

THE SMALL CATHECHISM¹

OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER
FOR ORDINARY PASTORS AND PREACHERS

INTRODUCTION TO THE SMALL CATECHISM

Several years before he put his own hand to the task, Luther had suggested to some of his friends that they prepare a catechism for the instruction of children. Finally Luther himself undertook to fill the need, impelled especially by dismay over the ignorance of the people whom he encountered when he visited parishes in Saxony during the fall of 1528 (see Preface, below, 1–6). Before and after this visitation, as often in earlier years, Luther preached several series of sermons in Wittenberg on the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the sacraments, and he used these sermons as a basis for the preparation of his Large Catechism.

In December, 1528, while he was still working on the Large Catechism, Luther also began on the text of the Small Catechism. As they were finished, its original five parts were printed on large charts, and about the middle of May, 1529, the completed Small Catechism was made available in an illustrated booklet. For this edition in book form Luther furnished the Preface at the beginning and the Table of Duties at the close. Other writings of Luther were later added, probably by the printers with or without Luther’s consent: A Short Form for Marriage, A Short Form for Baptism, and the Litany.

Although prepared simultaneously and utilizing the same materials, the Small Catechism is not merely a condensation of the Large Catechism, nor is the Large Catechism simply an expansion of the Small Catechism. The tone is different, for there is not a trace in the Small Catechism of the polemics which punctuate the Large, and the intended audience is different, for the Small Catechism was written for use in the households of plain people while the Large was addressed particularly to the clergy. The high esteem in which the Small Catechism was held is reflected in its incorporation in many church orders of the sixteenth century and in several early collections of confessional statements. It was quite natural, therefore, that it should be taken up into the Book of Concord.

The English translation is made from the German text. Only the most significant variants from the later Latin versions are indicated in the footnotes. ^(tr-533)

[PREFACE]

Grace, mercy, and peace in Jesus Christ, our Lord, from Martin Luther to all faithful, godly pastors and preachers.

¹ The deplorable conditions which I recently encountered when I was a visitor² constrained me to prepare this brief and simple catechism or statement of Christian teaching. ² Good God, what wretchedness I beheld! The common people, especially those who live in the country, have no knowledge whatever of Christian teaching, and unfortunately many pastors are quite incompetent and unfitted for teaching. ³ Although the people are supposed to be Christian, are baptized, and receive the holy sacrament, they do not know the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments,³ they live as if they were pigs and irrational beasts, and now that the Gospel has been restored they have mastered the fine art of abusing liberty.

⁴ How will you bishops answer for it before Christ that you have so shamefully neglected the people and paid no attention at all to the duties of your office? May you escape punishment for this! ⁵ You withhold the cup in the Lord's Supper and insist on the observance of human laws, yet you do not take the slightest interest in teaching the people the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, or a single part of the Word of God. Woe to you forever!

⁶ I therefore beg of you for God's sake, my beloved brethren who are pastors and preachers, that you take the duties of your office seriously, that you have pity on the people who are entrusted to your care, and that you help me to teach the catechism to the people, especially those who are young. Let those who lack the qualifications to do better at least take this booklet and these forms and read them to the people word for word in this manner:

⁷ In the first place, the preacher should take the utmost care to avoid changes or variations in the text and wording of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the sacraments, etc. On the contrary, he should adopt one form, adhere to it, and use it repeatedly year after year. Young and inexperienced people must be instructed on the basis of a uniform, fixed text and form. They are easily confused if a teacher employs one form now and another form — perhaps with the intention of making improvements — later on. In this way all the time and labor will be lost.

⁸ This was well understood by our good fathers, who were accustomed to use the same form in teaching the ^(tr-535)Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. We, too, should teach these things to the young and unlearned in such a way that we do not alter a single syllable or recite the catechism differently from year to year. Choose the form that pleases you, therefore, and adhere to it henceforth. ⁹ When you preach to intelligent and educated people, you are at liberty to exhibit your learning and to discuss these topics from different angles and in such a variety of ways as you may be capable of. But when you are teaching the young, adhere to a fixed and unchanging form and method. ¹⁰ Begin by teaching them the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, etc., following the text word for word so that the young may repeat these things after you and retain them in their memory.

¹¹ If any refuse to receive your instructions, tell them that they deny Christ and are no Christians. They should not be admitted to the sacrament, be accepted as sponsors in Baptism, or be allowed to participate in any Christian privileges. ⁴ On the contrary, they should be turned over to the pope and his officials, ⁵ and even to the devil himself. ¹² In addition, parents and employers should refuse to furnish them with food and drink and should notify them that the prince is disposed to banish such rude people from his land.

