

Congregational Catechism of Religious Instruction

The Ten Commandments

The First Commandment

I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

The Second Commandment

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for 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.

The Third Commandment

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

The Fourth Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep in holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates.

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

The Fifth Commandment

Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

The Sixth Commandment

Thou shalt not kill.

The Seventh Commandment

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

The Eighth Commandment

Thou shalt not steal.

The Ninth Commandment

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

The Tenth Commandment

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

The Apostolic Creed

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

And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten 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 rose 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.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the one Holy Universal Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Catechism

Introduction

1. **What do we mean by the term Catechism?** A short presentation of biblical teachings for our welfare and our salvation.
2. **What is the basis of these teachings?** The Bible, for in matters of faith only biblical teachings are to be accepted.
3. **What is the Bible?** The Holy Scriptures or the Word of God; written by men guided by the spirit of God
4. **Into what main parts is our Bible divided?** Into two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament
5. **What writings are contained in the Old Testament?** It contains the books of the Bible which were written before the birth of Jesus. We group them into historical, instructional and prophetic books. The historical books of the Old Testament are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. The instructional books of the Old Testament are: Job, the Psalms, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The prophetic books of the Old Testament are: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.
6. **What writings are contained in the New Testament?** It contains the books that were written after the birth of Jesus and gives us a report of his life and teachings, the work of his apostles and the beginning of the Christian Church. The historical books of the New Testament are: the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Acts of the Apostles. The instructional books of the New Testament are: Paul's Letters to the Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, the Letter to the Hebrews, the Letters of James, I and II Peter, I, II and III John, and Jude. The prophetic book of the New Testament is: The Revelation of John.
7. **How do we divide the content of our catechism?** Our catechism is divided into five principal parts. These are: the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacraments and the Christian Church.

I. The First Principal Part

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

8. **What does the first principal part contain?** It contains the Ten Commandments
9. **Where and when did God give us the Ten Commandments?** On Mount Sinai 50 days after the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt. (Exodus 20)
10. **What is the First Commandment?** I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
11. **What does God require in the First Commandment?** That we fear, love and trust God above all things. *1 John 5:3. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous. Isaiah 42:8. I am Jehovah, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise unto graven images.*

12. **The Second Commandment.** Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. For 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.
13. **What does God say in this Commandment?** God says in this Commandment that we shall not worship him in any image, for all true worshippers must worship him in spirit and in truth. *Isaiah 40:18. To whom then will ye like God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto him?*
14. **The Third Commandment.** Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
15. **What is God's will as expressed in this Commandment?** That we should not use his name thoughtlessly, nor irreverently, but hallow and honor it. *Leviticus 19:12. And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, and profane the name of thy God: I am Jehovah.*
16. **The Fourth Commandment.** Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates, For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.
17. **How can we hallow the Sabbath day?** We can hallow the Sabbath day by resting from all worldly employment, by studying the word of God at home and in church, by attending public worship, with praises and thanksgiving, and by devoting the entire day to our own and to our neighbor's salvation. *Psalms 100:2-4. Serve Jehovah with gladness; come before his presence with singing. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: give thanks unto him, and bless his name.*
18. **The Fifth Commandment.** Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
19. **What does God require in this Commandment?** God requires that I recognize my parents as his representatives placed over me by him to care for me, to look after my training and to guide me heavenward. For this I am to honor them by truly loving and cheerfully obeying them through my whole life. May God in his mercy help me to do this. *Proverbs 1:8. My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother. Colossians 3:20. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord. Proverbs 23:22. Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.*
20. **The Sixth Commandment.** Thou shalt not kill.
21. **What does God forbid in this Commandment?** God wishes to impress upon us the value and the sacredness of human life, therefore, he forbids us to take our own lives or to kill others. *Romans 12:19. Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. Matthew 5:44-45. Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.*
22. **The Seventh Commandment.** Thou shalt not commit adultery.

