

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

The *Heidelberg Catechism*, the second of our doctrinal standards, was written in Heidelberg at the request of Elector Frederick III, ruler of the most influential German province, the Palatinate, from 1559 to 1576. This pious Christian prince commissioned Zacharius Ursinus, twenty-eight years of age and professor of theology at the Heidelberg University, and Caspar Olevianus, twenty-six years old and Frederick's court preacher, to prepare a catechism for instructing the youth and for guiding pastors and teachers. Frederick obtained the advice and cooperation of the entire theological faculty in the preparation of the *Catechism*. The *Heidelberg Catechism* was adopted by a Synod in Heidelberg and published in German with a preface by Frederick III, dated January 19, 1563. A second and third German edition, each with some small additions, as well as a Latin translation were published in Heidelberg in the same year. The *Catechism* was soon divided into fifty-two sections, so that a section of the *Catechism* could be explained to the churches each Sunday of the year.

In the Netherlands this *Heidelberg Catechism* became generally and favourably known almost as soon as it came from the press, mainly through the efforts of Petrus Dathenus, who translated it into the Dutch language and added this translation to his Dutch rendering of the *Genevan Psalter*, which was published in 1566. In the same year Peter Gabriel set the example of explaining this catechism to his congregation at Amsterdam in his Sunday afternoon sermons. The National Synods of the sixteenth century adopted it as one of the *Three Forms of Unity*, requiring office-bearers to subscribe to it and ministers to explain it to the churches. These requirements were strongly emphasized by the great Synod of Dort in 1618-19.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* has been translated into many languages and is the most influential and the most generally accepted of the several catechisms of Reformation times.

LORD'S DAY 1

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

A. That I am not my own,¹
but belong with body and soul,
both in life and in death,²
to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.³
He has fully paid for all my sins
with His precious blood,⁴
and has set me free
from all the power of the devil.⁵
He also preserves me in such a way⁶
that without the will of my heavenly Father
not a hair can fall from my head;⁷
indeed, all things must work together
for my salvation.⁸
Therefore, by His Holy Spirit
He also assures me
of eternal life⁹
and makes me heartily willing and ready
from now on to live for Him.¹⁰

¹ 1 Cor 6:19, 20.

² Rom 14:7-9.

³ 1 Cor 3:23; Tit 2:14.

⁴ 1 Pet 1:18, 19; 1 Jn 1:7; 2:2.

⁵ Jn 8:34-36; Heb 2:14, 15; 1 Jn 3:8.

⁶ Jn 6:39, 40; 10:27-30; 2 Thess 3:3; 1 Pet 1:5.

⁷ Mt 10:29-31; Lk 21:16-18.

⁸ Rom 8:28.

⁹ Rom 8:15, 16; 2 Cor 1:21, 22; 5:5; Eph 1:13, 14.

¹⁰ Rom 8:14.

2. Q. What do you need to know
in order to live and die
in the joy of this comfort?

A. First,
how great my sins and misery are;¹
second,
how I am delivered
from all my sins and misery;²
third,
how I am to be thankful to God
for such deliverance.³

¹ Rom 3:9, 10; 1 Jn 1:10.

² Jn 17:3; Acts 4:12; 10:43.

³ Mt 5:16; Rom 6:13; Eph 5:8-10; 1 Pet 2:9, 10.

The First Part
OUR SIN AND MISERY
LORD'S DAY 2

3. Q. From where do you know your sins and misery?

A. From the law of God.¹
¹ Rom 3: 20; 7:7-25.

4. Q. What does God's law require of us?

A. Christ teaches us this in a summary in Matthew 22:

Love the Lord your God

with all your heart

and with all your soul

and with all your mind.¹

This is the first and greatest commandment.

And the second is like it:

Love your neighbour as yourself.

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.²

¹ Deut 6:5.

² Lev 19:18.

5. Q. Can you keep all this perfectly?

A. No,¹ I am inclined by nature to hate God and my neighbour.²

¹ Rom 3:10, 23; 1 Jn 1:8, 10.

² Gen 6:5; 8:21; Jer 17:9; Rom 7:23; 8:7; Eph 2:3; Tit 3:3.

LORD'S DAY 3

6. Q. Did God, then, create man so wicked and perverse?

A. No, on the contrary, God created man good¹ and in His image,² that is, in true righteousness and holiness,³ so that he might rightly know God his Creator,⁴ heartily love Him, and live with Him in eternal blessedness to praise and glorify Him.⁵

¹ Gen 1:31.

² Gen 1:26, 27.

³ Eph 4:24.

⁴ Col 3:10.

⁵ Ps 8.

7. Q. From where, then, did man's depraved nature come?

A. From the fall and disobedience of our first parents,
Adam and Eve, in Paradise,¹
for there our nature became so corrupt²
that we are all conceived and born in sin.³

¹ Gen 3.

² Rom 5:12, 18, 19.

³ Ps 51:5.

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

A. Yes,¹ unless we are regenerated
by the Spirit of God.²

¹ Gen 6:5; 8:21; Job 14:4; Is 53:6.

² Jn 3:3-5.

LORD'S DAY 4

9. Q. But does not God do man an injustice
by requiring in His law
what man cannot do?

A. No,
for God so created man
that he was able to do it.¹
But man, at the instigation of the devil,²
in deliberate disobedience³
robbed himself and all his descendants
of these gifts.⁴

¹ Gen 1:31.

² Gen 3:13; Jn 8:44; 1 Tim 2:13, 14.

³ Gen 3:6.

⁴ Rom 5:12, 18, 19.

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

A. Certainly not.
He is terribly displeased
with our original sin
as well as our actual sins.
Therefore He will punish them
by a just judgment
both now and eternally,¹
as He has declared:²
Cursed is everyone

*who does not continue to do everything
written in the Book of the Law (Galatians 3:10).*

¹ Gen 2:17; Ex 34:7; Ps 5:4-6; 7:11; Nahum 1:2; Rom 1:18; 5:12; Eph 5:6; Heb 9:27.

² Deut 27:26.

11. Q. But is God not also merciful?

A. God is indeed merciful,¹
but He is also just.²

His justice requires
that sin committed
against the most high majesty of God
also be punished with the most severe,
that is, with everlasting,
punishment of body and soul.³

¹ Ex 20:6; 34:6, 7; Ps 103:8, 9.

² Ex 20:5; 34:7; Deut 7:9-11; Ps 5:4-6; Heb 10:30, 31.

³ Mt 25:45, 46.

The Second Part **OUR DELIVERANCE**

LORD'S DAY 5

12. Q. Since, according to God's righteous judgment
we deserve temporal and eternal punishment,
how can we escape this punishment
and be again received into favour?

A. God demands that His justice be satisfied.¹
Therefore we must make full payment,
either by ourselves or through another.²

¹ Ex 20:5; 23:7; Rom 2:1-11.

² Is 53:11; Rom 8:3, 4.

13. Q. Can we by ourselves make this payment?

A. Certainly not.
On the contrary, we daily increase our debt.¹

¹ Ps 130:3; Mt 6:12; Rom 2:4, 5.

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

A. No.
In the first place,
God will not punish another creature
for the sin which man has committed.¹

Furthermore,

no mere creature can sustain
the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin
and deliver others from it.²

¹ Ezek 18:4, 20; Heb 2:14-18.

² Ps 130:3; Nahum 1:6.

