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The Catechism in Public Worship

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unter der alle stehen; Aufhebung aller doctores weltlichen und geistlichen Rechts; Ersatz des abzuschaffenden römischen Rechts durch das deutsche; Ausweisung der Geistlichen aus dem Reichs- und Fürstenrat; Errichtung von Reichsgerichten, über 64 Landgruppen verteilt. Nach dem achten Artikel sollen „alle Zölle . . . fürbahin tot und ab sein, ausgenommen was zur Notdurft erkannt wird“. Das bedeutet die Aufstellung des Grundsatzes, daß Zölle nur ein gewisses Einkommen für Obrigkeit bieten, nicht im Sinne von Schutzzoll aufzufassen sind.¹⁸⁾ Die beschwerliche verteuernde Ungleichheit von Münze und Gewicht soll aufhören (Art. 9. 10). Der elfte Artikel hebt alle großen Gesellschaften „und andere Kaufhändler“, die dem öffentlichen Wohl entgegenlaufen, auf, um die Verzehrenden und die Handwerker zu schützen. Es soll nicht jeder mit allerhand Waren handeln. Kein Kaufmann soll einen größeren Handel als bis zu 10,000 Gulden treiben.¹⁹⁾ Was er über dieser Summe besitzt, hat er der Obrigkeit zu 4 Prozent zu überlassen, die damit Armen Kredit verschafft. Der „Beschlussartikel“ erklärt nochmals, daß die Artikel nur die Frommen in ihrem Tun und Lassen fördern und den christlichen Glauben in rechter brüderlicher Liebe erhalten und mehren wollen. Gerade jetzt lasse Gott seine Gnade erscheinen. Deswegen sollten gerade die (römischen) Geistlichen das Kirchengut herausgeben. Sonst werde eine Zeit kommen, „daß ihre Güter als der Feinde Güter gebeutet und ausgeteilt werden. Dann werden erst die 12 Hauptartikel ihren Anfang nehmen“.

Manches haben diese Schriften mit den Reformatoren gemein; aber in Religionsduldung, Abschaffung des weltlichen und geistlichen Rechts, Rückgabe der Fischerei, der Jagd, des Waldes, mit mehreren Begründungen des natürlichen Rechts, gehen sie über die wirtschaftlichen Ansichten der Reformatoren hinaus, wenn auch nicht so weit wie die Wiedertäufer, Bauernrebelln und Münsterleute.

Richard B. Heinke.

The Catechism in Public Worship.

One of the most faithful disciples of Luther was Joachim Moerlin (born April 6, 1514, at Wittenberg, died May 23, 1571, at Königsberg). Luther regarded the young man so highly that he honored him by appointing him as his chaplain in 1539. A thorough theologian, a friend and coworker of Chemnitz at Königsberg and Braunschweig, a powerful, practical preacher, a fearless advocate of Lutheran doctrine and practise, a conscientious pastor and *Seelsorger*,

18) G. W. Böhmer in seiner Einleitung zu „Friedrichs III. Reformation“, S. 11 ff. 129 ff.

19) Der Reichstag von 1522 hatte Handelsgesellschaften mit mehr als 50,000 Gulden Kapital verboten. Aber sie waren einflußreich genug gewesen, Karl V. von der Durchführung abzuhalten.

a lover of music and song, Moerlin was withal one of the ablest catechists of his day. In the year after Luther's death, Moerlin published, at Goettingen, an exposition of Luther's Small Catechism, of which several revised editions appeared during his lifetime and which for more than sixty-five years was the exposition generally used in the principality of Goettingen and in the duchy of Braunschweig. In the preface to his exposition, Moerlin speaks very highly, though by no means too highly, of Luther's Small Catechism. We read: "I sincerely regard the Enchiridion as so precious, great, and noble a book that I cannot conceive how we can thank God sufficiently even if He had given us nothing more on earth through this great and holy, precious prophet. If one would take the Catechism out of the Bible, what would remain? . . . There is hardly a word, almost no syllable and letter, which does not offer and indicate such high ideas, thoughts, that I daily must ponder over it and, sorry to say, still am a poor, simple little pupil in it. Therefore my dearest book of all on earth shall be and remain the dear Catechism of my dear, blessed father in Christ, Doctor Martin. . . . As long as I am an unworthy, poor servant of my dearest Savior Jesus Christ, this book shall never leave my pulpit nor the school; for I have experienced what the Small Catechism of Dr. Luther does: it makes Christians and works miracles above all miracles." (Translated from Reu, *Quellen zur Geschichte des kirchlichen Unterrichts*, I, III, 1, p. 891*.)

