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## THE CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE BIBLE IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Active efforts are being made at the present time in various quarters for the reintroduction of the Bible into our public schools. This movement gives rise to a controversy very similar to the one which raged on the occasion of the elimination of the Bible as a text-book from the American public school system. The following brief historical consideration of that earlier struggle, therefore, seems appropriate at the present time.

The opposition to the Bible as a text-book began about 1840, especially in the large cities,<sup>1)</sup> and at the instigation of the Roman Catholic Church. According to Goodrich,<sup>2)</sup> the Catholics at this time numbered 800,000, out of a total of about 10,000,000 church-members in the United States. The Roman Catholics favored legal exclusion of the Bible from the public schools; Daniel Webster opposed legal exclusion.<sup>3)</sup>

The controversy was really due to the rise of state-supported public schools. Denominational schools wanted state support; but it became the established policy of the State not to give such support. The controversy involves the interpretation of the Constitution and the question whether the Bible is a sectarian book.

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1) Monroe's *Cyc. of Ed.*, I, p. 373.

2) Peter Parley's *Tales about the U. S.* (1883), p. 227.

3) Cheever, *Right of the Bible in Our Public Schools*. (New York, 1854.)

# MATERIALS FOR THE CATECHIST.

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## FIFTH OUTLINE.

### *THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.* Qu. 17—28.

“As the First Commandment has instructed the heart and taught it faith, so this commandment leads us forth and directs the mouth and tongue to God. For the first objects that, springing from the heart, manifest themselves are words.” *Large Cat.*, p. 397. “The Second Commandment teaches man how to conduct himself toward God in public, in his conversation with others, or in private, in his thoughts of God, *viz.*, how to show reverence to God’s name. For we cannot exhibit God to ourselves nor to others according to His divine essence, but only by means of His name.” X, 151. Thus Luther seeks to establish the progression of thought from the First to the Second Commandment: from the consideration of God Himself, the highest good, we proceed to the consideration of forms for addressing Him, for regulating our intercourse with, or our references to, Him.

*I. The Name of God. Qu. 20.*

A. *Names are markers.* When applied to persons, they serve to distinguish a person from others. By pronouncing a person's name, we summon him before our mind and the mind of others. The name stands for the person. We cannot think or speak definitely of anybody except by means of his name.

Names may be inadequate: they may not express all that a person is, all that might be said about him. Names may be arbitrary: they may not state anything characteristic; they may be a mere convenience. Names may even contain contradictions. Mr. White may be a negro. Most names do not exhaust the subject to which they are applied. We are usually able to distinguish between a person and his name. But we are conscious in every case where we repeat the name of a person of a certain fixed and indestructible connection between a name and the person bearing that name.

B. *God also is named.* Moses felt that, in order to speak intelligently of God, he must know His name. He asked God His name, Ex. 3, 13 f.; 6, 3. Nobody has a right to name God. Nobody could truly name Him; for nobody has seen and known Him, so as to understand Him. God's name must come from God Himself. What He calls Himself, that is a true name by which we may call Him.

He has told us that His name is "I Am." God cannot be named by comparison with anybody else. There is no one like Him. *His name is Himself.* He is the great I Am. What we know of Him we know by His telling us. He is called good, wise, holy, mighty. He has derived names for Himself by certain works which He has done, and which can be studied. He is the Creator, the Savior, the Comforter. He has published His Word, the Holy Bible. He has set up ordinances, like Baptism and the Lord's Supper, that are administered in His name. He has put His name upon the society of men which believe in Him, the Church. By all these means God has revealed Himself to men. And this revelation serves us for naming Him. The name of God is "God as He has revealed Himself to us." Ps. 48, 10 declares the praise of God to be coextensive with His name. Everywhere in the world people say something of God that redounds to His honor, *e. g.*, that He dispenses justice, that He rules men with equity. The whole psalm is full of episodes of the divine activity by which now this, now that trait has been displayed. Men tell each other what they know of God. By so doing, they publish and glorify the name of God.

## II. *The Prohibition.* Qu. 21—27.

A. *Stated in general terms:* "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain."

1. As in the preceding commandment, God also in this commandment personally turns to every individual. ("Thou.") What He says in this commandment is indeed addressed to the whole human race; but God has adopted a form of speaking that makes Him address only one person. He means you, and you, and you.