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

A. One who is a true¹ and righteous² man,
and yet more powerful than all creatures;
that is, one who is at the same time true God.³

¹ 1 Cor 15:21; Heb 2:17.

² Is 53:9; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 7:26.

³ Is 7:14; 9:6; Jer 23:6; Jn 1:1; Rom 8:3, 4.

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.¹

He must be a righteous man
because one who himself is a sinner
cannot pay for others.²

¹ Rom 5:12, 15; 1 Cor 15:21; Heb 2:14-16.

² Heb 7:26, 27; 1 Pet 3:18.

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 divine nature¹
He might bear in His human nature
the burden of God's wrath,²
and might obtain for us
and restore to us
righteousness and life.³

¹ Is 9:6.

² Deut 4:24; Nahum 1:6; Ps 130:3.

³ Is 53:5, 11; Jn 3:16; 2 Cor 5:21.

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

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ,¹
who has become for us wisdom from God – that is,

*our righteousness, holiness
and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30).*

¹ Mt 1:21-23; Lk 2:11; 1 Tim 2:5; 3:16.

19. Q. From where do you know this?

- A. From the holy gospel,
which God Himself first revealed in Paradise.¹
Later, He had it proclaimed
by the patriarchs² and prophets,³
and foreshadowed
by the sacrifices and other ceremonies
of the law.⁴
Finally, He had it fulfilled
through His only Son.⁵

¹ Gen 3:15.

² Gen 12:3; 22:18; 49:10.

³ Is 53; Jer 23:5, 6; Mic 7:18-20; Acts 10:43; Heb 1:1.

⁴ Lev 1-7; Jn 5:46; Heb 10:1-10.

⁵ Rom 10:4; Gal 4:4, 5; Col 2:17.

LORD'S DAY 7

20. Q. Are all men, then, saved by Christ
just as they perished through Adam?

- A. No.
Only those are saved
who by a true faith
are grafted into Christ
and accept all His benefits.¹

¹ Mt 7:14; Jn 1:12; 3:16, 18, 36; Rom 11:16-21.

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.¹
At the same time it is a firm confidence²
that not only to others, but also to me,³
God has granted forgiveness of sins,
everlasting righteousness, and salvation,⁴
out of mere grace,
only for the sake of Christ's merits.⁵
This faith the Holy Spirit works in my heart
by the gospel.⁶

¹ Jn 17:3, 17; Heb 11:1-3; Jas 2:19.

² Rom 4:18-21; 5:1; 10:10; Heb 4:16.

³ Gal 2:20.

⁴ Rom 1:17; Heb 10:10.

⁵ Rom 3:20-26; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-10.

⁶ Acts 16:14; Rom 1:16; 10:17; 1 Cor 1:21.

22. Q. What, then, must a Christian believe?

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

¹ Mt 28:19; Jn 20:30, 31.

23. Q. What are these articles?

- A. I. 1. *I believe in God the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.*
- II. 2. *I believe in Jesus Christ,
His only-begotten Son, our Lord;*
3. *He was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary;*
4. *suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
He descended into hell.*
5. *On the third day He arose from the dead;*
6. *He ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand
of God the Father almighty;*
7. *from there He will come to judge
the living and the dead.*
- III 8. *I believe in the Holy Spirit;*
9. *I believe a holy catholic Christian church,
the communion of saints;*
10. *the forgiveness of sins;*
11. *the resurrection of the body;*
12. *and the life everlasting.*

LORD'S DAY 8

24. Q. How are these articles divided?

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

25. Q. Since there is only one God,¹

why do you speak of three persons,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

- A. Because God has so revealed Himself in His Word²
that these three distinct persons
are the one, true, eternal God.

¹ Deut 6:4; Is 44:6; 45:5; 1 Cor 8:4, 6.

² Gen 1:2, 3; Is 61:1; 63:8-10; Mt 3:16, 17; 28:18, 19; Lk 4:18; Jn 14:26;
15:26; 2 Cor 13:14; Gal 4:6; Tit 3:5, 6.

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,
Creator of heaven and earth?*

- A. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who out of nothing created heaven and earth
and all that is in them,¹
and who still upholds and governs them
by His eternal counsel and providence,²
is, for the sake of Christ His Son,
my God and my Father.³

In Him I trust so completely

as to have no doubt
that He will provide me
with all things necessary for body and soul,⁴
and will also turn to my good
whatever adversity He sends me
in this life of sorrow.⁵

He is able to do so as almighty God,⁶
and willing also as a faithful Father.⁷

¹ Gen 1 and 2; Ex 20:11; Job 38 and 39; Ps 33:6; Is 44:24; Acts 4:24; 14:15.

² Ps 104:27-30; Mt 6:30; 10:29; Eph 1:11.

³ Jn 1:12, 13; Rom 8:15, 16; Gal 4:4-7; Eph 1:5.

⁴ Ps 55:22; Mt 6:25, 26; Lk 12:22-31.

⁵ Rom 8:28.

⁶ Gen 18:14; Rom 8:31-39.

⁷ Mt 6:32, 33; 7:9-11.

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,¹
whereby, as with His hand, He still upholds

heaven and earth and all creatures,²
and so governs them that
leaf and blade,
rain and drought,
fruitful and barren years,
food and drink,
health and sickness,
riches and poverty,³
indeed, all things,
come to us not by chance⁴
but by His fatherly hand.⁵

¹ Jer 23:23, 24; Acts 17:24-28.

² Heb 1:3.

³ Jer 5:24; Acts 14:15-17; Jn 9:3; Prov 22:2.

⁴ Prov 16:33.

⁵ Mt 10:29.

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

A. We can be patient in adversity,¹
thankful in prosperity,²
and with a view to the future
we can have a firm confidence
in our faithful God and Father
that no creature shall separate us
from His love;³
for all creatures are so completely in His hand
that without His will
they cannot so much as move.⁴

¹ Job 1:21, 22; Ps 39:10; Jas 1:3.

² Deut 8:10; 1 Thess 5:18.

³ Ps 55:22; Rom 5:3-5; 8:38, 39.

⁴ Job 1:12; 2:6; Prov 21:1; Acts 17:24-28.

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,¹
and because salvation is not to be sought or found
in anyone else.²

¹ Mt 1:21; Heb 7:25.

² Is 43:11; Jn 15:4, 5; Acts 4:11, 12; 1 Tim 2:5.

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

A. No.
Though they boast of Him in words,
they in fact deny the only Saviour Jesus.¹
For one of two things must be true:
either Jesus is not a complete Saviour,
or those who by true faith accept this Saviour
must find in Him all that is necessary
for their salvation.²

¹ 1 Cor 1:12, 13; Gal 5:4.

² Col 1:19, 20; 2:10; 1 Jn 1:7.

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 with the Holy Spirit,¹ to be
our chief Prophet and Teacher,²
who has fully revealed to us
the secret counsel and will of God
concerning our redemption,³
our only High Priest,⁴
who by the one sacrifice of His body
has redeemed us,⁵
and who continually intercedes for us
before the Father;⁶
and our eternal King,⁷
who governs us by His Word and Spirit,
and who defends and preserves us
in the redemption obtained for us.⁸

¹ Ps 45:7 (Heb 1:9); Is 61:1 (Lk 4:18); Lk 3:21, 22.

² Deut 18:15 (Acts 3:22).

³ Jn 1:18; 15:15.

⁴ Ps 110:4 (Heb 7:17).