While Luther did not think so highly of his own Enchiridion, yet Moerlin merely voices the opinion of Luther on the need of preaching the catechism and the blessings flowing from such preaching into the hearts of the hearers and becoming manifest in their lives. From the beginning to the end of his pastorate, Luther was an enthusiastic, untiring preacher of the catechism, and by such preaching he became the great Reformer of the Church of Christ, the founder of our Lutheran Church.

In the year 1516 Luther had been called as pastor of St. Mary's, or the City Church of Wittenberg, and at once began to expound the catechism to his congregation. Beginning in June and continuing to February, 1517, he preached on the Ten Commandments, following up this series by another on the Lord's Prayer, February till April. These sermons were later published in book form, passing through many editions. To his friend Spalatin he writes under date of March 13, 1519: "Every day at evening I pronounce the Commandments and the Lord's Prayer for the children and the unlearned; then I preach." This custom inaugurated by Luther, it seems, became quite wide-spread during the following years and was one of the important factors in thoroughly acquainting the congregation, young and old, with the text of the catechism. The term *catechism*, by the way, as used by Luther during the early years of the Ref-

ormation, comprised three parts: Commandments, Creed, and Lord's Prayer. In 1520 Luther revised his sermons on the Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, added an exposition of the Creed, and published the whole work under the title *Brief Form of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer*. Two years later his *Prayer-booklet* came out, which in addition to the *Brief Form* contained, besides a preface, an exposition of the Ave Maria, the German translation of Pss. 12, 67, 51, 103, 20, 79, 25, 10, and of St. Paul's Epistle to Titus. In later editions, sermons on Baptism and the Lord's Supper were added, and in 1529 his entire Small Catechism (cp. Cordes, *Die evang. Katechismusversuche*, I, p. 5 ff.). To this *Betbuechlein* Luther refers in his *Deutsche Messe, German Order of Worship*, when he instructs parents how to examine their children on the catechism: "Such questions may be taken from our *Prayer-booklet*, which offers a brief exposition of these three parts." (St. L. X, 231, § 15.) In this *German Order of Worship* he also makes it the duty of pastors "to preach at certain times, or daily, as the need may require," on the catechism. (St. L. X, 229, § 9; 230, § 12.) He himself preached on the catechism during Lent, 1522 and 1523, and on various parts of the catechism during the ensuing years, while in 1528, in preparation for his Large and Small Catechism, he preached three series of sermons on the entire catechism, one beginning in May, the second in September, the last in December. In his Large Catechism Luther implores all Christians, and especially all pastors and preachers, that they guard with all care and diligence against the poisonous infection of security, but keep on steadily not only in reading, learning, pondering, and meditating the Catechism, but *teaching* it; "and do not cease until they have made a test and are sure that they have taught the devil to death and have become more learned than God Himself," who "is not ashamed to teach these things daily, as knowing nothing better to teach, and always keeps teaching the same thing and does not take up anything new or different." (Large Catechism, Trigl., 573, §§ 16. 19.) And in a sermon preached as late as 1537 at Smalcald he says: "Christ, our dear Lord, has commanded us diligently to study and gladly to hear His Word. For though it always be the same sermon on Christ, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, still it is not so useless as some think. Because it is the Word of God, it has and keeps forever its nature [power] of renewing man and constantly making him more fervent and pious. Therefore it is forbidden throughout Holy Scripture and the prophets that one should seek a new word, but continually cling to the one and only one." (St. L., X, 982.)