2. The name of God may be used "in vain." 1) Since the name of God is God Himself, it should be uttered with reverence. The person who repeats the sacred name without being conscious of its solemnity, who lightly bandies God, Bible, holy things, about on the lips, interlards a common conversation with them, never really intends to be understood as sustaining a worshiper's relation to God, is certainly taking the name of God in vain. This thoughtless, aimless, profitless employment of the holiest things that can enter into our thoughts and rise to our lips, is what the Second Commandment attacks. It reveals the irreverence that is in the human heart, the proneness to profane the Holy One and His holy associations. From irreverence spring all the particular acts which Luther specifies in the Explanation, like so many weeds growing in a common soil. God wants men to be conscious of what they are doing, and why they are doing it, when they utter His name or speak of anything with which He is connected. "We call anything 'vain' and 'useless' that is done without a compelling cause and for a respectable reason." "Would you not consider him a madman who goes to a dance, theater, or to war in sacred vestments appointed to be used at worship? Would not

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1) It may be questioned whether in Ex. 20, 7, אֱשֶׁר is derived from the root that signifies "to lift up," *e. g.*, the voice in speaking, the hands in gestures of solemn affirmation, or from the other (identical) root, which means "to take away," "to put out of the way." Again, whether אֲשֶׁר is to be understood in the general sense of "evil," "iniquity," "wickedness," or in the special sense of "falsehood," "lie." Gesenius renders אֲשֶׁר לִשְׁוֹא יְהוָה אֱתֵשֶׁם אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה: "Thou shalt not utter the name of God unto a falsehood, thou shalt not swear falsely." This is Luther's view also; see *Large Cat.*, §§ 51. 52, p. 397. ("Let this be considered the plain and most simple meaning of this commandment.") Thus understood, the commandment has at once a special meaning: it prohibits perjury. But while admitting that this is the *scopus specialissimus* of the text, the terms used admit a much wider scope, which Luther has also adopted in both Catechisms.

such a person turn serious matters into a jest? Now, if you severely reprove such a person, why do you not much more reprove him who misuses that which is holier than any vestment, yea, which renders vestments and anything else sacred?" "We are now become such fine Christians as to buy wooden shoes, to keep us from soiling our new shoes, and we are certainly careful not to trail good dresses through the mire, nor do we vitiate a golden vessel by using it as a urinal; we would not even put swill-water into it. But we shamelessly drag the holy name of God into any indecency." III, 1194 f.

*B. Applied to particular acts: "cursing, swearing, using witchcraft, lying and deceiving by His name."*

1. *Cursing* <sup>2)</sup> by God's name may be viewed

a. As it affects God. Evidently our Catechism means to make "blaspheming God" one form of cursing. "Cursing God" and "blaspheming the name of the Lord" are equivalent expressions in Lev. 24, 15. 16.<sup>3)</sup> In a wild passion men may hurl words of defiance against God, shake their fist against heaven, utter threats against God. Or they may "mock God."<sup>4)</sup> They may ridicule the ordinances of God,

2) In our English term "curse" (from the Anglo-Saxon "cursian," which connects with the Danish "korse") lies concealed the precious term "cross." "Korse" means "to make the sign of the cross." Uttering an imprecation and accompanying the utterance with the sign that commemorates our redemption, hence, employing a most holy symbol as a cloak for a most unholy passion, that is what cursing meant originally.

3) Some have assumed that the Egyptian half-breed committed two distinct sins: 1) he cursed "his" god, *i. e.*, some idol to which he had been attached in his native country; 2) he blasphemed the name of the Lord, *i. e.*, the true God of Israel. For each sin a particular punishment was assessed upon him, the former being stated thus: "He shall bear his sin"; the latter, thus: "He shall surely be put to death." But the view is not practical. It is not easy to understand why in the camp of Israel the right of a person to have two gods, one his private idol, the other the national Deity, should be formally recognized in a legal ruling. The natural view is to understand ללך, "to make light of," "to treat with contempt," and נקב שם, "to pierce through," "to perforate the name," as referring to the identical action. Blaspheming, from the Greek βλάπτω, "to hurt," and φημί, "to speak," almost reproduces the image that lies concealed in the second Hebrew phrase. The blasphemer thrusts his mad execrations like a dagger through God, His name, and His ordinances; he means to hurt God by his speech. There have been instances recorded of such a mad folly.

4) Μυκτηροῦζειν, in Gal. 6, 7, means "to writhe the nostrils, as in scorn, to sneer at Him." It refers, in this text, to the contempt shown

make Bible-texts and Bible characters the subject of jests, etc. "How much popularity, do you think, would a person acquire by dumping his prince's escutcheon into the mud and dragging it through mire, while the prince is looking on and telling him not to do so, yea, directing him to set it up in an honorable place? We hear about the Turks profaning our churches, making our altars and sanctuaries filthy, and we become so enraged that we think of ways and means to avenge the crime; we plot war and complain that the lords are not waging war against the Turks. But put your hand into your bosom, and you will catch a Turk there." III, 1195.