⁵ Heb 9:12; 10:11-14.

⁶ Rom 8:34; Heb 9:24; 1 Jn 2:1.

⁷ Zech 9:9 (Mt 21:5); Lk 1:33.

⁸ Mt 28:18-20; Jn 10:28; Rev 12:10, 11.

32. Q. Why are you called a Christian?

A. Because I am a member of Christ by faith¹
and thus share in His anointing,²

so that I may
as prophet confess His Name,³
as priest present myself
a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him,⁴
and as king fight with a free and good conscience
against sin and the devil in this life,⁵
and hereafter reign with Him eternally
over all creatures.⁶

¹ 1 Cor 12:12-27.

² Joel 2:28 (Acts 2:17); 1 Jn 2:27.

³ Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9, 10; Heb 13:15.

⁴ Rom 12:1; 1 Pet 2:5, 9.

⁵ Gal 5:16, 17; Eph 6:11; 1 Tim 1:18, 19.

⁶ Mt 25:34; 2 Tim 2:12.

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.¹
We, however, are children of God by adoption,
through grace, for Christ's sake.²
1 Jn 1:1-3, 14, 18; 3:16; Rom 8:32; Heb 1; 1 Jn 4:9.
2 Jn 1:12; Rom 8:14-17; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:5, 6.

34. Q. Why do you call Him *our Lord*?

A. Because He has ransomed us,
body and soul,¹
from all our sins,
not with silver or gold
but with His precious blood,²
and has freed us
from all the power of the devil
to make us His own possession.³

¹ 1 Cor 6:20; 1 Tim 2:5, 6.

² 1 Pet 1:18, 19.

³ Col 1:13, 14; Heb 2:14, 15.

LORD'S DAY 14

35. Q. What do you confess when you say:
He 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,¹
took upon Himself true human nature

from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary,²
through the working of the Holy Spirit.³
Thus He is also the true seed of David,⁴
and like His brothers in every respect,⁵
yet without sin.⁶

¹ Jn 1:1; 10:30-36; Rom 1:3; 9:5; Col 1:15-17; 1 Jn 5:20.

² Mt 1:18-23; Jn 1:14; Gal 4:4; Heb 2:14.

³ Lk 1:35.

⁴ 2 Sam 7:12-16; Ps 132:11; Mt 1:1; Lk 1:32; Rom 1:3.

⁵ Phil 2:7; Heb 2:17.

⁶ Heb 4:15; 7:26, 27.

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

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

¹ 1 Tim 2:5, 6; Heb 9:13-15.

² Rom 8:3, 4; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 4:4, 5; 1 Pet 1:18, 19.

LORD'S DAY 15

37. Q. What do you confess when you say
that He *suffered*?

A. During all the time He lived 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.¹
Thus, by His suffering,
as the only atoning sacrifice,²
He has redeemed our body and soul
from everlasting damnation,³
and obtained for us
the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life.⁴

¹ Is 53; 1 Tim 2:6; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18.

² Rom 3:25; 1 Cor 5:7; Eph 5:2; Heb 10:14; 1 Jn 2:2; 4:10.

³ Rom 8:1-4; Gal 3:13; Col 1:13; Heb 9:12; 1 Pet 1:18, 19.

⁴ Jn 3:16; Rom 3:24-26; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 9:15.

38. Q. Why did He suffer *under Pontius Pilate* as judge?

A. Though innocent, Christ was condemned
by an earthly judge,¹
and so He freed us
from the severe judgment of God
that was to fall on us.²

¹ Lk 23:13-24; Jn 19:4, 12-16.

² Is 53:4, 5; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13.

39. Q. Does it have a special meaning that Christ was crucified and did not die in a different way?

A. Yes.

Thereby I am assured that He took upon Himself the curse which lay on me, for a crucified one was cursed by God.¹

¹ Deut 21:23; Gal 3:13.

LORD'S DAY 16

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

A. Because of the justice and truth of God¹ satisfaction for our sins could be made in no other way than by the death of the Son of God.²

¹ Gen 2:17.

² Rom 8:3; Phil 2:8; Heb 2:9, 14, 15.

41. Q. Why was He *buried*?

A. His burial testified that He had really died.¹

¹ Is 53:9; Jn 19:38-42; Acts 13:29; 1 Cor 15:3,4.

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 it puts an end to sin and is an entrance into eternal life.¹

¹ Jn 5:24; Phil 1:21-23; 1 Thess 5:9, 10.

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,¹ so that the evil desires of the flesh may no longer reign in us,²

but that we may offer ourselves to Him
as a sacrifice of thankfulness.³

¹ Rom 6:5-11; Col 2:11, 12.

² Rom 6:12-14.

³ Rom 12:1; Eph 5:1, 2.

44. Q. Why is there added:

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, pain, terror, and agony,
which He endured throughout all His sufferings¹
but especially on the cross,
has delivered me
from the anguish and torment of hell.²

¹ Ps 18:5, 6; 116:3; Mt 26:36-46; 27:45, 46; Heb 5:7-10.

² Is

53.

LORD'S DAY 17

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

A. First,
by His resurrection
He has overcome death,
so that He could make us share
in the righteousness
which He had obtained for us
by His death.¹

Second,
by His power
we too are raised up
to a new life.²

Third,
Christ's resurrection
is to us a sure pledge
of our glorious resurrection.³

¹ Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 15:16-20; 1 Pet 1:3-5.

² Rom 6:5-11; Eph 2:4-6; Col 3:1-4.

³ Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 15:12-23; Phil 3:20, 21.

LORD'S DAY 18

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

A. That Christ,
before the eyes of His disciples,

was taken up from the earth into heaven,¹
and that He is there for our benefit²
until He comes again
to judge the living and the dead.³

¹ Mk 16:19; Lk 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9-11.

² Rom 8:34; Heb 4:14; 7:23-25; 9:24.

³ Mt 24:30; Acts 1:11.

47. Q. Is Christ, then, not with us
until the end of the world,
as He has promised us?¹

A. Christ is true man and true God.
With respect to His human nature
He is no longer on earth,²
but with respect to
His divinity, majesty, grace, and Spirit
He is never absent from us.³

¹ Mt 28:20.

² Mt 26:11; Jn 16:28; 17:11; Acts 3:19-21; Heb 8:4.

³ Mt 28:18-20; Jn 14:16-19; 16:13.

48. Q. But are the two natures in Christ
not separated from each other
if His human nature is not present
wherever His divinity is?

A. Not at all,
for His divinity has no limits
and is present everywhere.¹
So it must follow that His divinity
is indeed beyond the human nature
which He has taken on
and nevertheless is within this human nature
and remains personally united with it.²

¹ Jer 23:23, 24; Acts 7:48, 49.

² Jn 1:14; 3:13; Col 2:9.

49. Q. How does Christ's ascension into heaven benefit us?

A. First,
He is our Advocate in heaven
before His Father.¹
Second,
we have our flesh in heaven
as a sure pledge that He, our Head,
will also take us, His members,
up to Himself.²

Third,
He sends us His Spirit as a counter-pledge,³
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.⁴

¹ Rom 8:34; 1 Jn 2:1.

² Jn 14:2; 17:24; Eph 2:4-6.

³ Jn 14:16; Acts 2:33; 2 Cor 1:21, 22; 5:5.

⁴ Col 3:1-4.

