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A SHORT EXPOSITION

of the

Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther,

published by

the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio,
and other States.

INTRODUCTION.

1. What is a Catechism?

An instruction in questions and answers.

2. Who has written our Small Catechism?

Doctor Martin Luther.

3. Whereof does he treat in this brief instruction?

Of the chief parts of Christian doctrine.

4. Whence has Luther taken this doctrine?

From the Holy Scripture or the Bible.

5. What is the Bible?

It is the Word of God, written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost by the holy Prophets in the Old Testament and by the Apostles and Evangelists in the New Testament, to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

6. Which are the Chief Parts of Christian doctrine?

1. The Ten Commandments; 2. the Creed; 3. the Lord's Prayer; 4. the Sacrament of holy Baptism; 5. the Office of the Keys and Confession; 6. the Sacrament of the Altar.

Part I.

The Ten Commandments.

7. What are the Ten Commandments?

They are the holy will of God, or the Law, wherein God tells us, how we are to be and what we are to do or not to do.

8. When has God given this law?

In the creation of man He has written it in man's heart, and afterwards He has laid it down in ten commandments, written on two tables, and published it through Moses.

9. What is the Sum of the First Table?

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” Matt. 22, 37.

10. What is the Sum of the Second Table?

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Matt. 22, 39.

11. What, then, is in one word the Sum of all commandments?
Love.

12. Whom does God mean when in the ten commandments he says,
“Thou shalt”?

Me and every other man.

THE FIRST TABLE.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

13. Which is the first commandment?

Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.

14. What does this mean?

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

15. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

All manner of idolatry, whether it be really to regard and adore a creature as God, or to fear, love, or trust in creatures as we should fear, love, and trust in God alone. (Coarse and fine idolatry.)

16. What is enjoined in the first commandment?

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

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

17. Which is the second commandment?

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

18. What does this mean?

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

19. Why do we here and in the following commandments say, "We should fear and love God"?

Because from the fear and love of God the fulfillment of all other commandments should flow.

20. What is God's name?

God, as He has revealed Himself to us.

21. What is forbidden in this commandment?

We should not take God's name in vain, especially by cursing, swearing, using witchcraft, lying or deceiving by His name.

22. What is cursing by God's name?

To blaspheme God, or to invoke upon one's self or others the wrath and punishment of God.

23. What is swearing by God's name?

To call upon God as the witness of truth or the revenger of falsehood.

24. What manner of swearing is forbidden?

False, blasphemous, and frivolous swearing, and all oaths in uncertain things.

25. What manner of swearing is permitted, and even enjoined?

Whatever swearing is demanded by the glory of God and the welfare of our neighbor.

26. What is using witchcraft by God's name?

Using God's name or word without His command and promise to perform supernatural things, such as conjuring, fortune-telling, consulting the dead, and similar diabolical practices.

27. What is lying or deceiving by God's name?

Adorning false doctrine or ungodly life with the word and name of God.

28. What is enjoined in the second commandment?

We should call upon God's name in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

29. Which is the third commandment?

Thou shalt sanctify the holy day.

30. What does this mean?

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

31. Does this commandment demand of us that we should keep the sabbath, feasts, or holy days of any kind, as the people of God did in the Old Testament?

No; for in the New Testament all this has been abolished by God Himself.

32. Wherefore do we then celebrate Sunday and other feasts?

Not by divine command, but in order to have time and occasion for public worship.

33. What is, therefore, forbidden in the third commandment?

We should not despise preaching and God's word.

34. How is this done?

By tardily, carelessly, or not at all, attending public worship or using the written Word of God and the Sacraments.

35. What is enjoined in the third commandment?

We should hold preaching and God's Word sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

THE SECOND TABLE.

36. What is the sum of the second table?

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Matt. 22, 39.

37. Who is our neighbor?

Every one who is in need of our love.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

38. Which is the fourth commandment?

Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

39. What does this mean?

We should fear and love God, that we may not despise our parents and masters, nor provoke them to anger; but give them honor, serve and obey them, and hold them in love and esteem.

40. Who are parents and masters?

Father and mother and all those who, according to God's ordinance, are placed above us in home, state, school, and church.