23. **What does God forbid in the Seventh Commandment?** In the Seventh Commandment God forbids all unchaste thoughts, words and deeds. *Matthew 5:28. But I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. I Corinthians 15:33. Evil companionships corrupt good morals.*
24. **The Eighth Commandment.** Thou shalt not steal.
25. **How is this Commandment broken?** This Commandment is broken when we appropriate to ourselves other people's money or goods, either secretly or openly, by trickery or by violence and when we covet our neighbor's possessions. *Jeremiah 22:13. Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by injustice; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not his hire.*
26. **The Ninth Commandment.** Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
27. **What does this mean?** This means that we should not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, or defame our neighbor, but should excuse his faults, speak well of him, and construe all his words and actions to his advantage. *Ephesians 4:25. Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor; for we are members one of another. Leviticus 19:16. Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people.*
28. **The Tenth Commandment.** Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.
29. **What is the meaning of the Tenth Commandment?** The fear of God and the love toward our fellow men are to restrain us from craftily seeking to appropriate to ourselves our neighbor's possessions; his house, his wife, his servants, his cattle... We should rejoice with him when he is happy and prosperous. *I John 2:15-17. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*
30. **Where in the New Testament and in what words do we find a summary of these Ten Commandments?** In the Gospel of St. Matthew 22:37-40: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and the great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

II. The Second Principal Part

THE CREED

31. **What do we mean by the word “creed”?** Our confession of faith in God. The Apostles’ Creed is the oldest declaration of Christian faith. It was first used in the early church to instruct Christian disciples.
32. **What do we call the three parts of the Apostolic Confession?** The three Articles of Faith.

THE FIRST ARTICLE

33. **What is the First Article?** I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
34. **What is meant by this?** I believe that God made heaven and earth, including me and all creatures; he gave me body and soul, reasoning power and all my senses; he provides me with food, clothing, home, family and all my possessions. I believe that he provides me daily with all necessities of life, protects and preserves me from danger, this all out of his fatherly and divine mercy, without any merit on my part. For this I am duty-bound to love, praise, serve and obey him.
35. **Where is God?** God is everywhere. Wherever there is goodness, truth or love, God is revealed.
36. **If God is everywhere, why can’t we see him?** We can’t see God because God is a spirit, and a spirit is invisible. *John 4:24. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*
37. **Is the God revealed in the Bible the only God?** There is but one God; though he has revealed himself in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. *Mark 12:29. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.*
38. **How did God create all things?** God created all things by his own power, his own free will and in an orderly manner.
39. **Which are the principal beings created by God?** The principal beings created by God are the angels and man.
40. **Who are the angels?** The angels are spirits, which God created to glorify him and to serve man.
41. **Which is the principal being on earth?** The principal being on earth is man, consisting of body, soul and spirit. *Genesis 2:7. And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*
42. **Why do we call God the Father of all men?** We call God the Father of all men because all human beings belong to one family, of which God is the Father.
43. **How may we know God for ourselves?** God will make himself known to us if we read the Bible (to know his will), pray to him, do right and try to live in the spirit of Jesus.
44. **What is divine providence?** Divine providence is the care with which God watches over us and over the world. *Psalms 33:18. Behold, the eye of Jehovah is upon thee that fear him, upon them that hope in his loving kindness.*

THE SECOND ARTICLE

45. **What is the Second Article?** I believe in Jesus Christ, his only begotten 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 rose 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.
46. **What is meant by this?** I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God the Father lived among his fellow men, and by his teaching, his suffering and death on the cross revealed the true love of God to mankind. In giving himself in this sacrifice of his own free will, he is our redeemer and deliverer from death and the power of Satan. His sacrifice is the assurance for us that God is willing to forgive our sins if we repent and in turn love and obey him.
47. **What does the name Jesus mean?** The name of Jesus means Savior or Redeemer. *Matthew 1:21. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.*
48. **What does the name Christ mean?** The name Christ means the Anointed One. Jesus was the long-expected Messiah.
49. **Why do we call Jesus our Teacher?** We call Jesus our Teacher because he teaches us about God, our Father, and how he expects us to live as his children. *John 1:18. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*
50. **Why do we call Jesus the Savior of mankind?** We call Jesus the Savior of mankind because through his life and death he revealed the true love of God the Father toward us. It is this love that draws us from the way of sin to God. *Romans 5:8. But God commandeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Hebrews 9:26, 28. But now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifest to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many.*
51. **What is sin?** Sin is the wrong and evil in this world that stands in opposition to God. *James 4:17. To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*
52. **What are the results of sin?** Sin separates us from God and brings sorrow, pain and suffering, and always lead to destruction.
53. **What does the suffering of Jesus teach us about God?** The suffering of Jesus teaches us that God love the world enough to suffer for its salvation. *John 3:16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*
54. **What did Christ accomplish for us by his suffering and death?** Through his suffering and death, Christ reconciled us with God and redeemed us from sin, death, Satan and hell, and restored unto us righteousness and eternal life. *Titus 2:14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works.*
55. **What do we mean by the resurrection of Jesus?** By the resurrection of Jesus we mean that though he was crucified and died he arose on the third day and lives forever. *I Corinthians 15:20, 22. But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*
56. **When did Christ ascend into heaven?** Forty days after his resurrection Christ ascended into heaven and entered into his glory; where he is sitting at the right hand of God. *Acts 1:3, 9. To whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days. And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