LORD'S DAY 19

50. Q. Why is it added,
And sits at the right hand of God?
- A. Christ ascended into heaven
to manifest Himself there
as Head of His church,¹
through whom the Father governs all things.²
- ¹ Eph 1:20-23; Col 1:18.
² Mt 28:18; Jn 5:22, 23.
51. Q. How does the glory of Christ, our Head,
benefit us?
- A. First,
by His Holy Spirit
He pours out heavenly gifts
upon us, His members.¹
- Second,
by His power
He defends and preserves us
against all enemies.²
- ¹ Acts 2:33; Eph 4:7-12.
² Ps 2:9; 110:1, 2; Jn 10:27-30; Rev 19:11-16.
52. Q. What comfort is it to you
that Christ *will come to judge
the living and the dead?*
- A. In all my sorrow and persecution
I lift up my head
and eagerly await
as judge from heaven
the very same person
who before has submitted Himself

to the judgment of God
for my sake,
and has removed all the curse from me.¹
He will cast all His and my enemies
into everlasting condemnation,
but He will take me and all His chosen ones
to Himself
into heavenly joy and glory.²

¹ Lk 21:28; Rom 8:22-25; Phil 3:20,21; Tit 2:13, 14.

² Mt 25:31-46; 1 Thess 4:16, 17; 2 Thess 1:6-10.

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, together with the Father and the Son,
true and eternal God.¹
Second,
He is also given to me,²
to make me by true faith
share in Christ and all His benefits,³
to comfort me,⁴
and to remain with me forever.⁵

¹ Gen 1:1, 2; Mt 28:19; Acts 5:3, 4; 1 Cor 3:16.

² 1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 1:21, 22; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:13.

³ Gal 3:14; 1 Pet 1:2.

⁴ Jn 15:26; Acts 9:31.

⁵ Jn 14:16, 17; 1 Pet 4:14.

LORD'S DAY 21

54. Q. What do you believe
concerning the *holy catholic Christian church*?

A. I believe that the Son of God,¹
out of the whole human race,²
from the beginning of the world to its end,³
gathers, defends, and preserves for Himself,⁴
by His Spirit and Word,⁵
in the unity of the true faith,⁶
a church chosen to everlasting life.⁷
And I believe that I am⁸
and forever shall remain

a living member of it.⁹

¹ Jn 10:11; Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11-13; Col 1:18.

² Gen 26:4; Rev 5:9.

³ Is 59:21; 1 Cor 11:26.

⁴ Ps 129:1-5; Mt 16:18; Jn 10:28-30.

⁵ Rom 1:16; 10:14-17; Eph 5:26.

⁶ Acts 2:42-47; Eph 4:1-6.

⁷ Rom 8:29; Eph 1:3-14.

⁸ 1 Jn 3:14, 19-21.

⁹ Ps 23:6; Jn 10:27, 28; 1 Cor 1:4-9; 1 Pet 1:3-5.

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

A. First,
that believers, all and everyone,
as members of Christ
have communion with Him
and share in all His treasures and gifts.¹

Second,
that everyone is duty-bound
to use his gifts
readily and cheerfully
for the benefit and well-being
of the other members.²

¹ Rom 8:32; 1 Cor 6:17; 12:4-7, 12, 13; 1 Jn 1:3.

² Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:20-27; 13:1-7; Phil 2:4-8.

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

A. I believe that God,
because of Christ's satisfaction,
will no more remember
my sins,¹
nor my sinful nature,
against which I have to struggle
all my life,²
but will graciously grant me
the righteousness of Christ,
that I may never come into condemnation.³

¹ Ps 103:3, 4, 10, 12; Mic 7:18, 19; 2 Cor 5:18-21; 1 Jn 1:7; 2:2.

² Rom 7:21-25.

³ Jn 3:17, 18; 5:24; Rom 8:1, 2.

LORD'S DAY 22

57. Q. What comfort does
the resurrection of the body

offer you?

- A. Not only shall my soul
after this life
immediately be taken up
to Christ, my Head,¹
but also this my flesh,
raised by the power of Christ,
shall be reunited with my soul
and made like Christ's glorious body.²

¹ Lk 16:22; 23:43; Phil 1:21-23.

² Job 19:25, 26; 1 Cor 15:20, 42-46, 54; Phil 3:21; 1 Jn 3:2.

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

- A. Since I now already
feel in my heart
the beginning of eternal joy,¹
I shall after this life
possess perfect blessedness,
such as no eye has seen,
nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man conceived –
a blessedness in which to praise God forever.²

¹ Jn 17:3; Rom 14:17; 2 Cor 5:2, 3.

² Jn 17:24; 1 Cor 2:9.

Our Justification

LORD'S DAY 23

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

- A. In Christ I am righteous before God
and heir to life everlasting.¹
1 Hab 2:4; Jn 3:36; Rom 1:17; 5:1, 2.

60. Q. How are you righteous before God?

- A. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ.¹
Although my conscience accuses me
that I have grievously sinned
against all God's commandments,
have never kept any of them,²
and am still inclined to all evil,³

yet God, without any merit of my own,⁴
out of mere grace,⁵
imputes to me
the perfect satisfaction,
righteousness, and holiness of Christ.⁶

He grants these to me
as if I had never had nor committed
any sin,
and as if I myself had accomplished
all the obedience
which Christ has rendered for me,⁷
if only I accept this gift
with a believing heart.⁸

¹ Rom 3:21-28; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8, 9; Phil 3:8-11.

² Rom 3:9, 10.

³ Rom 7:23.

⁴ Deut 9:6; Ezek 36:22; Tit 3:4, 5.

⁵ Rom 3:24; Eph 2:8.

⁶ Rom 4:3-5; 2 Cor 5:17-19; 1 Jn 2:1, 2.

⁷ Rom 4:24, 25; 2 Cor 5:21.

⁸ Jn 3:18; Acts 16:30, 31; Rom 3:22.

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
is my righteousness before God.¹
I can receive this righteousness
and make it my own
by faith only.²

¹ 1 Cor 1:30, 31; 2:2.

² Rom 10:10; 1 Jn 5:10-12.

LORD'S DAY 24

62. Q. But why can our good works not 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 agreement

with the law of God,¹
whereas even our best works in this life
are all imperfect and defiled with sin.²

¹ Deut 27:26; Gal 3:10.

² Is 64:6.

63. Q. But do our good works earn nothing,
even though God promises to reward them
in this life and the next?¹

A. This reward is not earned;
it is a gift of grace.²

¹ Mt 5:12; Heb 11:6.

² Lk 17:10; 2 Tim 4:7, 8.

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

A. No.
It is impossible
that those grafted into Christ
by true faith
should not bring forth
fruits of thankfulness.¹

¹ Mt 7:18; Lk 6:43-45; Jn 15:5.

Word and 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,¹
who works it in our hearts
by the preaching of the gospel,²
and strengthens it
by the use of the sacraments.³

¹ Jn 3:5; 1 Cor 2:10-14; Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29.

² Rom 10:17; 1 Pet 1:23-25.

³ Mt 28:19, 20; 1 Cor 10:16.

66. Q. What are the sacraments?

A. The sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals.
They were instituted by God
so that by their use

He might the more fully declare and seal to us
the promise of the gospel.¹

And this is the promise:

that God graciously grants us
forgiveness of sins and everlasting life
because of the one sacrifice of Christ
accomplished on the cross.²

¹ Gen 17:11; Deut 30:6; Rom 4:11.

