. Why is the Christian Church called a Holy Church?**

*The Christian Church is called holy, because the Holy Spirit works mightily in it by word and sacrament, and because every one of its members shall thereby be sanctified and made perfect.*

The Christian Church is called holy, not because its members are without sin, but because they are striving for holiness thru the help of the Holy Spirit. He aims to accomplish this thru the Word of God and the sacraments, the means of grace that have been given to the Church, and to the Church alone. The Holy Spirit may begin His work outside the Church, as in the case of Cornelius, Acts 10, but it can be outwardly completed only by baptism and admission into the Church of Christ. The sinners who come to realize their need, cannot find peace until they have become members of the Christian Church by baptism.

**Ephesians 5:25-27. Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the Church to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.**

If it is the aim of the Church to lead her members toward holiness, it is her duty to see to it that the Word is preached in all its purity, and that the sacraments are administered according to the plain words of the Scripture. This requires church discipline, by means of which those who give offense by living con-

trary to the Word of God may be excluded until they repent and seek forgiveness.

From Matthew 13:24-30 and 47-50 it is evident that as long as the Church exists on the earth it will be impossible to keep all ungodliness out. But just as surely as Jesus has established the Church, He will make it a holy Church. Ephesians 5:25-27.

### **105. Why is the Christian Church called a Universal Church?**

*The Christian Church is called a Universal Church, because every sinner of all nations and times can and shall be admitted into it, according to the will of God, and because every one finds there what he needs.*

The people of the earth differ greatly as to color, language, talents and customs, but all have one great need in common: *salvation from sin*. Just as all men of every race and country need food to nourish their body, they all need the bread and the water of eternal life, the redemption thru Jesus Christ, and they can find this only in the Church of Christ. Thus the Church and its message never grow old; it is just as vital to man's welfare today as it was nearly nineteen hundred years ago.

In the Old Testament only Israel, as the chosen people, was called; in the New Testament all nations of the earth are to hear the message of the Kingdom, Mark 16:15. It is this that has made the Christian Church a missionary Church, John 10:16, Revelation 5:9. The universal character of the Christian Church makes the doctrine of election as it is usually understood, impossible.

**John 10:16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd,**

**Mark. 16:15. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.**

Every need of every human being can be satisfied thru the Church, because it satisfies the *one fundamental need* of salvation from sin.

At present the Universal Christian Church, like the Holy Church is an unrealized ideal. But it is an ideal that faith is striving to attain more and more fully.



During the sixteenth century the word “*catholic*,” derived from the Greek word meaning *universal*, was dropped by Protestants in order to avoid confusion with the Roman Catholic Church. Many denominations are nevertheless again using the word.

### **106. Why is the Church called the Christian Church?**

*The Church is called the Christian Church, because Christ alone is its foundation, its head and the object toward which all its efforts are directed.*

The coming of Jesus Christ was the beginning of the Church, and He is therefore justly called the foundation.

**1 Corinthians 3:11. For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

Jesus Christ is also the head of the Church, i.e., the *source of its life and power* and its guide in every activity. Colossians 1:18. All the members of the body are governed by the head and dependent upon it. Without Christ the Church is dead, like a headless body. When all the members of the Church look toward Jesus Christ to guide them in every particular, the Church will be wholly Christian.

**Colossians 1:18. And He (Christ) is the head of the body, the Church.**

Christ is also the *end* toward which the Church is working. Her one aim is to bring all whom she can reach to Jesus Christ, Ephesians 4:13. The Church works toward Christ by seeking to make herself and her members Christlike thru His redemption and atonement. His mind and spirit are to be realized in every human life. Where the Church has not this aim she has no right to call herself Christian.

The Church has not yet become Christian to the extent that it should be the case. It often seems as though she were more worldly than Christian. But we firmly believe that the ideal is being more and more realized and will finally be reached. Ephesians 4:13.

### **107. Has the Church already become all that we confess concerning it?**

*The Church has indeed existed at all times as the true Church; but has frequently erred and been corrupted; its future perfection, however, is certain, according to God's promise,*

For nearly two thousand years the Church has existed amid much stress and struggle, and the powers of darkness have left no means untried to destroy it. For three hundred years the Church was persecuted by Jews and Gentiles, but, though her enemies often seemed to have conquered, she not only weathered every Storm, but came out of every struggle stronger than at the beginning. "The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church."

**Matthew 16:18.** And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Since persecutions were unsuccessful, Satan sowed tares of godlessness and apostasy among the good seed of the children of the kingdom, so that it sometimes seemed as though Christianity was merely an outward form without real spiritual life. But even in the midst of unbelief and corruption the Church has always existed as the true Church and the gates of hell have never been able to conquer her entirely. The seven thousand who have not bowed unto Baal, though despised and depressed, have stood firmly by the Head and founder upon the imperishable rock of divine truth. This was especially clear during the Protestant Reformation, after 1517, when Martin Luther and his associates stood practically alone against the mighty influence of the Roman Church and the German emperor, and with the help of God triumphed over their hatred and angry threats.

Even the church at Jerusalem had corrupt members, Acts 5:1-11; see also 2 Timothy 2:17. In later times there arose dissensions and false teachings, and from the ninth to the fifteenth century it seemed as though error and corruption had entirely destroyed the pure Word of God. Faithful believers, like the Waldensians or John Huss, were even put to death for their loyalty. In the parable of the tares among the wheat Jesus shows that the Church need not expect to be entirely purified as long as it consists of sinful human beings, Matthew 13:24-26. At the same time every church organization is responsible for the conduct of its members and under obligations to maintain church discipline against impenitent offenders, Acts 5 and 1 Corinthians 5-6,

**Matthew 13:24-26.** The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. But when the blade sprang up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

Error and corruption will cease only when the Church has been perfected, Matthew 13:49-52; Revelation 7:14-15; 19:6-7.

Those who have been baptized but do not believe, belong only to the visible Church; those who believe and have been baptized, belong to both the visible and the invisible Church. But there are not two Churches, but one, even as the shell and the kernel and the body and the soul are one.

### **108. What is understood by the “communion of saints?”**

*By the communion of saints we understand that all Christians, as members of one body, be united in love, and aid one another in their temporal and eternal welfare.*

Having one faith and one goal in life, Christians should enjoy a relationship of mutual love, helpfulness and devotion. This is called the communion of saints not because they are already sanctified, but because sanctification is the aim toward which they are striving.

How Christians should be united in love is shown by the example of the first Christian church at Jerusalem, Acts 2:42-47, and 4:32-37. “See, how they love one another!” the heathen exclaimed in wonderment. Thru Christ, their one head, all are to form one body. To the same extent that Christians lose their connection with Christ, they also lose touch with each other and fall into indifference, differences and even hatred, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Philippians 2:2-4.

**1 Corinthians 12:12-13.** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit.

**Ephesians 4:15.** But speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him, who is the head, even Christ.

The first church in Jerusalem shared all spiritual blessings alike; they were of one heart and soul, with gladness and singleness of heart. The church in Jerusalem also extended the com-

munion of its members even to the division of property. As long as the church was not too large, all went well, but Acts 6:1-7 shows some of the difficulties that were soon encountered. It was also a purely voluntary matter, Acts 5:4. The mutual aid remained, however, though in different forms, Acts 11:27-30; 2 Corinthians 8-9. Offerings for the sick and the needy, for charitable institutions, missions and all other purposes of the kingdom are evidence of the desire of Christians to aid each other. To help another's spiritual welfare is just as much a Christian duty as aiding his temporal welfare, Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:15-16; 1 Corinthians 12:26.

**Philippians 2:2-4.** Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing thru faction or thru vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.

**1 Corinthians 12:26.** And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it, or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

### **109. What do we confess with the words: I believe in the forgiveness of sins?"**

*The forgiveness of sins is offered in Christ to all mankind, so that thru the Holy Spirit every person of every time can and may have part therein, according to the will of God.*

A very good practical definition of what forgiveness of sins means is found in the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, Matthew 18:23-35. Our relation to God is similar to that of the servant to the king. We cannot fulfill our obligations toward God, and if God were to deal with us according to absolute justice it would mean utter misery and perdition for all of us. Because God is moved with compassion - for Christ's sake - we are released from obligation and the debt is forgiven. Jesus Christ has taken our guilt upon Him, has redeemed, purchased and delivered us lost and damned creatures from all sin with His precious blood and His innocent suffering and death. He has borne the sins of the whole world, i.e., of all men of all nations and times as long as the world stands. Forgiveness of sins is to be had for all who earnestly seek and desire it,

**Luke 24:46-47. Thus is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again, from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations.**

This gift of pardon is brought home to the individual thru the Holy Spirit working thru the Church by means of the Word of God and the holy sacraments. The ministers of the Gospel proclaim salvation thru faith in Christ and have authority to assure penitent seekers after salvation of the forgiveness of their sins, John 20:22-23. And there is no one who does not need salvation; in the eyes of God even the best and the most godly of men are poor and unworthy sinners who can claim nothing but His grace and mercy thru faith in Jesus Christ. In order that all men may have the opportunity of receiving forgiveness of sins, the Church is seeking to carry out Christ's great commission, Matthew 28:18-20, and offers the Gospel of salvation to all nations of the earth.

**Acts 17:30-31. The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all, everywhere, repent: inasmuch as He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance to all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.**

### **110. What do we understand by “the resurrection of the dead?”**

*On the last day Christ will raise up all the dead - the righteous to eternal life, the unrighteous to everlasting punishment.*

That Jesus has power to raise up the dead of any age, no matter how long they have been dead is evident from the instances recorded of His ministry on earth, (a) the daughter of Jairus, Mark 5:35ff, who had just died; (b) the widow of Nain's son, who was about to be buried, Luke 7:11ff, and (c) Lazarus, John 11:38ff, who had been dead four days.

**John 5:28-29. For the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment.**

St. Paul tells us what the resurrection of the body will be like, 1 Corinthians 15:35ff. The human body is carnal and sinful and returns to dust, but as the image of God and as the instru-

ment of the immortal soul it will arise again to a new and a higher and more glorious life.

**1 Corinthians 15:42-44.** It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.

**Philippians 3:20-21.** For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself.

Accordingly, the new body will be a glorified, incorruptible and transfigured body, showing forth the inward glory of the children of God. The godless, who have rejected salvation and the new life of Christ, will have a body showing forth the evil passions and all the terrible demoralization of sin into which they will have developed by that time. What will happen to those still on earth when the day of judgment comes is stated in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-53. They will be perfect in either goodness or wickedness and will therefore be ripe for the judgment.

The judgment takes place simultaneously with the resurrection; each one will know or feel whether he belongs to those on the right hand of the Son of Man, or to those on the left, Matthew 25:32-33. The judgment is not an announcement of something that was not known before, but rather the revealing of a process of separation that has reached the final climax. Then every sinful thought, word and deed, every secret or open iniquity will receive its penalty; nothing will be overlooked or forgotten; everything will be revealed as plainly as though it were written in a book, Revelation 20:11-13, 15.

The condemned are those who have not been cleansed from their sins thru the blood of the Lamb; having rejected the forgiveness of sins thru faith in Jesus Christ they will then have to bear the full consequences of their sins. Their place is in hell, the outer darkness, the eternal fire, and their condition is called the second death, not because it is an annihilation, but because, in view of its awful and inconceivable terror and of the final and hopeless separation from God, it cannot be called life. Matthew 25:30-41; Luke 13:27-28.

**Matthew 25:41.** Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.

From Scripture passages like John 9:4; 1 Peter 3:19; 4:6, and others it seems that there is a sort of twilight zone between death and the judgment day, and it is only fair to suppose that those who during their earthly life had no opportunity to hear the message of salvation thru Christ should have such an opportunity before they are finally judged; it would also seem necessary that even those who believe in Christ should continue in their development toward full sanctification. The Roman Catholic Church uses these passages for its doctrine of purgatory, i.e., that the souls of the dead may be purified by expiating such offenses committed in this life as do not merit eternal damnation. After this purgation the souls are believed to be received into heaven. This doctrine is altogether unwarranted and unbiblical, especially so since the mass has been connected with it as a sacrifice for the dead.