41. What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?

We should not despise our parents and masters, nor provoke them to anger.

42. How is this done?

When we do not respect their dignity and will, and provoke them to just anger by disobedience or any kind of malice.

43. What is enjoined in the fourth commandment?

We should give honor to our parents and masters, serve and obey them, and hold them in love and esteem.

44. How is this done?

When we truly regard them as God's substitutes, do for them what we can, obey them in all things in which God has placed them above us, and esteem them as a precious gift of God.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

45. Which is the fifth commandment?

Thou shalt not kill.

46. What does this mean?

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

47. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

That we should not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body; that is, we should do or say nothing whereby his life may be destroyed, shortened, or embittered, and bear no anger nor hate against him in our hearts.

48. What is enjoined in this commandment?

That we should help and befriend our neighbor in every bodily need, and hence be merciful, meek, and forgiving towards him.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

49. Which is the sixth commandment?

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

50. What does this mean?

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

51. What is marriage?

The life-long union of man and wife unto one flesh, which was instituted by God and is entered into by rightful betrothal.

52. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

Whatever breaks, violates, or desecrates the divine ordinance of matrimony, be it in or out of wedlock by deed, word, or desire.

53. What is enjoined upon all men in this commandment?

To lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed.

54. What is required thereto?

That we quench the evil desires by God's Word and prayer, industry and temperance, and that we flee and avoid all opportunity for unchasteness.

55. What is enjoined upon married people especially?

That each should love and honor his spouse, the husband his wife as his help-meet, and the wife her husband as her head.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

56. Which is the seventh commandment?

Thou shalt not steal.

57. What does this mean?

We should fear and love God, that we may 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 business.

58. What is forbidden in this commandment?

We should not take our neighbor's money or goods, nor get them by false ware or dealing.

59. What particular sins are here forbidden?

Robbery, theft, usury, and fraud, of any kind, as also envy and covetousness within our hearts.

60. What is enjoined in this commandment?

That we should help our neighbor to improve and protect his property and business.

61. How is this done?

By assisting our neighbor by word and deed that his property and business may be increased and preserved from harm.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

62. Which is the eighth commandment?

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

63. What does this mean?

We should fear and love God, that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, nor defame our neighbor; but defend him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on every thing.

64. What is forbidden in this commandment?

Not only every untrue testimony in court, but all words or thoughts against our neighbor which come from a deceitful heart.

65. What is deceitfully belying our neighbor?

It is with a deceitful heart telling him a falsehood or withholding from him the truth.

66. What is betraying our neighbor?

It is with a deceitful heart revealing his secrets.

67. What is slandering our neighbor?

It is with a deceitful heart speaking evil of him.

68. What is defaming our neighbor?

It is with a deceitful heart injuring or destroying his good fame.

69. What is enjoined in this commandment?

We should defend our neighbor, speak well of him, and put the best construction on every thing.

70. What is defending our neighbor?

Protecting him against false accusations.

71. What is speaking well of our neighbor?

Praising his good deeds and qualities as far as it can be done in keeping with the truth.

72. What is putting the best construction on every thing?

Charitably covering our neighbor's faults and frailties, and explaining in his favor whatever admits of such explanation.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

73. Which is the ninth commandment?

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

74. What does this mean?

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

75. What is forbidden in these words?

We should not craftily seek to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, nor obtain it by a show of right.

76. What is enjoined in this commandment?

That we should help our neighbor and be of service to him in keeping his inheritance or house.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

77. Which is 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.

78. What does this mean?

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

79. What is forbidden in this commandment?

We should not estrange, force or entice away from our neighbor his wife, servants, or cattle, that is, we should in no wise urge or allure them to leave him and come to us.

80. What is enjoined in this commandment?

That we should urge our neighbor's wife and servants to stay and do their duty.

81. Of what would God remind us particularly in these last commandments, saying, "Thou shalt not covet"?

Of two things; 1, that in God's sight evil lust is indeed and truly sin; and, 2, that we should have no evil lust whatever in our hearts, but only holy desire and love of God and of all that is good.

THE CLOSE OF THE COMMANDMENTS.