² Mt 26:27, 28; Acts 2:38; Heb 10:10.

67. Q. Are both the Word and the sacraments
then intended 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 us in the gospel
and assures us by the sacraments
that our entire salvation
rests on Christ's one sacrifice for us
on the cross.¹

¹ Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 11:26; Gal 3:27.

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

A. Two: holy baptism and the holy supper.¹

¹ Mt 28:19, 20; 1 Cor 11:23-26.

Holy Baptism

LORD'S DAY 26

69. Q. How does holy baptism
signify and seal to you
that the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross
benefits you?

A. In this way:

Christ instituted this outward washing¹
and with it gave the promise that,
as surely as water washes away
the dirt from the body,
so certainly His blood and Spirit
wash away the impurity of my soul,
that is, all my sins.²

¹ Mt 28:19.

² Mt 3:11; Mk 16:16; Jn 1:33; Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3, 4; 1 Pet 3:21.

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

A. To be washed with Christ's blood means
to receive forgiveness of sins from God,
through grace,
because of Christ's blood,
poured out for us
in His sacrifice on the cross.¹

To be washed with His Spirit means
to be renewed by the Holy Spirit
and sanctified to be members of Christ,
so that more and more
we become dead to sin
and lead a holy and blameless life.²

¹ Ezek 36:25; Zech 13:1; Eph 1:7; Heb 12:24; 1 Pet 1:2; Rev 1:5; 7:14.

² Jn 3:5-8; Rom 6:4; 1 Cor 6:11; Col 2:11, 12.

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 He says:
*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).
Whoever believes and is baptized
will be saved,
but whoever does not believe
will be condemned (Mark 16:16).*

This promise is repeated where Scripture calls baptism
the washing of rebirth and the washing away of sins
(Titus 3:5; Acts 22:16).

LORD'S DAY 27

72. Q. Does this outward washing with water
itself wash away sins?

A. No, only the blood of Jesus Christ
and the Holy Spirit
cleans us from all sins.¹

¹ Mt 3:11; 1 Pet 3:21; 1 Jn 1:7.

73. Q. Why then does the Holy Spirit call baptism
the washing of regeneration

and the washing away of sins?

A. God speaks in this way for a good reason.

He wants to teach us
that the blood and Spirit of Christ
remove our sins
just as water takes away
dirt from the body.¹

But, even more important,
He wants to assure us
by this divine pledge and sign
that we are
as truly cleansed from our sins spiritually
as we are bodily washed with water.²

¹ 1 Cor 6:11; Rev 1:5; 7:14.

² Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3, 4; Gal 3:27.

74. Q. Should infants, too, be baptized?

A. Yes.

Infants as well as adults
belong to God's covenant and congregation.¹
Through Christ's blood
the redemption from sin
and the Holy Spirit, who works faith,
are promised to them
no less than to adults.²

Therefore, by baptism, as sign of the covenant,
they must be incorporated into the Christian church
and distinguished from the children of unbelievers.³
This was done in the old covenant by circumcision,⁴
in place of which baptism was instituted
in the new covenant.⁵

¹ Gen 17:7; Mt 19:14.

² Ps 22:10; Is 44:1-3; Acts 2:38, 39; 16:31.

³ Acts 10:47; 1 Cor 7:14.

⁴ Gen 17:9-14.

⁵ Col 2: 11-13.

The Lord's Supper

LORD'S DAY 28

75. Q. How does the Lord's supper
signify and seal to you
that you share in
Christ's one sacrifice on the cross
and in all His gifts?

A. In this way:
Christ has commanded me and all believers
to eat of this broken bread
and drink of this cup
in remembrance of Him.
With this command He gave these promises:¹

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 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
nourish and refresh my soul
to everlasting life
with His crucified body and shed blood.

¹ Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:19, 20; 1 Cor 11:23-25.

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

A. First,
to accept with a believing heart
all the suffering and the death of Christ,
and so receive
forgiveness of sins and life eternal.¹

Second,
to be united more and more to His sacred body
through the Holy Spirit,
who lives both in Christ and in us.²

Therefore, although Christ is in heaven³
and we are on earth,
yet we are flesh of His flesh
and bone of His bones,⁴
and we forever live and are governed
by one Spirit,
as the members of our body are
by one soul.⁵

¹ Jn 6:35, 40, 50-54.

² Jn 6:55, 56; 1 Cor 12:13.

³ Acts 1:9-11; 3:21; 1 Cor 11:26; Col 3:1.

⁴ 1 Cor 6:15, 17; Eph 5:29, 30; 1 Jn 4:13.

⁵ Jn 6:56-58; 15:1-6; Eph 4:15, 16; 1 Jn 3:24.

77. Q. Where has Christ promised
that He will nourish and refresh 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 Lord's supper:

*The Lord Jesus, on the night 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, after supper He took the cup, saying,

*"This cup is the new covenant in My blood;
Do this, whenever you drink it,
in remembrance of Me."*

*For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death
until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).*

This promise is repeated by Paul where he says:

*Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks
a participation in the blood of Christ?*

*And is not the bread that we break
a participation in the body of Christ?*

*Because there is one loaf,
we, who are many, are one body,
for we all partake of the one loaf
(1 Corinthians 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.

Just as the water of baptism
is not changed into the blood of Christ
and is not the washing away of sins itself
but is simply God's sign and pledge,¹
so also the bread in the Lord's supper
does not become the body of Christ itself,²

although it is called Christ's body³
in keeping with the nature and usage of sacraments.⁴

¹ Eph 5:26; Tit 3:5.

² Mt 26:26-29.

³ 1 Cor 10:16, 17; 11:26-28.

⁴ Gen 17:10, 11; Ex 12:11, 13; 1 Cor 10:3, 4; 1 Pet 3:21.

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

A. Christ speaks in this way for a good reason:

He wants to teach us by His supper
that as bread and wine sustain us
in this temporal life,
so His crucified body and shed blood
are true food and drink for our souls
to eternal life.¹

But, even more important,
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 surely as we receive with our mouth
these holy signs in remembrance of Him,²

and, second,
that all His suffering and obedience
are as certainly ours
as if we personally
had suffered and paid for our sins.³

¹ Jn 6:51, 55.

² 1 Cor 10:16, 17; 11:26.

³ Rom 6:5-11.

LORD'S DAY 30

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

A. The Lord's supper testifies 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;¹

and, second,

that through the Holy Spirit
we are grafted into Christ,²
who with His true body is now in heaven
at the right hand of the Father,³
and this is where He wants to be worshipped.⁴

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
in the form of bread and wine,
and there is to be worshipped.

Therefore the mass is basically

nothing but a denial
of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ,
and an accursed idolatry.

¹ Mt 26:28; Jn 19:30; Heb 7:27; 9:12, 25, 26; 10:10-18.

² 1 Cor 6:17; 10:16, 17.

³ Jn 20:17; Acts 7:55, 56; Heb 1:3; 8:1.

⁴ Jn 4:21-24; Phil 3:20; Col 3:1; 1 Thess 1:10.

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,
and who also desire more and more
to strengthen their faith
and amend their life.

But hypocrites and those who do not repent
eat and drink judgment upon themselves.¹

¹ 1 Cor 10:19-22; 11:26-32.