### **111. What is meant by “life everlasting?”**

*Those who are justified and perfected in Christ, after receiving in the resurrection the glory of Christ in body and soul, shall enter into eternal bliss and glory.*

**John 17:24.** Father, that which thou hast given me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with me; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.

**1 John 3:2.** It is not yet made manifest, what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is.

**1 Corinthians 13:12.** For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known.

Those who have been justified, i.e., accounted righteous before God, thru faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Redeemer, and have been perfected in Christ, i.e., regenerated and sanctified thru the Holy Spirit, will have completed this process of renewal at the day of judgment and are therefore ready to receive the glory of Christ in the resurrection, 1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 13:12.

**1 Peter 1:7-9.** That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, tho it be tried with fire, might be found unto

**praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, tho now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.**

Being thus perfected, heaven, as the dwelling-place of God and Christ, is their eternal home, Matthew 25:34; John 17:24. From 1 Corinthians 2:9 and 2 Corinthians 12:4 we see that it is impossible for us to understand fully the whole bliss and glory into which these blessed ones of the Father will enter. There will be, no sin, no sorrow, no death, but perfect and everlasting beauty, glory, happiness and peace, Matthew 22:30; Isaiah 35:10; 1 Peter 1:7-9; Revelation 21:3-4. Then the Church of Jesus Christ will also be perfected and worthy of its name, the bride of the Lamb, the heavenly Jerusalem, Revelation 21:2-9. The old heaven and earth will have passed away and there will be a new heaven and a new earth, Revelation 21-22.

**Matthew 25:34. Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**

**Isaiah 35:10. The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**

**Revelation 21:3-4. Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more.**

## **112. What is the substance of your faith in the Holy Spirit?**

The substance of our faith in the Holy Spirit may be stated under four divisions as follows:

a) How do we come to believe in Jesus Christ?

*I believe that I cannot, by my own reason or strength, believe in my Lord Jesus Christ, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and preserved me in the true faith.*

b) Where does the Holy Spirit work?

*As He calls, gathers, enlightens and preserves the whole Christian Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.*



c) What gifts does He impart to Christians.

*In which Christian Church He daily and abundantly forgives me and all believers all sins.*

d) What hope have we thru the Holy Spirit?

*On the last day He will raise up me and all the dead, and will give unto me and believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.*

## PART III

## Prayer

We have now learned what God requires of us and what He has done for us; how He has created us in His image; how He has redeemed us thru His only begotten Son, and made us His children, and how He is working in us thru His Holy Spirit to sanctify us. As children of God we must have some way of intercourse with Him. This God has provided for by permitting us to pray.

**113. What is prayer?**

*Prayer is the conversation of the heart, addressed to God in making supplications, in giving thanks and in offering praise.*

**Psalm 19:14. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock, and my redeemer.**

True Christians must speak to their God and Savior; the earlier they begin the better. Christianity without prayer is unthinkable. We can pray with our lips and with our hearts; both should go together, Psalm 19:14. To utter what is not in the heart is hypocrisy.

“Prayer is the breath of the soul.” When praying we should remember that we are speaking to God and should do so in a quiet and devotional spirit, so that we may hear what God may have to say to us. Matthew 6:6. This of course, does not forbid prayer in public in the same spirit.

**Matthew 6:6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee.**

We make supplications to God for the things we need, not as though God did not know what we needed, but as an acknowledgement of our dependence upon him and of our trust in Him, Matthew 7:7-8; Luke 18:1-8; Matthew 21:22. In the Lord’s Prayer Jesus tells us what to pray for, i.e., for spiritual gifts, our daily bread, protection from danger, forgiveness of sins. We may pray for anything if only we trust that God is willing and able to grant our petitions.

When praying we should always yield to God’s will. He knows best what is good for us. Conscientious parents will never

give their children all they ask for, but only what they know is good for them. The prayer of two or more persons for a common purpose has a special promise, Matthew 18:19-20; Acts 4:24; 12:5-12, and should be constantly exercised in the home as well as in the public services of worship.

*Intercession*, i.e., prayer for others is another special form of prayer that is greatly blessed, Genesis 18:22ff; Luke 23:34; John 17; 1 Timothy 2:12.

**Matthew 7:7-8. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.**

**Matthew 21:22. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.**

**Matthew 18:19-20. If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything, that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.**

Because every good gift that we enjoy comes from God, even though we have not asked for it, we owe Him an expression of our gratitude. To *thank* Him means to *think* of the things we receive from day to day thru His goodness and mercy. Ephesians 5:20. To forget God's benefits is selfish and careless; even animals are naturally grateful. To say grace before or after meals is a fine way of giving thanks that should not be neglected in Christian homes, Matthew 14:19; 15:36; Psalm 50:23; 92:2. Nor should we forget to praise God for the great spiritual blessings we enjoy, for His word, His salvation, the Holy Spirit with His awakening and stimulating power, and all the comfort and consolation we may enjoy, and, by no means least, for the privilege of prayer.

**1 Timothy 2:1-2. I exhort, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity.**

To praise God for His greatness, perfection and glory, His wisdom and love and power, His patience, mercy and lovingkindness is a special form of prayer, Psalm 33; 34:4; 103:1-4; Revelation 4:8-11. Even in misfortune and affliction we may praise God, like Job, Job 1:21; or Paul and Silas, Acts 16:25; Psalm 118:21.

**Psalm 34:3.** O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.

**Psalm 103:1-4.** Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who health all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.

**Ephesians 5:20.** Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God even the Father.

**Psalm 50:23.** Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

**Psalm 92:1.** It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High.

We should pray *without ceasing*, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, i.e., our thoughts should be constantly directed toward God, even when our hands are busy with our tasks. Our hearts and our will should be always under the consciousness of God's presence and ready for communion with Him just as a child is always ready to speak with its father.

**1 Thessalonians 5:17.** Pray without ceasing.

To pray "*in Jesus' name*," John 16:23; is not merely adding the words "in Jesus' name" at the close of our petitions - to do this thoughtlessly amounts to blasphemy - but is prayer *controlled by the spirit of Jesus Christ*, and means praying as though Jesus himself were praying in our place for the things we desire. It can therefore proceed only from the *motives* that impelled Jesus to pray, and can concern itself only with the things in which Jesus was interested.

It is wrong to think that prayers that are read or spoken from memory are less desirable than those spoken from the heart; sometimes even the reverse is true. Prayers read or repeated from *spiritual indolence* are no real prayers. God judges our prayers not by the method we employ, but by their *earnestness and sincerity*.

#### **114. In what prayer has Jesus taught us how to pray?**

*In the "Lord's prayer," which is as follows: Our Father, who art in heaven: hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy 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 lead us not into temptation, but deliver, us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. amen.*

This prayer is called the “Lord’s Prayer,” because Jesus taught it to His disciples, Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4. Though the words differ somewhat in these passages, the contents are essentially the same. Luke omits the closing sentence or doxology.

The Lord’s prayer is usually divided into a) the address; b) the seven petitions, and c) the doxology. It is the most comprehensive prayer conceivable, and includes all the relationships of man toward God and the world in which we live, and every human need. It applies to all conditions of life and is so simple that any child may grasp its meaning, and yet so deep that the most advanced Christian cannot exhaust its content. It is the model prayer, after which all our prayers should be patterned.

### **115. What is the meaning of “Our Father, who art in heaven”?**

*God desires us and all His children to call upon Him with cheerful confidence, as beloved children entreat a kind and affectionate father, knowing that He is both willing and able to help*

The plural *Our* Father, means that we must never come to God thinking only of ourselves. We are also to remember our family, our relatives, our friends, our neighbors and our fellow-Christians when we come into God’s presence. There are, of course, occasions when our own special needs compel us to seek God alone; as a rule, however, we should remember that God has many children besides ourselves.

Jews and Mohammedans also call God Father, even some pagan people use the expression. But they think of God only as their Maker, Isaiah 64:7. The full meaning of the Fatherhood of God is understood only thru Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Savior, Redeemer and Lord, because we can be true children of God only thru Him, Matthew 7:9-11; John 16:27; Ephesians 3:14-15, With the word “Father” we therefore profess our

faith in Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18. Being a perfect Father, God gives only good gifts to His children.

**Matthew 7:9-11.** Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him?

**John 16:27.** For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father.

**Ephesians 3:14-15.** For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory.

Our Father's dwelling place is in heaven, the home of love, the source of every good and perfect gift, and we can ask nothing that He could not give, Romans 10:12. If He does not grant every request, it is not because of weakness, but because of His wisdom, which denies the gifts that would injure. Besides, God can help where man is powerless. Exodus 14; Acts 12:1-11.

**Romans 10:12.** For the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon Him.

**Psalms 121:1-2.** I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains: from whence shall my help come? My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

### **116. What do we pray for in the petition "Hallowed be Thy name?"**

*God's name is indeed holy in itself, but we pray in this petition, that it may be holy among us also. This is done when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God also lead a holy life in accordance with it. To this help us, dear Father in heaven!*

The name of God, i.e., every appellation by which He is known, is sacred, i.e., set apart from everyday use. God is so great and supreme in His majesty that any other but a reverent use of His name is wrong and sinful. In this petition we ask for strength to keep the third commandment.

**Psalms 72:18-19.** Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things: and blessed be His glorious name forever; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory.

God's name is holy and remains so, no matter how men may revile and blaspheme. When a thirsty person comes to a well

with good water, and is told that the water is bad, the water does not suffer, only the man who no longer wants to quench his thirst. The patient who will not use the medicine that might restore his health, injures only himself, not the medicine. Not God, only ourselves suffer when we take His name in vain. It is for our own sake only that we pray “Hallowed be Thy name.” Psalm 72:18-19.

**Galatians 1:8.** But tho we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema.

**Matthew 5:16.** Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

God’s name is most hallowed where he himself is best known, hence the importance of teaching the Word of God, the revelation of the truth concerning God, in its truth and purity. This teaching should begin in childhood with instruction in the Bible stories and the Catechism; it is to be continued in the public services of worship, in which old and young are to take part, so that all may know the Word of God and learn to live according to its teachings, Matthew 5:16. The Evangelical Church teaches the Word of God in all its truth and purity, taking nothing from it and adding nothing to it. *It places the Bible where it belongs, absolutely above every human creed and interpretation,* Galatians 1:8.

The Church also seeks to teach the Word of God to those who have become indifferent, i.e., home missions; and to those who have never heard the good tidings, i.e., foreign missions, Malachi 1:11.

### **117. What do we pray for in the petition “Thy kingdom come”?**

*The kingdom of God is indeed established by the redemption; but we pray in this petition that we and all others may participate in this kingdom, and that the same may be completed in every respect.*

The redemption thru Jesus Christ has established the kingdom of God upon earth. Those who accept salvation thru faith in Christ are citizens of the Kingdom because they have surrendered themselves to the royal rule of Jesus. In the Old Testament Israel, the Chosen People, constituted the kingdom of God, Exodus

19:6, but only as a type or shadow of the greater kingdom that was to come thru the royal reign of Christ in the hearts and the lives of men and to be perfected at His second coming. The Church of Christ, as the preacher and teacher of the Gospel of salvation thru Christ, is the chief agency of the Kingdom, but the Kingdom is larger than the Church. The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation, Luke 17:20-21, it is within, in the hearts of men, wherever they have been touched by the influence of the Christ spirit and have learned to hate iniquity and love righteousness. Everything that fights evil and promotes righteousness is working for the Kingdom of God, because it is in line with the spirit of Jesus Christ.