82. What does God say of all these commandments?

He saith thus: I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

83. What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all that transgress these commandments. Therefore we should fear His wrath, and not act contrary to them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all that keep these commandments. Therefore we should also love and trust in Him, and willingly do according to His commandments.

84. Why does God here call Himself a jealous God?

Because He has the right to give us commandments and will not suffer any transgression of His law to remain unavenged.

85. What does God threaten all them that hate Him and transgress His commandments?

His wrath and displeasure, temporal death and eternal damnation.

86. Upon what manner of children will God visit the iniquities of the fathers to the third and fourth generation?

Upon such as likewise hate Him and follow their parents in their transgression.

87. Whereunto should this threat induce us?

That we may fear His wrath and not act contrary to His commandments.

88. What does God promise those who love Him and keep His commandments?

Grace and every blessing.

89. Whereunto should this promise tenderly invite us?

That we may love God and trust in Him and willingly do according to His commandments.

90. Can we keep God's commandments as He would have us keep them?

No; since the fall natural man cannot keep the law of God at all, and even the regenerate can keep it but imperfectly.

91. What purposes does the law, then, serve?

First, it in a measure checks the coarse outbursts of sin and thereby helps to maintain outward discipline and decency in the world. (*A curb.*)

Secondly, and chiefly, it teaches man the due knowledge of his sin. (*A mirror.*)

Thirdly, it leads the regenerate to know what are truly good works. (*A rule.*)

Of Sin.

92. What is sin?

Sin is every departure from the rule of the divine law.

93. By whom was sin brought into the world?

By the devil, who first departed from God, and by man, who of his own free will suffered himself to be misled by Satan into sin.

94. Of how many kinds is sin?

Of two kinds, original sin and actual sin.

95. What is original sin?

It is that sin which we have inherited from Adam, the total depravity of our whole human nature, which is now deprived of its concreated righteousness, inclined toward all that is evil, and subject to damnation.

96. What is actual sin?

Every transgression of the divine law in desires, thoughts, words, and deeds.

97. How may we, then, be made free from sin, righteous, and heirs of salvation?

Not by the works of the law, but by faith.

Part II.

The Creed.

98. What is the Creed?

It is the confession or doctrine of faith as it is summed up in the Apostles' Creed.

99. Where do we find the doctrine of faith?

In the Gospel.

100. What is the Gospel?

It is the glad tidings of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

101. What difference is there between the Law and the Gospel?

1. The Law teaches what *we* are to do and not to do; the Gospel teaches, what *God* has done and still does for our salvation.

2. The Law shows us our sin and the wrath of God; the Gospel shows us our savior and the grace of God.

3. The Law demands, threatens, and condemns; the Gospel promises, gives, and seals unto us, forgiveness, life, and salvation.

4. The Law works wrath and kills; the Gospel invites and draws us to Christ, works faith and thus gives us spiritual life.

5. The Law must be preached unto secure sinners, the Gospel to such as are alarmed and terrified.

THE FIRST ARTICLE.

Of Creation.

102. Which is the first article of the Creed?

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

103. 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; also clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home, wife and children, fields, cattle, 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 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.

104. What is God?

God is a Spirit; He is eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, holy, just, faithful, benevolent, merciful, and gracious.

105. Who is the true God?

The Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three distinct Persons in one divine Essence.

106. How are these divine Persons distinguished from each other?

The Father has begotten the Son from eternity; the Son is begotten of the Father from eternity; the Holy Ghost from eternity proceeds from the Father and the Son.—To the Father especially is ascribed the work of Creation; to the Son, the work of Redemption; to the Holy Ghost, the work of Sanctification.

107. What is to believe in God?

It is to know and accept as true what the Scripture says of God, and with firm confidence to trust and rely in God.

108. Why do we in each of the three Articles say, "*I* believe," and not, "*We* believe"?

Because no one can be saved by another's faith, but every one must for himself believe.

109. Why do we here call the first Person, "the Father"?

Because He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also our true Father.

110. Why is God the Father called "Almighty" and the "Creator"?

Because He has by His word made all things out of nothing.

111. What do we signify by "Heaven and Earth"?

All creatures, visible and invisible.

112. Which are the invisible creatures?

The Angels.

113. Of how many kinds are the angels?

Of two kinds, good and evil.

