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## Preliminary Report of the Synodical Conference Catechism Committee

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the sense of Scripture or on what some master dreams for him. Dr. Robert F. Horton, as quoted from the *Contemporary Review*, January, 1917, in *Modern Religious Liberalism*, by J. Horsch, p. 30, states the case thus: "The real difficulty of our time is the dethronement of the Bible from its position of unquestioned authority. Up to the middle of the last century the imposing fortress of the Book remained practically unquestioned and certainly unbreached. No one within the borders of the Church hesitated to regard the Bible as effectively infallible. A quotation from any part of it carried unquestioned weight, and decisions drawn from its decretals were the settlement of all strife. . . . [Liberal] Protestants have lost their Bible and, in losing it, have lost their religion. How can they shelter in a building which is demolished or which is ever hidden by the scaffolding about it, necessary for perpetual repairs?"

TH. ENGELDER

(To be concluded)

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## Preliminary Report of the Committee

representing synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America to supply a revised translation of Luther's Small Catechism to supplant the three or more translations now in use

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

As the Head of the Family Should Teach Them  
in All Simplicity to His Household

#### I AM THE LORD, THY GOD

##### The First Commandment

Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

What does this mean?

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

##### The Second Commandment

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon Him in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

##### The Third Commandment

Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

**The Fourth Commandment**

**Honor thy father and thy mother that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth.**

What does this mean?

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

**The Fifth Commandment**

**Thou shalt not kill.**

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need.

**The Sixth Commandment**

**Thou shalt not commit adultery.**

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we lead a chaste and pure life in word and deed and each love and honor his spouse.

**The Seventh Commandment**

**Thou shalt not steal.**

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not take our neighbor's money or goods nor get them by false ware or dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and living.

**The Eighth Commandment**

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

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, nor defame our neighbor, but excuse him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

**The Ninth Commandment**

**Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.**

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not desire craftily to get our neighbor's inheritance or house nor obtain it by a show of right, but be of help and service to him in keeping it.

**The Tenth Commandment**

**Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.**



What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not estrange, force, or entice away our neighbor's wife, servants, or cattle, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

What does God say of all these commandments?

He says thus: I, the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all that transgress these commandments. Therefore we should fear His wrath and do nothing against these commandments. But He promises grace and every blessing to all that keep these commandments. Therefore we should also love Him, trust in Him, and willingly do according to His commandments.

## THE CREED

As the Head of the Family Should Teach It  
in All Simplicity to His Household

### The First Article

#### OF CREATION

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them; that He gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, fields, flocks, and all my goods; that He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life; that He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil; and that He does all this purely out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all which it is my duty to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

### The Second Article

#### OF REDEMPTION

And in Jesus Christ . . . and the dead.

What does this mean?

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, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power

of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I should be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

**The Third Article  
OF SANCTIFICATION**

I believe in the Holy Ghost . . . Amen.

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers and will at the Last Day raise up me and all the dead and will give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true.

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**As the Head of the Family Should Teach It  
in All Simplicity to His Household**

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**The Introduction**

Our Father who art in heaven.

What does this mean?

God would by these words tenderly invite us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that we may boldly and confidently ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

**The First Petition**

Hallowed be Thy name.

What does this mean?

The name of God is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy also among us.



How is this done?

When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity and we as the children of God also lead holy lives according to it. This grant us, dear Father in heaven! But whoever teaches and lives otherwise than God's Word teaches, he profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us, heavenly Father!

### The Second Petition

Thy kingdom come.

What does this mean?

The kingdom of God comes indeed without our prayer, of itself; but we pray in this petition that it may come also unto us.

How is this done?

When our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and live godly here in time and hereafter in eternity.

### The Third Petition

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

What does this mean?

The good and gracious will of God is done indeed without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done also among us.

How is this done?

When God breaks and hinders every evil will and counsel which would not let us hallow God's name nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh; but strengthens and keeps us steadfast in His Word and in faith unto our end. This is His gracious and good will.

### The Fourth Petition

Give us this day our daily bread.

What does this mean?