**Luke 17:20-21. And being asked by the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God cometh, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you.**

At present the Kingdom is far from completed. It is the chief business of every loyal follower of Jesus to strive and to labor and to pray that the royal rule of Jesus may be completed in every respect, in the hearts of individual believers as well as in the community, the State and the Nation, thruout Christendom as well as in every part of the world.

**Titus 2:13. Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.**

### **118. What do we pray for in the petition “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”?**

*God’s good and gracious will is indeed done without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may also be done among us, and everywhere, and that every one on earth may do His will as cheerfully as the angels in heaven.*

God’s will has been revealed to us in His law. To pray that His will be done, means to pray for strength to obey His commandments.

God’s will for us is always good, even when His paths are dark and difficult. God’s will was good when He required Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, because Abraham’s faith needed to be tested for his own sake. The famine at the time of Elijah was also God’s will, because it taught Israel to return to God, Romans



12:2. God's will is gracious, because He deals better with us than we have deserved, Ephesians 1:3-9.

God can enforce his will, when necessary, without our prayers. Pharaoh's stubbornness had to give way before God's overwhelming power, and Moses had to become His messenger, whether he wanted to or not. We should not wait until God enforces His will, but should render loving obedience. That is why we pray that God's will may also be done among us and everywhere. God is ready to strengthen our will, so that it becomes able to obey Him and desire nothing but what is his will, both for ourselves and for all men everywhere, John 4:34; Mark 14:36: Often it is not easy to yield our own will to His, because we do not love and trust His sufficiently. This requires self-denial, Matthew 16:24, for those who oppose God's will lose out every time, 1 John 2:17. God sometimes lets us have our own way in order to show how wrong and mistaken it is.

**Matthew 16:24. If any man would come after me, let him deny himself.**

**1 John 2:17. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.**

The angels in heaven are our models in that they do God's will gladly and perfectly. We shall have heaven upon earth to the same extent that men everywhere learn to do the will of God as gladly and as perfectly as the angels in heaven, Hebrews 13:21.

**Romans 12:2. And be not fashioned according to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

**Hebrews 13:21. Even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, thru Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory forever and ever.**

### **119. What do we pray for in the petition "Give us this day our daily bread"?**

*God indeed gives daily bread without our prayer, even to all the wicked; but we pray in this petition that he would lead us to know this, and enable us to receive with thanksgiving what we daily need for body and soul.*

This the first and only one of the seven petitions that deals with our bodily needs. Jesus did not overlook the needs of the body, but He made it subordinate to the needs of the immortal

soul, which is greater and more important. At the same time God wants the body well cared for and is ready to do all that is needed for that purpose. Daily bread includes *everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body* - “food, drink, clothing, house and home, field, cattle, money and goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors and the like” (Luther). The best food and clothing would be of little avail if they could not be enjoyed under peaceful and orderly conditions, above all, if the Word of God and its influence were lacking, Matthew 4:4.

**Matthew 5:45.** For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust..

**Psalms 145:15-16.** The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

We pray first for *our* daily bread. To be really ours it must be *honestly earned*. Only then can we pray sincerely for our daily bread, when we mean bread that we have earned by our own honest effort, 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12.

We pray for our *daily* bread. God wants us to trust in His loving care and providence from day to day. Even the wealthy, who apparently have bread for many years in advance, must remember that they may lose all that they have within a day. Jesus seeks to make His followers content with that which God gives them.

**Proverbs 30:8-9.** Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and use profanely the name of my God.

**Matthew 6:34.** Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

The word *us* in the petition indicates that it is not to be a selfish prayer, but rather an intercession, its spirit is not that of competition, but of *co-operation*, Philippians 2:4.

*This day* is mentioned because no one can know whether he will need any daily bread on the morrow, Matthew 6:34. We may think of the morrow, and it certainly is our duty to provide for it as far as possible, but to be anxious about it is not only useless, but a distrust of God's providence,

Even though we earn our daily bread, it is nevertheless a gift of God. Every good and perfect gift comes from Him. But for Him, we should have neither health, strength nor skill for our daily task, not even the opportunity, and much less the success we may achieve in it, Psalm 127:1-2. If God did not give daily bread without our prayers, most of us would have starved to death long ago. We do not pray in order to tell God what we need, Matthew 6:8; Psalm 145:15-16, but to recognize His bountiful kindness and mercy. Infants, who cannot pray, are cared for thru their parents; heathen, who do not even know God, receive all they need from Him, Matthew 5:45. Even the wicked, who deny his existence, or oppose his will, get their daily bread from Him, Luke 12:16ff; 16:19ff. He cared for Israel in the wilderness in spite of their unfaithfulness and disobedience.

**Psalm 127:1-2. Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that bulid it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you that ye rise up early, and so late take rest, and eat the bread of toil: for so He giveth unto His beloved sleep.**

**2 Thessalonians 3:10. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, if any will not work, neither let him eat.**

Though all can know that our daily bread comes from God, very few seem ready to acknowledge it, Luke 17:11ff. To realize this is also God's gift, a part of the nourishment for the immortal soul. To pray for this is just as necessary as the prayer for the nourishment of the body; the rich man in the parable found himself in Hades and in torments because he had not found the spiritual in all his material abundance. Regular grace before meals and family devotions are a great help in leading us to know that our daily bread comes from God.

*Gratitude toward God* is the natural consequence of this realization, Deuteronomy 8:10; Matthew 14:19; 15:36; 26:26. A true Christian cannot eat and drink without thanking God, or enjoy health and success without praising Him for it. Every gift of God should be heartily appreciated, both because of its value and because of the Giver, 1 Timothy 4:4-5. To waste or despise the gifts of God is downright sin.

**Deuteronomy 8:10. And thou shalt eat and be full, and thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He hath given thee.**

**1 Timothy 4:4-5.** For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified thru the word of God and prayer.

**Matthew 4:4.** Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Those who really appreciate God's gifts will always be ready to *share them* with those who may need them.

### **120. What is meant by the petition “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”?**

*We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not regard our sins nor on their account refuse us the forgiveness of all our sins; for we are worthy of none of the things for which we pray, neither have we deserved them, but that He would grant them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and deserve nothing but punishment. We promise also, on our part, heartily to forgive and willingly to do good to those who sin against us.*

This has been called the “dangerous” petition, because we so easily forget the second portion, and are then in danger of becoming like the unmerciful servant, Matthew 18:23-33.

To forgive is also a kind of giving, a giving that takes away that which must injure and destroy, i.e., the guilt and sin that separates us from God and real happiness. Sin is called a debt here because obedience and a godly life are what we owe to God. The less obedience we render Him, the more we owe Him. Because we cannot make good our transgressions we are obliged to ask for forgiveness or remission of our sins.

**Psalm 51:1-3.** Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

God might say, to forgive sinners will do no good, because they are disposed to sin; in spite of forgiveness they will keep on disobeying Me. If He did think thus, we could never be freed from sin and saved for eternal life. Therefore we ask God that He would not regard our sins, Psalm 51:3-5. The unmerciful servant is a picture of the sinner in his relation to God. It is impossible for us to get right with God without God's forgiveness.

Most people do not realize their sinfulness, because they do

not measure themselves according to God's standards. God's commandments were given us that we might realize our sins as such. Even earnest Christians are sinners as long as they live in a sinful world and have a body that responds to sinful thoughts and desires, Psalm 19:13.

If God is willing to forgive our sins it is only because of His gracious mercy and lovingkindness, without any merit or worthiness on our part. God's grace comes to us thru Jesus Christ who has redeemed us by His atoning death and reconciled us with God.

**Matthew 6:14-15.** For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

**Matthew 18:21-22.** Then came Peter, and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.

God's forgiveness is an obligation to *go and do likewise*. No one can sin against us as grievously as we sin against God. If we refuse to forgive others we cannot expect God's forgiveness. See how readily Joseph forgave his brethren, Genesis 50:15-21. The willingness to do good is the test of forgiveness. Luke 22:51; 1 Samuel 24 and 26; Matthew 18:21-22; Matthew 6:14-15; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:14; 1 Peter 2:21-25.

Of course the "doing good to those who sin against us" must be entirely sincere, without any desire to humiliate others or glorify self. Only when good deeds toward an enemy come from a truly loving heart can they be in accordance with the will of God.

### **121. What do we pray for in the petition "Lead us not into temptation"?**

*God indeed tempts no one, but we pray in this petition that God would protect us and keep us, that Satan, the world and our own flesh may not deceive us, nor lead us into sin, infamy and vice; mistrust, unbelief or despair, and though we be assailed by them we may nevertheless conquer, and finally obtain the victory over them.*

This petition is closely connected with the preceding, since

the temptations we encounter every day tend to burden us with new guilt. Of course the petition does not mean that God himself actually tempts men to do wrong, James 1:13. God *proves* and *tests* His children that they may grow strong in righteousness, Genesis 22:1; Exodus 20:20, but He tempts no one, for He cannot be tempted with evil. The petition is rather that God may protect us and keep us, that Satan, the world and our own flesh may not succeed in leading us into sin. Satan was the original tempter and the firmest determination to do only what is right will not keep one from being tempted. God alone is willing and able to protect and help us amid the deceitful influences that surround us, and keep us from falling into the results of temptation, 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Thessalonians 3:3.

**James 1:13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted Of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man. 1 Corinthians 10:13. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.**

In order to gain his ends Satan uses the *world*, i.e., the people who live only for this world, and the things of the world round about us that make us forget and ignore God. The influence of a bad example is a powerful force for evil, Genesis 39:7-12; Acts 4:17-18. The world often seems to offer fame, wealth and pleasure for following her example, but those who yield *are always deceived*.

The temptations of the world are all the more dangerous, because they strike a *responsive chord* in our hearts, which are evil by nature. Greed, lust, revenge, anger and fear are easily awakened in us and at once become powerful allies of Satan and the world, Genesis 4:1-8; 1 Samuel 22:12, 1 Peter 2:11.

We cannot avoid coming into touch with these temptations. The best of education and training, the most careful conduct and the and the firmest determination to do only what is right will not keep one from being tempted. God alone is willing and able to protect and help us amid the deceitful influences that surround us, and keep us from falling into the results of temptation.

**Luke 22:31-32. Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that**

he might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not.

**1 Peter 2:11.** Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

These are always in ascending progression: 1. *sin*, i.e., any violation of God's will, either in purpose or conduct; 2. *infamy* i.e., shame, disgrace, the injury to one's reputation that comes of doing wrong; 3. *vice*, i.e., wrong habits, depravity, immoral conduct, the result of unchecked sinful living; 4. *mistrust*, i.e., doubt of God's reality and of the truth of His word; 5. *unbelief*, or rejection of God's salvation, and finally, 6. *despair*, the utter loss of hope and the complete surrender to sinful influences.

To yield to temptation means to invite all these dreadful consequences of sin and to harden our hearts toward God's truth and love.

Only God's help can give us the victory over these foes of our spiritual life. We cannot avoid the conflict, and every day, yes, even every hour, may bring us into a new struggle. Sometimes we win, thru the help of God; sometimes we lose thru our own weakness and faithlessness. We ask God to give us the *final* victory, i.e., in the final struggle at the end of our earthly life. Having accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior and Redeemer, we may fearlessly look death in the face, because the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

**2 Timothy 2:5.** And it also a man contend in the games, ne is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully.

**1 John 5:4-5.** This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcome the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the son of God?

To be assured of this we must devote ourselves with all seriousness and sincerity to the conquest of Satan, the world and our own flesh *in the strength of Jesus Christ*. To make a good beginning and then retreat, or to merely pretend to fight is of no value, 2 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 5:4-5.