Luther's precept and example were followed by his coworkers. Melancthon in the *Instruction of the Visitors to the Pastors in the*

Electorate of Saxony urges throughout the preaching of the chief parts of the catechism and makes it obligatory on the superintendent to see to it that only such pastors be permitted to preach as are able to teach the catechism. (St. L. X, 1637—1681.)

These *Instructions* bore splendid fruit. The order adopted by the congregation at Schoenewalde during the visitation of 1528—1529 is typical of scores of others proposed to, and adopted by, the congregations of Ernestine Saxony at this time. We read: "On the afternoon of every Sunday and festival day the pastor shall recite before the people the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. Then he shall in simplest manner explain the same, similarly as a printed chart has been issued [Luther's Enchiridion in chart-form], and finally treat one, two, three, or four points, as time will permit, so that the people may understand them. During the winter time he shall also do this twice a week, on Tuesday and Friday, and during the sermon he shall examine the people as to the meaning of some of the articles. After he has so far succeeded that they know the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Prayer, he shall also preach to them the benefit of the Holy Sacraments of Baptism and of the Altar and point out what they find in them. Unless they have confessed and unless they have deplored their failings, the pastor shall give the Sacrament to no one; likewise, unless they know the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. He shall visit the villages every two weeks and teach the catechism there." (Rev. *Quellen*, I, II, 1, p. 40.)*

Similar ordinances were adopted wherever the Reformation was introduced. Bugenhagen, the great organizer, who himself preached frequently on the catechism in the City Church of Wittenberg, was sent to various cities and countries to organize the congregational work, and invariably he stressed the need of preaching the catechism. So in the ordinance for Braunschweig, adopted September 5, 1528; for Hamburg, 1529; Luebeck, 1530; Pomerania, 1534; Denmark, 1537; Hildesheim, 1542. We quote from the *Kirchenordnung* for the city of Braunschweig, which became the model for the ordinances adopted by the churches of Schleswig-Holstein, Lueneburg, and others.

We there read: "Work of all the preachers: Morning services on Sundays and holy-days during summer, beginning with the Passion season. At 4 o'clock, at St. Martin's, St. Andrew's, and St. Magnus's, the catechism, that is, the Christian instruction from the Ten Commandments of God, from the Lord's Prayer, and Baptism and the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, shall be preached in the simplest and plainest manner, so that the common people may thus learn what are true Christian commands, true Christian faith, true Christian prayer, and what one shall believe of the two Sacraments that Christ has by His eternal Word instituted and com-

manded in this world. At 5 o'clock this shall be done at St. Catharine's, St. Ulrich's, and St. Peter's." At 6 or 7 o'clock a sermon is to be preached on the Gospel-lessons at all the churches. In fall all the services were to be held at some later hour, "but all pastors shall agree and adopt a uniform custom in all churches." (Surely a wise ordinance!) (Reu, I, III, 1, p. 691.)* A special program was arranged for the winter.

The ordinance has a separate chapter "On the Four Special Seasons of the Catechism, That Is, of Instruction." We read: "Although, as has been said, the catechism is being preached every Sunday in the early morning by the other preachers, there are also set aside four seasons in the year when such [sermons] shall be preached by the superintendent and his assistant [adjutor] throughout the city. . . . These times are: In the Advent season two weeks on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. In the first four full weeks in Lent in the same manner. In Cross-week† and the week following in like manner, with the exception of the day of the Lord's Ascension. Two weeks after the harvest, before the hops are gathered, in the same manner. Therefore these two preachers shall briefly and plainly compile the catechism for the unlearned, so that it can be finished in these eight sermons. In the mean time the other pastors shall cease and rest with their lessons or work-day sermons; only on Wednesdays shall they preach in all churches during the "weeks of the catechism." But when the seasons approach that the Monday sermons on the catechism shall be begun, the other preachers shall on the Sunday preceding in all churches announce it to the people from the pulpit and admonish them that they are obliged to send their children and servants to such sermons. One quarter hour before such service the bells should be rung in all monasteries. Such hours shall be chosen for the two sermons as appear to be advantageous and convenient for the people and the servants, one in the morning, one in the evening." (Reu, l. c., p. 962.)*