¹³ Although we cannot and should not compel anyone to believe, we should nevertheless insist that the people learn to know how to distinguish between right and wrong according to the standards of those among whom they live and make their living. ⁶ For anyone who desires to reside in a city is bound to know and observe the laws under whose protection he lives, no matter whether he is a believer or, at heart, a scoundrel or knave.

¹⁴ In the second place, after the people have become familiar with the text, teach them what it means. For this purpose, take the explanations in this booklet, or choose any other brief and fixed explanations which you may prefer, ¹⁵ and adhere to them without changing a single syllable, as stated above with reference to the text. ¹⁶ Moreover, allow yourself ample time, for it is not necessary to take up all the parts at once. They can be presented one at a time. When the learners have a proper understanding of the First Commandment, proceed to the Second Commandment, and so on. Otherwise they will be so overwhelmed that they will hardly remember anything at all.

¹⁷ In the third place, after you have thus taught this brief catechism, take up a large catechism ⁷ so that the people may have a richer and fuller understanding. Expound every commandment, petition, ^{(tr-}

⁵³⁷⁾and part, pointing out their respective obligations, benefits, dangers, advantages, and disadvantages, as you will find all of this treated at length in the many books written for this purpose. ¹⁸ Lay the greatest weight on those commandments or other parts which seem to require special attention among the people where you are. For example, the Seventh Commandment, which treats of stealing, must be emphasized when instructing laborers and shopkeepers, and even farmers and servants, for many of these are guilty of dishonesty and thievery. ⁸ So, too, the Fourth Commandment must be stressed when instructing children and the common people in order that they may be encouraged to be orderly, faithful, obedient, and peaceful. Always adduce many examples from the Scriptures to show how God punished and blessed.

¹⁹ You should also take pains to urge governing authorities and parents to rule wisely and educate their children. They must be shown that they are obliged to do so, and that they are guilty of damnable sin if they do not do so, for by such neglect they undermine and lay waste both the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world and are the worst enemies of God and man. ²⁰ Make very plain to them the shocking evils they introduce when they refuse their aid in the training of children to become pastors, preachers, notaries, etc., and tell them that God will inflict awful punishments on them for these sins. It is necessary to preach about such things. The extent to which parents and governing authorities sin in this respect is beyond telling. The devil also has a horrible purpose in mind.

²¹ Finally, now that the people are freed from the tyranny of the pope, they are unwilling to receive the sacrament and they treat it with contempt. Here, too, there is need of exhortation, but with this understanding: No one is to be compelled to believe or to receive the sacrament, no law is to be made concerning it, and no time or place should be appointed for it. ²² We should so preach that, of their own accord and without any law, the people will desire the sacrament and, as it were, compel us pastors to administer it to them. This can be done by telling them: It is to be feared that anyone who does not desire to receive the sacrament at least three or four times a year despises the sacrament and is no Christian, just as he is no Christian who does not hear and believe the Gospel. Christ did not say, "Omit this," or "Despise this," but he said, "Do this, as often as you drink it," etc. ⁹ Surely he wishes that this be done and not that it be omitted and despised. "*Do* this," he said.

²³ He who does not highly esteem the sacrament suggests thereby that he has no sin, no flesh, no devil, no world, no death, no ^(tr-539)hell. That is to say, he believes in none of these, although he is deeply immersed in them and is held captive by the devil. On the other hand, he suggests that he needs no grace, no life, no paradise, no heaven, no Christ, no God, nothing good at all. For if he believed that he was involved in so much that is evil and was in need of so much that is good, he would not neglect the sacrament in which aid is afforded against such evil and in which such good is bestowed. It is not necessary to compel him by any law to receive the sacrament, for he will hasten to it of his own accord, he will feel constrained to receive it, he will insist that you administer it to him.