57. **Will Christ return to this earth?** Christ will come again, in great power and glory, to bring joy and deliverance to the righteous. *Acts 1:11. This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven. Matthew 24:36. But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.*
58. **What is the judgment of the world?** The judgment of the world is the final judgment by Jesus Christ of all the living and dead people, according to their works. *Matthew 16:27. For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall render unto every man according to his deeds. II Corinthians 5:10. For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

THE THIRD ARTICLE

59. **What is the Third Article of the Apostolic Creed?** I believe in the Holy Spirit, in the one Holy Universal Christian Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting. Amen.
60. **What is meant by this?** I believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Holy Trinity, precedes from the Father and the Son, dwells in the hearts of true believers, and that he calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies all Christians and keeps them in the true faith. As he has risen from the dead he will in the end raise all the dead and give to all true believers eternal life.
61. **What offices are ascribed to the Holy Spirit?** Three offices are ascribed to the Holy Spirit; the office of reproof; the office of comforting; the office of teaching.
62. **How does the Holy Spirit reprove us?** By leading men to recognize their sinfulness. *John 16:8. And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*
63. **How does the Holy Spirit comfort us?** If we love and obey God, the Holy Spirit is our constant companion. *John 14: 16-17. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him; ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you.*
64. **How does the Holy Spirit guide us?** When we sincerely pray to God, the Holy Spirit opens our minds to the truth and stirs our consciences to choose the right. *John 16:13-14. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak : and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you.*
65. **What must we do when we have done wrong?** We must confess our wrong-doing to God and in certain cases to the person wronged, as to be forgiven and do all we can to set things right.
66. **What is repentance?** True repentance consists in the conviction of our sinfulness, feeling sorry for our sin, confessing and renouncing our sin and asking God for forgiveness. *Luke 15:18-19. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of they hired servants.*
67. **What is conversion?** Conversion is the decision of the sinner to renounce all evil and dedicate his life to the service of God. *I Peter 2:25. For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*
68. **Is conversion necessary?** Yes, because it leads to regeneration, as Jesus said: "Ye must be born again!" and: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3, 7) *I Peter 1:23. Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth.*
69. **What is salvation?** Salvation consists in the justification of the sinner, his complete regeneration, and his transformation into the image of Christ. *Acts 16:31. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house.*

70. **What is faith?** Faith is a firm confidence in God. It is accepting God's ways without doubt even though we do not fully understand them. *Hebrews 11:1. Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.*
71. **Why must we have faith?** We must have faith because faith is necessary for wise and happy living. By faith in God and man, and in better things to come, we discover God's highest goals. *Hebrews 11:6. And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is rewarder of them that seek after him.*