b. As it affects man. Cursing means also "to invoke upon one's self or others the wrath and punishment of God." Peter sought to prop up his lie that he did not know Jesus by a curse.<sup>5)</sup> Matt. 26, 74. He must have said that he would rather be damned than be a disciple of Jesus. The Jews became guilty of the same offense when they assumed the guilt of Jesus' death. Matt. 27, 25.<sup>6)</sup> On the other hand, the curse may be employed to draw down on another some dire calamity such as only God can inflict. It then becomes a summons to God to carry out the wicked wish of men. David twice became the object of such a hideous attack: at the beginning of his career Goliath, at the end of his life Shimei cursed him. Both called on a higher power than themselves to destroy David. 1 Sam. 17, 43; 2 Sam. 16, 13.

c. The impropriety of cursing for Christians is declared by James. (3, 9. 10.) Every man was given his tongue for a different purpose than for cursing his fellow-men. The wild and wayward worldling does not recognize the noble mission of human speech to glorify God, and praise every creature of God. But the Christian

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to a minister of the Gospel by refusing him his temporal support. Such contempt God regards as directed against Himself.

5) Wilke-Grimm paraphrases *καταθεματιζεν* thus: *extremis diris devovere, graviter exsecrare*, to consign oneself to eternal perdition, to call down grievous harm on oneself.

6) "His blood be on us and on our children" means: "The consequences of this condemnation, be they what they may, we are willing to suffer. Let God visit it, if He will, upon us and our children; we and they will cheerfully bear the penalty. A mad and impious imprecation!" (*Williams.*) Pilate had just washed his hands to signify to the people that he would not have the blood of Jesus staining his hand; he deprecated the punishment of God that might be visited on the murderers of Jesus. The Jews invited that punishment.

does. It follows, then, that a Christian cannot curse and be a Christian.<sup>7)</sup>

d. God has declared that He will punish those who blaspheme and curse. In the theocratic government He not only pilloried the blasphemer by denouncing "sin upon him," and making the people turn away from him as from a doomed man, but He also decreed the shameful death by stoning against these malefactors. Lev. 24, 15. 16. He avenged Himself upon the uncouth Philistine braggart by a little stone hurled from the contemptible sling of a shepherd boy. Shimei met his fate by the sword of David's officer. The Jews lived to see their city destroyed, and their nation scattered, as it is to this day, throughout the earth. Peter, by his curse, was merged in grief, from which only the mighty hand of his merciful Lord could pluck him. Those who curse have grave reasons for remembering God's warning: "Be not deceived," Gal. 6, 7. Do not let any one persuade you that cursing is something innocent or even manly.

2. *Swearing.* Qu. 23—25.

a. Its meaning: "to call upon God as the witness of truth or the avenger of falsehood." The oath, according to 2 Cor. 1, 23, is an appeal to God (*τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλοῦμαι*). God's help is invoked as a witness (*μάρτυρα*).<sup>8)</sup> His omniscience, holiness, and justice qualify Him for being the unerring Observer of truth and the impartial Recorder of the same. With his appeal to God the maker of an oath stakes his eternal happiness (*ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν*). He is so sure that he is right that he wagers his soul to God, who alone has the mastery over the soul, and, as the final Arbiter of men's eternal destiny, "is able to save and to destroy," Jas. 4, 12. The oath, then, is a solemn matter, and should be treated as such.

b. "It is to be noted that there are two kinds of swearing, good and evil." III, 1195.

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7) The apostle emphasizes the inconsistency of which Christians become guilty by cursing, and that in two ways: 1) they "bless God," they bestow most endearing and affectionate names on Him, such as "Father," and then they proceed to curse the Father's other children, their brethren, who bear the same stamp and lineage with them, being descended from God, who made them all after His likeness. 2) They dedicate the mouth that had become consecrated to God by blessing to the devil by cursing. They are guilty of duplicity. Surely, "these things ought not so to be."

8) The rendering "record" which the A. V. gives of the term is to be understood in the sense of "attestation or testimony," as: He bore record of his manliness.

a. Swearing is enjoined and sanctioned by God when it tends to His glory and the welfare of our fellow-men. Three demands are made upon us in Deut. 6, 13: to fear the Lord, to serve Him, and to swear by His name. The last of these is related to the two former as an effect to its cause. Swearing an oath is a divine service, a worship rendered to God, by whose name, therefore, the oath is made. And this service flows from that fear of God which the Law inculcates. Genuine oaths are made only by God-fearing men, who have the honor of God, His institutions, His Word, His Church, at heart. Accordingly, Jesus did not hesitate to affirm with an oath that He was the Son of God. Not to swear an oath under the circumstances in which He was placed at the time would have been tantamount to a denial of the truth. — “God Himself not infrequently makes oath in the prophets, saying: ‘As I live, saith the Lord,’ Ezek. 33, 11; also in Ps. 110, 4 we read: ‘The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent,’ and Ps. 132, 11: ‘The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David.’ Thus Christ swears an oath in the Gospels; the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, all the saints swear, and have sworn, oaths. This is a commendable action because it is done in matters that concern our salvation. Accordingly, whenever a person says or does something that is an aid toward salvation, he should swear an oath in order that men may believe him, if there is reason to fear that otherwise they will not believe him. Thus the apostle swears Rom. 1, 9 that he had often proposed to himself to visit the Romans. What reason for swearing did he have except that it might conduce to their salvation to believe him? — that they might know him to be a faithful pastor and not a mercenary, and have the confidence that he was actuated by genuine love. Thus we read in Ps. 63, 11: ‘Every one that sweareth by Him shall glory.’” III, 1196. — That a true oath benefits men, and is of great service in their temporal relations, is shown by Heb. 6, 16.<sup>9)</sup> It ends many a strife. “The reason why God is pleased with an oath of this kind is because by it men take an