²⁴ Accordingly you are not to make a law of this, as the pope has done. All you need to do is clearly to set forth the advantage and disadvantage, the benefit and loss, the blessing and danger connected with this sacrament. Then the people will come of their own accord and without compulsion on your part. But if they refuse to come, let them be, and tell them that those who do not feel and acknowledge their great need and God's gracious help belong to the devil. ²⁵ If you do not give such admonitions, or if you adopt odious laws on the subject, it is your own fault if the people treat the sacrament with contempt. How can they be other than negligent if you fail to do your duty and remain silent. So it is up to you, dear pastor and preacher! ²⁶ Our office has become something different from what it was under the pope. It is now a ministry of grace and salvation. ²⁷ It subjects us to greater burdens and labors, dangers and temptations, with little reward or gratitude from the world. But Christ himself will

be our reward if we labor faithfully. The Father of all grace grant it! To him be praise and thanks forever, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

[I] THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

IN THE PLAIN FORM IN WHICH THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHALL TEACH THEM TO HIS HOUSEHOLD¹

THE FIRST

“You shall have no other gods.”²

² What does this mean?

Answer: We should fear,³ love, and trust in God above all things.

THE SECOND

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.”⁴

⁴ What does this mean?

Answer: We should fear and love God, and so⁵ we should not use his name to curse, swear,⁶ practice magic, lie, or deceive, but in every time of need call upon him, pray to him, praise him, and give him thanks.^(tr-541)

THE THIRD

“Remember the Sabbath day,⁷ to keep it holy.”

⁶ What does this mean?

Answer: We should fear and love God, and so we should not despise his Word and the preaching of the same, but deem it holy and gladly hear and learn it.

THE FOURTH

“Honor your father and your mother.”

⁸ What does this mean?

Answer: We should fear and love God, and so we should not despise our parents and superiors, nor provoke them to anger, but honor, serve, obey, love, and esteem them.

THE FIFTH

“You shall not kill.”

¹⁰ What does this mean?

Answer: We should fear and love God, and so we should not endanger our neighbor's life, nor cause him any harm, but help and befriend him in every necessity of life.

THE SIXTH

“You shall not commit adultery.”

¹² What does this mean?

Answer: We should fear and love God, and so we should lead a chaste and pure life in word and deed, each one loving and honoring his wife or her husband.

THE SEVENTH

“You shall not steal.”

¹⁴ What does this mean?

Answer: We should fear and love God, and so we should not rob our neighbor of his money or property, nor bring them into our possession by dishonest trade or by dealing in shoddy wares, but help him to improve and protect his income and property.

THE EIGHTH

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

¹⁶ What does this mean?

Answer: We should fear and love God, and so we should not tell lies about our neighbor, nor betray, slander, or defame him, but should apologize for him, speak well of him, and interpret charitably all that he does.

THE NINTH

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house.”

¹⁸ What does this mean?

Answer: We should fear and love God, and so we should not seek by craftiness to gain possession of our neighbor’s inheritance or home, nor to obtain them under pretext of legal right, but be of service and help to him so that he may keep what is his. (tr-543)

THE TENTH

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass,⁸ or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

²⁰ What does this mean?

Answer: We should fear and love God, and so we should not abduct, estrange, or entice away our neighbor’s wife, servants, or cattle, but encourage them to remain and discharge their duty to him.

[CONCLUSION]

What does God declare concerning all these commandments?

Answer: He says, “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.”

²² What does this mean?

Answer: God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments. We should therefore fear his wrath and not disobey these commandments. On the other hand, he promises grace and every blessing to all who keep them. We should therefore love him, trust in him, and cheerfully do what he has commanded.

[II] THE CREED

IN THE PLAIN FORM IN WHICH THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHALL TEACH IT TO HIS HOUSEHOLD⁹

THE FIRST ARTICLE: CREATION

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

² What does this mean?

Answer: I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that he has given me and still sustains my body and soul, all my limbs and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my mind, together with food and clothing, house and home, family and property; that he provides me daily and abundantly with all the necessities of life, protects me from all danger, and preserves me from all evil. All this he does out of his pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness on my part. For all of this I am bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey him. This is most certainly true. (tr-545)

THE SECOND ARTICLE: REDEMPTION

“And in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried: he descended into hell, the third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and is seated on the right hand of God, the Father almighty, whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.”

⁴ What does this mean?

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

THE THIRD ARTICLE: SANCTIFICATION

“I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.”

⁶ What does this mean?

Answer: I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole

Christian church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church he daily and abundantly forgives all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and on the last day he will raise me and all the dead and will grant eternal life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true.

[III] THE LORD'S PRAYER

in the plain form in which the head of the family shall teach it to his household¹

[INTRODUCTION]

¹ *"Our Father who art in heaven."*²

² What does this mean?

Answer: Here God would encourage us to believe that he is truly our Father and we are truly his children in order that we may approach him boldly and confidently in prayer, even as beloved children approach their dear father. ^(tr-547)

THE FIRST PETITION

"Hallowed be thy name."

