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Draft Translation
THE CATECHISM OR METHOD OF INSTRUCTION IN THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION
as it is taught in the Canadian Reformed Churches and Schools

Lord's Day 1

1. Q. What is your only comfort in life and death?
 - A. My only comfort is that I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.
He has, with his precious blood, fully paid for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil.
He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head, yes, that all things must work together for my salvation.
By his Holy Spirit He therefore also assures me of eternal life, and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him.
2. ^{Q.} What do you need to know so that you may live and die in the joy of this comfort?
 - A. First, how great my sins and misery are;
second, how I am delivered from all my sins and misery;
third, how I am to be thankful to God for such a deliverance.

The First Part

OUR SIN AND MISERY

Lord's Day 2

3. Q. From where do you know your sin and misery?
 - A. I know my sin and misery from the law of God.
4. Q. What does the law of God require of us?
 - A. Christ teaches us this in a summary in Matt. 22:
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.
5. Q. But can you keep all this perfectly?
 - A. No. I am inclined by nature to hate God and my neighbour.

Lord's Day 3

6. Q. Did God then create man so wicked and perverse?
 - A. No. God created man good and as his image, that is, in true righteousness and holiness, so that he might rightly know God his Creator, love Him with all his heart, and live with Him in eternal blessedness to praise and glorify Him.

7. Q. From where then comes this depraved nature of man?

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

8. Q. But are we so corrupt that we are totally unable to do any good, and inclined to all evil?

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

Lord's Day 4

9. Q. Is God then not unjust by requiring in his law what man cannot do?

A. No. God so created man that he could do it. But man, through the instigation of the devil, in deliberate disobedience, robbed himself and all his descendants of these gifts.

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

A. Certainly not. He is terribly angry with our original as well as actual sins. He therefore will, by a just judgment, punish them both in this life and in the life to come, as He has said: Cursed be every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them.

11. Q. But is not God also merciful?

A. God is indeed merciful, but He is also just. Therefore his justice requires that the sin which is committed against the most high majesty of God be also punished with the heaviest penalty, that is, with everlasting punishment of body and soul.

The Second Part

OUR DELIVERANCE

Lord's Day 5

12. Q. According to the righteous judgment of God, therefore, we deserve punishment both in this life and in the life to come. How can we escape this punishment and again be received into favour?

A. God wills that his justice be satisfied. Therefore we must make full payment to his justice, either by ourselves or by another.

13. Q. But can we ourselves make this satisfaction?

A. Certainly not. On the contrary, we daily increase our debt.

14. Q. Can any mere creature pay for us?

A. No one. In the first place, God does not want to punish another creature for man's guilt.
Moreover, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin and deliver others from it.

15. Q. What kind of mediator and deliverer must we then seek?

A. One who is true and righteous man, and yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is at the same time true God.

Lord's Day 6

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

A. He must be a true man because the justice of God requires that the same human nature which has sinned should pay for sin.
And He must be a righteous man because one who himself is a sinner cannot pay for others.

17. Q. Why must He at the same time be true God?

A. He must be true God so that, by the power of His divinity, He might bear in his human nature the burden of God's wrath, and obtain for us, and restore to us, righteousness and life.

18. Q. But who is that Mediator who is at the same time true God and a true and righteous man?

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

19. Q. From where do you know this?

A. From the holy gospel.
God Himself revealed this gospel first in Paradise, afterwards He proclaimed it by the holy patriarchs and prophets, and foreshadowed it by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law.
Finally He fulfilled it through his only Son.

Lord's Day 7

20. Q. Are all men then saved through Christ, just as all were lost through Adam?

A. No. Only those are saved who by true faith are incorporated into Christ and accept all his benefits.

21. Q. What is true faith?

A. True faith is a sure knowledge, whereby I accept as true all that God has revealed to us in his Word. At the same time it is a firm confidence that not only to others, but to me also, God has granted forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation, out of sheer grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits. The Holy Spirit works this faith in me through the gospel.

22. Q. What then does a Christian have to believe?

A. All that is promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our catholic and undoubted Christian faith teach us in a summary.