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9) The scope of this text is to show why *God* should be believed when He swears an oath: even a man's oath is accepted and closes a controversy (*ἀντιλογία*): *Βεβαίωσις* is best rendered, with Deissmann, “guarantee.” “The meaning is that when one man disputes the assertion of another, an oath puts an end to the contradiction, and serves for confirmation. *Πάντος* is added, not to indicate the universal deference paid to the oath (Bleek), but the completeness of its effect; no room is left for contradiction. *Ὁ ὄρκος* the generic article, best translated ‘an oath.’” (*Dods.*) “The oath has two results, negative and positive; it finally stops all contradiction; and it establishes that which it attests.” (*Westcott.*)



appeal to His truth, and manifest their faith in Him, and for His sake restore peace and unity among the parties to the oath. Accordingly, God is being worshiped by this sacred act, and the work of the devil, strife and quarreling, is being defeated. For a person who refuses to believe you and be at peace with you, will believe you for the sake of God's name which you invoke, and be at peace with you. For this reason we cannot accord this honor (of swearing by him) to any one else besides God." III, 1196. — Elimelech's oath to Abraham that he would find a wife for Isaac from among Abraham's kinsfolk greatly eased the troubled soul of the aged patriarch. Gen. 24, 3.<sup>10</sup>) — Calvin rightly remarks in his comment on Heb. 6, 16: "This passage teaches that there is a legitimate use for the oath among Christians. This must be borne in mind over and against those fanatical people who would wantonly abrogate the rule which God has prescribed in His law, *viz.*, that we should religiously swear an oath."

b. Evil swearing, that is forbidden, is "false, blasphemous, and frivolous swearing, and all oaths in uncertain things." False oaths (perjury) occur "among those who take oaths in courts of justice, where one side falsifies against the other. God's name cannot be more abused than when used to support falsehood and deceit." *Large Cat.*, p. 397. A blasphemous oath was that of Peter, Matt. 26, 27, of Herod, Matt. 14, 6—9, and of the band of conspirators who had agreed to fast until they had slain Paul. God was invoked by

10) The peculiar ceremony with which Abraham desires his servant to make oath to him is mentioned again only chap. 47, 29. "This ancient form of adjuration,<sup>3</sup> to which nothing analogous can elsewhere be discovered—the practise alleged to exist among the modern Egyptian Bedouins of placing the hand upon the *membrum virile* in solemn forms of asseveration not forming an exact parallel—was probably originated by the patriarch. The thigh, as the source of posterity (chap. 35, 11; 46, 26; Ex. 1, 5), has been regarded as pointing to Abraham's future descendants (Keil, Kalisch, Lange), and in particular to Christ, the promised Seed (Theodoret, Jerome, Augustine, Luther [I, 1656], Ainsworth, Bush, Wardsworth), and the oath to be equivalent to a swearing by Him that was to come. By others the thigh has been viewed as euphemistically put for the generative organ, upon which the sign of circumcision was placed, and the oath as an adjuration by the sign of the covenant (Jonathan, Jarchi, Tuch). A third interpretation considers the thigh as symbolizing lordship or authority, and the placing of the hand under it as tantamount to an oath of fealty and allegiance to a superior (Aben Ezra, Rosenmueller, Calvin, Murphy). Other explanations are modifications of the above." (*Whitelaw.*)

these oaths to sanction abjuration of the true faith in Jesus and murder. Moreover, the oath of Herod was frivolous, considering the occasion on which it was given, and the unreasonable promise that was confirmed by it. The King swore to bestow half his kingdom on a whore. Lastly, there was an element of uncertainty connected with both Herod's oath and that of the would-be assassins of Paul: the King did not foresee the devilish use that could be made of his solemn promise, and the conspirators undertook to determine what God alone determines, Paul's span of life, and their own power of endurance.—On frivolous swearing and oaths in uncertain things our Lord instructs us in Matt. 5, 33—37.<sup>11</sup>) “The other kind of