114. What are the good angels?

They are holy spirits, already confirmed in their bliss, and of great power, praising God, carrying out His commands, and serving mankind.

115. What are the evil angels?

The fallen spirits, forever rejected, who are the declared enemies of God and man, and endeavor to destroy the work of God.

116. Which is the foremost among the visible creatures?

Man, because God Himself has prepared his body, has given him a rational soul, and, above all, has made him in His image.

117. Wherein did the divine image consist?

In blissful knowledge of God, and in perfect righteousness and holiness.

118. Do we still bear the image of God?

No; it was lost by the fall, and while in believers a beginning is made of its renewal, it will be fully restored only in eternal life.

119. What do you also confess with the explanation of the first Article?

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.

120. What does God still do to you and all creatures?

He preserves and governs me and all creatures.

121. What does He give you for your preservation?

He gives me clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home, wife and children, fields, cattle, and all my goods; He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

122. What do you owe to the government of God?

That He defends me against all danger, and guards and protects me from all evil.

123. What prompts God toward doing all this to you?

He does it all purely out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me.

124. What, then, is your duty toward the Father in heaven?

For all this, it is my duty to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him.

125. And firmly believing all that you confess, what are your closing words?

This is most certainly true.

THE SECOND ARTICLE.

Of Redemption.

126. Which is the second Article?

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He arose

again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

127. 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 may 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.

128. Of whom does this Article treat?

Of Jesus Christ.

129. Why is He called Jesus?

Because He is the only Savior of all mankind.

130. Why is He called Christ?

Christ, or the Messiah, that is, the Anointed, He is called, because He has been anointed with the Holy Ghost without measure, to be our Prophet, Priest, and King.

131. Who is Jesus Christ?

True God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary.

132. Why do we believe that Jesus Christ is true God?

Because Scripture ascribes to Him divine names, divine attributes, divine works, and divine honor and glory.

133. Why do we believe that Jesus Christ is also true man?

Because Scripture expressly calls Him "man" and attributes to Him the essential parts and works of a man.

134. What two natures are, therefore, in Christ?
The divine nature and the human nature.

135. How are the two natures united in Christ?

In such manner, that the Son of God has received the human nature into His person, and that in this one Person each of the two natures partakes of the properties of the other.

136. For what purpose has the Son of God assumed human nature?
To redeem and save sinful mankind.

137. Why was it necessary that our Redeemer should be man?

That He might be capable of fulfilling the law, of suffering and dying, as all men's substitute.

138. Why was it necessary that He should be God?

That He might be sufficient to appease the wrath of God and to overcome sin, death, and the devil.

139. How manifold is the office which Christ took upon Himself
for our salvation?

Threefold, that of a Prophet, a Priest, and a King.

140. Wherein does the prophetic office of Christ consist?

In this, that He has by word and deed revealed Himself as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world, and by the preaching of the Gospel still reveals Himself.

141. Wherein does the priestly office of Christ consist?

In this, that He has in our stead perfectly fulfilled the law and sacrificed Himself for us, and still intercedes for us with His heavenly Father.

142. Wherein does the kingly office of Christ consist?

In this, that He mightily rules over all creatures, and especially governs and protects His church and at last leads it unto glory.

143. What two *states* do we distinguish in Christ's performance of this office?

The state of Humiliation and the state of Exaltation.

144. Wherein did Christ's state of Humiliation consist?

In this, that Christ according to His human nature did not always and not fully use the divine majesty communicated to His human nature.

145. With which words does the second article describe the state of humiliation?

With the words, "Conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried."

146. What does Scripture teach concerning the Conception of Christ?

That Christ was by the miraculous working of the Holy Ghost conceived as true man by the virgin Mary.

147. What does Scripture teach of the birth of Christ?

That Christ was born of the virgin Mary, a true man, and in great poverty.

148. What does Scripture testify of Christ's suffering and death?

That under Pontius Pilate He suffered unspeakable torments of body and soul and died on the accursed tree of the cross.

149. What does Scripture say of Christ's burial?

That His sacred body was laid in the sepulchre and remained there to the third day without seeing corruption.

150. For what purpose did Christ thus humiliate Himself?

To redeem me, a lost and condemned creature.