82. Q. Are those 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 profaned
and His wrath kindled

against the whole congregation.¹

Therefore,

according to the command of Christ and His apostles,
the Christian church is duty-bound
to exclude such persons
by the keys of the kingdom of heaven,
until they amend their lives.

¹ Ps 50:16; Is 1:11-17; 1 Cor 11:17-34.

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.¹

¹ Mt 16:19; Jn 20:21-23.

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

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

The kingdom of heaven is closed
when 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 testimony of the gospel,
God will judge
both in this life
and in the life to come.¹

¹ Mt 16:19; Jn 3:31-36; 20:21-23.

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 to be un-christian
in doctrine or life
are first repeatedly admonished
in a brotherly manner.

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

If they do not heed
also their admonitions,
they are forbidden the use of the sacraments,
and they are excluded by the elders
from the Christian congregation,
and by God Himself
from the kingdom of Christ.¹

They are again received
as members of Christ
and of the church
when they promise and show
real amendment.²

¹ Mt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:3-5; 11-13; 2 Thess 3:14, 15.

² Lk 15:20-24; 2 Cor 2:6-11.

The Third Part

OUR THANKFULNESS

LORD'S DAY 32

86. Q. Since we have been delivered
from our misery
by grace alone through Christ,
without any merit of our own,
why must we yet do good works?

- A. Because Christ,
having redeemed us by His blood,
also renews us by His Holy Spirit
to be His image,
so that with our whole life
we may show ourselves thankful to God
for His benefits,¹
and He may be praised by us.²
Further, that we ourselves

may be assured of our faith
by its fruits,³
and that by our godly walk of life
we may win our neighbours for Christ.⁴

¹ Rom 6:13; 12:1, 2; 1 Pet 2:5-10.

² Mt 5:16; 1 Cor 6:19, 20.

³ Mt 7:17, 18; Gal 5:22-24; 2 Pet 1:10, 11.

⁴ Mt 5:14-16; Rom 14:17-19; 1 Pet 2:12; 3:1, 2.

87. Q. Can those be saved
who do not turn to God
from their ungrateful and impenitent
walk of life?

A. By no means.
Scripture says that no unchaste person,
idolater, adulterer,
thief, greedy person,
drunkard, slanderer,
robber, or the like
shall inherit the kingdom of God.¹

¹ 1 Cor 6:9, 10; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:5, 6; 1 Jn 3:14.

LORD'S DAY 33

88. Q. What is
the true repentance or conversion of man?

A. It is the dying of the old nature
and the coming to life of the new.¹

¹ Rom 6:1-11; 1 Cor 5:7; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:5-10.

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

A. It is to grieve with heartfelt sorrow
that we have offended God by our sin,
and more and more to hate it
and flee from it.¹

¹ Ps 51:3, 4, 17; Joel 2:12, 13; Rom 8:12, 13; 2 Cor 7:10.

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

A. It is a heartfelt joy
in God through Christ,¹
and a love and delight
to live according to the will of God
in all good works.²

¹ Ps 51:8, 12; Is 57:15; Rom 5:1; 14:17.

² Rom 6:10, 11; Gal 2:20.

91. Q. But what are good works?
- A. Only those which are done
out of true faith,¹
in accordance with the law of God,²
and to His glory,³
and not those based
on our own opinion
or on precepts of men.⁴
- ¹ Jn 15:5; Rom 14:23; Heb 11:6.
² Lev 18:4; 1 Sam 15:22; Eph 2:10.
³ 1 Cor 10:31.
⁴ Deut 12:32; Is 29:13; Ezek 20:18, 19; Mt 15:7-9.

The Ten Words

LORD'S DAY 34

92. Q. What is the law of the LORD?
- A. *God spoke all these words:*
I am the LORD your God,
who brought you out of Egypt,
out of the land of slavery.
- 1. You shall have no other gods before Me.*
 - 2. You shall not make for yourself an idol*
in the form of anything in heaven above
or on the earth beneath
or in the waters below.
You shall not bow down to them or worship them;
for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God,
punishing the children for the sin of the fathers
to the third and fourth generation
of those who hate Me,
but showing love to a thousand generations of those
who love Me and keep My commandments.
 - 3. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God,*
for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless
who misuses His name.
 - 4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.*
Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD
your God. On it you shall not do any work,
neither you, nor your son or daughter,
nor your manservant or maidservant,

*nor your animals,
nor the alien within your gates.
For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth,
the sea, and all that is in them,
but He rested on the seventh day.
Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day
and made it holy.*

5. *Honor your father and your mother,
so that you may live long
in the land the LORD your God is giving you.*
6. *You shall not murder.*
7. *You shall not commit adultery.*
8. *You shall not steal.*
9. *You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.*
10. *You shall not covet your neighbor's house.
You shall not covet your neighbor's wife,
or his manservant or maidservant,
his ox or donkey,
or anything that belongs to your neighbor.¹*

¹ Ex 20:1-17; Deut 5:6-21.

93. Q. How are these commandments divided?

A. Into two parts.

The first

teaches us how to live in relation to God;
the second,

what duties we owe our neighbour.¹

¹ Mt 22:37-40.

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

A. That for the sake of my very salvation

I avoid and flee

all idolatry,¹ witchcraft, superstition,²

and prayer to saints or to other creatures.³

Further,

that I rightly come to know

the only true God,⁴

trust in Him alone,⁵

submit to Him

with all humility⁶ and patience,⁷

expect all good from Him only,⁸

and love,⁹ fear,¹⁰ and honour Him¹¹

with all my heart.

In short,
that I forsake all creatures
rather than do the least thing
against His will.¹²

¹ 1 Cor 6:9, 10; 10:5-14; 1 Jn 5:21.

² Lev 19:31; Deut 18:9-12.

³ Mt 4:10; Rev 19:10; 22:8, 9.

⁴ Jn 17:3.

⁵ Jer 17:5, 7.

⁶ 1 Pet 5:5, 6.

⁷ Rom 5:3, 4; 1 Cor 10:10; Phil 2:14; Col 1:11; Heb 10:36.

⁸ Ps 104:27, 28; Is 45:7; Jas 1:17.

⁹ Deut 6:5; (Mt 22:37).

¹⁰ Deut 6:2; Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7; 9:10; Mt 10:28; 1 Pet 1:17.

¹¹ Deut 6:13; (Mt 4:10); Deut 10:20.

¹² Mt 5:29, 30; 10:37-39; Acts 5:29.

95. Q. What is idolatry?

A. Idolatry is
having or inventing something
in which to put our trust
instead of, or in addition to,
the only true God
who has revealed Himself in His Word.¹

¹ 1 Chron 16:26; Gal 4:8, 9; Eph 5:5; Phil 3:19.

LORD'S DAY 35

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

A. We are not to make an image of God in any way,¹
nor to worship Him in any other manner
than He has commanded in His Word.²

¹ Deut 4:15-19; Is 40:18-25; Acts 17:29; Rom 1:23.

² Lev 10:1-7; Deut 12:30; 1 Sam 15:22, 23; Mt 15:9; Jn 4:23, 24.

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

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.¹

¹ Ex 34:13, 14, 17; Num 33:52; 2 Kings 18:4, 5; Is 40:25.

98. Q. But may images not be tolerated
in the churches
as “books for the laity”?

A. No, for we should not be wiser than God.
He wants His people to be taught
not by means of dumb images¹
but by the living preaching of His Word.²

¹ Jer 10:8; Hab 2:18-20.