11) The Lord had referred to such texts as Lev. 9, 12; Num. 30, 3; Deut. 23, 22. “What is wrong in these *dicta*? Nothing save what is left unsaid. The scribes misplaced the emphasis. They had a great deal to say, in sophistical style, of the oaths that were binding and not binding, nothing about the fundamental requirement of truth in the inward parts. Therefore, Jesus goes back on the previous question: Should there be any need for oaths?—*Ὁλως*: emphatic = *ταπειλῶς*, don't swear *at all*. Again an unqualified statement, to be taken not in the letter as a new law, but in the spirit as inculcating such a love of truth that, so far as we are concerned, there shall be no need of oaths. In civil life the most truthful man has to take an oath because of the untruth and consequent distrust prevailing in the world, and in doing so he does not sin against Christ's teaching. Christ Himself took an oath before the high priest. What follows in vv. 34—36 is directed against the casuistry, which laid stress on the words *τῷ κυρίῳ*, and evaded obligation by taking oaths in which the divine name was not mentioned: by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, or by one's own head. Jesus points out that all such oaths involved a reference to God. This is sufficiently obvious in the case of the first three, not so clear in the case of the fourth.—*λευκὴν ἢ μέλαιναν*. White is the color of old age, black of youth. We cannot alter the color of our hair so as to make our head look young or old. *A fortiori* we cannot bring on our head any curse by perjury, of which hair suddenly whitened might be a symbol. Providence alone can blast our life. The oath by the head is a direct appeal to God. All these oaths are binding, therefore, says Jesus; but what I most wish to impress on you is: Do not swear at all. Observe the use of *μήτε* (not *μηδέ*) to connect these different evasive oaths as forming a homogeneous group. Winer endorses the view of Herrmann in Viger that *οὔτε* and *μήτε* are *adjunctival*, *οὐδέ* and *μηδέ* *disjunctival*, and says that the latter add negation to negation, while the former divide a single negation into parts. Jesus first thinks of these evasive oaths as a bad class, then specifies them one after the other. Away with them one and all, and let your word be *ναὶ ναί, οὐ οὐ*. That is, if you want to give assurance, let it not be by an oath, but by simple repetition of your

swearing is evil, and this, again, occurs in two forms. One is habitual swearing, by which reverence for the divine name is diminished because it is being constantly used. We Germans have a habit of saying: By God, Verily, Forsooth, As surely as God is in heaven, By God and all the saints, By the living God, By the holy God, By the precious cross, By the precious blood, By the cross of God, Great zounds, By the precious agony, that is, By the suffering of Christ, it is so. Likewise, we have a habit of cursing: May the devil get me! May the devil break my neck! May I be a castaway! So help me God! Upon my soul, upon my conscience, upon my truth and honor, upon my priesthood! These, and many similar expressions, alas! are uttered so frequently by many that nearly every other word of theirs is such an oath. Here is where fathers and mothers should observe their children and domestics; for it is an exceedingly bad habit and contrary to this commandment. — For the sake of simple folk the question might be raised in this connection whether such an oath as, Verily, I speak the truth, has anything to do with the name of God. I answer: Yes; for the name of God is truth, because He is truth. For in this manner Paul swears, Rom. 9, 1, upon his truth and conscience. Although it might seem as if such swearing had been forbidden, because the conscience is not the name of God, still, because unnecessary swearing is just as sinful as not swearing by the name of God, or swearing by something that is not God, even when telling the truth, Christ in Matt. 5, 34—36 considers all such oaths relating to God. Hence it is plain that a person swearing by something that belongs to God or is ascribed to Him swears by God, of whom, and in whom, and for whom are all things. Rom. 11, 36. — The other form is perjury, *viz.*, when a person knowingly and purposely swears a false oath. This is a very grievous sin, and rarely

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*yes and no.* Grotius interprets: Let your yea or nay in *word* be a yea or nay in *deed*; be as good as your word, even unsupported by an oath. This brings the version of Christ's saying in Matthew into closer correspondence with Jas. 5, 12. Beza, with whom Achelis (*Bergpredigt*) agrees, renders, 'Let your affirmative discourse be a simple yea, and your negative, nay.' — *Τὸ δὲ περισσόν*, the surplus, what goes beyond these simple words. — *Ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ*, hardly 'from the Evil One,' though many ancient and modern interpreters, including Meyer, have so understood it. Meyer says, the neuter 'of evil' gives a very insipid meaning. I think, however, that Christ expresses Himself mildly out of respect for the necessity of oaths in a world full of falsehood. I know, He means to say, that in certain circumstances something beyond yea and nay will be required of you. But it comes of evil, the evil of untruthfulness. See that the evil be not in you." (*Bruce.*) Comp. Luther, III, 1200 ff.

remains unpunished in this life. If you doubt this, ask the perjured." Continuing, Luther exhaustively describes the sin of perjury. III, 1196 ff. In his *Large Cat.* Luther calls attention to a form of perjury that "is especially prevalent in marriage affairs, where two secretly betroth themselves to one another, and afterward abjure." p. 398.