23. Q. What are these articles?

A. I believe in God the Father, almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord;
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary;
Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; He
descended into hell;
The third day He rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit.
I believe a holy catholic Church, the communion of saints;
The forgiveness of sins;
The resurrection of the body;
And the life everlasting.

Lord's Day 8

24. Q. How are these articles divided?

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

25. Q. Since there is only one God, why do you speak of three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

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

God the Father and our Creation

Lord's Day 9

26. Q. What do you believe when you say: I believe in God the Father, almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

A. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing made heaven and earth and all that is in them, and who still upholds and governs them by his eternal counsel and providence, is my God and my Father for the sake of Christ, his Son.

In Him I trust so completely as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul, and also turn to my good whatever adversity He sends me in this sorrowful life.

He is able to do this as almighty God, and willing to do it as a faithful Father.

Lord's Day 10

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

A. God's providence is his almighty and ever present power whereby He still upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures, and so governs them that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and unfruitful years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty, yes, all things, come upon us not by chance, but from his fatherly hand.

28. Q. What does it benefit us to know that God has created all things, and that He still upholds them by his providence?

A. We may be patient in adversity and thankful in prosperity, and with a view to the future we may have a firm confidence in our faithful God and Father that no creature shall separate us from his love.
For all creatures are so completely in his hand that without his will they cannot so much as move.

God the Son and our Redemption

Lord's Day 11

29. Q. Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is, Saviour?

A. Because He saves us from all our sins, and because salvation is to be sought or found in no one else.

30. Q. Do those believe in the only Saviour Jesus who seek their salvation and well-being from saints, in themselves, or anywhere else?

A. No. Though they boast of Him in words, they in fact deny the only Saviour Jesus. For one of two things must be true: Jesus is not a complete Saviour, or those who by true faith accept this Saviour must have in Him all that is necessary for their salvation.

Lord's Day 12

31. Q. Why is He called Christ, that is, Anointed?

A. Because He has been ordained by God the Father, and anointed by the Holy Spirit, to be our chief Prophet and Teacher,
who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption;
to be our only High Priest,
who by the one sacrifice of his body has redeemed us, and who continually pleads for us with the Father;
and to be our eternal King,
who governs us by his Word and Spirit, and defends and preserves us in the redemption He has obtained for us.

32. Q. Why are you called a Christian?

A. Because by faith I am a member of Christ, and thus share in his anointing, so that;
as prophet I may confess his Name;
as priest present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him,
and as king fight with a free and good conscience against sin and the devil in this life, and hereafter reign with Him eternally over all creatures.

Lord's Day 13

33. Q. Why is He called God's only begotten Son, since we also are children of God?
- A. Because Christ alone is the eternal, natural Son of God.
We, however, are children of God by adoption, through grace, for Christ's sake.
34. Q. Why do you call Him our Lord?
- A. Because - not with gold or silver, but with his precious blood -
He has redeemed us, body and soul, from our sins,
delivered us from all the power of the devil,
and bought us to be his possession.

Lord's Day 14

35. Q. What do you confess when you say: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary?
- A. The eternal Son of God, who is and remains true and eternal God, took upon
Himself true human nature from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary,
through the working of the Holy Spirit.
Thus He is also the true seed of David, in all things like **his** brothers,
sin excepted.
36. Q. What benefit do you receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ?
- A. He is our Mediator, and with his innocence and perfect holiness covers,
before God's face, my sin wherein I was conceived and born.

Lord's Day 15

37. Q. What do you confess when you say that He suffered?
- A. During his whole life on earth, but especially at the end, Christ bore in
body and soul the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race.
Thus, by his suffering, as the only atoning sacrifice, He has redeemed our
body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtained for us God's grace,
righteousness, and eternal life.
38. Q. Why did He suffer under the judge Pontius Pilate?
- A. Though innocent, Christ was condemned by an earthly judge, and so He freed
us from the severe judgment of God that was to fall upon us.
39. Q. Is it significant that Christ was crucified instead of dying in a different
way?
- A. Yes. Thereby I am assured that He took upon Himself the curse which lay on me,
for the death of the cross was accursed by God.