In Schleswig the *German Mass* of Luther, with its insistence on catechetical instruction, was introduced already in 1527, and in 1528 the oldest North German Church Ordinance was officially adopted, the *Hardensleben Articles*, whose chief author was Johann Wenth, a pupil of Luther, who had been called to Hardensleben as *lector* on Biblical theology. This ordinance made it obligatory for the preachers to teach the catechism to their people. For this purpose they should, besides other measures, recite the catechism, that is, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the words of Baptism

† The week of Ascension Day, so called because of the solemn procession, on one or three of the days preceding Ascension Day, of the entire congregation to some specified church, in which a solemn mass was celebrated. During the procession from the home church and the return to it a large crucifix was carried at its head; hence the name Cross-week.

and the Sacrament of the Altar word for word after every Sunday's sermon. On the seven Sundays of Lent and on the seven Sundays following Michaelmas they were to preach on the five Chief Parts according to a prescribed schedule.

In the Latin *Ordinatio Ecclesiastica* for Denmark, which was based largely on the *Hardenleben Articles*, before mentioned, and which was sent to Wittenberg for Luther's approval in April, 1537, and delivered, with his sanction, by Bugenhagen in July of the same year, and which influenced the work of reformation throughout the entire land of the Danes, we read among other interesting passages: "In the matins on Sundays and holidays three psalms . . . shall be sung before the sermon. After them the boys shall read in a medium voice, without chanting, the Catechism, while the teacher shall always chant the heading. In this manner: First the teacher: 'These are the commandments of the Lord, our God.' Then the boys, changing about in order, the rest: 'I am the Lord, thy God. Thou shalt have,' etc. The teacher: 'These are the articles of our faith.' The pupils: 'I believe,' etc." As to public worship we read: "After breakfast the Catechism shall continually be preached to the pupils, yea, to all: first the Ten Commandments; then the Articles of Faith; thereafter the Lord's Prayer; finally the institution and use of the Sacraments; however, in this manner, that always one single part be completed at one time and that in the end one certain, sure and uniform exposition be regularly used, as it is found in Luther's Catechism. For here one must not show his learning and ability, but all must serve for the edification of the congregation, so that the same may always be heard by all and the people be made certain in their indoctrination by this very uniformity. As long as the points of any one part are being explained, the part in its entirety shall always be repeated, but in proper order, so that the pupils and all others may silently, for themselves, follow. . . . The Catechism once finished, shall always be repeated from the beginning." (Reu, l. c., I, III, 1, p. 518*.)

These few examples, which might easily be multiplied, indicate conclusively the importance attached by the founders of our Lutheran Church to catechetical instruction in public worship, and especially to preaching the Catechism. They certainly did not neglect the teaching of the Catechism in home and school, as we intend to show in a later issue. Yet it was from the pulpit that they inculcated upon their parishioners the duty to train their children in the Catechism at home and in school, and from the pulpit they preached the Catechism into the heads and minds and hearts and souls of their hearers, so that the Catechism became in truth the Layman's Bible, his norm and guide in doctrine and life. Many unlearned Christians could put to shame many a priest and bishop as to thorough knowledge of Christian doctrine. This systematic preaching of the Cat-

echism serves to explain in a large measure the rapid spread of the Gospel-truth, the marvelous growth of the Lutheran Church in spite of vehement opposition and persecution on the part of Rome and of that unfortunate, deplorable defection of Zwingli and Calvin and their adherents. This preaching of the Catechism explains the interest taken in theological questions not only by theologians, but by the man in the street, in the workshop, in the home. Nor was this mere dead orthodoxy. The lives of the Christians manifested forth the justifying and sanctifying power of the truths of the Catechism, which, since they were the Word of God, were the wisdom of God and the power of God. Else would so many have suffered persecution, exile, loss of house and home, separation from family and friends, imprisonment, death? What a marvelous change was effected by the simple preaching of the Catechism!