**122. What do we pray for in the petition "But deliver us from evil"?**

*We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that the Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil of body and soul; and finally, when our last hour has come, grant us a happy end, and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to Himself in heaven.*

The evils of body and soul are all the trials and vicissitudes of life, such as sorrow, suffering, poverty, hunger, thirst, public calamities, sickness, weakness, discouragement and disappointments, dissensions, etc., and at last death, together with the consequences and results of sin. As long as we live we are obliged to suffer more or less from them, though we may experience the helping and delivering hand of God again and again in the hour of direst need. It is the glory of Christianity that it makes men strong to bear and conquer the evils of the world, where others lose hope and despair.

**John 17:15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one.**

The evils of body and soul are not finally conquered until, by way of a peaceful and happy death, God graciously takes us away from this world with its weaknesses, sorrows and disappointments, and receives us to His presence in heaven, John 17:15; Psalm 25:22.

**2 Timothy 4:18. The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto His heavenly kingdom.**

**Romans 8:23. We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.**

### **123. What is meant by the conclusion “For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever, Amen”?**

*With these words we express a confident assurance that such petitions are agreeable to our Father in heaven and heard of Him; for He himself has commanded us thus to pray and promised that we shall be heard. “Amen.” Amen, i.e., yea, yea, it shall be so.*

We may expect great things from God, because His is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Thus the close of the Lord’s prayer is closely connected with its beginning.

**2 Corinthians 1:20. For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea: wherefore also thru Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God thru us.**



The word “kingdom” is here used in its largest sense, as God’s reign extends over everything that can be conceived, 1 Chron. 29:11-13. We can therefore ask nothing which God has not the power to give. The things we pray for in the Lord’s Prayer are so many and so great that only divine power could grant them. Yet we ask them without fear, for God is almighty, and is able to do exceedingly above all that we ask or think. All that we ask for is not for our own sake, but primarily for the glory of God. His answers to our prayer proves that His is the kingdom and the power, and hence helps to glorify his name.

**Ephesians 3:20. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations forever and ever. Amen.**

The word “Amen” is frequently used in the Bible to denote absolute certainty, it is the divine assurance and seal. Because God is as He is, there can be no doubt that our petitions are agreeable to our Father in heaven and heard of Him, 2 Corinthians 1:20; Ephesians 3:20.

## PART IV

### The Sacraments

#### **124. What is a sacrament?**

*A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ himself, in which by visible signs and means He imparts and maintains the new life.*

The word “sacrament” is derived from the Latin and denotes a solemn, sacred act. In this sense the word has become a part of church language, though not found in the Bible.

A sacrament is not only a *means* of grace, but a *gift* of grace, i.e., it is an actual possession, by visible signs and means, of invisible, but nevertheless real and definite heavenly gifts of grace which the Lord has conditioned upon the partaking of the sacrament. By instituting the two sacraments Jesus has declared them to be the divinely appointed way of coming into possession of the gifts communicated by them.

The gifts secured for us thru Christ’s redeeming death - forgiveness of sins and the new life - must, in order to become effective, become the *personal property* of the individual, they must become a most intimate, inward possession of those who desire to be saved. Christ desires to establish in every human heart a beginning of the growth of a new life, and He has instituted the sacraments that He might approach each one personally, and impart to and maintain in each one His own new heavenly life.

Because Jesus Christ has purchased salvation for us; because He knows best what men need for their salvation, and because He is the Lord of His Church He alone has the right to determine the ordinances necessary for securing salvation. Christ has conditioned the partaking of salvation by the individual upon the partaking of the sacraments. Therefore only those institutions of the Church are real sacraments, which have been instituted by Christ himself.

A sacrament requires *visible signs and means*. These are assurances that the Savior is actually approaching us with His

grace, just as God gave Noah the sign of the rainbow as an assurance of His covenant, Genesis 9:13, or as the Children of Israel before their deliverance from Egypt, were assured by the sign of the blood upon their doors, Exodus 12:13, that God would spare them, though the Egyptians were to be destroyed. These visible signs and means represent the spiritual aims and purposes of Christ. Water is a natural *cleansing* agency and is essential to the *growth* of all natural life. The use of water in Holy Baptism therefore signifies that Jesus desires to *cleanse men of their sins* and to *awaken a new life* in their hearts. Bread and wine were the chief articles of food in the Holy Land at the time of Christ, and their use in the Lord's Supper means that Christ desires to *maintain and to nourish* the spiritual life.

But these visible signs are more than signs, they are also means. In the sacraments we have not only outward signs showing what Christ intends to do inwardly, not only a seal or pledge that He is actually present in a spiritual way; these outward things are also the means thru which He imparts the spiritual gifts of His grace, they are *the vehicles of His spiritual blessings*. In Holy Baptism God gives in and with the water the gift of spiritual life; in the Lord's Supper He gives in and with the bread and the wine His body and His blood as the nourishment of the new life.

As long as we dwell in the body, the body is the natural and only channel thru which the spiritual life is reached, just as we can only receive the word of God by means of the bodily senses and their organs. Thru the sacraments God seeks to act *upon the body* for the sake of influencing *the spiritual life*. At the same time the body is also to be sanctified for its resurrection and transfiguration, 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

The sacraments thus deal with the new life, which has been treated under No. 98. If man is to become fit for the kingdom of God, God must create a new being within Him. Only God can give this new life, and where it has been received it must be sustained and nourished. In Holy Baptism God imparts the new life, and in the Lord's Supper He maintains and nourishes it. Baptism can therefore be administered only once, just as physical

birth can take place only once. If we receive nourishment for the growth of the new life thru frequent partaking of the Lord's Supper, no other sacraments are necessary.

A sacrament therefore must be:

1. Instituted by Christ himself;
2. Combined with visible signs and means;
3. Either impart or maintain the new life.

### **125. How many sacraments has Christ instituted?**

*Christ has instituted two sacraments: Holy Baptism and the Lord's supper.*

The number of sacraments is not stated in the Bible, though a reference to the two is evidently implied in 1 John 5:6. The Protestant Church has therefore rightly defined the idea of the sacraments in such a way that it can only be applied to Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Certainly Jesus has instituted no other outward acts with such solemnity and with such an assurance of spiritual blessings. Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper, with their respective promise of blessings were instituted in the most impressive moments of the Master's life, the former before His ascension, as His last will and testament, as it were; the latter just before His death, with the express command that the ceremony be observed by His followers.

Since these two sacraments have been instituted by Jesus Christ, it is self-evident that Christians *make use of them*. Jesus would not have commanded Holy Baptism if it were not essential to the birth of the new life; He would not have commanded the observance of the Lord's Supper if it were not necessary for the maintenance of the new life in man. Those who do not make use of the sacraments and profess to be content with the Word of God and special inner revelations and experiences, *depart from the way pointed out by Christ* and find fault with the Head and Lord of the Church, professing to know the spiritual needs of men better than He did.

It is wrong for Christians to remain away from the Lord's Supper for years, and still profess to be Christians. Even though we could not understand why the sacraments had been insti-

tuted, *the simple command of Christ* should suffice to make us respect and use them.

The Roman Catholic Church holds that there are seven sacraments, five others besides Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These are:

1. *Confirmation*, based upon Acts 8:15-17. But all three characteristics of a sacrament are wanting. The Evangelical Church also practices confirmation, but does not regard it as a sacrament.

2. *Penance*. See question No. 94. Penitence, or repentance, is not an outward act but an inward process. Even when confession and absolution are considered, the elements of a true sacrament are lacking. The Evangelical Church has penitence, repentance, confession and absolution, but they are not considered sacraments.

3. *Extreme unction*. The application of consecrated oil by the priest to all the senses of persons in danger of death from illness. Reference is made to James 5:14-15, where, however, no reference is made to what the Roman Catholic Church has made of the act. The Evangelical Church therefore has no such practice, because everything essential to a sacrament is absent.

4. *Matrimony* was neither instituted by Christ, nor does it serve for the maintenance of the new life, and cannot possibly be regarded as a sacrament. It is a strange inconsistency that Roman Catholic priests should be prohibited the use of this "sacrament."

5. *The consecration of priests*. They are supposed to be the mediators between God and man, and their ordination gives them an inviolable sanctity which separates them for life from the laity. Here also all elements of consecration are lacking. The Evangelical Church has ordination to the ministry, because, notwithstanding the universal priesthood, 1 Peter 2:5, *order* requires that certain persons be set aside for the public ministry of the Gospel. Only those are therefore permitted to receive ordination who have been recognized as especially gifted or especially called to the ministry. Because the apostles ordained their successors in office Acts 6:6; 13:2, Evangelical ministers are ordained

by the laying on of hands, and no one has a right to act as a minister of the Gospel without being duly ordained by some constituted church authority. The scriptural elements of ordination have thus been maintained, without making ordination a sacrament.

## The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

### **126. What is Holy Baptism?**

*Holy Baptism is the sacrament, by which the triune God imparts the new life to man. Thereby man is admitted into the communion of God and the whole Christian Church.*

The sacrament of Holy Baptism is observed thruout the entire Christian Church because Christ has so commanded it. Both divine and church authority require baptism as a sign of professing Christianity. Jesus Christ would not have required the observation of Holy Baptism if it were unnecessary. A mere confession of faith could have been framed in words and would find its sufficient expression in a godly life. Holy Baptism imparts what we could not otherwise obtain, *the new life*.

Holy Baptism is more than a mere symbol of the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of John was such a symbol, but the sacrament of Holy Baptism was needed to impart the Holy Spirit and with it the new life, Acts 19:1-7.

Baptism does not impart the *fullness* of the Holy Spirit, rather the *seed* and *beginning*, which is to grow and develop if the individual is to become a really regenerated Christian personality. Only God can impart this beginning of the new life, John 3:5-6.

If the new life is not cared for and developed the baptized individual remains practically what he was before. With proper Christian nurture, however, the new man develops more and more into the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ.

Holy baptism no more involves a conscious voluntary change of heart than birth involves a conscious voluntary way of living. The will is later influenced and changed by the Word of God. In Holy Baptism the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Jesus Christ, enters into the innermost depths of our being, and this implanting of a new life principle confers the power of conquering the

old man and creating a new personality, just as the infant's body has the power to grow strong enough to conquer disease and perform its duty in the world. As the seed-germ of such a life process, Holy Baptism is "the washing of regeneration." Titus 3:5.

Thus, thru Holy Baptism into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, God receives man as His own, declaring virtually, "I have created him and now adopt him as my child; Christ has redeemed him with His blood, therefore he shall have forgiveness of sin, life and salvation; the Holy Spirit shall dwell in him and bring forth faith and the fruits of grace, that he may gain eternal salvation." God thus imparts to man thru Holy Baptism *the whole perfect and blessed salvation which Jesus Christ has secured for us*, Acts 2:38; 22:16, just as the new-born child possesses a perfect living organism. The fact of our baptism may thus be a great comfort when we feel the weight of a guilty conscience. It is the seal of our covenant and communion with God, instituted by Him and received by us. This communion with God, at first passive and unconscious on our part, is to develop and ripen into a conscious and active relationship, just as the unconscious relationship between parent and child grows and ripens as the years go on - if properly nurtured. Conversion is the voluntary conscious acceptance and ratification of the communion with God begun in Holy Baptism. It is therefore entirely wrong to regard Holy Baptism as an assurance of the salvation of unrepentant sinners, just as the Jews were wrong, in relying for their salvation on being the "seed of Abraham." Holy Baptism is of no avail unless the grace of God there bestowed is accepted and appropriated.

Because Holy Baptism is the sign of entrance into communion with God, it has also become the sign of admission into the Christian Church, the communion of baptized believers. By becoming a candidate for baptism, the desire to be admitted into the Christian Church is expressed and Holy Baptism confers the right of full participation in all the blessings of the Church. Many baptized persons are not worthy and living members of the Church, *but that is not the fault of their baptism.*

If our children thus become members of the Christian Church

thru Holy Baptism and are entitled to all its privileges, it follows as a matter of course that the Church must provide for their Christian training and education, so that they may become capable of *personally appreciating and accepting* the gifts of God's grace. This is primarily the duty of the home, but the Church must encourage, promote, guide, systematize and perfect the training of the home, and seek to follow up all its members, old and young, for the purpose of insuring to all of the blessings of the communion with and the Word of God.