### 3. *Using witchcraft.*<sup>12)</sup> Qu. 26.

a. Its meaning: "using God's name or Word without His command and promise to perform supernatural things." This thing is known by many other names. In our days "magic" is coming into use as the proper term to designate the uncouth practises that fall under the head of witchcraft. In all ages there have been persons who have accomplished feats that could not be explained by knowledge which all men possess, or can possess. They would cure diseases, stop the flow of blood, put out a fire, cause things to disappear or appear suddenly. But in performing such feats they would not use the ordinary means which the physician, the fire brigade, etc., use. They would murmur strange words, pronounce a certain formula, move their hands in mysterious gestures, prescribe the use of things which naturally have no power to produce effects such as they sought to attain. These practises they made to appear very holy by using God's name, Bible-texts, baptismal water, communion wafers, etc., for performing them. Since God has nowhere in His Book commanded such a use of His name, nor promised His help to those who thus use His name, but has rather forbidden and cursed these practises, we are to regard such unnatural doings not as coming from God, but from the devil. They are "satanic arts"; people practising them are servants of Satan and in league with him. God suffers men to be duped by these mysterious feats for a punishment to those who have forsaken Him. 2 Thess. 2, 8—12.

b. Its forms. The story of the Egyptian sorcerers whom Pharaoh pitted against Moses and Aaron, and who turned a staff into a serpent and produced frogs, is useful in showing, not only the variety of stunning tricks which people who practise hidden arts can perform, but also that their mysterious feats are imitations of true miracles.

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12) The term, and its cognates, such as "wizard," connects with the Anglo-Saxon *witan*, to see, and *vita*, to know. From the standpoint of the ignorant masses any person of more than ordinary intelligence and information seemed to possess secret powers. Where ignorance is the natural state, knowledge always appears supernatural. Not all that passes for a supernatural attainment is such.

The devil always is God's ape. But God defeats his lying signs and wonders. Aaron's rod, turned into a serpent, devoured the serpents which the sorcerers had produced, perhaps by snake-charming. When they failed to produce lice, they acknowledged themselves defeated by "the finger of God." Ex. 7. 8.—The Catechism mentions among the forms of witchcraft chiefly three which are common in our day: 1. "conjuring" (now an archaic term), which means charming, enchanting, bewitching by means of incantations, charms, etc.; 2. "fortune-telling," in which a pretense of the knowledge of future events is made by the performer, who consults the lines in a person's hands (palmistry), cards, coffee-suds, etc. (clairvoyancy); 3. "consulting the dead," which is practised as a form of religion by our modern Spiritualists, who pretend to receive communications from the world of departed spirits by means of written characters, sound-signals, and even visions. The experience of Saul with the witch of Endor in the night before his suicide during the battle of Gilboa contains one element that deserves to be emphasized when the story is recounted: Saul himself saw and heard nothing. It was the woman who declared she saw strange shapes rising out of the ground. If she really did, God had no hand in this miracle, because He had forsaken Saul some time ago, and refused to answer him. 1 Sam. 28. The practise of magic was so wide-spread in Israel in those days that the king had in his better days sought to suppress it by special laws.—The Catechism suggests that the three forms of witchcraft which it mentions do not exhaust the subject. Deut. 18, 10—12 refers to many other practises, the exact character of each and every one of which it is now difficult to define.<sup>13)</sup>

13) The first practise named in this text does not necessarily refer to magic. קָסָם קְסָמִים, "one that useth divination," describes attempts made to discover the unknown by arrows, entrails, or teraphim, *i. e.*, domestic idols, Ezek. 21, 26. מְעוֹנֵן, "an observer of times," is from "a verb which signifies to cover, to use covert arts, to practise sorcery; though some derive it from the noun עָנָן, a thick cloud, and explain it as 'interpreter of clouds,' while others trace it to עָיַן, the eye, and explain it as 'one who cheats by optical fascinations,' or 'one who divines by inspection.—an augur.'"—מְנַחֵשׁ, "an enchanter." Gen. 44, 5; Num. 24, 1, show that this term describes one who divines by sign. Some have connected the word with נָחָשׁ, a serpent, and interpreted the above term as referring to ophiomaney, divining by serpents.—מְכַשֶּׁפֶת, "a witch." The LXX renders this term *φάρμακός*, the Vulgate, *maleficus*. The reference is probably "to one who pretended to cure diseases, or procured some desired result by nostrums and philters. . . . The English word 'witch' is now restricted

c. In the works of witchcraft we face the blasphemous defiance which the devils offer to God. The situation in Egypt at the time of the plagues vividly portrays the rebellious spirit that animated Pharaoh and his magicians against Jehovah. God overthrew them. Canaan in the days of Moses, like pagan countries in our day, was overrun with magic. A part of Joshua's mission was to extirpate the sorcerers. What an effect Paul's preaching had on the witches at Ephesus is told Acts 19, 19. Often pagan magicians have, like Simon Magus, employed the name of the Triune, or of Jesus, because they believed that they could work more powerful charms with these. The face of Christians must be sternly set against all "satanic arts."