Lord's Day 16

40. Q. Why was it necessary for Christ to humble Himself even unto death?

A. Because of God's justice and truth.

Payment for our sins could be made in no other way than by the death of the Son of God.

41. Q. Why was He buried?

A. His burial testified that He had really died.

42. Q. Since Christ has died for us, why do we still have to die?

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

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

A. Through Christ's death our old nature is crucified, put to death and buried with Him, so that the evil desires of the flesh may no longer rule in us, but we may offer ourselves to Him as a sacrifice of thankfulness.

44. Q. Why does the Creed add: He descended into hell?

A. In my greatest sorrows and temptations I may be assured and comforted that my **Lord Jesus Christ**, by His unspeakable anguish, pains, terrors and agonies, which He suffered during his whole life on earth, but especially on the cross, has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell.

Lord's Day 17

45. Q. How does Christ's resurrection benefit us?

A. First, by his resurrection He has conquered death, so that He might make us share in the righteousness He has obtained for us by his death.

Second, we too are by his power raised up to a new life.

Third, Christ's resurrection is to us a sure pledge of our glorious resurrection.

Lord's Day 18

46. Q. What do you confess when you say, He ascended into heaven?

A. That before the eyes of his disciples Christ was taken ^{up} from the earth into heaven, and that He is there for our good, until He comes again to judge the living and the dead.

47. Q. Is Christ then not with us until the end of the world, as He has promised us?

A. Christ is true man and true God.

According to his human nature He is no longer on earth,

but according to his divinity, majesty, grace and Spirit, He is never absent from us.

48. Q. But if his human nature is not present wherever his divinity is, are then the two natures in Christ not separated from each other?
- A. Not at all, for his divinity is without limits and everywhere present. It is therefore evident that his divinity is indeed beyond the human nature which He has taken on and yet is within it as well, and remains personally united to it.
49. Q. How does Christ's ascension into heaven benefit us?
- A. First, He is our advocate in heaven before his Father.
Second, we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that He, our Head, will also take us, his members, up to Himself.
Third, He sends us his Spirit as a counter-pledge, by whose power we seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, and not the things that are on earth.

Lord's Day 19

50. Q. Why is it added, And sits at the right hand of God?
- A. Christ ascended to heaven to manifest Himself there as Head of his Church, through whom the Father governs all things.
51. Q. How does this glory of Christ, our Head, benefit us?
- A. First, by his Holy Spirit He pours out the heavenly gifts upon us, his members.
Second, by his power He defends and preserves us against all enemies.
52. Q. What comfort is it to you that Christ shall come to judge the living and the dead?
- A. In all my sorrow and persecution I await with eager longing as judge from heaven the very same person who already in the past has submitted Himself to the judgment of God for my sake, and removed all the curse from me. All his and my enemies He will then cast into everlasting condemnation, but me and all his chosen ones He will take to Himself into the joy and glory of heaven.

God the Holy Spirit and our Sanctification

Lord's Day 20

53. Q. What do you believe concerning the Holy Spirit?
- A. First, He is with the Father and the Son true and eternal God.
Second, He is also given to me, to make me share, by true faith, in Christ and all his benefits, to comfort me, and to remain with me forever.

Lord's Day 21

54. Q. What do you believe concerning the holy catholic Church?

54. A. I believe that the Son of God, out of the entire human race, from the beginning of the world to its end, gathers, defends and preserves for Himself, through his Spirit and Word, in the unity of the true faith, a congregation chosen to everlasting life.

And I believe that of this congregation I am and always will remain a living member.

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

A. **First**, that the believers, all and everyone, as his members have communion with the Lord Christ, and share in all his treasures and gifts.

Second, that every one must use his gifts readily and cheerfully for the service and benefit of the other members.

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

A. Because of Christ's satisfaction God will no more remember any of my sins, nor my sinful nature against which I have to struggle all my life, but graciously grants me the righteousness of Christ, so that I will never be condemned.