Holy Baptism is necessarily a churchly act and can therefore only be performed by a regularly called and ordained minister of the Gospel. In case of emergency, however, where a regular minister cannot be called in time, it is not only right but a *duty* of parents to perform what is called *emergency baptism* themselves. Such baptism is valid when the child is sprinkled three times, with the words, "I baptize thee into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." The Apostolic Creed and the Lord's Prayer should also be added. If the child recovers emergency baptism must be confirmed in the regular order of Baptism.

It is not the lack, but the rejection of the sacrament that leads to perdition. The Church is bound to the things instituted by God and knows no other beginning of the new life than Holy Baptism, *but the Lord himself is not so limited* and can impart salvation without the visible sacrament. We have no right, therefore, to regard unbaptized children as lost, and they may be safely left to the grace of God whose will it is that not any one should be lost.

### **127. What is the visible sign in Baptism?**

*The visible sign in Baptism is water, in which the candidate for baptism is immersed or with which he is sprinkled in the name of the triune God, as it is written, Matthew 28:18-20, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations; baptizing them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."*



To baptize means to *immerse*, to dip into, and presupposes the use of water. Matthew 3:16; Acts 8:36; 10:47, and it is evidently the will of Christ that water should be used in connection with the sacrament.

This means that water is the *only* visible sign of baptism, and also that it is *only* a visible sign for a gift of God, the new life and forgiveness of sins. Water was undoubtedly chosen because it is *the one great natural life-giving, life-sustaining and cleansing element*. Without water there is no life and no growth and no cleanliness. And Christ has made it the symbol of the beginning of the new life and of purification from sin.

Of course water itself cannot do this, it is rather the *Word of God* as the divine agency and power that does it, together with the *faith* of the candidate for baptism, which accepts the gift of God. "Just as iron taken from the forge is heated thru, even though one may not see the fire, so the water used in Baptism is saturated and filled up with the power of God."

The word of God, which is essential to Baptism is represented by the use of the name of the triune God, which is a condition of Christian baptism. What is done in the name of another is done in his stead and by his inauthority. Baptism is therefore really *an act of God performed by the hand of the minister*.

The name of God stands for God himself and those who are baptized into the name of God, as the text originally reads, are thereby immersed in the very being of God, His salvation, His love, His redemption and sanctification. This is done because man is created in God's image, and because it is his business to develop Godward. In Baptism God plants His own divine life into the hearts of men and brings them into the closest and most intimate relationship with Him. It is thus that man enters into communion with God, becomes a Christian thru baptism and receives the beginning of a new life. This is at the same time the strongest possible incentive for nurturing and developing the new life.

The *name* received in Holy Baptism is to be a reminder that the name of the person is written in the book of life.

In His command to make disciples by baptizing and teaching

the nations Jesus says nothing as to *how the water is to be used*, whether Baptism is to be by sprinkling or by immersion. In the Early Church immersion was predominant, and the Greek Catholic Church and the different varieties of Baptists use that form exclusively. The chief reasons that induced the Western Church to change this custom are:

1. The fact that the Greek word "*baptizein*," usually rendered into English as "baptize" is translated *bathed* in Luke 11:38 to denote the ceremonial *washings* of the Pharisees; while the fact that in Hebrews 9:10 it is translated *washings* indicates that the word was *not* used by early Christians exclusively in the sense of immersion. It is doubtful whether the 3,000 baptized on Pentecost were baptized by immersion, since they were apparently baptized at once, and no provision for baptizing that number of persons by immersion are known to have existed in Jerusalem at the time. See also Ezekiel 36:25-27; Isaiah 44:3.

2. It is not the water that makes baptism, but *the Word of God used with the water*. The important thing therefore is not the amount of water used, but whether or not it is in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The beauty of the sun's rays is reflected by the dew-drop as well as by a larger amount of water and the value of baptism is not affected by the amount of water nor by the manner in which it is used.

3. In the case of sick or invalid persons, and in colder countries, baptism by immersion was impracticable, and so the Western Church gradually gave preference to baptism by sprinkling. *The Evangelical Church recognizes either form of baptism as valid if it has been done in the name of the triune God.*

### **128. What does Holy Baptism require of us?**

*Holy Baptism requires of us that we, by daily contrition and repentance, renounce all sinful longings and desires, and by faith arise to a new life.*

As the earth cannot bring forth fruit unless the seed has been sown, so man cannot be regenerated unless God plants the seed of a new life into his heart in baptism. And as the seed that has been sown cannot grow and bear fruit without sunshine and rain, those baptized cannot be saved unless the new life thus

given by God is nourished thru a faithful use of the Word of God and its conscious acceptance as the rule of life. This acceptance of the new life is *conversion* (see the answer to question No. 93), and baptized persons must be converted before they can become really regenerated.

Conversion in turn is to be followed by a sanctified life (see the answer to question No. 101), i.e., the constant struggle against our evil nature and its wicked desires. Where this is neglected the new life finally perishes. Luther says, "Such baptizing with water signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts, and, again, a new man daily comes forth and arises, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever."

**Romans 6:3-4. Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized in His death? We were buried therefore with Him thru baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead thru the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life,**

That we are all baptized into the death of Christ means not only that the old Adam, our sinful nature with all its lusts and desires, is to be cast aside and conquered, with the aim of beginning a new and better life after the example of the death and resurrection of Christ; it means also that the death of Jesus Christ *becomes the death of the sinful man in our hearts*. Christ died and was buried for our sins, and they who are Christ's own will conquer the sin within in the strength of His death. Jesus Christ has conquered sin, but it must be conquered and done to death *in the life of every individual*. Holy Baptism typifies this and gives the strength with which it is to be accomplished. Colossians 3:9-10. Those who have been baptized and converted must continue the work of their sanctification. The old man is compared with an unclean and tattered garment that must be put away and exchanged for one that is new and clean if the wearer is to appear decent and respectable. Holy Baptism spurs us on to constant efforts in putting aside evil desires and habits, so that we may conduct ourselves as children of God.

**Colossians 3:9-10. Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings,**

**and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him.**

Sanctification is a matter of *daily* concern and effort. Sin lifts its head every day and must be conquered anew every day.

To stand still means to lose ground. A Christian is never perfect as long as he lives. A careful housewife dusts her furniture every day, so that the dust may have no chance to accumulate and destroy the polished surface. A wise gardener looks after his plants every day in order to destroy the insects that may attack them, and to keep the soil in the proper condition. Those who desire to keep their lives clean must *pay daily attention* to the evil that is constantly gathering, and which, if allowed to accumulate, will at last bring him to shame and disgrace.

### **129. Why should children be baptized?**

*Infants should be baptized because the new life is a divine gift of grace, of which the infants are as much in need as adults, and which they are just as capable of receiving; hence the Lord has explicitly promised His kingdom unto them.*

The Evangelical Church regards infant baptism not only as a right but as a duty, especially since the new life imparted in Baptism is a *gracious gift of God*. It is not given because of faith, or because of a sanctified life; a conscious spiritual life is attainable only *after* God has planted the beginning of the new life in the heart. The children who have been baptized in early infancy of course *know* nothing of the gift they have received, but they are nevertheless *capable* of receiving it. If a young child may possess and enjoy material treasures without knowing anything of them, why not also spiritual treasures as well? The child's soul is created toward God as certainly as that of an adult, so why should not the divine life find a place in it just as well? Acts 2:39. If Jesus had not considered children *capable* of coming to Him and receiving the Kingdom He would hardly, have said what He did, Mark 10:13-14, 16. Herein, then, is infant baptism justified, and no one can forbid parents and the Church from putting the children under the living and saving influence of the new life from above from the very beginning of their life,

**Acts 2:39. For to you is the promise, and to your children,**

**Mark 10:13-14, 16.** And they brought unto Him little children, that He should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, He was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. And He took them in His arms, and blessed them, laying His hands upon them.

An infant cannot of course believe in the sense in which an adult believes, Mark 16:16, but the beginning of faith is there, because God put it there. If the *beginning of* will power and of sin is there, why not also the beginning of faith? And we certainly have a right to call this beginning faith, because it is of the same character as the conscious faith which appears later. *With the proper care and nourishment* this seed-grain of faith will in time manifest itself as real conscious faith. Just as the beginnings of the physical and intellectual life are actually present and taken account of, the beginnings of the spiritual life are also present and deserve to be reckoned with and appreciated.

And the young child *needs* the new life just as much as an adult, for it is in just the same sinful condition, Genesis 8:21; John 3:5-6. Without the privilege of Holy Baptism children would therefore be *actually excluded* from salvation and the kingdom of Christ.

The Old Testament type of Baptism is *circumcision*, which was the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham, Genesis 17:9ff, and which was to be performed on the eighth day of the child's life. In Baptism God gives what was there foreshadowed, the beginning of a *new* life, by admission into the new covenant. If young children could receive the blessings of the old covenant, why should they be forbidden to enter into the new? It should also be borne in mind that adult years are no guarantee of worthiness, since the danger of baptizing an unworthy person who may later revert to a sinful life is not at all excluded.

The Baptist and Mennonite contention that the Early Church baptized no infants is answered by Irenaeus (†202), who writes: "Jesus Christ came to save all men; all, I say, who thru Him are born again in God, *infants*, children, young men and women and adults," and by Origen (†254): "The Church has received *the custom of baptizing infants from the apostles.*" In the Great

Commission Baptism is expressly mentioned as the first of the two things necessary to make disciples of all the nations, i.e., 1. baptizing, and 2. teaching.

The Early Church was almost wholly a missionary church, and the persons baptized were very naturally mostly adults. A number of instances also show that the Apostles did not attach the importance to a full and definite knowledge of salvation before baptism which is often claimed. Neither the 3,000 in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, the Ethiopian eunuch, the heathen baptized in the home of Cornelius, nor the jailer at Philippi and his family seem to have had very careful preparation for baptism. It is also quite probable that in all these cases, except that of the Ethiopian, children were baptized with the adults.

Naturally infant baptism makes the *Christian training of children imperative*. Where it is evident that a Christian training is not possible, infant baptism should not be performed.

In the early days of the Church, when Christians were persecuted for their faith, many of them, expecting a martyr's death, requested relatives or intimate friends to see to it that their children received Christian instruction and training in that event. Thus the custom arose of selecting sponsors, or godfathers and godmothers, for young children who were baptized, and it has continued to the present day as a natural corollary of infant baptism. It should be self-evident that only such persons should be chosen for this sacred responsibility who realize the obligations assumed and are willing and able to carry them out.

It is the duty of the sponsor

1. To be a witness of the child's baptism who can testify that the child has been baptized and has been received into the Church and the covenant of God's grace.

2. To aid and counsel the parents in the Christian training of the child, and to care for it in the event of the parents' death.

3. To make the child's spiritual and eternal welfare an object of constant faithful prayer.

It is of course self-evident that the duty of religious training and education of children rests *primarily upon the parents*, and the custom of permitting the sponsors to represent the absent

parents at the baptism of their children should be insistently discouraged.

### **130. What does their children's baptism daily require of the parents?**

*Parents shall, by education and instruction, by prayer and example promote the growth of the new life in their baptized children.*

If it is the parents' sacred duty to give their children the proper physical care, food, clothing, shelter and education, the care of their spiritual life received in baptism, which is far more important for time and eternity, is their supreme obligation. Without careful attention and cultivation the beginnings of the Christian life must languish and perhaps die, just as the seed-grain cannot properly grow without due attention.