4. *Lying or deceiving by God's name.* Qu. 27.

a. Its meaning. — "Lying" = knowingly telling a falsehood; "deceiving" = causing evil to appear good. These practises, however, are here considered, not *per se*, but in so far as they occur among people who are using the name and the Word of God, and pretend union and intimacy with God while they engage in these practises. Religious lies and holy frauds are here scored. "To lie and deceive is in itself

to the *female* practiser of unlawful arts; formerly it was applied to *males* as well, if not chiefly." — חֲבֵר חֲבֵר, "a charmer." "The verb here used primarily means to bind, and the species of magic indicated is probably that practised by binding certain knots, whereby it was supposed that the curse or blessing, as the case might be, was bound on its object; this was accompanied apparently with incantation (Ps. 58, 5). Comp. Engl. *spell-bound*." — שֶׂאל אֹב, "a consulter with familiar spirits." The exact meaning is: "one who asks or inquires of an Ob, that is, a Python, or divining spirit." "This spirit was supposed to be in the person of the conjurer, and to be able to reveal to him what was secret or hidden in the future (Lev. 20, 27; 1 Sam. 28, 7, 8; Acts 16, 16). The notion of 'a familiar spirit,' i. e., a spirit not dwelling in a person, but with which he is intimate, — generally the spirit who formerly lived on earth, — is a modern notion not known to Scripture. The persons here referred to were probably ventriloquists (LXX renders: *ἐγγαστριμύθοι*), and used their faculty in this respect, pretending that they had within them a spirit which they could consult, and by which they could predict what would happen, or reveal what was hid." — יִדְעָנִי, "a wizard." "The English word 'wizard' did not originally convey the idea of anything evil in the person of whom it was used. Milton applies it to the Magi who came to worship at Bethlehem; it meant merely 'the wise one,' or 'the knowing one'; and thus is an exact equivalent for the Hebrew word here used." — אֵל־הַמֵּתִים, "a necromancer." "One who professed to call up the dead," as did the witch at Endor. (*Alexander*.)

a great sin, but is greatly aggravated by attempting a justification, and where, to confirm it, the name of God is invoked and is used as a cloak for shame, so that from a single lie a double lie, nay, manifold lies, result." *Large Cat.*, p. 398.

b. Its forms. — Following Luther's Sermons on Ex. 19 and 20, of the year 1526, and an earlier course of sermons on the Ten Commandments, which he preached to the people of Wittenberg in 1516, our Catechism assumes two forms of religious lying and deceiving: heresy and hypocrisy. (See III, 1072 ff.)

a. False doctrine is preached in the name of God, and from the Bible, by people who claim a commission from God to do so. The name and Word of God are used by these people, as a hunter uses a decoy to attract his game, and to cover up his dangerous design, or as a lewd person decks herself out in beautiful garments. Jer. 23, 31 describes the process of "prophets," *i. e.*, preachers, who appeal to God ("He saith") to induce their hearers to accept their own fabrications. For what they say they have turned out with their tongue, using that like a workman uses a tool. "The false prophets adopt the same forms as the true; but they are to them only forms." (*Cheyne.*) The most terrible indictment of the practises of these people is found in Matt. 23, where our Lord witheringly arraigns those most sanctimonious liars of His day, the Pharisees. Vv. 1—12 exhibit their character, vv. 13—31 denounce eight woes against their hypocrisy, and vv. 32—39 predict an appalling future for them. The Roman Catholic Church, with its spectacular holiness, is the true successor to the Pharisees. But also in Protestant Churches false teaching is offered with a great show of reverence for God and the Bible.

b. Heresy is, in most instances, allied with hypocrisy. But we embrace more by the term hypocrisy than efforts to adorn false doctrine with the Word and name of God. These same holy things are used to cloak ungodly life. Hypocrisy<sup>14</sup>) is sham holiness; an angel without and a devil within. In Matt. 15, 8 our Lord quotes Is. 29, 13 with a slight variation. He addresses people who "use the prescribed forms of worship, guard with much care the letter of Scripture, observe its legal and ceremonial enactments, are strict in the practise of all outward formalities." (*Williams.*) But they engage in these sacred acts without any inward devotion.—The Sermon on the Mount culminated in a denunciation of religious hypocrisy, Matt. 7, 15. The people who say, "Lord, Lord," acknowledge themselves servants and profess loyalty. But their show of reverential sub-

14) The Greek *ὑποκριτής* was an actor.

mission cannot deceive God, who shuts them out from the goal for which they seem to strive. No one has a right to call God his Lord who fails to do God's will. Hypocrisy makes its mouth perform astonishing feats of lip-service, but is the worst sluggard in enacting its beautiful sentiments. The reason is: the hypocrite knows he is speaking and acting a lie which he does not believe himself. Why should he trouble himself about doing what he professes? In the early Christian Church Ananias and Sapphira are the representatives of this wicked use of the divine name. "No one is so bold as to boast to all the world of the wickedness he has perpetrated, but wishes everything to be done secretly, and without any one being aware of it. Then, if any one be arraigned, the name of God must suffer for it, and change the villainy into godliness and the shame into honor. This is the common course of the world, which, like a great deluge, has inundated all lands." *Large Cat.*, p. 398.