⁴ What does this mean?

Answer: To be sure, God's name is holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may also be holy for us.

⁵ How is this done?

Answer: When the Word of God is taught clearly and purely and we, as children of God, lead holy lives in accordance with it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But whoever teaches and lives otherwise than as the Word of God teaches, profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us, heavenly Father!

THE SECOND PETITION

"Thy kingdom come."

⁷ What does this mean?

Answer: To be sure, the kingdom of God comes of itself, without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may also come to us.

⁸ How is this done?

Answer: When the heavenly Father gives us his Holy Spirit so that by his grace we may believe his holy Word and live a godly life, both here in time and hereafter forever.

THE THIRD PETITION

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

¹⁰ What does this mean?

Answer: To be sure, the good and gracious will of God is done without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may also be done by us.

¹¹ How is this done?

Answer: When God curbs and destroys every evil counsel and purpose of the devil, of the world, and of our flesh which would hinder us from hallowing his name and prevent the coming of his kingdom, and when he strengthens us and keeps us steadfast in his Word and in faith even to the end. This is his good and gracious will.

THE FOURTH PETITION

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

¹³ What does this mean?

Answer: To be sure, God provides daily bread, even to the wicked, without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that God may make us aware of his gifts and enable us to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

¹⁴ What is meant by daily bread?

Answer: Everything required to satisfy our bodily needs, such as food and clothing, house and home, fields and flocks, money and property; a pious spouse and good children, ^(tr-549)trustworthy servants, godly and faithful rulers, good government; seasonable weather, peace and health, order and honor; true friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

THE FIFTH PETITION

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

¹⁶ What does this mean?

Answer: We pray in this petition that our heavenly Father may not look upon our sins, and on their account deny our prayers, for we neither merit nor deserve those things for which we pray. Although we sin daily and deserve nothing but punishment, we nevertheless pray that God may grant us all things by his grace. And assuredly we on our part will heartily forgive and cheerfully do good to those who may sin against us.

THE SIXTH PETITION

“And lead us not into temptation.”

¹⁸ What does this mean?

Answer: God tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that God may so guard and preserve us that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us or mislead us into unbelief, despair, and other great and shameful sins, but that, although we may be so tempted, we may finally prevail and gain the victory.

THE SEVENTH PETITION

“But deliver us from evil.”

²⁰ What does this mean?

Answer: We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that our Father in heaven may deliver us from all manner of evil, whether it affect body or soul, property or reputation, and that at last, when the hour of death comes, he may grant us a blessed end and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to himself in heaven.

[CONCLUSION]

“Amen.”³

²¹ What does this mean?

Answer: It means that I should be assured that such petitions are acceptable to our heavenly Father and are heard by him, for he himself commanded us to pray like this and promised to hear us. “Amen, amen” means “Yes, yes, it shall be so.”^(tr-551)

[IV] THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

IN THE PLAIN FORM IN WHICH THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHALL TEACH IT TO HIS HOUSEHOLD⁴

FIRST

¹ What is baptism?

² Answer: Baptism is not merely water, but it is water used according to God’s command and connected with God’s Word.

³ What is this Word of God?

⁴ Answer: As recorded in [Matthew 28:19](#), our Lord Christ said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

SECOND

⁵ What gifts or benefits does Baptism bestow?

⁶ Answer: It effects forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and grants eternal salvation to all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declare.

⁷ What is this Word and promise of God?

⁸ Answer: As recorded in [Mark 16:16](#), our Lord Christ said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

THIRD

⁹ How can water produce such great effects?

¹⁰ Answer: It is not the water that produces these effects, but the Word of God connected with the water, and our faith which relies on the Word of God connected with the water. For without the Word of God the water is merely water and no Baptism. But when connected with the Word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul wrote to Titus ([3:5-8](#)), “He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit,

which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life. This saying is sure.

FOURTH

¹⁰ What does such baptizing with water signify?

¹² Answer: It signifies that the old Adam in us, together with all sins and evil lusts, should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance and be put to death, and that the new man should come forth daily and rise up, cleansed and righteous, to live forever in God's presence.

^(tr-553)¹³ Where is this written?

¹⁴ Answer: In [Romans 6:4](#), St. Paul wrote, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

[V] [CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION]

*HOW PLAIN PEOPLE ARE TO BE TAUGHT TO CONFESS*⁵

¹⁶ WHAT IS CONFESSION?