Parents are to promote the growth of the new life in their baptized children by *training and education* toward godliness. Christian parents will naturally seek to restrain their children from evil associates and habits and to accustom them to all that is good. The most effective means for this purpose is the parents' example in word and deed. Much talking is usually in vain, if it accomplishes anything it encourages a precocious, unwholesome, hypocritical "piety" that fails to stand the test when the children must make their own decisions. If, however, parents are agreed in their determination to impress the one thing needful on the minds of their children, and to require them to live up to all that is right before God and their conscience, they will become accustomed to will and to do that which is good, and will be doing all that is humanly possible to lead them to conversion. It is essential that parents are *entirely agreed* as to the principles and methods of training their children; any sign of disagreement only encourages the child in seeking to have its own way. Excessive authority is also wrong and usually defeats its own objects.

**Ephesians 6:4. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.**

*Instruction* toward godliness is another essential means of promoting the growth of the new life in the hearts of children. Knowledge of the facts and truths of the Bible furnish the most

favorable soil for the growth of the spiritual life, and parents can hardly begin too early with instructing their children in a way adapted to their age and development. This should be followed by definite religious instruction in school or Sunday School as the child grows older. At the proper time *confirmation instruction* should prepare their hearts for the voluntary decision to accept Christ as their Savior and to live for Him and serve him loyally thruout the entire life. Confirmation instruction can accomplish this only on the basis of adequate preparation. This should preferably be given in the home, while the instruction offered in the Sunday School should serve the same purpose. The aim of Christian home training and instruction is to make the religious impressions permanent and decisive for the child's later years. 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15-17.

**Matthew 28:20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.**

*Prayer* is also a most important means of promoting the new life in the heart of the child. Children should see and hear their parents pray in the family devotions and on other occasions, and parents should teach their children to *pray with them*. Intercession for their children is the most powerful aid of sound Christian home training. Monica, the mother of Augustine, prayed for her son, who led a dissipated life, for many years, apparently in vain, until finally he was converted and became the famous Christian teacher.

Children should also be required to *attend the public services of worship regularly*. Even though they may not understand all they hear there the spirit of worship will impress itself upon their hearts and mind, and the regular attendance trains them in Christian habits. Unwillingness to attend may usually be removed by loving explanation and persuasion *if the parents give them a good example of faithful and intelligent attendance at the services*.

The parents' life and conduct is the child's *object lesson in practical Christianity*. Children are natural observers and imitators, and the parents' effort to live a really, unselfish, faithful Christian life cannot fail to make an impression on almost any child. Proverbs 2:11.



**131. What is confirmation?**

*confirmation is the renewal of the baptismal covenant, that is, the baptized children, having been instructed in the Christian faith, publicly confess their faith and promise unto their Lord obedience until death.*

To confirm means to strengthen, establish, ratify or assure. Because our children are baptized in infancy without conscious action on their part, the baptismal covenant entered into thereby needs to be ratified by them as soon as they are able to realize the meaning of baptism. A covenant is a *mutual* pledge of faithfulness. In baptism God has promised to the child His love and mercy, and parents and sponsors have pledged the child's faithfulness and obedience. In confirmation the young people who have been baptized as infants voluntarily ratify and assume the pledges made by their parents or sponsors.

Naturally only those children can be confirmed who have been *baptized and instructed in Bible facts and teachings and carefully prepared for the step they are about to take.* They should fully understand the need and the meaning of conversion and what surrender to Jesus Christ as an act of the heart and the will implies. The aim is by no means a forced or precocious spirituality young people at the age of decision are by no means able to grasp the whole content of Christian teaching but to make the impression of *the love of God in Christ and the need of wholly yielding one's self to Him* as deep and lasting as possible.

After careful and thorough preparation the confirmands are to *publicly confess their faith.* This confession is usually preceded in Evangelical churches by public examination, which aims to show, as far as this is possible, that the children realize and know what they are about to do. By their confession during the act of confirmation the young people declare their acceptance of the faith in the triune God upon which they have been baptized and in which they have been instructed, as their own for time and eternity.

The confirmation pledge is followed by the confirmation prayer spoken by the confirmands:

“Come, God, Holy Spirit, into our hearts and make them thine own for time and eternity. Do Thou confirm and ratify all our promises, and help us both to will and to work, as long as we live in this world. Do Thou keep each one of us that none may be lost. And if any one of us should ever stray away from thee into the ways of sin and the world, do Thou seek him and bring him back, Lord Jesus, Thou Good Shepherd! Draw us, O Father, to the Son, and give us to Him that we may become and remain His own and finally behold His heavenly glory. Amen.”

Many objections have been made to the confirmation pledge on the ground that it is broken sooner or later by those who assume it. The pledge, however, aims to be a *help in obedience to the will of God*, see Genesis 28:20. Though broken it is not made void, but may rather aid in inducing the sinner to return to his God. In the Old Testament those who had assumed vows and broken them were obliged to begin over again, Numbers 6:12. The broken pledge thus becomes for the confirmand an incentive to repentance and a new beginning in faithfulness.

Upon this their public confession the young people are confirmed in the renewal of their baptismal covenant, admitted to membership in the Christian Church and are entitled to all its blessings and privileges and to participation in the Lord’s Supper. Confirmation of the baptismal covenant was not instituted by Christ and is not mentioned in the Scriptures. It has grown out of the practice of the laying on of hands or consecration, in the Apostolic Church, Acts 9:17; 19:6, and the needs of practical church life. In the Apostolic times the laying on of hands was the outward symbol for imparting the Holy Spirit. The Roman Catholic Church has made a sacrament of confirmation, which consists of unction and can only be administered by the bishop. Protestants abandoned unction, but retained confirmation as a Church rite, stress being laid not upon the rite as such but upon the Christian instruction preceding it. Evangelical confirmation and spiritual nurture in its present form dates back to the time of Spener (1635-1705).

No greater mistake can be made than to suppose that confirmation is *an end in itself*, or the climax of the spiritual life

of the confirmed. It should be regarded as *the beginning* of a conscious and steady development of Christian character and personality by means of thorough and systematic Bible study and training for Christian service. The Secondary and Adult divisions and the Missionary and Teacher Training departments of the Sunday School, as well as the work of the Evangelical League offer valuable and far-reaching education opportunities in this direction. The church that does not provide for growth of the spiritual life along these lines is neglecting its most sacred responsibility and its most glorious opportunity. Information in regard to aids to such a development will be gladly furnished as follows: Bible Study and Training for Christian service, *The Sunday School Editor*, *Eden Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.* Secondary, and Adult division and Missionary and Teacher Training departments of the Sunday School, *The General Secretary for Sunday Schools*, at the same address. The Evangelical League, *President of the Evangelical League, 31 Lower Third St., Evansville, Ind.*

## PART V

**The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper**

After the new life has been awakened it must be *cared for and nourished* just as every other kind of life. The Word of God is the nourishment of the spiritual life, but in the Lord's Supper Jesus has supplied a special means of sustaining and strengthening the new life, and it is this sacrament that we are now to consider. It is called the Lord's Supper because it was instituted on the night in which our Lord was betrayed. It is also called Communion because St. Paul calls it the "communion of the blood and the body of Christ," 1 Corinthians 10:16. In this sense those who partake of it are called communicants.

**132. What is the Lords Supper?**

*The Lord's Supper is that sacrament by which the new man receives the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ as the nourishment of his new life, sustains and confirms the communion with Christ and all believers, and proclaims that the Lord has died for us.*

In accordance with the definition given in the answer to Question No. 124 the Lord's Supper is a true sacrament; it has been instituted by Jesus Christ himself, has visible signs and means and sustains the new life.

The new man is the man *born again* and possessing a new and different life in place of the old natural life. We have seen that God gives the new life in Holy Baptism and that Holy Baptism signifies the admission into the Christian Church. Accordingly the Church cannot admit unbaptized persons to the Lord's Supper. Actual participation in the blessings of the Lord's Supper is possible only where the new life is consciously and voluntarily accepted in true faith, for it is thus that the new life established in Holy Baptism is realized. The Church can admit only such persons to the Lord's Supper who can be assumed to possess Christian knowledge and a conscious faith-life, Galatians 2:20; *unconfirmed* persons can therefore not be permitted to take part except those who have been members of churches not practicing confirmation. Since it is impossible to judge any one's spiritual

condition, the Church must necessarily content itself with judging by the outward standards, but these, however, must be strictly adhered to. The answer to the foregoing question states briefly 1) what the believers in Jesus Christ receive in the Lord's Supper, and 2) what participation in the Lord's Supper means to them.

In the Lord's Supper the new man receives *the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ as the nourishment of his spiritual life*. Where the new life is absent it cannot, of course, be nourished; where it is present, does exist, however, it must be nourished or perish.

**John 6:51. I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: it any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.**

It is the aim of Christ's redemption to transform sinful persons into the image of Christ himself; human hearts and lives are to be made Christlike so that His faith becomes our faith, His love our love, His life our life, and all our thoughts and emotions, words and deeds may breathe His spirit. His body and blood which He has given for us for the remission of sins stand for the *sin conquering power* of His atonement and redemption. By receiving it we receive himself and His work of redemption and strengthen the inner man and the new life. In much the same way as our natural food and drink becomes a part of our every being, Jesus Christ and what He has done for us aims to become a *part of our spiritual being* and to make it like unto himself. John 6:51, 55-56.

Since these words were uttered about a year before the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus probably did not have the Lord's Supper in mind at the time; what He means to say, however, is that those who would have eternal life must receive Him into their hearts thru faith. For those who trustingly partake of the Lord's Supper these words are fulfilled in their deepest sense. And even if we are not able to take part in the Lord's Supper for some reason, we shall always be able to receive Him in faith. By faith we receive Him spiritually, and in the Lord's Supper He comes to us with outward signs and means, that He may become one with us,

**John 6:55-56.** For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink in-deed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him.

In the Lord's Supper we *receive* the body and the blood of Jesus Christ. It is given to us as a gift that we have no power to change, that we can only receive as that which it is, the outward sign to which is added the Word of God. It does not depend upon our faith or our piety whether we receive the body and the blood of Christ in the bread and the wine, but it does depend upon our faith whether or not we *receive a blessing* from it.

In the Lord's Supper the new man also *sustains and confirms the communion with Christ and all believers and proclaims that the Lord has died for him*. By partaking of the body and the blood of Christ we enter into communion with Him, 1 Corinthians 10:16. It was to draw us upward from the world and receive us into His communion that He came into the flesh, and it is His constant aim to draw men closer and closer to Him and to make us members of His body, Ephesians 5:30. He is the vine and we are the branches, John 15:4. Just as the branches wither and die when they are separated from the vine, our spiritual life ceases when our communion with Him is ended. We sustain and confirm the communion with Him thru the faithful use of His Word, and we deepen it by partaking of the Lord's Supper. Jesus could not express the need of this communion with Him more plainly than He did by saying: "Take and eat, this is My body; Drink ye all of it, this is My blood."

The longer a tree's roots have been in the ground, the firmer its growth becomes, and the oftener we renew the communion with Christ, the deeper we grow into it, until at last the tie is so firm that nothing at all can break it. It is thus a Christian's duty to partake of the Lord's Supper *regularly*. Those who neglect it or do not partake at all thereby separate themselves from Him more and more, for even though we can maintain communion with Him thru prayer and in His Word, yet a continued disregard of His command, "This do in remembrance of Me," cannot but weaken and paralyze the spiritual life.

Holy Baptism admits to the communion of the whole Christian Church, and partaking of the Lord's Supper sustains and

confirms this communion. It is usually administered in the public service where all classes of believers, rich and poor, high and low, educated and uneducated, eat of the consecrated bread and drink of the consecrated cup at the same altar. All distinctions and differences are thus done away with and all become equal. Mutual love is thus fostered and the communion of the Saints encouraged. Every celebration of the Lord's Supper thus reminds us that Christians should be *at peace* with each other, so that no hatred and malice should separate those who would partake of Christ's love-feast, 1 Corinthians 11:26; 1 Corinthians 10:17.