III. The Third Principal Part

THE LORD'S PRAYER

72. **What is prayer?** Prayer is speaking with God, whereby we offer praise, give thanks, express our thoughts to him, listen to him and make our petitions either for ourselves or others.
73. **Where and how often should we pray?** We should pray everywhere and without ceasing. *1 Timothy 2:8. I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Pray without ceasing.*
74. **What do we mean by the Lord's Prayer?** The prayer that Jesus taught his disciples as given in Matthew 6:9-13.
75. **Will you repeat the Lord's Prayer?** Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed by 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.
76. **According to the opening words, to whom do we speak in this prayer?** To God as our heavenly Father.
77. **What is the first petition in this prayer?** Hallowed by thy name.
78. **What is meant by this?** The name of God is in itself holy, but we pray in this petition that it may also be hallowed among us. This is done when the word of God is taught in sincerity and we as children of God live according to his teaching.
79. **What is the second petition?** Thy kingdom come.
80. **What is meant by this?** The kingdom of God is coming even without our prayers, but we pray in this petition that we and all the people on earth may share in this kingdom and that all the kingdoms of the earth may speedily become the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.
81. **What is the third petition?** Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
82. **What is meant by this?** God's good and gracious will is indeed done without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may also be done among us, and everywhere, and that everyone on earth may do his will as cheerfully as the angels in heaven. *Hebrews 13:21. Make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory forever and ever.*
83. **What is the fourth petition?** Give us this day our daily bread.
84. **What is meant by this?** God indeed gives daily bread without our prayer, even to the wicked, but we pray in this petition that he may help us to recognize his kindness, that we may learn to appreciate his gracious gifts and receive them with thanksgiving. *Psalms 145:15. The eyes of all wait for thee; and thou givest them their food in the season. Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*
85. **What is the fifth petition?** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
86. **What is meant by this?** We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven may not look upon our sins, nor on their account deny our petitions, for we are unworthy, but we ask that by his grace he grant them in the measure as we are willing to forgive our fellow men who may do wrong to us. *Matthew 6:14, 15. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father*

forgive your trespasses. Colossians 3:13. Forgiving each other, if any man has a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye.

87. **What is the sixth petition?** Lead us not into temptation.
88. **What is meant by this?** God indeed tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that God may protect and keep us; that the Devil, the world and our own flesh may no deceive us, nor lead us into sin. *James 1:13. Let no man say when he is tempted. I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man. I Corinthians 10:13. There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted about that ye are able.*
89. **What is the seventh petition?** But deliver us from evil.
90. **What is meant by this?** We pray in this petition that the Father in heaven may deliver us from every evil of body and soul; and, finally, when our last hour has come, grant us a happy end and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to himself in heaven. *John 17:15. I pray no that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one.*
91. **What is the conclusion of this prayer?** For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.
92. **What is meant by this?** With these words we express a confident assurance that such petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven and heard by him; for he himself commanded us thus to pray and promised that we shall be heard. Amen, that is, Yea, yea, it shall be so.

The Fourth Principal Part

THE SACRAMENTS

93. **What does the fourth principal part deal with?** The Holy Sacraments.
94. **What are these Holy Sacraments?** Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. They are sacred ceremonies observed from the earliest times by the Christian church to remember Christ and to receive his Spirit.
95. **Why do we call them Sacraments?** Because they are visible signs or symbols of spiritual truths that are sacred, things that we feel deeply but cannot see.

A. Holy Baptism

96. **What is Holy Baptism?** Holy Baptism is a sacrament, whereby God the Father, through Jesus Christ his Son, and the Holy Spirit, assures those who are baptized, whether adults or infants, that he will be gracious unto them and forgive them all their sins for Jesus' sake, and in his mercy and compassion adopt them as his children and make them heirs of heaven.
97. **In what words did Christ institute Holy Baptism?** In the Gospel according to St. Matthew Jesus said to his disciples: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.: And in the Gospel according to St. Mark, in the last chapter, he said these words: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16)
98. **Why do we believe in infant baptism?** When Jesus commissioned his disciples to baptize all nations he certainly included children. Thus to give our children the assurance of the grace and love of God and fellowship in Jesus Christ, we administer this sacrament.
99. **What does Baptism as practiced in our churches involve?** It involves a solemn obligation on the part of the parents who present their child for consecration to God, to teach it early the fear of the Lord, to watch

over its education, associates and habits, and give it all the opportunities of religious education and training.
Ephesians 6:4. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