As children of the Reformation, as successors of Luther in the noble work of building the Church of the pure Word and Sacraments, let us, like Luther, glory in remaining pupils of the Catechism and preachers of the Catechism till our dying day. We are at times filled with gravest fear as to the future of our dear Lutheran Church. We know the dangers impending within and without; we know that indifference, worldliness, smug self-satisfaction, externalism, a lamentable unwillingness to work and sacrifice for God's kingdom, threaten to sap the very life-blood of our Church. Are we pastors applying the proper remedy? Conditions are not worse to-day than in the day of Luther. Though then, as now, the whole head was sick and the whole heart faint, yet he began to preach the Catechism and continued to preach this Catechism. And, lo and behold, what marvelous success was gained, what seemingly impossible change was accomplished! We have the same Catechism, the same simple truth of the milk of the Word. Nor has this Word lost its power and efficiency. God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure shall to eternity endure. And to the end of times, God's Word and Luther's Catechism will prove itself to be incorruptible seed, regenerating mankind, establishing and maintaining the Church of Christ on earth spite of all efforts of the gates of hell to overthrow it.

Let us preach that Word, that Catechism. Though not all the methods advocated and adopted by our fathers may be feasible in our day and under the changed conditions of our age, yet even to-day there are many possibilities of preaching the Catechism in public worship. Above all a Lutheran pastor should in every sermon preach the simple truths of the Catechism. The Chief Parts of the Catechism, after all, constitute the very heart of Christianity. Omitting them, failing to preach them, regarding them as outworn, out of date, obsolete, what have we to offer? Surely no more than hay, straw, stubble, which will not satisfy, which starve the soul and finally will fill man with disgust and hatred of religion. Preaching the Cat-

echism does not mean being satisfied with a dry presentation of the doctrines or with shallow generalities. It does mean leading the congregation ever deeper into the knowledge of the truth by a vivid clear presentation, by pointing out the interrelation and mutual dependence of the various doctrines, their importance in God's plan of salvation, their practical value for the faith and life of the child of God. Paul preached the catechetical truth of the resurrection of life, 1 Cor. 15, in order to bring home to his Christians their duty to abound in the work of the Lord and to make them willing for the collection for the saints, v. 58; chap. 16, 1. He preached the catechetical truth of Christ's humiliation and exaltation in order to admonish the Philippians to true lowliness of mind, Phil. 2, 1—12. Catechetical sermons dry sermons? Read Luther's sermons on the Catechism. They teem with life, with practical applications, with every-day examples. Learn of Luther to preach catechetical sermons, and you will not only have an interested audience, you will by such preaching save yourself and them that hear you.

While the truths of the Catechism should be presented in every sermon, it would be of inestimable value to preach special series of sermons on the Catechism, perhaps in the Sunday or midweek evening service or once a month on a certain Sunday or during special seasons. In connection with these services the good old custom of having a group of children recite the Catechism or parts of the Catechism could be revived. Or the pastor could, beginning with these special services, gradually introduce or revive the catechizing of the children in public service, care being taken of course not to draw out the service to too great a length. Such recitations and catecheses are profitable not only for the children, but especially for the adults. The exact wording of the Catechism will be remembered, forgotten truths brought back to their memory, unknown truths taught, a better understanding given of truths misunderstood or not fully grasped, in brief, the entire congregation more thoroughly indoctrinated, made wise unto salvation, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

Let Lutheran pastors not only praise Luther's Catechism; let them preach it until, as Luther so drastically puts it, "they have taught the devil to death." Then Luther's promise will come true (*Trigl.*, 573, § 20): "If they manifest such diligence, then I will promise them, and they shall also perceive, what fruit they will obtain and what excellent men God will make of them, so that in due time they themselves will acknowledge that the longer and the more they study the Catechism, the less they know of it, and the more they find yet to learn; and then only, as hungry and thirsty ones, will they truly relish that which now they cannot endure because of great abundance and satiety. To this end may God grant His grace! Amen."

T. L.