**Ephesians 5:30.** We are members of His body.

**1 Corinthians 10:17.** Seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread.

Every celebration of the Lord's Supper is a profession not only that Jesus Christ has died, but that He has died *for us*. We thus proclaim the atoning death of Christ and bear witness that we lost and condemned sinners could not be saved except thru His death, and thru the offering of His life we receive forgiveness of sins.

**1 Corinthians 11:26.** For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come.

The Lord's Supper should be celebrated with the *congregation*, and even when it is given to the sick relatives, friends or church officers should take part besides the sick person. The private communion of pastors is not in order, and contrary to the spirit and the purpose of Christ.

### **133. What are the visible signs and means of this sacrament?**

*The visible signs and means of this sacrament are the bread and wine, the worthy partaking of which is the eating and drinking of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; as it is stated in the words of instituting the Lord's supper.*

Bread and wine have been made the visible signs and means of this sacrament. It is thus by no means immaterial what we eat and drink when partaking of the Lord's Supper, for Christ has established a regular order from which we may not depart. And the words bread and wine are also very clear. The Roman Catholic Church, however, unmindful of these plain words of

Jesus, gives only the bread i.e., the host (wafer) to the laity, pretending that the wine, i.e., the blood, is too precious to be exposed to the danger of being awkwardly handled and perhaps spilt by laymen. She also teaches that the blood is contained in the body, i.e., the host, so that the laymen really receive both after all. This is why, according to the Roman Catholic way of celebrating the Lord's Supper, the priest alone partakes of the wine with the words, "I drink for you all."

The Protestant Church regards this as a *mutilation of the sacrament*, since it is clear from the words of Christ, "Drink ye all of it," and those of Paul, "For as often as ye eat this bread, *and drink the cup*," etc., that it was Jesus' intention as well as the practice of the early Church that all should partake of both the bread and the wine.

The withdrawal of the cup from the laity became customary in the twelfth century and was adopted as a doctrine at the Council of Constance, 1215. In exceptional cases persons and congregations have, however, been permitted to retain the cup. It was one of the chief teachings of John Huss that the withdrawal of the cup was contrary to the intention of Christ, as it was largely for this that he was condemned to be burned at the stake. His followers took up arms against the Church and waged a long and bloody war for their religious rights. In 1436 they were finally permitted to use the cup in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

It is significant that Jesus makes use of *natural articles of food* as the signs and means of His body and blood. Just *how* the heavenly gift combines with the outward sign is a mystery concerning which neither Christ nor the Apostles have said anything, and concerning which nothing definite can therefore be stated.

It is self-evident that the bread and the wine are vehicles of the body and the blood of Christ *only when they have been consecrated and are partaken of in the celebration of the Lord's Supper*. Anywhere else the bread is bread and the wine wine. This exposes another heresy of the Roman Catholic Church, which claims that the host and the wine, after it has been consecrated



by the priest, are only apparently bread and wine, but have been transubstantiated, i.e., transformed into the very body and blood of Christ, and that they remain in this form ever after. For this reason the monstrance, the transparent pyx or box in which the consecrated host is exposed to view, is held aloft for worship by the people at certain church festivals, especially on Corpus Christi day (Thursday after Trinity Sunday); it is also used superstitiously as a sort of charm during great public danger or calamities.

Such superstition and idolatry is utterly opposed to the Word of God and the teaching of the Protestant Church, which is that in the bread and the wine the participant receives in the Lord's Supper the body and the blood of Christ, i.e., Christ consecrates the visible signs as the vehicles of His body and blood without transforming them, so that the bread remains bread and the wine remains wine, in accordance with 1 Corinthians 10:16, where Paul calls the consecrated bread bread, *not* the body of Christ, and the consecrated wine is called wine, *not* the blood of Christ. We therefore receive the body and the blood of Christ only during the celebration of the Lord's Supper, when the Word of God is used with the visible signs, the bread and the wine. After the celebration the bread and the wine are what they were before.

The doctrine of transubstantiation, as the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church concerning the body and the blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper is called, is first met with during the ninth century, but was adopted only in 1215; before the ninth century Roman Catholic teaching on this point was practically Protestant. Since the rise of this teaching Roman Catholics began to regard the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice. The word "host" for bread is derived from the Latin *hostia* -sacrifice.

Luther (1483-1546) taught that, since Jesus in instituting the Lord's Supper uses the words "This is my body," "This is my blood," it cannot be otherwise than the body and the blood of Christ is *actually present and really given* in the sacrament, "in, with and under the bread and the wine we receive the body and the blood of Christ."

Zwingli, the early Swiss Reformer (1484-1531) held that the bread and the wine were merely *symbols* of the body and the blood of Christ, and that therefore the Lord's Supper is a memorial of the crucified body and the atoning blood of Christ.

Calvin, the great Geneva Reformer (1509-1564), regards the bread and the wine as *pledges of the spiritual gifts*. Just as surely, he says, as the believer receives bread and wine the spiritual man receives the body and the blood of Christ, i.e., all that the suffering and the death of Jesus Christ stands for.

The Evangelical Church does not undertake to decide for or against any one of these teachings, since both Christ and the Apostles, while stating the fact, are silent as to the *manner*, in which the believers receive the body and the blood of Christ. Just as we cannot explain the connection that exists between our own body and soul, the connection between the bread and the wine and the body and the blood of Jesus remains a mystery, concerning which every sincere believer is entitled to his own opinion. The Evangelical Church believes in unity rather than in uniformity of doctrine, and in conformity with its acknowledged principle in points of disagreement always employs *the exact words of Scripture* in the administration of the sacrament. The Bible is thus restored to its rightful place *above* the teachings of any man or church body, thus becoming actually as well as theoretically the sole guide of faith and conduct.

Immediately after the Reformation violent and long continued quarrels concerning the teachings on the Lord's Supper arose between the followers of Luther and those of Zwingli and Calvin, with the result that the Protestant Church in Europe suffered untold loss, both spiritually and in the way of prestige. Most of the unfortunate divisions among Protestants are due to this or similar causes. The Evangelical point of view was embodied in the declaration uniting the Lutheran and Reformed Churches of Prussia, issued by king Frederick William III on September 27, 1817.

The value and beauty of the Evangelical way of treating the different points of view on this or any other subject is perhaps best and most briefly suggested by the story of the two knights

of old, who, coming from opposite directions, one day met before the statue of a great warrior. After greeting one another they fell to admiring the work of the artist, praising the various details of feature, position, etc.

“Look at the great silver shield,” said the one, “how naturally he holds it aloft.”

“Silver shield, sayest thou,” said the other, “the shield is of gold.”

“Gold!” replied the other, “do I not see with my own eyes that it is silver? How can it be gold?”

“And I say it is gold!” hotly retorted the other. “To say it is of silver is false.”

“No man accuses me of falsehood unpunished,” cried the other in a rage, as he rushed at his opponent with drawn sword. The mortal combat was soon over, and as the victor, himself mortally wounded, gazed at the shield above him, his dying look was dazzled by the glittering gold. *One side of the shield was of silver, the other of gold.*

The one essential thing about the Lord’s Supper is that it is the *nourishment of the new life*, i.e., that those who partake of it do so *worthily*, i.e., accept in sincere faith what Jesus Christ has done for us by offering up His life and shedding His blood and seek a closer communion with Him and a more fruitful service for Him.

The catechism concerns itself only with what the *worthy partaker* of the Lord’s Supper receives. What those receive who partake unworthily is another and less important matter into which space forbids us to enter and which need not be discussed here. It seems clear that the attitude of those who receive the sacrament can have no power to change it. It is not man that makes the sacrament, but God. And if the visible signs and means are there, with the Word of God, they are consecrated and offered as the body and the blood of Christ, regardless of what those who receive them think of them. It is the same way with the Word of God, which is preached to both believers and unbelievers, but which becomes to one a savor from life unto life, to the other a savor from death unto death. The same sun that

gives life and comfort to the living and helps to grow beautiful flowers and nourishing fruit, brings decay and corruption to the dead and develops the poisonous atmosphere of the marshes and swamp. The sun remains the same, but the recipient is not, and hence the result is not the same. And the same bread and wine received in the Lord's Supper has a different effect on the believer than on the unbeliever, 1 Corinthians 11:27-29. Whether one accepts the Lutheran teachings concerning the Lord's Supper or that of Zwingli or Calvin, *persons known to be unworthy should not be permitted to partake of the sacrament*, lest they eat and drink judgment unto themselves if they discern not the body.

### **134. With what words did Christ institute the Lord's Supper?**

*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 the 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 ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."*

The above is a composite reproduction of Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25, and as such constitutes the words of consecration used in the administration of the Lord's Supper in Evangelical churches.

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper in the last night of His life and bequeathed it to His disciples as a *testament*, to be regarded as His will and to be observed after His death. Veneration and obedience toward Him therefore require that we make faithful use of the sacrament.

The occasion of the institution of the Lord's Supper was the Jewish Passover Exodus 12:1-13, which was observed annually in memory of the sparing of Israel's first-born when the first-born of Egypt was slain at the time of the Exodus. It was regarded as a type of Christ, John 19:36; 1 Corinthians 5:7. Thru the blood of the Passover the Israelites were cleansed from the corruption and iniquity of the Egyptians, and in the eating of the meal each one

accepted personally the cleansing thus effected. Thru the death of Christ and the shedding of His innocent blood we too are cleansed from sin and delivered from its guilt and bondage, and we partake of the Lord's Supper that each one may *personally* acquire the blessed gifts of redemption and reconciliation. It is a memorial of Christ's death, a recognition and acceptance of Christ and what He and His life mean to men. Christ says, "This do in remembrance of me," and we cannot better remember Him and His life and death than by partaking of His body and his blood. The memorial of the Lord's Supper thus brings us into *the most intimate personal relationship with him*.

The usual way of observing the Passover was to pass the cup with water and wine four times in succession among those partaking of the meal: the first time, as soon as the members of the household had seated themselves for the meal; the second time when the passover lamb had been placed before them; the third time after the passover had been eaten, and the fourth just before the final psalm of praise. It was taken when they had supped, i.e., the meal was over, and it is this fourth and final passing of the cup which Christ consecrated.

The essential features of the Lord's Supper are that the service be *conducted by an ordained minister of the Gospel*; that the bread and the wine be *regularly consecrated with Christ's words of institution*, and that the consecrated elements be *distributed to the communicants*. Non-essential features are the use of *leavened or unleavened bread* (Jesus used unleavened bread because no other was available; it is quite probable, however, that the Christians of the Apostolic Church used unleavened bread also); the use of *pure or mixed wine* (the Roman and Greek Catholic Churches use mixed wine, while the Protestant Churches usually have pure wine), and also the use of *candles on the altar*. Where they are used they are a reminder of the institution of the sacrament at night-time, and a symbol of Christ, the Light of the world.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the sacrifice which Christ has brought on the cross for the redemption of the world is repeated in the Lord's Supper or Eucharist, in its full effective-

ness, the Lord is *sacrificed again* but without the shedding of blood. This is done by the hand of the minister, who is therefore called priest, for where there is a sacrifice there must also be a priesthood. This service is called the *mass* (derived from the Latin *missa*, from the formula used in the early Church in dismissing those not entitled to receive communion), which must be celebrated daily in every Roman Catholic church, and includes the consecration, elevation, breaking, and communion of the host and chalice. The whole service is in the Latin language. The officiating priest wears five peculiar vestments, of which the colors vary with the occasion. The priest who celebrates always communicates; whether some or none of the congregation communicate, does not affect the sacrifice. The rule is, however, that some one must be present to make the responses. Private masses are said in a low tone, and are also called low mass, in which the priest attended by acolytes reads the service; in the chanted mass the service is sung, not read, and in the high or solemn mass the priest is assisted by deacons, sub-deacons and ministers. If the celebrant is a bishop the mass is pontifical. As saints are honored almost every day in the year, prayers in which their intercession is invoked are introduced at the beginning and the end of the service.