Answer: Confession consists of two parts. One is that we confess our sins. The other is that we receive absolution or forgiveness from the confessor as from God himself, by no means doubting but firmly believing that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.

¹⁷ What sins should we confess?

¹⁸ Answer: Before God we should acknowledge that we are guilty of all manner of sins, even those of which we are not aware, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. Before the confessor, however, we should confess only those sins of which we have knowledge and which trouble us.

¹⁹ What are such sins?

²⁰ Answer: Reflect on your condition in the light of the Ten Commandments: whether you are a father or mother, a son or daughter, a master or servant; whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, lazy, ill-tempered, or quarrelsome; whether you have harmed anyone by word or deed; and whether you have stolen, neglected, or wasted anything, or done other evil.

²¹ Please give me a brief form of confession.

Answer: You should say to the confessor: "Dear Pastor, please hear my confession and declare that my sins are forgiven for God's sake."

"Proceed."

²² "I, a poor sinner, confess before God that I am guilty of all sins. In particular I confess in your presence that, as a manservant or maidservant, etc., I am unfaithful to my master, for here and there I have not done what I was told. I have made my master angry, caused him to curse, neglected to do my duty, and caused him to suffer loss. I have also been immodest in word and deed. I have quarreled with my equals. I have grumbled and sworn at my mistress, etc. For all this I am sorry and pray for grace. I mean to do better."

²³ A master or mistress may say: "In particular I confess in your presence that I have not been faithful in training my children, servants, and wife to the glory of God. I have cursed. I have set a bad example by my immodest language and actions. I have injured my neighbor ^(tr-555) by speaking evil of him, overcharging him, giving him inferior goods and short measure." Masters and mistresses should add whatever else they have done contrary to God's commandments and to their action in life, etc.

²⁴ If, however, anyone does not feel that his conscience is burdened by such or by greater sins, he should not worry, nor should he search for and invent other sins, for this would turn confession into torture;⁶ he should simply mention one or two sins of which he is aware. For example, “In particular I confess that I once cursed. On one occasion I also spoke indecently. And I neglected this or that,” etc. Let this suffice.

²⁵ If you have knowledge of no sin at all (which is quite unlikely), you should mention none in particular, but receive forgiveness upon the general confession⁷ which you make to God in the presence of the confessor.

²⁶ Then the confessor shall say: “God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith. Amen.”

²⁷ Again he shall say: “Do you believe that this forgiveness is the forgiveness of God?”

Answer: “Yes, I do.”

²⁸ Then he shall say: “Be it done for you as you have believed.⁸ According to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Go in peace.”⁹

²⁹ A confessor will know additional passages of the Scriptures with which to comfort and to strengthen the faith of those whose consciences are heavily burdened or who are distressed and sorely tried. This is intended simply as an ordinary form of confession for plain people.

[VI] THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

IN THE PLAIN FORM IN WHICH THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHALL TEACH IT TO HIS HOUSEHOLD¹

¹ WHAT IS THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR?

² Answer: Instituted by Christ himself, it is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, given to us Christians to eat and to drink.

³ Where is this written?

⁴ Answer: The holy evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and also St. Paul, write thus: “Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and when he had given thanks he gave ^(tr-557)it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you. This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’”²

⁵ What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?

⁶ Answer: We are told in the words “for you” and “for the forgiveness of sin.” By these words the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament, for where there is forgiveness of sins, there are also life and salvation.

⁷ How can bodily eating and drinking produce such great effects?

⁸ Answer: The eating and drinking do not in themselves produce them, but the words “for you” and “for the forgiveness of sins.” These words, when accompanied by the bodily eating and drinking, are the chief thing in the sacrament, and he who believes these words has what they say and declare: the forgiveness of sins.

⁹ Who, then, receives this sacrament worthily?

¹⁰ Answer: Fasting and bodily preparation are a good external discipline, but he is truly worthy and well prepared who believes these words: “for you” and “for the forgiveness of sins.” On the other

hand, he who does not believe these words, or doubts them, is unworthy and unprepared, for the words “for you” require truly believing hearts.

[VII] [MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS]

HOW THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHALL TEACH HIS HOUSEHOLD TO SAY MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS³

¹ IN THE MORNING, WHEN YOU RISE, MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS AND SAY, “IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.”

² Then, kneeling or standing, say the Apostles’ Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. Then you may say this prayer:

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

³ After singing a hymn (possibly a hymn on the Ten Commandments)⁴ or whatever your devotion may suggest, you should go to your work joyfully.