Lord's Day 22

57. Q. How does the resurrection of the body comfort you?

A. My soul shall after this life immediately be taken up to Christ, ~~my~~ Head, and this my body, raised by the power of Christ, shall be reunited with my soul and made like Christ's glorious body.

58. Q. What comfort do you receive from the article of the life everlasting?

A. Since I now already feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy, I shall after this life possess perfect blessedness, such as no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, to praise God therein forever.

Our Justification

Lord's Day 23

59. Q. But what does it profit you now that you believe all this?

A. That in Christ I am righteous before God, and an heir to life everlasting.

60. Q. How are you righteous before God?

A. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ.

Although my conscience accuses me that I have grievously sinned against all God's commandments, never kept any of them, and am still inclined to all evil, yet God, without any merit of my own, out of mere grace, grants me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ.

He imputes these to me as if I had never had nor committed a single sin, and as if I myself had accomplished all the obedience which Christ has rendered for me.

This benefit I receive only when I accept it with a believing heart.

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

- A. Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith, for only the satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ are my righteousness before God.
But I can receive this righteousness and make it my own only by faith.

Lord's Day 24

62. Q. But why cannot our good works be our righteousness before God, or at least a part of it?

- A. Because the righteousness which can stand before God's judgment must be absolutely perfect and in complete conformity with the law of God, while even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.

63. Q. But do our good works merit nothing?

Has not God promised that He will reward them in this life and the next?

- A. This reward is not of merit, but of grace.

64. Q. Does not this teaching make people careless and wicked?

- A. No. It is impossible that those who are grafted into Christ by true faith should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.

The Sacraments

Lord's Day 25

65. Q. Since then faith alone makes us share in Christ and all his benefits, where does ~~this~~ faith come from?

- A. From the Holy Spirit, who works it in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by our use of the sacraments.

66. Q. What are sacraments?

- A. Sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals, instituted by God, so that by our use of them He might more clearly disclose and seal to us the promise of the gospel.
And this is the promise of the gospel that God graciously grants us forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, because of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross.

67. Q. Is it then the purpose of both Word and sacraments to focus our faith on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?

- A. Yes, indeed. The Holy Spirit teaches in the gospel and confirms by the sacraments that our entire salvation stands in the one sacrifice of Christ made for us on the cross.

68. Q. How many sacraments has Christ instituted in the new covenant?

- A. Two, holy baptism and the holy supper.

Baptism

69. Q. How does holy baptism remind and assure you that the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross benefits you?

A. Christ has instituted this external washing and thereby promised that I am as surely washed with his blood and Spirit from the uncleanness of my soul - that is, from all my sins - as I am externally washed with water, which takes away the dirt from the body.

70. Q. What does it mean, to be washed with Christ's blood and Spirit?

A. It means to have forgiveness of sins from God, through grace, for the sake of Christ's blood, which He poured out for us in his sacrifice on the cross. It also means to be renewed by the Holy Spirit and sanctified to be members of Christ, so that more and more we die unto sin and lead a holy and blameless life.

71. Q. Where has Christ promised that He will wash us with his blood and Spirit as surely as we are washed with the water of baptism?

A. In the institution of baptism, where Christ says:
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Matt. 28 : 19.
And: He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned, Mark 16 : 16.
This promise is repeated when Scripture calls baptism the 'washing of regeneration' and the 'washing away of sins,' Tit. 3 : 5; Acts 22 : 16.

Lord's Day 27

72. Q. Is then the external washing as such the washing away of sins?

A. No, only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sins.

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

A. God says this for a strong reason.
by / He wants to teach us that the blood and Spirit of Christ remove our sins just baptism as water takes away the dirt of the body.
But especially, He wants to assure us by this divine pledge and sign that we are as really cleansed from our sins spiritually, as we are bodily washed with water.

74. Q. Should infants also be baptized?

A. Yes. Infants as well as adults belong to God's covenant and congregation. In Christ's blood the redemption from sin and the Holy Spirit, who works faith, are promised to them no less than to adults. Therefore by baptism, as sign of the covenant, they must be grafted into the Christian Church, and distinguished from the children of unbelievers. This was done in the old covenant by circumcision, in place of which baptism was instituted in the new covenant.