### III. *The Injunction.* Qu. 28.

A. When God forbids taking His name in vain, He implies in the very prohibition that there is a use of His name that is not vain, useless, but commendable. He has revealed His name for the very purpose that men might know how to address Him. "Since the use of His holy name for falsehood or wickedness is here forbidden, it necessarily follows that *we are, on the other hand, commanded to employ it for truth and for all good.*" *Large Cat.*, p. 399. By eliminating every misuse of His name, God establishes its proper use:

1. In behalf of the truth;
2. In the helpful service of love to our fellow-men.

B. To the four ways in which God's name is misused Luther opposes four suggestions for its right and proper use, all of them having been taken from the Scriptures.

1. "Calling upon God in trouble." The Law of God was given to man when there was no trouble. Since sin entered the world, man's relation to God has been changed. But the Law has not been changed. Even from out of his sinful state man must show reverence to God. It is a mark of Luther's fine spiritual tact that he has mentioned the invocation of divine help as the first of the proper uses of God's name. And Luther is admirably in touch with the Scriptures in thus heading the series of our duties under the Second Commandment with a reminder that we must summon God to our side in our need. Ps. 50 is a didactic poem on the worship of God. After rejecting the mechanical worship of ceremonialism, God in v. 15 suggests as the true worship which He seeks to obtain from man petitions and



eulogies. Not to tell our troubles to God is a new sin on top of those which have brought on our trouble. Every affliction is a chastisement for our remissness to make God our confidant, our adviser and rescuer. On the other hand, laying our needs before Him, as Hannah did, is an act of the finest worship. God has commended that act by having Hannah's and many another sufferer's prayer recorded in Scripture.

2. "Pray." This refers to the regular practise of prayer in private and public. The entire Third Part of our Catechism will be devoted to the study of this subject, which God has commended to us in an emphatic statement, which contains beautiful images and a forceful climax, Matt. 7, 7. Though trouble may prompt the acts here enjoined, it is not necessarily in distress only that God would have us do what He enjoins in this text. This text rather describes the habitual attitude of His children toward Him. Hannah's continued prayer may serve to illustrate also this use of God's name.

3. "Praise." God is such a grand and lovable object to contemplate that a person who meditates upon Him, as David does Ps. 103, 1, feels impelled to break forth in praises of God.<sup>15</sup> Such praise God meant to elicit from man by revealing Himself to him. Hannah's prayer is full of praise.

4. "Give thanks." This implies the consciousness of favors and gifts which one has received from God, and which are highly prized, not only for their own sake, but also because of the good, generous, merciful Giver from whom they have come. Ps. 118, 1; 106, 1, and many other texts show that the Church of the Old Covenant was fairly trained for this duty. And here, once more, Hannah's example is instructive.

"For this end it is also of service that we be in the habit of daily commending ourselves to God, with soul and body, wife, child, servants, and all that we have, against all necessities that may occur; whence also the blessing and thanksgiving at meals, and other prayers, morning and evening, have originated and remain in use. Likewise also the practise of children to cross themselves and exclaim, when anything monstrous or terrible is seen or heard: 'Lord God, protect us!' 'Help, dear Lord Jesus!' etc. Thus, too, if any one experience unexpected good, however trivial, that he say: 'God be praised and thanked for bestowing this on me!'" *Large Cat.*, p. 400 f.

15) "Bless" (בָּרַךְ) in this place, of course, cannot mean to bestow a blessing or favor, but to exalt, extol, glorify, as good, sublime, blessed. It is, in effect, the same as בָּרַךְ in Ps. 50, 15.

*IV. The Fulfilment of the Duties Laid Down in This and the  
Succeeding Commandments. Qu. 19.*

Luther has opened his explanation of each commandment with a statement of something that reads like an injunction, *viz.*, "We should fear and love God," but is really intended for another purpose. It explains the condition of the heart that is needed for a proper execution of the various duties named in the commandments. Fear and love of God are a prerequisite for all service which the Law demands. Accordingly, no one can claim to have done his duty under the Law who has not done what he has done, or shunned what he has shunned, from the motive of profound and filial reverence, and cordial and childlike affection, for the great and sovereign, good and glorious Lawgiver.

D.