^(tr-559)⁴ In the evening, when you retire, make the sign of the cross and say, “In the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

⁵ Then, kneeling or standing, say the Apostles’ Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. Then you may say this prayer:

“I give Thee thanks, heavenly Father, through thy dear Son Jesus Christ, that Thou hast this day graciously protected me. I beseech Thee to forgive all my sin and the wrong which I have done. Graciously protect me during the coming night. Into thy hands I commend my body and soul and all that is mine. Let thy holy angels have charge of me, that the wicked one may have no power over me. Amen.”

Then quickly lie down and sleep in peace.

[VIII] [GRACE AT TABLE]

HOW THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHALL TEACH HIS HOUSEHOLD TO OFFER BLESSING AND THANKSGIVING AT TABLE⁵

[BLESSING BEFORE EATING]

⁷ When children and the whole household gather at the table, they should reverently fold their hands and say:

“The eyes of all look to Thee, O Lord, and Thou givest them their food in due season. Thou openest thy hand; Thou satisfiest the desire of every living thing.”⁶

⁸ (It is to be observed that “satisfying the desire of every living thing” means that all creatures receive enough to eat to make them joyful and of good cheer. Greed and anxiety about food prevent such satisfaction.)

⁹ Then the Lord’s Prayer should be said, and afterwards this prayer:

“Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us, and these thy gifts which of thy bountiful goodness Thou hast bestowed on us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

[THANKSGIVING AFTER EATING]

After eating, likewise, they should fold their hands reverently and say:

“O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever. He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens which cry. His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man; but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.”⁷

¹¹ Then the Lord’s Prayer should be said, and afterwards this prayer:

“We give Thee thanks, Lord God, our Father, for all thy benefits, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns forever. Amen.”^(tr-561)

[IX] TABLE OF DUTIES

*CONSISTING OF CERTAIN PASSAGES OF THE SCRIPTURES, SELECTED
FOR VARIOUS ESTATES AND CONDITIONS OF MEN, BY
WHICH THEY MAY BE ADMONISHED TO DO
THEIR RESPECTIVE DUTIES*⁸

BISHOPS, PASTORS, AND PREACHERS

“A bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher, no drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and no lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way. He must not be a recent convert,” etc. (1 Tim. 3:2-6).

DUTIES CHRISTIANS OWE THEIR TEACHERS AND PASTORS

“Remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages” (Luke 10:7). “The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14). “Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived; God is not mocked” (Gal. 6:6, 7). “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; for the scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain,’ and ‘The laborer deserves his wages’” (1 Tim. 5:17, 18). “We beseech you, brethren, to respect those who labor among you and who are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves” (1 Thess. 5:12, 13). “Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Heb. 13:17).

GOVERNING AUTHORITIES⁹

“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. He who is in authority does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer” (Rom. 13:1-4).

DUTIES SUBJECTS OWE TO GOVERNING AUTHORITIES

“Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21). “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God’s wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due” (Rom. 13:1, 5-7). “I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way” (1 Tim. 2:1-2). “Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for any honest work” (Tit. 3:1). “Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right” (1 Pet. 2:13, 14).

HUSBANDS

“You husbands, live considerately with your wives, bestowing honor on the woman as the weaker sex, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Pet. 3:7). “Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them” (Col. 3:19).^(tr-563)

WIVES

“You wives, be submissive to your husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are now her children if you do right and let nothing terrify you” (1 Pet. 3:1, 6).

PARENTS

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, lest they become discouraged, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21).

CHILDREN

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’ (this is the first commandment with a promise) ‘that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth’” (Eph. 6:1-3).

LABORERS AND SERVANTS, MALE AND FEMALE

“Be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling, with singleness of heart, as to Christ; not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same again from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free” (Eph. 6:5-8).

MASTERS AND MISTRESSES

“Masters, do the same to them, and forbear threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him” (Eph. 6:9).

YOUNG PERSONS IN GENERAL

“You that are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may exalt you” (1 Pet. 5:5, 6).

WIDOWS

“She who is a real widow, and is left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day; whereas she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives” (1 Tim. 5:5, 6).

CHRISTIANS IN GENERAL

“The commandments are summed up in this sentence: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Rom. 13:9). “I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men” (1 Tim. 2:1).

¹⁵ Let each his lesson learn with care
And all the household well will fare.⁹¹

¹Tappert, T. G. (2000, c1959). The book of concord : The confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church (The Small Catechism: -VIII, 15). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.