² Rom 10:14, 15, 17; 2 Tim 3:16, 17; 2 Pet 1:19.

LORD’S DAY 36

99. Q. What is required
in the third commandment?

A. We are not to blaspheme or to abuse the Name of God
by cursing,¹ perjury,² or unnecessary oaths,³
nor to share in such horrible sins
by being silent bystanders.⁴

Rather, we must use the holy Name of God
only with fear and reverence,⁵
so that we may rightly confess Him,⁶
call upon Him,⁷
and praise Him in all our words and works.⁸

¹ Lev 24:10-17.

² Lev 19:12.

³ Mt 5:37; Jas 5:12.

⁴ Lev 5:1; Prov 29:24.

⁵ Ps 99:1-5; Is 45:23; Jer 4:2.

⁶ Mt 10:32, 33; Rom 10:9, 10.

⁷ Ps 50:14, 15; 1 Tim 2:8.

⁸ Rom 2:24; Col 3:17; 1 Tim 6:1.

100. Q. Is the blaspheming of God’s Name
by swearing and cursing
such a grievous sin
that God is angry also with those
who do not prevent and forbid it
as much as they can?

A. Certainly,¹ 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.²

¹ Lev 5:1.

² Lev 24:16.

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.
Such oath-taking is based on God's Word¹
and was therefore rightly used
by saints in the Old and the New Testament.²

¹ Deut 6:13; 10:20; Jer 4:1, 2; Heb 6:16.

² Gen 21:24; 31:53; Josh 9:15; 1 Sam 24:22; 1 Kings 1:29, 30; Rom 1:9; 2 Cor 1:23.

102.Q. May we also swear by saints
or other creatures?

A. No.
A lawful oath is a calling upon God,
who alone knows the heart,
to bear witness to the truth,
and to punish me if I swear falsely.¹
No creature is worthy of such honour.²

¹ Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 1:23.

² Mt 5:34-37; 23:16-22; Jas 5:12.

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 maintained¹
and that, especially on the day of rest,
I diligently attend the church of God²
to hear God's Word,³
to use the sacraments,⁴
to call publicly upon the LORD,⁵
and to give Christian offerings for the poor.⁶
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.⁷

¹ Deut 6:4-9; 20-25; 1 Cor 9:13, 14; 2 Tim 2:2; 3:13-17; Tit 1:5.

² Deut 12:5-12; Ps 40:9, 10; 68:26; Acts 2:42-47; Heb 10:23-25.

³ Rom 10:14-17; 1 Cor 14:26-33; 1 Tim 4:13.

⁴ 1 Cor 11:23, 24.

⁵ Col 3:16; 1 Tim 2:1.

⁶ Ps 50:14; 1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 8 and 9.

⁷ Is 66:23; Heb 4:9-11.

LORD'S DAY 39

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

A. That I show 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,¹
and also have patience with their weaknesses
and shortcomings,²
since it is God's will
to govern us by their hand.³

¹ Ex 21:17; Prov 1:8; 4:1; Rom 13:1, 2; Eph 5:21, 22; 6:1-9; Col 3:18-4:1.

² Prov 20:20; 23:22; 1 Pet 2:18.

³ Mt 22:21; Rom 13:1-8; Eph 6:1-9; Col 3:18-21.

LORD'S DAY 40

105.Q. What does God require

in the sixth commandment?

- A. I am not to dishonour, hate, injure,
or kill my neighbour
by thoughts, words, or gestures,
and much less by deeds,
whether personally or through another;¹
rather, I am to put away
all desire of revenge.²
Moreover, I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself.³
Therefore, also, the government bears the sword
to prevent murder.⁴

¹ Gen 9:6; Lev 19:17, 18; Mt 5:21, 22; 26:52.

² Prov 25:21, 22; Mt 18:35; Rom 12:19; Eph 4:26.

³ Mt 4:7; 26:52; Rom 13:11-14.

⁴ Gen 9:6; Ex 21:14; Rom 13:4.

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 of revenge,¹
and that He regards all these as murder.²
¹ Prov 14:30; Rom 1:29; 12:19; Gal 5:19-21; Jas 1:20; 1 Jn 2:9-11.
² 1 Jn 3:15.

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

- A. No.
When God condemns envy, hatred, and anger,
He commands us
to love our neighbour as ourselves,¹
to show patience, peace, gentleness,
mercy, and friendliness toward him,²
to protect him from harm as much as we can,
and to do good even to our enemies.³
¹ Mt 7:12; 22:39; Rom 12:10.
² Mt 5:5; Lk 6:36; Rom 12:10, 18; Gal 6:1, 2; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; 1 Pet 3:8.
³ Ex 23:4, 5; Mt 5:44, 45; Rom 12:20.

LORD'S DAY 41

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

- A. That all unchastity is cursed by God.¹
We must therefore detest it from the heart²
and live chaste and disciplined lives,
both within and outside of holy marriage.³
¹ Lev 18:30; Eph 5:3-5.

² Jude 22, 23.

³ 1 Cor 7:1-9; 1 Thess 4:3-8; Heb 13:4.

109.Q. Does God in this commandment forbid nothing more than adultery and similar shameful sins?

A. Since we, body and soul,
are temples of the Holy Spirit,
it is God's will
that we keep ourselves pure and holy.
Therefore He forbids all unchaste acts,
gestures, words, thoughts, desires,¹
and whatever may entice us to unchastity.²

¹ Mt 5:27-29; 1 Cor 6:18-20; Eph 5:3, 4.

² 1 Cor 15:33; Eph 5:18.

LORD'S DAY 42

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

A. God forbids not only outright theft and robbery¹ but also such wicked schemes and devices as false weights and measures, deceptive merchandising, counterfeit money, and usury;² we must not defraud our neighbour in any way, whether by force or by show of right.³ In addition God forbids all greed⁴ and all abuse or squandering of His gifts.⁵

¹ Ex 22:1; 1 Cor 5:9, 10; 6:9, 10.

² Deut 25:13-16; Ps 15:5; Prov 11:1; 12:22; Ezek 45:9-12; Lk 6:35.

³ Mic 6:9-11; Lk 3:14; Jas 5:1-6.

⁴ Lk 12:15; Eph 5:5.

⁵ Prov 21:20; 23:20, 21; Lk 16:10-13.

111.Q. What does God require of you in this commandment?

A. I must promote my neighbour's good wherever I can and may, deal with him as I would like others to deal with me, and work faithfully so that I may be able to give to those in need.¹

¹ Is 58:5-10; Mt 7:12; Gal 6:9, 10; Eph 4:28.

LORD'S DAY 43

112.Q. What is required
in the ninth commandment?

A. I must not give false testimony against anyone,
twist no one's words,
not gossip or slander,
nor condemn or join in condemning anyone
rashly and unheard.¹

Rather, I must avoid all lying and deceit
as the devil's own works,
under penalty of God's heavy wrath.²

In court and everywhere else,

I must love the truth,³
speak and confess it honestly,
and do what I can
to defend and promote
my neighbour's honour and reputation.⁴

¹ Ps 15; Prov 19:5, 9; 21:28; Mt 7:1; Lk 6:37; Rom 1:28-32.

² Lev 19:11, 12; Prov 12:22; 13:5; Jn 8:44; Rev 21:8.

³ 1 Cor 13:6; Eph 4:25.

⁴ 1 Pet 3:8, 9; 4:8.