151. Wherefrom has Christ redeemed you?

From all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil.

152. In what respect has Christ redeemed you from all sins?

He has freed me from the guilt, the punishment, and the dominion of sin.

153. In what respect are you redeemed from death by Christ?

I need not fear temporal death, since eternal death has no longer any power over me.

154. In what respect has Christ redeemed you from the power of the devil?

He has overcome the devil, and conquered him, so that he can no more accuse me, and I can now victoriously withstand his temptations.

155. Wherewith has Christ redeemed you?

Not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.

156. How does this work your redemption?

He has thereby rendered satisfaction for me and paid the penalty of my guilt.

157. Whose own have you become by the redemption?

Christ has redeemed me, purchased and won me, so that I am now His own, and He is my Lord.

158. Has Christ redeemed, purchased and won *you* only?

No, me and all lost and condemned mankind.

159. Wherein does Christ's state of Exaltation consist?

In this, that Christ, according to His human nature, fully and continually uses the divine majesty communicated to His human nature.

160. In which words does the second Article describe this state?

In the words, "He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

161. What does Scripture teach concerning Christ's descent into hell?

That Christ, having been quickened in His grave, exhibited Himself to hell as its conqueror, and triumphed over all His infernal enemies.

162. What does Scripture teach concerning Christ's resurrection?

That Christ on the third day victoriously and with a glorified body issued from the grave and showed Himself alive to His disciples.

163. Why is the resurrection of Christ so comforting to us?

Because it is conclusive evidence

1. that Christ is the Son of God and that His doctrine is the truth;

2. that God the Father has accepted the sacrifice of His son for the reconciliation of the world;

3. that all believers shall rise unto eternal life.

164. What does Scripture testify concerning Christ's ascension into heaven?

That Christ according to His human nature visibly ascended on high and entered into the glory of His Father, there to prepare a place for us.

165. What, according to Scripture, is Christ's sitting at the right hand of God?

That Christ, also according to His human nature, with divine power and majesty rules and fills all things, and especially governs and protects His church, of which He is the Head.

166. What do we, according to Scripture, believe concerning Christ's coming to judgment?

That at the last day He will return visibly and in glory, to judge the world in righteousness.

167. Which words of the Catechism describe the fruit of Christ's exaltation and, likewise, the end and aim of the entire work of redemption?

The words, "that I may be His own, and live under 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.

168. Which is the third Article?

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of Sins; the Resurrection of the Body; and the Life everlasting. Amen.

169. 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 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 which 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 give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true.

170. Of what five points does this Article treat?

1. Of the Holy Ghost; 2. of the Church; 3. of the Forgiveness of Sins; 4. of the Resurrection of the Body; 5. of the Life Everlasting.

1. Of the Holy Ghost.

171. Which is the statement of the first point?

I believe in the Holy Ghost.

172. Who is the Holy Ghost?

The third Person in the Holy Trinity, true God with the Father and the Son.

173. Why is He called the *Holy* Ghost?

1. Because He is Himself holy; 2. because He makes us holy by working faith in us and appropriating to us Christ and His salvation.

174. In what words do you confess that your sanctification is not your own work?

In the words, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him."

175. In what words do you confess that sanctification is the work of the Holy Ghost?

In the words, "But the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith."

176. Why do you believe that you cannot by your own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him?

Because I believe the Scripture, which says that by nature I am spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God.

177. What has the Holy Ghost done to bring you to Christ and sanctify you?

He has called me by the Gospel.

178. What has the Holy Ghost wrought in you by such call?

He has by the Gospel enlightened me with His gifts, that I know Jesus as my Savior, trust and believe, rejoice and take comfort, in Him. (Regeneration. Conversion.)

179. What else has the Holy Spirit wrought in you?

He has sanctified me in the true faith; that is, He has by faith renewed my heart and gives me power to struggle against and overcome Satan, the world, and the flesh, and to walk in godliness and good works.

180. What is a good work in God's sight?

All that a child of God does, speaks, or thinks, in faith, according to the Ten Commandments, for the glory of God and the benefit of his neighbor.