The Lord's Supper

Lord's Day 28

75. Q. How does the Lord's supper remind and assure you that you share in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross, and in all his treasures?

A. Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread and to drink of this cup in remembrance of Him.

With this command He gave these promises:

First, as surely as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup given to me,
so surely was his body offered and broken for me, and his blood poured out for me on the cross.

Second, as surely as I receive from the hand of the minister, and taste with my mouth, the bread and the cup of the Lord as sure signs of Christ's body and blood,

so surely does He Himself with his crucified body and poured-out blood nourish and refresh my soul to everlasting life.

76. Q. What does it mean, to eat the crucified body of Christ and to drink his poured-out blood?

A. First, to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and the death of Christ, and thereby receive forgiveness of sins and life eternal.

Second, to be united more and more to his sacred body, through the Holy Spirit who lives both in Christ and in us.

Therefore, although Christ is in heaven and we are on earth, yet we are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones, and we live and are governed by one Spirit, as the members of the same body by one soul.

77. Q. Where has Christ promised that He will nourish and refresh the believers with his body and blood as surely as they eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup?

A. In the institution of the supper:

The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes, 1 Cor. 11 : 23-26.

This promise is repeated by Paul, when he says: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread, 1 Cor. 10 : 16, 17.

Lord's Day 29

78. Q. Are then the bread and wine changed into the real body and blood of Christ?

A. No. It is with the Lord's Supper as with baptism. The water of baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ, nor is baptism the washing away of sins

itself, but only its divine sign and pledge.

So the bread in the Lord's supper does not become the real body of Christ, although it is called Christ's body in agreement with the nature of sacraments and the way the Holy Spirit speaks about them.

79. Q. Why then does Christ call the bread his body, and the cup his blood or the new covenant in his blood, and does Paul speak of a participation in the body and blood of Christ?

A. Christ says this for a strong reason.

He wants to teach us by his supper that as bread and wine maintain this temporal life, so his crucified body and poured-out blood are the true food and drink of our souls to eternal life.

But especially, He wants to assure us by this visible sign and pledge, first, that through the working of the Holy Spirit we share in his true body and blood as really as we receive with our mouth these holy signs in remembrance of Him,

and second, that all his sufferings and obedience are as certainly ours as if we personally had suffered and paid for our sins.

Lord's Day 30

80. Q. What difference is there between the Lord's supper and the papal mass?

A. The Lord's supper declares to us,

first, that we have complete forgiveness of all our sins through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which He Himself accomplished on the cross, once for all; and second, that through the Holy Spirit we are grafted into Christ, who with his true body is now in heaven, at the right hand of the Father, and is there to be worshipped.

But the mass teaches,

first, that the living and the dead do not have forgiveness of sins through the suffering of Christ unless He is still offered for them daily by the priests; and second, that Christ is bodily present under the form of bread and wine, and is therein to be worshipped.

And so the mass is, basically, nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry.

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

A. Those who are truly displeased with themselves because of their sins, and yet trust that these are forgiven them, and that their remaining **weakness** is covered by the suffering and death of Christ, who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and amend their life. But the hypocrites, and those who do not truly repent, eat and drink judgment upon themselves.

82. Q. Are they also to be admitted to the Lord's supper who, by their confession and life, show that they are unbelieving and ungodly?

A. No, for then the covenant of God would be dishonoured and his wrath kindled against the whole congregation.

Therefore, according to the command of Christ and his apostles, the Christian Church is in duty bound to exclude such persons by the office of the keys until they amend their lives.

Lord's Day 31

83. Q. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

A. The preaching of the holy gospel, and church discipline.
By these two the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and closed to unbelievers.

84. Q. How is the kingdom of heaven opened and closed by the preaching of the holy gospel?

A. According to the command of Christ, it is proclaimed and publicly testified to the believers, all and everyone, that God has really forgiven all their sins for the sake of Christ's merits, as often as they accept by true faith the promise of the gospel.

But it is proclaimed and testified to all unbelievers and hypocrites that the wrath of God and eternal condemnation rest on them as long as they do not repent.