LORD'S DAY 44

113.Q. What does the tenth commandment
require of us?

A. That not even the slightest thought or desire
contrary to any of God's commandments
should ever arise in our heart.

Rather, with all our heart
we should always hate all sin
and delight in all righteousness.¹

¹ Ps 19:7-14; 139:23, 24; Rom 7:7, 8.

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 this obedience.¹

Nevertheless, with earnest purpose
they do begin to live
not only according to some
but to all the commandments of God.²

¹ Eccles 7:20; Rom 7:14, 15; 1 Cor 13:9; 1 Jn 1:8.

² Ps 1:1, 2; Rom 7:22-25; Phil 3:12-16.

115.Q. If in this life no one
can keep the ten commandments perfectly,
why does God have them
preached so strictly?

A. First,
so that throughout our life
we may more and more become aware of
our sinful nature,
and therefore seek more eagerly
the forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ.¹

Second,
so that, while praying to God
for the grace of the Holy Spirit,
we may never stop striving
to be renewed more and more
after God's image,
until after this life we reach
the goal of perfection.²

¹ Ps 32:5; Rom 3:19-26; 7:7, 24, 25; 1 Jn 1:9.

² 1 Cor 9:24; Phil 3:12-14; 1 Jn 3:1-3.

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.¹

Moreover, God will give
His grace and the Holy Spirit
only to those who constantly
and with heartfelt longing
ask Him for these gifts
and thank Him for them.²

¹ Ps 50:14, 15; 116:12-19; 1 Thess 5:16-18.

² Mt 7:7, 8; Lk 11:9-13.

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.¹

Second,

we must thoroughly know
our need and misery,
so that we may humble ourselves
before God.²

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.³

¹ Ps 145:18-20; Jn 4:22-24; Rom 8:26, 27; Jas 1:5; 1 Jn 5:14, 15; Rev 19:10.

² 2 Chron 7:14; 20:12; Ps 2:11; 34:18; 62:8; Is 66:2; Rev 4.

³ Dan 9:17-19; Mt 7:8; Jn 14:13, 14; 16:23; Rom 10:13; Jas 1:6.

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

A. All the things we need
for body and soul,¹
as included in the prayer
which Christ our Lord Himself taught us.

¹ Mt 6:33; Jas 1:17.

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

A. *Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
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 Yours is the kingdom
and the power
and the glory for ever. Amen.*¹

¹ Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4.

LORD'S DAY 46

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

A. To awaken in us
at the very beginning of our prayer
that childlike reverence and trust
toward God
which should be basic to our prayer:
God has become our Father

through Christ
and will much less deny us
what we ask of Him in faith
than our fathers would
refuse us earthly things.¹
¹ Mt 7:9-11; Lk 11:11-13.

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

A. These words teach us
not to think of God's heavenly majesty
in an earthly manner,¹
and to expect from His almighty power
all things we need
for body and soul.²

¹ Jer 23:23, 24; Acts 17:24, 25.

² Mt 6:25-34; Rom 8:31, 32.

LORD'S DAY 47

122.Q. What is the first petition?

A. *Hallowed be Your name.*

That is:

Grant us first of all
that we may rightly know You,¹
and sanctify, glorify, and praise You
in all Your works,
in which shine forth
Your almighty power,
wisdom, goodness, righteousness,
mercy, and truth.²

Grant us also

that we may so direct our whole life –
our thoughts, words, and actions –
that Your name is not blasphemed because of us
but always honoured and praised.³

¹ Jer 9:23, 24; 31: 33, 34; Mt 16:17; Jn 17:3.

² Ex 34:5-8; Ps 145; Jer 32:16-20; Lk 1:46-55, 68-75; Rom 11: 33-36.

³ Ps 115:1; Mt 5:16.

LORD'S DAY 48

123.Q. What is the second petition?

A. *Your kingdom come.*

That is:

So rule us by Your Word and Spirit
that more and more we submit to You.¹
Preserve and increase Your church.²
Destroy the works of the devil,

every power that raises itself against You,
and every conspiracy against Your holy Word.³

Do all this
until the fullness of Your kingdom comes,
wherein You shall be all in all.⁴

¹ Ps 119:5, 105; 143:10; Mt 6:33.

² Ps 51:18; 122:6-9; Mt 16:18; Acts 2:42-47.

³ Rom 16:20; 1 Jn 3:8.

⁴ Rom 8:22, 23; 1 Cor 15:28; Rev 22: 17, 20.

LORD'S DAY 49

124.Q. What is the third petition?

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

That is:

Grant that we and all men
may deny our own will,
and without any murmuring
obey Your will,
for it alone is good.¹

Grant also that everyone
may carry out the duties
of his office and calling²
as willingly and faithfully
as the angels in heaven.³

¹ Mt 7:21; 16:24-26; Lk 22:42; Rom 12:1, 2; Tit 2:11, 12.

² 1 Cor 7:17-24; Eph 6:5-9.

³ Ps 103:20, 21.

LORD'S DAY 50

125.Q. What is the fourth petition?

A. *Give us today our daily bread.*

That is:

Provide us with all our bodily needs¹
so that we may acknowledge
that You are the only fountain of all good,²
and that our care and labour,
and also Your gifts,
cannot do us any good
without Your blessing.³

Grant, therefore, that we may
withdraw our trust
from all creatures
and place it only in You.⁴

¹ Ps 104:27-30; 145:15, 16; Mt 6:25-34.

² Acts 14:17; 17:25; Jas 1:17.

³ Deut 8:3; Ps 37:16; 127:1, 2; 1 Cor 15:58.

⁴ Ps 55:22; 62; 146; Jer 17:5-8; Heb 13:5, 6.

LORD'S DAY 51

126.Q. What is the fifth petition?

A. *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;
any of our transgressions,
nor the evil which still clings to us,¹
as we also find this evidence of Your grace in us
that we are fully determined
wholeheartedly to forgive our neighbour.²

¹ Ps 51:1-7; 143:2; Rom 8:1; 1 Jn 2:1, 2.

² Mt 6:14, 15; 18:21-35.

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:

In ourselves we are so weak
that we cannot stand even for a moment.¹
Moreover, our sworn enemies –
the devil,² the world,³ and our own flesh⁴ –
do not cease to attack us.

Will You, therefore,
uphold and strengthen us
by the power of Your Holy Spirit,
so that in this spiritual war⁵
we may not go down to defeat,
but always firmly resist our enemies,
until we finally obtain
the complete victory.⁶

¹ Ps 103:14-16; Jn 15:1-5.

² 2 Cor 11:14; Eph 6:10-13; 1 Pet 5:8.

³ Jn 15:18-21.

⁴ Rom 7:23; Gal 5:17.

⁵ Mt 10:19, 20; 26:41; Mk 13:33; Rom 5:3-5.

⁶ 1 Cor 10:13; 1 Thess 3:13; 5:23.

128.Q. How do you conclude your prayer?

A. *For Yours is the kingdom
and the power*

and the glory for ever.

That is:

All this we ask of You
because, as our King,
having power over all things,
You are both willing and able
to give us all that is good,¹
and because not we
but Your holy name
should so receive all glory
for ever.²

¹ Rom 10:11-13; 2 Pet 2:9.

² Ps 115:1; Jer 33:8, 9; Jn 14:13.

129.Q. What does the word *Amen* mean?

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.¹

¹ Is 65:24; 2 Cor 1:20; 2 Tim 2:13.