181. What, lastly, has the Holy Ghost wrought in you?
He has, by the Gospel, kept me in the true faith.

182. Has the Holy Ghost wrought all this in *you alone*?

No; but He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

183. Is the Holy Ghost willing to work all this in every one who hears the Gospel?

Yes; but most men obstinately resist the word and Spirit of God and are thus guilty of their own perdition.

2. *Of the Church.*

184. Which is the statement of the second point in the third Article?

I believe in the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints.

185. What is the Church?

The congregation of saints, that is, all Christendom, the sum of all believers; for *only* believers, and *all* believers, are members thereof.

186. Why do we say, "I *believe* in the Church"?

1. Because the Church is invisible, since no man can look into another's heart and see if he believe;

2. because we are, nevertheless, assured by Scripture that the Holy Ghost at all times gathers and preserves a congregation of believers.

187. Why do we believe in *one* Church?

Because all believers are one spiritual body, whose only head is Christ.

188. Why do we say, "I believe in a *holy Church*"?

1. Because all the members of the Church are holy by faith in Christ;
2. because they serve God in holy works.

189. Why do we say, "I believe in a holy *Christian Church*"?

Because the Church is built upon Christ, its sole foundation.

190. Where is this one holy Christian Church to be found?

Wherever and only where the Gospel of Christ is in use; for according to God's promise His word does not remain without fruit.

191. Whom do we signify when we speak of a *visible Church*?

All those collectively who profess the Christian faith and are gathered about God's word, but among whom, beside the true Christians, there are also hypocrites.

192. Whom do we call the *true visible Church*?

All those collectively who have, teach, and confess the entire doctrine of the Word of God in all its purity, and among whom the Sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's institution.

193. What is the proper use of this doctrine of the Church?

When we take heed to be and remain members of the invisible Church; when we, to this end, adhere to the Church of the pure word and confession, contribute toward its maintenance and propagation according to our ability, and keep aloof from all false churches.

3. *Of the Forgiveness of Sins.*

194. Which is the statement of the third point of this Article?

I believe in the Forgiveness of Sins.

195. Why do you say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins"?

Because by the Scripture I am assured that God by grace, for Christ's sake, through the Gospel daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers.

196. How does God forgive sins?

He does not impute their sins to sinners, or, in other words, He declares sinners righteous. (Justification.)

197. Who receives this forgiveness?

Although it has been procured for all men, and is offered by the Gospel to all who hear it, yet only those who believe the Gospel and thus accept the forgiveness of sins, really become partakers of such forgiveness.

198. What then, do we, with our Church, confess regarding the forgiveness of sins, or justification?

That we receive forgiveness of sins and are justified before God, not by our works, but by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith.

199. Can every believer be sure of the forgiveness of sins, and of his salvation?

Yes, he can and should be, because God's promise is sure.

200. Why must we ever firmly maintain this Article especially?

Because it is the chief article of Christian doctrine, by which the Christian church distinguishes itself from all false religions, and which gives all the glory to God alone, and affords enduring comfort to poor sinners.

4. Of the Resurrection of the Body.

201. Which is the statement of the fourth point of the third Article?

I believe in the Resurrection of the Body.

202. What do you believe concerning this point according to Scripture?

That at the last day God will raise up me and all the dead, so that our bodies, the same bodies that have died, shall again be made alive.

203. What difference will there be in the resurrection of the dead?

The believers will rise with glorified bodies to everlasting life; but the unbelievers will rise to eternal death, that is, to everlasting shame, contempt, and torment, in hell.

5. Of eternal Life.

204. Which is the statement of the fifth point in this Article?

I believe in the Life Everlasting.

205. What does Scripture teach concerning eternal life?

That all believers, when they die, are, according to the soul, at once conveyed to Christ, and, after the last day, shall be with Christ, body and soul, and live with Him in eternal joy and glory.

206. To whom shall eternal life be given?

To me and all believers, but only to believers.

207. Are you sure that you also will enter into eternal life?

Yes; for according to the Scriptures I am firmly to believe that, as God has in time called me by the Gospel, enlightened, sanctified, and kept me in the true faith, even so He has from eternity chosen me unto the adoption of children and unto life everlasting, and no man shall pluck me out of His hand.

A. G.

(To be concluded.)