B. The Lord's Supper

100. **What is the Lord's Supper?** According to Christ's own words the Holy Supper is a memorial, commemorating his death. At the communion table we are to remember with penitent, believing and grateful hearts how he suffered and died for us and our salvation.
101. **When and in what words did Christ institute the Lord's Supper?** "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night which he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it unto the 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, and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying. 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."
102. **What do we receive by partaking of the Lord's Supper?** By partaking of the Lord's Supper we receive the assurance that his body was as surely offered for us upon the cross and his blood shed for us, as surely we see with our own eyes that the bread of the Lord is broken for us and the blessed cup present to us; and that Christ will as certainly nourish us with his body and blood, as certainly as we physically eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord. *John 6:51. I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.*
103. **How must we prepare ourselves to be worthy partakers of the Lord's Supper?** We must search our own hearts and examine our own lives, for in I Corinthians 11:28 we read: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." *Psalms 139:23, 24. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*
104. **What is the result for one who partakes of the Lord's Supper unworthily?** He who partakes of the Lord's Supper when he is not worthy of it is just as guilty of the suffering and death of Christ as those who caused the same; for St. Paul writes: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, for not discerning the Lord's body." *I Corinthians 11:27. Wherefore whosoever shall at the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.*
105. **What does partaking of the Lord's Supper require of us?** Our communion requires that we keep in remembrance the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus, and that we consider well how hard it was for our Savior to bear our sins and the sins of the whole world, and to gain eternal salvation for us by offering up his life and shedding his blood. Since our sins caused the Lord Jesus the greatest sufferings, yea, bitter death, we should have no pleasure in sin, but should earnestly flee from sin and avoid it; and being reclaimed by our Savior and Redeemer, we should live, suffer, and die to his honor so that at all times and especially in the hour of death we may cheerfully and confidently say: "Lord Jesus, for Thee I live, for Thee I suffer, and Thee I die! Lord Jesus, Thine will I be in life and death! Grant me, O Lord, eternal salvation!" Amen.

The Fifth Principal Part

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

106. **What is the Christian church?** The Christian church is the entire body of Christians, in heaven and on earth, which Christ has redeemed by his blood (Acts 20:28), called and regenerated by the Holy Spirit (John 3:8), and gathered into one great body of which he is the head.
107. **What two phases of the church do we distinguish?** We distinguish between the visible and the invisible church, or church militant and the church triumphant.
108. **What is the visible church?** The visible church consists of all members of the various church organizations who partake of the means of grace.
109. **What is the invisible church?** The invisible church comprises all those, in heaven and on earth, who have been regenerated and are true Christians. This group is called the invisible church because true believers are known to God only, "For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."
110. **What is the church militant?** The church militant consists of those members of the church who are actively engaged in the struggle with sin, which means all forces of evil.
111. **What is the church triumphant?** The church triumphant consists of those Christians who have been victorious through the blood of the Lamb, and who have already entered into everlasting glory, and are now, as the redeemed praising the Lord for their salvation. *Revelations 7:16, 17. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them nor any heat: for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.*
112. **Who governs the church?** The church is governed by Christ, its only head, through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.
113. **What kind of churches are best able to regulate their own affairs, in accordance with the will of God?** Those churches are best able to regulate their own affairs, in accordance with the will of God which earnestly follow the precepts of the Holy Scriptures, and in which the members do nothing through strife or vainglory, but gladly follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In such churches the Holy Spirit is able to give the necessary wisdom and to reveal clearly the will of God, even in the most difficult cases.
114. **What is the duty of the individual congregation toward other churches?** The individual congregations must have fellowship with other churches, heartily cooperate with them in building the kingdom of God, and help them in all worthy endeavors.
115. **What is the hope of the church?** The hope of the church is the second coming of Christ, as he promised, when he said: "I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." (John 14:3)
116. **What great events will take place at the second coming of Christ?** The resurrection of the dead and the ascension of the Lord's elect will take place. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangels, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I Thessalonians 4:16-17) *John 5:28, 29. For the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment.*
117. **Will the wicked also be raised from the dead?** Yes, the wicked will also be raised from the dead on the last day, not however, to everlasting glory, but to eternal disgrace and damnation, because they have repudiated Christ and rejected salvation.

118. **What is meant by “life everlasting”?** The elect of God shall enter into everlasting bliss and great joy. They shall have blessed fellowship with all the redeemed and the holy angels, and have full possession of all heavenly gifts.
119. **What should therefore be a person’s greatest concern in life?** That he may have steadfast hope of eternal life, as Jesus said, (Matthew 6:33) “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

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