According to this proclamation of the gospel God will judge, both in this life and in the life to come.

85. Q. How is the kingdom of heaven closed and opened by church discipline?

A. According to the command of Christ, people who call themselves Christians but show themselves unchristian in doctrine or life are first repeatedly admonished as brothers.

If they do not give up their errors or wickedness, they are reported to the elders of the church.

If they disobey also their admonition, they are forbidden the use of the sacraments, and so they are excluded from the Christian congregation, and by God Himself from the kingdom of Christ.

And they are again received as members of Christ and the church when they promise and show real amendment.

The Third Part

OUR GRATITUDE

Lord's Day 32

86. Q. Since we are redeemed from our misery by grace only, through Christ, without any merits of our own, why must we yet do good works?

A. Because Christ, having redeemed us by his blood, also renews us by his Spirit to be his image, so that with our whole life we may show ourselves thankful to God for his benefits, and He may be glorified by us.

Further, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by its fruits, and that by our godly life we may win our neighbours for Christ.

87. Q. Can those be saved who do not leave their ungrateful and impenitent life, and turn to God?

A. By no means. Scripture says than an unchaste person, idolator, adulterer, thief, greedy person, drunkard, slanderer, robber and the like will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Lord's Day 33

88. Q. How many aspects are there to the true repentance or conversion of man?

A. Two: the dying of the old nature, and the coming to life of the new.

89. Q. What is the dying of the old nature?

A. Heartfelt sorrow that we have offended God by our sins, and more and more to hate and flee from them.

90. Q. What is the coming to life of the new nature?

A. Heartfelt joy in God through Christ, and a love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works.

91. Q. But what are good works?

A. Only those that arise from true faith, conform to God's law, and are done for his glory; and not those based on our own opinion or human traditions.

The Law

Lord's Day 34

92. Q. What is the law of the LORD?

A. God spoke all these words, saying, I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

The first commandment

You shall have no other gods before me.

The second commandment

You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

The third commandment

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

The fourth commandment

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath days and hallowed it.

The fifth commandment
Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

The sixth commandment
You shall not kill.

The seventh commandment
You shall not commit adultery.

The eighth commandment
You shall not steal.

The ninth commandment
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

The tenth commandment
You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.

93. Q. How are these commandments divided?

A. Into two parts.

The first has four commandments and teaches us how we ought to live in relation to God; the second has six commandments and teaches us what we owe our neighbour.

94. Q. What does God require in the first commandment?

A. That for my life's sake I avoid and flee all idolatry, magic, sorcery, superstitious rites, and prayer to saints or other creatures. Further, that I rightly come to know the only true God, trust in Him alone, submit to Him with all humility and patience, expect all good from Him only, and love, fear and honour Him with my whole heart. In short, that I give up all creatures rather than do the least thing against His will.

95. Q. What is idolatry?

A. Idolatry is to invent or to have something in which we put our trust instead of - or beside - the only true God who has revealed Himself in his Word.

Lord's Day 35

96. Q. What does God require in the second commandment?

A. That we in no way make any image of God, nor worship Him in any other manner than He has commanded in his Word.

97. Q. May we then not make any image at all?

97. A. God cannot and may not be visibly portrayed in any way. Creatures may be portrayed, but God forbids us to make or have any images of them in order to worship them or to serve God through them.
98. Q. But may images not be tolerated in the churches as 'books for the laity'?
- A. No, we should not be wiser than God. He wants his people to be taught not by means of dumb images, but by the living preaching of his Word.

Lord's Day 36

99. Q. What is required in the third commandment?
- A. That we do not blaspheme or abuse the name of God by cursing, perjury, or unnecessary oaths, nor share in such horrible sins by being silent bystanders. In short, we must use the holy name of God only with fear and reverence, so that we may rightly confess Him, call upon Him, and glorify Him in all our words and works.
100. Q. Is the blaspheming of God's name by swearing and cursing then such a grievous sin that God is angry also with those who do not help prevent and forbid it as much as they can?
- A. Certainly, for no sin is greater or provokes God's wrath more than the blaspheming of his name. That is why He commanded it to be punished with death.