God gives daily bread indeed without our prayer, even to all the wicked; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to acknowledge our daily bread as His gift and to receive it with thanksgiving.

What, then, is meant by daily bread?

Everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body, such as food and drink, clothing and shoes, house and home, fields and flocks, money and goods; a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, order, honor, true friends, good neighbors, and the like.

### **The Fifth Petition**

**And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins nor on their account deny our prayers; for we are worthy of none of the things for which we pray, neither have we deserved them; but that He would grant them all to us by grace; for we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment. Therefore, surely, we, on our part, will heartily forgive and readily do good to those who sin against us.

### **The Sixth Petition**

**And lead us not into temptation.**

What does this mean?

God indeed tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us nor lead us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and that, when so tempted, we still may finally overcome and gain the victory.

### **The Seventh Petition**

**But deliver us from evil.**

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil of body and soul, property and honor, and finally, when our last hour shall come, grant us a blessed end and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Himself in heaven.

### **The Conclusion**

**For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

What does "Amen" mean?

That I should be certain that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us so to pray and has promised to hear us. Amen, Amen, that is, yea, yea, it shall be so.

## **THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM**

**As the Head of the Family Should Teach It  
in All Simplicity to His Household**

### **First**

What is Baptism?

**Baptism is not simply water, but it is water used by God's command and connected with God's Word.**



**What is that Word of God?**

Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Matthew: Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

**Secondly****What does Baptism give or profit?**

It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

**What are such words and promises of God?**

Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Mark: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

**Thirdly****How can water do such great things?**

It is not the water indeed that does them, but the Word of God which is in and with the water, and faith, which trusts this Word of God in the water. For without the Word of God the water is simply water and no Baptism. But with the Word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says, Titus, chapter third: —

According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior; that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

**Fourthly****What does such baptizing with water signify?**

It signifies that the Old Adam in us is to be drowned by daily contrition and repentance and is to die with all sins and evil lusts; and, again, a new man is daily to come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

**Where is this written?**

St. Paul says, Romans, chapter sixth: We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that, like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

**THE OFFICE OF THE KEYS****As the Head of the Family Should Teach It  
in All Simplicity to His Household****What is the Office of the Keys?**

The Office of the Keys is the peculiar power given by Christ to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of penitent sinners, but to retain the sins of the impenitent so long as they do not repent.



### **Preliminary Report of the Committee**

**Where is this written?**

Thus writes the holy Evangelist John, chapter twentieth:

The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

**What do you believe according to these words?**

I believe that, when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, this is as valid and certain, in heaven also, as if Christ our dear Lord, dealt with us Himself. In particular is this true when they exclude manifest and impenitent sinners from the Christian congregation, and, again, when they absolve those who repent and are willing to amend.

### **How the Unlearned Should be Taught to Confess**

**What is Confession?**

Confession embraces two parts: the one is that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the confessor as from God Himself and in no wise doubt, but firmly believe that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.

**What sins should we confess?**

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even of those which we do not know, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the confessor we should confess those sins only which we know and feel in our hearts.

**Which are these?**

Here consider your position according to the Ten Commandments, whether you are a father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, servant; whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, slothful; whether you have grieved any one by word or deed; whether you have stolen, neglected, or wasted anything, or done other damage.

### **THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR**

**As the Head of the Family Should Teach It  
in All Simplicity to His Household**

**What is the Sacrament of the Altar?**

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.

**Where is this written?**

The holy evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul write thus:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it and gave it to His disciples and said, Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.



After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Take, drink ye all of it; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.

What is the benefit of this eating and drinking?

That is shown us by these words, "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins"; namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

How can bodily eating and drinking do these great things?

It is not the eating and drinking indeed that does them, but the words here written "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins"; for, beside the bodily eating and drinking, these words are the chief thing in the Sacrament; and he that believes these words has what they say and declare, namely, the forgiveness of sins.

Who, then, receives such Sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation are indeed a fine outward practise; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words, "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." But he that does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared; for the words "For you" require nothing but believing hearts.

#### Members of the Committee

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