According to the Roman Catholic teaching this bloodless sacrifice insures salvation, peace and all the blessings of heaven and eternal life even to those who take no part in it. Even temporal advantages may be secured thru it, such as protection in danger, averting of drought, foods, etc. not only by those present, but also by those unable to attend. Requiem masses are also read for the release of souls from purgatory.

In accordance with Hebrews 10:12-14, "But He when He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; henceforth expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified;" Protestants reject absolutely all this false and unwarranted teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. The whole letter to the Hebrews is opposed to the repetition of Christ's offering and the re-establishment of the Old Testament

priesthood. Nor do the words of the institution say anything of a “bloodless sacrifice of Christ.”

### **135. What do we receive by thus eating and drinking?**

*By thus eating and drinking we receive the remission of sins, life and salvation; as it is stated in the words, broken and shed for you for the remission of sins.*

Jesus Christ died for us; His body was broken and His blood was shed in order to secure *remission of sins* for us. Forgiveness of sins has been obtained for us, it is available at any time we choose to accept it. In Holy Baptism forgiveness of sins was already vouchsafed to us, but since we sin again and again every day and hour, we need renewed forgiveness. We can secure it by faith in Jesus Christ, by a faithful use of the Word of God, and especially in the Lord’s Supper, where we partake of the body and the blood of our Redeemer, thus entering into the closest possible relationship with Him and all that He accomplished for Us.

Forgiveness of sins brings *life and salvation*. John 6:53 Jesus says, “Verily, verily I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves,” and in verse 56: “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in Me and I in Him.” The life here spoken of is the inner, spiritual life which we can have only by Christ’s *dwelling in our hearts*. It is this of which Paul says, Galatians 2:20, “It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me,” and of whom Christ says, John 15:5, “I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for apart from Me ye can do nothing.” Christ is the new life, and when we worthily receive His body and blood in the Lord’s Supper, we *assimilate* His life so that it penetrates our whole being and stimulates our spiritual or soul life so that it may bring forth fruit in *practical service*. He is the conqueror of sin and will help us to conquer also.

With forgiveness of sin the peace of God enters the heart. “If God be for us, who is against us?” asks Paul triumphantly, Romans 8:31. And where the heart has found peace in Christ there is happiness, joy and the *beginning of salvation*. Only

those who have Christ in their hearts can be really happy, all the more so as they know that their present happiness is to develop into eternal joy and salvation, John 6:54: “He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” The partaking of the Lord’s Supper increases and confirms this joyful and happy hope, and it is therefore customary to give communion to the sick and dying, not as though the sacrament could in some magical way automatically cleanse from sin and bring salvation, but because thereby the person’s faith in the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life is strengthened. That *only those who sincerely and fully trust in Christ Jesus as their Savior and Lord* can enjoy these or any other blessings of His redemption is so self-evident that it needs only to be mentioned.

Because of the great spiritual blessings vouchsafed to sinners thru the Lord’s Supper, it should be partaken of much more frequently than is the case with most church members. To remain away from the sacrament for years, or even for one year, *is a wrong and an injury to the spiritual life*, which must suffer seriously under such neglect. The early Christians celebrated communion every day, Acts 2:46, and later every Lord’s day. Earnest Christians today take the sacrament from four to six times a year, and there is nothing to prevent a more frequent communion than this if the sincere desire is present. There must, however, be no attempt at compulsion, nor should anyone come from mere force of habit or custom, but only with the sincere purpose of nourishing and strengthening the spiritual life. The self-examination necessary whenever one worthily partakes of the Lord’s Supper is in itself a great blessing, a furtherance of self-knowledge and a strong incentive to seek salvation. 1 Corinthians 11:23-32.

### **136. Who, then, receives this sacrament worthily?**

*He who eats and drinks with heartfelt repentance and true faith; for he alone is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in the words, “given” and shed for you for the remission of sins.” But he who does not believe these words, or doubts, is unworthy and unprepared; for the words “for you” require truly believing hearts.*



Whether we receive a blessing from the Lord's Supper or not depends upon the condition and manner in which we receive it. Christians must therefore not come to the altar thoughtlessly, but with due self-examination, 1 Corinthians 11:28. When we attend a festivity of any kind we would not think of going otherwise than in clean and decent apparel, and being sure that every part of the attire was properly arranged. When we are to be guests at the Lord's Supper we should not bestow less care upon the condition of our hearts and on the proper spiritual preparation. It is our business to find out whether we still secretly or openly cherish any form of sin; whether we have been conscientious enough in our Christian life and everyday conduct, and whether we honestly repent of the wrong things in our lives we may discover. Luther gives this advice: "Consider thy station in the light of the Ten Commandments, whether thou art father, mother, son, daughter, master, servant; whether thou hast been disobedient, unfaithful, idle, angry, impure or revengeful; whether thou hast wronged any one in word or deed, or hast stolen or been careless or neglectful to any one's wrong or injury." Every station or condition in life has its own duties and its own transgressions, and it is our business to see to it that we perform our full Christian duty in every way. The Ten Commandments represent the will of God, and all of them have their special application to every human life, from the first Commandment, which requires that we fear and love God and trust in Him above all things, to the last, which forbids all evil lusts and desires, and requires that we delight in God and in His holy Providence. A searching self-examination according to the measure of the Ten Commandments will lead every sincere inquirer to repentance. See answer to Question No. 94. Those who think they need no repentance have not examined themselves very thoroughly. Those who after an earnest self-examination, think they must regard themselves as unworthy of partaking of the Lord's Supper, should remember that Jesus requires no merit of good works, but only a sincerely repentant heart that seeks to be relieved of its guilt and sin and be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

**1 Corinthians 11:28. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.**

**2 Corinthians 13:5.** Try our own selves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves.

**Psalm 139:23-24.** Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

True faith is an essential part of real repentance. According to the answer to question 95 it is “the firm confidence with which the sinner accepts and retains the grace of God in Christ,” and is therefore necessary to a worthy partaking of the Lord’s Supper. 2 Corinthians 13:5. Faith directs our life Godward and effects a consecrated and sanctified life. Christ does not require a faith like that of Peter or Paul, even a weak and imperfect faith is still faith and may receive the nourishment it needs at the Lord’s table. Those who come with this purpose in mind will not come in vain, for the Lord will strengthen and confirm his faith. That our self-examination may be real and sincere we pray with the psalmist Psalm 139:23-24.

*“He that does not believe these words or doubts, is unworthy and unprepared.”* Not to believe means being an unbeliever. Those who care nothing for God, nor for the Savior who has died for them, are unbelieving. Many church members are still unbelieving because they have *not surrendered entirely* to Christ, but still love the world; others are unbelieving because they are disobedient to the heavenly vision. They are therefore unworthy partakers of the Lord’s Supper. One who, for instance, is not willing to forgive a brother with whom he has quarreled, nor to ask forgiveness, is unworthy on account of his pride and stubbornness. Though seeking Christ’s forgiveness he is yet so hard-hearted that he does not remember that an unworthy partaking of the Lord’s Supper must become a judgment unto him. See Matthew 5:23-24.

Before Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, He washed the disciples’ feet, John 13, as an example of the humble love they are to show to one another, and of the willingness to forgive and to serve one another. It should be our aim, therefore, to be at peace with all men when we come to the Lord’s Supper, and to be ready to forgive or be forgiven. And even where a reconciliation with an adversary may not be possible thru no fault of ours, we

should harbor no bitter feelings, so as not to miss the blessings of the sacrament.

**Matthew 5:23-24.** If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

What St. Paul says concerning those who eat of the bread and drink of the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, 1 Corinthians 11:27-30, shows *the sacred seriousness* of partaking of the Lord's Supper, and how seriously the words, "Be ye not deceived, God is not mocked," apply in regard to it. Unbelievers or unrepentant sinners should therefore not be permitted to take part. Bishop Ambrose of Milan refused the sacrament even to the emperor Theodosius because he had shed innocent blood and had not repented of his wrong-doing.

To partake of the Lord's Supper worthily requires:

1. That we come with the humble acknowledgement of *our need* of forgiveness of sins;
2. That we cheerfully believe and trust that forgiveness *has been supplied* for us;
3. That we come to the Lord's Table in the spirit of *love and conciliation* toward all;
4. That we finally resolve to renounce sin *more completely than ever*, and to serve the Lord more faithfully.

**1 Corinthians 11:27.** Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.

**1 Corinthians 11:29-30.** For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body. For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep.

Many Christians earnestly desire to put away their sins and to yield themselves more fully to Christ, but their repentance is not as sincere nor is their faith as firm and cheerful as it ought to be. Should these remain away from the Lord's Supper because they feel their spiritual deficiency and fear that they might be unworthy? When the epileptic boy was brought to Jesus, Mark 9:17ff, He said to the father, "If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth!" Straightway the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!"

*And Jesus accepted the weak and little faith of that father and healed his boy.* For even though faith is weak, it is faith nevertheless, and the Lord's Supper was instituted for the express purpose of *strengthening* faith. "They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick," Luke 5:31. Those who struggle against doubt and unbelief and seek to strive for the firm assurance of salvation are not unworthy. The Savior's call is to those who are weary and heavy laden, and to them He offers rest and peace. Those who are weary and heavy laden because they are not sure of their salvation thru Christ are thus welcome at His table. Christ aims to strengthen their faith, and they are not to eat and drink judgment unto themselves.

### **Confession and Absolution**

The sacred seriousness of the sacrament requires that a public service of preparation precede the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The public confession should be a part of this service, and the hymn, the prayer and the address should lead up to it.

Confession, in this sense, consists of the *confession of sins* and the *absolution*. The confession of sins, or prayer of confession, is spoken by the pastor for all those present (see the order for the administration of Holy Communion in the Evangelical Book of Worship, p. 158ff, and general confession under "Prayers which may be used in celebrating Holy Communion," in the appendix to Hymnal of the Evangelical Church, p. 63). After the persons present, by their answer to the prayer of confession have acknowledged their sins, affirmed their faith in God's forgiveness thru Christ, and asserted their submission to the gracious direction of the Holy Spirit, the pastor, in the absolution, declares to them the forgiveness of all their sins in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, John 20:22-23. Only an ordained minister can pronounce the absolution.

The personal preparation for the sacrament is inward rather than outward by fasting and self-denial. It is of course necessary that a Christian, when getting ready to partake of the Lord's Supper, should refrain from anything and everything that may interfere with the proper self-examination, and outward preparation may be of great value in helping one to arrive at the

proper spiritual condition, but the outward preparation is *no guarantee* of a worthy participation. Psalm 143.

### **137. What does our communion daily require of us?**

Three leading thoughts should be considered in the study of the answer to this question, in accordance with which we divide the whole answer into three sections, summarizing each with a brief passage of Scripture.

*Our communion requires that we daily keep in remembrance the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus, and that we consider well now hard it was for our Savior to bear our sins and the sins of the whole world, and to gain eternal salvation for us by offering up His life and shedding His blood. "Remember Jesus Christ," 2 Timothy 2:8. Read Hebrews 10:19-25.*

*And since our sins caused the Lord Jesus the greatest sufferings, yea, bitter death, we should have no pleasure in sin, but earnestly flee and avoid it.*

*"Even so reckon ye yourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus," Romans 6:11. Read Romans 6:19-23.*

*And being reclaimed by our Lord, Savior and Redeemer we should live, suffer and die to his honor, so that at all times, and especially in the hour of death, we may cheerfully and confidently say:*

*Lord Jesus, for Thee I live, for Thee I suffer, for Thee I die:*

*Lord Jesus, Thine will I be in life and death!*

*Grant me O Lord, eternal salvation! Amen.*

*"And it is no longer, I that live, but Christ liveth in me," Galatians 2:20. Read Psalm 73:23-26.*