Lord's Day 37

101. Q. But may we swear an oath by the name of God in a godly manner?
- A. Yes, when the government demands it of its subjects, or when necessity requires it, in order to maintain and promote fidelity and truth, to God's glory and for our neighbour's good. For such oath-taking is based on God's Word, and saints in the Old and New Testament have therefore rightly used it.
102. Q. May we swear by saints or other creatures?
- A. No. A lawful oath is a calling upon God, who alone knows the heart, that He will confirm the truth, and punish me if I swear falsely. No creature is worthy of such honour.

Lord's Day 38

103. Q. What does God require in the fourth commandment?
- A. First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained, and that especially on the sabbath, that is the day of rest, I diligently attend the church of God, to hear God's Word, to use the sacraments, to call publicly upon the Lord, and to give Christian offerings for the poor. Second, that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works, let the Lord work in me through his Holy Spirit, and so begin in this life the eternal sabbath.

Lord's Day 39

104. Q. What does God require in the fifth commandment?

- A. That I render all honour, love and faithfulness to my father and mother and to all those in authority over me, submit myself with due obedience to their good instruction and discipline, and also have patience with their weaknesses and failings, since it is God's will to govern us by their hand.

Lord's Day 40

105. Q. What does God require in the sixth commandment?

- A. That I do not dishonour, hate, injure or kill my neighbour, by thoughts, words, or gestures, and much less by deeds, whether personally or through another; rather, I am to put away all desire for revenge. I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself either. Therefore the government bears the sword to prevent murder.

106. Q. But does this commandment speak only of killing?

- A. By forbidding murder, God teaches us that He hates the root of murder, such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire for revenge, and regards all such as murder.

107. Q. Is it enough then that we do not kill our neighbour in any such way?

- A. No. When God forbids envy, hatred and anger, He commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves, to show patience, peace, gentleness, mercy and friendliness toward him, to protect him from harm as much as we can, and to do good even to our enemies.

Lord's Day 41

108. Q. What does the seventh commandment teach us?

- A. That all unchastity is accursed by God. We must therefore thoroughly detest it and live chaste and continent lives, both in holy marriage and in single life.

109. Q. Does God in this commandment forbid only such scandalous sins as adultery?

- A. Because our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, it is God's will that we keep it pure and holy. He therefore forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever may entice us thereto.

Lord's Day 42

110. Q. What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?

110. A. God forbids not only outright theft and robbery,
He also regards as theft all cheating and swindling,
whether by force or under appearance of right,
and whether punishable by law or not.
We may not defraud our neighbour by
false weights, unjust measures, deceptive merchandizing,
counterfeit money, excessive interest,
or any other means.
God also condemns all greed, and all abuse or waste of his gifts.
111. Q. But what does God require of you in this commandment?
- A. I must further my neighbour's good wherever I can and may,
treat him as I would like others to treat me,
and work faithfully, so that I may be able to give to those in need.

Lord's Day 43

112. Q. What is required in the ninth commandment?
- A. That I never give false testimony against anyone, twist no one's words,
do not gossip or slander, and condemn nor join in condemning anyone rashly
and without a hearing.
Rather, I must avoid all lying and deceit as the devil's own works,
if I do not want to call down on me God's heavy wrath.
In court and everywhere else I must love the truth,
speak and confess it honestly,
and do what I can to defend and promote the honour and reputation of my
neighbour.

Lord's Day 44

113. Q. What is required in the tenth commandment?
- A. That not even the slightest desire or thought contrary to any of God's
commandments shall ever enter our hearts.
Rather, we shall always hate all sin with all our heart, and delight in all
righteousness.
114. Q. But can those converted to God keep these commandments perfectly?
- A. No. In this life even the holiest have only a small beginning of such an
obedience.
Nevertheless, with earnest purpose they do begin to live not only according
to some, but to all the commandments of God.
115. Q. Why then does God have the ten commandments preached so strictly, when no one
can keep them in this life?
- A. First, so that throughout our life we may increasingly come to know our sinful
nature, and seek the more eagerly forgiveness of sins and righteousness in
Christ.
Second, so that we may constantly and diligently pray God for the grace of the
Holy Spirit, to be more and more renewed after God's image, until after this
life we reach the goal of perfection.

Prayer

Lord's Day 45

116. Q. Why is prayer necessary for Christians?

- A. Because prayer is the most important part of the thankfulness which God requires of us.
Moreover, God will give his grace and the Holy Spirit only to those who constantly, from the depths of their heart, ask God for these gifts and thank Him for them.

117. Q. What belongs to a prayer which pleases God and is heard by Him?

- A. First, we must from the heart call upon the one true God only, who has revealed Himself in his Word, for all that He has commanded us to pray.
Second, we must thoroughly know our need and misery, so that we may humble ourselves before the majesty of God.
Third, we must rest on this firm foundation, that although we do not deserve it, God will certainly hear our prayer for the sake of Christ our Lord, as He has promised us in his Word.

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

- A. All things we need for body and soul, as comprised in the prayer which Christ our Lord Himself taught us.

119. Q. What is the Lord's Prayer?

- A. 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 also have forgiven our debtors;
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.
Amen.

Lord's Day 46

120. Q. Why has Christ commanded us to address God as Our Father?

- A. At the very beginning of our prayer Christ wants to awaken in us the child-like reverence and trust toward God which must be the ground of our prayer: God has become our Father through Christ, and will much less deny us what we ask Him in faith than our human fathers refuse us earthly things.

121. Q. Why is there added, who art in heaven?

- A. Thereby Christ teaches us to think of God's heavenly majesty in no earthly manner, and to expect from his almighty power all things we need for body and soul.

Lord's Day 47

122. Q. What is the first petition?

A. Hallowed be thy name.

That is: grant us first of all that we **rightly** know Thee, and sanctify, glorify and praise Thee in all thy works, in which shine forth thy almighty power, wisdom, goodness, righteousness, mercy and truth.

Grant us also that we so direct all our life - our thoughts, words and actions - that thy name is not blasphemed because of us, but honoured and praised.

Lord's Day 48

123. Q. What is the second petition?

A. Thy kingdom come.

That is: so govern us by thy Word and Spirit that more and more we submit to Thee;

preserve and increase thy church;

destroy the works of the devil, every power that raises itself against Thee, and every conspiracy against thy holy Word;

until the fulness of thy kingdom comes, wherein Thou shalt be all in all.

Lord's Day 49

124. Q. What is the third petition?

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

That is: grant that we and all men deny our own will, and without contradicting obey thy will, for it alone is good.

And grant that so every one may carry out the duties of his office and calling as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.

Lord's Day 50

125. Q. What is the fourth petition?

A. Give us this day our daily bread.

That is: wilt Thou provide for all our bodily needs, so that we may acknowledge that Thou art the only source of all good, and that our care and labour, and also thy gifts, cannot do us any good without thy blessing.

And so grant that we no longer put our trust in any creature, but in Thee alone.

Lord's Day 51

126. Q. What is the fifth petition?

126. A. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
That is: for the sake of Christ's blood do not impute to us, wretched sinners that we are, any of our transgressions, nor the evil which still clings to us, as we also find this evidence of thy grace in us that we are fully determined wholeheartedly to forgive our neighbour.

Lord's Day 52

127. Q. What is the sixth petition?

A. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
That is: from ourselves we are so weak that we cannot stand for one moment; moreover, our sworn enemies - the devil, the world, and our own flesh - do not cease to attack us.
Wilt Thou, therefore, uphold and strengthen us by the power of thy Holy Spirit, so that in this spiritual war we do not go down in defeat, but always firmly resist our enemies, until finally we have won the complete victory.

128. Q. How do you conclude your prayer?

A. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.
That is: all this we ask of Thee because, as our King who hast power over all things, Thou art willing and able to give us all good, and may not we, but thy holy name, so receive all glory for ever.

129. Q. What is the meaning of the word Amen?

A. Amen means: it is true and certain.
For God has much more certainly heard my prayer than I feel in my heart that I desire this of Him.